



International Labour Conference

The Standing Orders at a Glance

International Labour Office

2019

The object of this guide is to provide all Conference participants with guidance at a glance on how to deal with the various procedural questions that may arise in the course of the work of the Conference. It is based on rules and current practice. A comprehensive review of the Conference Standing Orders undertaken by the Governing Body with a view to their simplification and modernization is expected to be completed in 2020.

Since the procedures in plenary sittings of the Conference in many cases differ from those that apply in committees, plenary and committees are treated separately.

Cross references are given to the relevant provisions of the ILO Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Conference (unless otherwise stated, cross references concern the Standing Orders), but it must be emphasized that this guide *is not an authoritative legal text, and is not intended to be a substitute for, or to provide an interpretation of, the ILO Constitution and the Conference Standing Orders*. In case of doubt, the Office of the Legal Adviser should be consulted.

Contents

| | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| Plenary sittings of the Conference..... | 1 |
| Plenary sittings – General | 1 |
| Rights of persons attending the Conference..... | 1 |
| 1. Right to speak, to move amendments and to vote in plenary | 1 |
| 2. Suspension of the right to vote | 2 |
| Points of order, motions, right of reply | 2 |
| 1. Distinction between point of order and motion as to procedure..... | 2 |
| 2. Motion for closure | 2 |
| 3. Right of reply..... | 3 |
| Amendments | 3 |
| Decisions – Voting procedures | 4 |
| 1. The basic rules..... | 4 |
| 2. Methods of voting..... | 5 |
| 3. Electronic voting | 6 |
| Committees..... | 6 |
| Committees – General..... | 6 |
| Standing committees..... | 6 |
| Technical committees | 7 |
| Outputs of technical committees | 7 |
| 1. Conventions and Recommendations | 7 |
| 2. Resolutions and conclusions..... | 8 |
| 3. Resolutions or conclusions emerging from a general discussion or a recurrent discussion | 8 |
| Rights of persons attending a committee | 9 |
| 1. Right to speak, to move amendments, to vote | 9 |
| 2. Motion for closure | 9 |
| Amendments | 10 |
| Decisions – Voting procedures | 11 |
| The basic rules | 11 |
| Methods of voting..... | 12 |
| Vote by show of hands..... | 12 |
| Record vote..... | 12 |

Plenary sittings of the Conference

Plenary sittings – General

Plenary sittings are devoted to a **discussion** of the reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body (see below), unless there are other matters that need to be considered by the Conference.

The **adoption of Committee reports, international instruments** and other texts generally takes place in the last two days of the Conference.

During the discussion of the reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, one Government delegate, one Employers' delegate and one Workers' delegate, as well as a visiting minister from each member State may participate.

Time limit for speeches: five minutes.

Rights of persons attending the Conference

- 1. Right to speak, to move amendments and to vote in plenary**
(Constitution, articles 3 and 4;
Standing Orders, articles 1, 2, 12.3 and 14)

| | Right to speak | Right to move amendments | Right to vote |
|--|--|--------------------------|---|
| DELEGATES (articles 12.3, 14.1 and 14.3) | Yes, but not more than once in the general discussion, or on the same motion, resolution or amendment | Yes | Yes, granted to the four delegates of each member State (two Government, one Employers', one Workers') unless right to vote suspended or incomplete delegation (see below) |
| SUBSTITUTES (article 1.2 and 1.3) | Same rights as delegates when authorized to substitute for them | | |
| ADVISERS NOT APPOINTED TO BE SUBSTITUTES (Constitution, article 3.6) | Only when authorized to do so by delegate and by President | No | No |
| MINISTERS ATTENDING THE CONFERENCE WHO ARE NOT DELEGATES OR ADVISERS (articles 12.3, 14.8) | Yes | No | No |
| MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING BODY WHO ARE NOT DELEGATES OR ADVISERS (article 14.8) | Yes | No | No |
| REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (IGOs) (article 14.9) | Yes | No | No |
| OBSERVERS FROM NON-MEMBER STATES (article 14.11) | Yes, with the permission of the President | No | No |
| REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs) (article 14.10) | Only with the permission of the Officers | No | No |
| REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS (article 14.12) | Yes, with the permission of the President | No | No |

