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2B

International Labour Conference – 112th Session, Geneva, 2024

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Plenary sitting: Report of the General Affairs Committee

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Thursday, 6 June 2024, 10.10 a.m.

President: Mr Buzu

Report of the General Affairs Committee: Presentation and noting of the report and adoption of the Committee's recommendation

The President

Without further ado, we shall begin with the presentation of the report of the General Affairs Committee. This report has been published on the Conference website, in [Record of Proceedings No. 2A](#).

It is my pleasure to recall the names of the Officers and of the Reporter of the Committee, all of whom are with us in the room here today. They are: Mr Ali Abadi (Islamic Republic of Iran), Chairperson; Ms Mugo (Kenya), Employer Vice-Chairperson; Ms Passchier (Netherlands), Worker Vice-Chairperson; and Ms Elgallal (Libya), Reporter.

I will begin by giving the floor to Ms Elgallal, so that she may present to us the Committee's report. The Officers will then take the floor.

Ms Elgallal

Reporter of the General Affairs Committee

I have the honour to present to the Conference the outcome of the deliberations of the General Affairs Committee. The report of the Committee has been published in Record of Proceedings No. 2A. It presents a summary of the proceedings and the outcome of the discussions on the only matter that the Conference referred to the Committee this year, that is, the proposed abrogation of four international labour Conventions. Two of these Conventions, namely the Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45), and the Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937 (No. 62), concern occupational safety and health; the third, the Convention concerning Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work, 1938 (No. 63), deals with statistics; and the fourth, the Labour Inspectorates (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No. 85), refers to labour inspection in non-metropolitan territories. They have in common the fact that they were all examined by the Governing Body's Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group in 2018, which determined that they are no longer relevant and that they no longer make a useful contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the Organization.

The discussion in the General Affairs Committee was expeditious and consensual. The Committee decided to recommend to the Conference that it submit the proposals for the abrogation of the four Conventions to a final record vote, to be held later today. The proposals are set out in the appendix to the report.

This is the fifth time that the Conference will be called upon to decide on the abrogation of obsolete international labour Conventions. If the four Conventions are abrogated, the Conference will have removed from the body of standards a total of 23 Conventions since 2017. As in previous exercises, the focus of the reflection by the constituents has been the need to find a careful balance, on the one hand, striking out outdated standards in the interest of preserving the relevance of the ILO system of norms and, on the other, avoiding the creation of gaps in coverage or protection. It somehow involves looking back, and burning away what is no longer relevant, but also looking ahead, and making sure that modern approaches and

solutions are accepted. It is all about associating progress not only with the denunciation of old instruments, but also with the ratification and application of modern ones.

With these words, I have the honour to submit the report of the General Affairs Committee to the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Ms Mugo

Employer Vice-Chairperson of the General Affairs Committee

It is our pleasure to take part in the presentation of the report of this General Affairs Committee. We examined the instruments that were proposed for abrogation and we are in agreement. We believe, as Employers, that this is a decision of key relevance, and it comes at the end of a very long process. The work done by the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group played a key role in advising and informing the decision of the Governing Body on the way forward towards securing the continued relevance and up-to-date nature of the framework of standards that we have in this house.

The Employers' group believes that we, as a body, need to continue to make efforts to make a contribution towards having legal certainty in the instruments that guide our work and to keep them current for the world of work that we have today. With these brief remarks, the Employers confirm that we support the Committee's report.

Ms Passchier

Worker Vice-Chairperson of the General Affairs Committee

We have before us the report of the General Affairs Committee, focusing especially on the abrogation of four Conventions. The process was initiated on the recommendation of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group, with the approval of the Governing Body, and included steps by the Office to consult national governments and constituents. The Workers' group has supported the decisions made throughout this process. In the General Affairs Committee, however, I raised the concerns of my group regarding the situation, namely that we are currently abrogating four Conventions, of which some still have a very high ratification rate, while the more modern instruments have not been ratified. A case in point is Convention No. 45, on the protection of women in mining, where 68 ratifications are still valid; only one of the 68 countries has in the meantime ratified the more modern instrument, which is the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), regarding the protection of men and women workers in mines. Although the approach of Convention No. 45 certainly is outdated – and we agreed with that – its abrogation, without having any further newer instruments applicable, leaves women in mines without any protection. While we do not question the current proposals for abrogation and can support the report of the General Affairs Committee, we want to come back to this worrying situation in the future.

