

► Record of Proceedings

7C

International Labour Conference – 112th Session, Geneva, 2024

Date: 8 July 2024

Plenary sitting: Outcome of the work of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

Contents

	Page
Outcome of the work of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Presentation and discussion.....	3
Resolution and conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work	16

Friday, 14 June 2024, 11.25 a.m.

President: Mr Buzu

Outcome of the work of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Presentation and discussion

The President

We will now proceed with the presentation and discussion of the outcomes of the work of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The text of the proposed resolution, which contains the Committee's conclusions, can be found in [Record of Proceedings No. 7A](#). The report on the Committee's proceedings is contained in [Record of Proceedings No. 7B](#).

I am pleased to welcome the Officers of the Committee and its Reporter, namely: Ms Fuentes Julio (Chile), Chairperson; Mr Mackall (United States of America), Employer Vice-Chairperson; and Mr Norddahl (Iceland), Worker Vice-Chairperson; as well as Ms Angonemane Mvondo (Cameroon), Reporter.

I now give the floor to Ms Angonemane Mvondo, so that she may present to us the outcome of the Committee's work. The Officers of the Committee will then take the floor.

Ms Angonemane Mvondo

Reporter of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
(Original French)

It is an honour for me to take the floor today to present to this august assembly the outcome of the work of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Please allow me at the outset to thank the Africa group and, above all, its coordinator, for having chosen my country, Cameroon, and myself for this role. May I express Cameroon's deep gratitude to them.

I would also like to thank Ms Fuentes Julio for the remarkable way in which she steered the work of the Committee. Thanks to her human qualities, particularly her sense of humour, she made sure that nobody in the Committee felt excluded from its work. Her passion to achieve results enabled us to achieve conclusions which we can all support.

I would also like to applaud the contribution of the two Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Mackall, Employer member from the United States of America, and Mr Norddahl, Worker member from Iceland. Their wisdom, experience and skills, and the efforts made by both them and their teams to find common ground, made it possible to resolve situations that seemed to be leading to an impasse and played a key role in the successful completion of our Committee's work. I would also like to thank all the members of the Government group. They demonstrated impressive teamwork and commitment.

I cannot conclude my words of thanks without expressing the Committee's gratitude to the members of the Secretariat of the International Labour Organization. A tremendous team, in particular the précis-writers, editors, translators and interpreters, who I thank for their important work and who have helped us in the difficult task of summarizing the discussions of the Committee and faithfully reporting on the proceedings, facilitating many important exchanges that took place within our Committee.

The Committee held 12 sittings, during which, from Monday to Wednesday, working until late at night, it considered more than 160 amendments. While the tentative plan of work only allowed for very few extensions beyond 9.30 p.m., the plenary sittings and the drafting group meetings finished before 10 p.m. only once, on Tuesday, 4 June. Despite these demanding working hours, the members of the Committee never tired in their work. Quite the contrary. They stayed at their posts, showing great diligence, following the work of the Committee and making individual contributions to the work of their group.

Our discussions were sometimes technical, long and complex, and sometimes sensitive, in view of the different perspectives held. Fortunately, the spirit of dialogue, respect and consensus shown by each delegate prevailed at every stage of our work and this was clearly driven by a shared sense of the importance of our task, namely that of promoting the fundamental principles and rights at work, both for each of us individually and for our societies as a whole.

My intention this morning is not to present a detailed report on the work of the Committee. That is the purpose of the report. I will therefore limit myself to emphasizing the profound spirit of collaboration, sacrifice and above all respect and mutual understanding that inspired all our deliberations, both on points of detail and on sensitive issues.

The message of hope coming from our conclusions is not something that occurred by chance. It reflects the capability of the tripartite spirit to achieve something remarkable, as well as the importance that the tripartite constituents give to respect for the fundamental principles and for human rights at work.

Our conclusions thus mark both a break from and a sense of continuity with preceding recurrent discussions, in view of the challenges we now face. A break, because the conclusions are focused on identifying underlying causes and have produced guidelines for the tripartite constituents. A sense of continuity, because the conclusions build a bridge between two world summits: the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, and the other, which is to be held next year. The set of conclusions we have developed thus provide a solid basis for the activities to promote the fundamental principles and rights at work that will be undertaken by the tripartite constituents over the coming years with the support provided to them by the Office.