2. Suspension of the right to vote

The right to vote may be suspended for one of two reasons in the Conference and in committees:

| INCOMPLETE DELEGATIONS (article 4.2 of the Constitution) | ARREARS OF CONTRIBUTIONS (article 13.4 of the Constitution, articles 29–33 of Standing Orders) |
|--|--|
| If any member State nominates only one of the two non-governmental delegates (i.e. an Employers' delegate but not a Workers' delegate or vice versa) the delegate who has been nominated (and his/her advisers or substitutes in committees) is deprived of the right to vote in the Conference and in its committees. | If any member State is at least two years in arrears of its contribution to the ILO, the entire tripartite delegation of that country (Government, Employers' and Workers' delegates and advisers) is deprived of the right to vote in the Conference and its committees, unless the Conference , by a two-thirds majority, approves financial arrangements with the country concerned and permits its delegation to vote . |

Points of order, motions, right of reply

1. Distinction between point of order and motion as to procedure

| POINT OF ORDER Articles 14.5 and 15.9 (Conference) Article 63.9 (committees) | MOTION AS TO PROCEDURE Article 15.2 (Conference) Article 63.2 (committees) |
|---|---|
| Definition: A complaint that the Standing Orders (or some previous decision by the Conference/committee) are not being observed. | Definition: A motion to obtain a decision by the Conference/committee on a procedural matter, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to refer the matter back; – to adjourn the sitting or the debate on a particular question; – to postpone consideration of the question under discussion; – to proceed to the next item; – to seek the opinion of the Legal Adviser; – closure of the discussion (see box below). |
| Procedure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A point of order may be made at any time, even while a speaker has the floor. (2) It does not need to be seconded, but the speaker must refer specifically to the article of the Standing Orders or to the previous decision which he/she claims is not being observed. (3) The President/Chairperson decides, and must give an immediate ruling. Points of order are not voted upon. | Procedure: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) A motion as to procedure may be moved at any time, except while a speaker has the floor. (2) It must be seconded. (3) The Conference/committee decides. The motion must be put to the Conference/committee for immediate decision, by vote if necessary. It takes precedence over everything else. |

2. Motion for closure (article 16)

Definition: A motion as to procedure **to bring to a close** the discussion of any item (e.g. the article, paragraph or resolution) currently being examined by the Conference. This means that the Conference proceeds immediately to taking a decision on the issue. It may be useful for two different purposes: ensuring that all amendments are thoroughly considered and debated and completing important tasks such as standard-setting exercises within a limited period of time.

Procedure:

- (1) The speaker must clarify the **scope of the motion**: closure of the discussion on a particular resolution or amendment or on the “general question”.
- (2) The motion must be supported by at least **30 delegates (article 16.2)**. To ascertain this, a show of hands may be required unless the motion is proposed by a group.
- (3) The President reads out the list of delegates who had signified their wish to speak before the closure has been moved (**article 16.2**).
- (4) Delegates may speak against the closure, but no such speech shall exceed five minutes (**article 16.3**).
- (5) The motion for closure is then put to a vote.
- (6) If adopted, one speaker from each group that so requests may speak on the question under discussion, whether or not there has been a previous speaker representing that group.
- (7) **After closure has been voted, no speakers other than those mentioned in paragraph (6) above may speak on the substance of the item that has been subject to closure.**

3. *Right of reply*

The right of reply is mentioned nowhere in the Standing Orders of the Conference, but it has always been granted on the basis of an “unwritten but natural law”. The President of the Conference may be quite **flexible** in granting a right of reply, **but** must be strict in controlling its exercise. In particular he/she should:

- (1) give the floor for a right of reply **at the end of the sitting** rather than immediately after it is requested;
- (2) insist that it be brief (e.g. no more than three minutes);
- (3) insist that it be limited to **responding to a specific point or points** in a speech which the speaker requesting the right of reply finds offensive or inaccurate;
- (4) insist on the use of **parliamentary language**;
- (5) **interrupt** a speaker if he/she uses the right of reply **to attack another member** or his/her country.

