

Governing Body

352nd Session, Geneva 28 October–7 November 2024

Institutional Section

INS

Minutes of the Institutional Section

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Opening remarks

1. **The Chairperson** welcomed participants and opened the 352nd Session of the Governing Body.
(The Governing Body adopted the agenda published in document [GB.352/Agenda\(Rev.2\).](#))
2. **The Director-General** made an introductory statement to the Governing Body. The statement is reproduced in its entirety in [Appendix I](#).
3. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** said that the social and employment field was experiencing a period of great uncertainty caused by deep technological changes, the disruptive impact of climate change policies and intensifying geopolitical conflicts, which were a result of the rebalancing of the global order brought about by the transformation of former developing countries into powerful economic and political actors.
4. Against that backdrop, the ILO had a responsibility to deliver timely and constructive solutions by advocating social dialogue as a driver of positive change and social peace. Given that the United Nations (UN) in general seemed oblivious to the need for strong social partners, it was important for the ILO to raise its profile. However, the Organization would be credible only if it substantially improved its functioning to become more effective, transparent, balanced and legally consistent, including through a much-requested review of the Standing Orders and practices of the Governing Body.
5. The second World Summit for Social Development in 2025 offered a prime opportunity for the ILO to elevate its profile, showcase its experience, collaborate with key stakeholders and strengthen its advocacy role within the UN. She therefore welcomed the tripartite input to the Summit prepared by the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda, which faithfully reflected the views of the ILO constituents and emphasized the importance of adopting measures to enhance productivity and create an enabling environment for businesses, especially sustainable and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.
6. Pending the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, there was a need to find efficient and legally sound interim solutions to ensure the democratic, fair and equal representation in the ILO's governance of a larger number of constituents.
7. With regard to the International Labour Conference, her group continued to believe that the Governing Body should adopt a strategic approach to the agenda-setting process that prioritized emerging issues in the world of work. Timely preparation was vital. Her group therefore urged the Governing Body to finalize the agenda for the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference at the current session.
8. Concerning the Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27, her group welcomed developments with respect to sustainable enterprises, productivity, growth, competitiveness and other areas of critical importance for the future of the ILO, which should pursue its efforts to support employers' and workers' organizations.
9. Her group wished to draw attention to the report of the ninth meeting of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group (SRM TWG), which contained recommendations calling on the Governing Body to give thorough consideration to the Mechanism's mandate, decide on a number of pending matters and address serious governance flaws.

10. At its current session, the Governing Body would also consider country cases under articles 26 and 33 of the ILO Constitution. Her group was concerned by the proliferation of such cases, some of which remained under consideration unnecessarily, damaging the credibility of the ILO. The Governing Body should focus on cases involving severe violations of the freedom of association rights of employers' and workers' organizations and avoid fuelling geopolitical conflicts. In instances of evident government non-cooperation, the ILO should handle all cases responsibly and consistently, using the measures provided for by its supervisory system to ensure universal respect for international labour standards.
11. To conclude, she wished to pay tribute to Mr Francisco Díaz Garaycoa, a valued former representative of the Ecuadorian employers' organizations and member of the Governing Body who had recently passed away at the age of 86 years. His death left a void not only in the business community but also in the hearts of all those privileged enough to have known him. During his time as a Governing Body member, which had stretched from 1978 to 2005, he had provided valuable insights on complex issues. He had been the Employer spokesperson when the International Labour Conference had discussed and adopted the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). His legacy would always be remembered with gratitude and admiration.
12. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** said that the Governing Body was meeting in troubled times, with more than 60 military conflicts raging around the world and claiming millions of victims. Prime among them was the terrible war waged in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the wake of the abhorrent attack by Hamas on Israeli people and communities on 7 October 2023. Her group would always strongly condemn terrorist attacks on innocent civilians. It recognized the right of States to defend themselves against armed attacks, provided that any action taken was immediate and proportional, as required under international law. However, no attack could legitimize the devastation and destruction inflicted on civilians in Gaza, many of whom were women and children, the growing incidence of violence perpetrated by illegal settlers in the West Bank, which was going unpunished by the Israeli authorities, or the expansion of hostilities into Lebanon.
13. In November 2023, when the situation had already been dire, her group had called for an immediate ceasefire and the return of hostages. At its current session, the Governing Body had to make decisions that equipped the ILO to play its unique role in championing social justice and peace and upholding international human and labour rights, including through the provision of technical support and emergency relief. Furthermore, the Occupied Palestinian Territory should be granted the same status as Member States and full participation rights, which would represent an important step on the path to full membership.
14. Other major conflicts also required the Governing Body's urgent attention. In Myanmar, the military regime was strengthening its detrimental grip on the country. Since the regime had failed to implement any of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry established in accordance with article 26 of the ILO Constitution, the Governing Body now had to decide whether to initiate the article 33 procedure.
15. Meanwhile, the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine continued relentlessly, with massive loss of life on both sides and no end in sight. The Governing Body would have to consider what more it could do, within the framework of its mandate, for the increasingly desperate and exhausted workers and their families in Ukraine.
16. In the face of growing numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, many countries were introducing ever-harsher migration and asylum policies. The ILO should revisit its historical mandate in that area. The Organization was the personification of the social contract

the world had needed in 1919 and 1945. The Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27 should reflect a renewed commitment to that social contract in order to build a more inclusive, resilient and peaceful society. However, an effective social contract hinged on democracy and on the rights to self-determination and freedom of association. It was regrettable that, at the current session, the Governing Body's discussion on democratization in the ILO's governance would focus narrowly on the Organization's internal governance. Indeed, the ILO had a broader mandate to defend democracy.

17. Given the unprecedented number of country cases involving serious and persistent violations of fundamental rights and freedoms, there was a need for the ILO constituents to safeguard the supervisory system and demonstrate that, through social dialogue and diplomacy, progress could be achieved towards peaceful conflict resolution and the protection of workers' rights. There was also a need to continue working towards a robust and up-to-date body of international labour standards and for the agendas of future sessions of the International Labour Conference to address current and emerging challenges. A priority issue was to advance the transformative agenda for gender equality at work, particularly in view of the backlash against women's rights observed in many countries and regions.
18. Regarding the report of the ninth meeting of the SRM TWG, priority should be given not to the abrogation of outdated standards that nevertheless continued to fulfil an important role in the protection of workers, but to the development of comprehensive plans of action, including to strengthen the ILO's technical assistance to Member States to promote the ratification and implementation of more modern standards.
19. One of the matters that the Governing Body would discuss at its current session was its own functioning and working methods. While her group was open to considering ways to improve, it believed that the Governing Body's Standing Orders were basically fit for purpose and that administrative and bureaucratic issues should not be prioritized above major challenges in the world of work.
20. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico said that, in its consideration of the Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27, the Governing Body would need to think critically about how resources were allocated in order to address the most pressing issues while maintaining flexibility.
21. It was of paramount importance to follow up on two items discussed at the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference, namely fundamental principles and rights at work, and decent work and the care economy.
22. The biennial report on the implementation of the ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020–23) would allow the Governing Body to assess progress and identify remaining gaps, while discussions on democratization in the ILO's governance would enable it to reflect on ways to further enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of the Organization.
23. The Director-General had requested the Government of Mexico to facilitate dialogue on combating all forms of discrimination in the workplace. It was happy to agree to that request and considered it essential to uphold, in the deliberations of the Governing Body, the spirit of tripartite cooperation that made the ILO unique.

1. Approval of the minutes of the 351st Session of the Governing Body (GB.352/INS/1)

Decision

24. The Governing Body approved the minutes of the 351st Session.

(GB.352/INS/1, paragraph 2)

2. Agenda of future sessions of the International Labour Conference (GB.352/INS/2)

25. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized the importance of ensuring a strategic and coherent approach to the setting of the agenda of the Conference and other institutional processes and discussions, as reflected in the proposals in document GB.352/INS/2. It was clear from several discussions of the Conference that tripartite constituents agreed on the need to give more specific guidance to the Office on how to advance a transformative agenda for gender equality at work, and the lack of progress made towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 lent a sense of urgency to action on gender equality. The Workers' group therefore reiterated its support for a general discussion on that subject at the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference, noting that the timing would be especially fitting as a review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action by the Commission on the Status of Women was due to take place in March 2025.
26. The Workers' group did not support a discussion on harnessing technology alone, but could support a discussion combining technology and structural transformation under the proposed title "technological innovation and structural transformation of the economy for decent work and sustainable development". In the group's view, the scope of a discussion on structural transformation should go beyond productivity to also include uptake of technology and the climate emergency; the Conference conclusions on a just transition also linked the two topics by addressing industrial policies. A general discussion under that title would be a step towards providing guidance on the "why" and "how" of structural transformation processes in the context of the climate emergency, which required drastic transformation in industries. The group was interested in the proposal in paragraph 39 of Appendix I to document GB.352/INS/2 to discuss which type of structural transformation generated productive employment opportunities across all regions and segments of the labour force, emphasized production and investment over finance and prioritized revitalizing local communities. The protection of workers in light of new technologies was a topic that was worthy of exploration, particularly in the context of artificial intelligence, but such a discussion should take place once the standard-setting discussion on the platform economy had been finalized.
27. As to the recommendation by the SRM TWG to withdraw the Labour Standards (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No. 83), the Workers' group suggested that that should be discussed only after the Governing Body had taken a decision on the report of the ninth meeting of the SRM TWG at its present session.
28. The Workers' group welcomed the Governing Body's decision at its 350th Session (March 2024) to include a standard-setting item on chemical hazards on the agenda of the 115th and 116th Sessions (2027 and 2028) of the Conference. Mindful of the need to avoid the discussion of two standard-setting items on occupational safety and health at the same session, the group supported the inclusion of a standard-setting item on ergonomics and manual handling on the agenda of the 117th and 118th Sessions (2029 and 2030). The group also supported the Office's

proposal to hold a tripartite meeting of experts prior to the publication of a law and practice report on ergonomics and manual handling, and asked when would be most appropriate to hold such a meeting and whether such a meeting would need to be included in the programme and budget. Regarding the revision of the instruments concerning guarding of machinery, the group supported the holding of a single discussion in 2031 following a technical preparatory meeting in 2030, if the Office could confirm that it considered such an approach to be suitable. The group also asked the Office whether it would consider holding, prior to the 353rd Session of the Governing Body (March 2025), an informal briefing on those two highly technical topics.

29. The Worker spokesperson stressed the importance of moving forward on the issue of global supply chains and could support the inclusion of a standard-setting item on decent work in supply chains for a discussion beginning at the 115th (2027) or 116th Session (2028) of the Conference. She noted that there was no rule limiting the number of standard-setting items on the agenda of a single Conference session and that, because standard-setting on chemical hazards and on supply chains would involve two different departments, the inclusion of those two particular items on the agenda of the same session would not represent an unmanageable workload for the Office. She expressed the hope that the Governing Body would be able to advance on its consideration of such an agenda item during its discussion of the implementation report of the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains at its subsequent session.
30. Noting with interest that a joint working paper on the protection of whistle-blowers in the public service sector was due to be published in 2025, she asked the Office to prepare at the earliest opportunity a report for discussion by the Governing Body on possible normative or non-normative action.
31. She noted with interest that the UN Working Group on Ageing had recommended the consideration of an international legally binding instrument to promote, protect and ensure all human rights of older persons; it was important for the Office to participate actively in those discussions and to ensure synergies with its own work. The SRM TWG had also suggested during its review of the Older Workers Recommendation, 1980 (No. 162), a possible future general discussion or standard-setting discussion on the subject. She asked the Office to include, in the document for the Governing Body's next discussion on the agenda of future sessions of the Conference, a proposal for an item on migration.
32. Regarding the draft decision, the group had a strong preference for a general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work.
33. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Employers' group still believed that, in its approach to agenda-setting, the Governing Body should prioritize emerging issues that affected the world of work and required the ILO's timely attention. The group would not accept the inclusion of two standard-setting items on the agenda of a single Conference session, as it was neither appropriate nor practical, would place undue strain on the Office and constituents, and was not in line with established practice. The group had agreed to place two standard-setting items on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference only as an exception. Furthermore, a single discussion for standard-setting would place severe strain on the Office and constituents in terms of resources, costs and time, and would be detrimental to quality.
34. The Employers' group continued to support the inclusion on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference of an item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work, which was important in relation to the strategic goals of the Decent Work Agenda and particularly relevant following the adoption by the UN General Assembly in September 2024 of the Global Digital Compact, for which the ILO could provide important input on the

social and employment dimensions. The Employers' group's proposal for an item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity highlighted the critical importance of productivity for higher wages, better working conditions, stability, skills development and career growth, economic resilience and social progress; the group therefore supported the inclusion of that item on the agenda of the Conference at the earliest opportunity. Having expressed flexibility regarding the merging of the two items on harnessing technology and on structural transformation, she stressed the need to avoid distracting from the key discussion of productivity-enhancing policies. The Governing Body needed to reach consensus at the current session on whether to merge the two topics in one item. If it was so decided, the Employers' group supported the inclusion of the merged item on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026). If they remained separate items, the group supported their inclusion on the agendas of the 114th and 115th Sessions (2026 and 2027).

35. As for the standard-setting items on ergonomics and manual handling and on guarding of machinery, it was imperative to maintain the established practice of holding a double discussion for each to ensure ample time for discussion, especially given the complexity of the issues. Including two such items on the agenda of a single session would be inappropriate as it would place too great a strain on the resources and time management of the Office and constituents. The group strongly supported the proposal by the SRM TWG to hold a meeting of experts prior to the double discussion for those items. The items should be placed on the agenda of the Conference only after a meeting of experts had taken place and no sooner than 2029. The group supported placing on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) an item on the withdrawal of Convention No. 83 (subparagraph (b) of the draft decision).
36. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Benin said that, of the topics proposed for a general discussion at the 114th Session (2026), the group favoured harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work, which would provide an opportunity to examine the implications of the Global Digital Compact for the ILO's mandate. The subject of structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity was also of great importance to the group and needed to be examined in depth in a separate general discussion, which it proposed for the 115th Session (2027).
37. The Africa group had previously proposed that standard-setting on chemical hazards should be the subject of a double discussion at the 115th and 116th Sessions (2027 and 2028). As proposed in the document, standard-setting on the guarding of machinery could be completed in a single discussion at the 119th Session (2031), preceded by a tripartite meeting in 2030, to avoid any overlap with standard-setting on ergonomics and manual handling.
38. He reiterated his group's proposal that matters related to whistle-blowers in the public service should be discussed in the form of tripartite technical meetings or meetings of experts to examine a broad range of contextual aspects. With regard to advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work, he proposed to continue the consultations on the follow-up to the general discussion at the 112th Session (2024) of the Conference. He supported the draft decision with the option of harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work.
39. **Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**,¹ a Government representative of Peru

¹ Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

stressed the importance of maintaining the Governing Body's long-standing strategic and coherent approach to setting the agenda of the Conference. The group was preparing to participate actively in the standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy and in the general discussion on innovative approaches to tackling informality at the 113th Session (2025), both of which were priority issues for the region.

40. He reiterated the group's support for the ongoing standard-setting exercise on protection against biological hazards, for the forthcoming double discussion on decent work in the platform economy due to take place at the 113th and 114th Sessions (2025 and 2026), and for the inclusion of a standard-setting item on chemical hazards on the agenda of the 115th and 116th Sessions (2027 and 2028).
41. He agreed in principle that standard-setting on ergonomics and manual handling should take place in a double discussion at the 117th and 118th Sessions (2029 and 2030), and favoured a single standard-setting discussion on the guarding of machinery at the 119th Session (2031).
42. For the agenda of the 114th Session (2026), the group supported a general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work, consistent with the aspirations of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the 2021 Conference conclusions concerning inequalities and the world of work.
43. Harnessing the potential of technology to achieve decent work was an important and relevant topic, and the group would support it being held at the 116th Session (2028), to allow sufficient time to consider the outcome and initial implementation of the future standard on decent work in the platform economy that could be adopted at the 114th Session (2026).
44. With regard to the items on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity and on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work and sustainable development, he expressed the group's flexibility as to which could be included on the agendas of the 115th and 116th Sessions (2027 and 2028).
45. **Speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)**, a Government representative of Australia said that his group continued to support the strategic and coherent approach to setting the agenda of the Conference, and was mindful of the recommendations of the SRM TWG on standard-setting, including with respect to ergonomics and manual handling, and the guarding of machinery.
46. With regard to the agenda of the 114th Session (2026), ASPAG was open to the various proposed topics for a general discussion. It could support combining the topics of harnessing the fullest potential of technology and structural transformation of the economy in the interest of efficiency, and was open to scheduling it in 2026 if that was the consensus.
47. The group would prefer to defer a decision on the agenda for the 115th Session (2027) until the next session of the Governing Body to allow time to consider the report on the implementation of the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains that would be discussed at that session.
48. ASPAG supported the inclusion on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) an item on the withdrawal of Convention No. 83.
49. **Speaking on behalf of the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland underscored her group's support for the coherent and strategic approach to the setting of the Conference agenda. IMEC strongly supported the mandate of the SRM TWG and its crucial role in ensuring that the ILO had a clear, robust and up-to-date body of standards; follow-up action

to the SRM TWG's recommendations was key to the delivery of the ILO's normative mandate. In light of the SRM TWG's recommendation on occupational safety and health, she reiterated IMEC's support for standard-setting on chemical hazards on the basis of a double discussion at the 115th and 116th Sessions (2027 and 2028). The Governing Body would soon be required to make a decision regarding follow-up to the SRM TWG's recommendations on standards on ergonomics and manual handling and on the guarding of machinery.

50. She reiterated her group's interest in keeping open the possibility of a normative discussion on decent work in global supply chains at the 115th Session (2027), while recognizing that the holding of two parallel standard-setting discussions would be challenging for some constituents and should not become common practice. IMEC looked forward to receiving an update on the progress of the ILO strategy on decent work in global supply chains at the forthcoming session of the Governing Body, as well as the options paper on possible initiatives to complement the body of international labour standards on global supply chains, which the Office was due to present at the 356th Session of the Governing Body (November 2025). Both background documents would contribute to a fruitful and in-depth discussion of the issue.
51. With regard to possible items for inclusion on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026), IMEC maintained its preference for a general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work, which was not only of global importance but central to the Organization's standard-setting mandate; a discussion could help to strengthen the implementation of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and would provide a valuable opportunity to follow up on the outcomes of the 112th Session of the Conference (2024) on decent work and the care economy and on fundamental principles and rights at work. The group was open to hearing the views of other members and to postponing a decision until the next session if no consensus emerged.
52. **A Government representative of Barbados** said that as technological advances opened up significant opportunities, it was important to focus on harnessing technology for decent work, while limiting any potentially adverse impacts. He was not in favour of holding that discussion at the same time as standard-setting on decent work in the platform economy, because small States with limited resources would be unable to follow both discussions. The same applied to the proposed discussions on harnessing technological innovation and on structural transformation towards higher levels of productivity. Moreover, the discussion on decent work in the platform economy should take account of the stage and impact of technological developments, including artificial intelligence.
53. To give continuity to the discussion at the 112th Session (2024) on decent work and the care economy, including the gender imbalances that must be addressed to ensure that women could contribute more fully to economic development, he supported the inclusion on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) of an item on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality, with discussions on harnessing the full potential of technology and on structural transformation of the economy at one of the earliest possible sessions thereafter.
54. **A Government representative of Japan** said that the agenda of the Conference should reflect key and emerging issues in the world of work. Japan recognized the importance of the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work. Technological development, including rapid advances in artificial intelligence, could drive productivity, innovation and jobs. The risks that workers might face as a result of the ever-increasing impact of technology should be acknowledged and addressed. In that context, the G20 and G7 Ministers' Meetings on Labour and Employment could provide useful inputs to a future

discussion at the Conference. He favoured the placement of an item on harnessing technology on the agenda as soon as possible, but was prepared to be flexible to reach consensus.

55. As to the proposed agenda items for standard-setting, he noted that it would be very difficult, even for a country of Japan's size, to participate meaningfully in parallel standard-setting discussions. Lastly, he observed that the possible agenda items for a general discussion at the 114th Session (2026) were listed in a different order in the draft decision than in the body of the document, and requested the Office to avoid such differences in the future to prevent any misunderstandings or mistrust.
56. **A Government representative of China** welcomed the continued application of the strategic and coherent approach to the setting of the Conference agenda. The general discussion should focus on pressing issues to guide constituents on how to effectively respond to challenges, seize opportunities for development, promote decent work and achieve social justice. Scientific and technological innovation, especially the widespread use of artificial intelligence and information technology, was accelerating the digital transformation of the world of work, profoundly affecting the organization of human work and production. Such innovation presented new challenges for global labour governance and opened up vast opportunities for new productive forces and the promotion of decent work. The subject was therefore ripe for consideration by the International Labour Conference. The wording "technological innovation and structural transformation for decent work and sustainable development" in subparagraph (a) of the draft decision fully accommodated the concerns of all parties and should be included as the general discussion item on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference. His Government was ready to work towards consensus on the matter.
57. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that gender equality should be prioritized in the agenda for the 114th Session of the Conference. In addition, following the interventions of the social partners, her Government supported the proposal to merge the general discussion items on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work and the structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity. Technology was itself a transformation that should always be addressed in the context of structural transformation of the economy. Moreover, productivity should not be discussed without reference to decent work, as the term was sometimes used – alongside other terms such as "entrepreneurship" – to mask precarious work or work that placed an excessive burden on workers.
58. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster), responding to a query about the timing of the tripartite meeting of experts prior to the double discussion for standard-setting on ergonomics, said that a law and practice report needed to be submitted not less than 18 months before the first discussion of a topic. Therefore, if the first discussion on ergonomics took place in 2029, the report should be submitted in late 2026 or early 2027 at the latest, with the necessary resources included in the programme and budget for that period. The same principle would apply to a single discussion for standard-setting on the guarding of machinery, so submission in late 2028 or early 2029 for a discussion in 2031. The Office could provide a briefing session for constituents on the implications of decisions stemming from the recommendations of the SRM TWG, and on any other issues that might arise concerning future Conference agendas.
59. Regarding the different options for general discussion at the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference, she noted the widespread support for the item on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality. Some speakers had expressed a preference for the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work, while others agreed on

its importance but would be content to address it at a later session to take into account the standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy due to take place in 2026. It seemed that there was appetite for discussing structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity, but at a later date, while several speakers had declared themselves open to merging the item with that on technology. Given the flexibility shown, it should be possible to reach a decision on the matter. She agreed, however, that the decision should be taken following the discussion of the report of the Ninth Meeting of the SRM TWG, given the need to consider its view of the withdrawal of Convention No. 83.

60. **The Worker spokesperson** asked for further information on the proposal to use a single discussion procedure for the standard-setting discussion on the guarding of machinery, preceded by a technical meeting. It would be useful to clarify when exceptions to the double discussion procedure should apply.
61. **The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) said that, as standard-setting on the guarding of machinery would involve the consolidation of two existing standards, there was no need to look into new issues. A single discussion procedure preceded by a tripartite technical meeting was therefore likely to be sufficient.
62. **The Worker spokesperson** said that such information was useful for a strategic long-term vision of agendas and the timely planning of technical or expert meetings. Her group would appreciate additional time to reflect on the discussion before making a final decision by the end of the current Governing Body session. In that context, the Employers' group should consider prioritizing the issue of gender equality, as other participants had done, given the need for businesses to make use of the capacities and talents of women workers and entrepreneurs. Regarding the proposal to merge the items on the potential of technology and structural transformation of the economy, she stressed that her group would not discuss those topics in isolation, in the interests of efficiency and to ensure thorough coverage of all issues related to technological advances, decent work, structural transformation and climate challenges. A more comprehensive proposal on that subject could be presented to the Governing Body in March 2025.
63. **The Employer spokesperson** said that her group would still prefer to have separate general discussions on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work and on structural transformation of the economy towards higher productivity, in 2026 and 2027. Both technology and productivity were relevant issues in the world of work and the policy field, hence their suitability for a general discussion. The Employers' group also appreciated the importance of gender equality and was open to a general discussion on that issue. Based on what other speakers had said, one compromise would be to hold a merged general discussion on technology and structural transformation in 2026 and then to address gender equality in 2027. Such a step would do justice to the urgency of the issues. However, the group was open to reversing that order of priority if that would achieve consensus for a decision to be taken during the current session.
64. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group did consider the topic of technology, technological change and structural transformation relevant, but thought it would be best discussed after 2026 to take into account the standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy. However, the group would consider the proposal by the Employers' group if the Office could provide more details on the proposed merged item on technology and structural transformation. The Workers' group was content for the issue of productivity to be included in the discussion, but especially wished to cover worker protection with regard to

new technologies and climate challenges. Supply chains was another important topic that should be the subject of a double discussion for standard-setting at a future session of the Conference. Other discussions to be held at a later stage, namely those on ergonomics and the guarding of machinery, did not have to be finalized immediately as long as their implications for the programme and budget were taken into account.

(The Governing Body resumed its discussion of this item at a later sitting.)

65. **The Employer spokesperson** said that it was her group's understanding that Governing Body members were open to merging the two items "harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work" and "structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity". The Employers' group was also open to that, provided that attention was not deflected from the key discussion of productivity policies. After further discussion with the Workers' group, the Employers' group could agree to addressing the impact of structural transformation not only in the context of technological change but also more broadly in view of economic, social and technological change, digitization, climate change and demographic shifts. Her group was open to including an item on gender equality.
66. The only remaining point of disagreement was the timing of each discussion. In a spirit of consensus, the Employers' group could agree to including those two items – the merged item and the item on gender equality – on the agendas of the 114th (2026) and 115th (2027) Sessions, respectively. The group therefore asked the Office to provide a proposal for the merged item on the basis of the terms agreed with the Workers' group that:

A general discussion would be a step towards providing guidance on the "why" and "how" of harnessing technological innovation and structural transformation processes in the context of unprecedented economic and social changes, climate change, demographic shifts and digitization that characterized the current era. Adapting to those changes necessitated a profound transformation of industries and sectors through the implementation of just transition frameworks. The discussion would focus on identifying challenges and opportunities to stimulate innovation and productivity growth across regions and sectors, production and investment. It would also identify policy actions to revitalize local communities, supporting full employment, productivity and sustainability through structural changes towards higher-value-added economic activities that promoted sustainable economic growth and decent work. The discussion should consider the complex and multifaceted interaction of macroeconomic trade, investment, labour, employment and development policies.

67. The Employers' group wished to add that the need for a balanced set of policies for improving the business environment while upholding fundamental principles and rights at work should be borne in mind during that general discussion.
68. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group agreed with what she understood to be the consensus that the item on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality would be included on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference and the merged item would be included on the agenda of the 115th Session (2027) on the basis of the terms agreed between the Workers' and Employers' groups and under the provisional title "Technological innovation and structural transformation for decent work and sustainable development". If the Governing Body so decided, she asked the Office to present at its 353rd Session (March 2025) a proposal for the content of the discussion on the merged item. The Conference conclusions on inequalities and the world of work from the 109th Session (2021) would also be relevant to that discussion. The Governing Body should reserve its discussion of the agenda for sessions beyond 2027 until its next meeting or later.
69. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Australia said that his group remained open to the various ideas for general discussions presented in document

GB.352/INS/2 and was willing to support the emerging consensus on scheduling a general discussion on gender equality for the 114th Session (2026) and a general discussion on a combined item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology and structural transformation for the 115th Session (2027) of the Conference.

70. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of France said that his group's preference was for a general discussion on gender equality at the 114th Session (2026). The group could support the inclusion of a combined item for a general discussion on harnessing technology and structural transformation on the agenda of the 115th Session (2027), provided that the ILO's social justice mandate remained at the heart of the discussion. He therefore asked the Office to present a proposal on such a discussion to the Governing Body for decision at its 353rd Session (March 2025). Such a timeline would likely not allow for a standard-setting discussion on supply chains to begin at the 115th Session (2027), which IMEC would have supported. However, the group would be willing to support postponing that standard-setting discussion to begin at the 116th Session (2028) if doing so would facilitate consensus at the current Governing Body session. That would also give the Office and constituents an additional year to prepare for that important discussion.
71. **The Employer spokesperson** emphasized that the term "productivity" must remain in the title of the merged item, as the wording of the original item proposed was "structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity".
72. **The Worker spokesperson** said that, in the decision, the title of the item on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality must be followed by the words "at work".
73. **The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) said that the Office would present, at the next session of the Governing Body, a proposal for the discussion on the merged item that took into account the guidance provided by the Governing Body, including the joint inputs from the Workers' and Employers' groups.

Decision

74. **The Governing Body:**
 - (a) **decided to place on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference an item for a general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work and to place on the agenda of the 115th Session (2027) of the Conference an item for a general discussion merging the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work with the item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity, and requested the Office to provide a proposal for such an item taking into account the Governing Body's guidance, including the inputs jointly provided by the Employers' and Workers' groups, for consideration at its 353rd Session (March 2025);**
 - (b) **decided to place on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference an item on the withdrawal of the Labour Standards (Non-Metropolitan Territories) Convention, 1947 (No. 83);**
 - (c) **requested the Office to take into account the guidance provided in preparing the document concerning the agenda of future sessions of the Conference for its 353rd Session (March 2025).**

(GB.352/INS/2, paragraph 49, as amended by the Governing Body)

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

3.1. Follow-up to the resolution concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work (GB.352/INS/3/1)

75. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, proposed jointly by the Employers' and Workers' groups and circulated to the Office, which read:

The Governing Body requested the Director-General, to take into account its guidance, to review in implementing and periodically reviewing the plan of action set out in GB.352/INS/3/1 giving effect to the conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work, and to prepare an information document to be presented at its 356th Session in March 2026 that reflects the adjustments and implementation progress and to draw on it in preparing future programme and budget proposals.

76. **The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the structuring of the plan along five means of action and the linkage with the four areas of focus for governments. However, he expressed concern that it failed to align with the conclusions. The high-level outputs did not ensure balanced attention to the five fundamental principles and rights at work categories but overemphasized freedom of association, collective bargaining and trade unions. In the outputs under the focus area of freedom of association and social dialogue, including collective bargaining, the Office had omitted reference to social dialogue in favour of collective bargaining exclusively. Furthermore, the plan did not sufficiently follow the specific guidance on addressing some of the root causes of decent work deficits and implementation gaps, nor drive the effective implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work by governments. It also did not adequately address the nexus between fundamental principles and rights at work and sustainable enterprises, support for the integration of fundamental principles and rights at work into micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, or the capacities of employers' organizations.
77. On standards-related action, there was no reference to a dedicated output on promoting the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). The Employers strongly questioned the wording used for the high-level output on workers' organizations' campaigns advocating for the ratification of fundamental Conventions; the Office itself should not develop advocacy or related materials. Although the conclusions called for increased synergies within the ILO on all fundamental principles and rights at work, there was only an output on enhancing synergies to mainstream freedom of association and collective bargaining. Regarding enhanced research and capacity, the Employers doubted the feasibility of the output concerning global estimates on the level of national compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining, due to the almost impossible task of finding relevant measures to allow horizontal comparisons.
78. Concerning formalization and sustainable enterprises, the output on research on the legal framework and impact of new technologies should focus on the many opportunities linked to new technologies including productivity levels, job creation and all forms of social dialogue. With regard to freedom of association and social dialogue, the Employers rejected the output on good and innovative practices of workers' and employers' organizations. They would not support the output on capacity-building for employers' and workers' organizations if it focused only on the promotion of freedom of association and effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining in relation to the informal economy. No output was foreseen on raising awareness in the UN system on the important role of micro, small and medium-sized

enterprises or on creating and promoting an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises conducive to fundamental principles and rights at work.

79. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed strong support for the output on mainstreaming fundamental principles and rights at work promoted in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and, in particular, the output on enhancing synergies in respect of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. The outputs on global estimates on the level of national compliance and on workers' organizations' campaigns were also welcome. He noted with interest the output on research undertaken on the legal framework and impact of new technologies. The output on post-disaster needs assessments, while appreciated, should also include armed conflicts. However, it was highly problematic that the Office had incorporated in the plan certain elements that were not part of the conclusions. Concerning policy coherence and partnerships, some points agreed in the conclusions had been left out, such as a reference to strengthened engagement with the World Trade Organization.
80. The Workers opposed the output concerning discussions on productivity growth and fundamental principles and rights at work in multilateral forums, as a broader focus than solely productivity was necessary. The Office should also include work with the G20 Occupational Safety and Health Network and address freedom of association and bargaining in Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS countries). The output regarding research on the link between productivity growth, job creation, job quality and fundamental principles and rights at work far exceeded what had been agreed in the conclusions. It was unclear why the Office wanted to look at productivity statistics specifically in relation to collective bargaining. The output also lacked an emphasis on performance measures and their impact on fundamental principles and rights at work. In relation to planning, mobilization and allocation of resources and development cooperation, the Office had unilaterally introduced references to innovative financing mechanisms and the implementation of social impact bonds. Overall, the outputs focused more on the first three of the five thematic priorities, with little focus on just transition and the digital economy.
81. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon welcomed the proposed plan of action. The five means of action, in particular policy coherence and partnerships, took into account the region's main concerns. The definitive plan of action should clearly indicate the framework for the consultations held by the Office with ILO constituents to prioritize outputs for financing, in case sufficient resources were not available. It was important to take into account different national contexts when implementing the plan, particularly with regard to the activities related to Convention No. 111. She supported the amendment proposed by the Workers and the Employers.
82. **Speaking on behalf of a majority of Governments of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru welcomed the output on promoting the mainstreaming of fundamental principles and rights at work in DWCPs, United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, and in the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. The output on implementing ILO frameworks of action on child labour and forced labour was also valued. Regarding the proposed amendment, he asked whether the March 2026 deadline would jeopardize the implementation of the plan. If the Office confirmed that it would not, he could accept the proposed amendment.
83. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of the Philippines took note of the proposed plan of action and recognized that the fundamental principles and rights at work were vital for fostering sustainable economic growth and social cohesion across the diverse Asia and the Pacific region. Despite notable developments since 2017, challenges remained,

including the increase in child and forced labour, threats to the right to collective bargaining and the expansion of the platform economy.

84. Emphasizing the need for robust governance, she encouraged the Office to continue providing countries in her region with technical assistance for the ratification of up-to-date Conventions, particularly those related to occupational safety and health. ASPAG advocated for increased investment by the Office in research and capacity-building initiatives to enhance compliance with international labour standards, and for strengthened partnerships with international organizations, civil society and the private sector to enhance policy coherence for the realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work. Commitment to equality and inclusion must remain at the forefront of the ILO's actions and the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, with a focus on formalization, should be a priority. She encouraged the Office to continue its work on enhancing research and knowledge-sharing, especially in areas such as the impact of emerging technologies on the fundamental principles and rights at work and urged the social partners to engage constructively in the implementation of the proposed plan of action. She called on the Office to provide regular updates on progress in that regard. Her group supported the proposed amendment.
85. **Speaking on behalf of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America**, a Government representative of the United States welcomed the proposed activities to reinforce efforts for the promotion of freedom of association and collective bargaining. She also supported the focus on gender equality and inclusion, which were essential to achieve a world free from poverty and a just transition. She underlined the importance of further developing targeted measures for groups more at risk of fundamental principles and rights at work deficits, addressing the specific needs and barriers faced by persons in vulnerable situations and strengthening disaggregated data on discrimination. She noted with interest the planned studies on the intersection of fundamental principles and rights at work with trade.
86. She welcomed the proposed actions to increase synergies among the ILO supervisory bodies, development cooperation, technical assistance and research and efforts to build on the ILO's partnerships with various civil society organizations. She would appreciate additional information, such as baselines and measures of success, on the implementation of actions to give effect to the conclusions from the second recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work that had not been completed. She encouraged the Office to continue strengthening internal capacity to effectively implement the proposed plan of action, including by assessing internal training needs, and would be interested to know whether there were mandatory courses for ILO officials on reviewing the fundamental principles and rights at work and the supervisory mechanisms. She urged the Office to consider allocating sufficient regular budget resources in current and future programmes and budgets to support the implementation of those principles and rights. It would be useful to have information on how the Office intended to identify the priority outputs that it would be able to deliver with the available resources within the established time frame. She expressed support for the proposed amendment.
87. **Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that the following countries aligned themselves with the statement: Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Norway. She strongly supported a cross-cutting approach to the five thematic priorities identified in the resolution concerning the third recurrent discussion and welcomed efforts to ensure coherence with the ILO's strategic documents, including the programme and budget. She noted with concern the absence of specific references to each of those priorities in document GB.352/INS/3/1 and the low number

of proposed standards-related actions regarding crisis situations, just transition and the digital economy in the appendix. She urged the Office to conduct further research and analysis to better identify fundamental principal and rights at work deficits and develop effective solutions to address them.

88. She appreciated that further support would be offered to governments in advancing towards the universal ratification of the fundamental Conventions, and that increased attention would be paid to ensuring the coherence of ILO actions. The Office's efforts to support ILO constituents with made-to-measure technical assistance and capacity-building on all five fundamental principles and rights at work were welcome. She expressed support for work to accelerate action for the realization of those principles and rights and to enhance policy coherence across the multilateral system and commended the Office for its strategy to mobilize earmarked resources to expand development cooperation. She supported the proposed amendment.
89. **Speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam said that the fundamental principles and rights at work had been incorporated into various ASEAN initiatives, reflecting its members' long-standing commitment to the protection of workers' rights. She expressed confidence that the proposed plan of action for the period 2024–30 would further strengthen international labour standards, help close gaps in implementation and enhance global cooperation. ASEAN aligned itself with the call made on behalf of ASPAG for the social partners to engage constructively in the implementation of the plan and supported the draft decision as amended.
90. **A Government representative of Mexico** said that he agreed with the proposal for the multidisciplinary team that had developed the proposed plan of action to supervise, monitor and support its implementation and, also, the revision of the fundamental principles and rights at work strategy. The time frame to address the thematic priorities should be reduced, given the urgency of addressing issues such as the elimination of forced and child labour and discrimination. Further details on the specific estimated budget allocation for the priority outputs would be helpful. He would be interested to know how the proposed plan of action would impact the current action plans for each of the five categories of fundamental principles and rights, how the plan would be aligned with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, and how the Office would seek to ensure that each of the fundamental Conventions was accorded equal importance. The challenges posed by the increase in non-standard forms of employment, the exclusion of certain categories of workers and high levels of competition in the labour market required innovative responses.
91. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) said that the omissions indicated, including the need to pay more adequate attention to the root causes of deficits in the observance of the fundamental principles and rights at work, had been noted and would be considered in the future development of the plan of action. The proposed plan built on existing commitments undertaken by the Office following instructions and guidance from the Governing Body. Freedom of association and collective bargaining were particularly important for realizing the ILO's four strategic objectives, but she would ensure that the Office continued work on the other forms of social dialogue. The imbalance in the treatment of the five thematic priorities reflected the focus of the ILO's work, particularly in the case of the just transition and the digitalization of the economy, which were relatively new areas. The Programme and Budget for the period 2026–27 would include an outcome dedicated to those priorities. Further discussions on the proposed programme and budget at the Governing Body's 353rd Session (March 2025) would present another opportunity to consider the thematic priorities. It might

be appropriate to present an information document to the Governing Body on any adjustments and progress in the implementation of the plan of action at its 358th Session in November 2026, since that was the midpoint in the programme and budget cycle for 2026–27 and the outcomes of the next session of the Global Conference on Child Labour would be available.

92. **The Worker spokesperson** said that he would be amenable to considering the information document at the November 2026 session of the Governing Body.
93. **The Employer spokesperson** supported subamending the draft decision to reflect that an information document would be presented to the Governing Body in November 2026, as the next session of the Global Conference on Child Labour was expected to take place around March of that year.

Decision

94. **The Governing Body requested the Director-General, taking into account its guidance, to review periodically the plan of action set out in document GB.352/INS/3/1 giving effect to the conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work; to prepare for its 358th Session (November 2026) a document for information that reflects the adjustments and progress in its implementation; and to draw on the plan of action in preparing future programme and budget proposals.**

(GB.352/INS/3/1, paragraph 26, as amended by the Governing Body)

3.2. Follow-up to the resolution concerning decent work and the care economy (GB.352/INS/3/2)

95. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to subparagraph (b) of the draft decision, which had been proposed by the Employers' group and circulated by the Office. The proposal was to replace the words "in the first quarter of 2026" by "in 2026, on a date to be determined by the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025),".
96. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed appreciation to the Office for having prepared the proposed plan of action and pride in the resolution and conclusions concerning decent work and the care economy adopted at the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference. The plan of action should maximize synergies with other ILO plans of action, including that relating to the fundamental principles and rights at work. In order to be better aligned with the resolution, it should include a reference to effective workplace cooperation as a tool to help ensure safe and productive workplaces. Noting that the proposed plan of action was guided by the 5R Framework for Decent Care Work, which was focused primarily on regulatory measures to enhance conditions in care work, she said that policies should not only set standards; they should also provide incentives for businesses to innovate and enhance care delivery. In that regard, greater emphasis should be placed on promoting public-private partnerships, to leverage the strengths of both sectors to provide quality care services in a sustainable manner. The success of the 5R Framework hinged on adequate resources to support its implementation.
97. Turning to component 1 of the plan of action, she welcomed the knowledge products relating to public-private partnerships and private enterprises in care provision and investment and would like to see how those partnerships were used to boost social welfare outcomes and to pool resources. She indicated her strong support for research into skills development in the care economy. The communication and dissemination strategy should include key messages

highlighting the role of the private sector and public-private partnerships and the need for a skilled workforce.