We have all been enriched by this experience. We will leave with a clearer vision of the path ahead. I sincerely hope that you will return home inspired by our work and that we will all be able to work together in the future in order to move forward on the path we have just charted for ourselves.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak on its behalf and I invite the Conference to adopt the outcome of its work.

Mr Mackall

Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

The Employers' group is pleased to present the proposed resolution and conclusions for adoption. We must first share, however, our gratitude to the Chairperson, Ms Fuentes Julio, for her inclusive and effective leadership and her continuing and timely sense of humour amidst the work; to my Worker counterpart, Mr Norddahl, my friend Magnus, for advocating strongly, but respectfully and constructively; to our Government colleagues, whose commitments were clear and who worked tirelessly to help resolve differences through consensus; and to the

Office, the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch, the technical team, and the interpreters, who ensured a smooth operation with little noise, which enabled us to focus on the work at hand. Finally, I would like to thank my Employer colleagues, whose work, commitment and support, even into the wee hours of the morning, provided the energy to see the discussions through to a successful close.

From the very opening of this session of the International Labour Conference, all parties acknowledged the importance of the outcome of this discussion. Presumably, the next recurrent discussion will not occur for another seven years. More critically, fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) are at the heart of the values and work of this house, and governments, employers and workers alike see them as enabling the conditions necessary for the full realization of the ILO's strategic objectives. In short, this outcome does matter. These principles are universally recognized human rights that are inseparable, indivisible, interrelated and mutually reinforcing. Applicable to workers and employers alike, they all stand on an equal footing, not in a hierarchy of value or causation.

Coming into the discussion, we all appeared to agree that, despite ongoing commitments to FPRW, tremendous work at the ILO and at the national level, and very significant progress since the last recurrent discussion in 2017, significant implementation gaps remained. Ratifying Conventions and pledging commitments to respect, promote and realize FPRW is one thing; implementing those commitments is something else. In our discussions, most constituents shared the view that paying greater attention to the root causes of implementation failures is crucial. There was broad recognition of the critical importance of developing the capacities of governments and social partners, of strengthening governance, of addressing the persistence of informality, and of supporting social dialogue. The Employers' group also argued that creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises is essential for ensuring inclusive growth and economic development, providing people with avenues into the formal economy and out of poverty, and promoting the full realization of FPRW. Finally, there was agreement that the ILO's actions should be focused on supporting constituents, especially governments.

We would like to draw particular attention to the call to address informality. Informality remains one of the major obstacles to progress in the respect, promotion and realization of FPRW. Informality impedes both workers and employers from fully benefiting from FPRW. Informal enterprises, particularly micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), are faced with low productivity and a lack of access to finance. Governments are directly affected by informality, as it translates into lower economic growth and development and is a critical barrier to a sustainable social protection system. The outcome document calls on States to "take necessary steps to reduce informality in line with the ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204)".

We welcome the reaffirmation of the key role of sustainable enterprises. The conclusions fully align with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which recognized sustainable enterprises as key generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work. An adequate enabling environment for sustainable enterprises encourages productivity growth, decent work and the promotion and respect of FPRW. This is especially true for MSMEs, which are the backbone of our economies. The conclusions strongly reaffirm the essential, mutually reinforcing link between sustainable enterprises and FPRW, and call for due attention and support to be given to MSMEs.

We also welcome the fact that the ILO's priority actions include enhancing the potential of the annual follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at

Work (1998), as amended in 2022; examining the nature, causes and consequences, and the social and economic impacts of FPRW deficits at the country and global levels; and undertaking research into the economic and social impacts of informality on the realization of FPRW. Moreover, we support the undertaking of research on best practices for the integration of FPRW into the business of MSMEs and newly formalized enterprises, including through greater synergies between the work on FPRW and the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) programme.

As our Reporter said, I do not wish to go through the terms of the document in greater detail. I hope that you will all read it and take to heart and recognize how it has embraced the viewpoints expressed so forcefully by the constituents in the room. We are pleased to have reached an agreement that will guide the Office's work for the coming years. The conclusions specifically state that the Office should update its integrated strategy on FPRW to balance action across all five FPRW categories and address gaps in implementation, while ensuring that the ILO continues to be responsive to the needs of constituents.

Mr Norddahl

Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work

The recurrent discussion is an important one, where we address both our success and what we could have done better, whether as the ILO, as Governments or as social partners. This year we dedicated this Committee to the discussion of fundamental principles and rights at work. I will not deny that it has been a week of very intense and spirited debates, and frankly sometimes quite difficult ones. But at the end of the day, there was a collective will to reach consensus on the conclusions.

