

**CHAPTER IX**  
**INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL—ARTICLE 263**

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**CHAPTER IX**  
**INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL — ARTICLE 263**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

9.1.01 Framing of policies and their implementation are two of the most important functions of government. If policy and its implementation are discordant, governance gets distorted.

9.1.02 In a dual polity, coordination of policies and their implementation become extremely important, specially in view of large areas of common interest and shared action. This can only be done through a sustained process of contact, consultation and interaction, for which a proper forum is necessary.

9.1.03 The executive powers of the union and States are normally co-extensive with their legislative powers. In regard to matters in the Concurrent List, a Union law prevails over a State law to the extent of repugnancy. However, the fact remains that matters in the "Concurrent List" are of 'common interest' to the Union and the States. Even the division of powers between the Union and States in relation to matters in List I and List II is not absolute. Several Entries in the Union List expressly overlap or control certain Entries in the State List. From a functional aspect, basic issues of national policy in all spheres of overlapping jurisdiction are of common Union-State concern.

9.1.04 Another unique feature of our system is that, for securing implementation of many of its laws and policies, the union depends on the machinery of the States, particularly in the concurrent sphere. The Union can entrust its executive functions, in the manner laid down in Article 258 to the State Governments or their agencies. The States may also entrust their executive functions, with the consent of the Union, to the Government or agencies of the Union (Article 258A). The States too, are dependent on the Union for fiscal resources, administrative assistance and in several other ways to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. Such inter-dependence is inevitable, more so in a large, diverse and developing society as ours.

9.1.05 The Constitution gives overriding powers to the Union to secure compliance with its laws and to remove any impediment or prejudice to the exercise of the executive power of the Union by any executive action of a State (Articles 256 and 257). These are, however, extreme steps which should not be contemplated in the ordinary course of inter-governmental affairs. The normal way of resolving such problems and coordinating policy and action in a democratic two-tier polity, is through collective thinking, discussion and persuasion between the Political executives of the Union and States. For that purpose, proper institutional arrangements are essential. There is no high-level coordinating forum other than the Inter-State Council envisaged in Article 263 of the Constitution where such problems can be sorted out.

9.1.06 The provisions of Article 263 are almost similar to those of Section 135 of the Government of India Act, 1935. The latter provided for the establishment of an Inter-Provincial Council with duties identical with those of the Inter-State Council under Article 263. At the time of framing of Section 135, it was felt that "if departments or institutions of coordination and research are to be maintained at the centre in such matters as agriculture, forestry, irrigation, education and public health and if such institutions are to be able to rely on appropriations of public funds sufficient to enable them to carry on their work, the joint interest of the Provincial Governments in them must be expressed in some regular and recognised machinery of inter-governmental consultation". It was also intended that an Inter-Provincial Council should be set up as soon as the provincial autonomy provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935, came into operation. The Council was a device for facilitating inter-Provincial cooperation.

9.1.07 There is another historical factor which underscores the urgency of setting up an all-embracing Inter-State Council. Before 1967, it was easier to resolve differences or problems that arose between the Union and States, at the party level, because the same party was in power in the Union and the States. Since 1967, parties or coalitions of parties other than the one running the government at the union, have been in power in several States. These State Governments of diverse hues have different views on regional and inter-State problems. In such a situation, the setting up of a standing Inter-State Council with the comprehensive charter under Article 263 has become an imperative necessity.

9.1.08 New areas of national concern are emerging with economic growth, technological development and socio-political changes. The rapidly expanding governmental functions have brought in their wake increasing inter-dependence. Routine problems, which arise in the day-to-day working, are sorted out through discussions and inter-action at various levels of bureaucracy. More important problems which cannot be resolved at the bureaucratic level, are settled through discussions between the concerned

Ministers of the Union and of the States. However, there are problems of still greater importance involving basic issues of national policy. For resolution of such problems and ensuring coordination of policy and action on matters of common interest, through a process of collective consideration, discussion and persuasion by the political heads of the Union and States, the Constitution gives to the President power to establish an inter-governmental forum called the Inter-State Council. 2. *ARTICLE 263*

9.2.01 Article 263 provides—

"If at any time it appears to the President that the public interests would be served by the establishment of a Council charged with the duty of—

- (a) inquiring into and advising upon disputes which may have arisen between States;
- (b) investigating and discussing subjects in which some or all of the States, or the Union and one or more of the States, have a common interest; or
- (c) making recommendations upon any such subject and, in particular, recommendations for the better co-ordination of policy and action with respect to that subject,

it shall be lawful for the President by order to establish such a Council, and to define the nature of duties to be performed by it and its organisation and procedure."