98. On component 2, she stressed that policy guidance relating to maternity protection, care leave policies and work-life balance measures must be guided by evidence and data. The respective needs of and benefits for both employers and workers, as well as the realities of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) needed to be taken into consideration. There should also be a focus on promoting the formalization of jobs and enterprises in the care economy and on supporting the constituents to that end.
99. With respect to component 3, she noted that, in line with the recommendations of the SRM TWG and the resolution concerning decent work and the care economy, the Office was being called on to undertake research to assess whether there were gaps in the ILO's body of international labour standards related to paternity and parental protection, and other care leave. Such research must not deviate from the original intention. The wording used did not presuppose that a new standard was required but pointed to the need to improve understanding of the matter, to inform further decisions.
100. Her group did not support the proposed sectoral approach to international labour standards, which did not align with the resolution. There was a need for broader strategies that ensured sustainability and efficiency in the care economy without overcomplicated regulations. She asked why the plan of action referred to research on key obstacles and challenges for the effective exercise of the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining by all care workers, including those most at risk of exploitation and abuse. That language had been removed from, and therefore did not accurately reflect, the conclusions adopted by the Conference.
101. Explaining the reasoning behind the proposed amendment, she said that there was no need to specify that the meeting of experts on paternity leave and parental protection, and other care leave, would take place in the first quarter of 2026, as the exact dates would be decided upon at the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body. As stated in the programme of meetings set out in document GB.352/INS/22, the dates would be confirmed subject to the decision to be taken by the Governing Body under the current item. She would appreciate it if, in the future, the Office could conduct prior consultations with her group's secretariat on both the form and timing of such meetings, so as to facilitate alignment between different agenda items.
102. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Office for the document, which contained a comprehensive proposal for giving effect to the landmark resolution concerning decent work in the care economy. Referring to component 1, she welcomed the focus on groups of care workers who were more exposed to discrimination and exclusion; it was crucial that community health and care workers were included among those groups. Research should focus on how the decent work deficits of care workers had affected the quality of care provision and the recruitment and retention of care workers, and on the impact of staff shortages on working conditions, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic. The proposed studies on thematic, regional and national trends in decent work and the care economy should also shed light on the development of public investment in the sector.
103. Referring to the development of evidence-based knowledge, she noted that there should also be a focus on how the entities in question were helping to advance labour rights, especially freedom of association and collective bargaining, within the care economy. The communication and dissemination strategy should underline the importance of decent work for care workers in contributing to quality care, supporting worker recruitment and retention,

addressing labour shortages and building resilient societies and economies. Research into skills development should also focus on how skills recognition contributed to the revaluation of paid care work, as well as to enhancing labour and social protection for care workers.

104. Under component 2, advisory services should also focus on helping the constituents to extend assistance and protection to workers with family and caring responsibilities, especially those facing disadvantages. The International Training Centre of the ILO should create a course on developing strategies and measures to address decent work deficits within the care economy, especially those affecting care workers at risk of discrimination and inadequate protection, including in new or emerging forms of employment. Concerning the reinforcement of capacities to strengthen all forms of social dialogue in care sectors, the Office should target countries where new initiatives on care and support systems were emerging. She emphasized the importance of developing guidance on policies and legislation that contributed to a rights-based approach for care, grounded in international labour standards and social dialogue, ensuring high standards of quality, safety and health for care workers and recipients, and safeguarding the rights of both.
105. Moving on to component 3, she supported the promotion of the ratification and effective implementation of the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). Technical support and guidance on maternity protection should extend beyond those countries that had already ratified that or the other maternity protection Conventions. It should also target countries that were aiming to align their legislation with the standards of Convention No. 183. Her group welcomed efforts to promote the voice and representation of care workers, in particular domestic workers, community health and care workers and migrant care workers. Research into the role of community health and care workers was essential.
106. Under component 4, she underlined that the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions were important vehicles for strengthening partnerships with UN entities. The Office should ensure that representatives of all constituent groups from the selected developing countries had access to the "South4Care" platform. It should also establish criteria for engaging with partners that were not ILO constituents. She sought clarification on the form of support provided to help monitor the impacts of climate and technological change on paid and unpaid care work, and stressed the importance of conducting research into the challenges and opportunities involved in the introduction and use of technology in the care economy, and its impact on working conditions. She accepted the draft decision and the proposed amendment.
107. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Congo welcomed the proposed plan of action. He asked what specific strategies the ILO would deploy in Africa, at the national level and in the workplace, to bring about real change. Concerning component 2, he said that technical assistance in Africa should be directed towards managing the migration of care workers more equitably, as the large-scale departure of such workers, after they had received costly training, was depriving African countries of an essential resource. Agreements should therefore be concluded, with the support of the ILO, between countries of origin and the main countries of destination, under which the countries of destination would contribute to the education and training; skills upgrading, recognition and certification; and access to lifelong learning of such workers, in order to develop, attract and retain a skilled workforce in African countries.
108. The holding of a tripartite meeting of experts in 2026 was essential to enable the ILO to assess whether there were gaps in its body of international labour standards related to paternity and parental protection, and other care leave. The costs associated with holding it should be based

on the best possible financial option. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the need to better equip the care economy to prevent future health crises, taking into account climate, technological and other major changes. He urged the Office to pursue the plan of action and supported the draft decision as amended by the Employers' group.

- 109. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Brazil supported the holding of a tripartite meeting of experts on paternity and parental protection, and other care leave, given the relevance of the care economy in her region and the need to address gaps in the ILO's international labour standards covering the issue. She was pleased to note the inclusion of measures to strengthen regional partnerships and initiatives and to improve policy coherence in the multilateral system on the care economy, leveraging the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the Global Accelerator. She supported the creation of the "South4Care" platform and would like to learn more about it. It was important to monitor the impacts of climate change and technological change on paid and unpaid care work. Any conclusions drawn could be used in the development of international policies on that subject. She reaffirmed her group's commitment to build an inclusive and supportive care system at the national, regional and international levels, in order to redistribute care work, with special attention to vulnerable groups in society. She supported the draft decision, as amended.
- 110. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh welcomed the fact that the proposed plan of action was guided by the 5R Framework and urged the Office to take into consideration his group's broad range of care work experience as it looked to implement component 1. The development of knowledge products could be instrumental for governments and enterprises as they took decisions on investments in quality care services, care infrastructure, training and employment opportunities. A gap analysis was essential to decide on future normative actions to protect care workers in terms of paternity and parental protection and other care leave. He therefore welcomed the proposal to convene a tripartite meeting of experts on that subject in 2026. The ILO's technical assistance was required to help devise sector-specific strategies, guidelines and policies for care workers in diverse occupations and ensure that such initiatives addressed the fundamental rights at work; maximum working time limits; occupational safety and health; and the prevention and tackling of violence and harassment. He supported the proposals regarding the reinforcement of the ILO's leadership, policy coherence and partnerships in the multilateral system, and on the leveraging of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, the Global Accelerator and regional initiatives. He expressed support for the amendment proposed by the Employers' group.
- 111. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway and Armenia aligned themselves with her statement. The EU and its Member States were convinced that decent work should also apply in the care economy and stood ready to support efforts towards that end. In that regard, she noted that the European Care Strategy for Caregivers and Care Receivers was focused on improving conditions for both recipients and givers of care and on providing training for care staff. Welcoming the plan of action proposed by the Office, she expressed support for its four components, especially the actions related to knowledge development; technical advisory services and capacity-building for constituents; international labour standards; reinforced social dialogue in the care economy; the development of statistical standards; and the ILO's global leadership promoting policy coherence and partnerships on decent work and the care economy. She supported the proposal for a tripartite meeting on paternity and parental protection, and other care leave. The Office should engage in extrabudgetary resource

mobilization to meet resource gaps, as required. She supported the draft decision, as amended.

112. **Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam said that the care economy played an increasingly vital role in shaping the future of work. Regrettably, care work was often invisible, heavily gendered and undervalued. It was important therefore to address the skills gap, pursue policies to promote gender equality, and recognize the value of care work in driving sustainable economic growth. The ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community, adopted at third ASEAN Women Leaders' Summit in August 2024, was testament to her group's commitment to addressing the specific challenges of the care economy and to creating an inclusive environment that supported decent work in the care economy. She welcomed the proposed plan of action and looked forward to its implementation. She supported the draft decision.
113. **A Government representative of Malawi**, noting that the care economy was a cornerstone of social stability and economic growth, said that the plan of action should acknowledge the impact of changing global demographic patterns. Given that competition for migrant labour in the care economy was likely to intensify, migration needed to be managed in a way that protected individual workers' rights and ensured that countries of origin did not experience a skills shortage. The plan of action should therefore consider modalities for fostering co-investment by countries of destination and countries of origin in the education and skills development of young people in Africa, through the conclusion of agreements between countries, with the support of the ILO, to ensure that African countries retained sufficient numbers of carers to meet their own needs. Sustainable development could not be achieved without a healthy, secure workforce in the care economy. Malawi supported the draft decision.
114. **A Government representative of Barbados**, recognizing the importance of decent work in the care economy, said that the ILO had a solid foundation on which to build a comprehensive programme to achieve the desired outcomes. In the light of demographic trends, it was important to consider the entire "ecosystem" of care. Barbados attached importance to the formalization of care work, which was inextricably linked to the social protection of workers and the sustainability of social security. The first two components of the proposed plan of action should take into account the needs of small island developing States, which would benefit from assistance in the collection and analysis of data to inform evidence-based policy. After outlining recent developments in Barbados to address the challenges of the care economy, including the ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), he emphasized that paid and unpaid care work was essential to all other sectors, and that it was important to ensure the implementation of the Conference resolution.
115. **A Government representative of India** said that, as the global population aged, the demand for care was set to rise, creating numerous jobs and presenting a unique opportunity to formulate a comprehensive care policy. He highlighted several initiatives launched by his Government in that regard, including initiatives to expand universal health coverage to all senior citizens, to engage in bilateral efforts with other countries to facilitate the mobility of skilled care workers, and to alleviate the daily care burden of women and increase maternity leave. A multipronged approach – encompassing professional development, societal awareness, financial support, regulatory frameworks, technological integration, legal protection and improved access to care services – was needed to promote decent work in the care economy.

- 116. A Government representative of the United Kingdom** said that he supported the proposed plan of action and agreed that the 5R Framework should guide the ILO's efforts. He also supported the Office's proposal to convene a tripartite meeting of experts to examine data gaps on care leave and encouraged the ILO to consider data collection at a household level. It was essential to promote the equal sharing of care responsibilities within households and prioritize the provision of accessible, high quality care services that would reduce barriers to the uptake of maternity, paternity and parental leave. The ILO should invest in affordable and inclusive measures to address the challenges linked to demographic transitions. By way of example, he highlighted the recent legislative changes introduced in his country to address the challenges of the care economy. To address shortcomings in its body of labour standards, the ILO should focus on improving gender and social disparities, access to inclusive care services, and employment reform. He was flexible with regard to the amendment proposed by the Employer spokesperson.
- 117. A Government representative of the United States** welcomed the alignment of the proposed plan of action with the conclusions adopted by the Conference. She looked forward to receiving disaggregated data on all forms of care work and appreciated the focus on groups and workers at greatest risk of discrimination and exclusion. She also appreciated the Office's commitment to intensify efforts to strengthen social dialogue, as well as the focus on technical assistance. She supported the proposal to assess whether there were gaps in the ILO's body of international labour standards on care leave, and the convening of a tripartite meeting of experts on care protection. She was convinced that paternity and parental protection policies could encourage a more equal sharing of unpaid care work among caregivers, promote work-family balance, support diverse care needs, and contribute to equality of opportunity and treatment between women and men. She supported the draft decision as amended.
- 118. A Government representative of Australia** said that it was important that the enormous contribution of care workers to society was recognized and valued, and that all care workers enjoyed decent working conditions. Welcoming the proposed plan of action, he underscored the importance of turning the sentiments and commitments of the Conference resolution into concrete actions. He welcomed the fact that the plan of action considered the unique needs of indigenous peoples, including in relation to community-based care, and would be happy to share his country's experience of piloting community-led services that responded to local needs in a culturally appropriate way. He supported the proposal to convene a tripartite meeting of experts on paternity and parental protection, and other care leave. His Government prioritized policies that supported families to make choices that worked for them, alongside policies and programmes settings that improved gender equality. He looked forward to contributing to the implementation of the plan of action.
- 119. A Government representative of South Africa** said that South Africa was committed to keeping the care economy and gender equality at the forefront of the agenda during its Presidency of the G20 in 2025. It would endeavour to advance gender-responsive macroeconomic and sectoral policies, support the professionalization of care work and ensure that paid and unpaid care work were recognized and valued as drivers of sustainable development. She fully supported the proposed plan of action and commended the ILO's commitment to advancing labour standards and fostering global partnerships to drive decent work in the care economy. She encouraged the Office to remain focused on implementing the 5R Framework, ensuring equal treatment and rights for all care workers, and supporting countries to develop and retain their care workforces. Action to address gender-based occupational segregation and to improve conditions for care workers was essential to achieve a fair, resilient and inclusive economy and would contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

120. The Conference resolution provided a valuable opportunity to close the gap between ILO Conventions and other international instruments, including those aimed at preventing human trafficking for domestic servitude and giving a voice to the voiceless. It was an invitation to take decisive action to harmonize international legal frameworks with labour standards to ensure that all workers could enjoy their fundamental rights and protections. She supported the amendment proposed by the Employers' group.
121. **A Government representative of Mexico** said that her country remained committed to building an inclusive and supportive care system at the international and national levels in accordance with the Conference resolution. Paid and unpaid care work was essential and must not prevent carers from engaging in other work. It was important to seize the opportunity to build societies that prioritized care, social welfare and decent work. Underscoring the importance of promoting equal and non-transferable parental leave, she expressed support for the Office's proposal to convene a tripartite meeting on that subject. She then highlighted the steps that her country was taking to address the challenges of the care economy, including the establishment of a national care system.
122. **A Government representative of Canada** welcomed the proposed plan of action, which would support key strategic priorities on gender equality and inequalities in the world of work and contribute to the achievement of SDG 5 on gender equality and Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth. The proposed efforts to address informality in the care economy and assess normative gaps related to care leave were also positive. He was flexible with regard to the timing of the tripartite meeting of experts. He commended the Office for its leadership and the support provided to the constituents to advance decent work in the care economy.
123. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) noted with appreciation the recognition of the central importance of the care economy to job creation, economic and social resilience, and gender equality. The support expressed for the 5R Framework and for the various components of the proposed plan of action was also greatly appreciated.
124. Responding to comments made by the Employer spokesperson, she agreed that workplace cooperation was essential to creating a safe and healthy working environment free from violence and harassment. She confirmed that such cooperation was reflected in the plan of action and that, in line with the recommendations of the SRM TWG, the purpose of the proposed tripartite meeting of experts was to assess whether the existing body of international labour standards related to paternity and parental protection, and other care leave, was fit for purpose in terms of addressing the challenges of the care economy. The need for further normative or non-normative action would be determined on the basis of that assessment.
125. Turning to comments made by the Worker spokesperson, she said that the support proposed by the Office in relation to the impact of climate change and environmental transitions on the care economy would focus on dissemination and capacity-building activities and on using existing technical guidance to clarify the relationship between climate change and the care economy. It would also focus on confirming the "green" status of jobs in the care economy and on ensuring that concerns related to the sector were taken into consideration as part of a just transition.
126. Addressing other comments, she said that the "South4Care" platform, which was a work in progress, had been developed in response to requests by a number of developing countries regarding the specific measures they should take to adapt the care ecosystem to their specific contexts. The current discussion had been useful in terms of clarifying further what the expectations were in that regard. There was also scope to build on existing initiatives, such as

the South–South Meeting Point, which had been developed by the International Training Centre of the ILO, and the ILO Living Academy on South–South and Triangular Cooperation. She acknowledged in that regard the importance of involving the tripartite constituents in such initiatives.

127. The comments highlighting the importance of taking into account demographic shifts in the context of the care economy; the value of bilateral agreements to ensure that the demand for care in countries of destination and origin was properly managed; and the need for adequate investment in skills development, reflected those raised in the discussions of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda. Those discussions had highlighted the relevance of those issues to countries with a “youth bulge” and those with a rapidly ageing population.
128. With regard to the proposed amendment, she said that she had no objection to postponing the decision on the timing of the tripartite meeting of experts until the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body. She noted, however, that it would be preferable to hold the meeting in advance of the 114th Session (2026) and 115th Session (2027) of the Conference, if the items on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality, on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work, and on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity, were included on the agenda of those sessions.
129. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated her thanks to the Office for the comprehensive document and thanked the Government representatives and the Employer spokesperson for their useful input, which had demonstrated the universal importance of the care economy.
130. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked all those that had supported her proposed amendment. Reiterating that her group did not support the proposal to link public–private partnerships with collective bargaining, she invited the Office to review the summary of proceedings of the General Discussion Committee on Decent Work and the Care Economy at the 112th Session (2024) of the Conference, to determine the clear wish of the constituents in that regard. She also reiterated that the plan of action must be consistent with the resolution. She thanked those who recognized the important role of such partnerships and of private enterprises in contributing to a healthy, productive and well-functioning care economy. She appreciated the Office’s assurances with regard to the importance of workplace cooperation.

Decision

131. The Governing Body:

- (a) **requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in implementing the proposed plan of action set out in document GB.352/INS/3/2 giving effect to the Conference resolution concerning decent work and the care economy and to draw on the proposed plan of action in preparing future programme and budget proposals;**
- (b) **approved the holding of a tripartite meeting of experts in 2026, on a date to be determined by the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025), to enable the Organization to assess whether there are gaps in the ILO’s body of international labour standards related to paternity and parental protection, and other care leave (for sick or critically-ill family members, older persons or persons with disabilities) and, if so, what normative and/or non-normative actions could be appropriate;**
- (c) **decided that the cost of the above meeting of experts, which is estimated at US\$389,000, would be financed in the first instance from existing resources**

attributed under the regular budget to the Conditions of Work and Equality Department, with an estimated amount of US\$300,000 financed from savings that may arise under Part I of the budget for 2026–27 or, failing that, through the use of the provision for unforeseen expenditure, in Part II. Should this not prove possible, the Director-General would propose alternative methods of financing at a later stage in the biennium.

(GB.352/INS/3/2, paragraph 36, as amended by the Governing Body)

3.3. Analysis of the measures taken to promote the effective functioning of the Conference (GB.352/INS/3/3)

132. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the slight increase in the proportion of women delegates and advisers in 2024 and expressed the hope that the trend would continue towards full gender parity. It was positive that in-person participation would continue and that the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference would be held at the Palais des Nations. He thanked the Office for the provision of online tutorials and technical support prior to the 112th Session (2024), and for its efforts to facilitate registration and badge collection for delegates; the option to collect badges by proxy had been particularly useful. Work should continue to improve online accreditation and the process for securing visas to travel to Switzerland. The ILO Events app had been an effective tool and the Office should consider reinstating, with the necessary safeguards, the feature allowing delegates to contact one another.
133. The Workers' group would appreciate further clarification regarding the proposed tripartite consultations to prepare for the discussions in the technical committees. Those consultations must remain informal and should not be used as an opportunity to start negotiations prior to the committee sittings. The secretariat of the Workers' group was available to discuss the schedule of consultations in the first quarter of 2025.
134. The group supported efforts to ensure the early nomination of the Officers of the Conference and its committees, and to raise awareness among delegates of the substantive and practical aspects of the Conference. It would also welcome the organization, in coordination with the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), of information sessions on rules and the amendments process.
135. He agreed that the Director-General's report should be published at least three weeks before the opening of the session. He highlighted difficulties in navigating the new website and requested a return to the previous version, where documents did not need to be downloaded in PDF format but could be accessed directly on a web page.
136. He welcomed the success of the inaugural Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the special sitting on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. His group would be interested in the follow-up to those two events, particularly given the ongoing difficult situation in the occupied Arab territories.
137. The Workers' group appreciated the successful use of the new voting system and the Office's briefings on voting procedures. It was positive that all committees had successfully concluded their work, but more attention should be paid to the reasons for holding night sittings. In addition to the slow progress of negotiations and the overall procedural approach, mentioned in the document, disputes related to the interpretation of the Standing Orders had also caused delays. He requested the Office to develop the preliminary suggestions on time management and other measures proposed in paragraph 37 of document GB.352/INS/3/3. Regarding the communication strategy, he welcomed the efforts to inform and engage internal and external

audiences on the work of the Conference, the issues under discussion and major scheduled events. The Workers' group supported the draft decision.

138. **The Employer spokesperson** said that improvements that could be made prior to each session of the Conference included adequate preparation to avoid excessive late-night sittings, which increased pressure, frustrations and stress on all constituents; it would be helpful to provide for them, in advance, in the plan of work. The timely publication of reports was essential; in particular, the Director-General's report should be published at least two months prior to the session. Committee chairpersons should allow sufficient time to discuss difficult issues, and be able to identify when bilateral discussions outside the Committee plenary would be appropriate. She requested the Office to review previous plans of work and consider reinstating two and a half days of substantive discussions for general and recurrent discussion committees, while still allowing for two days for the drafting group. She highlighted the need for the Office to provide timely guidance to the chairpersons; ILO expertise, strict time management, flexibility, active listening, impartiality and diplomacy were all critical skills to enable a chairperson to build consensus. The Office should also consider nominating an individual who could serve as a back-up chairperson in case of emergency.
139. Concerning the tripartite consultations on the proposed points for discussion and plan of work, she said that that practice had proven inefficient in the past and that her group would prefer to continue the practice of consulting the regional coordinators and employers' and workers' secretariats separately. She requested the Office to organize an information session before the Conference on the drafting group process and the submission of amendments and subamendments.
140. Improvements that could be made during the session included the Office preparing more focused, concise, clear and balanced tentative conclusions for the drafting group, which was crucial in saving time and producing better outcomes. The Office had an important role to play in reflecting common positions or proposals for policy recommendations, and in gathering opposing views in a nuanced way in the tentative conclusions that facilitated consensus in the drafting group. Using language that had already been agreed on in a tripartite setting would be preferable to relying on the ILO's own reports. The Employers' group had regrettably experienced situations where observers had been lobbying committee members, which was unacceptable and undermined the tripartite nature of the committee's work. She proposed that the Office should require observers to sign an agreement to refrain from lobbying, with non-compliance resulting in their credentials being withdrawn. To enhance time management, she proposed using a traffic light system to inform all speakers of their remaining speaking time and help chairing officers to apply effective time management. She referred the Office to the comments that the Employer spokesperson had made at the June session of the Governing Body. The Employers' group supported the draft decision.
141. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Senegal commended the improvements made to the functioning of the Conference and the increased number of delegates, particularly the proportion of women. The simpler accreditation and registration procedures and the timely sharing of key information relating to the agenda were welcome. He noted the improved logistical arrangements to address the limited space available, and commended the successful launch of the new voting system. The increased number of speakers in the plenary showed delegates' particular interest. He expressed appreciation to the Office and speakers for their efforts to improve timekeeping in the plenary.
142. Aspects that could still be improved included, firstly, the timely nomination of committee chairpersons; he encouraged governments to support the regional coordinators and the

Government group chairperson in the early nomination of chairpersons. Secondly, earlier publication of the Director-General's report provides delegates with sufficient time to analyse it and prepare their statements; and thirdly, improved time management. He proposed a review of the programme and working methods of the committees to ensure that sittings could finish earlier, which would be of particular importance at the 113rd Session (2025) of the Conference, where there would be two standard-setting committees. Lastly, he expressed concern regarding some delegates' difficulties in obtaining visas to attend the Conference, which had also been raised by the Workers' group. He called on the Office to facilitate the visa process, especially as members who were elected for a three-year period had to reapply each time for the same visa. His group supported the draft decision.

- 143. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Uruguay welcomed the continued high participation rate of delegates to the 112th Session (2024) of the Conference and the measures to facilitate remote participation, including the use of prerecorded videos in plenary and online, passive access to committee sittings. The group expressed concern at the difficulties many delegations had experienced due to the limited seating available and encouraged the Office to do everything within its power to alleviate the situation in 2025. He recognized the Office's efforts to facilitate the accreditation and registration processes, and noted that they would be further improved by the implementation of the planned new conference management system. He expressed appreciation for the Office's efforts to share information effectively, and encouraged it to continue to make the new website more user-friendly. Recognizing the challenges faced in the timely nomination of chairing officers, he stated that his group would continue to make every effort to improve the situation. He emphasized the importance of holding full tripartite consultations to prepare for discussions in the technical committees, as they would enable constituents to understand each other's priorities and expectations, thereby facilitating discussions during the Conference. He welcomed the proposal to share a schedule of consultations with regional coordinators and group secretariats in the first quarter of 2025. The group generally agreed with the areas for improvement identified by the Office, and in particular the need to improve time management and make every effort to avoid night sittings, which had negative impacts on the well-being of delegates and staff. GRULAC supported the draft decision.
- 144. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Japan welcomed the changes proposed in paragraph 37 of the document, which served as a good basis for further discussion. However, the preliminary exchange of views among committee officers proposed in paragraph 37(g) should not be considered as a means to facilitate the discussion at the Conference, as committee chairpersons did not represent the interests of governments. He welcomed the planned return to the Assembly Hall at the Palais des Nations in 2025, which would address the logistical challenges faced in 2024, and requested that any venue changes should be communicated in a timely manner. He noted that some delegates had been unable to upload a photograph or copy of a passport to the online accreditation system. He welcomed plans for a new conference management system and requested that the Office hold information sessions on it. He also requested flexibility in the application of the proxy option.
- 145.** The group considered that discussions extending beyond 10 p.m. were already excessive and those ending after midnight were unacceptable in view of the fundamental right to a safe and healthy working environment; all committee sittings should conclude by 9 p.m. and, in the interests of equity and transparency, should not be continued without interpretation. He emphasized the need to ensure that the workload was reasonable to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. The start of sittings and resumption after breaks had frequently been delayed without explanation due to informal discussions; the Office should inform delegates of any

delays based on the expected duration of such discussions. The group requested improvements to overall time management; in the event of late sittings, arrangements should be made for meals during breaks.

146. He urged the Government group to reach consensus on nominations for chairing officers by the close of the 353rd Session of the Governing Body. Furthermore, he requested the Office to continue to support the chairpersons of the committees with regard to Conference procedures. He also asked the Office to conduct separate briefings for logistical and technical matters, and supported targeted training on procedures for committee members. Lastly, he requested the Office to continue to allow Member States to participate remotely, as some countries lacked the resources to send delegates to Geneva every year. ASPAG supported the draft decision.
147. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Canada noted that the level of women's participation in the Conference remained low, and called on constituents to increase efforts to achieve more equitable representation within delegations. The group appreciated the new measures being implemented for accreditation and registration, but there had still been challenges related to uploading photographs and with the proxy option. The group looked forward to the improvements to be introduced by the new system. She reiterated the difficulties and confusion created by the launch of the new ILO website just prior to the Conference, and requested the Office to notify constituents in a timely manner regarding any future changes. She agreed that the early nomination of chairing officers was important to ensure that they understood the complex procedures used at the Conference and its tripartite nature, including the need to build consensus. She supported the need for timely publication of Conference documents and for transparent communication with constituents if changes were made to committee reports.
148. As to the work of committees, she urged constituents to find ways of ensuring that discussions were targeted and productive in order to avoid late-night sittings, to protect participants' safety and health, including mental health. She encouraged the Office to make further adjustments to the committees' programmes of work and working methods prior to the next session of the Conference. She thanked the Office for the possible changes proposed in paragraph 37 of the document. The time management measures contemplated under subparagraph (a) should be strictly enforced by chairing officers, and the tripartite consultations proposed under (c) relating to technical committees should be held as early as possible. She noted the improvements made at the last session to the availability of food and urged the Office to ensure that it was available to all participants. She asked the Office whether discussions on the functioning of the Conference could be held at the October–November sessions of the Governing Body and not repeated at the subsequent March session, in order to provide sufficient time for the finalization of arrangements and invitations. She supported the draft decision.
149. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) thanked constituents for their comments and suggestions. She noted that the Assembly Hall of the Palais des Nations was still closed, but according to the latest information from the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), it would be reopened in time for the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference. Any possible changes in venue that would be required if the refurbishment work had not been completed would be beyond the Office's control.
150. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Official Meetings, Documents and Relations Department) said that the Office had noted the areas in which the Governing Body

expected improvements and would work with constituents to bring about those improvements. Concerning the preliminary consultations on technical matters, he explained that the purpose was not to start or pre-empt negotiations but to hear the spectrum of views prior to the session of the Conference and improve understanding of the complex issues at stake. It was hoped that the clarity gained from such consultations would facilitate the smooth functioning of the committees. Time management was a key concern of various groups, and improvements would require joint efforts on all sides. He noted the request to be more diligent in terms of starting sittings on time and to increase chairing officers' involvement in time management in committees and the plenary. As to the concerns expressed about the new ILO website, he explained that it no longer required users to download PDF documents. The functionality of the website would continue to be improved and a survey would be sent to constituents seeking suggestions for improvements to the website, which would include access to documents for meetings of the governance organs.

151. In response to the question from the representative of IMEC on streamlining the discussions within the Governing Body on the functioning of the Conference, he said that the Office would continue to seek feedback on matters arising from each session of the Conference immediately afterwards at the June session of the Governing Body. At the November session of the Governing Body, the Office could provide a more comprehensive document building on that feedback and providing a basis for the programme for the following session to help delegates to better prepare; however, some details, such as those related to the high-level event, would not be available until a date closer to the Conference session. As to the challenges related to the accreditation system and the proxy option, some would be addressed with the roll-out of the new conference management system, but that system would have to be aligned with the security systems used by UNOG. That would continue to impose some constraints, which the Office was working with UNOG staff to resolve.
152. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) noted the concerns expressed by the representative of the Africa group related to obtaining visas to attend the Conference. After the Worker spokesperson had raised the issue at the previous session of the Governing Body, the Office of the Legal Adviser had contacted the Permanent Mission of Switzerland, which had reported that the number of visas denied had decreased from 2023 to 2024. She invited the representatives of the groups affected to contact her office so that the appropriate action could be taken.
153. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated his position that holding prior consultations on technical matters was a delicate matter, as Conference discussions should involve the views of tripartite representatives from all 187 Member States. Implementing such consultations would require further discussion. The shared desire for inclusive and results-oriented social dialogue at every session of the Conference was clear from the views expressed by the Governing Body. It was important to avoid any attempt to renegotiate prior conclusions on fundamental issues that formed the building blocks of every new discussion.
154. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed with the Worker spokesperson on the issue of prior tripartite consultations. It was not her group's intention to exclude governments from drafting the points for discussion; the Office could send them to all constituents simultaneously, who could reply in writing or orally within the deadline. Instead, the intention was to avoid pre-empting the negotiations at the Conference. The practice of consulting the groups separately in advance of the session had been beneficial and did not need to be changed. Furthermore, efforts to simplify processes would be of even greater importance in 2025 with two standard-setting items on the agenda.

Decision

- 155. 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.**

(GB.352/INS/3/3, paragraph 43)

4. Update on the Global Coalition for Social Justice (GB.352/INS/4(Rev.1))

- 156. The Employer spokesperson** said that she was encouraged to see increasing numbers of partners joining the Global Coalition for Social Justice, including from the business community. She noted with appreciation the substantial improvements made to the work of the Coalition, which was heading in a very positive direction. Before being able to fully agree to proceed with the new interventions, the Governing Body would need time to fully understand them, although her group supported the existing interventions such as the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC), the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and Productivity Ecosystem for Decent Work and Social Justice.
- 157.** She would like to see the centre of excellence on inequalities examine all forms of inequality, including its systemic root causes, such as shortcomings in enabling environments for sustainable enterprises and good governance. It would also be interesting to see the impact of technology on inclusion, including its effect on inequalities. She wondered how the Coalition could ensure that the technology transfer benefited countries with relatively few technological resources, how the centre of excellence would be funded and how constituents could contribute their experience and expertise to it. Similar questions applied to the proposed development of country-specific strategies to tackle different dimensions of inequality. It would also be interesting to have more information on how that initiative would differ from, and interact with, the work of the centre of excellence.
- 158.** It would be important to ensure that the social partners contributed to developing the framework for the promotion and implementation of a human rights economy that fostered an approach where sustainable development, economic growth and progress went hand-in-hand with the promotion of human and labour rights. Private sector employers must be engaged in the intervention, and the International Organisation of Employers would be pleased to contribute.
- 159.** Clarification was required as to whether the reference to “realizing labour rights as human rights” meant that the fundamental principles and rights at work were fundamental rights, or whether “labour rights” referred to all aspects of work, such as working time and wages; the latter was inaccurate and therefore unacceptable. She therefore proposed amending the wording to read “labour rights and human rights including fundamental principles and rights at work”. She also proposed including a reference to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights under that thematic area. Again, the private sector should be engaged in those efforts, through employers’ organizations. She supported the intervention on wage policies, including living wages, which she hoped would enhance coherence. It was important to ensure that the governance of the initiative fully respected and reflected the role of social partners in wage-setting policies. Partnerships with other organizations therefore needed to respect tripartism and the leading role of employers’ and workers’ organizations.

160. She was pleased to see a thematic area dedicated to promoting sustainable enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, and her group would welcome further interventions that promoted an enabling environment for businesses. An intervention to promote entrepreneurship and skills development would also be appreciated. Skills development, reskilling, upskilling and lifelong learning were missing from that section. The intervention on responsible business for inclusive and sustainable societies was welcome, provided that it was not concerned with the challenging and complex topic of global supply chains. A stand-alone intervention to support micro, small and medium-sized enterprises would be a positive addition, given their importance to economies globally; the International Organisation of Employers was willing to assist with the scope of such an intervention.
161. She proposed the addition of an intervention on skills for a just transition, since skills development was crucial when it came a just transition but was missing from some environmental policies. It would be necessary to ensure that all the interventions were linked to the ILO's mandate and that the related resources were allocated to its core activities and not used by other organizations. The outputs of the Coalition should contribute to the outcomes of the programme and budget, and she would welcome the possibility of conducting evaluations to ensure their alignment with real outcomes. The focus on the Coalition's concrete added value for employers' organizations and businesses should continue. The Employers' group supported the draft decision.
162. **The Worker spokesperson** called on all governments and partners to consider joining the Coalition and welcomed the results of the Inaugural Forum. She asked the Office to provide information on the specific role of the Coordinating Group in the coming months, and she requested the Coalition secretariat to ensure that the contributions to the Coalition and the messages disseminated were fully in line with the Coalition's mandate. The Workers remained concerned at the potential use of the Coalition for "social washing" without any accountability mechanism or efforts to coordinate work in its thematic areas. The Office's attention and resources should not be diverted away from its programme and budget or its mandate, and the Coalition should not duplicate the work of the Office; rather, it should be an echo chamber of the work of the social partners and a tool to disseminate the ILO's agenda. As a multi-stakeholder initiative, it should not be a programmatic area of the ILO itself.
163. The Workers repeated their request for clarification and further details of possible new partnerships and initiatives under the auspices of the Coalition. Coalition partners should avoid making pledges, which lacked means of measuring the real impact of partners' engagement. In relation to the preliminary proposals for each thematic area, her group had serious concerns about the dilution of the ILO agenda in practice. A closer examination of the key interventions was necessary. She reiterated that the ILO's mandate extended to inequalities, and the interventions listed in that section of the document already existed. Concerning the realization of labour rights as human rights, labour rights were meant not only to guarantee basic needs, but also to improve working conditions and overall well-being. Moreover, labour and human rights were universal and did not depend on cultural diversity. She echoed the request of the Employers' group for clarification of the concept of labour rights as human rights and requested further clarification of the human rights economy.
164. She recalled that the social partners did not have a seat at the United Nations Food Systems Summit and that the ILO had developed policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in the agri-food sector, which should be the flagship document in that area. The work on food systems should include a focus on living wages for rural workers. She asked why the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as amended in 2022 (MNE Declaration) was not reflected under the thematic area on capabilities for

productive and freely chosen employment and sustainable enterprises. The description of artificial intelligence lacked a reference to the labour protection agenda. It was unfortunate that the efforts relating to providing protection and building resilience were directed at individuals and enterprises at the same level, with no specific mention of workers. Living wages could not achieve results in the context of a multi-stakeholder initiative, and while the concept should be brought to the attention of all partners in the Coalition, it should be operationalized with the social partners through collective bargaining, following the methodological approach developed by the experts and adopted by the Governing Body. A focus on quality public services was absent from the document.

165. Additional information on the Partnership for Cotton and on sustainable investment for social justice, in particular ethical finance models, would be welcome. Delivering social justice using the power of social dialogue should not be listed as an intervention under the thematic area of reinforcing institutions of social dialogue, since it was already the work of the ILO. While the Coalition had a role to play in mainstreaming social dialogue within the multilateral system, it should not dilute the role of social dialogue. Her group wished to know how the Office intended to combine its leadership through direct engagement and partnerships with external organizations with a focus on key messages and future Governing Body and International Labour Conference decisions. She supported the draft decision.
166. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico made a statement, from which Argentina subsequently dissociated itself by note verbale, to the effect that the Coalition had achieved political momentum thanks to, inter alia, the June 2023 World of Work Summit. He valued the fact that the Coalition did not constitute a new entity and stated that it would undoubtedly contribute to the development of a collective agenda among its partners to promote human-centred policy coherence and would push for the integration of social justice and employment into a broader framework to achieve quantitative and qualitative results for social justice for all. The diversity among its partners would facilitate concrete action. The Inaugural Forum had demonstrated that interest in the initiative had come at the right time. The statements delivered at the Forum, which had complemented the consultations led by the secretariat and the work of the Coordinating Group, had clearly outlined the collective aspirations of the Coalition. In particular, the statement given by the Co-Chairperson of the Coordinating Group, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, had highlighted the challenges facing the global community, including workers.
167. He welcomed the particular emphasis that would be placed on amplifying youth voices and empowerment in the comprehensive advocacy and communication plan – more information on that plan would be welcome – and he supported the identification of the proposals for each thematic area based on their potential to drive multi-stakeholder and transformative action. The Coalition secretariat should ensure that activities carried out under the main thematic areas were promoted in line with the Decent Work Agenda, taking into account national priorities as described in the DWCPs. Synergy and coordination with UN Resident Coordinators in countries where activities and initiatives involving other international organizations took place were essential. The Coalition would be able to strengthen many of the ILO's activities and objectives without duplicating effort. It was necessary, however, to define how the Coalition would undertake its work and pave the way to action. It was also important to continue to solidify strategies for effective implementation of the Coalition's programme of activities in 2025. He supported the draft decision.
168. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Tunisia highlighted her group's commitment to contributing actively to the Coalition, which was reflected by the growing number of African partners. Her group was convinced that the Coalition would meet

the aspirations of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. Coherence and coordination among the Coalition's activities and existing regional and multilateral frameworks were important. The members of the Coordinating Group should step up their interactions with other partners to ensure that all stakeholders' proposals and initiatives were taken into account. The Africa group encouraged the Coalition secretariat and the Coordinating Group to increase their efforts to enable the timely operationalization of the key interventions, welcoming that those interventions included both pre-existing and new initiatives, demonstrating the spirit of alignment and integration of initiatives that prevailed in the Coalition.

