



Governing Body

352nd Session, Geneva, 28 October–7 November 2024

Institutional Section

INS

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Third item on the agenda

Matters arising out of the work of the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference

Analysis of the measures taken to promote the effective functioning of the Conference

Purpose of the document

This document reviews the arrangements implemented at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (2024) and explores further areas where improvements could be considered. The review of such arrangements will inform the proposals to be made in March 2025 with respect to the programme and working arrangements of the 113th Session of the Conference (2025) (see the draft decision in paragraph 43).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome: Enabler B: Improved leadership and governance.

Policy implications: Effective and efficient governance of the Organization.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None at this stage.

Follow-up action required: Preparation of proposals regarding the arrangements and programme of work for the 113th Session of the Conference (2025) to be considered and approved by the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025).

Author unit: Official Meetings, Documents and Relations Department (RELMEETINGS).

Related documents: GB.351/PV; GB.350/INS/2/2; GB.349/INS/3/4.

► Introduction

1. The 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, held from 3 to 14 June 2024 at the Palais des Nations and at the ILO building, accomplished its objectives and achieved several important outcomes.
2. The Conference included the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice; a special sitting on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, as requested by the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024); and a dialogue with the Co-Facilitators of the Second World Summit for Social Development. The Conference also elected the members of the Governing Body for the period 2024–27.
3. This document analyses the effectiveness of the arrangements implemented at the 112th Session of the Conference and explores areas where further improvements could be made, noting the feedback received from constituents at the 351st Session of the Governing Body (June 2024) and at informal debriefings.

► Participation

4. Participation at the 2024 session of the Conference remained high. Of the 6,246 accredited delegates, 4,987 registered.

► Number of accredited Member States and delegates (2018–24)

	2018	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024
Member States	168	178	181	178	172	174
Accredited delegates	6 438	7 661	4 467	4 445	6 095	6 246

5. The overall proportion of women delegates and advisers increased slightly from 36.6 per cent in 2023 to 37.8 per cent in 2024, but remained low despite repeated appeals by the Office to constituents to ensure greater gender balance in their delegations.
6. As requested by the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024), meeting arrangements implemented at the 111th Session (2023) were retained, namely, a fully in-person meeting with the possibility to submit pre-recorded statements for the plenary and for participants to have passive remote access to committee sittings.

► Logistics

Room capacity

7. Due to unexpected delays, renovation work in the Assembly Hall was not completed in time for the Conference. Consequently, the opening sitting and all plenary sittings, including the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, had to take place in smaller rooms and required the number of seats allocated to each delegation to be limited.

8. To ensure tripartite participation for all Member States in the most equitable manner, four seats were assigned to each delegation and two overflow rooms were set up to accommodate other members of the delegations.
9. The Office regrets the difficulties the seating constraints generated for many delegations but expects that this will not be the case in 2025. By a letter dated 11 July 2024, the United Nations Office at Geneva informed the Office that Building E would remain open in 2025 and confirmed that the Assembly Hall would also be back in operation. The 113th Session of the Conference will therefore still take place at the Palais des Nations, from 2 to 13 June 2025, presumably for the last time until the completion of the renovation work. Seating arrangements will thus return to the traditional set-up of eight seats per delegation.

Registration upon arrival and issuance of badges

10. As requested by the Governing Body at its 349th Session (October–November 2023), the Office sought ways to facilitate the accreditation and registration process, within the limits of the United Nations (UN) security guidelines to which it is subject. Delegates were provided with the option of authorizing a third party to collect their badges on their behalf (that is, by proxy) by filling out an online form and uploading their photos. UN security guidelines require participants to provide photos that meet their technical requirements for the production of badges. Unfortunately, some delegates who were unable to upload their photo in advance through the system due to connectivity issues could not avail themselves of the proxy option.
11. The Office is in the process of replacing the current Conference Management System, on which the online accreditation system depends. The new system is expected to bring further improvements to the accreditation process in the near future. The Office will organize information sessions on the Conference Management System to share information on its development, seek constituents' views on certain aspects and progressively familiarize them with how to use it.
12. To reduce waiting times for badge collection, registration desks opened earlier (as of the Wednesday of the week preceding the opening of the Conference), extended their hours at both the ILO building and the Palais, and remained open on both weekends. The Office expects to continue this practice, which was appreciated by constituents, and make any necessary adjustments.
13. Certain governments reported difficulties in securing visas to travel to Switzerland for the Conference.¹ The Office is examining the matter and will liaise, as appropriate, with the authorities of the host State through established channels.