Amendments (article 15)

Amendments either modify existing text under discussion or insert new text. Sub-amendments are technically amendments to amendments that have already been submitted. Amendments to draft texts (Conventions, Recommendations, resolutions or conclusions) emerging from committees are rarely moved in plenary sittings of the Conference. When they are moved, they must be submitted to the Clerk of the Conference **in writing** in English, French or Spanish and distributed to all delegates in the three languages before they can be considered by the Conference. *The procedure for the consideration of amendments by the Conference is the same as in committees, but the procedures for voting are different.* The basic rules are as follows:

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- (1) Each amendment must be **seconded (article 15.1)**, unless submitted by more than one member or by a group. **If not seconded, an amendment is not discussed.**
 - (2) Amendments shall be decided upon **before** the text to which they refer **(article 15.7(1))**. Similarly, if **sub-amendments** are moved they must be decided upon before the amendment to which they refer.
 - (3) The President decides on the order in which amendments (and sub-amendments) are to be discussed **(article 15.7(2))**.
 - (4) Each amendment (and sub-amendment) **must be decided upon (article 15.7(2)(a))**, unless it is adopted by consensus or withdrawn. Amendments may be decided upon either individually or against other amendments, as the person chairing the sitting may decide **(article 15.7(2)(b))**.
 - (5) An amendment **can be withdrawn** by the person who moved it, **unless a sub-amendment** to it is under discussion or has been adopted. **(article 15.8(1))**.
 - (6) An amendment that has been withdrawn **can be moved again** without previous notice by another delegate **(article 15.8(2))**.
 - (7) When all amendments to a particular article or paragraph have been considered, **the article or paragraph, as amended, must be put to the Conference for adoption** (if necessary by vote). Similarly, when all articles or paragraphs have been considered, **the entire instrument or resolution** as amended must be put to the vote.

Decisions – Voting procedures

1. *The basic rules*

- (1) Unless otherwise provided for in the Standing Orders, the Conference makes every effort to take its decisions by consensus. Consensus is characterized by the absence of any objection presented by a delegate as an impediment to the adoption of the decision in question. It is for the Chairperson to ascertain the existence of a consensus.
- (2) In the case of vote, decisions are taken by the Conference by a **simple majority** of the delegates attending the Conference **(Constitution, article 17.2)**, **except** for the following decisions which, under the Constitution, require a **two-thirds majority**:
 - (a) admission of Members to the Organization **(Constitution, article 1.4)**. In this case, a positive decision also requires the affirmative votes of two-thirds of the Government delegates present and voting;
 - (b) refusal to admit a delegate or adviser to the Conference **(Constitution, article 3.9)**;
 - (c) approval of the programme and budget **(Constitution, article 13.2(c))**;
 - (d) inclusion of a new item on the agenda of the following session of the Conference **(Constitution, article 16.3)**;
 - (e) granting permission to vote to a Member which is in arrears in the payment of its contributions **(Constitution, article 13.4)**;

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- (f) final vote on the adoption of a Convention or a Recommendation (**Constitution, article 19.2**);
 - (g) adoption of amendments to the Constitution (**Constitution, article 36**).
- (3) There are two main methods of voting – by **show of hands** or by **record vote (article 19.1)**.
- (4) Whatever the method of voting:
- (a) a vote is not valid if the **quorum** has not been attained – i.e. if the total number of votes cast for and against (**not** counting abstentions) is **less than half** the number of delegates attending the Conference and entitled to vote (**Constitution, article 17.3; Standing Orders, article 20**);
 - (b) once voting has started, it **cannot be interrupted**, except on a point of order concerning an alleged irregularity in the voting process;
 - (c) brief **explanations of vote** are permitted **after** the voting is completed (**Standing Orders, article 19.14**).