169. Overlap between efforts linked to the ILO's mandate and those relating to the objectives of the Coalition should be avoided. The secretariat should provide to ILO Member States a list of the interventions to be undertaken that detailed how they were to be funded. Her group called on the secretariat to advocate for the mobilization of funds in order to establish specific funding mechanisms that would allow the Coalition's objectives to be met. All Coalition partners should combine their efforts to achieve the Coalition's goals. She endorsed the draft decision.
170. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Japan, welcoming the high-level participation of President Lula of Brazil and President Ram Chandra Paudel of Nepal in the Inaugural Forum, said that his group hoped that the Coalition secretariat would incorporate the feedback from the Inaugural Forum into its plans for the next Forum. In light of the high number of persons living below the poverty line in Asia and the Pacific, ASPAG called on the secretariat to improve action targeting developing countries and small island developing States, particularly through the six thematic areas, with a focus on productive employment and sustainable enterprises. His group strongly supported the Coalition's thematic development and welcomed the emphasis placed on small and medium-sized enterprises and women's economic empowerment in the interventions. While the Coalition's efforts to reduce inequalities within and between countries were welcome, the secretariat must ensure balanced geographical representation – and ensure in particular the representation of ASPAG members – in the partnerships established to that end. ASPAG stood ready to contribute its expertise, support the advocacy and communication plan for 2025 and collaborate closely to advance social justice globally. He supported the draft decision.
171. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Armenia aligned themselves with the statement. Given that urgent action was needed to ensure social justice, the EU and its Member States continued to strongly support the Coalition. The increase in the number of partners to over 300, as well as the successful holding of the Inaugural Forum, were commendable, and he welcomed the support given to the Coordinating Group. The EU and its Member States wished to request further information from the Office on the timing and expected deliverables of the Coalition's first concrete actions and its cooperation with other international organizations. It would also be interesting to learn more about the synergies with ILO initiatives, including the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the initiative on living wages, and how their impact could be expanded under the auspices of the Coalition and vice versa. He asked the Office to explain in greater detail whether it planned to involve the Coalition in the Second World Summit for Social Development in 2025, in which the Coalition should play a crucial role, and, if so, what form that would take and what preparations were necessary. Moreover, it would be useful to know how the first report on the state of social justice in the world would contribute to the Summit. He supported the draft decision.

- 172. Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam expressed full support for the Coalition and underscored that its collaborative nature allowed partners to pool resources, ideas and efforts, enabling them to scale interventions and achieve results. ASEAN appreciated the ILO's leadership in keeping social justice at the forefront of the global development agenda and reaffirmed its commitment to continued collaboration with all stakeholders in the Coalition, ensuring that no one was left behind. She supported the draft decision.
- 173. A Government representative of Colombia** outlined a number of programmes and reforms implemented in his country that reflected the commitment of the Colombian Government to the principles of the Coalition, prioritizing inclusion, equity and sustainability in the labour and social field. His Government would be an active and collaborative partner in the Coalition.
- 174. A Government representative of Sudan** urged the Office to undertake further efforts to attract new partners to the Coalition and affirmed his Government's interest in joining. It remained true that lasting peace could be established only if based upon social justice. The war launched by rebels against his Government had revealed the importance of interconnectedness and integration between regional and international economies and communities. He highlighted the importance of promoting social justice by expanding social protection coverage and supporting comprehensive programmes and policies in order to achieve the Coalition's objectives.
- 175. A Government representative of Barbados** expressed hope that the webinars organized as part of the development of specific collaboration proposals, which had enabled small States to exchange experiences and participate in developing the thematic areas, would continue. Regarding the thematic areas, it was important for Coalition to not take on more than it could handle or to spread its attention too thinly. The key interventions on the human rights economy, sustainable investment for social justice and mainstreaming social dialogue within the multilateral system were of particular importance and would benefit from ILO advocacy and influence in the multilateral space.
- 176. A Government representative of India** highlighted the need for the implementation of the key interventions to take into account the unique national circumstances and priorities of the partner countries. The Coalition's activities for 2025 should focus on facilitating collaboration among the partners in ways that built on ongoing efforts under DWCPs. With regard to the thematic area of strengthening a just transition and the social dimension of sustainable development, trade and investment, trade arrangements should not impose strict obligations linked to social justice that constrained inclusive growth and employment generation, particularly in the global South.
- 177. A Government representative of the United States** welcomed the Office's efforts to engage a range of Coalition partners and identify specific action areas, and she noted with interest the work on mainstreaming social dialogue within the multilateral system and the initiative on living wages. All Coalition activities, whether led by the Office, ILO constituents or other partners, should focus on the promotion of decent work. Additional information would be appreciated on whether the labour income share would be addressed by the proposed centre of excellence on inequalities; what action was envisaged to accelerate progress towards SDG indicator 8.8.2, including with regard to a human rights economy; how workers' rights would be incorporated into proposed action on socially just artificial intelligence and how the Coalition would embed a focus on decent work into activities related to the Partnership for Cotton. Although the secretariat's efforts to provide innovative spaces for collaboration were appreciated, she cautioned against placing excessive emphasis on one particular platform;

regular engagement with ILO constituents should continue. Her Government supported the draft decision.

178. **A Government representative of Benin** expressed his Government's pleasure at being among the first Government partners to join the Coalition. As a founding member of the Partnership for Cotton, his Government welcomed the Coalition's interest in that initiative and the ILO's support for local transformation and improving the cotton textiles value chain in the Cotton 4+ countries, in keeping with international labour standards. His Government was committed to contributing to the success of the Coalition through its pilot interventions.
179. **A Government representative of China** said that her Government had joined the Coalition in April 2024 and supported its efforts to build consensus, enhance policy coordination and promote inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic social development. He requested details of each intervention; of the relationship between each intervention and the ILO's current programme and budget, including whether they required budgetary or extrabudgetary resources; and of the ILO's definition of the human rights economy. Good economic and social development could not be based on human rights protection alone but should also consider development sustainability, national conditions and human well-being; the wording used in that regard should therefore reflect the ILO's main areas of responsibility. The Office should uphold the principle of tripartism and focus on priority issues such as poverty alleviation, full and productive employment, universal social protection and skills development. Her Government supported the continuous improvement of the Coalition's governance using a results-oriented approach and through coordination with stakeholders.
180. **A Government representative of Brazil** recalled that, at the Inaugural Forum, President Lula had highlighted the challenges faced by the global community, especially workers, and the importance of social justice, in particular in the global South. He had also called for global governance reform to ensure greater inclusion of developing countries and greater international cooperation to address those challenges. During its presidency of the G20, her Government had called on members and guest countries to participate in the Coalition and in the Equal Pay International Coalition. The Coalition could help build South-South cooperation and accelerate the development of policies to address informality, strengthen social dialogue, reinvigorate trade unions, promote a just transition and engage young people. She welcomed the proposal to shape the Coalition's priorities jointly.
181. **A Government representative of Nepal** recalled that, in his keynote address to the Inaugural Forum, the President of Nepal had emphasized that the Coalition represented a shared commitment to social justice for all and had highlighted the impact of climate change on the world of work and the challenges it posed to social justice. His Government supported the six thematic areas of focus and encouraged the development of clear and actionable interventions. He supported the draft decision.
182. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that social justice needed to be further consolidated at the global level to achieve tangible progress on decent work and a new social contract. He requested the Office to report on the challenges of promoting the Coalition among global buyers and brands in the context of low participation by upstream actors in global supply chains. On living wages, social protection and occupational safety and health, sharing the responsibility across producers in the developing world and brands and buyers in the developed world could be instrumental to social justice for workers in the global South. He asked for information about the possibilities for engagement by actors pursuing climate justice and urged the Office to ensure that they, as well as global brands, could participate meaningfully in the Coalition. He supported the draft decision.

- 183. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) thanked Governing Body members for their positive feedback, and noted that all were in agreement that it was time to move from concept to execution. The Coalition was not an entity in itself, but a platform for identifying synergies and possibilities for collaboration among partners to amplify social justice. Participation in the Coalition and its activities was entirely voluntary and there was no intention to introduce reporting obligations on international labour standards. Its activities were broader than, but aligned with, the ILO's mandate. The identified contributions of the ILO had been developed with the relevant policy departments following the existing strategies, guidelines and initiatives, and were in line with the programme and budget.
- 184.** The Coalition's mandate was to advocate for advanced social justice in the areas of responsibility of its partners and share knowledge among them. It was intended to enhance the role of social partners in an inclusive, equitable and efficient economy and boost their visibility in other international organizations. The Coalition was also intended to avoid duplication of work by bringing together entities working on similar subjects and ensuring coherence. Local and regional priorities were crucial; the intention was to work with the UN resident coordinators to identify issues and expand the possibilities of work programmes at the country level.
- 185.** The Governing Body's feedback on the thematic development would help to make the Coalition a practical platform focused on implementation. The key interventions had been selected based on the interest of partners in joining forces for implementation on the ground and the potential for international organizations with complementary objectives to participate as conveners. Consultations had been held within the relevant departments of the Office to identify and shape the key interventions, since the small secretariat responsible for the Coalition lacked the necessary expertise. Most of the interventions would be adjusted based on the feedback received from the Governing Body and various partners, with a view to presenting the programme of activities to the Coordinating Group at its meeting in December.
- 186.** The Coordinating Group was intended to promote the Coalition's agenda and provide advice on its programme of activities, resource mobilization, advocacy and communications, identification of forums at which social justice issues could be raised and how to attract partners to fill identified gaps. Implementation of several activities would commence in 2025, subject to the shaping of activities and alignment of partners' ambitions. Some of the 16 key interventions were at a more advanced stage than others and, in some cases, implementation would not be possible until resources were mobilized. Activities already in implementation would continue to use their existing governance structures, whereas new activities would need new governance frameworks, which would be shaped by the participating partners. The ILO's contribution to Coalition initiatives would be determined according to the programme and budget or additional resource mobilization, with partners also contributing funding and supporting resource mobilization for some activities.
- 187.** She welcomed the new initiatives proposed by Governing Body members, which could be discussed in the future. Guidance on the communications and engagement plan would be provided by the Coordinating Group, but Governing Body members were also welcome to contribute. During negotiations on the Coalition, it had been agreed that the report on the state of social justice in the world would be an ILO report, rather than a Coalition report. The possibility of an evaluation would depend on the nature of each activity.
- 188.** As to the Second World Summit for Social Development, the ILO's contribution would be led by the tripartite constituents and the dedicated working party. The Coalition could amplify the

message of social justice and also work to engage parties that would not normally contribute to a social development summit. In terms of the follow-up to the Summit, it was to be hoped that the Coalition would be considered as an option for implementation.

189. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) clarified that the characterization of labour rights as human rights was based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the latter Covenant recognized fundamental labour rights, including the right to work, the right to safe and healthy working conditions and the right to social security.
190. The human rights economy was an initiative launched by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to place people and planet at the centre of economic decision-making, address structural barriers and inequalities, and advance the rule of law and good governance. The ILO was working with the OHCHR to reach a common understanding of how to advance social justice by building on each organization's comparative advantages and means of action.
191. Work on the labour income share was a follow-up to G20 decisions on the topic. There were plans to carry out research activities to assess the evolution of the labour income share and the extent to which developments in productivity and other macroeconomic policies influenced it, including with reference to the effect of collective bargaining.
192. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Global Coalition for Social Justice), responding to questions about the Coalition's key interventions, said that the MNE Declaration was reflected in the key intervention on expanding access to, and capabilities for, productive and freely chosen employment and sustainable enterprises. With regard to the UN Food Systems Summit, the ILO was leading the Decent Work for Equitable Food Systems Coalition, which took account of the ILO policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in the agri-food sector and was designed to involve tripartite constituents and social dialogue. On climate change, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the United Nations Environment Programme and the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change were already members of the Coalition and were working with the ILO on action to deliver the Paris Agreement for a just transition and social justice.
193. She welcomed the guidance provided on efforts on inequalities; the key interventions were aligned with the resolution concerning inequalities and the world of work adopted at the 109th Session (2021) of the International Labour Conference and with the ILO strategy to reduce and prevent inequalities in the world of work. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs had agreed to co-convene two key complementary interventions on inequalities: the first was aimed at gathering knowledge and supporting national capacity-building, including by promoting social collaboration, and would encompass the root causes of inequalities; the second intervention was aimed at coordinating strategies across the UN system, and the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the UN Human Settlements Programme had already expressed their willingness to strengthen action and coherence at the country level through UN resident coordinators. The goal was to launch pilot programmes in 2025 to develop that approach.
194. **The Deputy Director-General**, responding to questions on the report on the state of social justice in the world, said that the first draft had been circulated to ILO technical departments and ACT/EMP and ACTRAV. The report was on track for completion by the end of the first quarter of 2025, so that it could contribute to discussions in advance of the Second World Summit for Social Development in November 2025. Government groups had been briefed on

some of the data that would be set out in the report, which would be based on the four pillars of social justice identified in the Director-General's report to the 111th Session (2023) of the Conference on advancing social justice. The report would not include a ranking of countries based on social justice.

- 195. The Employer spokesperson** noted the confirmation that the Coalition was a platform to join forces with the other relevant key partners, not a vehicle for policy guidance. She called on the Office to continue strengthening communication on the work of the Coalition in order to attract more partners. The added value of apprenticeships should be included in efforts on skills development, in line with the Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208). As to the concept of labour rights as human rights, the wording should be amended to refer to the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to avoid implying that all labour rights were human rights.
- 196. The Director-General** said that the Office would take into account the feedback of the Governing Body, and would review the wording relating to human rights and labour rights. The challenge of making the Coalition operational by 2025 would be met, and he welcomed the positive pressure from the Governing Body, which indicated the importance it attached to the initiative. The Coalition would not dilute the ILO's own efforts or resource mobilization; rather, the partners involved in a particular intervention would determine its ambition and the ILO would contribute to that effort in accordance with its programme and budget. The International Organisation of Employers and the International Trade Union Confederation were both members of the Coalition and its Coordinating Group and could choose to participate in initiatives, so there was no need to fear that employers and workers would be left behind.

Decision

- 197. The Governing Body took note of the update on the Global Coalition for Social Justice provided in document GB.352/INS/4(Rev.1) and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in the further development of the Coalition.**

(GB.352/INS/4(Rev.1), paragraph 30)

5. Developments in the United Nations system Implementation of Our Common Agenda, the United Nations development system reform process and measures taken by the Office (GB.352/INS/5)

- 198.** The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, which had been proposed by IMEC and circulated by the Office. The proposal was that the words "at its 355th Session (November 2025)" at the end of subparagraph (b) should be deleted.
- 199. The Worker spokesperson** said that the ILO's effective engagement in the implementation of the reformed UN development system was key to ensuring a central position for the Organization in that system. Regarding Our Common Agenda and the proposed paths forward, she said that intensified, assertive and proactive action was required to effectively defend the mandate and vision for social justice through standards and tripartism, which should not be made dependent on economic development. While the Pact for the Future had several positive elements, the lack of a reference to social dialogue and international labour standards, and the exclusion of trade unions from the negotiations at the Summit of the Future were serious deficiencies. While the ILO's engagement in the preparations for the Fourth

International Conference on Financing for Development was welcome, it was regrettable that decent work had been largely absent in the Conference workstreams, apart from in relation to social protection. The Office should intensify its efforts and ensure that wages were brought to the centre of the discussions.

200. Despite the fact that social partner involvement was one of the strong points of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions (“Global Accelerator”) in theory, it was non-existent in practice, particularly with respect to the development of the national road maps. In Albania and Paraguay, for example, where implementation of the road maps had already started, unions had not been involved, despite their formal requests to participate. Enhanced efforts were therefore needed to support the engagement of the social partners in the context of the Global Accelerator. Furthermore, it was vital to ensure that the role of social dialogue and tripartism was adequately recognized in the process and outcomes of the Second World Summit for Social Development.
201. She expressed concern that the resident coordinator system continued to experience an annual funding gap of US\$54 million and called on all governments to ensure that adequate resources were allocated for development worldwide. The fact that the world was completely off-track in terms of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) was also extremely worrying. The world urgently needed a renewed social contract with the support and commitment of all stakeholders.
202. She welcomed the Office’s capacity-building efforts aimed at supporting trade union representatives in effectively engaging in the SDG processes, including in common country analysis the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UN Cooperation Frameworks) processes. However, the level of engagement of the social partners in such processes needed to be further improved. Many worker organizations had reached out to resident coordinators but had not managed to set up a structured dialogue with them. In other cases, their contributions had not been taken on board or they had been considered to be in the same category as non-governmental organizations. Enhanced efforts were therefore required to increase the awareness of resident coordinators and UN country teams of the importance of the social partners’ participation in UN processes. The ILO should ensure that the UN system respected the ILO’s tripartite governance structure and normative functions, including the independence of ILO processes and mechanisms, and the important role of the social partners at the country level.
203. While the partnerships with various multi-partner trust funds to advance ILO work in several areas were welcome, a more balanced approach to resource mobilization was needed, with a focus on social dialogue, especially in the context of Joint SDG Fund implementation and the Global Accelerator. She supported the draft decision.
204. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Pact for the Future was closely aligned with the ILO’s mission to promote economic growth, social justice and decent work and the ILO’s emphasis on tripartism made it uniquely suited to championing those goals. It was essential to prioritize decent work with a focus on youth employment, poverty reduction and social protection. Furthermore, the ILO must engage in the newly adopted Global Digital Compact in a manner that was consistent with existing and future policies agreed by the tripartite constituents. It must also be ready to take a leading role at the Second World Summit for Social Development.
205. She welcomed the update on the various financing initiatives and emphasized the need for the ILO to ensure the tripartite dimension of such developments. Regarding the creation of an interdepartmental working group to support the financing for development process, ACT/EMP

should be involved to ensure that the perspective of employers was reflected in the Office's contributions. The ILO should continue to engage with the constituents to ensure that their views were considered in evaluation, common country analysis and UN Cooperation Framework processes and to ensure alignment DWCPs. For tripartite engagement to be meaningful, capacity-building for the social partners and the promotion of understanding of tripartism and the fundamental principles and rights at work among resident coordinators should go hand-in-hand. The ILO should continue to support the sharing of best practices, such as the effective collaboration in some countries between UN country teams and employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs), to ensure that lessons learned were incorporated into future capacity-building activities. In that regard, she said that greater ILO support was needed for EBMOs to enable them to effectively fulfil their representative role.

206. On partnership and resource mobilization, she said that the Office must ensure a balance between supply-driven projects and programmes to deliver its core mandate to the tripartite constituents in accordance with their needs and priorities. She requested clarification on how the social partners would benefit from the 83 projects that the ILO was implementing in collaboration with 18 UN entities. She also asked how the Office intended to participate in the implementation of the Pact for the Future, including its two annexes, namely the Global Digital Compact and the Declaration on Future Generations. Concerning the amendment to the draft decision proposed by IMEC, the Employers wished to ensure that the updates on development in the UN system continued to be provided on a regular basis. She therefore suggested a subamendment to add the words "at its 356th Session (March 2026) at the latest" at the end of subparagraph (b).
207. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom said that the ILO's tripartite governance structure and normative mandate meant that it was well positioned to contribute to the discussion on effectiveness across UN systems. She welcomed the Office's plans to drive forward Our Common Agenda and commended its efforts in that regard, noting that the Summit of the Future had opened the door to new areas of cooperation.
208. She emphasized that increasing incomes in the world's poorest countries was central to achieving decent work and to aiding the progression of all SDGs in all developing countries. It was also important to ensure that the respective mandates, roles and expertise of the different UN organizations fed into the joint priorities and delivery of UN country teams. She encouraged the Office to pursue its efforts to strengthen the capacity of social partners to participate in UN Cooperation Framework, common country analysis and SDG processes. The Global Coalition for Social Justice could serve as a platform for sharing knowledge, best practices and concrete examples, thus acting as a key solution provider for advancing social justice.
209. In the light of the call for more compact Governing Body agendas, the frequency of reports on developments in the UN system could be reduced. Furthermore, it might be beneficial to have a comprehensive overview of the ILO's engagement on matters relating to the UN reform, the Global Coalition and follow-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development in one document, to enable more cohesive discussions on interlinking issues. IMEC had therefore proposed to remove from the draft decision the specific reference to the preparation of a further report for consideration by the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025). It would be more pertinent to have a future discussion after the Second World Summit, at the 356th Session (March 2026). IMEC remained open to further amending the draft decision to include a reference to the 356th Session of the Governing Body.

- 210. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Tunisia welcomed the Office's efforts to ensure that the voice of the tripartite constituents had been heard at the Summit of the Future. She encouraged the Office to play an active role in the implementation of the Pact for the Future, including its two annexes, and to ensure that the priorities and concerns of the tripartite constituents were duly taken into account in that endeavour. She also encouraged it to explore all the possibilities for cooperation that those texts offered.
- 211.** In view of the delays in achieving the SDGs and the slow implementation of the SDG Stimulus, she welcomed the creation of a Leaders Group to promote the SDG Stimulus and the fact that its membership included Heads of State and Government from her region. She welcomed the Office's efforts to integrate labour and social issues into the work of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, and invited the Office to share with Member States the synthesis notes that would be prepared as part of the ILO's contribution to that Conference. She thanked the ILO, including its regional offices, for its involvement in regional and international initiatives and its partnerships with different UN entities on an increasingly diverse range of issues. Her group could support the amendment proposed by IMEC as subamended to specify that the Governing Body should consider a further report at its 356th Session at the latest.
- 212. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Mexico acknowledged the measures adopted by the Office to strengthen its leadership, including by creating the UN, International Financial Institutions, Economic Organizations and Civil Society Branch in the Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department. Such actions confirmed the ILO's commitment to position itself as a key player in global efforts to redefine multilateralism and address current global challenges. Given the current context and the need to build trust and demonstrate effectiveness in addressing local, regional and global challenges, it was vital to adopt an inclusive approach that prioritized social justice. She supported the amendment proposed by IMEC.
- 213. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Nepal acknowledged the significant progress made under Our Common Agenda and in the reform of the UN development system, noting that it was essential to align ILO efforts with those of the broader UN system in order to achieve the SDGs. He encouraged the ILO to continue strengthening tripartite engagement in those processes to ensure that the voices of employers, workers and governments were integrated into decision-making. Acknowledging the ILO's contribution to the adoption of the Pact for the Future, including its annexes, he suggested that it should further explore partnerships with technology firms and educational institutions to expand digital literacy, and ensure the world of work was prepared for the digital transformation, with a focus on narrowing digital divides in Asia and the Pacific.
- 214.** Looking forward to the Second World Summit for Social Development, he said that a concise action-oriented political declaration was needed. The ILO should continue working with the co-facilitators to ensure that the key messages of the tripartite input remained central to the discussions. Targeted strategies were required to address challenges related to employment generation and sustainable poverty reduction in Asia and the Pacific as part of the SDG Acceleration Actions. Furthermore, the ILO should advocate for sustainable financing mechanisms at the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development to support social protection systems and job creation, particularly in developing countries. He endorsed the amendment put forward by IMEC and the subamendment proposed by the Employers.
- 215. A Government representative of China** noted the ILO's active role in promoting the implementation of Our Common Agenda and its contribution to the adoption of the Pact for

the Future. He supported the ILO's continued cooperation with UN agencies in areas such as digital skills strategies, lifelong learning and technical and vocational training. He welcomed the work of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda and expressed the hope that the ILO would continue to actively engage with the co-facilitators of the Second World Summit for Social Development. He encouraged the ILO to continue to actively participate in the reform process of the UN development system, explore new areas of cooperation, including on financing for development, artificial intelligence and digital platforms, and prioritize and allocate more resources and policies for developing countries, in particular technical support. China was ready to actively participate in the relevant processes.

(The Governing Body resumed consideration of the item at a later sitting.)

- 216. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom confirmed that her group agreed with the subamendment proposed by the Employers.
- 217. The Worker spokesperson** also endorsed the subamendment put forward by the Employers.
- 218. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster), responding to comments, said that the UN Secretary-General had created a steering committee for the Summit of the Future, comprising representatives of several agencies in the UN system, in which the Director-General had been invited to participate. The steering committee would be examining the different commitments under the Pact for the Future in order to coordinate the support for governments in its implementation. The Office was in the process of identifying the working groups in which it would participate as part of the steering committee. Furthermore, it would continue its work to increase the understanding of tripartism among resident coordinators and strengthen the capacity of the constituents at the national level. In several cases, efforts already made in that regard had yielded positive results. She invited governments to discuss the importance of social partner participation with resident coordinators at the national level and with UN country teams, particularly with respect to the UN Cooperation Frameworks.
- 219. Another representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Jobs and Social Protection Cluster), also responding to comments, said that the progress on the Global Accelerator at the country level was not linear. Although the Global Accelerator was led by the ILO, the Global Accelerator was a UN initiative, which meant that the ILO did not control every part of the context in which it operated. In collaboration with ACTRAV, the Office was in the process of mapping out in detail the involvement of social partners across the pathfinder countries. For pathfinder countries on the high-impact track, the social partners had been involved in both the development of the road map and in national steering committees. The involvement of social partners and the establishment of national steering committees was taking shape in pathfinder countries that were in the process of developing their road maps. For countries that were still developing their road maps, there was still progress to be made. In Albania, for example, the steering committee had been established on the basis of an existing structure under the UN Cooperation Framework. The ILO was advocating for the existing committee and Global Accelerator activities to be inclusive of the social partners. In Paraguay, the steering committee was not yet functional. An event on employment and just transition had recently been held in Paraguay in the context of the Global Accelerator, which had been inclusive of the social partners. As a nationally-owned initiative, progress would also depend on government leadership.

Decision

220. The Governing Body took note of the current developments at the United Nations (UN) level and requested the Director-General to:

- (a) take into consideration the views expressed by the Governing Body in the ILO's ongoing work in support of the engagement of the tripartite constituents in UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks and common country analysis processes;
- (b) prepare a further report on developments at the UN level and the measures taken by the Office in that regard for consideration by the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026).

(GB.352/INS/5, paragraph 74, as amended by the Governing Body)

6. Biennial report on the implementation of the ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020–23) (GB.352/INS/6)

221. The Employer spokesperson, welcoming the report, congratulated the Office on the significant progress achieved through the ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020–23) (2020–23 Strategy). While the Employers' group regretted that the content of the ILO Disability Inclusion Strategy (2024–27) (2024–27 Strategy) had not been included in the report, it fully supported the ILO's ongoing work on disability inclusion, particularly the Director-General's vision for the ILO to become an employer of choice for persons with disabilities.

222. The commitment of all stakeholders at all levels, both in the field and at headquarters, was necessary in order to mainstream disability inclusion throughout ILO projects and programmes. It was therefore essential to incorporate disability inclusion into budgets, events and research, provide ILO staff training on disability awareness and reasonable accommodation in workplaces, and ensure inclusive recruitment practices. In addition, the Director-General and the Office should continue their efforts to guarantee accessibility, including regarding the use of closed captioning for online Governing Body, International Labour Conference and sectoral meetings, and physical accessibility in all premises and facilities. Furthermore, specific budgetary support was essential for the effective implementation of ILO policy and strategy on disability inclusion. The Employers recommended that the Office leverage the valuable and transferable knowledge available in the ILO Global Business and Disability Network to develop comprehensive guidelines on accessibility for conferences and meetings. She supported the draft decision.

223. The Worker spokesperson welcomed the Office's commitment to continuing its leadership role within the UN system, particularly through its engagement with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS) and other related initiatives. Including the commitment of the Director-General and the Global Management Team in the 2024–27 Strategy, along with innovative measures that went beyond the requirements of the UNDIS, was a crucial step. Since the UNDIS was an accountability framework with 15 indicators, it was particularly important to improve on UNDIS indicator 2 on strategic planning. The ILO should therefore refer to its firm, high-level commitment to incorporating disability inclusion as a priority area of work in its Strategic Plan for 2026–29. She welcomed the initiative by the ILO's ACTRAV, its Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch and Public Services International to promote tools for disability inclusion in public services by drafting trade union manuals. Her group encouraged further similar initiatives to reflect, through the work of the different ILO departments, the priority given to disability inclusion in the world of work. The intersections

with the informal economy, and work-related injuries that could lead to acquired disabilities, should be acknowledged. She also noted that sustained collaboration between trade unions and organizations of persons with disabilities had been crucial. She expressed concern that references to social dialogue and workers' organizations were still lacking in the UNDIS framework. The 2024–27 Strategy should place greater emphasis on social protection and rights at work, as they were fundamental to achieving decent work for all. She therefore urged the Office to ensure that workers' organizations were included in consultations on the design and implementation of programmes and operations during the coming cycle. The Office should also consider further investment in disability-inclusive procurement and the creation of a central ILO budget for accessibility. The Workers considered it important to continue promoting the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), and its ratification. She supported the draft decision.

- 224. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa acknowledged the significant strides made in meeting the requirements under the UNDIS, while recognizing the need for further progress. The plan to hire more junior professional officers and interns with disabilities, as part of the Director-General's vision, was commendable. However, achieving that vision would require targeted initiatives and additional resources in the upcoming biennial budget. He encouraged the Office to address other forms of inequality to diversify recruitment efforts and ensure broader democratic representation from regions such as Africa, Asia and Latin America. The democratization of the ILO must be supported by effective strategies and practices, including human resource recruitment processes that led to real improvements in equity and fairness within the context of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization. His group therefore urged the Office to apply such an approach across its recruitment initiatives, while ensuring the availability of necessary financial support for candidates from under-represented regions. He supported the draft decision.
- 225. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru, noting that the implementation of most UNDIS indicators was rated as "approaches requirements", requested that measures continue to be implemented to ensure improvement. His group would welcome further information on accessibility plans for non-ILO premises, on whether regional offices were included in that category and on the expanded use of closed captioning and International Sign interpretation, including the relevant budget line. Noting that the 2023 ILO Staff Survey on Disability Inclusion had recorded a lower level of satisfaction among staff with disabilities, he asked what measures were recommended to improve results in future surveys. Disability inclusion should be a permanent feature of the programme and budget and in DWCPs. He supported the draft decision.
- 226. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed appreciation for the ILO's progress on disability inclusion and its use of the reporting mechanism under the UNDIS. Positive developments included senior management leadership on disability inclusion and improved accessibility of premises, processes and publications, including websites.
- 227.** A clear action plan with timelines was needed to systematically address the UNDIS indicators in order to meet or exceed requirements. The Office should address the career progression and reasonable accommodations issues identified by the Staff Survey and develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for the professional development and retention of staff members with disabilities. The ILO should systematically mainstream disability inclusion across all programmatic work, especially at the country level; integrate disability inclusion more

robustly in DWCPs; enhance the disability inclusion marker system; and develop an initiative to allocate funding to promote disability inclusion in programming.

228. A dedicated budget for implementation of the 2024–27 Strategy should be considered. ASPAG supported plans to hire more interns and junior professional officers with disabilities and urged increased representation at professional and senior levels by addressing barriers to recruitment, enhancing outreach to potential candidates and providing targeted career development for persons with disabilities. The use of closed captioning and International Sign interpretation should be expanded to enhance accessibility at ILO meetings and events, including at sessions of the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body.
229. Implementation of the 2024–27 Strategy should be strengthened at the regional and country levels, and capacity-building should be provided for field office staff in collaboration with local organizations of persons with disabilities. A methodology was needed to gauge the inclusiveness of communication products. Partnerships with UN agencies, organizations of persons with disabilities and the private sector should be strengthened to share best practices and leverage resources for disability inclusion. Greater efforts were needed to provide capacity-building for constituents to promote disability inclusion at work, particularly in developing countries.
230. ASPAG remained committed to advancing disability inclusion and stood ready to work with the Office and constituents to build a more inclusive ILO. His group looked forward to the successful implementation of the 2024–27 Strategy. He supported the draft decision.
231. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Italy took positive note of the progress achieved under the UNDIS and 2020–23 Strategy, highlighting senior management leadership and the proactive stance of the Director-General on disability inclusion, in addition to collaboration with other UN agencies, the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General and the Turin Centre. IMEC appreciated that the Turin Centre had started reporting under the UNDIS framework and was improving the accessibility of its courses. The 2024–27 Strategy and the consultative process for its development were also appreciated.
232. IMEC applauded the inclusion of disability considerations in the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and encouraged the Office to systematically mainstream disability inclusion across all levels of programming and budgeting and ensure collaboration with ILO regional offices and DWCP efforts. Consistent provision of closed captioning and International Sign interpretation at ILO meetings was needed; comprehensive guidelines should be developed to ensure that accessibility arrangements were in place at all facilities used for ILO purposes. Greater efforts were needed to increase the number of staff members with disabilities and ensure their full inclusion.
233. In order to address the lower satisfaction levels among staff members with disabilities concerning career progression and reasonable accommodations, IMEC urged the ILO to enhance dialogue with staff with disabilities and key stakeholders to ensure that policies were aligned with their needs and perspectives. Efforts to raise awareness of disabilities among management, including through training, and to address barriers to the recruitment and active participation of staff members with disabilities should continue. The frequent overlap of disability with other dimensions of identity called for an intersectional approach to tackling the discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. IMEC supported the draft decision.
234. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye and Ukraine aligned themselves with her

statement. Her group aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of IMEC, and with the ILO and UN disability inclusion strategies. She welcomed the explicit mention of persons with disabilities among those in situations most vulnerable to exclusion and discrimination in the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and expressed appreciation for the disability inclusion internship initiative and the ILO's collaboration with other UN agencies and bodies.

235. Several challenges remained, however. The Staff Survey results indicating lower satisfaction levels among staff members with disabilities, particularly on career progression, were regrettable. Her group urged the ILO to strengthen dialogue with staff members with disabilities to ensure that policies reflected their needs and to continue enhancing management and staff awareness and competencies. Accessibility to ILO premises, processes and products was essential, including accessibility to all ILO meetings and events within and outside ILO facilities. Her group supported the 2024–27 Strategy and looked forward to receiving an update on its implementation. She applauded the ILO for going beyond the requirements of the UNDIS in terms of innovation and expressed support for the draft decision.
236. **A Government representative of India** welcomed the document and the Organization's dedication to promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. She welcomed the focus on consultation with persons with disabilities when shaping policy and encouraged further engagement with key stakeholders at all levels to address the specific needs of persons with disabilities in different national contexts. Her Government supported the 2024–27 Strategy and looked forward to working with the ILO and Member States on its implementation.
237. **A Government representative of Colombia** said that her Government was committed to promoting the right to work and the inclusion of persons with disabilities. She supported the 2024–27 Strategy and the draft decision.
238. **A Government representative of Mexico** welcomed the Office's efforts to implement the 2020–23 Strategy and noted the need to assess the measures taken so far in order to ensure that the 2024–27 Strategy achieved "exceeds requirements" ratings under all UNDIS indicators. Indicators that lagged behind required special attention, particularly the indicator on consultation with persons with disabilities. Progress with regard to all types of disabilities, not solely motor disabilities, was needed, as was refurbishment of ILO buildings, including regional and country offices. Member States' good practices and experience could prove useful, and his Government stood ready to share its experience in that regard.
239. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that there was consensus on the need to promote disability inclusion, and her group therefore expected further efforts from the Office on the issue.
240. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster), responding to constituents' comments, said that work was under way to ensure accessibility at events and meetings within and beyond ILO premises. A feasibility study would review whether to set up a fund to enhance ILO accessibility, and procurement procedures were being developed to ensure that hotels with which the ILO did business met minimum accessibility requirements.
241. The ILO planned to carry out focus groups with ILO staff with disabilities to understand reasons for their lower satisfaction and possible responses. It was important to partner with persons with disabilities, as had been the case for the development of the 2024–27 Strategy.

Decision

242. The Governing Body:

- (a) requested the Director-General to implement the ILO Disability Inclusion Strategy (2024–27), taking into account the guidance provided during the discussion.
- (b) welcomed moves to further increase accessibility of ILO premises, events, processes and publications, including through the establishment of minimum levels of accessibility for all Governing Body sessions;
- (c) instructed the Office to conduct monitoring that coincides with the reporting period for the implementation of the accountability framework established by the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), and to provide to the Governing Body, on a biennial basis, a report on progress and areas for improvement, including a summary of the annual reporting to the United Nations on its implementation of the UNDIS; and
- (d) requested the Director-General to pursue the ILO's mandate to promote disability inclusion in the implementation of current and future ILO strategic plans and corresponding programmes and budgets, and to facilitate extrabudgetary resources, taking into consideration the guidance provided during the discussion.

(GB.352/INS/6, paragraph 42)

7. Democratization in the ILO's governance and update on the status of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO (GB.352/INS/7)

243. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, proposed by the Africa group and circulated by the Office, which sought to delete options 1 and 2 and to amend option 3 to read:

- (b) pursue, pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment, consultations with the tripartite constituents with a view to resuming, at its 353rd ~~at later~~ Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body, the examination of possible alternative options to advance the full, equal and democratic participation of constituents in the ILO's tripartite governance, including the two alternative options interim measure outlined in paragraphs 19–~~35~~44 of document GB.352/INS/7, and report to the Governing Body.

244. The Worker spokesperson said that the ratification of the Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, 1986 (the 1986 Amendment) was a long-standing issue, and she welcomed the update on the measures taken towards its entry into force and the analysis of the possible alternative options. She reaffirmed her group's commitment to the 1986 Amendment. The fact that 70 per cent of ILO Member States had ratified it could not be ignored, and she echoed the affirmation of the tripartite working group on the full, equal and democratic participation in the ILO's tripartite governance that "the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment was and should remain the priority in order to definitively democratize the functioning and composition of the governing bodies of the ILO, as stated in the resolution on the Centenary Declaration". She called on all Member States, especially the Members of chief industrial importance, to prioritize its ratification. The lack of progress in that regard was frustrating, but she welcomed the indication from the Government of Brazil that it was considering ratification. The efforts undertaken by the Director-General and the Office at various levels to promote ratification should continue, as also stated in the preview of the

Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27,² and be strengthened to give effect to the call for ratification of the 1986 Amendment as an institutional priority. She proposed preparing a questionnaire for relevant Member States on the obstacles to ratification and holding an exchange of views with those Member States that had ratified it. Subsequently, the Office should submit a report to the Governing Body in 2026 containing the data gathered and the concerned Member States should be given the possibility to present the concrete actions taken as well as the challenges they were facing. She expressed appreciation for the consultations on possible alternative options to advance democratization in the ILO's governance, noting that both proposed options retained the permanent seats on the Governing Body for the Members of chief industrial importance.

- 245.** Her group was prepared to support the “pragmatic approach”, referred to in option 1, relating to granting voting and other rights to deputy members of the Governing Body, if that was the preferred option of the Governing Body. However, adopting that approach would require an increase in the number of deputy members for the Employers’ and Workers’ groups from 19 to 24, which carried a financial implication. The approach would also require amendments to the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. She reiterated that such an approach would be an interim arrangement, only until the 1986 Amendment entered into force. She noted the information provided by the Office on the legal feasibility of the approach, recalling that concerns had been expressed in that regard during the consultations. She emphasized that any such approach would require strong consensus, if not unanimous approval. Furthermore, approval would have to be reaffirmed after every election of Governing Body members. Since building consensus took time, she proposed that the discussion on alternative proposals should be resumed in 2026, in line with her earlier proposal regarding data gathering on obstacles to ratification of the 1986 Amendment.
- 246.** While a new constitutional amendment would be, from a legal point of view, a clear way to extend the membership of the Governing Body, it would not fully advance the full, equal and democratic representation of constituents in the ILO's governance. Moreover, it would supersede the 1986 Amendment to which many constituents, including the Workers’ group, remained committed. She expressed the wish to hear the views of Governments, particularly those that had already ratified the 1986 Amendment. However, at the current time, her group's preference would be for option 3 of paragraph (b) of the draft decision.
- 247. The Employer spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the consultations on possible alternative options for the democratization of the ILO's governance. While the issue was long-standing, it was also urgent; recent Governing Body outcomes had demonstrated that the voting members did not reflect the composition of the ILO's Member States. Her group supported democratization, which would ensure the ILO's legitimacy and authority. It was of note that only one new ratification had been registered since March 2024. She noted that some Members of chief industrial importance had expressed openness towards one or more of the possible alternative options to advance democratization, though not towards ratification of the 1986 Amendment.
- 248.** Turning to the three options proposed by the Office, she said that it was clear that there was no consensus on which way forward would bring real progress. Option 3 represented maintaining the status quo. She encouraged the Office to continue its promotional activities towards ratification of the 1986 Amendment, and urged Member States to seriously consider the impact on the future work of the Governing Body of not making any change to its

² GB.352/PFA/2, para. 221.

governance. Option 1, “the pragmatic approach”, would not be a permanent solution. However, her group was in favour of increasing the number of voting members of the Governing Body to more adequately reflect the current membership of the ILO. However, there was a question regarding whether constitutional provisions allowed for voting rights to be granted to deputy members. The role of deputy members had evolved since the 1950s, however the proposed change would equate their status with regular members, which would not comply with article 7.1 of the ILO Constitution. The decision to grant voting rights to deputy members would need to be repeated by newly elected regular members after election, reflecting its uncertain legal basis. Her group was open to considering option 1 as a temporary approach to progress towards democratization. However, it was unclear whether that option would be supported by the Members of chief industrial importance. The ideal solution, proposed in option 2, would be a new constitutional amendment, ratified quickly, to increase the number of voting members of the Governing Body from 56 to 112 without abolishing the ten non-elective seats. The entry into force of the 1986 Amendment was the main objective to be achieved. Her group could support option 2, as it would be compliant with the procedures set out in the ILO Constitution and the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference. If there were consensus on option 2, an item on the new amendment could be included on the agenda of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference. However, if there were no consensus, her group would support option 1 as a temporary solution while a more permanent approach was identified, as long as the legal uncertainties could be addressed.