From the perspective of the Workers' group, we believe that the final conclusions are balanced. They set out a clear path for the work that we, as constituents, as well as the Office, need to do in order to realize fully the fundamental principles and rights at work for all workers of the world, irrespective of their employment relationship. The debates that we had acknowledge that the world is currently undergoing a number of transformations that are affecting the capacity of workers to build and to enjoy fully their fundamental rights: their rights against forced labour, child labour and discrimination, as well as their rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and a safe and healthy working environment.

Allow me to recall a number of developments and challenges that grounded our discussions. First, the pervasiveness of the informal economy is posing a major challenge to the enjoyment of fundamental principles and rights at work. Around 60 per cent of the global workforce continues to make a living through informal work. These workers are often excluded from labour laws and associated protections and rights. Technological changes and the rise of the digital economy, and accompanying developments such as the rise of digital platforms and employment misclassification, are contributing to workers' insecurity and are threatening the enjoyment of workers' fundamental rights. These include the right to organize and to join a trade union, as well as the right to negotiate improvements to working conditions in collective agreements.

The prevalence of global supply chains is continuing to facilitate social dumping, as companies and countries compete on the basis of low wages, a lack of protection and low labour costs, with business accountability compromised through an attenuated chain of responsibility. The global trading system is further putting downward pressure on labour standards and is constraining the policy space of governments to regulate sufficiently in favour

of the adequate protection of labour rights. The world at work is, at the same time, affected by multiple crises, including armed conflict and disasters, as well as climate change. These trends are creating new and emerging risks, including in relation to occupational safety and health, such as heat stress.

Within our discussion, the constituents reaffirmed their commitment to protect, respect and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work. These principles and rights at work are the heart of all of our work. It was agreed that governments will engage in tripartite social dialogue and take action to consolidate the progress made, stop reversals and address regulatory and implementation gaps. They will also seize the momentum generated by the recognition of a safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental principle and right at work to strengthen national laws and practices on occupational safety and health. They will also take the necessary steps to reduce informality in line with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), and they will effectively incorporate the fundamental principles into a just transition.

We moreover reached an agreement that the ILO's work in the coming years in relation to the principles will pay due attention to the ongoing challenges. This work will be focused on five thematic areas: informal economies; enterprises and supply chains; crisis and fragility; and the two new ones, just transition and the digital economy. The relevance of the ten fundamental Conventions, as well as of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, was reaffirmed. That being said, major ratification gaps remain; major violations of fundamental rights have been observed around the world; and the work of the Office must seek to address these gaps. We are pleased that, as a result of our discussions, the Office will intensify efforts for universal ratification of the core Conventions and a specific campaign will focus on those least ratified Conventions.

In this respect, I would like to emphasize that, given the recent recognition of occupational safety and health as a fundamental right, now is the time to seize the moment to advance ratification of the related Conventions.

We also look forward to the Office's promotion of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), which still have major ratification gaps compared to most other core Conventions. Major violations of these two Conventions have been observed, including this week by the Committee on the Application of Standards, and those violations call for effective responses from all countries. Freedom of association and collective bargaining are not only fundamental rights; they are also enabling rights, as has been confirmed time and time again. They allow for the enjoyment of all four other fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as the five strategic objectives of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. The enabling character of these rights was well reflected in the discussion and in the conclusions, and the Governments agreed to pay particular attention to the enjoyment of these rights going forward.

Within our discussion, it was also evident that we need greater policy coherence, both at the national level and internationally, to enable the true enjoyment of the fundamental rights. We reached an agreement that the Office will make better use of the information gathered in the annual follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, and will increase synergies among the ILO supervisory bodies, development cooperation, technical assistance and research, including by enhancing efforts to mainstream understanding of the functioning and outputs of the ILO supervisory mechanisms across the Organization.

We also reached an agreement to promote policy coherence, both internally within the ILO and internationally. Going forward, the Office will engage with a number of relevant initiatives and institutions internationally, including the World Trade Organization, to better promote adherence to the fundamental principles and rights at work.

I wish to conclude by emphasizing that realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work is a prerequisite for achieving social justice. Each of us, Governments, Employers, Workers and the Office, have important but different roles and responsibilities in this regard. These conclusions provide an important framework for defining the way forward for the constituents and for the ILO itself and, if implemented, will make a real difference to the lives of workers all around the world.