► Preparatory processes

Dissemination of key information

14. Before the publication of the [International Labour Conference Guide](#) on the website on 15 May, information on practical arrangements was published on the Conference website as it became available and after the Governing Body approved the arrangements for the session at its 350th Session (March 2024). The Guide consolidated the information that was already available

¹ GB.351/PV, para. 27.

on the website and that had previously been shared with all delegations through communications sent to the Permanent Missions and through the Regional Coordinators. The Guide also included an overview of the items on the Conference agenda, an overview of the proposed programme of work, accreditation formalities and participation rights, and detailed logistical information.

15. In parallel, the Office organized information sessions on both the substance and practical aspects of the Conference. The *Explanatory note for national delegations on the submission of credentials*,² instruction manuals on voting, detailed information on how to participate in committees and register to speak in plenary, and a video tutorial on submitting amendments were produced or updated and published on the website as of the third week of April.³ A document entitled *The International Labour Conference at a glance*, which explains the Standing Orders in concise terms, has been available online in the seven working languages since 19 May 2023.⁴
16. Nevertheless, these efforts did not seem sufficient, or at least did not reach the target audience, as some delegates still had difficulties locating the necessary information. Additional briefing sessions may therefore need to be considered, in addition to the information session for governments normally held two weeks before the Conference and the customary briefings conducted by the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) for the Employers' and Workers' groups respectively. These could take the form of targeted briefings, including on the amendments process, during the first days of the Conference, to address the needs of all delegates and advisers, particularly those attending the Conference for the first time. The Office will continue to explore more efficient and focused ways of communicating with constituents in the lead-up to the Conference.
17. In addition to the constituent-focused information sessions, briefing sessions should also be systematized for ILO staff, on whose expertise and experience the effective functioning of the Conference also largely depends, to ensure that the institutional knowledge of procedures and Conference processes is preserved.
18. Feedback received from constituents indicates that the new ILO website proved challenging for users to navigate and find information easily. The Office is looking at ways to make it more user-friendly.
19. The latest version of the ILO Events app, on the other hand, saw an unprecedented level of usage, by 49.91 per cent of attendees (3,475 out of 6,953). The app contained essential information on the programme of work of the Conference. Important notifications were issued simultaneously to all delegates who had downloaded it on their smartphones. Conference participants welcomed the new design, its user-friendly features and up-to-date information. As requested by some constituents, the Office will explore the feasibility of reinstating a feature from the previous version of the app that allowed registered delegates to contact other delegates and organize side meetings. The Office will ensure that the necessary safeguards are in place and that there is the possibility for delegates to opt out.

² ILC.112/Explanatory note.

³ Practical information for delegates to the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference.

⁴ *The International Labour Conference at a glance*, 2023.

Nomination of officers

20. The early nomination of the Officers of the Conference and its committees continues to be a challenge, despite the long-standing recognition by all parties of the important role of the Officers in ensuring the efficient conduct of the business of the Conference and its Committees under the Standing Orders. The process for nominating the Officers of the Conference and its committees was launched in November 2023 and included a short description of the desired skills and profile of committee officers, which had been requested by the Governing Body at its 349th Session. Nevertheless, despite all efforts made by the Regional Coordinators and the Chairperson of the Government group to secure the nominations in time, some nominations were received only days before the Conference opening. The late nominations did not allow for some of the committee chairpersons to be sufficiently briefed in advance, on both substance and the complex procedures, which had an impact on the work of some committees (see paragraph 35(b) below).

Consultations

21. As on previous occasions, views were expressed on the importance of holding **full tripartite consultations** to prepare for the discussions in the technical committees. While not intended to pre-empt Conference discussions, early consultations would give all parties the opportunity to hear each other's expectations and priorities in a full tripartite setting and thereby facilitate discussion at the Conference.
22. Considering the tight time frame between the March session of the Governing Body and the Conference, it would be necessary to determine the number of consultations required, prioritize them and focus on critical issues, to avoid overburdening constituents while also optimizing the use of reduced resources. A proposed schedule of consultations would be sent to the Regional Coordinators and the group secretariats in the first quarter of 2025.
23. Furthermore, ways to engage with technical experts in the preparatory stage could be considered, bearing in mind that representatives attending the pre-Conference consultations may not necessarily be the same persons who later participate in the committees.

