

New Delhi, the 20th May, 2010

Subject: Procedures regarding preparation/submission of papers for consideration of the Committee of Secretaries and implementation of the decisions.

Detailed instructions regarding preparation and submission of papers for consideration of the Committee of Secretaries (COS) were circulated by this Secretariat vide its O.M. number 89/1/1/95-Cab. dated the 9th May, 1995 (**Annex 1**). These instructions were reiterated vide this Secretariat's O.M. number 1/4/4/2004-CA.IV dated 21st September 2004 (**Annex 2**).

2. It has been observed that in many cases, Notes for the COS are still not being prepared in accordance with the instructions issued by this Secretariat, which results in avoidable delays in consideration of the issues by the COS. Sometimes, the issues for consideration as well as the options available and decisions sought from the COS are not clearly stated, which also leads to delays in holding the COS meetings. Further, after the COS meetings have been held, decisions of the COS are sometimes not followed up adequately by many Ministries/Departments, which defeats the purpose of holding the COS meetings.

3. In view of the above, it is necessary that existing instructions for preparation and submission of papers for the COS circulated by this Secretariat (**as per Annex 1 & 2**) are complied with by all Ministries/Departments, subject to the following modifications aimed at facilitating focused discussion and consideration of issues by the COS:

Submission of Issues for consideration of the COS:

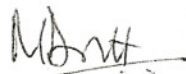
- i. Ministries/Departments should bring to the notice of this Secretariat important matters/issues where review by the COS is considered necessary and needs to be done in a time bound manner. This would help in lining up meetings on such issues on priority basis.
- ii. While forwarding Notes for consideration by the COS, Ministries/Departments should clearly indicate in the forwarding letter, the number and names of other Ministries/Departments concerned with the proposals contained in the Notes, and specify those Ministries/Departments which have already concurred with the proposals and those which have not concurred so far. This will facilitate processing of the proposals expeditiously by this Secretariat.
- iii. Important issues that require review meetings on a periodical basis should also be brought to the notice of this Secretariat.
- iv. In respect of issues on which review meetings are currently being held on a regular basis, Ministries/Departments may examine whether the periodicity of such meetings needs to be reduced or even phased out completely wherever such meetings have outlived their utility, or whether certain meetings relating to the same sectors/subjects could be clubbed, and convey to this Secretariat accordingly.
- v. On the lines of a Cabinet Note, each COS Note should have a clear-cut decision paragraph at the end, listing out the decisions sought from the COS. Each decision should be relatable to discussion in the main body of the COS Note.

Preliminary Meetings in Cabinet Secretariat in certain cases:

- vi. In order to make the COS meetings focussed on specific outstanding issues only, preliminary meetings may be held in this Secretariat, if required, to further crystallize the issues along with possible options for each issue. Based on these discussions, the concerned Administrative Department will immediately submit a revised COS Note, if so required.
- vii. In rare cases relating to extremely urgent matters, particularly those that have arisen suddenly and require resolution within a limited time frame, where formal inter-ministerial consultations have not been undertaken, the system of holding preliminary meetings could be used as the forum for inter-ministerial consultations to expedite consideration of the issues.

Implementation of the Decisions of the COS:

- viii. After COS meetings have been held, the concerned Ministries/Departments need to ensure that decisions of the COS are implemented at the earliest. Hence, the concerned Ministries/Departments should take suitable action to ensure implementation of each decision of the COS in a time-bound manner, and action taken reports should be sent to this Secretariat till the decisions are implemented. As soon as action is complete on individual decisions of the COS, the concerned Ministries/Departments should convey the same to the concerned Division in this Secretariat, clearly bringing out how action has been completed.
 - ix. In respect of decisions taken in the COS meetings for placing any specific matter(s) before the Cabinet/Cabinet Committees, the concerned administrative Ministry/Department should ensure that such matters are placed before the Cabinet/Cabinet Committees at the earliest and within the time schedule, if any, decided by the COS. As soon as this is done, the concerned Division in this Secretariat should be informed.
4. It is requested that these instructions may kindly be brought to the notice of all concerned for strict compliance.
5. These instructions are also being placed on the website of this Secretariat (www.cabsec.gov.in).