These conclusions would not have been reached without my dedicated team from the International Trade Union Confederation and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), and definitely not without my Employer counterpart, Mr Mackall, a wordsmith and a pathfinder of solutions. Neither would they have been reached without our distinguished, elegant and resourceful Chairperson, Ms Fuentes Julio. Under her leadership, and with all the distinguished representatives of Governments representing all regions of the world, in its complexity and with its diverse cultures, we have shown that social dialogue works if we are dedicated enough to listen, to understand, to communicate with respect and to be true to those who have chosen us to protect and promote their interests on our path towards social justice and a peaceful world.

Ms Fuentes Julio

Chairperson of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Original Spanish)

I would like, once again, to thank all those who granted me the great honour of chairing the work of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, a privilege that was even greater since I could count on the valuable support of the two Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Mackall and Mr Norddahl.

Mr Mackall impressed me with his great eloquence and elegant language, his great knowledge and his ability to find the right words to sum up accurately and concisely the ideas that were brought up during the discussions, as well as his skill in building bridges and bringing the different positions of the members together.

Mr Norddahl also impressed me, particularly with his passion for the defence of workers' rights, his great knowledge and his capability in defending the interests of his group, while not forgetting about other collective and shared interests. I would like to thank both of them and acknowledge their great skill as negotiators.

Over the last two weeks, I would have to say that the interaction between them steadily improved, and by the end I would even go so far as to say that they developed a kind of symbiosis in their work. The result is that they managed to bring together the positions that separated their respective groups and also build bridges towards the positions of the Governments. The Governments, I am proud to say, did not restrict themselves just to being the third group, but also displayed a lot of knowledge, capacity for compromise and skill in formulating and conceiving proposals. The Government group made essential contributions to the work of the drafting group and during the discussion of amendments.

I would therefore like, once again, to thank all of the groups. It was truly a great pleasure to chair the discussions and contribute to the achievement of a satisfactory outcome. I would also like to thank the members of the Secretariat who displayed excellent attitude, professionalism and determination in their work and always provided support when needed. Lastly, I would like to thank the Reporter for her efforts to ensure that the work done in our Committee has been accurately reflected. Ms Angonemane Mvondo was present not only at all of our sittings, but also at the drafting group meetings, which has meant that she has a complete overview of all our work and the progress we have made.

Allow me now to say a few words about the outcome of our Committee's work. I believe that we have achieved more than we initially expected. The conclusions stress that the fundamental principles and rights at work are more necessary and relevant than ever. They are key to human dignity, to the foundation of more just societies and to ensuring that economic and social progress advance together. They are also key to building more peaceful societies. This is vital at a time when international peace is so elusive. The conclusions reaffirm the enabling nature of the fundamental principles and rights at work in creating the conditions that are necessary for the realization of the ILO's strategic objectives.

In a context in which demographic, environmental and digital transitions, and the rise of artificial intelligence and related technologies, are transforming the world of work and creating new challenges and opportunities, it is clear that we need to pay renewed attention to the fundamental principles and rights at work and also to more robust policies and measures.

The conclusions emphasize that respect for the rule of law and democratic freedoms are prerequisites for the full realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work and that persistent inequalities, poverty and informality continue to be significant obstacles to the advancement of these principles and rights, as well as to the advancement of sustainable development and decent work.

Our Committee identified four areas on which governments should focus their attention as a priority, in consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers.

The first area of focus is strengthened governance in the labour market, since the adoption of laws on respect for fundamental principles and rights at work is essential, but not sufficient to make them a reality. Effective institutions and measures are also required to ensure compliance.

The second area is full respect for and promotion of freedom of association, trade union rights and social dialogue, including collective bargaining, in order to identify suitable, legitimate and lasting solutions to address the challenges and opportunities that may arise in a world of work that is experiencing profound transformation.

The third concerns the acceleration of measures that will facilitate transition from informality to formality and the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, which are defined as those that respect the fundamental principles and rights at work.

The last area of focus is the promotion of equality of treatment and opportunities in employment and occupation, without any kind of discrimination and with full inclusion both in economic and social terms, and in terms of the rights of the most vulnerable groups.

Part III of the conclusions sets out a road map for the ILO, and the Office in particular, for supporting the constituents of the Organization in the adoption of suitable measures to make this vision a reality.