Documents

24. Noting that the Director General's thematic report was published just two weeks before the Conference opening, various groups requested that it be released earlier to give delegates more time to craft well-prepared substantive statements. The Office will make every possible effort to have the Director-General's report published three weeks before the opening.
25. In addition, a number of constituents requested that any modifications made to a report that has already been published should be communicated to constituents in a timely and transparent manner.

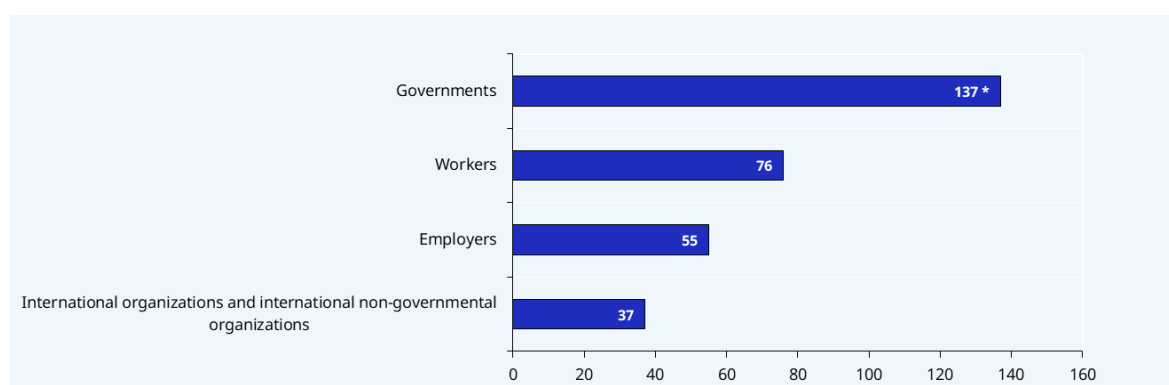
► Conference plenary

26. The inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice achieved high-level participation, with at least 40 ministers in attendance. The speeches of the Presidents of Brazil and Nepal drew significant interest from participants and the media. Some groups called for improved participation of women, who were not represented on the closing panel of the Forum, and for

continued efforts to achieve gender parity in all aspects of the Conference. They also encouraged earlier notification in the future of any changes to the programme.

27. A total of 305 statements were made in the regular plenary sittings dedicated to the Reports of the Director-General and of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, as reflected in the figure below.

► **Number of speakers during the plenary sittings devoted to the discussion of the Reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body**



* Of which 113 (82 per cent) were ministers.

28. Of the 305 speakers, 81 women took the floor (26.6 per cent). Excluding observer delegations, the regional distribution of speakers was: Africa, 21 per cent; the Americas, 18 per cent; Asia and the Pacific, 24 per cent; and Europe, 24 per cent. With very few exceptions, delegates respected the five-minute time limit for their statements. Their cooperation and the efficient management by the chairing officers helped to avoid evening sittings. Statements during the adoption of committee reports in plenary adhered to the time limits introduced in 2019.
29. As recommended by the Governing Body at its 350th Session, the Conference held a special sitting on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. Statements were made by 75 speakers: 40 representing Governments (including 15 ministers), 23 representing Workers, 7 representing Employers, and 5 from observer delegations. Of the total number of speakers, 25.33 per cent were women.
30. The Strategic Dialogue with the Co-Facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process for the Second World Summit for Social Development provided delegates with an opportunity to engage actively in that important process. The statements during the dialogue, as well as those delivered at the plenary discussion of the Director-General's thematic report on a renewed social contract, provided solid contributions to the ongoing development of the ILO tripartite input to the Summit that the Working Party on the New Social Contract is currently undertaking.

► Votes

31. The Conference elected the new members of the Governing Body for the term 2024–27 using the new voting system introduced at the 111th Session (2023) of the Conference. The Government electoral college elected its members on Friday, 7 June, while the Employer and Worker electoral colleges conducted their respective elections on Monday, 10 June.

