

GB.340/INS/21

Composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meetings

IMEC Statement

1. IMEC thanks the Office for preparing the documents and engaging in consultations with us regarding this agenda item. This agenda item is now more significant than ever, since, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is impossible to hold meetings as previously planned. We must reconsider the arrangement of meetings while keeping in mind the purpose of each meeting.

2. In general, IMEC supports the Office's proposal to hold meetings related to the governing body and supervisory mechanisms fully or partially by virtual means if it is obliged to do so due to the prevailing circumstances. We believe this is important and necessary from the perspective of the continuity of the ILO's work. In the context of COVID-19, the role of the ILO has become all the more important, and the ILO must ensure that its work continues to contribute to the global recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

3. Virtual meetings are rapidly becoming part of the "new normal" in the ILO and worldwide. As we adopt to this new custom, we should ensure participation in meetings for all constituents on an equal footing and also keep improving on working methods specific to virtual meetings to make them more efficient and effective.

4. This session of the Governing Body will be the first experience for the ILO to have substantive discussions in a virtual meeting. Based on the experience of the GB340, measures to improve the efficiency of virtual meetings should be taken towards improving the experience for GB341 and other meetings going forward.

5. We also understand that while some meetings need to be face-to-face, under the current constraints, it is difficult to organize them for the time being. When we consider resuming face-to-face meetings, hopefully in the near future, it must be considered thoroughly by all groups, since the national circumstances may be different for each country in terms of travel, health, and safety conditions. From this perspective, and considering the fact that there are many meetings for which dates and format are to be determined as described in the second part of the Appendix, IMEC supports the office's proposal to convene tripartite consultations regarding this item, as described in para 6 and 8(b).

6. Specific comments regarding each meeting are as follows.

(a) The 109th Session of the International Labour Conference: We cannot afford to defer the 109th ILC again, considering the continuity of the ILO's work and the fact that we have to adopt the next P&B on that occasion. We sincerely hope that it can be held as a face-to-face meeting, but it is unclear whether the situation would permit it. Therefore, IMEC is strongly of the view that the discussion about the arrangement of the ILC should start early and we should not exclude the possibility of a virtual meeting, especially considering the time bound nature of some of the issues. When we consider

holding a virtual format ILC, more details than usual must be discussed, such as how to set a programme and order of business that is efficient and acceptable for different time zones, how to hold elections, and how to ensure strict time management. Such a discussion should start, well in advance, based on the experience of the GB340.

(b) The Sixth Meeting of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group: It is of critical importance to the world of work that the ILO's standards are up-to-date, robust and relevant. Postponing the SRM TWG meeting to September 2021 means that the GB will unfortunately miss one year of SRM TWG recommendations and follow-up by the Office and the ILO constituents. IMEC would like to urge the Office to make sure this is not a lost year for the SRM process by proceeding with its work, and urges all SRM TWG constituents to be innovative and flexible in their approaches going forward to ensure the group can continue its very important work.

7. With those comments, IMEC can support the point for decision.