2. **Methods of voting (article 19)**

- (1) The normal method of voting is **by show of hands (article 19.2)**.
- (2) **Record votes** are taken in the following circumstances:
 - (a) in all cases in which a **two-thirds majority** is required by the Constitution (see above), (*except in the case of a vote on the inclusion in the agenda of the following session of the Conference of an item which is already on the agenda of the present session*) (**article 19.5**);
 - (b) in case of **doubt as to the result of a vote by show of hands (article 19.4)**. The President has **complete discretion** in deciding whether there are sufficient grounds for doubting the result, for example because the result was very close, or there was some perceived irregularity in the voting process – and for proceeding to a record vote;
 - (c) if requested by at least **90 delegates** present at the sitting, or by the **spokesperson for a group, before or immediately after** a vote by show of hands (**article 19.6**);
 - (d) the President may decide on his/her initiative to hold a record vote **when a quorum has not been attained** in a vote by show of hands (**article 20.2(1)**). He/she would normally only take such a decision if the quorum fails to be attained by a narrow margin, but would be obliged to call a record vote if it is requested by at least **20 delegates** present (**article 20.2(2)**);
 - (e) the President may furthermore – again on his/her initiative – cause a record vote to be taken **at one of the two following sittings** if a quorum has not been obtained in a vote by show of hands or in a record vote (but **not** in the case of a final record vote for the adoption of a Convention or a Recommendation) (**article 20.3**).

3. **Electronic voting**

Except if the Conference decides otherwise, all votes in plenary are conducted using an electronic voting system. Access to the voting system is through a personal identification code (PIN), which will be issued to all accredited members of delegations at the time of registration.

At the beginning of a vote, the voting station screen will ask each delegate to enter the PIN and confirm his or her identity. Clear instructions will then appear on the screen, in English, French or Spanish, explaining the voting procedure in stages.

Regular delegates or their substitutes are authorized to vote. If they are unable to attend a vote, they may delegate their right to an adviser. Delegations of authority to vote should be submitted to the secretariat of the Credentials Committee, preferably the day before the vote and, in any event, not later than one hour before voting begins. Forms for delegation of authority are available online as well as at the Information Desk and at the secretariat of the Credentials Committee.

Votes by show of hands or record votes are carried out using electronic voting stations. The numerical results (votes in favour, against, abstentions, quorum and required majority) of the vote are immediately displayed and subsequently published in the *Provisional Record*. In the case of a record vote, a list of delegates showing how they voted is also published, while in the case of a vote by show of hands no access is possible to individual votes.

Committees

Committees – General

Nearly all of the substantive work of the Conference is done in committees, which are appointed by the Conference on the opening day of the Conference. The committees report to the Conference upon completion of their work; none of the texts (instruments, resolutions, conclusions, decisions) resulting from their work are valid until approved (and, where necessary, voted upon) by the Conference.

There are two types of committees: **Standing committees and technical committees.**

Standing committees

- **Selection Committee (article 4):** The traditional responsibilities of the Selection Committee (for example, arranging the programme of the Conference or fixing the time and agenda for the plenary sittings) are now dealt with by the Conference during its opening sitting. The Selection Committee is convened mainly to address specific substantive matters that the Conference may decide to refer to it, which typically include the proposed abrogation and withdrawal of standards, the approval of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention or requests for admission to ILO membership.
- **Credentials Committee (article 5 and article 26):** Consists of one Government, one Employers' and one Workers' delegate. Examines the credentials of delegates and their advisers and any objections or complaints that may be made to them regarding non-payment of expenses or act of omission preventing an accredited delegate or adviser from attending the Conference, as well as monitoring cases.