- 249. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the Niger said that the 1986 Amendment remained the best way to democratize the ILO’s governance. He called on the Members of chief industrial importance that had not yet done so to ratify the 1986 Amendment. The Office should provide any assistance that was required in that regard. The Member States of the Africa region stood ready to share their experience of ratification. All Member States had supported the 1986 Amendment at the moment of its approval, including those that continued to block its entry into force. He commended the Government of India and Italy for their ratification of the 1986 Amendment, the Government of Brazil for the progress made towards ratification and the Government of Australia for its recent ratification, which brought the total number of ratifications to 127. The failure of the 1986 Amendment to enter into force was damaging the reputation of the ILO; it could not promote social dialogue when it was facing its own constitutional crisis. In an era of combating inequality in all its forms, the ILO could no longer preserve space for certain Members on the basis of an outdated reality. The notion of Members of chief industrial importance, along with other expressions that appeared in the final paragraph of the Declaration of Philadelphia, was unfair and stigmatizing and reflected the survival of colonialism.
- 250.** He expressed appreciation for the consultations that had led to the proposed alternative options to advance the democratization of the ILO’s governance. His group did not support the adoption of a new constitutional amendment, as the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment was being blocked by only a minority of Member States. The proposed new amendment would not remove the ten permanent seats on the Governing Body or amend article 36 of the ILO Constitution. Moreover, it would effectively allow States to place a reservation on the 1986 Amendment, an act that was prohibited by the ILO Constitution. Moreover, there was no guarantee that five of the permanent members would ratify the proposed new amendment. He noted that the “pragmatic approach” would not remove the ten permanent seats or amend article 36 of the ILO Constitution either, and remained subject to various concerns. Regardless of which option was approved by the Governing Body, any alternative approach must be temporary and the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment must remain the priority.

- 251. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh welcomed the latest ratification of the 1986 Amendment by the Government of Australia and reaffirmed his group's commitment to its entry into force. He noted the continued lack of ratifications by Members of chief industrial importance, despite the commitment made by the Government of Brazil to that end and the proposed alternative options to advance the democratization of the ILO's governance. Addressing the current imbalance was vital to enhancing representation within the Governing Body; maintaining the status quo was no longer acceptable. Compared with other similar international organizations, the Governing Body lagged far behind in its representation of the full membership of the ILO.
- 252.** Turning to option 1, he noted that the ILO Constitution contained no mention of deputy members of the Governing Body, and recalled that their creation and subsequent changes in their number and status set a precedent for the proposed change in their voting rights. He took it that the Conference decision that had created deputy members in 1951 had enjoyed full support and legal certainty. ASPAG did not agree with those members that had declared such an approach to be unconstitutional. The proposed new constitutional amendment under option 2 offered less than the 1986 Amendment, and effectively rejected the views of the global majority that had already ratified the 1986 Amendment. Therefore, such a proposal was not acceptable. Any efforts that could be directed towards promoting a new amendment should instead be directed to promoting the ratification of the 1986 Amendment by the Members of chief industrial importance. Reiterating that option 1, the "pragmatic approach", could serve as an interim arrangement until the 1986 Amendment entered into force, he called on the Office to propose any amendments to the Standing Orders of the Governing Body that would be required in that regard.
- 253. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that, of the options presented in the document for advancing democratization, GRULAC favoured the promotion of the ratification of the 1986 Amendment. A total of 127 Member States had ratified it and their commitment to democratization should be recognized and respected. Moreover, many States recognized by the UN following decolonization had a place in the ILO and the international community, and the time had come to put an end to postponement and procrastination.
- 254.** While each of the proposed alternative options could result in a more democratic and inclusive Governing Body, doubts of a practical or legal nature expressed by some delegations made it difficult to achieve consensus. GRULAC was willing to listen to their concerns and put forward proposals for consensus that could advance democratization. The realization of a more inclusive Organization could not be postponed indefinitely, and all members of the Governing Body must be willing to make concessions and engage in meaningful negotiations.
- 255. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the Netherlands reaffirmed the group's continued support for the democratization of the Governing Body, which was of utmost importance. Achieving a common position was essential for moving forward. IMEC reiterated its commitment to enhancing representation within the Governing Body and remained convinced of the need for solutions that were legally sound.
- 256.** The priority should be the 1986 Amendment, which among others, allowed for 112 regular members in the Governing Body, without distinction between regular and deputy members. IMEC called on Members that had not yet ratified the 1986 Amendment to do so as soon as possible, noting that that included Members of chief industrial importance from all regions except Africa. Nonetheless, IMEC would consider the options set out in the document, and

remained committed to exploring any legally sound means of advancing the full, equal and democratic representation of constituents in the ILO's governance, through tripartite dialogue.

- 257. Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam said that ASEAN aligned itself with the ASPAG statement. ASEAN remained committed to the principles of full, equal and democratic representation in the ILO's governance, and was of the view that democratization was vital for ensuring the continued credibility and effectiveness of the Organization. Although significant geopolitical complexities had undoubtedly delayed the ratification of the 1986 Amendment, it was concerning that three decades had passed without it entering into force. ASEAN supported the proposal to increase the voting rights of deputy members of the Governing Body as an interim measure towards ensuring fair representation, but that was no substitute for the ultimate objective of securing the full implementation of the 1986 Amendment. ASEAN remained open to a continued dialogue on alternative approaches and stood ready to collaborate with all stakeholders to reach consensus.
- 258. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Qatar called on the Office and the Director-General to continue to promote the ratification of the 1986 Amendment, including by assisting Members to overcome any difficulties encountered in the process. The entry into force of the 1986 Amendment must remain a priority in order to definitively democratize the work and composition of the Governing Body. The Arab group commended India and Italy for ratifying the instrument and urged other Members of chief industrial importance to complete the ratification process as soon as possible. It also commended Australia for its recent ratification, and Brazil for its commitment to ratification, as announced at the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference.
- 259.** The adoption of a new constitutional amendment would not be appropriate. It would not achieve the objective of democratization and would represent a step backwards and possibly even a dismantling of the 1986 Amendment, for which there was no substitute. There was also no guarantee that a new constitutional amendment, even if adopted, would be ratified by at least five of the ten permanent Members, and the ILO would then be confronted with the same obstacle that had hindered the implementation of the 1986 Amendment. As to the proposed "pragmatic approach" that would grant voting and other rights to deputy members through ad hoc decisions of the Conference and the Governing Body, it was important that efforts were made to engage all constituents in discussions on that option.
- 260. Speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)**, a Government representative of Malawi said that the SADC aligned itself with the Africa group statement. It welcomed Australia's ratification of the 1986 Amendment and Brazil's announcement that it was working towards ratification. Regrettably, the fact that very few Members of chief industrial importance had ratified the instrument meant that it would not come into force, despite its ratification by more than two thirds of Member States and by all African Member States. The ILO was in the midst of a constitutional crisis: the Constitution was no longer fit for purpose as it could not serve the needs of the majority of Member States. Democratization would not be achieved in the near future if the ILO continued to rely on the goodwill of Members of chief industrial importance to ratify the 1986 Amendment.
- 261.** At the same time, a piecemeal approach to administrative measures would not address the real issue of the unbalanced composition of the Governing Body. Therefore, the proposed alternative options would not result in effective democratization. The "pragmatic approach" was not viable because it would be temporary in nature and required unanimous acceptance and a decision by the current members of the Governing Body. Furthermore, it could be subject to legal challenge because the Constitution did not make provision for voting rights of deputy

members. Therefore, the SADC could not support the “pragmatic approach” until all relevant legal issues had been addressed.

262. The proposal for a new constitutional amendment was not acceptable since it was effectively an admission that the current composition of the Governing Body was neither reflective nor representative enough of the ILO’s membership. At the same time, it sought to retain the status of Members of chief industrial importance, which ran counter to one of the main aims of the 1986 Amendment. Moreover, it did not take into consideration the long-term commitment demonstrated by Member States that had already ratified the 1986 Amendment.
263. In light of the current impasse – which arose from the fact that the Constitution could not be amended without the agreement of Members of chief industrial importance – the SADC requested the Office to provide legal advice on the steps that the ILO should take to ascertain whether the Constitution still served the purpose for which it was created, and what immediate remedial action could be taken to resolve the situation.
264. **Speaking on behalf of a like-minded group of countries,**³ a Government representative of Denmark said that her group aligned itself with the IMEC statement and appreciated the alternative options to resolve the issue. The group, which was composed of countries that had ratified or accepted the 1986 Amendment, continued to support the 1986 Amendment in order to achieve full, equal and democratic participation in the ILO’s tripartite governance. It encouraged Member States that had not yet ratified the instrument – including Members of chief industrial importance from all regions except for Africa – to do so as a matter of urgency. The group invited the Governing Body to request the Director-General to continue his efforts to promote the 1986 Amendment by reaching out to Member States that had not yet ratified the instrument, while alternative options were explored. It would engage constructively in discussions on the alternative options to find a solution that would swiftly bring about a more balanced representation. She encouraged Member States that had not ratified or accepted the 1986 Amendment to propose other solutions to reach the common goal of better representation.
265. **A Government representative of Nepal** said that her country appreciated the ILO’s commitment to promoting social justice and international labour standards and ensuring fair representation. She underscored the importance of ensuring the full, equal and democratic participation of Members in the ILO’s decision-making processes, and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Director-General and the Office to promote the ratification of the 1986 Amendment. Nepal welcomed the tripartite consultations to explore ways to advance democratization. Equitable representation would ensure that Member States could work together to build a future of work that was inclusive, sustainable and just. Nepal therefore supported the “pragmatic approach” and the granting of voting rights to deputy members as an interim measure, pending full ratification of the 1986 Amendment.
266. **A Government representative of Brazil** congratulated Australia on its recent ratification of the 1986 Amendment. The President of Brazil, Mr Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, had recently announced his country’s firm commitment to ratifying that instrument, reflecting the importance that Brazil attached to the reform and democratization of international organizations. The ILO must continue to prioritize the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment

³ Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

in order to ensure effective democratization. Brazil stood ready to engage constructively in discussions to achieve that objective.

- 267. A Government representative of India** commended the ILO for its continued efforts to promote democratization. India strongly supported comprehensive governance reforms within the ILO and other UN organizations. Such reforms could not be implemented in isolation: collectively, they could enhance the effectiveness, accountability and transparency of the entire UN system. Almost 40 years had elapsed since the adoption of the 1986 Amendment, and the need to achieve consensus had become urgent. India appreciated the Office's consultative approach in setting out interim options and would continue to support the process of advancing the democratization of the ILO's governance.
- 268. A Government representative of Mexico** reiterated the importance of improving the tripartite governance of the ILO while respecting the geographical, economic and social interests of the constituents in accordance with the principles of equality, fairness and representativeness. Mexico had ratified the 1986 Amendment in 1988, and since then had been emphasizing the need to channel efforts towards ensuring its entry into force. He welcomed the information provided by the Office on the action taken by the Director-General to encourage Members of chief industrial importance to ratify the 1986 Amendment. Insufficient information had been provided on the implications of adopting the "pragmatic approach": there was a risk that an interim measure might set a precedent that would not necessarily achieve the intended objective, as the 1986 Amendment was not expected to enter into force any time soon. Furthermore, although the granting of voting rights to deputy members might promote the principles of equality, fairness and representativeness, the ILO must ensure that conciliation and consensus continued to be paramount in its decision-making processes. Consideration should be given to the extent to which deputy members might exercise their voting rights to block consensus, and the potential impact on future decisions of the ILO in defence of workers' rights and the promotion of decent work and social justice. It would be useful to clarify what the main differences would be between regular, substitute and deputy members.
- 269.** Given the lack of clarity regarding the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment and the implications of the proposed "pragmatic approach", Mexico would prefer to adopt a new constitutional amendment that would enhance the equality, fairness and representativeness of the ILO's governance. It supported option 2 of the draft decision.
- 270. A Government representative of South Africa** said that it had been widely acknowledged that the current composition of the Governing Body was disproportionate and not fully aligned with the economic realities of Member States. The prolonged process of ratifying the 1986 Amendment underscored the rigidity of the Constitution and the ILO's difficulty in adapting to global dynamics. The Organization's amendment process hampered institutional evolution; consequently, reforms often became outdated before they could be enacted. It was therefore essential to modernize the ILO's governance to reflect changes in the economic and political landscape. The failure to ratify the 1986 Amendment was due in part to the political reluctance of Member States, in particular those that wielded significant influence within the ILO's governance. That dynamic raised questions about equity, fairness and the Organization's commitment to democratic representation.
- 271.** South Africa would appreciate greater clarity on the alignment of the "pragmatic approach" with the Constitution. However, the main challenge – which had critical implications for the ILO's credibility and operational effectiveness – was to balance governance with the evolving

needs of Member States. He called for continued engagement on the issue and asked the Office to provide the Governing Body with an update on the matter at its next session.

- 272. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster), responding to some of the comments, said that, although the Governing Body had discussed the item a number of times during previous sessions, it had not yet had the opportunity to consider in a formal setting the different options – including the “pragmatic approach” set out as option 1 of the draft decision. She had taken note of the ongoing concerns expressed about the legal basis of option 1, despite the Office’s efforts during the consultations and in the document to respond as fully as possible to all legal questions asked. In response to concerns raised about a so-called constitutional crisis, she emphasized that the procedure governing amendments to the Constitution – which was set out in the Constitution itself – had been followed to the letter at all stages for the 1986 Amendment. The Office remained open to proposals for alternative options and, in any case, would continue to promote the ratification of the 1986 Amendment and update the Governing Body on developments. In that regard, she welcomed Brazil’s commitment to ratify the 1986 Amendment.
- 273. Another representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) confirmed that the Office had responded to all legal questions that had been put to it. It had provided access to the documents that had been circulated during the consultations, setting out all the questions and answers in detail. A synthesis was provided in document GB.352/INS/7. She also confirmed that the adoption and entry into force of any amendments to the Constitution were governed by article 36 of the Constitution.
- 274. The Employer spokesperson** said that the issue in question, and the root of the constitutional crisis that was being faced, was not legal, but political, in nature. Despite the support for the democratization of the ILO’s governance, a lack of political will meant that the 1986 Amendment was very unlikely to enter into force. Given the changes in the international architecture, simply encouraging more ratifications was not enough. She urged those Governing Body members that were calling for options beyond those provided by the Office in the document to put forward feasible and constructive alternatives themselves.
- 275. The Worker spokesperson** recalled that the members of the Governing Body had expressed their support not only for the democratization of the ILO’s governance, but also for the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. It was perfectly legitimate to ask whether there were alternatives to the options provided by the Office, but it was not for her to put forward new proposals. There were some signs of hope. For example, it was significant that IMEC was calling on Members of chief industrial importance to speedily ratify the 1986 Amendment, even if ratification was not delivered. Furthermore, the significance of Brazil’s move to ratify the 1986 Amendment, and the ratifications of India and Italy, should not be underestimated. Even though the Amendment was unlikely to enter into force soon, it was pessimistic to suggest that it would never do so. It was relevant that half of the voting members of the Governing Body came from the world of work. Emphasizing the major importance of the ILO to the workers of the world, she expressed concern about the suggestion that it might be facing a constitutional crisis. Such a crisis should not be allowed to happen. The ILO was a unique organization that must be allowed to deliver its mandate of social justice for peace. Although there was no easy solution, her group was ready to work with the Employers and Governments to find a way forward.
- 276. The Employer spokesperson** recalled that, during the 350th Session (March 2024) of the Governing Body, the Worker spokesperson had said that, in the current geopolitical

circumstances, sufficient ratifications were unlikely to be forthcoming and that the Workers' group would welcome any proposals for a positive way forward to further democratization. The Worker's group's current support for simply promoting ratification without additional proposals was inconsistent with those past views. The Organization was not able to deliver on its mandate properly, as its membership had evolved substantially since 1945, and those changes were not reflected in the current architecture of the Organization. Political will was required to find an innovative and legitimate solution.

277. **The Worker spokesperson**, responding to the Employer spokesperson's comments, said that, if there had been convergence on any alternative approach, she would have advised her group to consider supporting it, given that her group had, for the past 100 years, consistently supported measures, including the abolition of the status of permanent member, to democratize the Organization. The adoption of the "pragmatic approach" required consensus. In the absence of consensus, not much could be done.
278. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger asked what specific steps or initiatives had been undertaken by the Government of Brazil and other governments to realize their commitments to ratify the 1986 Amendment. Such information should be taken into account when identifying solutions.
279. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that he was aware of some apprehension that granting deputy members the right to vote meant that they would be able to block consensus. He recalled in that respect the importance of applying the principle of sovereign equality. He asked whether any legal remedies were available allowing individual Member States to challenge, before the International Court of Justice, Governing Body decisions that had been made as a result of deputy members joining or blocking consensus.
280. **A Government representative of South Africa** said that he had not received a satisfactory answer to his question on whether the "pragmatic approach" was compatible with the ILO Constitution. In addition, he wondered why the Office considered that it had exhausted all possible avenues for progress. He was convinced that a more satisfactory option could be found. Perhaps the Governing Body could request the Director-General to consult with those Member States that had not ratified the 1986 Amendment and report on the responses received in order to provide an insight into the state of affairs and inform relevant regional discussions.
281. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster), reiterating the Director-General's commitment to promoting the ratification of the 1986 Amendment, said that a number of steps had been taken by the Office to promote ratification, some of which were outlined in paragraphs 8, 9, 11 and 12 of the document. Those efforts had borne fruit, with President Lula of Brazil having announced that his country would work to ratify the Amendment.
282. It was difficult to imagine there being any avenues for progress that the Office had not yet explored. It had organized three informal consultations and had invited governments to propose alternative options, but to no avail. There was no consensus on the "pragmatic approach" or on drafting a new amendment. The Governing Body had therefore reached an impasse. Nevertheless, the Office remained open to suggestions.
283. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser), responding to the questions raised by the Government representative of Bangladesh, confirmed that deputy members had the capacity to block consensus and that, pursuant to the 1946 Agreement between the UN and the ILO, the latter could request the International Court of Justice to give an advisory

opinion on any legal question concerning its functioning or its constitutional framework. However, it was for the Court itself to determine the admissibility of any submission that it might receive from an individual country. As set out in paragraph 26 of the document, among others, the Office considered that the “pragmatic approach” was legally and constitutionally sound. To reinforce the legitimacy of the approach, it would be desirable for the Governing Body to approve it unanimously.

- 284. The Director-General** reiterated the Office’s position that the “pragmatic approach” was legally and constitutionally sound and that the issue of ratifying the 1986 Amendment was political rather than legal. Countries’ stances on the matter were institutionalized to the point that they could not be altered simply by a change of government. Responding to a comment by the Government representative of South Africa, he confirmed that he had met with representatives of the eight Members of chief industrial importance that had not ratified the Amendment at a meeting held during the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference. The Office would continue to seize every available opportunity to promote ratification. However, in the absence of consensus on the “pragmatic approach”, the Office saw no clear path forward.
- 285.** While he hoped to be mistaken, his impression was that the issue of ratifying the 1986 Amendment could not be dissociated from ongoing debates surrounding the reform of the Security Council and of the multilateral system in general. Looking at the situation optimistically, there was always a chance of further ratifications, but he could not predict when they would happen. In the meantime, Member States could lend their support through advocacy efforts from their capitals.
- 286. A Government representative of South Africa** said that he found the Office’s understanding of the constitutionality of the “pragmatic approach” to be flawed. It could not in any case be acceptable to use the Standing Orders of the Governing Body to circumvent the ILO Constitution. He would engage with the Office of the Legal Adviser bilaterally to seek further clarification in that regard.
- 287. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that those members of the Governing Body who claimed to be in favour of the democratization of the ILO’s governance should prove their sincerity by granting voting rights to deputy members and approving the inclusion of two representatives from Asia and the Pacific in the Screening Group, bearing in mind that the region accounted for the majority of the world’s population.
- 288. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger proposed another amended version of option 3 of the draft decision, based on the comments made, which read:
- (b) pursue, pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment, consultations with the tripartite constituents with a view to resuming, at ~~a later session~~ its 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body, the examination of main issues blocking implementation of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment and propose, taking into consideration views expressed during the 352nd Session (November 2024), possible alternative options to advance solutions aimed at advancing the full, equal and democratic participation of constituents in the ILO’s tripartite governance, including the two alternative options outlined in paragraphs 19–44 of document GB.352/INS/7 and to report back to the Governing Body.
- 289. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Germany thanked the Director-General for his efforts to promote the ratification of the 1986 Amendment. Since there was no clear convergence on the options proposed by the Office, his group was ready to

engage constructively in further discussions with a view to finding a legally sound and consensual way forward. In that context, his group could support option 3 of the draft decision as amended by the Africa group, should there be consensus in favour of that proposal.

- 290. The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Africa group for its proposed amendment. However, given that no clear consensus was emerging and as the Office had not been able to devise any alternative solutions, despite its best efforts, resuming the examination of the matter in March 2025 might be too soon. More time would be needed for discussion. She therefore suggested deferring the item to the 355th Session (November 2025) of the Governing Body.
- 291. The Employer spokesperson** said that it was clear that the status quo could not continue and that further discussion of the three options put forward in the draft decision was needed. She reiterated that her group did not support option 3, as it would entail abandoning discussion of options 1 and 2, or variations thereof. Her group had reservations regarding the amendment to option 3 proposed by the Africa group, as it would require each country to report individually on the issues blocking ratification of the 1986 Amendment at the national level, which did not appear to be a constructive approach. She suggested deferring the discussion to the 353rd Session (March 2025) and returning to the draft decision with the three options as originally worded. Intersessional consultations should be held before March 2025 with a view to reaching a compromise on the way forward that would be acceptable to the Members of chief industrial importance as well as those countries that had the legitimate desire for a more inclusive Governing Body. There was no need for the Office to prepare another document on the matter, as the one currently before the Governing Body contained all elements needed to inform a constructive discussion. Given the urgency of the matter, her group could not accept further delays to its conclusion.
- 292. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh thanked the Africa group for its proposed amendment, which recognized the need for further discussion and the significance of the 1986 Amendment to the discussions surrounding the democratization of the ILO. Reaffirming his group's long-standing and unequivocal commitment to the full realization of the 1986 Amendment, he said that further efforts must be made, in line with the approach of the Director-General, to engage in tripartite efforts to promote ratification. He reiterated his group's support for the "pragmatic approach" as a first step in that direction and proposed that discussions be deferred until later during the current session with a view to seeking convergence through engagement and diplomacy. That would be preferable to postponing the discussion to a future session.
- 293. A Government representative of Spain** observed that, while the "pragmatic approach" had not yet been universally accepted, it appeared that discussions were heading in that direction. The Governing Body should therefore continue to consider that approach, which had not yet been fully explored. While his Government had no objection to the possible subsequent codification of the "pragmatic approach" through a constitutional amendment, it would never close the door on the 1986 Amendment.
- 294. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger expressed support for the proposal to defer the decision until later in the session to allow time for further consultations.
- 295. A Government representative of Barbados** said that the topic under discussion was of great importance to his country and other small and not-so-small States. The ILO had an undemocratic, anachronistic framework in which some States were more equal than others. Similarly archaic, contradictory systems existed in other organizations and prevented them from implementing their mandates fully. Barbados continued to consider it necessary to

address democratization in all aspects of the ILO's governance and to focus efforts in that regard on promoting the ratification of the 1986 Amendment. Unfortunately, it did not believe that the Members of chief industrial importance would do what was right. In the current discussion, little or no progress was being made, hence the need to be pragmatic by granting voting rights to deputy members and exploring alternative paths to democratization at a later date.

- 296. The Employer spokesperson** said that it was important to remember that much had changed since 1986. Her group could support the proposal to defer the decision until later in the session in the hope that an approach could be found that would lead to agreement, at the 353rd Session (March 2025), on a permanent, legally sound solution that addressed the urgent need to extend voting rights within the Governing Body in order to reflect more adequately the composition of the Organization. In the intersessional period, governments should develop proposals to enable progress to be made and avoid further dissatisfactory and even toxic discussions that diverted attention away from important social policy, employment and sustainability issues.
- 297. The Worker spokesperson**, noting her group's continued support for the ratification of the 1986 Amendment, said that the unanimity required for any approach to prove successful was unlikely to be achieved later in the session and that deferring a decision would take up precious time. Consequently, she proposed the adoption of the draft decision as amended by the Africa group, with a further amendment to make clear that, at the 353rd Session (March 2025), all possible options would remain on the table, including those considered at the current session.
- 298. A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that democratization in the ILO's governance was about much more than just the 1986 Amendment, with so much having changed over the previous 40 years. Article 7 of the ILO Constitution favoured Members of chief industrial importance. If a decision was deferred until later in the session, he would appreciate it if, prior to the resumption of the discussion, the Office could explain the bases used in the past and currently to determine the Members of chief industrial importance and the allocation of the 18 Government seats reserved for other Members. It was important to ensure that small island developing States, in particular, were equitably represented in the Governing Body and all other decision-making ILO forums.
- 299. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office would prepare a note responding to the query raised by Bangladesh, to be circulated to Governing Body members.
- 300. A Government representative of South Africa** said that his country would be grateful for the opportunity to meet with representatives of the Office, including the Legal Adviser, prior to any resumption of the discussion later in the session.
- 301. The Director-General** said that the Office would be happy to organize an informal meeting with any interested groups or countries.
- 302. The Worker spokesperson** asked how, if a decision was deferred until later in the session, the Governing Body expected to have time to conclude its consideration of all the items on its agenda. Given that the discussion had so far failed to produce a satisfactory conclusion and the Office was being requested to provide additional information, it would seem more logical to revisit the issue at the 353rd Session (March 2025).
- 303. The Chairperson** noted that the Governing Body seemed to have two options before it: either to defer the discussion to a later sitting at the current session; or to defer it to the 353rd Session (March 2025).

- 304. The Employer spokesperson** said that her group would prefer to defer the entire discussion to the 353rd Session (March 2025), provided that all three options were kept on the table, which meant that the amendment proposed by the Africa group would not be adopted.
- 305. The Worker spokesperson** asked the Employer spokesperson to clarify whether her group's proposal was to postpone the discussion without a decision until the 353rd Session (March 2025).
- 306. The Employer spokesperson** said that she had understood that the option her group had supported meant that, while no decision would be taken on the substance, it would be decided that all points would be deferred to the following session of the Governing Body.
- 307. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that his group agreed that the discussion could be postponed until the next session, provided that the three options were kept open and that the Office would facilitate the necessary consultations in the meantime. He also asked whether the Office's note would be provided before those consultations began.
- 308. The Worker spokesperson** requested clarification on what was meant by the previous speaker by "consultations".
- 309. Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico said that his group agreed to defer the discussion until the next session. A flexible approach could be taken towards consultations with a view to continuing the discussion on the item at the next session.
- 310. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger, aligning with the comments made by the Government group, withdrew his group's proposed amendment.
- 311. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office was willing to facilitate consultations after the current session, whether tripartite, governmental, regional or of some other kind.
- 312. The Chairperson** drew attention to an amended version of subparagraph (b) of the draft decision, proposed by the Office on the basis of the comments made, which read:
- (b) decided to defer its decision on alternative options pending the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution to its 353rd (March 2025) Session and requested the Director-General to organize consultations to that end.
- 313. A Government representative of South Africa** asked whether the amendment proposed by the Africa group could be reinstated at the next Governing Body session.
- 314. The Worker spokesperson** said that, if the discussion was deferred until the next session, the amendment proposed by the Africa group would no longer be pending. She proposed subamending subparagraph (b) of the amended draft decision proposed by the Office to include "requested the Director-General to facilitate any consultations upon request" and delete "to that end".
- 315. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) clarified that to be considered at the following session, the amendment proposed by the Africa group would have to be resubmitted.
- 316. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh and **the Employer spokesperson** disagreed with the proposal by the Workers to delete "to that end".
- 317. The Worker spokesperson** accepted to keep "to that end".

Decision

318. The Governing Body:

- (a) requested the Director-General to continue to use all means within his authority for bringing about the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation;
- (b) decided to defer its decision on alternative options pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment to its 353rd Session (March 2025) and requested the Director-General to facilitate any consultations that might be requested to that end.

(GB.352/INS/7, paragraph 47, as amended by the Governing Body)

8. Review of the functioning of the Governing Body, identification of possible areas for improvement and arrangements and time frame for results-based follow-up action (GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1))

- 319. The Employer spokesperson** said that the continued improvement and revision of key governance aspects was a crucial function of the Governing Body. The current session, with a packed agenda and a growing number of country cases, illustrated the need to re-evaluate working methods. Moreover, the legitimate call for greater inclusiveness in the work of the Governing Body required an examination of the procedural aspects of the revision process, which should be short, efficient and time-bound, and carried out by a working party as for previous reviews.
- 320.** The agenda-setting process required improvements to ensure clarity and transparency, and should be detailed in a guidance document or in the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. The lack of an explicit reference in the Standing Orders to the Governing Body's role in the agenda-setting process required particular attention. So too did the suggestions for reducing the volume of the agenda, notably to review the periodicity of standing items; her group agreed that some items could be at least partially discontinued. Time management was another persistent challenge, and was becoming more relevant as the agenda grew in volume. The proposals listed in paragraph 15, including the use of late sittings and avoidance of protocol parts of statements, deserved further consideration alongside other ideas a working party might develop.
- 321.** Policy discussions should not be held for their own sake, but in order to enhance the Governing Body's governance and decision-making functions. The High-Level Section should not just be a platform for policy debates that were better suited to the International Labour Conference or other forums. Any changes made to the limited use of that section should be undertaken with caution. Although her group supported the involvement of ministers and other high-level guests in Governing Body activities, it must be well planned and coherent with the agenda, and incorporate measures to reduce the workload of the Governing Body.
- 322.** The Committee of the Whole had grown in importance due to the legitimate calls for inclusiveness in Governing Body discussions. It therefore required further examination, particularly in connection with the discussion on democratization of the ILO's governance. The items pending from the most recent reform should also be addressed, notably the improvement of document production to ensure timely publication, and a more inclusive approach to the speaking rights of non-members of the Governing Body.

- 323.** The Employers' group was concerned that the contributions of different groups to Office drafts did not receive equal treatment, most recently in the discussion of the SRM TWG. Such a lack of impartial treatment of different groups, especially the social partners, was unacceptable.
- 324.** The gaps, inconsistencies and unclear practices in the Standing Orders of the Governing Body required changes to the text for clarification, including the implications of occasions where the Officers of the Governing Body were unable to reach agreement.
- 325.** There was much room for improvement and several areas requiring further discussion. Rather than minor or ad hoc changes, ambitious action was needed to prevent the transparency, balance, inclusiveness and legitimacy of the ILO's governance from being called into question again. Procedural option A, setting up a working party to review the functioning of the Governing Body, was the most suitable choice as it made use of a tried-and-tested process. However, it would be preferable for the working party to meet during, rather than before, Governing Body sessions to avoid any need to extend those sessions. In addition, intersessional meetings might not be practical given the composition of the working party. The time frame of three sessions seemed reasonable; the Employers' group was flexible about a time-bound process and wished to see prompt results. The group was not in favour of option B of holding informal consultations, as it would not fulfil the need for effective formal inclusiveness, and large number of consultations continued to add to the intersessional workload.
- 326. The Worker spokesperson** expressed concern that the document included matters beyond those discussed during tripartite consultations. The current exercise was duplicating the extensive review of the functioning of the Governing Body since 2009, including the efforts of the previous working party up to 2018, when its mandate had come to an end. Since then, the updated rules had been applied effectively and flexibly where necessary, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the functioning of the Governing Body could always be improved, there was no need to revise the Standing Orders or perform another full review. Dedicating too much time and energy to the issue would impede fulfilment of the three main functions of the Governing Body: governance, debate on substantive policy issues and supervision of standards.
- 327.** The role of the Screening Group in the agenda-setting process and the possible complications arising from a lack of consensus were clearly described in the document, but codifying practices would not solve the problem. Dialogue was the best way of reaching consensus; applying a procedural approach was not the most efficient way to deal with issues that could generally be resolved by redrafting proposals, or rescheduling or postponing the discussion of agenda items. It was regrettable that the creative solutions that had been found in such cases had not been reflected in the document.
- 328.** The duration of Governing Body sessions should be adapted according to the agenda rather than reducing the number of items. One solution could be to extend sessions to the Friday of the second week. The increase in ratifications of ILO instruments meant that more time had to be spent on the supervisory system. Discussion of substantive policy issues was also essential to provide guidance to the Office; her group would not accept any cuts to the agenda on policy matters. The regular report of the Director-General did not take much time and provided a useful overview of the work of the Organization. The Governing Body could consider the proposal to consolidate reports on and programming of all technical meetings under the Institutional Section. The report on sectoral meetings, currently under the Policy Development Section, should be expanded to showcase the impact of the Sectoral Policies Department on the world of work.

329. Significant improvements had already been made in time management. Participants were more aware of the issue, and the Chairperson had greater scope for managing the discussions, including permitting replies where appropriate. However, the time limits should remain indicative. Better preparation would help to establish realistic time limits for statements, taking into account the importance and complexity of the item, such as discussions on the programme and budget. Another area where improvements had been made was the timely publication of documents.
330. The Worker's' group welcomed use of the High-Level Section to raise the profile of the Decent Work Agenda, but did not believe that it should replace policy discussions by constituents. The four segments of the Policy Development Section should be retained and potentially expanded to include segments on issues such as gender equality, supply chains or wages.
331. The Committee of the Whole was important, and its use did not need to be reviewed. Instead of abolishing the obligation to report to the Governing Body, reporting could take place at the end of Governing Body sessions as an expedited item. The summary provided by the Chairperson was much appreciated and provided a helpful reference.
332. As to the remaining items pending from the Governing Body reform, further support could be given to governments by providing more information sessions through the regional and national offices, and the social partners should be able to benefit from them too. Regarding other procedural aspects calling for a possible update of the Compendium of Rules, it was inappropriate for the Office to make, on its own initiative, unhelpful proposals that only complicated the discussion.
333. There was no good reason to revisit the extensive discussions on the rules and practices of the Governing Body. The current Standing Orders had served the Governing Body well, including adaptations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and it would be premature to undertake a time-consuming review when there were no major problems to resolve. The Workers' group therefore objected to the creation of a working party to review the Standing Orders, but was open to informal consultations on identified areas of convergence, on the basis of a careful balance between the three main functions of the Governing Body. Once agreement had been reached on the specific issues requiring attention, an appropriate working method could be identified to address them, according to their complexity and whether practical or regulatory measures were needed. The Workers' group supported the draft decision with the option of informal consultations.
334. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger noted that the document did not address the composition of the Screening Group, a subject of particular importance for the Government group that was closely linked to the matter of democratization. The Africa group categorically rejected any over-representation or dual representation and called for fair and equitable participation in all bodies of the Organization. The only groups authorized to deal with the Office and other Government members should be the four regional groups representing the four regions recognized in the texts of the ILO, without prejudice to the formation of any Government groupings for the purpose of addressing the Governing Body or other ILO bodies. Moreover, the Officers of the Governing Body should also include a Government Vice-Chairperson appointed by the Government group to respect the ratio of two Government members to one Worker member and one Employer member, which would be aligned with the rules for technical meetings.
335. He welcomed the Office's readiness to support the Government group by responding promptly to requests for information and other services, but reiterated the Africa group's call for additional support beyond governance matters, potentially in the form of a dedicated

secretariat, which would also help ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the Government group's work. Noting efforts to publish documents at least 15 working days before the opening of each session, he called for further improvements to enable members to better prepare in advance of sessions, which in turn would facilitate work during the sessions.

336. Delegation of authority to the Officers should be the exception rather than the rule, and the practice should be rationalized. Similarly, the delegation of powers by the International Labour Conference to the Governing Body should be periodically examined by the Conference to ensure that all constituents were able to participate in decision-making on issues of key universal importance.
337. The analysis of the functioning of the Governing Body in Part I of the document was highly relevant and, if adopted, the proposals could contribute to streamlining its work. On that basis, his group supported the draft decision with the option of establishing a working party. It would be preferable for the work to be concluded within a year, with the meetings of the working party taking place outside Governing Body sessions to prevent parallel meetings and allow full participation in the sessions.
338. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that it was regrettable that no agreement had yet been reached on a new format for the Screening Group. His group remained willing to continue discussing that issue and emphasized that any decision on representation of the Government group must respect the full participation of GRULAC.
339. Time management was essential. The need for equity and inclusiveness among the tripartite groups must be given due consideration, and extended sittings should not be a recurrent practice. Many of the special arrangements adopted by the Governing Body during the COVID-19 pandemic remained relevant and could be used again to maintain the efficiency of meetings. As to the Committee of the Whole, he requested additional information on the plan for lifting the restrictive conditions contained in articles 1.8 and 4.3 of the Standing Orders.
340. All three procedural options offered a valid approach to reviewing the functioning of the Governing Body. It was essential to conduct the review efficiently, according to clear rules and on a time-bound basis. To that end, the group proposed a variation of option C combining informal consultations and a working party, with a first round of informal consultations to define the mandate and parameters – including the duration, composition and operating modalities – of the working party, which would be established subsequently on the basis of the outcome of consultations.
341. **Speaking on behalf of 45 countries of ASPAG**,⁴ a Government representative of Bangladesh said that consultations within the Government group and among the tripartite constituents following previous sessions of the Governing Body had regrettably not led to consensus on the composition of the Screening Group. A working party should be mandated to review the functioning of the Screening Group, taking account of the Government group's discussion, and to submit proposals for the Governing Body's consideration at its next session. The significant majority of ASPAG favoured geographical rather than cross-regional representation in the Screening Group. For subregional groups, it was important to respect the sovereign choices of Member States and of the four regional groups as to how they nominated their representatives

⁴ Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Cook Islands, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kiribati, Republic of Korea, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tonga, Timor-Leste, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Yemen.

in the Screening Group. To address concerns regarding the representation of the subregional groups, there should be two representatives from each of the four regions. Discussions on the composition of the Screening Group should continue in a structured and efficient manner in order to reach consensus.

342. Certain aspects of the 2011 reform package that had not yet been fully implemented deserved careful consideration. He supported the proposal to review the mandated functions and realign specific strategies with the four-year strategic plan to reduce the volume of the agenda, and endorsed the suggested consolidation of reporting on technical meetings under the Institutional Section. To make the functioning of the Governing Body more effective, the mandate of the working party needed to include ways of increasing the representation of governments from the current 28 out of 187 Member States – and increasing representation of the social partners proportionately – and address the differences in voting status. He would support the creation of a dedicated facility to support governments.
343. Many of the issues outlined in the document needed to be thoroughly discussed in a working party, which would allow the Governing Body more time for substantive discussions. Amendments to the Standing Orders deserved in-depth discussion. He supported the draft decision with the establishment of the working party.
344. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United States said that she considered the Governing Body rules fit for purpose but was open to considering measures to improve clarity and certainty. The group was open to the proposal to clarify the Governing Body's role in setting its own agenda and to introducing summarized minutes and criteria to guide the Screening Group's assessment of agenda proposals. She requested the Office to undertake the review of all mandated functions but sought clarification on the proposed further review of the periodicity of standing items. Her group would like to retain the possibility of discussing documents labelled "For information" as needed and would prefer expedited items or other options for efficient handling of routine matters rather than delegating them to the Officers. She asked why it was proposed to discontinue the regular report of the Director-General rather than provide it for information. She supported the proposed realignment of strategies and work plans and the consolidation of reports on technical meetings under the Institutional Section, and asked the Office to further develop the latter proposal.
345. She looked forward to continuing internal discussions within the Government group on representation in the Screening Group. She considered that time management measures already in place should first be implemented more effectively before considering further measures, and requested the Office to monitor time usage and time lost during Governing Body sessions to inform future discussions. Her group was open to discussing how to make better use of the Policy Development and High-Level Sections. It supported abolishing the restriction on the right to speak in the Committee of the Whole and could also support abolishing the obligation to report to the Governing Body, even though items discussed in the Committee of the Whole format would still need to be referred to the Governing Body for decision. The group remained open to the views of other governments on the issue of enhancing Office support to the Government group. She requested the Office to explore whether a password-protected information management platform could be made available to the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and regional coordinators of the Government group to facilitate the maintenance of shared records.
346. She requested clarification on when Governing Body documents were published in languages other than the three official languages, and noted that the process concerning late publication

of documents was not aligned with paragraph 5.6.6 of the Standing Orders. It was important to first apply the rule before considering changing it, and she encouraged the Office to continue promoting internal accountability measures for Governing Body documents to be published within the prescribed time frame.