I would like to point out, in particular, that the Office is called on to update its integrated strategy on the fundamental principles and rights at work, using the momentum generated by the recognition of a safe and healthy work environment as the fifth fundamental principle and right at work. This update should ensure a balance between actions related to the five categories of fundamental principles and rights at work, while recognizing at the same time the particular significance of freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining to achieving the four strategic objectives.

In this respect, the Office is called on to intensify efforts to promote the universal ratification of the fundamental Conventions and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930; to strengthen synergies among the ILO supervisory bodies, development cooperation, technical assistance and research; to continue to promote and carry out studies and develop statistical measurement tools and methodologies in order to collect qualitative and quantitative data, with an emphasis on those categories of fundamental principles and rights at work that have not received sufficient attention up till now; and to promote policy coherence in relation to the fundamental principles and rights at work at national level, as well as within the United Nations system and with multilateral organizations, development banks and international financial institutions.

I am very pleased that the Committee has established a link between its work and the preparations for the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development. I believe that the principles of social justice, social dialogue and tripartism should be key pillars of the Summit.

In reading the Committee's outcome document, it occurs to me that our work over the past two weeks bears a close similarity with an experience that some of you may perhaps have had, in particular if you have had the opportunity to visit the Swiss Alps or the majestic Andes. Just like when you go hiking, in a Committee like ours, it is important to take things step by step but, at the same time, to keep up a steady rhythm and demonstrate perseverance. Even though the walker might not see the summit they are aiming to reach until it is only a few metres ahead of them, they keep going without losing focus until finally they get to the top and then they can look around at the impressive panorama of the landscape.

When we started looking at the amendments this week, I imagine that many of us felt something similar and at times the path was very difficult, but I think that all of us then felt the sense of happiness that overcomes you when you reach that summit, look back and realize the importance of our achievement.

In conclusion, I would once again like to thank all the members of the Committee and reiterate that it was a pride and a pleasure for me to take this journey with them.

The President

I now declare open the discussion on the outcome of the work of the Committee.

Mr Tomita

Government (Japan), speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group

Japan is honoured to speak on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG). I wish to thank Ms Fuentes Julio for her leadership of the Committee. Despite the Committee having to address a range of broad, complex and challenging issues, an agreement was reached thanks to the tremendous constructive efforts of the tripartite constituents of this Committee, who worked tirelessly. I would like to express my gratitude to all those involved in the discussions. However,

we have to draw attention to the fact that some meetings lasted until midnight due to so many unexpected breaks. We believe there is much room for improvement. We request the Office to make more efforts to develop efficient working methods and provide stronger support to the Chairperson, so that we can try all the means available to make full use of time. We have to avoid late sittings.

Asia and the Pacific is home to roughly 60 per cent of the world's population. It includes both advanced economies and those with significant development challenges. Despite this diversity, we are united by our shared aspirations for the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW). Last week, on the sidelines of the Conference, ASPAG held our ministerial meeting. We acknowledge that promoting social justice is necessary at this time of immense social and environmental challenges. We strive to ensure decent working conditions, advance social justice and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

ASPAG recognizes that FPRW are crucial to achieving decent work. These principles and rights are inseparable, interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Therefore, all five categories of FPRW should be treated equally. To pay due attention to environmental change and keep up with the fast-changing pace of the world of work, it is vital that technical assistance is provided in line with national circumstances, taking into consideration the different economic development status and unique vulnerability of small island developing States and the least developed countries. Areas of particular importance include the impact of climate change, natural disasters and constraints on economic diversification. With these considerations in mind, we will continue to contribute to respecting, promoting and realizing FPRW.

Since the discussion on FPRW in 2017, our region has seen significant progress and many developments. We have witnessed many governments making efforts to ratify the Conventions, especially those regarding a safe and healthy working environment, which was elevated to a fifth category of FPRW in 2022. We welcome that change, especially because workers continue to be exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working environments and because new risks like heat stress and psychological risk have emerged. Also, we have conducted legal reforms and established policies and programmes to respect FPRW, in collaboration with international organizations and groups. For example, regarding child labour, the Office report *Fundamental principles and rights at work at a critical crossroads* pointed to progress in the Asia and the Pacific, showing a steady decline in child labour since 2008.