9.2.02 Under clause (a), the duty that can be assigned to the Council is only of 'inquiring' into and 'advising' upon inter-State disputes. The implication is that the Council cannot be authorised under this Article to adjudicate such disputes.

9.2.03 Under clause (b), all subjects in which the states *inter se* or the Union and one or more States have a common interest, can be investigated and discussed by the Council. Under clause (c), the function of the Council would be to make recommendations upon any subject of common interest referred to in the preceding clause, and in particular, it can recommend for better coordination of policy and action with respect to that subject. Clauses (b) and (c) read together, make it clear that the Council to be established by the President, is not merely to be a deliberative body but also one competent to investigate, enquire and make recommendations. It is noteworthy that the investigative, deliberative and recommendatory duties, which can be conferred on the Council under clauses (b) and (c), are restricted to "subjects in which some or all of the States or the Union and one or more of the states have common interest". The Council formed under this Article is basically an advisory and consensus-seeking body.

9.2.04 The imperatives of planned development led to early recognition of the need for suitable institutional arrangements. The National Development Council was constituted under an executive order, instead of Article 263, to meet this felt need.

### 3. NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

9.3.01 The general complaint is that the President has not adequately used the powers given to him by the Constitution to establish a permanent forum having comprehensive jurisdiction for mutual consultation and coordination of policy and action on all matters of common interest falling within the purview of clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263.

9.3.02 It is true that a few bodies have been set up under Article 263 with respect to limited issues such as Health<sup>1</sup>, Local-self Government<sup>2</sup> and Sales Tax<sup>3</sup>. Such sectoral bodies can hardly serve purpose of overall coordination of policy and action on all issues of national importance. They do not provide a structure for investigating and resolving multi-sectoral inter-governmental problems.

9.3.03 Sporadic meetings at the Ministerial and official levels, also, do not provide an effective forum. These arrangements, being *ad hoc* in nature, have no means of ensuring follow-up action or its continuity.

9.3.04 The Administrative Reforms Commission recommended the setting up of an Inter-State Council, to begin with for a period of two years. They recommended that the Inter-State and Union-State differences should be settled through mutual discussions and, to the extent possible, these discussions should be held in camera. While agreeing that the Inter-State Council should deal with problems relating to or arising out of the Constitution, legislative enactments, administration and finance, it did not want to Inter-State Council to deal with matters in the purview of the National Development Council.<sup>4</sup>

9.3.05 We recommend that an Inter-State Council charged with duties set out in clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263 should be formed. In order to reflect its true character and differentiate it from other sectoral bodies that have been set up under this Article, it may be called the Inter-Governmental Council (IGC).

9.3.06 The Administrative Reforms Commission submitted its report in 1969. Since then events have moved fast and tremendous socio-economic and political changes have taken place in the country. In the present context we are convinced that a permanent body is an imperative necessity and its constitution is overdue. However, we agree with the Administrative Reforms Commission that the proposed Inter-State Council should not concern itself with matters relating to socio-economic planning and development for which we have recommended a separate body (*vide* paragraph 9.4.07 below).

#### 4. SCOPE OF THE COUNCIL

9.4.01 Most of the State Governments, some political parties and eminent persons are of the view that the proposed Council should have only such investigative, deliberative and recommendatory functions as would fall within the ambit of clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263. Only two State Governments and some others have suggested that Article 263 be amended and reformulated so as to ensure—

- (i) that it is obligatory for the President to establish an inter-State Council on a permanent basis;
- (ii) that the Council has a wider role including that of an appellate forum against the decisions of the Union affecting one or more States; and
- (iii) that the council is consulted with respect to several other matter such as appointment of Governors and other constitutional functionaries, imposition of President's rule etc.

A few have suggested that Inter-State and Union-State disputes should also be considered by the council.

9.4.02 It is an accepted maxim that responsibility and authority should go together. In making appointments of constitutional functionaries such as Governors, Comptroller and Auditor General, Chief Election Commissioner, Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission, the President abides by the advice of the Union Council of Ministers, who, in turn, are accountable for the same to Parliament. If for making of these appointments, it is provided that the Inter-State Council, consisting of the political executives of the States should also be consulted, it will politicise these appointments. Eminent persons for fear of their names being debated in such a Council, where there may be political pulls and pressures, will be deterred from accepting these offices. If the Council, is involved in the process of making these appointments, it is sure to dilute the accountability of the Union Executive to Parliament.