32. Numerous briefings were provided to the three constituent groups before and during the Conference on the rules and procedure for voting, and on the practical use of the electronic voting system. The votes for the Governing Body elections and on the abrogation of four international labour Conventions were carried out smoothly.

► Conference committees

Outcome of the work of the committees

33. All committees successfully concluded their work. The technical committees produced the following outcomes:
- (a) The General Discussion Committee on Decent Work and the Care Economy put forward a resolution and conclusions that were adopted by the Conference. The resolution includes a request to the Director-General to prepare a plan of action to give effect to the Committee's conclusions, which provide a common understanding of the care economy. The plan of action on decent work and the care economy will be discussed by the Governing Body at this session.⁵
 - (b) The resolution and conclusions of the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work were also adopted by the Conference, and highlighted the importance of those principles and rights in a rapidly changing world of work. The resolution requested the Director-General to prepare a plan of action to give effect to those conclusions. The follow-up plan of action will also be discussed by the Governing Body at this session.⁶
 - (c) The Standard-Setting Committee on Biological Hazards concluded the first discussion with a view to adopting possible new international labour standards on protection against biological hazards at the second discussion in 2025.
34. Outcomes of the standing committees:
- (a) The Conference adopted the report of the Finance Committee on the scale of assessments of contributions to the budget for 2025 and the financial report and audited consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.
 - (b) The Committee on the Application of Standards examined the application of ILO Conventions in 24 individual country cases and presented its report to the Conference. The report also reflected the special sitting on Belarus aimed at securing compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry established in 2003 concerning the observance by the Government of Belarus 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). The effective implementation of the working methods of the Committee, which it agreed on at its annual informal tripartite consultations prior to the Conference, enabled it to fully accomplish its tasks.
 - (c) The General Affairs Committee completed its work in one very brief sitting and presented its report to the Conference on the abrogation of four international labour Conventions.

⁵ GB.352/INS/3/2.

⁶ GB.352/INS/3/1.

- (d) The Credentials Committee held seven sittings to examine 4 monitoring cases, 17 objections, 3 complaints and 7 other communications, which resulted in the unanimous adoption of its final report.

Areas requiring further improvement

35. Several concerns raised by constituents are long-standing and have been discussed at numerous sessions, namely:

(a) Time management and late sittings

- (i) Three committees finished their sittings far beyond the agreed plans of work, at times concluding in the early hours of the morning. All groups unanimously shared concerns on the detrimental impact night sittings have on the well-being of delegates and staff.
- (ii) The Drafting Committee of the Conference was expected to be able to start on Thursday, 6 June and to avoid holding sittings beyond 10 p.m.⁷ This did not prove possible because of the slow progress made in the Standard-Setting Committee. In the event, the Drafting Committee met three times, beginning at 10 p.m. or later.⁸ As already pointed out by the Office at the 346th Session (October–November 2022) of the Governing Body,⁹ better ways to integrate the work of the Drafting Committee into the overall programme of work of the Conference must be sought, all the more so as the agenda of the 113th Session includes two standard-setting items.
- (iii) There were lengthy debates about terminology and broader terms that were not commonly understood by delegates. Information notes provided by the secretariat, including before the Conference, might help in focusing the discussion on core issues. Questions concerning terminology could also be addressed within the framework of pre-Conference consultations.
- (iv) Lengthy tentative conclusions meant that drafting groups had insufficient time to review and refine them, which led to prolonged discussions in the full committee sittings. Groups called on the Office to prepare more concise tentative conclusions.

(b) Timely designation of chairing officers

- (i) As noted in paragraph 20, the late nomination of chairpersons had a significant impact on the functioning of some committees. It did not leave sufficient time for the Office to properly brief chairpersons on the substance and on the complex rules of procedure. Governments are urged to intensify their efforts and support Regional Coordinators and the Chairperson of the Government group in reaching consensus on the nominations by the close of the March Governing Body session.
- (c) Some groups called for the strict enforcement of the rules prohibiting Conference participants from taking photos during votes, particularly in technical committees. To address this issue, a reminder on the responsibilities of delegates will be included in the Conference Guide, including on the use of social media during votes and committee

⁷ GB.350/INS/2/2, para. 40.