On the other hand, there are some challenges: informal employment often falls outside the scope of labour regulations, leaving millions of workers inadequately protected. We highlight the need to respond to developments and trends in the world of work, such as demographic shifts, digital transitions and climate change, in order to continue addressing issues related to FPRW. We would also point out that diverse and emerging forms of work create both opportunities and risks and can pose special challenges for fully realizing FPRW. Furthermore, we express concern about the lack of freedom of association and collective bargaining, which increases the vulnerability of those workers who are often most at risk of child labour, forced labour, discrimination and hazardous working conditions.

We welcome the great efforts of all tripartite constituents to adopt these conclusions at this Conference session. We also welcome the ILO's prioritization of five thematic priorities in relation to FPRW. We endorse the ILO's future actions to promote FPRW and are eager to see how the ILO will enhance its support for its Members to ensure social justice and decent work for everyone. With this statement, we support the Committee's resolution and conclusions.

Mr Mangongo

Government (Gabon), speaking on behalf of the Africa group
(Original French)

The Africa group would like to thank the Officers of the Committee for the work that has been achieved and the interpreters who have facilitated our discussions. The group also thanks the Employers' group, the Workers' group and all the Governments that participated in the work of the Committee for the efforts they made and which have led to the conclusions that are before the Conference for adoption. These conclusions will guide the actions of the ILO and the tripartite constituents for the years ahead.

The Africa group reaffirms the importance of the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) in a world where inequalities are widening owing to a number of factors, such as poverty, informality, social and economic crises, conflict and geopolitical instability. We believe that by addressing these factors, which are obstacles to the application of FPRW, and by continuing to promote these fundamental principles and rights, we will be able to achieve greater social justice through the achievement of decent work.

Further, despite the inseparable, interrelated and mutually reinforcing nature of FPRW, the integrated policies and strategies to be applied at the regional and national levels should take into account the context and needs expressed by the tripartite constituents.

Our region is determined to consolidate FPRW at the continental level, including by eliminating gaps in respect of the five categories of FPRW. We would like to emphasize that, as regards discrimination in employment and occupation, the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), defines the grounds for discrimination and emphasizes the importance of the national context for addressing this issue.

Accordingly, the Africa group recalls the need for the Office to take into account the specificities of each regional and national context, and the needs authentically expressed by the tripartite constituents in their different contexts when developing and implementing the next action plan, which it will submit to the Governing Body in November 2024.

In closing, the Africa group supports the adoption of the resolution before us.

Ms Renard

Government, Belgium (EU and its Member States)

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Georgia, Iceland and Norway align themselves with this statement.

First and foremost, we warmly thank the Chairperson, Ms Fuentes Julio, for her able chairing and steering of the discussions. We are equally grateful to the Vice-Chairpersons, Mr Norddahl and Mr Mackall, for their passionate engagement in this Committee, as well as to our fellow Government representatives for their meticulous approach. We would like to thank the Secretariat for its tireless work over the last two weeks, as well as all ILO staff, and especially our interpreters and translators, for their excellent efforts in facilitating our work.

Since the last recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work in 2017, they have been threatened by unprecedented challenges, such as public health, economic and political crises. This accelerated the process of adding the fifth fundamental right, the right to a safe and healthy working environment, in 2022. The current context places fundamental principles and rights at work at heightened risk, and at the same time reaffirms their

importance. They have to guide us through the demographic, digital and environmental transitions that lie ahead and that are rapidly changing the world of work.

At the outset of these discussions, we stated our ambition for conclusions that would look beyond the walls of this house, and that would be a reference point, not only for tripartite constituents, but also for international and multistakeholder action, feeding into the momentum created by the launch of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, and contributing to the preparations of the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development. It was therefore also our hope that there would be convergence on strong, future-oriented and inclusive language on non-discrimination. In the Committee's journey to consensus, we regret that these considerations were sometimes secondary, yet we welcome the emphasis placed on balance, clarity and improvement based on constructive tripartite dialogue. In particular, we welcome that this house has agreed to add just transitions and the digital economy as two new priority areas, in addition to the informal economy, situations of fragility and enterprises in supply chains. We believe that this will enable the Office to take up meaningful work for a better tomorrow. We are also happy that the conclusions give due attention to increasing the synergies between the ILO supervisory bodies and ILO assistance to its constituents, as well as to policy coherence at all levels, and that they highlight the ILO's role in the multilateral system.