9.4.03 In the Chapter on Emergency Provisions we have dealt with the suggestion that the Inter-State council should be consulted before proclaiming President's Rule under Article 356(1). For reasons given therein, we are unable to support this suggestion.<sup>5</sup>

9.4.04 We are of the view that the Council which we are recommending should be charged with duties in broad terms embracing the entire gamut of clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263. This is essential to avoid repeated references to the President for piecemeal orders under Article 263 authorising the Council to deal with specific issues as and when they crop up.

9.4.05 The Council will be a recommendatory body. It will not therefore in any way erode or encroach upon the responsibilities and powers which, under the Constitution, are the exclusive concern of the Union and the States, respectively.

9.4.06 Some States have asked for abolition of the National Development Council. One State has suggested that, in addition to the Inter-State Council, there should be a separate body called the National Development and Planning Council. We have considered in detail the various issues relating to economic and Social Planning in Chapter XI. After carefully considering the various suggestions and pros and cons of the issue we are of the view that the Inter-Governmental Council which we are proposing in this Chapter will deal with matters other than socio-economic planning and development.

9.4.07 We reiterate the recommendations made in Chapter XI that the separate identity of the National-Development Council should be maintained. However, we recommend that its status should be formalised and duties re-affirmed through a Presidential Order passed under Article 263 and it be renamed as National Economic and Development Council (NEDC). This issue has been considered in detail in the Chapter on "Economic and Social Planning".

#### 5. PROCEDURES

9.5.01 The Inter-Governmental Council should evolve guidelines to identify and select issues to be brought up before it. The Council should take care to ensure by a process of screening and selection that only such matters of national importance relating to subjects of common interest are brought before it as would fall within the ambit of clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263; otherwise, there is every possibility of its being swamped with a large number of references which might stultify its working. Bilateral or regional issues may be considered by the Zonal Councils.

9.5.02 Voting in any form should be avoided. All advisory decisions should be taken on the basis of consensus. No rigid procedure, e.g. approval by at least two-thirds of the members need be laid down for determining whether a consensus has been reached. The discussions in the Council should be conducted in a spirit of mutual accommodation, comity and compromise.

9.5.03 The meetings, proceedings and deliberations of the Council should be held in camera, away from the publicity normally associated with the meetings at this level. We reiterate the caution sounded by the Administrative Reforms Commission that a "word uttered in public is not capable of recall, but the one uttered in discussion it is possible to review and reconsider. The matter then does not become one of prestige, but remains one which it is possible to settle by mutual discussion."<sup>6</sup>

9.5.04 It is expected that this Council, working within such an environment, will be able to build up mutual trust and confidence and will soon emerge as the major instrument for discussing at the national level policies and actions affecting inter-governmental relations.

9.5.05 The Council should have independent and adequate secretariat support which will enable various issues to be considered in depth. It will also devise procedures to regulate the conduct of its business. However, it will be advantageous if the procedures to be followed are modelled on this lines of cabinet meetings, ensuring that all points of view, after analysis by the secretariat, are placed before the Council for consideration. It would also ensure necessary confidentiality.

## 6. ORGANISATION

9.6.01 Almost all the suggestions are in favour of a Council with Prime Minister as the Chairman and Chief Ministers as Members. The Administrative Reforms Commission also made similar recommendations. We share this view.

9.6.02 The Council should consist of a General Body assisted by a smaller Standing committee. The General Body itself need not go into all the matters referred to it. Normally, all references should, in the first instance, go before the Standing Committee. If a matter is considered sufficiently important for consideration by the General Body, the Standing Committee may refer it to them.

9.6.03 The General Body should consist of:—

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| (a) Prime Minister   | — Chairman |
| (b) All Chief Ministers  | — Members  |
| (c) All Union Cabinet Ministers<br>(or Union Ministers dealing with<br>subjects of common interest to<br>the Union and States) | — Members  |

This Council shall meet at least twice a year. All its meetings will be held in camera.

