



AD HOC COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON
THE ORGANIZATION'S STRATEGIC PLAN
11th session
Agenda item 2(a)

CWGSP 11/2(a)/1
18 March 2010
ENGLISH ONLY

REVIEW OF WORKING ARRANGEMENTS AND ASSOCIATED BUDGETARY FACTORS

(a) Potential economies and efficiency gains

Submitted by Denmark, Norway and Sweden

SUMMARY

Executive summary: This document sets out a number of specific proposals regarding the working arrangements of the Organization in order to improve efficiency and to reduce costs

Strategic direction: 4

High-level action: 4.0.1, 4.0.7

Planned output: 4.0.1.2, 4.0.7.5

Action to be taken: Paragraph 20

Related documents: C 102/8/1 and CWGSP 10/6(b)/1

Introduction

1 The Council, at its 25th extraordinary session, recognized that there was a need to continue the discussions on working arrangements and associated budgetary factors in the Working Group to be reconvened in the first half of 2010.

2 At its last session, the Working Group discussed the issue based on the submission from Bahamas to C 102 (C 102/8/1) and the submission from Denmark to CWGSP 10 (CWGSP 10/6(b)/1).

3 The working group recognized during its 10th session that the proposals had merit, but no decisions were taken.

4 The co-sponsors are of the opinion that there are at least two reasons to look closely at working arrangements during meetings and associated budgetary factors:

- .1 the first reason is that meeting activities and associated staff costs comprise a very substantial part of the IMO budget; and
- .2 when IMO delegates – and IMO secretariat staff – are attending meetings they are not able to perform their normal tasks, thereby adding an extra

burden on Administrations and Secretariat alike, apart from the costs associated with travel to London.

Working arrangements

5 A way to improve efficiency and to reduce costs is to – critically and systematically – review present working arrangements of the various IMO organs.

6 The co-sponsors are aware that the specific proposals can be controversial. However, we are of the opinion that in order to have a substantial discussion on working arrangements, we need to have a firm starting point, which this document could provide. The intent of this document is not to arbitrarily cut meeting days, but to start a debate by pointing to specific areas where we all could benefit from changed procedures and practices. In the discussions in the Working Group, we hope that further suggestions will emerge.

7 In CWGSP 10/6(b)/1, Denmark proposed to reduce the number of Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) meeting days. Currently, the MSC meets three times during a biennium for 8 days each time. The co-sponsors would suggest that, at a minimum, in the years with two sessions, the number of days could be reduced, for one of the two meetings, to only one week.

8 Further, it was suggested that the Legal Committee (LEG) has coped with only one yearly meeting for some years. This meeting cycle should be made permanent, or at least the LEG cycle should be changed to three meetings during a biennium, as for the MSC and MEPC.

9 The above suggested changes are expected to be able to be implemented without any impact on the workload of the Committees, especially taking into account the experience and workload of the Committees in the past years.

10 Furthermore, the co-sponsors note that Council Members have a special obligation to act as a good example for other IMO Members. It is therefore suggested that the Working Group recommends to Council that the Council meeting in the second half of 2010 is reduced to three days on a trial basis.

11 The co-sponsors are of the firm opinion that Council Members are all dedicated IMO Member States participating in the work of the Committees. Therefore, the need to present documents regarding the work of the Committees to Council is limited. The Committees' Chairmen should therefore not be expected to present their reports unless extraordinary circumstances or specific input is sought from the Council. In similar vein, only issues of extraordinary circumstance should be presented by the Secretariat before Council debates the relevant issues.

12 If the time used to present the documents is reduced, if Member States are cognizant of the need to limit interventions due to the need to reduce meeting days, and as only summary decisions from the Council meetings are produced, it is believed that two days could be saved, thereby reducing the length of the meeting to three days.

13 In similar vein, consideration should also be given to shortening the duration of the Assembly, given the actual time the 26th Assembly was in session – and this has also been the case for previous Assembly sessions. One way could be to have the extraordinary Council session on Monday and Tuesday of the first week, with Assembly commencing on Wednesday. As the first day of Assembly is usually used for general statements, it is

suggested that the Secretariat would be able to produce relevant documents for the Assembly to consider anyway.

14 The co-sponsors are of the opinion that the tasks of the Sub-Committees should also be considered with the aim of making these meetings more efficient and thereby reducing the number of meeting days. It would not be appropriate for Council to decide which tasks could be handled in a different and less time-consuming way – however, Council could request, through the Committees, that the Sub-Committees themselves undertake such an evaluation of their respective tasks. Council could set out guidance in connection with this process, i.e. that the Sub-Committees should primarily identify areas of work that are essentially of an information nature and that, therefore, do not require actual decisions of the Sub-Committee.

15 One way to reduce meetings by up to 45 minutes is by looking at the procedure for the election of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. The current practice could be changed as follows. On the first day of the meeting a J-paper is circulated stipulating whether the current Chairman and Vice-Chairman are willing to serve for another year. On the day of the election, the Secretariat could ask the plenary if other candidates are available; should that not be the case the Chairman and Vice-Chairman could be re-elected by acclamation. Should, however, the Chairman and/or Vice-Chairman not be available for re-election, or other candidates are indeed available, then the current procedure should be used for elections.

16 Any changes made to the length of meetings should be evaluated from a budgetary perspective, with the Secretariat producing estimates on cost savings for the Council to consider.

17 In the view of the co-sponsors, it is important to keep an open mind and look at the big picture. Even if some changes might only entail minor savings in time, in the end it could be that many small changes will lead to a big reduction. In this respect, the above suggestions should be taken as suggestions to ways of improving efficiency and should be considered as a non-exhaustive list.

Translation and production of working papers and final reports

18 Further, as previously suggested, consideration should be given to looking at the economic impact of reducing the number of working papers to be translated during meetings and to consider other ways to produce the records of the meetings. Despite the sensitive nature of this matter, it is suggested that the only way to make a meaningful decision on these matters is to have the financial implications brought forward. It could also be beneficial to look at how sister agencies in the UN conduct their work.

19 It would be beneficial to have information detailing how much the production (including staff costs) of the reports from Sub-Committees and Committees costs – and how that would compare, if, for example, only a "summary of decisions" were to be produced. Further, such information should also detail the staff implications of such a change.

Action requested of the Working Group

20 The Working Group is invited to recommend to the Council that:

- .1 in years when it holds two meetings, one of the MSC meetings should be reduced to five days;

- .2 LEG should only meet once a year or, alternatively, that LEG meets three times during a biennium;
 - .3 the Council, in November 2010, should meet only for three days;
 - .4 the Assembly is reduced to eight days;
 - .5 the Committees be requested to consider ways to reduce the length of Sub-Committees' meetings, including the proposed new procedure for the election of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen;
 - .6 the Secretariat be requested to provide information on the budgetary implications of changing the format of reports from meetings; and
 - .7 the Secretariat be requested to liaise with sister UN agencies in order to establish information on practices regarding translation of working papers in these agencies.
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