- 347.** It was surprising that Part F of the document included areas in addition to those that had already been the subject of significant consultations. She asked why requests for delegation of authority were not routinely put to the Governing Body. The matter of functions exercised by non-members of the Governing Body merited further discussion in the light of the evolution in practice, to increase inclusion while respecting the rules for participation. The issues of voting when a regular member had lost the right to vote due to arrears, the definition of consensus, the right to reply and the duties of the Chairpersons should be clarified in the Standing Orders. Her group had reservations regarding the proposal to allow a suspension of a provision of the Standing Orders; however, it was open to including clarifying language in the Standing Orders on the decision-making process for the Officers, the status of substitutes and seat-sharing arrangements, but asked about the feasibility of enforcing a prohibition on seat-sharing.
- 348.** With respect to the procedural proposals, her group did not see sufficient substance to merit the establishment of a working party. If one was to be set up, the notional terms of reference would require review and agreement. The group would like to move forward with practical and specific improvements to the functioning of the Governing Body and, as such, requested time for further consultations before selecting one of the options presented in the draft decision.
- 349. Speaking on behalf of a number of small island developing States,**⁵ a Government representative of Barbados highlighted that many of the reforms to the ILO over the decades had taken place before most small island developing States had existed and did not sufficiently address their concerns. Those States needed to be better represented on the Governing Body if democracy and the ILO's founding principle of social justice were to be upheld: at present, they accounted for around 3 per cent of the Governing Body, despite making up nearly 20 per cent of ILO Member States. His group welcomed the Office's willingness to increase its support for the full participation of regional groups with lower representation, but more specific measures were required. As in other UN organizations, specific strategies, programming or other creative measures might be developed to improve their representation and effective participation.
- 350. A Government representative of China** expressed support for the review of the functioning of the Governing Body with a view to promoting decent work for all through continuous reform and improvement, and welcomed the successful efforts made by the Governing Body to improve its governance capacity. Her Government approved of the areas identified for further review and called for a systematic and comprehensive approach in future. The reforms should centre on long-term governance, highlight priorities, set a clear time frame and focus on achieving results. She expected the issue of the dual representation of certain Governments in the Screening Group, which her Government believed had hindered the effective functioning of the Governing Body, to be resolved in a substantive manner. Her Government supported the establishment of a working party.
- 351. A Government representative of Mexico** stressed the need to reduce the number and complexity of agenda items that required action or decisions by the Governing Body so as to ensure that constituents had the capacity to analyse all documents; failure to do so resulted in

⁵ Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Cabo Verde, Dominica, Fiji, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu.

extended sittings and the postponing of decisions to the second week of the sessions, often causing them to be taken by vote rather than consensus. The Office should conduct informal consultations to determine which matters should be discussed and which could be addressed by other means.

352. She supported the Office's time-management proposals; it would be useful if the Officers of the Governing Body and the Screening Group reviewed the mechanisms for submitting provisional programmes of work that included the approximate time allocated to each item and the time limits for interventions. She acknowledged the efforts made by the Office to publish documents in a timely manner. It was necessary, however, to continue to seek solutions to ensure that the Standing Orders of the Governing Body were applied as strictly as possible. Her Government would prefer informal consultations over a working party in order to save time, facilitate the Office's work and achieve quicker results, although it was willing to support the option that enjoyed consensus.
353. **A Government representative of Brazil** expressed her Government's clear preference for informal consultations; establishing a working party could have a negative impact in terms of time, resources and bureaucracy.
354. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru suggested that the proposal on the Screening Group made by a significant majority of ASPAG should be formally submitted for consideration by the Government group, as had been agreed in that group.
355. **The Employer spokesperson**, responding to the assertion made by the Worker spokesperson that the Office had included in the document additional matters, recalled that at its 350th Session the Governing Body – and, indeed, the Worker spokesperson herself – had requested the Office to identify further areas in which the functioning of the Governing Body might be improved. With respect to agenda-setting, the document referred clearly to a practice, rather than specific provisions.
356. The decision to end the Governing Body's sessions on the Thursday of the second week had been taken so that delegates, some of whom travelled long distances to attend, could travel home on the Friday and have time to recover from the strains of the session over the weekend. In the past, the extension of sessions to the Friday had seen participation levels suffer on the final day.
357. She agreed with the Worker spokesperson's comments on the High-Level Section, which should be well-prepared and held on an exceptional basis. If the functioning of the Governing Body was to be improved, and the Office and the Organization were to gain a leading role in the multilateral system, there was an urgent need for them to deliver. She welcomed the statements from the Governments indicating general support for improvements. There was a need to discuss how such improvements could be achieved; the view of the Employers' group was that the best approach was a time-bound working party, although it was open to discussions, taking into account budgetary and time considerations.
358. **The Worker spokesperson** recalled that the Governing Body had decided to continue its discussion on the possible areas of convergence already identified. Constituents disagreed as to the magnitude of the changes required. Her group did not share the view that in-depth discussion was needed to address a large number of fundamental issues. Nonetheless, she acknowledged the concerns raised by a significant majority of ASPAG and recognized that they included several aspects on which constituents could agree, many of which would not require amendments to the Standing Orders. The discussions should focus on those areas of convergence, rather than issues on which agreement was unlikely to be reached.

- 359.** The issues raised regarding the Screening Group were for the Government group to resolve, and it would be inappropriate to involve all constituents in addressing them. She called on the Government group to reach a solution; it would perhaps be helpful to recall that the role of the Screening Group was limited. Additionally, it was important to remember that a deliberate decision had been made to separate discussions on the review of the functioning of the Governing Body from discussions on the democratization of the ILO's governance.
- 360.** She supported the proposal made by IMEC to allow more time for reflection on the way forward. It was unlikely that consensus would be reached in the context of a working party if it could not be achieved by the Governing Body. Given that there had been no agreement on a forum for the discussion, it would be necessary to conceive of another way to seek convergence, preferably one that was time-bound.
- 361. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office had excluded the issues raised in relation to the Screening Group from the document at the request of the Government group, which had signalled its intention to address the matter internally. The Office would continue to respect the independence of the Government group in matters regarding its representation. It was unlikely that the necessary improvements would be made by 2025, as they might require certain rules to be amended, after consideration by the Governing Body. Responding to comments made by the Government representative of Mexico, she said that issues to be discussed would need to be defined before a decision could be made on whether they should be considered by the Governing Body or resolved via another mechanism.
- 362. Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Official Meetings, Documents and Relations Department) said that, in compliance with the Standing Orders, all Governing Body documents were published in English, French and Spanish. Depending on the availability of resources, some documents, selected in consultation with constituents, were also translated into the four working languages (Arabic, German, Chinese and Russian), such as documents concerning the agenda of the International Labour Conference or stemming from Conference resolutions. He clarified that the Office was not proposing to discontinue the regular report of the Director-General, but rather to omit certain details, such as obituaries, ratifications and publications, that did not require discussion and were easily accessible on the ILO website. He took note of the suggestion regarding the creation of a platform for sharing information with governments, which could also be used to share information with Governing Body members.
- 363. A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) said that the Office was not aware of any particular reason why requests for delegation of authority were not routinely put to the Governing Body. Of the five areas set out in paragraph 2.3.1 of the Standing Orders, the only one on which delegation of authority to its Officers was systematically decided upon by the Governing Body at every March session was that on motions to the International Labour Conference involving expenses. With regard to seat-sharing arrangements, the intention of paragraph 39(c) of the document was to bring to the attention of Governing Body members the fact that the practice was not in line with the Constitution, as well as to enable the Chairperson to fulfil his or her responsibility to enforce the Standing Orders. Finally, in response to GRULAC's question about removing restrictions on the right to speak in a Committee of the Whole, as explained in paragraph 25 of the document, that would require amending paragraph 1.8.3 to allow ILO Members that were not members of the Governing Body to make multiple statements before a Committee of the Whole.
- 364. The Director-General** said that the Office had a responsibility to bring to the attention of the Governing Body possible areas in which its work could be improved, and it was for the

Governing Body to decide when and how to proceed. It would be imprudent to ask the Office to await instruction before raising such issues, particularly those concerning good governance.

- 365. The Worker spokesperson** clarified that her group would never seek to prevent the Office from raising concerns; however, the fact that new issues had been put to constituents after they had begun to identify areas of convergence, and after the Governing Body had explicitly asked the Office to work on those particular areas, had complicated the situation.
- 366. The Employer spokesperson** urged Governing Body members to give due consideration to the issues raised by the Office, which was well placed to identify potential problems in ILO processes.
- 367. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh, recalling that his group had flagged both minor and fundamental shortcomings at recent Governing Body sessions, stressed that surface-level changes would be insufficient to solve all the problems identified. The role of the Screening Group was not negligible; if it was, achieving greater balance within it would be easier. His group had raised its concerns in that regard within the Governing Body because they had not been addressed satisfactorily within the Government group.
- 368. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger said that it was nonsensical to suggest that issues of relevance to particular constituents should not be discussed by the Governing Body. The functioning of the Governing Body was linked to the democratization of the ILO's governance. His group was therefore entitled to raise the matters of the composition of the Screening Group and the Government group during formal Governing Body meetings; the Government group had already held informal discussions on those subjects. He repeated his group's call for the establishment of a working party to discuss those matters.
- (The Governing Body resumed its consideration of the item at a later sitting.)*
- 369. The Worker spokesperson** noted that there had been differences in opinion on the extent of the review of the functioning of the Governing Body and whether the Standing Orders should be revised, but all agreed that the review should be time-bound. A possible compromise option would be to organize a tripartite meeting, governed by the Standing Orders for technical meetings to the extent possible, to have a four-five days' discussion of the six aspects related to the functioning of the Governing Body identified in paragraph 8 of document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1) with a view to reaching consensus. The Office could prepare a document setting out the options for addressing those aspects, and the recommendations stemming from the meeting would be put to the Governing Body. The differences of opinion could be set out in the report of the meeting.
- 370. The Employer spokesperson** said that her group remained convinced of the need to establish a working party, an exercise that had proved successful in the past and appeared to be supported by most Governments. The lengthy discussion on the matter clearly demonstrated the urgent need for reform of the working methods of the Governing Body.
- 371.** The proposal made by the Workers' group was unacceptable to her group. Holding a four-day meeting would not allow discussions of progress in the various issues to be suspended and resumed, and holding it outside the Governing Body session would exclude Governments with small delegations from participating. Her group preferred to discuss only the options proposed in the document.

- 372. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh reiterated his group's support for the establishment of a working party, which would enable a structured and results-oriented discussion, and could devise solutions to be put to the Governing Body for adoption. He agreed with the Worker spokesperson that further discussions among the groups were needed, and preferred to continue the discussion at a later sitting.
- 373. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger said that his group would like to consult internally on the proposal made by the Workers' group. He reiterated his group's preference for a working party, which would reduce the workload of the Governing Body while ensuring that the conversation could continue in a formal setting. The Governing Body appeared to agree that the review should be completed by 2025, while the Office had proposed that the third meeting of the working party could be held in 2026. The working party could instead hold two meetings prior to March 2025 to consider the areas of convergence and a third meeting prior to November 2025 to address the elements of the Compendium of Rules applicable to the Governing Body that would need to be revised.
- 374. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru clarified that informal consultations was the option broadly preferred by his group, but some members had indicated that they would not object to the creation of a working party. The group also remained flexible regarding a combination of those two options but would need to consider the proposal made by the Workers' group before expressing its position.
- 375. Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico said that Governments needed more time to react to new proposals as they had to consult at multiple levels before stating a position. Thus, they would need some time to take a position with respect to the proposal made by the Workers' group.
- 376. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United States said that her group was still not in favour of establishing a working party. She expressed appreciation for the proposal made by the Workers' group and requested time for consultations within her group.
- 377. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office would follow up on the request of the Workers' group to elaborate on its proposal. Responding to the question raised by the Africa group, she said that it would not be feasible to hold two informal consultations before March 2025.
- 378. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger noted that the Office had proposed one meeting prior to the March session and a second meeting in October to discuss the areas of convergence and asked whether it would be feasible to merge the two meetings into a single two- or three-day meeting.
- 379. The Worker spokesperson** said that her group's proposal was intended to avoid a years-long process. A tripartite meeting would allow all areas of convergence to be discussed in a four- or five-day meeting, which would be quicker than a working party holding several one-day discussions and would avoid the need to discuss the issue at subsequent sessions of the Governing Body. It would be important to decide whether to limit the discussion to the areas of convergence or to expand the scope. For that reason, it would be helpful to consider a concrete proposal drawn up by the Office with a realistic time frame. Since some groups had stated that the situation required urgent attention, the Governing Body should explore the possibility of scheduling a meeting for 2025, the outcome of which would be a series of recommendations for consideration by the Governing Body in November 2025.

- 380. The Employer spokesperson** noted that there appeared to be convergence on the urgent need to discuss improvements to the functioning of the Governing Body. Her group planned to submit a further proposal that would reflect the sense of continuity and urgency required and it would consult with other groups to seek consensus in advance of the resumed discussion.
- 381. The Worker spokesperson** clarified that her group continued to favour the option of holding intersessional consultations but had made its proposal in an effort to seek a compromise on the way forward. She encouraged all groups to approach the proposal with an open mind with a view to reaching consensus.
- 382. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office would provide details on the proposal to hold a meeting made by the Workers' group, and a revised time frame for a possible working party as requested by the Africa group.
- 383. A Government representative of the United States** said that she would welcome further details concerning the possible timings for meetings of a working party, particularly as there were other bodies that met directly before Governing Body sessions, and the resources that would be required.

(The Governing Body resumed its consideration of the item at a later sitting.)

- 384. The Chairperson** noted that the Office had circulated by email the additional information requested on the convening of a tripartite meeting in 2025 and on a revised timetable for a working party to complete a review in two meetings rather than three. Furthermore, the Office had circulated a proposal from the Employers' group on holding tripartite consultations to review the functioning of the Governing Body.
- 385. The Employer spokesperson** said that despite her group's preference for the establishment of a working party, in a spirit of compromise it had circulated a proposal for tripartite consultations that drew on the different ideas expressed by the Workers' group and Governments. The proposal acknowledged the need for a time-bound process and covered the identified scope of the review. A balance was needed between thoroughly addressing the issues and maintaining a sense of urgency. The aim was therefore to develop consensus-based recommendations for the Governing Body to revise its Compendium of Rules and to consider adjustments in practice for issues that would not require a revision of the rules.
- 386.** The proposal consisted of holding tripartite discussions over two days at least two months in advance of each of the three Governing Body sessions scheduled for March and November 2025 and March 2026. That would allow the Office time to prepare a report on the discussion for each Governing Body session and present proposals for overcoming dissenting opinions. Two days of meetings were needed on each occasion to allow time for discussion, reflection and decision-making. The use of a hybrid format would limit the financial burden imposed by the process. To ensure that the process was inclusive, her group saw merit in the proposal by the Workers' group to follow the Standing Orders for technical meetings, with a specific number of Workers' and Employers' delegates and a representative of each interested Government. Attendance by advisers who did not take the floor was unlikely to be problematic, since it was standard practice in other meetings. The format of technical meetings could also prove helpful in that consensus-based recommendations would form part of the report to the Governing Body, and dissenting opinions would be placed on record without impeding the adoption of a given decision, which would make the process transparent.

- 387. The Worker spokesperson** noted that, other than the proposed use of the existing Standing Orders for technical meetings, the Employers' group's proposal was very similar to the original option of a working party. It was the Workers' group's firm view that the Governing Body would be more successful in overcoming differences in opinion if it held a single focused meeting instead of a series of meetings, in which decision-making might be postponed. A single meeting must allow enough time for decisions to be made and should therefore last four or five days. The Workers' group strongly objected to holding such a meeting in autumn 2026, as adding a further meeting to an already full schedule would overburden constituents and the Office. The meeting might instead be held in April or May 2025, as proposed by the Office. The Governing Body could then decide in November 2025 whether another such exercise was required.
- 388.** Regarding the agenda, the meeting should focus on the issues where convergence had already been identified so as to generate some positive momentum. It would also be helpful if the Government group could resolve the issues concerning the Screening Group prior to the meeting. Making the meeting open to all interested Governments might disrupt the usual tripartite balance, but the Workers' group welcomed an inclusive approach. Nevertheless, Governments should keep in mind that the functioning of the Governing Body would be the meeting's focus and select its participants with appropriate expertise and should avoid inviting an excessive number of advisers. Regarding finances, the Workers' group's understanding was that extending a single meeting by one day would be much more cost-effective than holding additional meetings. The Worker spokesperson emphasized that her group would not agree to holding more than one such meeting in 2025.
- 389. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the Niger said that his group would support a happy medium of holding two in-person meetings, one in March 2025 and the other in November 2025, as reflected in the Office's proposed revised time frame for a working party. That would allow ample time for reflection and preparation in between meetings, whereas a single meeting might be insufficient to address all issues and reach consensus. In addition, the Office had indicated the possibility of holding a virtual meeting between the in-person meetings in March and November and also organizing informal consultations among all participants, thereby affording a degree of flexibility. Moreover, the working party format would limit the number of Government representatives to 16, plus an adviser or observer for each group, thereby assuaging any concerns about the proportional representation of the social partners.
- 390. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Bangladesh said that his group would prefer the format of a working party, because of the structured format and its proven success. The group supported keeping open what exactly would be discussed. It could agree to holding consultations with a view to resolving the issue of the composition of the Screening Group prior to the working party meeting and to only keep the matter on the agenda of the working party if consultations failed to produce a solution.
- 391. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Peru welcomed the fact that several options had been put forward for reviewing the functioning of the Governing Body but requested more information from the Office about the time and financial implications of each option. The cost of attending three meetings in a single year could be prohibitive for some delegations.
- 392. Speaking on behalf of IMEC,** a Government representative of the United States expressed the group's willingness to agree to establishing a formal discussion process aimed at examining

specific practical improvements to the functioning of the Governing Body, and highlighted IMEC's own priorities. First, any discussion must be limited to the six issues listed in sections A–F of Part I of document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1), as they had been the subject of significant consultation. Second, the meeting or meetings should result in just one report to the Governing Body containing the conclusions of the discussions; providing interim reports would overburden the Governing Body's agenda and potentially hamper the process of developing consensus. Third, to prioritize efficiency while allowing space for full discussions, it would be preferable to complete the exercise over one or two multi-day meetings. Despite being less cost-effective, the meeting or meetings should be stand-alone rather than immediately before or after the sessions of the Governing Body, as that would give constituents the time and space necessary to focus on the issues at hand. Lastly, the group would prefer meeting arrangements that allowed Government representatives to be accompanied by advisers, but was otherwise flexible about the Government group composition so as to ensure an inclusive and productive meeting.

- 393. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the estimated costs were approximately US\$230,000–250,000 for a two-day meeting, US\$350,000 for a three-day meeting and US\$500,000–530,000 for a four- or five-day meeting. However, the exact costs would depend on the composition of the Workers' and Employers' delegations and the resulting travel costs. As for the feasibility for the Office of a meeting in April or May 2025, despite an already busy agenda the Office stood ready to provide the necessary support.
- 394. The Employer spokesperson** said that it would be important to present a report to the Governing Body after each meeting so that it could continually assess progress and determine whether further work was needed on any of the agreed areas, even if a decision could be taken only at the end of the exercise.
- 395. The Worker spokesperson** said that the preference of the Africa group and the significant majority of Governments of ASPAG for a working party was surprising, given that those groups had always advocated an inclusive approach, which would be possible in a tripartite meeting. The best way of addressing all the views expressed would be to adopt a tripartite format based on the Standing Orders for technical meetings. The Workers' group had maintained from the outset that it was important to consider the areas of convergence set out in paragraph 8 of the Office document, and not address the additional issues proposed by the Office. The schedule for autumn 2025 was already full, but the group would be in favour of a focused meeting held in April or May 2025. If two meetings proved necessary, they could be held in 2025 and 2026, respectively, followed by a further discussion in the Governing Body.
- 396. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that the group was in favour of the most efficient option and preferred only one meeting over multiple days. He asked how much work each of the proposed formats would generate for the Office, and what the impact would be on the agenda of future sessions of the Governing Body.
- 397. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger noted that the composition of the Screening Group had been raised during discussions at the 350th and 351st Sessions as an area of convergence in need of improvement, but was not listed in the document for the current session. The option of a working party would address the Workers' group's concerns regarding the potential over-representation of Governments in a technical meeting. That option was the most cost-effective because the in-person meetings would be held immediately before or after the sessions of the Governing Body, for which all potential participants would be present in Geneva.

- 398. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that it was concerning to hear so many questions raised about costs, and asked the Office to clarify the hourly cost of discussions in the Governing Body.
- 399. The Worker spokesperson** clarified that she had previously stated that a working party would have a limited number of Government members – 8 Worker members, 8 Employer members and 16 Government members – whereas a tripartite meeting would allow all Governments to participate and was therefore much more inclusive. She had not said that advisers should not be allowed to participate. She would be interested to know how many hours had already been devoted at the current and previous sessions to discussing the format of the review. It was time to conclude the discussion or continue it at the subsequent session in March 2025.
- 400. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office would be able to facilitate the discussion in the format decided on by the Governing Body. If the current item were to be added to the agenda of a future session, the Screening Group would decide how it should be incorporated. The Office had not included the composition of the Screening Group in the background document because it had been asked to allow the Government members time to discuss the issue within their group. With regard to the additional hours of discussion in extended sittings of the Governing Body, the cost had been estimated to be in the region of CHF7,000 per hour.
- 401. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh requested the Office to include the issues of the composition of the Screening Group and of ensuring full, equal and democratic participation in the ILO's governance as part of the discussion on the functioning of the Governing Body.
- 402. The Worker spokesperson** acknowledged the importance of democratic participation in the Screening Group, but said that it was primarily an issue for the Government group to resolve. The main consideration currently should be how to proceed with the review of the functioning of the Governing Body. It should be possible to reach a compromise between those who wished to set up a working party and those wanting a shorter process.
- 403. Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico said that the group had held extensive discussions on the issue of representation within the Screening Group. Three plenary meetings and two meetings of a smaller negotiating group had taken place in 2024, with a view to ensuring full, equal and democratic participation in the tripartite structure of the ILO and addressing dual representation in the Screening Group. Although the process was taking longer than expected, every effort would be made to reach consensus on the issue, including by holding discussions at a higher level or in a more structured way if necessary. The aim was to reach a universally acceptable solution in the coming months that could be shared with the Governing Body at its next session.

(The Governing Body resumed its consideration of the item at a subsequent sitting.)

- 404. The Chairperson** made the following proposal for an amended draft decision based on the discussion of the additional proposals that had been presented:

The Governing Body:

- (a) ~~noted the areas of convergence contained in document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1) to inform the review of the functioning of the Governing Body, subject to the guidance provided during its discussion;~~
- (b) ~~decided to undertake a review of the functioning of the Governing Body and convene, to that end, two tripartite meetings to which the Standing Orders for Technical Meetings~~

would apply, with the necessary suspensions. Arrangements will be made to enable remote participation to these meetings;

(b) decided that:

(i) the first tripartite meeting will be held in April/May 2025 and present its deliberations and outcome to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025);

(ii) the second tripartite meeting will be held in January/February 2026 and present its deliberations and outcome to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);

(iii) the meetings would be composed of one representative of each interested Government and eight representatives of the Employers' group and of the Workers' group respectively, with the possibility of being accompanied by advisers;

(iv) to discuss the review areas identified in section I of document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1);

(c) noted that discussions were ongoing within the Government group concerning the representation of Governments in the Screening group. approved procedural option [II A, B or C] outlined in paragraphs 40-60 of document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1) for the continuation of the review, and requested the Director General to take into account the guidance provided during its discussion.

- 405. The Worker spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the proposed compromise in the interest of ending the discussion. However, clarification was needed on how “the necessary suspensions” to the Standing Orders would be identified. The group did not support the provision for remote participation unless it was for observers only; despite the cost efficiencies, hybrid meetings should not be held for challenging discussions, as they did not provide space for the side negotiations that were often necessary. Further information was needed regarding the length of the meetings. She proposed that a decision on whether to hold a second meeting could be made at the 355th Session of the Governing Body (November 2025), based on the outcome of the first meeting.
- 406.** The Workers' group could support the proposed composition under clause (iii) of the proposal. However, the scope under clause (iv) included issues listed in section I(F) of document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1) that had neither been addressed in the tripartite consultations nor requested for inclusion, which would add unnecessary complexity to the discussions. Nevertheless, the Workers' group could accept their inclusion in the spirit of compromise. On subparagraph (c), she proposed that more positive language could be used to encourage the Government group to make progress on its discussions of the composition of the Screening Group.
- 407. The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Chairperson for the proposal, which captured well the different perspectives. Her group understood “the necessary suspensions” to refer only to the possibility of remote participation in the meetings. Although most negotiations would take place in person, online participation would make the meetings more inclusive and should be welcomed. The Employers' group could support holding two meetings instead of three, with the possibility of cancelling the second meeting if all the issues had been resolved in the first. It would be useful to specify the length of the meetings, but the specific arrangements could be left to the Office. She fully supported clause (iv) specifying the scope of the meetings, and saw no need to amend subparagraph (c), as the Government group was already in discussions on the Screening Group.
- 408. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) clarified that the necessary suspensions to the Standing Orders for technical meetings would apply to article 3, paragraph 2, as there would be no need to publish or disseminate the results of the meetings, and to article 9, paragraphs 2, 3 and 8, as

the participation of representatives of international organizations and non-governmental organizations and external persons would not apply; those provisions could be specified in the decision. In terms of duration, four days had been proposed for the first meeting, with the length of the second to be decided at the 355th Session of the Governing Body (November 2025); that could also be indicated in the decision.

- 409. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru welcomed the proposal, which took into account the positions of the various groups. Although his group would have preferred a single meeting, it could be flexible in the interests of consensus.
- 410. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger echoed support for the proposal, which took into account the range of views.
- 411. The Worker spokesperson** proposed that the meeting invitations should clearly state that the discussions would take place primarily in person, and agreed that the decision should state that the first meeting would last four days and that the dates of the second meeting would be decided at the 355th Session of the Governing Body.
- 412. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that he would agree with the proposal, provided that the Office took into account the concerns regarding democratization that his group had expressed during the discussion of item INS/7. As to the Screening Group, he proposed using more specific wording than “noted that discussions were ongoing within the Government group”, to address the concerns of the Worker spokesperson.
- 413. The Worker spokesperson** suggested including the wording “and invited them to make progress in the upcoming months” in subparagraph (c).
- 414. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United States expressed support for the proposal as it aimed to achieve consensus. She proposed to include in subparagraph (a): “decided to undertake a targeted review of a selected number of areas of the functioning of the Governing Body”, in line with the wording of the Office document. Speaking in her national capacity, she proposed to include in subparagraph (c) the wording “and encouraged the conclusion of the discussions”.
- 415. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh did not support the proposal to include “targeted review of a selected number of areas” in subparagraph (a).
- 416. The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the proposed addition to subparagraph (a). However, since there had been opposition to that proposal, an alternative could be to incorporate clause (iv), which detailed the scope, into subparagraph (a).
- 417. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger emphasized that the original proposal presented by the Chairperson enjoyed general consensus; the Governing Body should not rewrite it endlessly and should instead move forward. He did not support incorporating clause (iv) into subparagraph (a).
- 418. A Government representative of Barbados** restated for the record that the discussion on the functioning of the Governing Body must take into consideration the need for greater representation of small island developing States.
- 419. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that it was important for the discussions of the Screening Group to remain separate to avoid any duplication, and proposed deleting subparagraph (c).

- 420. A Government representative of Colombia** agreed that subparagraph (c) could be deleted. Otherwise, it should be placed on record that the discussion on the Screening Group was a separate process from the tripartite meetings and should not be included in their agenda.
- 421. A Government representative of Mexico** reiterated that the Government group would continue to seek consensus on the complex matter of the composition of the Screening Group, and noted that it was not necessary to include subparagraph (c) in a decision on a separate matter.
- 422. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger said that discussions on the composition of the Screening Group had been held at previous sessions in connection with the functioning of the Governing Body and that subparagraph (c) should therefore be retained.
- 423. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that his group also wished to retain subparagraph (c).
- 424. The Worker spokesperson** said that subparagraph (c) should be retained, as it made it clear that the composition of the Screening Group was an issue to be resolved among Governments and would not be discussed at the tripartite meetings. In the interest of consensus, she withdrew her proposed amendment to subparagraph (c), which had been aimed at avoiding further discussion.
- 425. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that if the consensus was to keep subparagraph (c), his group would prefer to revert to the initial wording.
- 426. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, the Government representative of Bangladesh said that his group also supported the original wording of subparagraph (c).
- 427. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United States asked how the first four-day tripartite meeting would be structured and what issues would be covered, as the duration of the possible second meeting had not been specified and she was reluctant to have a programme of work that included repeated discussions. The group did not see the need for the second meeting also to be over four days, as eight days in total would be just one day short of a Governing Body session. She also asked whether drafting groups would be formed during the meetings.
- 428. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) responded that all the areas of convergence identified for further review would be discussed during the four-day meeting, but the specific agenda would be set at a later date. No drafting groups were planned. There had been several requests for a possible second meeting if all of the issues could not be concluded at the first and the potential dates would remain open for decision at the 355th Session.
- 429. The Worker spokesperson** proposed, for the sake of clarity, to specify in the decision that the second meeting would be held “in principle over two days, subject to further decision-making by the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025)”.
- 430. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger asked the Office whether the Governing Body had to determine the details of meetings governed by the Standing Orders for technical meetings when it made its decision.
- 431. Another representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) responded that article 3, paragraph 1 of the Standing Orders for technical meetings required the Governing Body to

“establish the agenda of the meeting and specify which form the results of its proceedings may take, in particular conclusions or other agreed statement containing guidance on the matters covered by the agenda”. Those details should therefore be included in the decision.

- 432. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger opposed the latest amendment by the Workers’ group. **Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh also opposed the proposed amendment.
- 433. The Employer spokesperson** said that, in his understanding, the majority of the Governing Body had supported the text as presented by the Chairperson and that the proposed amendments intended to clarify the wording had not proved helpful.
- 434. The Worker spokesperson** explained that the intention of her proposal was to ensure that the decision clearly reflected the agreement that in November 2025, the Governing Body would consider the outcome of the first meeting and decide whether a second meeting would be required and how long it should be. With that understanding, she withdrew the amendment and accepted the original text of clause (b)(ii).

Decision

435. The Governing Body:

- (a) **decided to undertake a review of the areas of its functioning identified in section I of document GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1) and to convene, to that end, two tripartite meetings to which the Standing Orders for technical meetings would apply, with the suspension of article 3, paragraph 2, and article 9, paragraphs 2, 3 and 8, and for which arrangements would be made to enable remote participation;**
- (b) **decided that:**
 - (i) **the first tripartite meeting would be held over four days in April/May 2025 and present its deliberations and outcome to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025);**
 - (ii) **the second tripartite meeting would be held in January/February 2026, and present its deliberations and outcome to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);**
 - (iii) **the meetings would be composed of one representative of each interested Government, eight representatives of the Employers’ group and of the Workers’ group respectively, with the possibility of being accompanied by advisers;**
- (c) **noted that discussions were ongoing within the Government group concerning the representation of Governments in the Screening Group.**

(GB.352/INS/8(Rev.1), paragraph 61, as amended by the Governing Body)

9. The status of Palestine in the ILO and its participation rights in ILO meetings (GB.352/INS/9 and GB.352/INS/9(Add.1))

- 436. The Employer spokesperson** said that the ongoing conflict and the resultant immense human suffering in the region continued to have a profound impact on people’s lives and livelihoods, and she expressed her group’s solidarity with those affected, noting that sustained dialogue and cooperation were essential for recovery and achieving lasting peace. Acquiring the status

of non-member observer State would enable Palestine to participate more fully in the ILO's decision-making processes and discussions. It would provide better access to technical committees and discussions that directly influenced labour conditions, provide an opportunity to bring a regional perspective to global labour discussions, and allow it to better address challenges related to social protection, skills development and employment policies. Tripartite social dialogue could help strengthen Palestinian institutions and institution-building, with knowledge transfer from other countries facing similar challenges, such as in vocational training, social protection and employment law. Enhanced participation could contribute to creating a stronger, more resilient labour market, which was essential for business growth and economic stability, and fostering the development of labour policies that were more closely aligned with international standards. Additional support for small and medium-sized enterprises and the simplification of regulatory frameworks were critical to rebuilding the Palestinian economy. Furthermore, Palestine could benefit further from ILO capacity-building and collaboration with regional and international partners to boost productivity, economic competitiveness and job creation, thereby advancing sustainable development and stability. Its increased participation in ILO discussions could also contribute to fostering an environment that supported growth, inclusivity and cooperation. She emphasized that progress on economic cooperation, labour market development and social justice were closely tied to peace and stability.

437. Her group supported option 1 of the draft decision contained in GB.352/INS/9(Add.1), which would involve temporarily suspending the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and the Standing Orders for technical meetings to the extent that they were incompatible with Palestine's participation as a non-member observer State. That measure was practical and effective, and could be implemented swiftly if approved by the International Labour Conference in June 2025. It would also enable Palestine to participate more fully, without requiring complex amendments to the Organization's rules.
438. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Employers' group and several Governments for supporting the call of the Workers' group at the June 2024 session of the Governing Body for the Governing Body to discuss and adopt measures to grant additional rights and privileges for the participation of Palestine as soon as possible. The position of the Workers' group was clear and long-standing: Palestine must be recognized as an independent State, in accordance with the important principle of self-determination, in order to move closer to the urgently needed two-State solution. Palestine's current legal status in the ILO as a liberation movement was completely outdated. Granting it the status of non-member observer State would mean that the ILO formally recognized Palestinian statehood. That was essential to aligning the ILO's practices with the UN, reflecting broader developments in international law and providing legal clarity on its participation rights.
439. The Workers' group fully supported option 1 of the draft decision conferring the same participation rights outlined in resolution ES-10/23, and supported the adjustments made in the draft Conference resolution to reflect the ILO's tripartite structure. The group agreed with the proposal to grant Palestine the limited rights specified in article 1.8 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and to grant it participation rights in technical meetings. The group also agreed that the Governing Body's decision should take effect only after confirmation by the Conference.
440. The Workers' group did not support option 2 of amending the relevant standing orders and rules for meetings, as it concurred with the Office's assessment that specifying participation rights that would apply solely to Palestine would be somewhat unusual. Moreover, the group could not endorse any option that would not grant Palestine at least the status of non-member

observer State. The group also disagreed with the idea of establishing a new generic status of non-member observer State, with enhanced participation rights to be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Governing Body and the Conference, as it would violate the principle of universality, allow States to participate without paying for membership and generalize a highly unusual practice that was applicable only in very specific circumstances. A decision of the Governing Body together with a resolution submitted to the Conference would be sufficiently authoritative to align with the UN General Assembly resolution, therefore the group fully supported option 1 of the draft decision.

- 441. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Libya reaffirmed the principles set out in the UN Charter and the fundamental right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State and participate fully in all international organizations. As Palestine was already a party to numerous UN instruments and a full member of various specialized agencies, she urged the ILO to implement resolution ES-10/23 to formally recognize Palestine as a non-member observer State, rather than a liberation movement, and grant it the enhanced participation rights outlined in Appendix III to GB.352/INS/9. Under resolution ES-10/23, Palestine was eligible for full membership of the UN and other international organizations, but the Africa group could support option 1 of the draft decision as an interim measure pending its full membership of the ILO.
- 442. Speaking on behalf of a number of Latin American and Caribbean countries**,⁶ a Government representative of Colombia noted that in the Workers' group's call to the Governing Body to align Palestine's participation rights in the ILO with resolution ES-10/23, it had emphasized that its social partners' participation rights must be aligned with those of any ILO Member State. Conferring on Palestine the status of non-member observer State would provide it with access to human rights protection mechanisms and international remedies at the ILO and other bodies to defend its workers. It would also have a positive impact on the development of labour and social rights, decent work and social justice within its territory, and would strengthen the ILO's universal mandate. His group supported option 1 of the draft decision, which would mean that Palestine would henceforth be recognized as a State also within the ILO.
- 443. Speaking on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)**, a Government representative of Oman said that the people of Palestine had been the victims of displacement and dispossession, the destruction of their infrastructure and economic environment, the bankruptcy of thousands of businesses and the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and workers. Resolution ES-10/23 had requested specialized UN agencies to grant enhanced rights to Palestine, which was a clear call for justice and equity. The widespread support among UN Member States for admitting Palestine as a full Member necessitated a review of Palestine's status within the ILO. Full membership was a legitimate right and was vital to safeguard the rights of the Palestinian people. Accordingly, the group called on the Office to take all necessary measures to implement the General Assembly resolution and grant Palestine the privileges outlined in Appendix III to document GB.352/INS/9, in accordance with the wishes of the vast majority of the international community. The group supported option 1 of the draft decision and underscored the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and to establish an independent and fully sovereign State.

⁶ Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

- 444. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Tunisia noted that resolution ES-10/23 recognized that Palestine was qualified for membership in the UN, and requested the ILO to apply the appropriate modalities, in accordance with the binding nature of that resolution. That was not only a matter of principle, but an urgent necessity in order to rectify the injustice inflicted on Palestinians. Recognition by the ILO would represent an important step in affirming the rights of the Palestinian people to freedom, peace and self-determination, and was a prerequisite for achieving lasting peace in the region as a whole. In the special sitting at its 112th Session (2024), the International Labour Conference was almost unanimous in condemning the catastrophic humanitarian situation in the occupied Arab territories. He therefore supported option 1 of the draft decision and called for the adoption by the Conference of the draft resolution in Appendix III to document GB.352/INS/9 at its 113th Session (2025).
- 445. A Government representative of Spain** said that the Governments of Ireland, Norway and Slovenia supported his statement. He expressed strong support for option 1 of the draft decision. That would end a situation arising from a decision made in 1974 that no longer corresponded to the current circumstances, and would align the ILO with other UN entities, such as the World Health Organization (WHO), that had already updated the status of Palestine. He called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire to alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe and the release of the remaining hostages. The countries would continue to support the two-State solution. A viable Palestinian State with internationally recognized borders comprising Gaza and the West Bank, sea access and East Jerusalem as its capital was vital for peace, security, stability and the success of the political process in the Middle East.
- 446. Speaking on behalf of Malaysia and the Philippines**, a Government representative of Malaysia said that the Government of Indonesia also supported her statement. She reaffirmed their support for the full recognition of Palestine as a Member State of the UN, in alignment with resolution ES-10/23. She urged the Governing Body to choose option 1 to elevate Palestine's status and expand its participation rights. That would not merely be a symbolic gesture, but essential to advance progress in the region; it was a matter of justice, of ensuring inclusive representation and enabling Palestine to contribute to the global discourse on labour rights and social justice. Codifying Palestine's rights through the adoption of the draft Conference resolution contained in Appendix III to document GB.352/INS/9 would avoid the need for case-by-case decisions about Palestine's participation in meetings and provide a clear framework for that participation, thus saving time and resources. Option 2 in the draft decision could lay the groundwork for future recognition, but there was a risk of significant delays and uncertain outcomes, as reaching consensus when seeking to amend the relevant standing orders would be a lengthy process, whereas immediate decisive action was required.
- 447. A Government representative of the United States** expressed concern that the process proposed in option 1 involved suspending relevant rules and standing orders without specifying which specific provisions. Standing orders provided vital guardrails for the governance of the ILO and should only be amended after a thorough process of review, not set aside on an ad hoc basis. Moreover, the designation of "non-member observer State" used in the draft resolution did not appear in the Standing Orders of the Conference. Therefore, she expressed support for option 2, which would involve thoughtful discussion by the Governing Body over two sessions.
- 448. A Government representative of Brazil** said that her Government was proud to have co-sponsored resolution ES-10/23, which had been supported by two thirds of UN Member States. The General Assembly had sent the clear message that Palestine must be granted in all relevant organizations, agencies and entities within the UN system the participation rights set

out in the appendix to the resolution. She supported option 1 of the draft decision, which would rectify the anachronism of considering Palestine to be a liberation movement; it had been recognized as a State by the Government of Brazil since 2010. Adopting option 1 was vital to fulfilling the ILO's mandate of promoting social justice and decent work. She reiterated her Government's commitment to the two-State solution, applying the pre-1967 borders.