9.6.04 The composition of the Standing Committee should be as under:—

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| (a) Prime Minister   | — Chairman |
| (b) Six Chief Ministers, one from<br>each Zone selected annually     | — Members  |
| (c) Six Union Cabinet Ministers to<br>be nominated by Prime Minister | — Members  |

9.6.05 Prime Minister may nominate a Cabinet Minister to preside over the meetings of the Standing Committee when he is unable to attend himself. But there is merit in making it a rare contingency. The Committee should meet *at least* four times a year. All its meetings should be held in camera. If any members of the General Body wants to participate in any of meetings of the Standing Committee, he may do so with the permission of the Chairman.

9.6.06 The Inter-Governmental Council and its Standing Committee should be able to set up *ad hoc* Sub-Committees to investigate special matters. For instance, a Sub-Committee of legal experts could be set up by the Inter-Governmental Council to suggest a model Bill for regulating elections to local self-governing bodies, panchayats, etc. While considering such a suggestion in the Inter-Governmental Council, the States could agree to get legislations based on the model "Bill" enacted by their State Legislatures or agree to get the requisite resolutions passed by their legislatures to enable Parliament to enact it under Article 252(1) of the Constitution.

## 7. COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

9.7.01 The pre-requisites for the smooth and proper functioning of the council are:—

- (a) an independent permanent secretariat;
- (b) meetings in camera;
- (c) adequate documentation; and
- (d) preparation of papers for consideration of the General Body and the Committee.

9.7.02 Without an independent permanent secretariat, the Council will not be able to establish its credibility. Considering the nature of meetings and the level of participants, the Council's Secretariat should be suitably staffed and modelled on the Union Cabinet Secretariat. It will have a difficult role to play. Besides deciding on the issues for consideration of the Committee and for the General Body, the Secretariat will be required to maintain constant liaison with the Union and States.

9.7.03 One of the important tasks of the Council Secretariat will be to prepare detailed documentation on various issues for discussion before the Council or its Standing Committee. Some of the cases may go into complex Inter-Governmental matters, where opinions from different places may have to be sought. The Secretariat should, therefore, have adequate time for preparing the relevant documents. These documents should be prepared in the same manner as papers for consideration of the Union Cabinet. Practices and procedures laid down for Cabinet meetings may be followed by the General body of the Inter-Governmental Council. The Standing Committee of the Inter-Governmental Council may follow the procedures of the Cabinet Sub-Committee meetings.

## 8. ZONAL COUNCILS

9.8.01 Majority of the replies to the Commission's questionnaire have pointed out that the Zonal Councils have not been able to achieve the objectives for which they were set up. We also agree that most of the Zonal Councils have not been able to fulfil their aims and objectives. It may be useful to consider briefly the reasons for this failure.

9.8.02 Five Zonal Councils were set up under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.<sup>7</sup> In the northeast, the North Eastern Council (NEC) was set up under the North Eastern Council Act, 1971.<sup>8</sup> Immediately after the setting up of Zonal Councils, there were many residuary problems arising out of the reorganisation of States, which required to be sorted out. The initial enthusiasm after the formation of the Zonal Councils subsided gradually. Moreover, as one party was in power both in the Union and the States for nearly a decade after the setting up of the Zonal Councils, it was considered more convenient for the Union and the States to sort out their problems through party channels instead of the Zonal Councils.

9.8.03 One of the main reasons for failure of Zonal Councils is the absence of their own competent, independent secretariat (except that of the NEC). From 1957 to 1963 the five Zonal Councils were functioning with the help of five separate secretariats as intended by the Act (Section 19 of the States Reorganisation Act). From 1963, the Secretariat staff, other than the Secretary, of all five Zonal Councils has been centralised at Delhi. During the seven year period from 1957—63, 33 meetings of different Zonal Councils were held (average being 4.7 meetings per year). During the period from 1963 to 1985 about 51 meetings were held (average 2.2 per year). With centralisation of the Secretariat staff of the Zonal Councils, the Secretariat of the Zonal Councils has virtually become a part<sup>9</sup> of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

9.8.04 The agenda papers for the Zonal Councils are prepared on the basis of suggestions received from different Union Ministries and from the concerned State Governments, only after they are scrutinised and approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs. Under the States reorganisation Act, one of the Chief

Secretaries in each Zone is the *ex-officio* Secretary of the Zonal Council by rotation. The Secretariat having virtually become part of the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Secretaries of the Zonal Councils have ceased to play an effective role.