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- **Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (article 7):** Considers the measures taken by member States to give effect to the provisions of ratified Conventions and to their constitutional obligations relating to Conventions and Recommendations.
 - **Finance Committee of Government Representatives (article 7 bis):** Consists of one Government delegate from each member State represented at the Conference. Examines the programme and budget, the allocation of expenses among member States, the audited financial statements, requests for permission to vote from Members in arrears and other financial and administrative matters.

Technical committees

The Conference also establishes committees, the number and purpose of which vary at each session of the Conference, to examine the technical items on its agenda. These technical items can be **either** for the **adoption of an instrument** (Convention and/or Recommendation) or for a **recurrent discussion** or a **general discussion**.

With the exception of the Credentials Committee, the work of all the above committees – whether standing committees or technical committees – is governed by a separate section of the Standing Orders (section H), the main provisions of which are summarized below. In many important respects, the rules governing the procedures in committee differ quite substantially from those that apply to plenary sittings of the Conference.

Outputs of technical committees

1. Conventions and Recommendations

The procedure for the preparation and adoption of Conventions and Recommendations is spelled out in some detail in **article 19 of the Constitution** and **section E (articles 34–45) of the Standing Orders**. The usual procedure is for these standards to be adopted under the **double-discussion** procedure, i.e. it is discussed at two successive sessions of the Conference:

- As soon as the Governing Body has placed an item on the Conference agenda for the adoption of an instrument under the double-discussion procedure, the Office prepares a **first report (white report)** setting out the law and practice of different countries on the subject under consideration for the adoption of an instrument, together with a questionnaire. This report is sent to the governments of all member States who send in the comments after consulting national employers' and workers' organizations. In the light of these comments, the Office prepares a **second report (yellow report)** which analyses the replies received and proposes draft conclusions. **These draft conclusions form the basis of discussion in a committee at the first session of the Conference.**
- Immediately after the first discussion at the Conference, the Office prepares a **third report (brown report)** which contains a draft instrument (or instruments) based on the conclusions adopted at the first discussion. This is sent to the governments of all member States who, after consulting national employers' and workers' organizations, send in their comments on the draft instrument(s). In the light of these comments, the Office prepares a **fourth report (blue report)** containing a draft instrument or instruments, revised to take account of the comments received. **The draft instrument(s) form the basis of discussion in committees at the second session of the Conference.** The committee transmits the draft instrument(s), as amended during its discussion, to the Conference for adoption. **A two-thirds majority in a final record vote is required in order for an instrument to be adopted by the Conference.**

Note: Each committee established to consider a draft Convention or Recommendation shall set up a **committee drafting committee**, consisting of one Government member, one Employer member and one Worker member, together with the Reporter of the Committee and the Legal Adviser of the Conference, to finalize the drafting of a text, including ensuring linguistic consistency between the English and the French versions, the two authentic texts, before it is put to the committee for adoption (**article 59.1**). The committee drafting committee shall form part of the **Conference Drafting Committee**, consisting of at least three persons, which is responsible for finalizing the texts of Conventions and Recommendations and for ensuring agreement between the English and French versions of these texts before they are put to the Conference for final adoption (**article 6**).

Due to time constraints but also as a matter of business efficiency, in all standard-setting exercises of the last ten years, there has been practically no distinction between the Conference Drafting Committee and the committee drafting committee. The general responsibilities of the Conference Drafting Committee are assumed by the committee drafting committee.

2. **Resolutions and conclusions**

A resolution or conclusions emerge from discussions in a committee – particularly a committee dealing with a general discussion item (see below).