(Mala Dutt)
Director
Tel. 23792357

To,

All Secretaries of the Government of India (By Name)

New Delhi, the 9th May, 1995.

Subject:- Procedure regarding preparation and submission of papers for consideration of the Committee of Secretaries.

Instructions have been issued from time to time by the Cabinet Secretariat regarding the procedures to be followed in the preparation and submission of papers for consideration of the Committee of Secretaries (COS). The instructions have been revised wherever necessary in the light of past experience and are circulated herewith in consolidated form for the guidance of and compliance by all concerned.

General and attendance

1. Purpose of COS Meetings: The COS meets in the Cabinet Secretariat to discuss important issues referred to them by Departments/Ministries.
2. Who is to attend meetings of COS: Since the meetings of COS are fixed generally after ascertaining the convenience and availability of the participating Secretaries, they are expected to be attended appropriately by the invitee Secretaries in person and not with or through their representatives. In case an invitee Secretary is not in a position to attend the meeting on account of unforeseen circumstances and for compelling reasons, he may depute a senior representative (not below the rank of a Joint Secretary) of his Department, after prior approval of the Cabinet Secretary. In such cases, the officer attending the meeting should be fully briefed so that he can enter into necessary commitments on behalf of the Secretary.
3. It may be necessary, in rare cases, for the invitee-Secretary to be accompanied by another officer to assist him. In such cases also Cabinet Secretary should be kept informed in advance by the invitee-secretary.

Types of Cases that can be brought before COS

4. All cases of the nature specified below can be brought before the COS:-
 - a. Cases pursuant to a specific direction of Prime Minister/Cabinet/Cabinet Committee/GOM;
 - b. Cases specifically referred to COS for discussion;
 - c. Cases where there is/are irreconciled difference(s) of opinion between the sponsoring Department and the Ministries/Departments consulted at official level and where discussion in COS would be of help in resolving or narrowing down the differences;
 - d. Cases of very urgent nature requiring direction on policy or course of action within a prescribed time limit regarding which a consensus among the concerned Ministries/Department is considered necessary;

- e. Cases where decisions taken in a particular Ministry/ Department could have repercussions on matters dealt with in other Ministries/Departments concerned and a discussion in COS for evolving a coordinated approach is necessary;
- f. Cases in which a Secretary of a Department desires advice of COS on a subject assigned to his charge; and
- g. Cases of new policy initiatives or change in policy where discussions in COS concerned may be helpful/fruitful.

Types of Cases NOT TO BE submitted to COS

- 5. The following cases are NOT TO BE brought before the COS:-
 - a. Those cases which are within the scope of the various Committees of the Government, like PIB, FIPB, etc.;
 - b. Those cases which concern one or two Ministries only and where the issues could be resolved bilaterally;
 - c. Cases where the issues could be resolved through inter-Ministerial meeting(s); and where instructions already exist for consulting specific Departments/Agencies, e.g. Department of Banking, Reserve Bank of India, etc.;
 - d. Cases of routine nature relating to creation of posts etc.;
 - e. Cases involving large financial allocation in which Ministry of Finance has not concurred.

Preparation of Notes for COS

- 6. The essential procedural requirements which should be complied with for the preparation and submission of Notes for COS are as under:-
 - a. The Notes should bear the name of the Ministry/Department at the top. It must also carry File Number and date. The words "Note for the Committee of Secretaries" should appear below the name of the Ministry or Department;
 - b. The note must be Security Graded (Secret or Top Secret as the case may be), and the copies of the note be serially numbered. The Security Grading must appear on all pages of the note;
 - c. A brief subject heading indicative of the proposals contained in the paper be given in all cases;
 - d. All the pages of the note, including the Annexures, should carry consecutive serial numbers on the bottom extreme right hand corner of the pages, simultaneously indicating total number of pages, in the manner "Page x of y", where "x" is the running serial number of the page and "y" is the total number of pages in the note.

