

**PROCEDURE REGARDING PREPARATION AND  
SUBMISSION OF PAPERS FOR  
CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMITTEE OF  
SECRETARIES.**

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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 indicated below 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, the invitee Secretaries are expected to attend them 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 and authorised to 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 irreconcilable 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 Ministries/ Departments concerned 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.

#### 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 can be resolved bilaterally;
  - c. Cases where the issues can 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 Annexes, should carry continuous page 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 annexes/appendices;
- b. The last paragraph 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 last but one paragraph of the note should contain the points on which decisions/recommendations of the COS are sought, together with the views of the sponsoring Ministry/Department;
- e. In all cases, the Ministries/Departments concerned 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 Departments concerned 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;

- f. Paragraphs of the note must be numbered;
- g. 20 copies of the note should be sent to the Cabinet Secretariat;

- h. Notes should be sent well in advance so that there is sufficient time to convene the meetings; and
  - i. The notes must be typed on both sides of the paper in double space with sufficient space (not less than 1.5") on the left edge of the obverse side of the paper and on the right edge on the reverse of the paper.
8. 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.
  9. These instructions may be strictly followed/adhered to by all concerned.