9.8.05 Over the years, a tendency has developed to exclude controversial and sensitive subjects from the agenda of the Zonal Councils. Too many items in the agenda and meetings at infrequent intervals have also diluted the effectiveness of the meetings. On an average, 20 items had been discussed in different meetings, held usually for a day. As a result, points discussed in Zonal Councils mainly relate to vague assertions on which States rarely disagree. The Union Home Minister who is the Chairman of all the Zonal Councils finds it extremely difficult to devote time to all of them.

9.8.06 Section 21 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, spells out the functions of the Zonal Councils. Broadly, it covers discussions and recommendations with regard to matters of common interest in the field of economic and social planning matters concerning water disputes, linguistic minorities or Inter-State transport and any matters connected with or arising out of reorganisation of States under the States Reorganisation Act.

9.8.07 The functions of Zonal Councils cover mostly the functions envisaged in Article 263(c) of the Constitution. It is our considered view that the Zonal Councils should be reactivated so as to work in the respective Zones in the same manner as the IGC. The ambit of clauses (a), (b) and (c) of Article 263 is wide enough to cover the functions laid down in Sub-Sections (1) and (2) of Section 21 of the States Reorganisation Act. In fact the scope of Article 263 is wider as it includes provisions for investigation and enquiry in matters of common interest. The Zonal Councils should, therefore, be constituted afresh under Article 263 by the same order by which the IGC is established. The North Eastern Council (NEC) has been set up under a separate statute. It has its own secretariat. It can function as the Zonal Council for the North Eastern States in addition to its existing functions. Necessary amendments may be carried out in the States Reorganisation Act and the North Eastern Council Act for this purpose.

9.8.08 The Zonal Councils, after they are reconstituted under Article 263, will be constitutional bodies functioning in their own right. In order that the Councils may function without any inhibition or restrictions, they should not be declared, or even regarded nationally, as committees of the Inter-Governmental Council or as in any way subordinate to it.

9.8.09 The meetings of Zonal Councils, like those of the IGC, should be held in camera and at regular intervals, in any case not less than twice a year. The same procedure as in the case of IGC meetings may, as far as possible, be adopted for Zonal Council Meetings.

9.8.10 It has been suggested in the succeeding paragraph that a Chief Minister for the Zone may become the Chairman of the Zonal Council by yearly rotation. It is, therefore, appropriate that the Secretariat of each of the Zonal Councils is located in the State Capital of one of the States constituting the Zone. It will however be inconvenient to shift the Secretariate from State to State every year. It is, therefore, suggested that the Secretariat may be located in such State Capital as may be decided upon by the Inter-Governmental Council, in consultation with the State Governments of the Zone. For purposes of coordination and consultation in respect of matters which should come up before the Inter-Governmental Council, the Secretary of the Zonal Council should be in close touch with the Secretary of the Inter-Governmental Council. With these measures, it should be possible to rejuvenate the Zonal Councils as supplements to the IGC, for sorting out bilateral and regional issues.

9.8.11 The Zonal Councils should provide the first level of discussion of most, if not all, of the regional and Inter-State issues. Every endeavour should be made to sort out as many as possible of these issues in the Zonal Councils, thereby reducing the burden of the Inter-Governmental Council. The Inter-Governmental Council may also refer some of the issues directly raised before it to the Zonal Councils. Instead of the Union Home Minister, a Chief Minister from the Zone may become the Chairman of the concerned Zonal Council by rotation on a yearly basis, except in the case of the NEC. Meetings of the Zonal Councils (at least twice a year) may be held in the State of which the Chief Minister is the Chairman.

## 9. CONCLUSION

9.9.01 The spirit of cooperative federalism requires proper understanding and mutual confidence between the Chief Executives of the Union and State Governments. The IGC and Zonal Councils can provide suitable opportunities for discussing many of the problems of common interest. This type of working relationship should be considered desirable and essential for the successful working of a dual polity with such large areas of inter-dependence.

9.9.02 A group of senior statesmen, meeting in camera free from the pressures of public glare, will presumably be able to see problems from a national perspective, which does not necessarily mean foregoing the interests of one's own State and region. Such a body, while being a formal institution, will also retain the flexibility of a body working on mutual faith and trust, born out of the requirement of being kept informed and consulted on matters of national importance.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.10.01 (a) A permanent Inter-State Council called the Inter-Governmental Council (IGC) should be set up under Article 263.