- 449. A Government representative of Cuba** said that it was time to rectify the historic injustice against the Palestinian people by admitting Palestine as a Member State in multilateral forums. That would also contribute to a fair and lasting solution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine by furthering Palestine's right to self-determination. It would be consistent with resolution ES-10/23 for the ILO to recognize Palestine as a full Member State of the ILO rather than a non-member observer State, which did not do justice to the resolution. Option 1 of the draft decision nevertheless represented a step forward and was the most appropriate approach to advancing recognition of Palestinian statehood at the ILO. The Palestinian people needed the support of the ILO, which meant the recognition of the inalienable right to self-determination. He reiterated the call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, an end to the illegal occupation and guaranteed access to urgent humanitarian aid.
- 450. A Government representative of France** reiterated the urgent need for a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all hostages and unimpeded delivery of widescale humanitarian aid. The adoption of resolution ES-10/23 urgently required a corresponding decision by the Governing Body. His Government supported option 1 of the draft decision. Granting Palestine non-member observer State status would confer on it the rights and privileges already granted by the General Assembly and the WHO. Such a decision would help raise awareness that the UN must act to settle the conflict between Israel and Palestine on the basis of a two-State solution, as the only way of addressing Israel's security concerns and the Palestinians' legitimate aspirations for statehood.
- 451. A Government representative of South Africa** called on Governing Body members to support option 1 of the draft decision in order to enhance Palestine's participation rights in ILO meetings and to right the historical wrong of designating it as a liberation movement. His Government would have preferred for Palestine to be granted full Member status in the ILO, as was the case in other entities in the UN system. It was regrettable that the UN Security Council had failed to admit the State of Palestine as a full Member of the UN. Option 1 of the draft decision would at least ensure that the ILO was aligned with the General Assembly, which had granted Palestine non-member observer State status in 2012. It was critical for the ILO to grant Palestine that status in light of the ongoing human tragedy in Gaza, as it would signal that the Palestinian people had not been forgotten and would confirm the decisions of the International Court of Justice in the proceedings instituted by South Africa against Israel under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide that the Palestinian people had an inalienable right to self-determination that could not be vetoed and from which all other rights flowed, including labour rights.
- 452. A Government representative of Colombia** expressed support for Palestine's rights to self-determination and to participate actively in international forums, which were essential to build peace and strengthen social justice, and condemned the genocide of the Palestinian people. A decision to align Palestine's participation in the ILO with that of other international organizations was not only coherent, but necessary. She would therefore support Palestine's recognition as an ILO Member State, thereby strengthening its right to self-determination, enabling it to participate in discussions on social justice and labour policy and rights, and providing access to international protection mechanisms to support its workers. Furthermore, such a decision would contribute to strengthening social justice and decent work for all,

furthering diplomatic dialogue, as well as recognizing Palestine's right to build a fair, inclusive and sustainable economy and to participate in the development of international labour standards that reflected the reality of all people. As it would not be possible for the Governing Body to recognize Palestine as a full Member State at the current session, recognizing it as a non-member observer State would represent significant progress and send a clear message of solidarity and support for Palestine.

- 453. A Government representative of China** welcomed the adoption of the historic resolution ES-10/23 recognizing that Palestine qualified for full membership in the UN. Palestine played a significant role in global labour governance, and the ILO had long been providing development cooperation to safeguard the rights and interests of Palestinian workers and employers. Efforts by the ILO and partners should be increased. He endorsed the proposal to invite Palestine to participate in future meetings as a non-member observer State with the corresponding rights, and called on other Governing Body members also to support option 1 of the draft decision.
- 454. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that, in light of the fact that the overwhelming majority of UN Member States had recognized the State of Palestine and supported its participation in international organizations, including in the ILO, he endorsed option 1 of the draft decision. He specifically called for formal recognition of Palestine's status as a non-member observer State within the ILO, full participation rights in ILO meetings, the temporary suspension of any provisions that might limit those rights and privileges, and enhanced participation rights adapted to the ILO tripartite structure. That would enable more effective representation of Palestinian workers' interests and contribute to the advancement of decent work and social justice in Palestine, which was vital given the catastrophic situation in Gaza, where large numbers of jobs had been lost following the destruction of workplaces and other civilian infrastructure.
- 455. A Government representative of Mexico** said that the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory required an approach that promoted inclusion, respect for human rights and social justice. He therefore expressed support for granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State, in line with the decisions of the UN General Assembly and other multilateral bodies. That would strengthen Palestine's participation in the work of the ILO, facilitating closer cooperation on key issues. Its inclusion was key to the development of effective labour policies to meet the needs of Palestinian workers. It would further strengthen social dialogue in the region, facilitate the role of the ILO in supporting Palestinian workers and employers, and promote conditions conducive to economic and social reconstruction. The effective and equitable inclusion of Palestine in the ILO's decision-making processes would build constructive cooperation, thus contributing to a lasting and sustainable peace.
- 456. A Government representative of Honduras** said that her Government recognized Palestine as a free and sovereign State and had supported the adoption of resolution ES-10/23. Strengthening the effective participation of Palestine in the work of the ILO was an important step to giving effect to the resolution, which would also contribute to rectifying a historic injustice and enhance the Palestinian people's legitimate right to self-determination. Granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State would constitute a significant step towards the development of labour and social rights, decent work and social justice, and would also strengthen the universal mandate of the ILO. Therefore, she expressed support for option 1, as it was the most efficient means of implementing the UN resolution.
- 457. A Government representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** reiterated her Government's support for Palestine's legitimate right to participate as a State in international organizations, including the ILO. Her Government would have preferred to grant Palestine full

membership of the ILO, but in order to join the consensus, could support option 1 granting it the status of non-member observer State. Palestine must have significant representation and participate actively in the various multilateral forums. Its participation would enhance the mission of the ILO and provide an important perspective to decisions on labour rights; excluding Palestine from participating would be a moral failure. Finally, she reiterated the call for a ceasefire and called for a negotiated solution in line with UN decisions.

- 458. A Government representative of Bangladesh** reaffirmed his Government's support for Palestine's right to self-determination. The current attacks had caused destruction and the loss of jobs and livelihoods, which made the UN resolution more relevant than ever. Palestine had already been granted enhanced rights in other UN agencies and deserved the right to be a full Member of the ILO. The Organization must grant it enhanced participation rights, including for the social partners. Any proposal less than granting Palestine the status of non-member observer State would not guarantee Palestinians the right to assert their views fully or enable them to share the perspectives of a workforce under occupation and attack. He therefore supported option 1 of the draft decision.
- 459. Speaking on behalf of the countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, a Government representative of Pakistan advocated for Palestine to take its rightful place within the ILO, based on the principles of justice, equal rights, self-determination, inclusivity and respect for all people. Following the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution ES-10/23, it was imperative for the ILO to recognize Palestine's status and right to participate in its meetings, consistent with other UN agencies. That would enable Palestine to contribute to discussions on labour rights and social justice, and ensure that the perspectives of Palestinian workers under occupation were represented. His group supported option 1 of the draft decision.
- 460. A Government representative of Israel**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, said that the proposal to afford to the Palestinian liberation movement the rights that were granted to ILO Member States undermined the entire system of international labour standards. Membership of the Organization was both a privilege and a responsibility; enhancing the participation rights of the Palestinian liberation movement would send the message that membership could be obtained without any commitment to implementing the decisions of the ILO, to submitting to its oversight and advisory mechanisms or to upholding its standards and values. Such a step was another example of the politicization of a UN specialized agency and would not benefit Palestinian workers. The Office was asking ILO Member States to consider in haste the suspension of certain provisions of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, instead of carefully examining adjustments to the rules under due process. The proposal should be rejected outright.
- 461. A Government representative of Algeria**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, said that full membership status should be granted to Palestine in line with resolution ES-10/23 and taking into account the 1946 Agreement between the UN and the ILO. Indeed, Palestine deserved full membership status to enable it to participate effectively in the work of the ILO and to redress the historical injustices that it had experienced. In accordance with the principles of the UN Charter, the Palestinian people had the right to self-determination, including the right to establish their own sovereign State. Palestine should be able to participate fully in all international organizations on the basis of freedom, equality and justice for all, and respect for fundamental human rights. The Governing Body should therefore recommend the adoption of the Conference resolution with a view to enhancing the status of Palestine in the ILO, granting it

the rights set out in resolution ES-10/23 and enabling it to participate in discussions and decision-making to defend the rights of Palestinian workers. He therefore expressed support for option 1 of the draft decision.

- 462. A Government representative of Egypt**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, welcomed the efforts aimed at aligning the ILO's position with resolution ES-10/23, which recognized that the State of Palestine was qualified for membership in the UN in accordance with Article 4 of the UN Charter. The acquisition of full membership status by the State of Palestine in the UN and its specialized agencies was, furthermore, an inalienable right based on international law and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish, within the June 1967 borders, an independent State with East Jerusalem as its capital. That right was also consistent with the provisions of the ILO Constitution, according to which universal and lasting peace could be established only if it was based on social justice. The discussion of the item within the Governing Body was a step in the right direction towards upholding the principles of international law and justice and achieving the objectives of the UN. It was high time to recognize the rights of the Palestinian people, who had been suffering for more than seven decades from foreign occupation. Egypt therefore supported option 1 of the draft decision, which would grant Palestine the right to participate in the work of the ILO as a non-member observer State and the rights and privileges set out in the draft resolution.
- 463. A Government representative of Jordan**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, said that Palestine should enjoy full membership in the UN, in accordance with resolution ES-10/23 and with the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including their right to an independent and sovereign State. Based on the principles of justice, inclusiveness and respect for all peoples, upon which the ILO was founded, he supported the proposal to review the status of Palestine in the ILO and to grant it the privileges set out in resolution ES-10/23. That would represent an important step towards affirming the rights of the Palestinian people to freedom, peace and self-determination. He supported option 1 of the draft decision.
- 464. A Government representative of Türkiye**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, called on the international community to take steps to stop the Israeli aggression in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and reiterated the call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, together with the release of hostages and detainees, and unhindered humanitarian access in Gaza. His Government advocated an independent, sovereign and contiguous Palestinian State based on 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. It therefore welcomed the initiative to enable Palestine to be represented as a non-member observer State in the Governing Body, regional meetings and technical meetings, and endorsed efforts to advance Palestine's full membership of the UN. Such measures would contribute to sustainable development and foster greater cooperation with the international community. In that spirit, his Government firmly supported the proposal to expand Palestine's participation rights at the ILO, as set out in option 1 of the draft decision, which presented a valuable opportunity to enhance Palestine's representation on the international stage, deepen its engagement with the ILO and advance regional peace and development goals. In particular, the participation of Palestine as a non-member observer State in the Governing Body and at technical meetings would help safeguard the labour and social rights of the Palestinian people. The draft resolution on the status of Palestine should receive strong support at the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference. His Government would continue to support all efforts to protect Palestinian rights and facilitate Palestine's active participation on international platforms.

- 465. A representative of Palestine** (Minister of Labour), authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in keeping with past practice, welcomed the Governing Body's decision by consensus to include the item on the agenda of the current session. Indeed, conferring on Palestine the status of a non-member observer State in the ILO, the right to participate in ILO meetings and the other privileges following resolution ES-10/23 would contribute to the achievement of social justice and sustainable development in Palestine. The decision would represent a victory for the Palestinian people, despite the barbaric war and the ongoing genocide being carried out against them by the occupying forces. The war had put the free world and its values and principles to the test: the test of standing on the side of truth, justice, freedom and peace. Thanks to democratic principles, Palestine enjoyed widespread acceptance within international organizations, including the UN and its specialized agencies, and was committed to the principles of the UN Charter and to upholding international law and the associated resolutions accordingly. She expressed her gratitude to all countries that had shown their support to Palestine. She also expressed the hope that the voice of Palestinian employers and workers would now be heard.
- 466. A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) noted that some speakers had called for the rights and privileges set out in the draft resolution to be conferred on Palestine as soon as possible. She drew the attention of the Governing Body to the text of the draft resolution that proposed to confer the rights and privileges contained in paragraph 3 for "future sessions of the International Labour Conference and regional meetings". Therefore, if the draft resolution was adopted as it currently read by the Conference at its 113th Session (June 2025), Palestine would be able to exercise those rights at the 114th Session (June 2026) of the Conference. Furthermore, Palestine would be able to exercise the right set out in subparagraph (c) of the draft decision at the 354th Session (June 2025) of the Governing Body, immediately following the 113th Session of the Conference.
- 467. The Government representative of the United States** said that, from a governance perspective, provisions of the Standing Orders should not be suspended indefinitely. Her Government would have preferred to discuss the procedural modalities of the proposal during both the current and the next sessions of the Governing Body so that the Governing Body could recommend a detailed route forward to the Conference. However, in the interests of reaching a decision, her Government wished to propose an amendment to option 1 of the draft decision to insert a new subparagraph reading: "decided that the Governing Body should evaluate in due time the need to amend relevant Standing Orders to conform with this decision". The Office should also clarify which provisions of the Standing Orders would be suspended. Her Government had also submitted a clarifying technical change to the draft resolution to be considered by the Conference.
- 468. A Government representative of Germany and a Government representative of the United Kingdom** seconded the proposed amendment and aligned themselves with the statement made by the representative of the United States.
- 469. The Employer spokesperson** expressed support for the proposed amendment.
- 470. The Worker spokesperson**, noting that it was important to reach consensus on the draft decision, asked the representative of the United States to clarify the proposed amendment, which appeared to undermine the strength of the decision. In particular, it was not clear what evaluation might entail or how long "due time" might be.
- 471. The Government representative of the United States** explained that the Governing Body should be able to carry out a review, at some point after the adoption of the decision and when

time allowed, in order to determine whether the ILO would be well served by amending the Standing Orders.

- 472. The Worker spokesperson** said that her group could support the draft decision if it meant that the matter would be put to the Conference in 2025, without further discussions in March. It could support an evaluation of the suspension of the Standing Orders at some point in the future.
- 473. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Tunisia confirmed his group's firm position on the inalienable right of Palestine to enjoy full membership in the UN and its specialized agencies. In the interests of reaching consensus, it could accept the proposed amendment. It looked forward to the adoption of the draft resolution by the Conference at its 113th Session (2025).
- 474. A Government representative of South Africa** said that, as he understood it, the proposal was to suspend the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders to conform with the decision under consideration – which related to a specific issue – and not to amend the relevant provisions to conform with the current situation more generally. The draft decision already established that any rights and privileges would be conferred on Palestine “on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent”. Yet, the proposed amendment suggested the opposite.
- 475. The Worker spokesperson** said that the proposed amendment simply provided the flexibility to evaluate whether or not there was a need to modify the Standing Orders in the future. While her group did not think that the Standing Orders currently required any modification, it would be prepared to discuss the issue if and when the time came. There was no need to be more specific than that. The proposed amendment would not fundamentally change the decision or imply that it was somehow temporary. The most important thing was to move forward on the basis of consensus with a view to granting Palestine additional participation rights.
- 476. The Employer spokesperson** agreed that it was important to reach consensus at the current sitting and suggested that deleting the words “to conform with this decision” might make the proposed amendment less vague. Her group was open to solutions that would not delay the implementation of the decision.
- 477. The Worker spokesperson** said that it was important to retain the words “to conform with this decision” as they established that any evaluation would have to take place in the context of upholding the decision.
- 478. The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) said that the Office understood that the proposed amendment would align with the ILO's practice of trialling the suspension of the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders for a period of time. There might then be an evaluation of the need to amend the Standing Orders in order to develop new rules. Concerning the specific wording “to conform with this decision”, she noted that it related to a subparagraph within a highly comprehensive draft decision, and should be read in that context and not in isolation. In addition, any doubts about its intended meaning could be clarified authoritatively by consulting the minutes of the session.
- 479. A Government representative of South Africa** said that the decision, if adopted, would be final. It was therefore confusing to speak of suspending the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders on a trial basis. He wished to know why, if it was decided that the rights contained in article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders would be conferred on Palestine on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, there would subsequently be a need to consider amending the Standing Orders to conform with that decision. If he had understood correctly, the Workers' group was not open to amending the Standing Orders. He would be grateful for an indication

of whether, by agreeing to evaluate the need to amend the Standing Orders to conform with the decision, the Governing Body would be opening the door to amending the Standing Orders in response to a single issue, which was an approach that he did not support.

- 480. The Worker spokesperson** said that, while she was not generally in favour of making changes to the Standing Orders, suspensions were occasionally necessary. Indeed, some provisions had been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. It seemed to her that the vast majority of members would prefer to keep matters simple by suspending relevant provisions of the Standing Orders and conducting an evaluation in due time. She hoped that, when that time came, Palestine would be a fully fledged member of the Governing Body, meaning that its status would no longer need to be clarified in the Standing Orders.
- 481. The Director-General** noted that the proposed evaluation would relate only to the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders that had been suspended, not to the Standing Orders in their entirety.
- 482. A Government representative of India** asked whether, in the event that the Conference adopted the draft resolution, it would be necessary to go back to the Governing Body to amend the Standing Orders.
- 483. A Government representative of South Africa** clarified that he did not wish to prevent the adoption of the draft decision, despite being dissatisfied with the Office's responses to the concerns it had raised.
- 484. The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser), noting that the current discussion focused on option 1 proposing suspensions of the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure, confirmed that, if adopted by the Conference, the draft resolution would take effect on the day of its adoption and no further decision of the Governing Body would be necessary in that connection. The Governing Body's decision granting enhanced participation rights to Palestine in relation to its work and technical meetings would take effect once the draft resolution had been adopted by the Conference.
- 485. Another representative of Palestine** recalled that the proposed non-member observer status was similar to the status granted to Palestine at the WHO. While Palestine's long-term ambition remained full membership, it was satisfied with the pragmatic solution provided by the draft decision, which would represent a significant step forward in its efforts to exercise its right to participate fully and freely in the work of the international community as soon as possible. Regrettably, one Government did not support the recognition of that right. He expressed the hope that a decision would not be delayed as a result.
- 486. Speaking on behalf of the countries of the OIC**, a Government representative of Pakistan said that his group could support the proposed amendment, on the understanding that it would not prevent Palestine from enjoying the rights and privileges set out in the draft resolution.
- 487. The Employer spokesperson** expressed support for the draft decision as amended.

Decision

488. The Governing Body, having duly considered resolution ES-10/23 adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 May 2024 and the request contained therein to specialized agencies to apply the modalities set out in the annex to the resolution:

- (a) **recommended that the Conference consider at its 113th Session (2025) the adoption of the draft resolution on the status of Palestine in the ILO and participation rights of Palestine in ILO meetings contained in Appendix III to document GB.352/INS/9;**
- (b) **decided, subject to the adoption by the Conference of the resolution referred to in subparagraph (a), to authorize the Director-General to extend invitations to Palestine to participate as a non-member observer State in the Governing Body, the Asia and the Pacific regional meetings and, as appropriate, ILO technical meetings;**
- (c) **decided, subject to the adoption by the Conference of the resolution referred to in subparagraph (a), and on an exceptional basis and without setting a precedent, to confer upon Palestine at future sessions of the Governing Body the rights contained in article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and, for technical meetings, to grant it mutatis mutandis the rights and privileges set out in the resolution adopted by the Conference;**
- (d) **decided that the relevant provisions of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and the Standing Orders for technical meetings shall be suspended to the extent that they are incompatible with the present decision;**
- (e) **decided that the Governing Body should evaluate in due time the need to amend relevant Standing Orders to conform with this decision;**
- (f) **requested the Director-General to report to the United Nations Secretary-General on the decisions taken to give effect to resolution ES-10/23.**

(GB.352/INS/9, paragraph 68, and GB.352/INS/9(Add.1), paragraph 9, as amended by the Governing Body)

489. A Government representative of the United States, taking the opportunity to explain her Government's position, said that her country wished to dissociate itself from the consensus on adopting the draft decision. It had consistently stated that durable peace in the region could be achieved only through direct negotiations between the parties aimed at a two-State solution that enabled Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side with equal measures of freedom and dignity. It remained of the view that unilateral measures such as the draft decision would not advance that goal. Its stance did not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood. The draft decision would not result in Palestine obtaining ILO membership or the same standing as a Member State. Indeed, it would bring about no tangible change for Palestinians. Her country's efforts remained focused on achieving a ceasefire and the release of hostages while ensuring that Palestinians in Gaza received the aid that they desperately needed.

490. A Government representative of Hungary, also taking the opportunity to explain her Government's position, said that her Government, as a deputy member of the Governing Body with no voting rights, did not agree with the decision or the proposed processes.

491. In reply to a question raised by the Government representative of South Africa as to whether the amendment had been adopted, **the representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) confirmed that the Governing Body had adopted the decision as amended. After the adoption, as per the practice at the Governing Body and the Conference, two Governments

had explained their positions regarding the decision that had been duly taken by the Governing Body.

- 492. The Worker spokesperson** said that she was saddened by the situation in the Middle East and shocked that any country could ignore calls for humanitarian aid and respect for human rights. The consensus on adopting the draft decision was to be celebrated, even though much remained to be done. She disagreed with the reasoning applied by the United States. It was of the utmost importance to recognize Palestinians and their right to self-determination. She hoped that the adoption of the draft decision would enable the ILO to move forward and continue to work towards further progress.

10. Follow-up to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus (GB.352/INS/10(Rev.1))

- 493. A Government representative of Belarus** (Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Belarus), authorized to speak in accordance with article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders on a matter concerning his Government, said that, as the Governing Body would be considering the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus for the first time in its current composition, his Government considered it necessary to state its position clearly and unambiguously.
- 494.** The resolution was unjust and politically motivated. Its very existence was unacceptable as it went against the principles of work and the very spirit of the ILO. It also went beyond the Organization's mandate. A group of countries, with the help of certain international trade union organizations, had managed to foist an anti-Belarus agenda onto the ILO. Such action was a continuation of an aggressive campaign launched by a number of Western countries against Belarus following the current head of state's convincing victory in the country's 2020 presidential elections.
- 495.** The Government of Belarus had presented persuasive evidence – during sessions both of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference – that there was no objective reason to apply article 33 of the ILO Constitution against Belarus, but its arguments had not been heard. The resolution, in essence, was calling for sanctions and other restrictive measures against Belarus. Indeed, the only information about measures taken by the Office and Western countries to implement the resolution described unilateral restrictive measures taken against Belarus.
- 496.** The conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards adopted during the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference did not accurately reflect the discussions that took place at the Conference and completely disregarded the points made by the Government of Belarus about the real situation in the country regarding the respect of trade union rights and the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. There was no persuasive evidence that persecution of trade union activists carrying out trade union activity was taking place in Belarus. Claims that a climate of violence, intimidation and fear prevailed in Belarus were absurd.
- 497.** The opinions and comments of ILO bodies were based solely on information provided by the so-called Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), which had no legal status in Belarus. Moreover, the activities of the BKDP and all of its associated trade unions had been halted by Supreme Court ruling in July 2022. The BKDP no longer operated within Belarusian enterprises and no longer represented the interests of Belarusian workers. The BKDP and its

representatives were located abroad and in receipt of funding from foreign governments, and were therefore incapable of forming an independent and objective opinion of the situation in Belarus.

498. As stated on numerous occasions, the persons who were allegedly suffering for their trade union activity had been prosecuted for crimes that were entirely unrelated to lawful trade union activity. Those persons had committed unlawful acts, including participating in the organization and holding of unsanctioned mass events, disturbing the peace, using force against law enforcement officials and engaging in extremist activity, and were prosecuted by the national competent authorities on sound legal grounds.
499. The BKDP served the interests of Western countries and should be excluded from the ILO's list of correspondents. The Government did not consider it necessary to respond to the BKDP's false information, which served only to stoke opposition against and discredit Belarus.
500. The Government vehemently disagreed with the draft decision. The Governing Body had once again drafted a document that was based on information provided by countries and organizations against Belarus; had disregarded the Government's position; and continued to push a narrative claiming a lack of discernible progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. He recalled that his Government had on several occasions provided information to the ILO supervisory bodies about concrete steps taken to implement the recommendations, including simplifying the trade union registration process and establishing tripartite bodies. Moreover, all measures taken by the Government had been developed in collaboration with the Office. The majority of the recommendations had now been implemented. He also recalled that the Committee on the Application of Standards had noted that progress had been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.
501. As part of the tripartite delegation to the International Labour Conference and in accordance with article 3 of the ILO Constitution, the Government held consultations on a yearly basis with the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB), which was the most representative workers' organization in Belarus. There was no other trade union organization of that scale in Belarus.
502. The Government considered the suggestion in the draft decision to authorize the Credentials Committee to monitor the nomination of the Workers' delegation of Belarus at the International Labour Conference to be another attempt at provocation intended to undermine the entire social partnership system in Belarus.
503. The draft decision was neither objective nor even-handed. It should not be approved; it should instead be put to a vote.
504. **The Worker spokesperson** said that there had been no improvement in Belarus since the 350th Session of the Governing Body; in fact, the situation had deteriorated. The Government of Belarus continued to reject the ILO supervisory bodies' assessments and to deny its own flagrant violation of freedom of association. Independent trade union leaders continued to be subjected to harassment and persecution for carrying out legitimate trade union activities. She expressed deep concern about the welfare of all those trade unionists who had been detained and imprisoned. Under recently enacted legislation, only members of the State-controlled FPB were covered by collective bargaining arrangements. She condemned the FPB for touting the lies and misrepresentations of the Government to the International Labour Conference. She called on the Office to intensify its efforts to support progress towards the implementation of the measures recommended by the Governing Body. The Workers' group supported the draft decision, clarifying that: the action requested of the Government of Belarus under

subparagraph 38(d) was of the utmost urgency, in particular for imprisoned and detained trade unionists; the appointment of a special envoy as outlined under subparagraph 38(f)(i) should be confirmed as quickly as possible; and the reference in subparagraph 38(g) to national tripartite discussions as a means of following up on the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body was welcome.

- 505. The Employer spokesperson** acknowledged that the Committee on the Application of Standards had held a special sitting during the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference to discuss the application 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), in Belarus, and had expressed its deep concern about the use of criminal sanctions against trade unionists engaging in genuine and legitimate trade union activities. The group noted that the Committee had expressed the expectation that the Director-General would appoint and mandate a special envoy to interact with the Government of Belarus and relevant UN agencies to ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, and that the Office would continue collecting information on measures taken by Member States pursuant to the resolution. The group acknowledged that the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus that the United Nations Human Rights Council had had before it during its 56th session had revealed a targeted eradication of independent associations in Belarus since 2021.
- 506.** The group also acknowledged that the Government of Belarus had communicated information on the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, which it had previously provided to the Committee on the Application of Standards during the special sitting and in its reports on the application of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). The group took note of the Government's stated belief that the ILO supervisory bodies had negatively assessed its efforts to build constructive cooperation with the social partners and the Office on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. Noting the Government's statement that some of the recommendations had been fully implemented and significant progress had been made towards implementing others, the group had observed that that ran counter to the BKDP's statement of 14 September 2024 that violations had not only not been addressed but had worsened owing to the Government's campaign of persecuting workers' movement leaders and activists.
- 507.** The Employers' group wished to have more factual information, including from other trade union organizations operating in Belarus. The group called on the Government of Belarus to initiate all the necessary measures to move towards compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and Conventions Nos 87 and 98, and to receive an ILO tripartite mission that could gather information on the implementation of those recommendations and those of the ILO supervisory bodies. The group supported the draft decision.
- 508. Speaking on behalf of the Governments of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine,** a Government representative of Poland said that the persistent failure of the authorities of Belarus to observe the country's obligations under Conventions Nos 87 and 98 was deeply regrettable. The Government continued to disregard the guidance, conclusions and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, supervisory bodies and the Governing Body and had, in an unprecedented move, called for a vote on the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards during the 112th Session (2024) of the

International Labour Conference. He called once again on Belarus to take all the necessary measures to meet its obligations under Conventions Nos 87 and 98.

- 509.** The human rights situation in Belarus had deteriorated drastically since the 2020 presidential elections and had further worsened since the involvement of Belarus in the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. He strongly condemned the ongoing campaigns of persecution and intimidation against independent trade unionists, civil society organizations, democratic opposition forces and all other segments of Belarusian society. The arbitrary arrest and detention of trade union leaders and members was a matter of deep concern. The high-level round table on freedom of association in Belarus had shed further light on the disproportionate and illegitimate use of violence, fines, detentions and arrests of trade unionists and human rights defenders, and the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus had revealed a targeted eradication of all independent associations since 2021. In addition, the report had acknowledged the lack of independence of the FPB and recommended the suspension of its participation in the International Labour Conference. Coordinated efforts between the ILO and other relevant UN bodies to support progress towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry were to be encouraged. The Government of Belarus should engage with the appointment of an ILO special envoy.
- 510.** The climate of violence, intimidation and fear in Belarus was deplorable, as was the erosion of the rule of law, which was manifest in the judiciary system's complete lack of impartiality and independence. Gravely concerned by the numerous reports of deaths in detention, he demanded the immediate and unconditional release and effective rehabilitation of all political prisoners and the introduction of a moratorium on the death penalty with a view to its abolition. The group supported the draft decision.
- 511. Speaking on behalf of the Governments of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden,** a Government representative of Denmark expressed deep concern about the lack of progress towards compliance by the Government of Belarus with Conventions Nos 87 and 98, and regret that the human rights situation in Belarus continued to deteriorate. He strongly condemned the Belarusian regime's continued oppression and harassment of its own society and its targeting of political opponents, civil society organizations, independent media and minority groups. It was regrettable to witness the continued use of criminal sanctions against trade unionists engaged in legitimate trade union activities and the judicial harassment of trade union members, including arrests, prosecution and imprisonment. Since the 2020 presidential elections, the deliberate suppression of independent associations, including trade unions, had resulted in the almost complete eradication of freedom of association in Belarus. He urged the regime in Minsk to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate the more than 1,300 political prisoners and called on Belarus to end its involvement in the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. Firm in his belief that the regime in Belarus should not take advantage of relations with other ILO constituents to perpetuate violations of workers' rights to freedom of association, he urged Member States that had not yet implemented measures in accordance with the resolution to do so. He also urged constituents to support Belarusian civil society both within Belarus and abroad and to persist with any existing sanctions against Belarus, particularly in connection with the circumvention of sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation in connection with its unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. He supported the draft decision.
- 512. Speaking on behalf of the Governments of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United Kingdom,** a Government representative of Canada, though

appreciative of the Director-General's tireless efforts to engage in a genuine dialogue with the authorities in Belarus, expressed deep concern about the persistent, widespread and well-documented human and labour rights violations against workers and trade unionists for exercising their fundamental rights at work in Belarus. The authorities of Belarus continued to show blatant disrespect for the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the ILO supervisory bodies. In view of reports by the BKDP that Belarusian workers continued to face unprecedented levels of repression, he urged the authorities in Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release trade unionists imprisoned or criminalized for exercising their fundamental labour rights; remove the names of released activists and leaders of independent trade unions from the authorities' list of "extremists and terrorists"; and cease attacks on workers, including arbitrary mass detentions and arrests. He urged Belarus to fully engage and cooperate with the ILO to implement, without further delay, all outstanding recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the ILO supervisory bodies, including by accepting an ILO tripartite mission to independently assess implementation, engaging with the ILO on the appointment of a special envoy to supervise implementation, and accepting an international humanitarian mission to ensure that all imprisoned trade unionists received the necessary medical assistance. He asked the Director-General to keep the Governing Body informed of developments and encouraged constituents to continue taking measures in accordance with the resolution. He supported the draft decision.

- 513. A Government representative of the United States** said that the Lukashenko regime's persistent disregard of the guidance, conclusions and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, supervisory bodies and Governing Body was deeply concerning, and the ever-worsening repression of trade unionists and workers deplorable. She welcomed the release in 2024 of Vasil Berasnieu but remained concerned about other trade unionists who remained imprisoned for engaging in legitimate trade union activity. She urged the authorities in Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release trade unionists imprisoned for exercising their fundamental labour rights, including Mr Aliaksandr Yarashuk and Ms Palina Sharenda-Panasiuk; all unjustly detained trade union leaders and members; and the 1,300 unjustly detained political prisoners. She also urged the authorities to fully cooperate with the ILO, including by permitting an ILO tripartite mission to visit imprisoned trade unionists. She encouraged Member States and social partners to continue taking all possible measures in accordance with the resolution, including ceasing all relations that the Belarusian authorities might leverage against workers. She supported the draft decision.
- 514. A Government representative of Oman** said that strengthening relations between the Government and the social partners was key to creating an atmosphere conducive to dialogue and cooperation, which were the cornerstones of sustainable solutions. He therefore invited the Government of Belarus to implement the recommendations issued by the ILO supervisory bodies.
- 515. A Government representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic** commended Belarus for its continued efforts to fulfil its obligations under ILO Conventions and mechanisms. He also commended the Government's guarantee of the right to work for citizens, including those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized groups, its successful conduct of tripartite meetings; and its country-wide campaigns to raise awareness about ILO work and initiatives. Any ILO action plans or technical assistance should be based on a Member State's requests, needs and priorities. The work of the ILO should be conducted on the basis of genuine dialogue and cooperation with Member States and through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. He did not support the draft decision.

- 516. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** noted with regret that the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus went beyond the mandate of the ILO as it was effectively part of an anti-Belarus campaign to increase pressure on and further isolate the country. He emphasized that further restricting relations between ILO constituents and Belarus would be counterproductive as it would negatively affect the well-being of workers in Belarus. Similarly, preventing the FPB from participating in the International Labour Conference could cause problems for workers in Belarus. It was clear that Belarus was taking concrete steps to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. Support from the ILO would be more effective than sanctions from other Member States. Inclusive dialogue between the parties involved would be a superior alternative to unilateral sanctions. He wished to note that, as the BKDP had halted its activities by Supreme Court ruling in 2022, no longer operated in Belarus and no longer represented its workers, accusing Belarus of persecuting BKDP leaders and activists could be perceived as an act of provocation organized by the BKDP itself. The Russian Federation was against pressurizing Belarus and was also against the measures for implementing the resolution, including the appointment of a special envoy to monitor the situation in Belarus, which would discredit the country's authorities. He did not support the draft decision and called for a vote.
- 517. A Government representative of China** said that it was regrettable that article 33 had been invoked to impose sanctions on Belarus. Sanctions were damaging the rights of workers and employers and harming economic and social development. He noted the information provided by the Government and called on the Governing Body to take it seriously. The Governing Body should also respect the Government's willingness to consider the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. The ILO's supervisory mechanisms should not be weaponized to attack a Member State and interfere in its internal affairs, and the Governing Body should not act on the basis of unilateral allegations. He encouraged the Office to consider appropriate follow-up measures and to provide the technical assistance required for the Government of Belarus to improve its capacities. His Government did not support the draft decision and supported the request by the Government representative of the Russian Federation for the draft decision to be put to a vote.
- 518. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the information provided by the Government of Belarus demonstrated its commitment to comply with the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and its desire for respectful dialogue with the ILO. In any forum, a country's sovereignty and self-determination must be respected. Furthermore, the ILO's supervisory system should be impartial when considering information submitted by a government. It was of concern that government responses and those from the social partners were not dealt with equitably, and that links between trade union actions and political matters were often ignored. No action plan should contain elements unrelated to the ILO's mandate. He asked why similar measures, such as the creation of a working group, were not being applied to alleviate the humanitarian and labour crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Governing Body should avoid politicization, which would ultimately undermine the credibility of the ILO. Dialogue and cooperation should prevail over coercion, punishment and confrontation. He reaffirmed the importance of tripartite dialogue and consensus-building.
- 519. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** noted the steps taken by the Government of Belarus to comply with the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, including through the Tripartite Council for the Improvement of Legislation in the Social and Labour Sphere. He urged the ILO to remain focused on labour standards and workers' rights, and avoid the politicization of the issue. He also encouraged efforts to build consensus on the

way forward. Questions relating to human rights should be referred to the appropriate UN mechanisms. The Governing Body should focus on technical cooperation and constructive dialogue; unilateral coercive measures were damaging for workers and the economy.

- 520. A Government representative of the Niger** welcomed the progress made by the Government of Belarus in implementing the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, cooperating with the Office, and collaborating with social partners. The Office should take the information provided by the Government seriously. He did not support the draft decision because it would not contribute to resolving the challenges relating to the application of the Conventions in question. He urged the Governing Body to show flexibility and to seek solutions that would garner consensus at all levels, thereby enhancing their effectiveness. He urged the Governing Body to give the Government more time, and called on the Office to provide the assistance requested.
- 521. A Government representative of Belarus** thanked those members of the Governing Body that had expressed support for his Government and said that the views expressed clearly indicated that the Conference resolution invoking article 33 of the ILO Constitution should be revoked. The implementation of that resolution had not provided any positive results; rather it sowed distrust and undermined the ILO's authority as a specialized agency that supported Member States in the promotion of good social and labour practices. A Conference resolution should facilitate the application of the Conventions in question, rather than issuing sanctions and restrictions that were discriminatory and demonstrated a double standard. He said that it was clear that the issues being discussed fell outside the mandate of the ILO, and that the information provided by some parties had not been independently verified, particularly regarding the identity of persecuted trade union leaders. Involving international organizations and UN Special Rapporteurs in the so-called "action plan" was unacceptable. Moreover, the competence of such individuals had not been taken into account, only their political bias. He questioned why the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus had recommended suspending the participation of the FPB in the Conference, a decision that fell outside her mandate. The inclusion of a provision to monitor the nomination of the Workers' delegation of Belarus was also unacceptable. He rejected the provisions of the draft decision, which seemed to be aimed at prolonging the issue and discrediting the Government. The proposed tripartite and humanitarian missions would only be used to falsely escalate the situation.
- 522. The Chairperson** observed that no consensus had been reached on the draft decision contained in paragraph 38 of document GB.352/INS/10(Rev.1). Since two delegations had asked for a vote, and having consulted with his fellow Officers, he had decided to put the draft decision to a vote by show of hands.

(The decision was adopted with 41 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 6 abstentions.)

Decision

523. The Governing Body:

- (a) took note with growing concern of the information provided in document GB.352/INS/10(Rev.1);**
- (b) noted with deep regret that the Government of Belarus once again provided no new information on the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and subsequent recommendations of the Committee on**

Freedom of Association, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the Committee on the Application of Standards;

- (c) urged the Government of Belarus to submit information on any new concrete steps taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and subsequent recommendations of the supervisory bodies of the ILO in respect of freedom of association by 17 January 2025 for transmission to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025);
- (d) requested the Government of Belarus with the utmost urgency to accept:
 - (i) an international humanitarian mission to ensure that independent doctors can visit all imprisoned trade unionists to assess their health and offer medical assistance, as necessary; and
 - (ii) an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation and visit trade unionists that are currently in prison or detention;
- (e) requested the Director-General to bring to the attention of the Credentials Committee of the International Labour Conference at the 113th Session (2025), the information provided in document GB.352/INS/10(Rev.1) and the discussion in the Governing Body, so that it might take it into account in its monitoring of the nomination of the Workers' delegation of Belarus as decided by the Conference at its 112th Session (2024) and in the examination of any new objection concerning the subject;
- (f) took note of the steps taken by the Office to implement the Conference resolution and the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards and requested the Director-General to report to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session on:
 - (i) the appointment of a special envoy with the mandate outlined above; and
 - (ii) the outcome of engagement with the United Nations human rights bodies and other international entities with the view to establishing a working group of the ILO and other United Nations institutions with a view to ensuring coordinated and joint action towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the supervisory bodies;
- (g) invited the Organization's constituents – governments, employers and workers – to continue to take steps to ensure an effective follow-up to the Conference resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus, including by holding national high-level tripartite meetings to assess and intensify efforts and to report back thereon to the Director-General for transmission to the Governing Body;
- (h) requested the Director-General to prepare an updated report for the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body.

(GB.352/INS/10(Rev.1), paragraph 38)

11. Follow-up to the report of the Commission of Inquiry established in accordance with article 26 of the ILO Constitution concerning the non-observance by Myanmar of Conventions Nos 87 and 29, and to the resolutions concerning Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 102nd (2013) and 109th (2021) Sessions (GB.352/INS/11(Rev.1))

- 524. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) clarified that the options set out in the document for measures under article 33 of the ILO Constitution had been provided in response to the Governing Body decision of June 2024. While for ILO operations, the bank transfer for ILO activities had been made successfully in September 2024, the Office had been asked once more to nominate a different candidate for the post of Deputy Liaison Officer whose visa request had been rejected. The National Complaints Mechanism had originally been established in 2020 with representation from relevant ministries, the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission and employers' and workers' organizations. Since the coup however, all country authorities on the Mechanism were from the military or appointed by them and the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM) and Myanmar Industry, Crafts and Services Trade Unions Federation (MICS-TUsF) had withdrawn their participation. The Mechanism was reactivated only in August 2024 and the ILO has not engaged with it since the expiry of the Decent Work Country Programme in 2022. In response to a request from the military authorities for the names of detained trade unionists and victims of forced labour, the Office had explained that further engagement on the matter would require assurances at the highest level that those persons, their families or organizations would not be subject to any retaliation for their contact with the ILO. No such assurances had been received by the Office.
- 525. The Employer spokesperson** noted that the crisis in Myanmar had destabilized the economy and created an extraordinarily difficult environment for workers and employers, and that it was essential that social partners should be able to execute their mandates in that context. Beyond the human impact, the business sector had struggled to operate in a context of instability. Small and medium-sized enterprises were the backbone of Myanmar's economy and were crucial to economic resilience and recovery. Freedom of association must be respected and upheld at the highest levels, and re-operationalized in industries and workplaces. The impact of measures linked to economic sanctions must be acknowledged, due to the potential for unintended consequences for civilians and local businesses.
- 526.** Her group urged the ILO Liaison Office to continue collaborating with the UN Country Team on forced labour, child labour, employment barriers and the struggles of small and medium-sized enterprises. In the absence of representation of the military authorities at the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference, constituents were reliant on the Office to monitor and assess the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. Her group urged the military authorities to engage constructively with the ILO Liaison Office and make tangible efforts to comply with the recommendations. The facilitation of visa requests for ILO staff and lifting of banking restrictions were critical to supporting social partners in the country, including the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry – which had engaged in a range of activities in 2023–24 to support labour rights and respond to the humanitarian crisis.