Contents of the COS Notes

- 7. The following may be observed while preparing notes for COS:
 - a. The notes should be self-contained. They should not be unnecessarily long and, in any case, should not exceed five-six pages. Other relevant material should be relegated to its annexures/appendices;
 - b. The last para of the note must indicate that the note has the approval of the Secretary of the sponsoring Ministry/Department;
 - c. The note must be signed by an officer of the rank of Deputy Secretary/Director or above;
 - d. The notes must not make references to informal/formal consultations with Cabinet Secretariat/Prime Minister's Office;
 - e. The last but one para of the note should contain the points on which decisions/recommmendations of the COS are sought, together with the views of the sponsoring Ministry/Department;
 - f. In all cases, the concerned Ministries/Departments must be consulted before hand and their views or comments be included in the COS note;

In urgent and time bound cases, the opinion/comments of other concerned Ministries be indicated in the note for COS if they are known through previously convened meetings or inter-departmental consultations.

The inter-departmental consultations should provide full opportunity to the concerned Departments to list their objections, and reservations, if any. The Ministries/Departments should, therefore, avoid sending their comments to this Secretariat on the Agenda notes circulated to them, and their objections, reservations may be articulated in the meeting itself. In cases, where it is necessary to send the comments on Agenda notes to Cabinet Secretariat, this must be as a supplementary note in the format prescribed for COS Notes under these instructions;

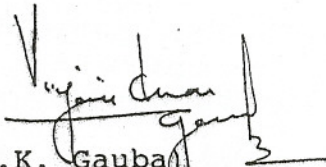
- g. Paragraphs of the note must be numbered;
- h. 20 copies of the note should be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat;
- i. Notes should be sent well in advance so that there is sufficient time to convene the meetings; and
- j. The notes must be typed on both sides of the paper in double space with sufficient space on the left edge of the obverse side of the paper and on the right edge on the reverse of the paper.

8. It is requested that these instructions may kindly be brought to the notice of all concerned to enable them to be conversant with them for future guidance.

9. All the papers pertaining to COS are classified documents and the Departmental Security Instructions must be followed scrupulously in regard to their handling and safe custody.

10. These instructions may be strictly adhered to by all concerned.

This is issued with the approval of the Cabinet Secretary.



(V.K. Gauba)

Under Secretary to the Cabinet
Tel. No. 3012835

To

All Secretaries of the Government of India
(By Name)

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Annex-2

No. 1/4/4/2004-CA.IV
Government of India भारत सरकार
Cabinet Secretariat मंत्रिमंडल सचिवालय
Rashtrapati Bhavan
राष्ट्रपति भवन

New Delhi, the 21st September, 2004

Subject:- Procedure regarding preparation and submission of papers for consideration of the Committee of Secretaries.

Detailed instructions regarding preparation and submission of papers for consideration of the Committee of Secretaries were circulated by this Secretariat vide its OM number 89/1/1/95-Cab. dated the 9th May, 1995.

2. It has been observed that on many occasions the notes are not prepared in conformity with the guidelines issued by this Secretariat. Very often the structure of the note is loose and a clear analysis of the issues involved and options available is missing.

3. It is, therefore, reiterated that the Notes for consideration of the COS should be prepared with utmost care and in accordance with the OM dated 9.5.1995, with special emphasis on the following:-

- i. The Notes should be brief, crisp, self contained and preferably should not exceed 5-6 pages.
- ii. A clear analysis of the issues involved and the options available.
- iii. The concluding para of the note should indicate the points on which decisions/recommendations of the COS are sought.
- iv. Views of the Ministries / Departments obtained on the note, along with views of the nodal Ministry / Department, should form a part of the main note.
- v. Phone Number(s) of the officer signing the COS Note must be given.

4. It is requested that these instructions may kindly be brought to the notice of all concerned.



(Pravir Krishn)
Director

Tel. No. 2379 2204

To

All Secretaries of the Government of India
(By Name)

NOO : Copy for information to -
AS/JS (SS)/JS(M)/JS (AM)/JS (AKD)/Dir (RR)/Dir (PK)/Dir (KLS)/Dir (RKC)
CA.I/II/III/IV/V Sections and TS Cell.

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