The EU and its Member States look forward to further collaboration with the ILO on informed policies based on its excellent research and expertise. We would like to ask the Office, and subsequently all constituents, to reflect on the working methods of Recurrent Discussion Committees. We trust that there are ways to work more efficiently, while fully respecting everyone's role and input. We bring many people together here for two full weeks and should make the most of their time and experience.

Finally, all of us in this room, as ILO constituents, are accountable for making fundamental principles and rights at work a reality for all. We hope that the adoption of these conclusions in the plenary serves to underscore the crucial importance of promoting, respecting and realizing fundamental principles and rights at work, now, more than ever, and consequently enhance progress under the Sustainable Development Goals. We look forward to continuing our joint work in following up on the conclusions.

Mr Oñate Vera
Worker (Mexico)
(Original Spanish)

We have concluded a recurrent discussion full of many challenges and difficulties. Many hours of work have allowed us to reach conclusions that will enable us to continue building a future of respect for and protection of the rights of all workers around the world.

For the Latin American region, talking about fundamental principles and rights is a very significant matter, with the region being one full of challenges and opportunities, where we see progress in some countries, but threats and exclusions in others. Therefore, the role that governments play in committing to the respect, promotion and achievement of fundamental principles and rights is vital.

The cornerstone of, or, as we would say in the aviation industry, the engines that move the aeroplane of, fundamental principles and rights are freedom of association and collective bargaining. These rights make it possible to guarantee that workers have representation that allows them to defend and fully realize their rights, along with social justice and the promotion of social dialogue.

Promoting gender equality in terms of remuneration and participation in the labour market, respect for and defence of people who belong to one or more vulnerable groups and effectively addressing issues of poverty, insecurity and inequalities are some of the points that were focused on and are ones that we must continue to pay attention to in order to respect all these fundamental rights. With the inclusion of occupational safety and health, there are new opportunities for all workers to have a safe and healthy working environment.

Challenges are arising in the world of work, including artificial intelligence and digitalization. Therefore, it is important for us to have all the elements that will make it possible to understand and face the coming challenges, while always, always, keeping human beings in the forefront and, thereby, guaranteeing respect for their rights. There are still many tasks to be done, which is why it is important to have the support of all those who participate in the world of work: the ILO, Governments, Employers and, of course, us Workers. If we understand that fundamental principles and rights are and will always be the vehicle, we will be on the right track to build a new social contract in favour of everyone around the world.

Ms Jantjies
Employer (South Africa)

One of the most pervasive challenges to economic development and the advancement of fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) is the persistence of the informal economy. While informality worldwide is estimated at 60 per cent of the workforce, in the region where I am from nearly 83 per cent work in the informal economy, according to ILO statistics.

Not only does informality affect the workforce, but it also affects the productivity of businesses and impacts society as a whole. Hence, to advance FPRW, we need to promote the transition to the formal economy, following the recommendations found in the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), and we call on all governments to ensure an enabling environment to promote it. Nevertheless, FPRW cannot be advanced around the world without addressing the common economic root causes, especially through practical, demand-driven policy solutions.

Therefore, we call on all Member States to ensure the implementation of effective policies and reforms to promote the transition to a formal economy, which is a win-win for all constituents. As an essential actor in this process, with a distinct role as the legitimate representative of the business community, we have a clear commitment to improving economies and work around the world, for which we call on the ILO to support all its constituents in transitioning towards formalization as a precondition to upholding FPRW in line with the ILO. The transition from the informal economy to the formal economy is paramount to this discussion, and we are quite pleased that the conclusions reinforce the need to give continuous attention to informality in order to advance the realization of FPRW.

Ms Moreau Avila
Worker (France)
(Original French)

It was particularly important for us that the Committee should reach conclusions, given the serious nature of the findings set out in the report *Fundamental principles and rights at work at a critical crossroads*, including the increase in child labour and the fact that the rights to collective bargaining and freedom of association are being called into question in many countries. It was therefore important to recall some of the gains made by the ILO, which must be maintained in order to guarantee and uphold social justice. The conclusions reached by the

Committee reiterate the particular importance of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in achieving the ILO's strategic objectives.

It was also essential that the conclusions should guide the actions of the ILO, to ensure that the Organization remains relevant for all workers, and especially young people. The ILO must address new challenges which, if not duly taken into account, will affect the labour rights of new generations. This is why it was so important to set the two new thematic priorities of just transition and the digital economy.

Respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work is key to ensuring that the exacerbation of climate change, the development of platform work and the growing use of artificial intelligence and algorithmic management do not lead to forms of work that are not decent. It was also important to reiterate that combating all forms of discrimination remains a priority for the ILO. Lastly, I believe that it is particularly important to ensure that the plan of action to be prepared by the Director-General to give effect to the conclusions does not overlook supply chains. It will be essential to develop and support legislation on due diligence, and to rethink globalization so that it is, at last, fair to workers.

Mr Díaz Mirón Salcedo

Employer (Mexico)

(Original Spanish)

The fundamental principles and rights at work include the means to obtaining progress and the ends we all wish to achieve. We have shown that symmetry in social dialogue is essential for reinforcing the link between the fundamental principles and rights at work, the pillars of decent work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In achieving our objectives, a discourse of acceptance implies that we have gathered around the negotiating table and demonstrated the strength of the relationship that we have. Today, we have managed to reach an agreement because of our common ground, despite our differences. After two weeks, I think I can safely say that guaranteeing the means and achieving the ends of the fundamental principles and rights at work would not be possible if we were not all fully participating. As Employers, I think it is right to acknowledge our social partners in achieving this excellent outcome. To find a viable solution to our problems, we must work together. Finally, in order to accomplish our goals, we must also focus on the resources needed to achieve them. Establishing an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises is vital for all our efforts, because we will never get to where we want to go or where we have to be without the means to get there. To achieve this, you can rely on our support.

Mr Dimitrov

Worker (Bulgaria)

I will briefly address two issues that we have included in our conclusions in this Committee: one is supply chains, including global supply chains, and the second one is inequalities, or tackling inequalities. As stated in point 11 of the conclusions, failures to protect and respect the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) continue to be observed within supply chains. In point 19(b), we reaffirm that enterprises and supply chains are among the five thematic priorities on which the Office should focus in updating its integrated strategy on FPRW, while taking into account and building on the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains (2023–27), adopted by our Governing Body.

Governments, in consultation with the social partners, should ensure the compliance of business practices with FPRW within global supply chains, including mandatory due diligence

legislation, in line with the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as amended in 2022. We also call on the ILO to promote policy coherence on FPRW in ongoing international efforts to regulate, in international human rights law, the activities of multinational enterprises and other businesses.

Also, to ensure that governments will meaningfully tackle poverty, insecurity and inequalities, which are major drivers of FPRW deficits, as stated in point 17(q), we need to ensure the effective recognition of collective bargaining and require living wages to be set through such bargaining, taking into account the needs of workers and their families, and calculated for the work performed during normal hours of work, excluding overtime, in accordance with the ILO's principles on estimating living wages, as agreed by the Governing Body on a tripartite basis at its 350th Session.

Ms Nagasawa **Employer (Japan)**

Employers fully support the fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW) as universal human rights which apply to workers and employers alike. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), as amended in 2022 (Social Justice Declaration), constitute the international framework to promote, respect and realize FPRW. They are as relevant and as important as ever.

During the discussions, we agreed that substantial progress has been made, but significant gaps in the implementation of FPRW still remain. Sustainable enterprises that create decent jobs play a key role in tackling these gaps and challenges. In particular, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises need support to understand and integrate respect for FPRW into their businesses. They are the backbone of any economy by creating decent jobs and enabling productive and freely chosen employment. They are essential for the realization of FPRW. This reflects the clear interdependency between sustainable enterprises, economic and social development and the advancement of FPRW.

As you recall, many ministers from different regions who spoke at the inaugural forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice emphasized the importance of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to achieving social justice for all. Therefore, an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises to promote decent work is a precondition to implement FPRW and to achieve concrete and effective outcomes on the ground, noting that business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive growth and job creation. The Social Justice Declaration and the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work (2017) both acknowledged the indispensable role of sustainable enterprises, and the Employers are very pleased to have achieved the reinforcement of this key role in the conclusions of this third recurrent discussion.

Resolution and conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work

The President

There being no further speakers, we will now proceed with the adoption of the proposed resolution concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work, which contains the Committee's conclusions, the text of which can be found in Record of Proceedings No. 7A.

If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts, as a whole, the proposed resolution and the conclusions contained therein?

(The resolution and conclusions are adopted.)

I would like to extend my warmest thanks and congratulations to the members and Officers of the Committee for their tireless work. I would also like to thank the Secretariat for its support. Good job, and congratulations to them all.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.30 p.m.)