(b) The IGC should be charged with the duties set out in clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263, other than socio-economic planning and development.

(Paragraphs 9.3.05, 9.3.06 & 9.4.06)

9.10.02 The separate identity of the National Development Council should be maintained. However, its status should be formalised and duties reaffirmed through a Presidential order passed under Article 263 and it should be renamed as the National Economic and Development Council.

(Paragraph 9.4.07)

9.10.03 The Inter-Governmental Council will evolve guidelines for identification and selection of issues to be brought before it and will take care to ensure that only such matters of national importance relating to subjects of common interest are brought up before it as would fall within the ambit of clauses (b) and (c) of Article 263.

(Paragraph 9.5.01)

9.10.04 (a) The Council will consist of a General Body assisted by a smaller Standing Committee.

(Paragraph 9.6.02)

(b) The General Body will consist of:

1. Prime Minister — Chairman
2. All Chief Ministers — Members
3. All Union Cabinet Ministers  
(or Union Ministers dealing  
with subjects of common interest  
to the Unions and States). — Members

(Paragraph 9.6.03)

(c) The Standing Committee will consist of:—

1. Prime Minister — Chairman
2. Six Chief Ministers, one from  
each zone selected annually. — Members
3. Six Union Cabinet Ministers  
to be nominated by the Prime  
Minister. — Members

(Paragraph 9.6.04)

(d) The General Body of the IGC will meet at least twice a year.

(Paragraph 9.6.03)

(e) The Standing Committee should meet at least four times a year.

(Paragraph 9.6.05)

9.10.05 Every meeting of the General Body will be held in camera and its proceedings will be conducted as in Union Cabinet meetings. Practices and procedures laid down for Cabinet meetings may be followed by the General Body.

(Paragraphs 9.5.03, 9.5.05, 9.6.03 & 9.7.03)

9.10.06 (a) Matters proposed to be referred to the General Body will first be discussed in the Standing Committee. Normally, such matters only as are referred by the Standing Committee will be taken up for discussion in the General Body. All other matters will normally be considered and disposed of at the level of Standing Committee.

(b) Meetings of the Standing Committee will be held in camera.

(c) Any member of the General Body may attend a Standing Committee meeting with permission of the Chairman of the Committee.

(d) The Prime Minister may nominate any other Union Cabinet Minister to preside over the Standing Committee meetings when he (i.e. the Prime Minister) is not present.

(Paragraphs 9.6.02 & 9.6.05)

9.10.07 The Inter-Governmental Council and its Standing Committee should be able to set up *ad hoc* Sub-Committees to investigate special matters.

(Paragraph 9.6.06)

9.10.08 Procedure adopted for the Standing Committee meetings will, as nearly as may be, be the same as for Cabinet Sub-Committee meetings.

(Paragraph 9.7.03)

9.10.09 There should be a permanent Secretariat to the Council.

(Paragraph 9.7.02)

9.10.10 (a) The five Zonal Councils which were constituted under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956 should be constituted afresh under Article 263.

(b) The North Eastern Council set up under the North Eastern Council Act should function as the Zonal Council for the North-Eastern States, in addition to its existing functions.

(Paragraph 9.8.07)

9.10.11 In the case of the five Zonal Councils, a Chief Minister may be elected Chairman annually by rotation. In the case of the North Eastern Council, the existing arrangements should continue.

(Paragraph 9.8.11)

9.10.12(a) the Secretariat of each Zonal Council may be located in such State Capital of one of the States constituting the Zone as may be decided upon by the IGC in consultation with those State Governments.

(b) The Secretary of the Zonal Council should be in close touch with the Secretary of the IGC for purposes of coordination and consultation in respect of matters which should come up before the IGC.

(Paragraph 9.8.10)

9.10.13 The Zonal Councils should provide the first level of discussion of most, if not all, of the regional and Inter-State issues. Every endeavour should be made to sort out as many as possible of these issues in the Zonal Councils, thereby reducing the burden of the Inter-Governmental Council. The Inter-Governmental Council may also refer some of the issues directly raised before it to the Zonal Councils.

(Paragraph 9.8.11)

9.10.14(a) The same procedure as in the case of IGC meetings may, as far as possible, be adopted for Zonal Council meetings.

(b) The Zonal Council, may meet at least twice a year, in the State of which the Chief Minister is the Chairman.

(Paragraphs 9.8.09 & 9.8.11)