527. The Employers' group called on all parties in Myanmar to work towards an environment of freedom, peace and stability. Her group considered that the draft decision adequately addressed the main challenges and called on the Governing Body to support it.
528. **The Worker spokesperson**, noting that the discussion was taking place against the backdrop of a major human rights crisis and expressing solidarity with the people of Myanmar, said that it was most regrettable that the military authorities had not made progress on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. They had instead launched a campaign – including by threatening social partners – to oppose a decision by the Governing Body on a potential resolution under article 33 of the ILO Constitution. Although the military authorities claimed in their communication that they were taking steps to implement the recommendations, the report provided by the Office made it clear that that was not the case.
529. The absence of the right to freedom of association had led to trade unionists facing intimidation, arrests and, in the case of Thet Hnin Aung, General Secretary of the MICS-TUsF, imprisonment under fabricated charges. Unions on the ground had collected testimonies on hundreds of labour violations committed since the coup. A report by the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre had indicated 155 cases of human and labour rights abuses against workers in garment factories from December 2023 to June 2024 that were linked to 87 international companies sourcing from factories in Myanmar. The claim that labour disputes were resolved through workplace coordination committees and conciliation and arbitration bodies was not credible; the workplace coordination committees had, in fact, been used to usurp the role of unions, which had gathered examples of labour rights abuses in the private sector. Thousands had been conscripted under the People's Military Service Law, including from their homes or workplaces, or had been extorted for steep bribes to avoid conscription. The assertion that the National Complaints Mechanism was functioning effectively was incorrect. It was to be hoped that an independent and credible complaints mechanism to address forced labour could be developed with ILO assistance.
530. Although the ILO should refrain from engaging in activities with the military, his group encouraged the Organization to increase its capacity to monitor human rights and labour violations and respond to them. The Office should support genuine trade unions and employers' organizations to play a role in monitoring and reporting in order to secure and disseminate first-hand accounts. The Workers' group was deeply troubled by the demands for the removal of the current Deputy Liaison Officer, who had a deep knowledge of the country and the trust of social partners. Staffing decisions must be free of interference.
531. The Governing Body must take action since it was clear that the military authorities had no intention of complying with the recommendations. He therefore welcomed the draft decision, in particular subparagraph (b)(iv) on the placement on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference of an item concerning measures under article 33 of the ILO Constitution.
532. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She expressed alarm at the gravity of the human rights and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar and condemned in the strongest terms the incidents and violence against trade union leaders and members documented by the Commission of Inquiry. The systematic imposition of forced labour by the military, including of children, was a cause for grave concern; she called on the military authorities to heed the call of the ILO to provide the final version of the conscription

rules. The exaction of forced labour from members of the Rohingya minority and other ethnic or religious minorities was deplorable.

- 533.** She concurred with the Office's assessment that the military had not demonstrated meaningful action on the recommendations for immediate implementation or a real understanding of the gravity of the situation. Any measures under article 33 must be effective and targeted at those responsible for violations and press for the full observance of labour rights. Given the importance of livelihoods, measures that could adversely affect the people of Myanmar should be avoided. She requested the Office to publish the draft resolution in advance of the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body. The EU and its Member States appreciated the Office's efforts to assess the effectiveness of previous measures with a view to devising wise and expedient measures to secure compliance by Myanmar with the recommendations.
- 534.** She called on the military to ensure no further restrictions on the bank account of the ILO Liaison Office and urged the speedy resolution of remaining visa issues. She reiterated the call for the military to accept and implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry without further delay. The EU and its Member States supported the draft decision.
- 535. Speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom,** a Government representative of Australia said that she wished to express her gratitude to the ILO Liaison Officer and Office in Myanmar, and to all those who continued to document the political, security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar. The military regime had repeatedly failed to provide evidence of action to implement the recommendations or to acknowledge the dire situation. Her group called on the military regime to stop targeting civilians and trade unionists for exercising their rights and to immediately release all those who had been arbitrarily detained. Violations of human rights and labour standards in Myanmar inflicted great suffering, especially on women and girls and people in vulnerable situations, while reports of the forced military recruitment of children were a cause for grave concern. Her group was dismayed to learn that the military regime purported to address forced labour through the reactivation of the National Complaints Mechanism when a significant proportion of forced labour was occurring within its own institutions.
- 536.** She welcomed the information provided by the Office on potential actions under article 33 of the Constitution; the challenge was to determine the most effective way to communicate increasing frustration with the regime's disregard for the recommendations, while not exacerbating the suffering of the people of Myanmar. Her group remained steadfast in its support for the people of Myanmar and the process for the ILO to consider the next steps. Her group supported the draft decision.
- 537. A Government representative of the United Kingdom** supported the need to take action in response to non-compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The measures proposed must not have unintended consequences for innocent civilians. Measures such as asking international institutions and businesses to review their relations with Myanmar would disproportionately impact the garment sector, which provided stable employment for thousands of women and from which the regime derived minimal benefit. Any exit by businesses would exacerbate suffering and leave space for less scrupulous companies. Her Government would welcome measures that focused on the regime and their actions, rather than targeting private industry and the people of Myanmar. She welcomed the decision to allow workers and employers from Myanmar to contribute to future discussions at the ILO and would support the nomination of a spectrum of union voices from Myanmar. Her Government supported the draft decision.

- 538. A Government representative of China** noted the report and the information submitted by the Permanent Mission of Myanmar on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, which Governing Body members should read attentively. The Government of Myanmar had contacted the ILO Liaison Office and had sought technical support, which demonstrated a positive attitude to communication and cooperation. Myanmar was a Member State of the ILO and an important member of ASEAN, yet its Government was unable to attend ILO meetings and explain its position. The Governing Body's discussion was therefore inherently flawed.
- 539.** His Government did not support the imposition of sanctions against Member States under article 33 of the Constitution. The tripartite constituents of Myanmar, as the first Member State to have been sanctioned, had suffered greatly as a result. In the case of Belarus, sanctions had had no constructive effect and the rights and interests of workers and employers had been harmed. True multilateralism involved mutual respect and willing cooperation. A people-centred approach was needed that respected and protected the rights and interests of workers and employers. He called for an objective and rational discussion and for the Office to provide more technical support to help the Government of Myanmar better fulfil its obligations under international labour Conventions.
- 540. A Government representative of Japan** expressed deep concern at the continuing deterioration of the situation in Myanmar and reiterated his Government's firm request for the military to cease its violence, release those detained and restore the democratic political system. The problems should be resolved through dialogue involving all relevant parties, and he called for action to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. His Government supported the draft decision.
- 541. A Government representative of the United States** said that his Government was deeply concerned at the worsening political, economic and humanitarian crises in Myanmar and remained steadfast in its solidarity with the people of Myanmar. He called for an end to the harassment and surveillance of trade unionists and the release of all those arbitrarily detained since the military takeover. It was most regrettable that the military authorities had not accepted or responded in full to the conclusions and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry; the information provided by the regime demonstrated a failure to address numerous violations of its obligations under Convention No. 87 and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). His Government supported the inclusion of an item on article 33 measures on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference. The potential adverse impact of measures on workers must be considered and he was therefore pleased that worker and employer representatives from Myanmar would have a voice in deciding on the most appropriate measures. His Government supported the draft decision.
- 542. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** noted that the application of article 33 was a measure of last resort for cases of gross violations in the absence of any cooperation with the ILO supervisory system, which was not the case for Myanmar. The Government of Myanmar had implemented a range of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and had provided clarifications in response to the Governing Body decisions; he called on Governing Body members to familiarize themselves with its comments, including those contained in the Appendix to the report. There were therefore no grounds for the application of article 33. He drew attention to elements of politicization in the draft decision; comments on the internal political situation and calls bordering on interference in governance went far beyond the ILO's mandate and were unlawful. Political considerations could not form a basis for the adoption of sanctions that led to the worsening of the situation for workers in the country.

- 543.** The fact that the Government of Myanmar was unable to participate in the work of the Governing Body and report on the implementation of the obligations placed upon it violated all imaginable rights of States and ran counter to basic common sense. Even more absurdly, during discussion of the agenda item on the possible participation of employers' and workers' representatives from Myanmar in future sessions of the International Labour Conference, a proposal had been made to exclude from consideration any information from the official Government of Myanmar. It was to be hoped that the proposal would not find any support. His Government urged the Governing Body to refrain from triggering article 33 and called for continued dialogue with the Government of Myanmar, based on the principles of objectivity and tripartite cooperation, and taking into account the positions of interested parties.
- 544. The representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department), responding to the request made by the EU and its Member States to the Office to publish the draft resolution concerning the measures to be taken under article 33 of the ILO Constitution in advance of the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body, wished to clarify that the decision of when to publish the draft resolution lay with the Officers of the Governing Body, not with the Office.
- 545. The Director-General** wished to clarify that all decisions regarding staffing in the ILO Liaison Office must be taken by the Office and in the interest of the Office and the ILO. Constituents were invited to refrain from directing such decisions, as to do so was inappropriate.
- 546. The Employer spokesperson** said that the participation of the social partners from Myanmar at the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference would be welcome as they would be in a position to provide first-hand information about the situation on the ground. She reiterated the group's hope that a solution would be found to the paradoxical situation wherein the Myanmar military authorities were invited to engage but were not able to do so as they had not been recognized as representing the Government of Myanmar. Agreeing with the Director-General's comment, the group recognized the need to refrain from attempting to influence decisions that fell within the remit of the Office and offered its full support to the ILO Liaison Office.
- 547. A Worker member from Myanmar** wished to thank the Governing Body for supporting the draft decision, which outlined the correct next steps in order to uphold the ILO Constitution and ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The situation in Myanmar required urgent action and its people were relying on the swift implementation of those recommendations.

Decision

- 548. Recalling the resolution for a return to democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021), and noting with utmost concern the absence of any concrete action towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in its 2023 report, which emphasized the urgency of the national situation, the Governing Body:**
- (a) **as regards the 2021 resolution:**
- (i) **deplored once again the continued absence of progress towards respecting the will of the people, democratic institutions and processes, and the fact that, over three years since the military coup, the democratically elected government had yet to be restored;**

- (ii) called once again on the military authorities to end immediately all acts of violence, and the arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of trade unionists, labour activists and others, including the Rohingya, in the exercise of their human rights and ensure the immediate release of those detained;
- (b) as regards the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry:
 - (i) repeated its call for Myanmar to ensure that employers' and workers' organizations are able to exercise their rights in a climate of freedom and security, free from violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, by means of the full implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, which include the revocation of any military orders, legislative or other measures, decreed since February 2021 and identified as restricting freedom of association and the basic civil liberties of trade unionists;
 - (ii) expressed once again its profound concern over the conclusions set out in the Commission's report concerning the exaction of forced labour by the military authorities and call for immediate action to be taken to put an end, in law and in practice, to any forced recruitment into the military contrary to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), including the forced recruitment of children;
 - (iii) requested the Director-General to:
 - continue to closely monitor the situation in Myanmar with regard to the exercise of freedom of association and the prohibition of forced or compulsory labour;
 - continue to ensure that no technical cooperation or assistance to Myanmar takes place, except for the purpose of direct assistance to implement immediately the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry;
 - continue to inform the Governing Body of the ILO's engagement, within the framework of the UN system, to ensure that the Commission's recommendations are acted upon within the respective mandate of each body;
 - submit to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) a document providing an update on any developments with regard to compliance by Myanmar with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry;
 - (iv) decided to place on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference an item concerning measures under article 33 of the Constitution to secure compliance by Myanmar with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry;
 - (v) requested the Director-General to submit to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) a draft resolution concerning the measures to be taken under article 33 of the ILO Constitution in light of its discussion;
 - (vi) invited the Myanmar military authorities to submit to the Director-General by 15 January 2025 any relevant information for transmission to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025);
- (c) called once again on the military authorities, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21 November 1947, to continue to ensure that no restrictions are placed on the

operation of the ILO's bank account, approve all international staff visa extensions requested and facilitate the ILO's continued operations to bring benefit to the people of Myanmar despite the expiry of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Decent Work Country Programme in September 2022.

(GB.352/INS/11(Rev.1), paragraph 63)

12. Developments in the full implementation by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of the agreed plan of action to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in respect of Conventions Nos 26, 87, and 144 (GB.352/INS/12(Rev.1))

- 549. A Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Deputy Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) was authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders. She said that her Government had fully complied with the timetable of meetings agreed upon at the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum on the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26), Convention No. 87 and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).
- 550.** With regard to Convention No. 144, she said that her Government had demonstrated its commitment to social dialogue as a mechanism for enhancing harmonious relations and achieving stability in the world of work. It maintained ongoing communication with the social partners.
- 551.** With regard to Convention No. 26, she recalled that the Government, together with the social partners, had launched a consultation process culminating in the publication of a report indicating each participating organization's views on the issue of fixing a national minimum wage. That report had been submitted to the National Executive. Referring to the concerns raised by trade union representatives at the Social Dialogue Forum about the effectiveness of the method that was being put in place for fixing the minimum wage, she reiterated that the Government had complied with its obligations under Convention No. 26 and that the National Executive alone held the responsibility for setting the minimum wage. The Government had been seeking alternative measures to improve workers' income and to restore their social well-being, despite the unilateral coercive measures that continued to be imposed on the country. Those genocidal actions had seriously hampered economic and social development and the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, including labour rights and the right to social security.
- 552.** The inconsistency shown by certain parties between engaging in social dialogue and constructive debate on the one hand, and sending written submissions to the ILO on the other, would hamper progress and undermined the trust and understanding that was being built at the national level.
- 553.** International organizations should not put pressure on countries for political reasons that were not aligned with the objectives for which they were created or support unilateral actions that violated the rule of law in a country. In that respect, the practice of hiding behind Convention No. 87 was of concern. The allegations regarding the prosecution of trade union members and leaders were one example; the legal proceedings referred to had been undertaken on a legitimate basis under Venezuelan legislation for acts of homicide, association to commit a crime, conspiracy and treason. Such cases had been presented as violations of trade union rights, without reference to the guilty verdicts that had been handed down. She

recalled that, in accordance with Article 8(1) of Convention No. 87, employers, workers and their respective organizations had a responsibility to respect the law of the land. She drew attention to efforts to submit unfounded accusations to the ILO's supervisory bodies, which diverted those bodies from their work to continue improving compliance with the ILO's Conventions.

554. Her Government had clearly been willing to receive technical assistance by accepting the support of the ILO Special Adviser on Social Dialogue; however, that individual had subsequently assumed an observer role. It was regrettable that the Special Adviser had not maximized the opportunities to contribute in a virtual format to relevant activities. Nevertheless, despite the lack of contact with him, effective tripartite dialogue had continued. Furthermore, her Government remained open to receiving technical assistance in the area of social dialogue; it could not be said that such assistance would be effective only in person, in the light of the significant technological advances in recent years.
555. Her Government remained committed to making progress in the implementation of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144, but was unable to support the draft decision proposed by the Office, as it would limit the Government's potential actions to maintain tripartite relationships in the world of work. She called on the Governing Body to recognize the ongoing efforts of her Government and to ensure that the discussion did not become politicized.
556. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that some progress had been made in implementing the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and expressed appreciation of the ILO's efforts to collaborate with the Government and the social partners of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Although he welcomed the appointment of the ILO Special Adviser for Social Dialogue, it was regrettable that, since March 2024, the Government had allowed only his virtual attendance at meetings. That was not in line with the original agreement and had effectively reduced the role of the Special Adviser to that of an observer. Nevertheless, the provision of technical assistance was key to the Government's ability to meet its obligations and to enhance social dialogue.
557. He expressed surprise at the allegations that had been levelled by the representative of the Government against the social partners, despite their efforts to build consensus. It was disappointing that, instead of making constructive remarks, the Government had cast blame on the parties that were suffering the most as a result of its actions in the country. It seemed that the long-awaited progress would not be attained. While meetings had continued in the framework of the Social Dialogue Forum, the Government's compliance with its obligations under Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 had stalled.
558. He expressed serious concern regarding the cancellation of the passport of a trade union official, who had been due to represent workers at the current session of the Governing Body. Preventing individuals from carrying out their trade union functions was a violation of trade union rights and freedoms, and preventing them from exercising free movement was an unacceptable act of intimidation for all worker and employer representatives. Such actions created an environment that was hostile to the exercise of the right to freedom of association, and he urged the Government to repeal that measure.
559. He expressed concern regarding the interference of the Workers' Production Councils in freedom of association, noting that their membership included representatives of the military and that they existed under the auspices of the Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour, which undermined the independence of workers and trade unions. They also threatened the independence of enterprises, in violation of Convention No. 87. He called on the Government to review the structure and role of those Councils to ensure that they did

not interfere with workers' and employers' fundamental rights. He also requested that the Government address the ongoing land cases.

560. He called on the Government to submit a detailed report to the Director-General regarding the specific measures taken to address the above-mentioned concerns. He expressed his group's support for the draft decision and reaffirmed the need for the Government's full cooperation, including with the ILO Special Adviser.
561. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed regret that the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had failed to uphold its commitments, including by deciding that the physical presence of the ILO Special Adviser in tripartite meetings was no longer necessary. Furthermore, the Government had demonstrated in recent months a deeply concerning disregard for the situation of workers.
562. With regard to Convention No. 87, she noted that no progress had been made in addressing violations of the right to freedom of association and said that the technical meeting that had been held on 11 September 2024 on that Convention had been unproductive and had not demonstrated a commitment to meaningful social dialogue. Despite efforts by the Committee on Freedom of Association, the problem of the retention of union dues by public entities remained unresolved. In addition, the Government had employed repression and intimidation tactics against union leaders, including the imprisonment of Robert Franco, General Secretary of the Union of Education Professionals – Association of Teachers of Venezuela (SINPRODO-CPV), the conditional release of six other trade union officials pending trials that had repeatedly been delayed, and the attempted arrests and frequent police surveillance of public sector union leaders.
563. Concerning Convention No. 144, she said that legislation that had supposedly been introduced to protect public order had increasingly been used to suppress trade union activity. The Government had failed to engage in meaningful tripartite discussion in that regard, despite repeated calls for legislative reform. She highlighted the Government's neglect of the established terms of reference for the Social Dialogue Forums, which undermined their efficiency and results and meant that their recommendations were routinely ignored. Since the Government had expelled the ILO Special Adviser from the country, the ILO's participation in tripartite meetings had been limited to a virtual format. She urged the Government to facilitate the Special Adviser's return to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and called on the Office to ensure that he had the necessary support and resources to perform his role.
564. With regard to Convention No. 26, she said that the current minimum wage of US\$3.50 per month did not even cover the most basic living expenses. She noted that the Government had not engaged in any tripartite dialogue on a viable minimum wage-setting mechanism, relying instead on discretionary bonuses, in direct violation of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), and creating a climate of economic insecurity for workers.
565. The ILO should continue to support Venezuelan workers by providing technical assistance in the country and by monitoring the Government's compliance with international labour standards in the interests of the social partners. She expressed concern regarding the future viability of the Social Dialogue Forum. The Office's commitment must be matched by genuine effort on the part of the Government. She expressed support for the draft decision.
566. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova aligned themselves with her statement. She thanked the Director-General for his personal efforts to foster social dialogue in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and for the technical

assistance provided. It was deeply regrettable that the Venezuelan authorities had not arranged for the ILO Special Adviser to attend in person the meetings that the participants at the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum had agreed to hold in 2024. She urged them to facilitate his return to the country to ensure the effectiveness of technical assistance. It was essential that the meetings outlined in the timetable allowed for the full participation of the social partners. The implementation of the ratified international labour standards in the country depended on meaningful tripartite consultations that could be achieved only by building trust and engaging in sincere social dialogue.

567. While she recognized the work done to determine methods for setting the minimum wage, tripartite discussions needed to be further pursued to ensure compliance with Convention No. 26. The recent joint communication from the workers' organizations to the ILO was troubling. She deplored the recent 30-year sentence imposed against Robert Franco, General Secretary of SINPRODO-CPV, and the upholding of 16-year custodial sentences for six others. The cancellation of the passport of Leida Marcela León, General Secretary of the Independent Trade Union Alliance Confederation of Workers (CTASI), prevented her from fully exercising her responsibilities as a member of the Workers' group of the Governing Body and should be resolved without delay. Underscoring the importance of an independent judiciary, she condemned the threats faced by trade unions and employers' organizations and reiterated the need to guarantee their independence, autonomy and protection. Action must be taken in respect of allegations of violations of civil liberties and trade union rights to ensure fair trials, reparations and the reinstatement of individuals proven innocent. The Venezuelan authorities should fully accept and implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.
568. The EU and its Member States would remain closely seized of the matter and supported the draft decision.
569. **A Government representative of the United States, speaking also on behalf of Canada and the United Kingdom**, expressed ongoing concern that the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry had yet to be accepted, five years after their adoption. Moreover, it was deeply disappointing that the ILO Special Adviser had been unable to provide technical assistance in the country since the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum. While the plenary and technical meetings on Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 had generally been held as scheduled, ILO officials and the Special Adviser had been invited to participate in them only remotely, as observers. Furthermore, some of the meetings had been rescheduled to coincide with others, including sessions of the Governing Body, and the in-person participation of workers had been hampered. She regretted the lack of meaningful progress at those meetings on issues related to the Workers' Production Councils, the National Electoral Council, and the functioning of the National Register of Trade Union Organizations.
570. The situation with respect to freedom of association – in particular the arbitrary arrest of trade union officials – was deeply troubling. While the conditional release of six trade unionists in December 2023 was to be welcomed, the requirement for them to appear regularly in court restricted their ability to participate in trade union activities.
571. She welcomed the Director-General's efforts to engage with the Venezuelan Government in relation to the cancellation of the passports of trade union and civil society leaders and the situation of the ILO Special Adviser. She would welcome clarification on the current status of the Special Adviser and the feasibility of providing technical assistance remotely. She supported the draft decision.
572. **A Government representative of Colombia** said that it was essential to recognize the progress made and the challenges faced by the Venezuelan Government in implementing the

agreed plan of action and that the defence of labour and social rights must be underpinned by respect for the decisions of sovereign nations. The Venezuelan Government had signalled its commitment to comply with Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. There had been a notable improvement in tripartite dialogue, and progress had been made on a consultation with the National Assembly on draft legislation affecting the world of work. Some measures had been taken to promote respect for freedom of association. Any decision by the Governing Body should be adopted by consensus. Colombia would support efforts to strengthen peace and social justice in the region on the basis of sovereignty, solidarity and mutual respect.

- 573. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the tangible progress made by the Venezuelan Government was proof that it was committed to fulfilling its obligations under Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 and to strengthening social dialogue. Technical assistance should be provided in accordance with – and not contrary to – the needs of the Government. Moreover, the Governing Body should allow time for governments to implement measures appropriate to their national legislation and economic circumstances.
- 574.** If the Governing Body wished to accelerate the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, it should call for the lifting of the unilateral coercive measures that undoubtedly had a very negative impact on the lives of Venezuelan workers. There was no justification for the application of punitive measures under article 33 of the Constitution. The decision should be adopted by consensus following a broad and inclusive discussion. Experience had shown that punitive approaches never produced positive results. Cuba believed in negotiated solutions and rejected the manipulative intervention of multilateral organizations in the internal affairs of States.
- 575. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** welcomed the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's efforts to engage constructively with the ILO and its social partners. The steps taken to strengthen minimum wage mechanisms, enhance tripartite consultations and resolve outstanding matters related to freedom of association appeared to demonstrate the Venezuelan Government's commitment to upholding international labour standards, despite significant economic and social challenges. Those challenges were exacerbated by the imposition of unilateral coercive measures that had complicated the Government's efforts to fully implement the recommended actions.
- 576.** He encouraged the Governing Body to take a balanced and constructive approach to the issues at hand while maintaining a clear focus on compliance with Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. A collaborative approach that ensured the continued provision of technical assistance and an open dialogue with the social partners would be the most productive way forward. Resorting to punitive measures under article 33 of the Constitution would only hinder progress and undermine stability. He remained hopeful that a mutually acceptable resolution could be achieved through sustained efforts in good faith.
- 577. A Government representative of China** said that the progress made by the Venezuelan Government demonstrated its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the Conventions. She supported the continued provision of ILO technical assistance, which would enhance the country's capacity to implement Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144, promote social and economic development, and protect employers' and workers' rights. She encouraged the Government to continue to work closely with the ILO to achieve the agreed objectives.
- 578. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that the Venezuelan Government continued to adopt targeted and graduated measures to implement the agreed plan of action, which included convening the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024. Since then, the Government had taken a number of steps allowing for the full

or partial implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, such as improving the effectiveness of trade union election processes, ensuring the independence of the judiciary, and strengthening social dialogue in the legislative sphere. The Government had implemented all the measures envisaged under the action plan.

- 579.** It was his understanding that the Venezuelan Government appreciated the contribution of the ILO Special Adviser to ensuring the implementation of the recommendations and stood ready to engage further in constructive dialogue, including remotely. However, such cooperation should be reviewed in the context of domestic and foreign policy issues.
- 580.** He supported the draft decision and called on other delegations to do the same in the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.
- 581. A Government representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** said that she appreciated the efforts of the Venezuelan Government to implement the agreed plan of action. Tangible results had been achieved, despite the challenges resulting from the imposition of unilateral coercive measures, which her country rejected. The inclusion of representatives of different sectors of the population in the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum had helped to strengthen labour rights and facilitate the implementation of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144.
- 582.** While her Government valued ILO technical assistance, it was important to recognize that each nation had its own priorities, and that cooperation should be based on respect for sovereign decisions. It was also important to leave aside politicized positions that did not help to build trust. The progress made by the country, as well as the challenges facing it, should be taken into account by the Governing Body in its decisions. Punitive approaches would not foster development or social progress.
- 583. The Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Deputy Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) thanked those members that had highlighted her Government's efforts to promote social dialogue and fulfil its commitments under Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. Unfortunately, others had sought to discredit her Government for their own political ends. Contrary to what some had said, it was undeniable that tangible progress had been made in her country. That had been recognized by the social partners during the last plenary meeting of the world of work, which had been attended by representatives of all relevant organizations and by ILO officials, but regrettably not by the ILO Special Adviser. At that meeting, the Minister of Labour, Mr Eduardo Piñate, had reaffirmed his Government's commitment to social dialogue and to pursuing its efforts to comply with the Conventions.
- 584.** The 947 unilateral coercive measures imposed on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela over many years had adversely affected the enjoyment of labour rights in the country. Despite all the challenges faced, her country continued to develop strategies and mechanisms to ensure that its people enjoyed the greatest amount of social security and that its working population enjoyed the greatest possible happiness.
- 585.** As to the question of the cancellation of a passport of a member of the Governing Body, her Government had directly informed the Director-General and the Venezuelan social partners that the matter was the subject of an investigation completely unrelated to any trade union activities. In no way did it constitute a reprisal by the Government against the individual in question for being an elected Member of the Governing Body, and it was absurd to suggest otherwise: a representative of the Venezuelan employers was currently serving in the

Employers' group, and other representatives of the social partners had previously served on the Governing Body, and had not had their travel documents cancelled.

586. She rejected the suggestion by the Employers' group that the Workers' Production Councils interfered in freedom of association. The Government had not received any complaint regarding alleged or possible interference. Furthermore, the prosecutions of trade union officials were completely unrelated to Convention No. 87. They had been substantiated by the judiciary in accordance with due process and had resulted in convictions for crimes under Venezuelan law.
587. Her Government had always been open to receiving technical assistance from the ILO. Indeed, it had willingly allowed the ILO Special Adviser to provide support since November 2023. Regrettably, the limited contact between Special Adviser and the Government in recent months had hindered direct dialogue. Nonetheless, the Government continued to foster dialogue with Venezuelan partners in the world of work, and the ILO had played an important part in that effort.
588. The draft decision before the Governing Body would adversely affect peace and stability in labour relations in her country and would undermine the progress made on social dialogue and the implementation of international labour standards. Furthermore, she did not accept the draft decision's stark assertion that ILO technical assistance, especially in relation to social dialogue, could be effective only if delivered in person on the ground: on the contrary, it could be provided in various forms.
589. Lastly, she repeated her call for the Governing Body to recognize the efforts made by her Government to ensure peace and stability in the world of work, and not to be swayed by the political interests of certain groups.
590. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Venezuelan Government's stated belief in multilateralism and intention to fulfil its commitments appeared to be at odds with its refusal to support the draft decision. A willingness to make progress had to be backed up by facts, and the draft decision provided an opportunity to do exactly that, by providing the information requested in paragraph 48(f).
591. The issue of the activity of the Workers' Production Councils had been examined by the Commission of Inquiry; the draft decision merely noted the suggestions made, which had not come from the Governing Body. His group hoped that the Venezuelan Government's determination to act on those suggestions would become apparent at the next session of the Governing Body. Meanwhile, it would be helpful if the Special Adviser could attend relevant meetings in person, as the full scope of technical assistance simply could not be provided remotely.
592. He urged members to support the draft decision and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to comply fully with its commitments under the Conventions.
593. **The Worker spokesperson** said that many speakers, in commending the progress made by the Venezuelan Government, had failed to acknowledge the clear evidence of the repression of workers' rights. Their apparent willingness to disregard the reports of the Committee on Freedom of Association and the Commission of Inquiry was nothing short of perplexing.
594. Furthermore, several delegations had stated their opposition to unilateral coercive measures. Perhaps those delegations believed that the imposition of such measures legitimized the imprisonment of trade union members or the refusal to allow the Special Adviser to enter the country. If so, their reasoning was not based on logic. It was deeply problematic that

individuals were being investigated and prosecuted for up to 30 years without being given any evidence of the accusations against them, and the assurances provided by the Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela did little to assuage her concerns.

- 595.** It was difficult to understand why the draft decision was so problematic for the Venezuelan Government: it simply requested that the country work with the ILO, allow the Special Adviser to enter the country, and organize the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum. It should be made plain that the Government was expected to cooperate with the Organization in the manner requested by the Governing Body. The Special Adviser had been appointed to support the Government, provide technical assistance and do everything possible to improve the situation, but the lack of positive momentum suggested that the Government did not take the ILO seriously. Since the Government seemed to be tone deaf to the ILO's exhortations to engage in a positive process, perhaps it was time to consider alternative ways forward.
- 596. The Director-General** addressing the concerns raised about the role of the ILO Special Adviser, recalled that, following constructive discussions with the Venezuelan Government at the 349th Session (October–November 2023) of the Governing Body, the Special Adviser had been present on the ground in the country from November 2023 until February 2024, after which time his visa had not been renewed. The explanation given – which had seemed reasonable – was that the country would soon be holding elections. However, since February 2024, no progress had been made. That was problematic because it was not feasible to work remotely as an expert in social dialogue. The Office had become concerned that progress could not be made without a physical presence on the ground. He had therefore continued to appeal for the Special Adviser to be allowed into the country. Despite constructive discussions with the Government on the subject, his appeals had so far not yielded results and he was starting to wonder whether the situation could be damaging the credibility of the Office.
- 597. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department), responding to questions, said that the ILO Special Adviser was working on an ad hoc basis because the full scope of technical assistance could not be provided under the current circumstances. That was far from ideal for the Special Adviser and for the Office, because the situation was unpredictable. Furthermore, his absence from two meetings had been due to the fact that he had been travelling on the dates in question and had been unable to change his flights at short notice.

Decision

598. The Governing Body:

- (a) **took note of the Director-General's report on developments in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and reiterated once again its call to the Government to accept and implement in full the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry adopted in 2019;**
- (b) **strongly urged the Government to strengthen its efforts to accelerate further the implementation of all commitments made in the plan of action as updated by the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024, in order to achieve concrete results without further delay, in particular with regard to those areas where no progress has been made;**
- (c) **deeply regretted that the Government had not made the necessary arrangements to ensure that the ILO Special Adviser on Social Dialogue could continue to provide support on a constant basis in the country, mindful that ILO technical assistance,**

especially in relation to social dialogue, can only be effective if delivered in person on the ground;

- (d) recalling the decision adopted in November 2023 concerning the posting of an ILO special adviser to the country to accompany and support the implementation of the plan of action and preparation of the Social Dialogue Forum meetings, called on the Government to take immediate steps to facilitate the ILO Special Adviser's presence in the country to that end;
- (e) requested the Director-General to continue collaborating with the Government and the social partners of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the full implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, the related Governing Body decisions and the effective application of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 in law and practice, on the condition that the ILO Special Adviser could continue to provide support on a constant basis in the country and to submit to the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body a further report on any developments concerning the above;
- (f) invited the Government to submit to the Director-General by 15 January 2025 information on any new concrete steps taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the commitments made in the plan of action as updated by the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024, as well as to organize the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum in 2025 with a view to transmitting the information to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025).

(GB.352/INS/12(Rev.1), paragraph 48)

- 599. The Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Deputy Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) said that her Government deplored the adoption of the decision by a significant majority of members, despite the lack of consensus and the lack of consideration given to the progress made by her country in recent months, which should have been recognized by the Office. Her Government wished to register its opposition to the non-consensual adoption of a decision that would do nothing to improve the stability of the world of work in Venezuela. To claim that the physical presence of the ILO Special Adviser was essential was to ignore the technological possibilities of the twenty-first century. The heroic people of Venezuela had succeeded in resisting the global right, and she had no doubt that it would be able to overcome any challenge. It was important to consider that some actors were acting in their own political interests, which strengthened her Government's determination to build a participatory democracy. Her Government's commitment to international labour Conventions was unshakeable and it would be unstinting in its efforts to ensure that it built on social dialogue in order to ensure peace in the world of work. It would willingly accept the technical assistance of the ILO if it was offered in a respectful manner that did not disregard the consideration of a sovereign State.

13. Complaint alleging non-observance by Guatemala of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 (GB.352/INS/13(Rev.1))

- 600. A Government representative of Guatemala** (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare) welcomed the fact that the 351st Session of the Governing Body in June 2024 had recognized her Government's commitment to overcoming obstacles to and difficulties in the implementation of Conventions Nos 87 and 98, as well as its commitment to strengthening the

practice of mature and ongoing social dialogue. Thanks to the tripartite efforts of the Government and employers' and workers' organizations, the Government wished to continue making progress in implementing the road map on freedom of association.

601. Her Government deplored the murders of trade union leaders. It had requested the relevant authorities to clarify the facts, with the Ministry of the Interior playing a fundamental role in the first 24 hours of intervention and the Public Prosecutor's Office being the body responsible for criminal prosecution. The Ministry of the Interior had recently held a meeting with the National Tripartite Committee on Labour Relations and Freedom of Association (CNTRLLS) and had met with representatives of workers' organizations on three separate occasions. The reactivation of a trade union technical round table – the function of which was to assess the risks to trade unionists prior to the granting of security measures – was a significant achievement. As a result of the round table's work, 71 security measures had been granted to trade union leaders between January and July 2024. The round table had also reviewed and updated the protocol for protective measures for trade unionists, keeping in mind the cross-cutting issue of social and tripartite dialogue.
602. The Parliamentary Labour Commission had met the CNTRLLS, giving fresh impetus to efforts to establish a legislative basis for the CNTRLLS and revise the Labour Code, the Criminal Code and the Act on Unionization and Regulation of Strike Action by State Employees, with the overarching aim of ensuring those pieces of legislation conformed to international labour standards. Both efforts were contained in bills that were pending before Parliament, and to which amendments should be introduced on comprehensible legislative technical drafting. Consequently, the Government would address the matter in the tripartite committee in order to move forward and reconsider the reform proposals as directed.
603. High-level meetings would be sought with the newly elected judges to the Supreme Court of Justice on measures to implement the reinstatement orders, as necessary actions to restore the violated labour rights. Her Government had engaged in tripartite efforts to ensure compliance with the road map, and consensus had been reached on the guide to freedom of association, which would provide guidance on the implementation of the constitutional right to freedom of association. Furthermore, the Ministry of Labour had met with workers' and employers' organizations to discuss proposals concerning the right to collective bargaining both in the private and public sectors.
604. She expressed appreciation for the technical assistance provided by the ILO, which would accelerate her country's compliance with the Conventions. Tripartite social dialogue was a powerful tool for progress and the Government was committed to promoting it. Her country remained committed to respecting workers' rights and would redouble its efforts to ensure full compliance with the Conventions.
605. **The Worker spokesperson** took note of the Government's efforts to promote respect for labour rights in the country, which stood in stark contrast to the hostility and indifference of the previous government in that regard. However, the political and economic powers that had stymied progress for so long remained deeply entrenched.
606. His group welcomed the renewed social dialogue that had followed the establishment of the CNTRLLS, and the Government's commitment to securing the passage of Bill 5508 in order to provide a legislative basis for the continued functioning of the CNTRLLS. He noted with interest the meeting between the CNTRLLS and the Parliamentary Labour Commission on 16 June 2024 regarding legislative reforms, specifically the further promotion of Bill 6162. He noted however the Government's caveat, that the adoption of such reforms relied on a two thirds majority and

expressed the hope that this mention was not a signal not to expect their passage anytime soon.

607. His group welcomed the Government's commitment to drafting, with the support of the Office, a bill to address the outstanding legal issues identified by the CEACR, including an amendment to the Labour Code in respect of the formation of sectoral unions and machinery for sectoral collective bargaining. He would be interested to know whether any progress had been made in reaching an agreement on a legislative proposal on sectoral bargaining and, if so, whether there was a reasonable prospect of the proposal being adopted.
608. His group welcomed the Government's short- and medium-term commitments to address anti-union violence and impunity. The granting of security measures to trade union leaders, the resumption of work on the protocol for protective measures for trade unionists, and the proposed reactivation of a monthly dialogue forum were all positive developments. While the Public Prosecutor's Office had recorded 100 murders of trade union members, efforts to record such crimes clearly needed to be intensified. The number of cases of anti-union violence exceeded 100, and at least another 6 trade unionists had been murdered in Guatemala in the first five months of 2024. He urged the Government to improve the legal and political environment in which workers organized, strengthen protection schemes, and swiftly prosecute the material and intellectual authors of such crimes.
609. His group welcomed the information that judges had been appointed to handle cases in which employers had ignored a final court order for the reinstatement of trade union members. It also welcomed the Government's efforts to facilitate a meeting between the CNTRLLS and judges of the Chamber of Constitutional Protection and Preliminary Proceedings to examine the functioning of the collegial peace court in criminal matters for cases involving offences of non-compliance with labour decisions. Regrettably, trade unionists continued to be dismissed for their activities and urgent steps should be taken to address that issue.
610. In view of the fact that it would take time to overcome the damage caused by decades of inaction and neglect on the part of the State, his group agreed that the decision to consider further action in respect of the complaint should be deferred to the 353rd Session of the Governing Body in March 2025.
611. Lastly, he encouraged the international community to support the ILO's technical assistance programme by providing the necessary resources.
612. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group appreciated the efforts of the Government of Guatemala to fulfil its commitments under the Conventions and to strengthen tripartite social dialogue. It welcomed the establishment of the inter-institutional technical round table of the National Decent Employment Commission and the progress made in drafting regulations on collective bargaining. However, the persistent violence against trade union leaders was troubling and the Government should take urgent steps to combat impunity.
613. In addition to implementing the road map, the Government should facilitate the adoption of legislation, in particular Bills 5508 and 6162. An approach that combined the support of the international community on legislative issues, together with sustained social dialogue in Guatemala, could bring about positive change and serve as a model for other countries facing similar problems.
614. Lastly, he requested that the Governing Body be kept informed of the Government's progress made in implementing the Conventions. His group supported the draft decision.