⁸ The Drafting Committee met the following days: 10 June from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m., 11 June from 10 p.m. to 1.45 a.m. and 12 June from 10.30 p.m. to 3.40 a.m.

⁹ GB.346/INS/3/4, para. 34.

discussions. The chairpersons will also be adequately briefed and equipped to properly enforce the rules.

► Possible changes to be considered

36. All groups raised strong concerns about the working hours of the Conference, noting that the current working conditions have pushed the limits of what is acceptable for the well-being of delegates and staff. One group suggested that it could be time to reassess the two-week format; however, returning to a three-week format appears not to be feasible for significant logistical and financial considerations. The Governing Body may wish to consider further improvements for the next session of the Conference, but within its current format.
37. The Governing Body may therefore wish to consider the following preliminary suggestions on time management and other measures, which the Office can further develop for the 353rd Session (March 2025), also bearing in mind that in 2025, the Conference will have, for the first time since the introduction of the two-week format, two standard-setting committees:
 - (a) Reassess the committees' programmes of work and explore adjustments to enhance efficiency (such as the time allocated to statements and the drafting of conclusions). For standard-setting committees, general statements could be made at the first sitting on the Monday afternoon, so that the discussion of amendments could start on the Tuesday morning.
 - (b) Since setting time limits for interventions during the discussion of amendments may not be feasible, protracted debates on contentious amendments could be suspended and resumed only after the parties concerned have consulted outside the sittings. This approach would allow the discussion of other, unrelated amendments to advance.
 - (c) Conduct fully tripartite consultations at least three weeks in advance to prepare for the discussions in technical committees, as mentioned in paragraph 21, including on the proposed points for discussion and plan of work of the General Discussion Committee.
 - (d) Develop proposals to better integrate the work of the Drafting Committee in the programme of work of the Conference.
 - (e) Prepare information notes on matters relating to terminology, to enhance common understanding, before and during the session, as appropriate.
 - (f) Continue efforts with the Government group and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups to ensure the early appointment of committee officers.
 - (g) Facilitate a preliminary exchange of views among committee officers (remotely) in advance of the session to prepare the ground for a smooth and effective discussion at the Conference. For this to happen, the officers must be identified by the end of March.
 - (h) Provide additional and more targeted training for the members of the general discussion and recurrent discussion committees on procedures, particularly on amendments. This could be done after the last sitting on the points for discussion and before drafting groups begin their work. For standard-setting committees, an online training session on the submission of amendments could be conducted on the first day of the session, before the amendment platform opens.

- (i) Strengthen the capacity of ILO staff through systematized training programmes to ensure the effective functioning of the Conference and maintain institutional knowledge of Conference procedures.

► Communication strategy

- 38. The ILO's communication strategy focused on informing and engaging primary external and internal audiences on the work of the Conference, the issues under discussion and major scheduled events, including the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
- 39. Ahead of the Conference, the launch of the *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2024* report secured top-tier international, regional and country-level media coverage, drawing attention to the ILO ahead of the Conference. Several media advisories and press releases were issued ahead of and during the session, including on the opening and closing sittings and the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition. During the Conference, in-person communication with delegates was prioritized at the branded engagement zone.
- 40. Daily live thematic ILC Conversations were introduced for the first time, giving visibility to the broader work and impact of the ILO and allowing dozens of delegates to interact directly with the speakers each lunchtime. ILO Live ran uninterrupted broadcasts of all the public sittings, with a peak of almost 4,600 visitors on a single day. Video recordings of speakers and sittings were available for replay or download after broadcasts took place.
- 41. Social media was used to bring the Conference to a broader public audience, with shareable branded content prepared and translated in advance for field offices, constituents, staff in the UN system and others who could amplify ILO reach. New types of content, including a series of behind-the-scenes videos featuring constituents and those working at the Conference received between 400,000 and 700,000 plays on the ILO's Instagram account.
- 42. Communication support was provided for the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition, including liaison and briefings with the moderators, as well as production during the event between the two rooms, promotion ahead of time, the live broadcast, media relations and social media coverage.

► Draft decision

- 43. **The Governing Body requested the Office to prepare for its consideration at its 353rd Session (March 2025) a detailed programme of work for the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference, including the possible changes set forth in paragraph 37 of document GB.352/INS/3/3, taking into account the guidance provided.**