Mr Ali Abadi

Chairperson of the General Affairs Committee

I have the honour to stand before you as the Chairperson of the General Affairs Committee. I was privileged to have been elected to this position. The General Affairs Committee is one of the standing committees of the Conference. It exemplifies the critical coordination and synergy between the Conference and the Governing Body.

The Conference has submitted to the Committee one item this year, which was the consideration of the proposed abrogation of four international labour Conventions, on the

basis of the questionnaire and report prepared by the Office, contained in document ILC.112/VII(2)(Rev.1).

In addition to what you have just heard from the Reporter of the Committee, I wish to recall that, due to the institutional significance of the act of removing Conventions in force from the body of standards, a meticulous and multistep process has been devised and must be carried out before the Conference can take a record vote with a qualified majority on the matter. This process is aimed at ensuring that the obsolescence of the instruments concerned is generally recognized and that the broader implications for the coherence of the ILO's normative system have been thoroughly considered. This process is deliberately lengthy and includes an initial examination by the dedicated Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group, a debate on that Group's recommendations by the Governing Body, consultations with the tripartite constituents at the national level, further discussion by the General Affairs Committee of the Conference and a formal decision by the Conference in plenary on whether to put the proposed abrogation to a record vote, which is precisely the purpose of the sitting this morning.

The Conference is the supreme deliberative body of the ILO and has the power to adopt and remove standards from the so-called "international labour code". It does so with vision and pragmatism. It is for the Member States, of course, to translate this vision into reality, not only by distancing themselves from the outdated standards, but also, and perhaps more importantly, by promptly embracing and effectively implementing the new standards that this Conference diligently crafts.

To conclude, I wish to thank the members of the Committee, and of course Ms Jacqueline Mugo, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, and Ms Catelene Passchier, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, for their engagement and expertise.

The President

I thank the Reporter and the Officers of the Committee for their statements. As there are no requests for the floor or objections, may I take it that the Conference agrees to take note of the report of the General Affairs Committee?

(The Conference takes note of the report.)

Abrogation of four international labour Conventions

The President

The General Affairs Committee has recommended to the Conference that it take the decision, pursuant to article 52(2) of the Standing Orders of the Conference, to submit the formal proposals for the abrogation of four international labour Conventions, namely the Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45), the Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937 (No. 62), the Convention concerning Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work, 1938 (No. 63), and the Labour Inspectorates (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No. 85), as set out in the appendix to the report of the General Affairs Committee, to a final record vote. The vote will be held by electronic means later today. You are strongly encouraged to exercise your right to vote on these issues of institutional importance.

If there is no objection, may I take it that this decision is adopted by the Conference?

(It is so decided.)

Closing of the sitting

The President

That brings us to the end of our proceedings related to the work of the General Affairs Committee. I now declare closed this plenary sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 10.25 a.m.)

(The Conference continues its work in plenary.)

Friday, 7 June 2024, 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr Dubey

Employer Vice-President of the Conference

Abrogation of four international labour Conventions: Announcement of the results of the record vote

The President

It is my honour to declare open the eighth plenary sitting of the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference.

This morning we shall begin by announcing the results of the final record vote on the proposed abrogation of four international labour Conventions, which was held electronically yesterday afternoon. The quorum was set at 286 votes.

I am pleased to announce that, as a result of the final record vote, all four instruments have been abrogated, the quorum and the required two-thirds majority having been reached. These instruments are:

Abrogated Conventions

- Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 (No. 45)
- Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937 (No. 62)
- Convention concerning Statistics of Wages and Hours of Work, 1938 (No. 63)
- Labour Inspectorates (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No. 85).

(The detailed results of all the votes are available on the [Conference website](#).)

(The Conference continues its work in plenary.)