NB: *Any draft resolution involving expenditure must be referred to the Governing Body and its Programme, Financial and Administrative Section before being discussed by the Conference (article 18).*

3. **Resolutions or conclusions emerging from a general discussion or a recurrent discussion**

While the procedures for standard-setting items are spelled out in some detail in the Constitution and the Standing Orders, items for general discussion are dealt with in one brief article of the Standing Orders (**article 11 ter**), which provides that the Office shall prepare a report on the question for general discussion, and that the question shall be referred to a committee. The **usual procedure** is for such a committee to:

- (1) hold a **general exchange of views** on the question and on the Office report;
- (2) appoint a **small tripartite working party/drafting group** to prepare draft conclusions (or a draft resolution) on the question with the help of the Office;
- (3) **adopt** the text proposed by the working party/drafting group (after considering any amendments that may have been made to it by members of the committee), and **refer it to the Conference for final adoption**.

Recurrent discussions have been introduced under the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization. They take place according to a cycle decided by the Governing Body. The current cycle is of five years with the following sequence: social dialogue and tripartism in 2018; social protection (social security) in 2020; employment in 2021; social protection (labour protection) in 2022; and fundamental principles and rights at work in 2023. The Conference Standing Orders contain no provision regulating the working methods of a committee for recurrent discussions. As per current practice, recurrent discussions generally follow the modalities of general discussions. The Governing Body provided guidance on the organization of the discussion (for example, interactive discussions with the participation of key stakeholders in addition to the tripartite constituents, including

recognized experts and representatives from relevant national, regional and international organizations) and a concise and action-oriented outcome.

Note: Resolutions or conclusions emerging from a general discussion are adopted by the Conference by a **simple majority** or by consensus, and do **not** require a **final record vote** (unless, of course, one is requested by at least 90 delegates (see above)).

Rights of persons attending a committee

1. *Right to speak, to move amendments, to vote*

| | (Article 56) | | |
|--|---|--------------------------|---|
| | Right to speak | Right to move amendments | Right to vote |
| REGULAR MEMBERS | Yes | Yes | Yes, unless right to vote suspended |
| DEPUTY MEMBERS (article 56.5) | Yes | Yes | Only in replacement of a regular member |
| SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (article 56.3) | Same rights as members for whom they substitute | | |
| DELEGATES OR ADVISERS NOT MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE (article 56.6) | Yes | Yes | No |
| REPRESENTATIVES OF IGOs (article 56.7) | Yes | No | No |
| OBSERVERS FROM NON-MEMBER STATES (article 56.8(a)) | Only with the Chairperson's permission | No | No |
| REPRESENTATIVES OF NGOs (article 56.9) | Only with permission of Officers | No | No |
| REPRESENTATIVES OF NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS (article 56.10) | Yes | No | No |

2. *Motion for closure (article 64)*

Definition: A motion **to bring to a close** the discussion of any item (for example, the article, paragraph or resolution) currently being examined by the committee. This means that the committee proceeds immediately to taking a decision on the issue. It may be useful for two different purposes: ensuring that all amendments are thoroughly considered and debated and completing important tasks such as standard-setting exercises within a limited period of time.

Procedure

- (1) The speaker must clarify the **scope of the motion**: closure of the discussion on a particular amendment or on the “general question”.
- (2) The motion must be supported by at least **one fifth** of members **present** (i.e. **not** of the total membership of the committee) (**article 64.2**). To ascertain this may require a show of hands (votes should **not be weighted** in this case), unless the motion is proposed by a group.

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- (3) The Chairperson reads out the list of members who have requested to speak (**article 64.2**).
 - (4) **One speaker** from each group may oppose closure (**article 64.3**). **No other speakers on the motion for closure should be permitted.**
 - (5) Motion for closure is then put to a vote.
 - (6) If adopted, members who had requested to speak (paragraph (3) above) may do so (**article 64.2**). In addition, one member from each group may speak on the item that has been subject to closure, **but only if no other member of that group** is on the list of speakers referred to in paragraph (3) above (**article 64.3**).
 - (7) **After closure has been voted, no speakers other than those mentioned in paragraph (6) above may speak on the substance of the item that has been subject to closure.**

Amendments (article 63)

1. Amendments must be submitted **in writing** in English, French or Spanish and distributed in the three languages before they can be considered by the committee (**article 63.3, 63.4 and 63.5**).
2. If there are several amendments to a particular article or paragraph, the Chairperson shall determine the order in which amendments shall be discussed by the committee (**article 63.7(2)**), but the Standing Orders give no further guidance on the question.

As a general rule, the most radical amendment is taken first, i.e. the amendment which is furthest removed from the original text. The most radical of all amendments would propose:

- **either (a) to delete all** of an article or paragraph;
- **or (b) to replace all** of an article or paragraph by a new text.

If either (a) or (b) is adopted, all other amendments to that article or paragraph will fall.

If neither (a) nor (b) is adopted, or no such radical amendments are proposed, the remaining amendments are taken in the order of the text.

3. Amendments must be decided upon (if necessary by vote) **before** the text to which they refer (**article 63.7(1)**).
4. Each amendment must be **seconded (article 63.1)**, unless submitted by more than one member or by a group. **If not seconded, an amendment is not discussed.**
5. If **sub-amendments** are moved (**article 63.6**), they must be decided upon (if necessary by vote) **before** the amendment to which they refer (see table on **sub-amendments** below).
6. Each amendment (as sub-amended) **must be put to the vote (article 63.7(2)(a))**, unless it is adopted by consensus or withdrawn (see table on **Withdrawal of amendments** below). Amendments are generally voted on **individually**, but the Chairperson may decide to have two amendments **voted against each other (article 63.7(2)(b))**.

7. If amendments are **voted against each other**, members are first called upon to **vote only for (but not against)** one or the other amendment (and the **total number of votes** in favour of both amendments **must exceed the quorum** – if not, both amendments are rejected). The one receiving the **highest number of votes** is then **put to the vote for adoption** in the usual manner (for, against, abstention).
8. When all amendments to a particular article or paragraph have been considered, **the article or paragraph, as amended, must be put to the committee for adoption** (if necessary by vote). Similarly, when all articles or paragraphs have been considered, **the entire instrument or resolution** as amended must be put to the vote (**article 63.7(2)(c)**).

| Withdrawal of amendments (article 63.8) | Sub-amendments (article 63.6) |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An amendment may be withdrawn at any time by its author, unless: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) it has been adopted by the committee; or (b) a sub-amendment to it is under discussion or has been adopted (article 63.8(1)). 2. A withdrawn amendment can be resubmitted without notice by another member of the committee (article 63.8(2)). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A sub-amendment is an amendment to an amendment. But objections may be raised if it is not considered to be a genuine sub-amendment, i.e. an attempt to smuggle in a new amendment after the deadline. 2. It can be submitted orally and without notice, but anyone can ask for it to be submitted in writing to the Chairperson and read out to the committee. 3. If several sub-amendments are submitted, the Chairperson decides the order in which they should be taken (article 63.7(2)), and must make sure that the committee fully understands the wording of each. |

Decisions – Voting procedures (articles 65 and 66)

The basic rules

Unless otherwise provided for in the Standing Orders, the committee makes every effort to take its decisions by consensus. Consensus is characterized by the absence of any objection presented by a delegate as an impediment to the adoption of the decision in question. It is for the President to ascertain the existence of a consensus.

In the case of a vote, decisions are taken in the committee by a **simple majority (article 65.1)**.

There are **two** methods of voting – by **show of hands** or by **record vote (article 65.6)** Whatever the method of voting:

- (a) votes shall be **weighted** so as to ensure equality of voting strength of the three groups;
- (b) a vote is not valid if the **quorum** has not been attained, i.e. if the total number of votes cast for and against (**not counting abstentions**) is less than **two-fifths** of the total voting power (**article 66.1**);
- (c) a **tied vote** (i.e. equal number of votes for and against) means that the motion, resolution, amendment or sub-amendment has **not** been adopted (**article 65.10**);
- (d) Once voting has started, it **cannot be interrupted**, except on a point of order concerning irregularity in the voting process.
- (e) Brief **explanations of vote** are permitted **after** the voting is completed (**article 65.11**).

Methods of voting

The **normal** method of voting is **by show of hands**. **Record votes** are **only** taken in the following circumstances:

- (a) If the result of a vote by show of hands is **challenged (article 65.7)**. A member who makes such a challenge should give a **valid reason** for doubting the result of the vote, for example the result was very close, or there was some perceived irregularity in the voting process. The Chairperson has **complete discretion** in deciding whether the challenge is valid and there are sufficient grounds for proceeding to a record vote.
- (b) If requested by at least **one fifth of the members present at the sitting (not one fifth of the total voting strength of the committee) before or immediately after** a vote by show of hands (**article 65.8**). Unless the request is made by an **entire group**, a show of hands will normally be taken to determine whether it is supported by one-fifth of members present (N.B. **but votes are not weighted in this case**).
- (c) The Chairperson may decide on his/her initiative to hold a record vote **when a quorum has not been attained** in a vote by show of hands (**article 66.2**). He/she would normally only take such a decision if the quorum fails to be attained by a narrow margin, but would, of course, be obliged to call a record vote if it is requested by at least **one fifth** of the members present (see subparagraph (b) above).

Vote by show of hands

Government members vote first. They are requested to raise hands if **in favour**. When votes in favour have been counted, government votes **against** and then government **abstentions** are counted.

The same procedure is followed for **Employer** members, and then **Worker** members.

The secretariat multiplies the votes cast by each group by the **appropriate weighting coefficient**, totals the weighted votes in favour, against and abstentions, ascertains whether the **quorum** has been attained, and hands the result to the Chairperson, who reads it out.

Record vote

Each **regular** member of the committee **who is entitled to vote** is called in turn (Governments first, then Employers and then Workers), and each will call out “Yes”, “No” or “Abstention”. The secretariat **repeats** the vote out loud and **records** it in the appropriate box on the form. When the list for each group is exhausted, the names of the members of that group who did not vote first time round are **called again**. In certain circumstances, **deputy members** may be called upon to vote in the place of regular members, but the **practice varies** according to the group (**see box below**).

At the **end** of the voting, **the same procedure** as for a vote by **show of hands**, i.e. the secretariat multiplies the votes of each group by the appropriate **coefficient**, totals up all weighted votes for, against and abstentions, checks whether the **quorum** has been attained, and gives the result to the Chairperson.

(a) Record vote – Governments

Governments are called by the name of the **country** in French alphabetical order, **not** by the name of the representative. When the list is exhausted, the names of governments which did not vote first time round are **called again**; their votes are recorded, or a tick is

placed in the “absent” box. **Government deputy members** are **not** called unless they have been **authorized in writing** by a regular Government member to vote in its place (**article 56.5(a)**). In practice, this very rarely happens.

(b) Record vote – Employers and Workers

| Employers | Workers |
|---|---|
| <p>All regular Employer members with the right to vote are called in alphabetical order. If one member does not reply all personal substitutes for that member are called until one replies. Employers who did not reply first time (and for whom no substitute voted) are called again; their votes are recorded, or a tick is placed in the “absent” box. If less than the full quota of the Employer members is attained, the normal practice is to call deputy members with the right to vote in alphabetical order until the full voting strength of the group has been attained, or the list is exhausted.</p> | <p>Note that Worker members do not have personal substitutes. All regular Worker members with the right to vote are called in alphabetical order. Workers who did not reply first time are called again; their votes are recorded, or a tick is placed in the “absent” box. If less than the full quota of the Worker members is attained, the normal practice is to call deputy members with the right to vote in alphabetical order until the full voting strength of the group has been attained, or the list is exhausted.</p> |