- 615. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries,**⁷ a Government representative of Brazil welcomed the Guatemalan Government's sustained efforts to strengthen tripartite dialogue as a fundamental tool of democracy, as well as the decisive action taken to strengthen the CNTRLLS. The ILO's technical assistance to the CNTRLLS was of crucial importance in strengthening its functioning. Her group urged the international community to contribute to the technical assistance programme to ensure continued progress in the implementation of the Conventions.
- 616. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She expressed support for the ILO's indispensable role in developing, promoting and supervising the implementation of ratified international labour standards, and commended the Office's efforts to provide technical assistance to the Government of Guatemala.
- 617.** She welcomed the Government's commitment to strengthening the practice of mature and ongoing social dialogue, increasing the relevance of the CNTRLLS and facilitating cooperation between social partners and institutions. The reinstatement of a technical round table to draft regulations in accordance with the recommendations of the CEACR was likewise a positive step. She thanked the Office for preparing a study on collective bargaining in the public sector in Guatemala and encouraged the Government to implement its findings. The Government should adopt without delay national legislation to bring the country into line with international labour standards. She called on the Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate all acts of violence against trade union leaders and members. It was important to achieve tangible results in that regard.
- 618.** The EU and its Member States had increased their cooperation with Guatemala by strengthening political and trade ties, as reflected in the EU–Central America Association Agreement, which aimed to improve the application of the ILO fundamental Conventions. The funding of initiatives such as the promotion of the decent work project would continue to support Guatemala's efforts to comply with its commitments under the road map, and the EU worked closely with the ILO to achieve the objectives of the technical assistance programme.
- 619.** The EU and its Member States would continue to follow the situation closely. They encouraged further interaction between the Government and the ILO to increase the effectiveness of the measures already taken. She supported the draft decision.
- 620. A Government representative of the United States** said that, while she acknowledged the efforts by the Government of Guatemala to establish a clear normative framework for collective bargaining, promote tripartite engagement and combat violence against trade union leaders, there was still a lot of work to do. The Government's commitment to implementing the road map would help Guatemala to achieve compliance with the Conventions.
- 621.** The United States shared the concerns of the CEACR in relation to the legislative obstacles to collective bargaining and delays in the reinstatement of workers dismissed for union activities. It welcomed the recent approval of a new Trade Union Booklet to improve the registration of trade union organizations, in particular in the maquila and agricultural sectors. Her country would like to be kept abreast of any challenges encountered in the registration of trade unions.

⁷ Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

- 622.** The United States continued to encourage the Government to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to protect workers' rights and create decent work opportunities, enhance coordination between the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry, and work closely with social partners and the ILO. It remained committed to working with Guatemala to promote the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. She supported the draft decision.
- 623. A Government representative of Guatemala** (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare) said that her country valued the support of the international community. Sustained tripartite dialogue was a powerful tool for building a fairer, more prosperous society and her Government would build on the tangible results achieved to make further progress on labour rights. She thanked the ILO for its valuable technical assistance.

Decision

624. The Governing Body:

- (a) **requested the Government of Guatemala to continue intensifying its efforts to implement 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);**
- (b) **requested the Office to continue expanding its technical assistance programme to ensure further progress in the implementation of the referred Conventions;**
- (c) **strongly encouraged the international community to contribute to the above-mentioned technical assistance programme by providing the necessary resources;**
- (d) **deferred to its 353rd Session (March 2025) the decision to consider further action in respect of the complaint, based on information to be submitted by the Government on further developments.**

(GB.352/INS/13(Rev.1), paragraph 12)

14. Report by the Government of Bangladesh on progress made in the implementation of the road map to address all outstanding issues mentioned in the article 26 complaint concerning alleged non-observance of Conventions Nos 81, 87 and 98 (GB.352/INS/14(Rev.2))

- 625. A Government representative of Bangladesh** (Adviser for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs) began by paying homage to the young people who had lost their lives defending their rights during the recent uprising in the country. In its first three months, his interim Government had initiated widespread reforms, including by acceding to the United Nations International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, initiating the process of abolishing the Cyber Security Act and considering the establishment of a United Nations Human Rights Office in Bangladesh. A number of reform commissions had been set up, covering, inter alia, the police, public administration, anti-corruption, the judiciary, the Constitution and women's rights. A labour rights reform commission had also been established to examine and recommend, by January 2025, improvements to labour rights and welfare in line with international standards.
- 626.** Although recent events in Bangladesh had hindered progress on the road map, the interim Government had aligned its agenda with the road map's workflow. On 24 September 2024, the

Government, employers and workers had signed a joint declaration to implement an 18-point agreement in response to demands submitted by the workers, streamlining the process for addressing most of the concerns voiced by development partners, including regarding the minimum wage, blacklisting, unfair termination of employment, the prosecution of workers, benefits and welfare.

- 627.** Bangladesh had made progress in improving working conditions in a number of areas. It had ratified eight of the fundamental Conventions, amended its labour rules and adopted rules governing export processing zones (EPZs). A comprehensive review of the Bangladesh Labour Act was currently under way following ILO technical guidance and recommendations, and the National Tripartite Consultative Council (NTCC) and the ready-made garment Tripartite Consultative Council were being reformed to ensure meaningful representation of workers and employers in that process. The Bangladesh Labour Act had been extended to special economic zones (SEZs). Following amendments to labour legislation, immediate steps would be taken to amend the EPZ Labour Act and relevant regulations. The discrepancies between the amended Bangladesh Labour Act and the EPZ Labour Act would be analysed and the next steps considered.
- 628.** Action had already been taken to digitalize trade union registration, establish preregistration services and provide training to facilitate union activities. In addition, legal reforms were planned that would lower the threshold for unionization, minimize the required documentation and maintain the confidentiality of registration information. To facilitate freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, a technical committee had been formed to scrutinize unfair labour practices, and various mechanisms, including increased penalties for such practices and for anti-trade union discrimination, would also be adopted. A review of the cases brought against workers, labour leaders and activists during the previous year's minimum wage movement had begun.
- 629.** Greater human resources had been allocated to factory inspections, and the number of inspections and corrective measures had also increased. Within EPZs, inspections were carried out not only by the EPZ authorities, but also by the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments. Concrete action, including unannounced inspections and sector-specific training, had been taken to improve the quality of inspections. Six new labour courts had been established, and prosecutors would soon be given training on international labour standards. The interim Government was also working with the ILO to develop an online case management system.
- 630.** The interim Government had renewed its commitment to establishing a fully functional alternative dispute resolution mechanism. In 2023, the NTCC had finalized a standard operating procedure for conciliation to ensure that conciliators remained objective. Fifteen conciliators had been assigned to facilitate dispute resolution. In addition, a draft standard operating procedure for arbitration and guidelines for industrial dispute arbitration would be presented to the NTCC for approval. The Employment Injury Scheme had been piloted in the ready-made garment sector with financial support from brands and buyers and technical support from the ILO, although further action was needed, and more funding was required from global brands and buyers to launch the Scheme in other sectors. The interim Government had begun consultations with the ILO on the piloting of the Scheme in EPZs.
- 631.** The National Occupational Health and Safety Training and Research Institute had been established and steps taken to create a database of occupational safety and health experts. He firmly believed that, through concerted efforts, it would be possible to implement the road map within the specified timeline. Given the interim Government's renewed focus and

commitment, and the progress made so far, he requested the Governing Body to consider closing the case.

- 632. The Worker spokesperson** said that the recent protests, in which hundreds had died and which had led to the loss of jobs and income owing to temporary factory closures, had been fuelled in part by many serious and long-standing grievances, such as the prolonged economic downturn, the lack of decent work, rampant corruption, serious human rights violations and the lack of democratic channels for initiating the necessary change. The 18-point agreement approved by business and union representatives addressed some important worker complaints.
- 633.** While he welcomed the steps planned by the interim Government, he highlighted that democratic, independent unions that applied for union registration in compliance with the law continued to be arbitrarily rejected. Inconsistent legal provisions coupled with burdensome requirements and the discretionary power of the Department of Labour continued to thwart workers' ability to exercise their right to freedom of association. Workers in EPZs still had no effective way to exercise their right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Moreover, workers continued to be dismissed for their legitimate trade union activities, without effective means of redress, and to suffer violence while perpetrators avoided consequences; in the case of the killing of Shahidul Islam, for example, an investigation had been launched into a mid-level manager despite the existence of evidence against more senior figures in the company. Labour inspection and labour justice institutions remained woefully understaffed and under-resourced.
- 634.** He acknowledged that the interim Government had not created the situation, and he was hopeful that it would take the necessary steps to address the above issues, set out in the road map, as a priority. Reform would require not only legislative and regulatory changes, but also a shift in the country's business and political culture, which had systematically devalued labour's contribution to the country's growth. Workers in Bangladesh had been suppressed for decades and were among the worst paid in Asia. He recognized that the interim Government needed time to act and therefore supported deferring a decision on a commission of inquiry until March 2025, as set out in the draft decision.
- 635. The Employer spokesperson** highlighted that the Government had engaged actively with the Office and made steady progress in addressing the complaint and improving the situation of freedom of association. Outlining some of the key developments that had addressed the points raised in the complaint, she welcomed in particular the news that a comprehensive reform of the labour sector would be a major area of action under the interim Government and trusted that work would swiftly resume towards the full implementation of the road map.
- 636.** She strongly encouraged the interim Government to undertake extensive consultations with the national social partners on labour, employment and industrial relations matters, emphasizing the need to work not only with trade unions but also with employers if the labour law reform was to be successful and the road map implemented before the deadline. She would like to see a focus on the concept of sustainable enterprises, as well as the needs of such enterprises, without which it would be difficult to make progress on the ground or create an ecosystem and infrastructure that facilitated the involvement of workers and created decent work that was respectful of all human rights and labour rights. The Employers' group stood ready to work closely with the Bangladesh Employers' Federation in supporting the interim Government in undertaking all the necessary actions and ongoing initiatives. Her group believed that, in the light of the progress made, the case should be closed as soon as possible, and it supported the draft decision.

- 637. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with the statement. Mindful of the recent political changes in Bangladesh, the EU and its Member States welcomed the commitment of the interim Government to improving the labour rights situation by creating a labour reform commission, and they stood ready to deepen cooperation. She emphasized the importance of fully implementing the 18-point agreement reached between employers and labour leaders.
- 638.** She remained concerned that Bangladesh had only partially implemented the labour reforms to which it had committed and reiterated her group's call for their timely and comprehensive delivery. She expected the interim Government to speed up the reform of the Bangladesh Labour Act and the EPZ Labour Act, and she urged it to adequately consult and involve the social partners in that process. It was particularly crucial to remove restrictions on freedom of association in all sectors and facilitate the registration of trade unions and enjoyment of the right to collective bargaining. She urged Bangladesh to lift the remaining obstacles to the unionization of workers and to stop the systematic refusal of workers' rights regarding wage payments, overtime and working conditions.
- 639.** Swift investigations were required into the injury, killings, harassment and intimidation carried out in 2023 against workers and labour activists owing to their association with trade unions or in connection with wage demands and protests. Those responsible must be held to account and preventive measures implemented, including through meaningful social dialogue. Continued and intensified training efforts were required for the law enforcement authorities responsible for dealing with strikes and protests to ensure that human rights, including labour rights, were respected.
- 640.** Further work was necessary to enable free and independent labour inspections. She encouraged the interim Government to continue its work towards rendering labour inspectorates fully functional with a sufficient number of adequately trained labour inspectors. She reaffirmed her group's strong commitment to cooperation with Bangladesh in partnership with the ILO and encouraged the interim Government to accelerate its progress and tackle the remaining challenges. Her group supported the draft decision.
- 641. A Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that his Government took note of the draft decision to defer further action on the complaint until the Governing Body's next session. In the wake of the recent major political developments in Bangladesh, the country had a unique opportunity to make sustainable and lasting changes. It would, however, need to address concerns about fairness in the labour market effectively and holistically if it was to safeguard its long-term stability and prosperity. He urged the interim Government to accelerate implementation of the road map, which would help maintain preferential access to key markets and open up opportunities in new ones, and to collaborate constructively with the ILO, taking full advantage of its technical expertise. His Government stood ready to support the interim Government and all other social partners in that endeavour.
- 642. A Government representative of Oman** said that the document demonstrated that Bangladesh had made progress in its ongoing efforts to reform the labour inspectorate, put an end to illegal practices, increase trade union freedoms and implement training campaigns. The establishment of labour courts would allow all labour disputes to be resolved swiftly, thereby strengthening social justice. His Government urged Bangladesh to maintain its momentum in order to improve working conditions and protect all workers.

- 643. A Government representative of the United States**, noting that the previous Government had failed to make significant progress in implementing the road map, welcomed the interim Government's prioritization of labour sector reform and adoption of corresponding measures. He strongly encouraged the interim Government to work closely with the social partners to implement the road map, bring EPZs under the Bangladesh Labour Act and ensure that labour inspectors had the authority to conduct unannounced inspections and issue sanctions in those zones. The Bangladesh Labour Act should be amended in line with international labour standards through meaningful tripartite consultations. The resulting amendments should simplify the trade union registration process, reduce the threshold to form a union, increase penalties for unfair labour practices and anti-union discrimination and prohibit worker blacklisting.
- 644.** His Government remained concerned at reports of baseless arrests, violent suppression and criminal charges against labour organizers during the 2023 minimum wage protests. He urged the interim Government to withdraw those charges. His Government welcomed the introduction of regular, transparent reviews of the minimum wage that were inclusive and representative of workers, in line with the road map's provisions on promoting social dialogue. He supported the draft decision.
- 645. A Government representative of Qatar** commended the interim Government for its strong commitment to the road map. He welcomed its efforts to amend the Bangladesh Labour Act and the measures that it had adopted to strengthen the labour inspection and dispute resolution system. He wished to draw particular attention to the interim Government's continuing efforts to recruit labour inspectors, establish new labour courts, appoint an additional judge to the Labour Appellate Tribunal and organize training and awareness-raising programmes. In the light of the interim Government's commitment to the road map, and its progress in addressing the issues raised in the complaint, he invited the Office to continue providing the necessary technical assistance to enhance efforts to implement the reforms. He urged the parties concerned to cooperate in order to reach a solution that would allow the complaint to be closed definitively.
- 646. A Government representative of China** welcomed the emphasis placed by the interim Government of Bangladesh on fulfilling its obligations under the international labour Conventions and encouraged it to continue working with the ILO on further implementation of the road map. The Governing Body should recognize the interim Government's positive attitude towards labour reform and seek to close the case as soon as possible.
- 647. A Government representative of South Africa** said that globalization had imposed disproportionate social, labour and environmental burdens on developing countries in a process that forced the global South to deal with the negative impact of global supply chains despite limited resources and economic returns. Although her Government acknowledged the underlying concerns in the article 26 complaint, it also recognized the pressures on Bangladesh to meet global demand with limited profit margins. The discrepancy between those pressures and the significant profits generated by global corporations highlighted an unequal system that restricted the financial resources available to countries like Bangladesh for essential development initiatives, such as labour rights enhancement.
- 648.** The ILO should acknowledge the efforts made to implement the road map and improve labour conditions, particularly since the recent political changes in the country. Rather than being punitive, international labour Conventions should foster development, and a developmental approach would encourage their ratification and implementation by Member States without fear of sanction for striving towards gradual improvement. The Governing Body should

recognize the incremental progress made by the interim Government and support a framework that promoted development, focused guidance and cooperation, and it should work collectively to ensure that the Conventions enabled countries like Bangladesh to build on the progress made in creating fair and safe workplaces for all. Her Government supported the draft decision.

- 649. A Government representative of Cuba** welcomed the commitment of the interim Government of Bangladesh to implementing the road map, noting the ongoing communication and technical assistance provided through the ILO Country Office. The action taken had strengthened tripartite social dialogue and cooperation with the Organization. Indeed, the progress made demonstrated what could be achieved when the Governing Body gave the Government time and space to work with the relevant stakeholders, within the framework of its national legislation, to comply with its obligations and commitments in relation to the ratified ILO instruments. It also showed the importance of prioritizing dialogue and consensus-based solutions. Tripartite dialogue was a fundamental principle that must form part of all decisions. In assessing any issue, the willingness and commitment of Member States to work with the ILO should be considered. The progress made by Bangladesh on labour matters should be taken into account and the complaint should not be pursued further. Any other decision could hinder efforts to continue to implement the activities under the road map.
- 650. A Government representative of Nepal** commended the progress made across the four priority areas of the road map: labour law reform; trade union registration; labour inspection and enforcement; and addressing acts of anti-union discrimination, unfair labour practices and violence against workers. He encouraged the interim Government to continue with its implementation of the road map. The recent political changes in the country were an opportunity for comprehensive reform, including in the labour sector. With the support of the ILO and the international community, Bangladesh would be well placed to navigate the reforms. He therefore called on the international community to provide all necessary cooperation for the implementation of the road map.
- 651. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** recognized the work carried out to improve labour rights in Bangladesh and commended the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. Considering those and other developments, notably improvements in the ready-made garment sector, increases to the minimum wage and the expansion of the labour courts, her Government supported the closure of the case as soon as possible. The ILO should continue to provide assistance for labour rights improvements in the country.
- 652. A Government representative of Canada** welcomed the commitment of the interim Government to in-depth labour reforms, including the establishment of a labour rights reform commission. He was concerned, however, by the lack of progress highlighted in the 2024 report of the CEACR. The interim Government must undertake major reforms to align labour legislation with international standards in order to strengthen measures to prevent discrimination, violence and harassment against trade union leaders and workers, and improve the investigation of such incidents; reduce the backlog of cases at labour courts; simplify the online trade union registration system; and ensure a full complement of qualified labour inspectors, including in EPZs and SEZs. There should be continued monitoring of the implementation of the road map. The Government of Canada supported the draft decision and would work with the Government of Bangladesh to achieve those objectives.
- 653. A Government representative of the Niger** commended the remarkable progress made in improving working conditions and the decision of the interim Government to prioritize labour

reform. It was particularly positive to hear that a joint declaration had been signed by the Government and the social partners that took into account the concerns expressed by workers. The case of Bangladesh was testament to the success of social dialogue established with the technical support of the Office. His Government supported the draft decision and believed it was time to close the case.

- 654. A Government representative of the Philippines** said that the progress report demonstrated the ongoing commitment of the interim Government to advancing labour rights and workplace safety in line with international standards so as to improve conditions for both workers and employers. Continued technical assistance and open tripartite dialogue would be key to operationalizing the reforms. She encouraged the interim Government to maintain momentum in its efforts to fully implement the road map, provide detailed responses to allegations made against it and continue working closely with the ILO to address the remaining challenges.
- 655. A Government representative of Sudan** highlighted the significant progress made in implementing the road map. Particularly noteworthy steps included the new agreement signed with the social partners, the strengthening of the factory inspection system and the growth in trade union registrations. The increased number of labour courts and improvements to the arbitration and conciliation mechanism were also positive signs of progress, as was the formation of a labour rights reform commission. His Government encouraged the Office to provide further support to the interim Government of Bangladesh with a view to closing the case by the next session of the Governing Body.
- 656. A Government representative of Spain**, noting the interim Government's willingness to make structural reforms to facilitate free and democratic elections, said that its creation of a labour rights reform commission demonstrated commitment to upholding labour rights. Continued collaboration with the Office was vital in that immense task, although the positive results of the dialogue between the social partners that had been promoted by the interim Government provided a good starting point. His Government welcomed the dialogue between the ILO and the interim Government on important issues such as the relationship between the minimum wage and the living wage, the revitalization of social dialogue, the establishment of mechanisms to resolve labour disputes and the creation of a new occupational risk scheme and comprehensive social protection system. His Government would support the interim Government in its ongoing work on the remaining challenges. He supported the draft decision.
- 657. A Government representative of Bangladesh** thanked the Governing Body for recognizing the progress that his interim Government had made. Acknowledging the concerns expressed by some international partners regarding the EPZ Labour Act, he said that a review of that legislation was due to be completed by 2025. In the meantime, the existing EPZ Labour Act and EPZ Labour Rules made provision for the formation of workers' welfare associations, which could engage in collective bargaining and negotiations on a similar basis to trade unions. The only limitation was that workers' welfare associations could not join external federations, but that was being examined as part of the review. Improvements were also ongoing with regard to labour inspection, including to allow unannounced and free inspections.
- 658.** In the case of Shahidul Islam, the police had submitted their investigation report charging 14 individuals, including the main accused person, on 25 February 2024. The interim Government was determined to conduct a fair trial and support the victim's family. It would also reinvestigate cases where there had been complaints of irregularities, following due process. Deaths of workers during recent unrest, including the tragic death of Kausar Hussain on 30 September 2024, would be investigated promptly. He pledged to ensure appropriate

action was taken if it was found that excessive or disproportionate force had been used. The change of government was an occasion to put human dignity and rights at the centre of governance. Indeed, the article 26 complaint highlighted some of the very grievances that had fuelled the uprising. Work to implement the road map would continue in consultation with all stakeholders. His interim Government looked forward to the continued constructive feedback of the Governing Body in that regard and requested it to close the case as soon as possible.

- 659. The Worker spokesperson** said that there had been many failed attempts to implement the numerous action plans drawn up to improve the situation in Bangladesh, including with the EU and the ILO. Much work remained to be done to implement the current road map. The actions of the interim Government would determine how quickly the case could be closed, and, although he had confidence in its stated commitment, concrete results were needed before a decision could be made. It should be noted that EPZs were not just a cause for concern among some partners, but had been the subject of detailed, specific recommendations by the Committee of Experts in its most recent report with regard to both the Conventions Nos 87 and 98; in addition to the prohibition on joining unions outside EPZs, the Committee had identified other significant limitations on the ability of workers and their welfare associations to associate and bargain collectively.
- 660. The Employer spokesperson** stressed that Conventions Nos 87 and 98 referred to both employers and workers. The Employers' group was committed to facilitating decent work through formalization, but that required special support for employers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. She expected that the interim Government would engage constructively with both employers' organizations and trade unions as part of a balanced approach to labour law reform.

Decision

- 661. Taking note of the report on progress made with the implementation of the road map of actions to address all outstanding issues mentioned in the article 26 complaint concerning the alleged non-observance of Conventions Nos 81, 87 and 98, and mindful of the recent political changes which led to an interim Government, the Governing Body:**
- (a) **urged the Government to fully commit to a timely implementation of its road map of actions and take all necessary action to that effect;**
 - (b) **welcomed the commitment expressed by the Government to a labour reform agenda and called on the Government and the social partners to reinforce their tripartite consultations on the labour law reform in a constructive manner with a view to bringing about all necessary reforms as a matter of priority, with the ILO technical assistance and the support that could be provided by the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups;**
 - (c) **requested the Government to report by 15 January 2025 on further progress made in the implementation of the road map of actions to address all the outstanding issues mentioned in the article 26 complaint for transmission to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025);**
 - (d) **deferred the decision on further action in respect of the article 26 complaint to that session.**

(GB.352/INS/14(Rev.2), paragraph 9)

15. Complaint alleging non-observance by Nicaragua of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144 (GB.352/INS/15(Rev.1))

- 662. A Government representative of Nicaragua**, recalling that Nicaragua's Constitution and legislation provided for non-discrimination at work, said that, on 29 August 2023, her Government had submitted to the ILO reports on Conventions Nos 87 and 111, with reference to the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards provided during the 111th Session (2023) of the International Labour Conference. The Office had acknowledged receipt of those reports on 9 October 2023. On 20 December 2023, her Government had sent to the ILO a report with documentary evidence of the observance by Nicaragua of Convention Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144. The Office had acknowledged receipt of that report on 17 January 2024. Furthermore, on 2 September 2024, her Government had sent to the ILO reports on Conventions Nos 87 and 98 and a report on the follow-up to the conclusions adopted by the Committee on the Application of Standards during the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference. The Office had acknowledged receipt of those reports on 4 September 2024.
- 663.** It was therefore important to note that her Government had provided evidence of its compliance with its obligations as an ILO Member State and that the labour rights of the Nicaraguan people were being upheld in accordance with Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144. It was clear that some delegates from the International Organisation of Employers intended to maintain an approach that lay beyond the legal logic normally applied to the work of the ILO. The Government of Nicaragua guaranteed the respect and exercise of freedom of association by promoting, approving and certifying trade union organizations in all sectors of the economy without any form of discrimination, thereby allowing workers to participate directly in their places of work through collective agreements that ensured better conditions for workers and tripartite negotiations on the fixing of the minimum wage, in accordance with the law. She urged the ILO to acknowledge her Government's achievements in guaranteeing the labour rights of workers in Nicaragua. Her Government categorically rejected the Office document, as it interfered in a domestic political issue, thereby undermining the country's sovereignty.
- 664. The Employer spokesperson** said that the discussion represented a critical moment for fundamental labour rights in Nicaragua, and in particular freedom of association. He recalled that the Committee on the Application of Standards had examined the case every year since 2022 and that, in its latest examination, it had issued conclusions urging the Government of Nicaragua to take a series of actions. None of those actions had been taken. Instead, the human rights situation in Nicaragua had deteriorated and the Government continued to facilitate, coordinate and commit serious violations and abuses of human rights. A series of repressive measures have been taken over the years within the civic space in Nicaragua. As indicated in a report issued by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in August 2024, 1,700 organizations were closed down, constituting a grave attack on civil liberties, and bringing the number of dissolved organizations up to more than 5,000. The human rights situation in Nicaragua has drastically worsened over the past year. One of the most alarming acts of repression in terms of tripartism and compliance with the Conventions was the complete dismantling of independent employers' associations, including the Higher Council for Private Enterprise (COSEP). Members of COSEP faced exile and statelessness and many of those remaining in Nicaragua did so in fear. The complaint was therefore extremely serious and there was an urgent need to restore freedom of association and guarantee non-discrimination on the grounds of political beliefs and respect for human rights. Regrettably, the Government of Nicaragua still did not acknowledge the serious human rights situation in

the country and had not responded to the requests of the ILO supervisory bodies. The recent case filed by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights against Nicaragua with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights for violation of trade union rights, confirmed these grave violations of the said rights in the country. Against that backdrop, his group urged the Governing Body to consider appointing a Commission of Inquiry under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. The ILO must be firm and determined in its defence of fundamental labour rights in order to show the social partners in Nicaragua that they were not alone in their fight for justice.

- 665. The Worker spokesperson** said that her group's position was based on the recognition that all ILO Member States, regardless of political denomination, had the obligation to uphold the fundamental principles and rights at work. She emphasized that the right to freedom of association required respect for fundamental human rights, the rule of law and civil liberties. By the same token, the rights protected by Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144 were meaningless in the absence of respect for basic freedoms. She recalled that the ILO supervisory bodies had taken decisions in response to allegations of acts of violence, threats, persecution, stigmatization and intimidation against individuals and organizations in connection with their exercise of the right to freedom of association in Nicaragua, and took note of the comments made by the CEACR referring to serious concerns reported by the Human Rights Council, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.
- 666.** It was regrettable that the Government of Nicaragua had not responded to any of the Office's communications and had not provided the information requested by the Governing Body. She urged the Government to engage with the Office by making full use of ILO technical assistance to fulfil its obligations under Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144 and establish a tripartite dialogue round table without delay. It was important to note that Nicaragua had taken the sovereign decision to become an ILO Member State and to ratify those important Conventions. Fulfilling its obligations as an ILO Member State and party to those Conventions would in no way undermine its sovereignty.
- 667.** As the Government of Nicaragua had not made good on its opportunity to engage constructively with the Office, her group agreed that it was necessary to increase pressure on the Government to work with the ILO to establish a dialogue. To do that, the best next step would be to send a high-level tripartite mission to Nicaragua to assess the situation on the ground and help to build a way forward towards genuine social dialogue. Appointing a Commission of Inquiry under article 26 of the Constitution would not yet be appropriate. However, the group would consider such action at a later stage in the event that no progress was made. She therefore urged the Government to accept such a high-level mission and to provide a full report to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025). The group supported the draft decision.
- 668. A Government representative of the United States, speaking also on behalf of Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom,** noted with regret that the Government of Nicaragua continued to reject the complaint and to refuse to engage with the allegations contained therein. She echoed the profound concern expressed by the CEACR regarding the lack of action by the Government of Nicaragua to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Application of Standards. Noting with concern that the Government had yet to respond to the Office's offer to work together to identify areas in which the ILO could provide support, she urged the Government to engage with the Office, to consult with the social partners at both the domestic and the international levels, and to remedy the serious issues identified in the complaint and by the ILO supervisory bodies. In view of the Nicaraguan Government's inaction,

the United States, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom would have been ready to support the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry. They were, nevertheless, persuaded that a high-level tripartite mission would be useful and, in a spirit of consensus, were willing to support that course of action. She supported the draft decision.

- 669. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. The EU and its Member States remained deeply concerned at the labour rights situation in Nicaragua and deplored the climate of violence, insecurity and intimidation in the country, as well as the ongoing human rights violations. The recent closure of bilateral chambers of commerce was deeply worrying. It was regrettable that the authorities had as yet failed to follow up on the conclusions of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards regarding Conventions Nos 87 and 98 adopted at the 110th (2022) and 111th (2023) Sessions of the International Labour Conference. She urged the Government to act on those conclusions and also on those adopted at the 112th Session (2024).
- 670.** She urged the Nicaraguan authorities to address the serious gaps in compliance that had been identified. It was regrettable that, despite the repeated calls of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards to establish a tripartite dialogue round table under the auspices of the ILO and the Office's recent efforts to facilitate such a step, no tangible progress had been made. The EU and its Member States deplored the Nicaraguan authorities' failure to respond to Office communications and to provide the information requested by the Governing Body. She called on the authorities to engage positively with the Office and to accept a high-level tripartite mission. If no progress had been made by the next session of the Governing Body, it would be necessary to explore the next steps provided for under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. The EU and its Member States would continue to monitor the situation closely and support the people of Nicaragua, and they remained open to genuine dialogue. She supported the draft decision.
- 671. A Government representative of Cuba** reiterated his Government's view that the nature of the case and the manner in which it had been declared receivable demonstrated a lack of transparency and democratization in the complaints mechanism. Such decisions should not be made solely by the Officers of the Governing Body, and the use of such outdated procedures left room for political manoeuvring. His Government had opposed the inclusion of the item on the agenda of the Governing Body. The information contained in the document demonstrated the willingness of the Government of Nicaragua to honour the obligations that it had undertaken by sovereign choice in becoming a Member State of the ILO. Dialogue and cooperation based on respect for state sovereignty were key to upholding labour rights. The Governing Body could not request a State to violate its national legislation or act contrary to the principle of self-determination.
- 672.** His Government rejected the use of punitive measures, which were not in keeping with the mandate of the ILO and were destined to fail. His Government reaffirmed its full support for the efforts of the Government and people of Nicaragua to achieve sustainable development, peace, justice and social emancipation. It firmly opposed politicization and the use of the bodies and mechanisms of the UN system to manipulate the situation in Nicaragua, destabilize its democratically elected Government and tarnish its international image. Respectful dialogue and cooperation should always be prioritized over coercion and interventionist action.
- 673. A Government representative of China** highlighted the Nicaraguan Government's earnest efforts to fulfil its obligations under Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144 and to cooperate

with the ILO. The Government's positive attitude towards freedom of association should be fully recognized. She encouraged the Government to continue its close cooperation with the ILO to make progress on matters including social dialogue. The ILO must support Member States in fulfilling their obligations under international labour Conventions. In reviewing country cases, the Governing Body should be free from political bias, adhere to the principles of fairness and justice and focus on protecting the rights and interests of employers and workers. It should also attach greater importance to the authoritative information provided by governments, continue to enhance cooperation and dialogue with Member States and provide greater technical assistance.

- 674. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** recognized the efforts made by the Government of Nicaragua to enhance its compliance with ILO standards and Conventions, the progress achieved to that end and the Government's ongoing engagement with the ILO supervisory bodies. Constructive dialogue by all parties that respected the sovereignty of Nicaragua, along with technical cooperation, were the most effective means of addressing any remaining challenges. She called on the ILO to continue to provide technical assistance and support to Nicaragua. As a developing country facing various challenges, Nicaragua deserved understanding and support from the international community. Her Government supported affording Nicaragua adequate time and opportunity to address any outstanding matters through continued cooperation with the ILO.
- 675. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** expressed support for the opinions expressed by the Government of Nicaragua regarding the document and the draft decision. The document did not include the written explanations provided by the Government and seemed not to have taken into consideration the position expressed by it during the 349th and 350th Sessions of the Governing Body. Regarding the claim that the Government had persecuted COSEP, it should be noted that, according to the information provided by the Government, that organization had been shut down in 2018 and its management found guilty of criminal charges. The ILO and its supervisory bodies did not have the authority to comment on decisions made by national judicial or law enforcement bodies or to demand the release of individuals sentenced by national courts. Such action amounted to grievous interference in the sovereign rights of a State. The document displayed clear signs of politicization. To continue with such an approach would be to undermine the authority of the supervisory system and, ultimately, the Organization as a whole.
- 676. A Government representative of Nicaragua** thanked the Government representatives who had highlighted the politicization of the matters relating to her Government, which would not stand for interference in its affairs. Her Government's commitment had been made amply clear by its progress in relation to labour rights, social rights and human rights. It was regrettable that the ILO was so divided in its approach to protecting the workers of the world. Her Government protected and promoted labour rights through genuine tripartism because its primary struggle was against the poverty caused by the inequalities promoted by the imperialists of the world. The issues under discussion fell under the scope of Nicaragua's legal system. Her Government remained open to dialogue that was fair and open to considering its position. She called on the Office to evaluate the information provided by her Government without political bias or prejudice.
- 677. The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the fact that the Workers' group and many Governments shared his group's concerns surrounding the case, although he was deeply troubled by the continued denial by the Government of Nicaragua of the gravity of the case and its refusal to cooperate with the supervisory mechanisms. He had little confidence that

progress would be made before the Governing Body's next session. He supported the draft decision.

- 678. The Worker spokesperson** said that there was nothing contentious in the ILO's request for a government to cooperate in order to achieve social dialogue. She asked the Government of Nicaragua to accept the technical assistance and support being offered by the Office to that end.

Decision

- 679. In the light of the information provided in document GB.352/INS/15(Rev.1), the Governing Body:**

- (a) recalled the deep concerns expressed by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) in their latest examination of the implementation by the Government of Nicaragua of the Conventions that are the subject of the article 26 complaint;
- (b) deplored the lack of meaningful engagement of the Government, and the fact that it has responded to none of the Office communications and has not provided the information requested by the Governing Body;
- (c) urged the Government to address the issues raised in the complaint as a matter of urgency;
- (d) called on the Government to respond to the Office communications and to provide the information requested since the 350th Session (March 2024) of the Governing Body as soon as possible;
- (e) decided to send a high-level tripartite mission to assess the issues raised in the complaint, and to provide a full report to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) and defer the decision on further action in accordance with article 26 of the Constitution to that session.

(GB.352/INS/15(Rev.1), paragraph 8)

16. Developments in the application of the resolution concerning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization (GB.352/INS/16)

- 680.** The Governing Body had before it an amended version of the draft decision, which had been proposed by the Government of the Russian Federation, seconded by the Government of China and circulated by the Office. The proposal was to amend subparagraphs (b), (c), (d) and (g) to read:

- (b) reiterated its most profound concern at the ~~continuing aggression by the Russian Federation, aided by the Belarusian Government, against~~ situation in Ukraine, and at the impact that this ~~aggression~~ situation is having on the tripartite constituents – workers, employers and the democratically elected Government - in Ukraine, and on the world of work beyond Ukraine;
- (c) urged ~~the Russian Federation against~~ all the parties to the conflict to immediately and ~~unconditionally~~ cease armed activities ~~its aggression and withdraw its troops from~~ Ukraine;

- (d) urged once again the Russian Federation to meet all the obligations following from its ratification of ILO Conventions, including the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), in particular in relation to the repatriation of seafarers and access to medical care; the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), in relation to the exposure of workers to ionizing radiations in the course of their work; and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and its accompanying Protocol of 2014, ~~and to ensure the full protection provided by these instruments to all workers currently performing work under its control;~~

...

- (g) requested the Director-General to continue to monitor the impact on the world of work of the ~~Russian Federation's aggression against~~situation in Ukraine and to report to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) on developments in the light of the resolution, including the ILO's continued engagement with the relevant United Nations bodies involved in monitoring human rights violations and the situation of maritime and nuclear workers.

- 681. The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the update on ILO efforts to support tripartite constituents in Ukraine and to support countries in the subregion through the Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Moscow (DWT/CO-Moscow), in keeping with the resolution adopted by the Governing Body in March 2022. She affirmed her group's commitment to supporting the businesses and workers of Ukraine, noting the severe impact in Ukraine and the subregion of the ongoing conflict on employment, investment and business continuity. Sustainable social and economic progress was intrinsically linked to peace and her group therefore urged the international community to work towards peace in all regions affected by conflicts.
- 682.** She welcomed the ILO's continued support to help national employers' organizations enhance their membership services and noted the success of two development cooperation projects which had generated hundreds of new job opportunities – including for internally displaced persons. She welcomed the continued operation of the ILO Country Office for Ukraine (CO-Kyiv) in Kyiv, despite difficult conditions, and its efforts to monitor the security situation. Her group looked to the speedy signing of the host country agreement to further enhance the Office's ability to deliver assistance to constituents.
- 683.** Her group noted that DWT/CO-Moscow continued to provide technical cooperation and assistance to all countries in the subregion, except the Russian Federation and Belarus. She expressed appreciation for the increasing portfolio of activities, reflected in the diversification of donor funds, and the ILO's intention to continue its efforts in support of constituents in Ukraine and the subregion and to expand partnerships for development cooperation. The Employers' group supported the original draft decision.
- 684. The Worker spokesperson,** welcoming the report, reiterated her group's urgent call for peace and a withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory. The apparent absence of further diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict was a cause of concern and she called on all political leaders for the urgent reinvigoration of efforts. Her colleagues in the field were extremely concerned by the Russian aggression and attacks on Ukraine's infrastructure, particularly in the light of the coming winter. Attacks on hospitals and healthcare workers received insufficient attention; the 8 July missile attack on the National Specialized Children's Hospital in Kyiv should be strongly condemned.
- 685.** War did not justify rights' violations; information from trade unions about forced labour in Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories was extremely concerning and she echoed trade union demands for immediate action to locate and return the detained workers of the Zaporizhzhia

Nuclear Power Plant. Employees of educational institutions in occupied territory who refused to collude with the Russian education system were reportedly imprisoned, threatened, tortured and, in some cases, killed. The Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science reported that more than 3,500 institutions had been damaged in shelling with 365 completely destroyed; schools near the front lines were not safe for either children or teachers. Trade unions had documented the targeting of trade union buildings in Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Mykolaiv. Trade unions in Ukraine faced unprecedented challenges and would need significant support from the ILO and other international organizations to re-establish their functions after the war. Further causes of concern included the forced dissolution and replacement of Ukrainian trade unions and the expropriation of trade union properties in the territories occupied by the Russian Federation.

- 686. The war also affected Russian workers, due to the extension of military action to Kursk province and a clampdown in the Russian Federation on basic rights and freedoms. The IndustriAll Global Union and the International Transport Workers' Federation had been declared undesirable organizations by the Russian authorities, while migrant workers were forced to work on the front lines and in some cases to sign military contracts or face deportation.
- 687. She welcomed the Office's support for tripartite dialogue on the development of a road map on social dialogue in Ukraine, efforts by the State Employment Service to develop and implement active labour market policies and the work of the labour inspectorates. Her group reiterated its solidarity in a context where labour rights were at risk from martial law, noted the efforts of employers' organizations and recognized the difficulties of doing business. A revival of national social dialogue was needed to develop labour law and bring it into compliance with ILO standards.
- 688. Once a just peace was achieved in Ukraine, reconstruction would require the involvement of workers and their unions, yet the Government had, so far, failed to include them properly. Her group welcomed development cooperation programmes and the support they provided to constituents, and the efforts of the ILO staff, who faced extraordinary challenges in Kyiv. The efforts of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest (DWT/CO-Budapest) were also welcome and she noted the work of DWT/CO-Moscow, the diversification of donors and the ILO's direct engagement with constituencies in Central Asia. More action was needed in the region concerning the implementation of article 33 of the ILO Constitution in relation to Belarus. Her group agreed with the areas for further action set out in the document and endorsed the original draft decision. Her group rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.
- 689. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that the report once more contained unjust accusations against his country. The use of phrases such as "the Russian Federation's aggression", fell outside the mandate of the ILO and led to unnecessary politicization that was counterproductive to promoting the interests of workers. The Organization should not violate its principles and values, as enshrined in its Constitution, of social and labour rights for the citizens of all countries without exception. Yet another anti-Russian decision would have a negative impact on the living standards and well-being of peaceful Russian citizens and workers. The foreign policy activities of the Russian Federation had not caused the economic crisis in Ukraine and other countries in Europe and the subregion of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Labour migration between the Russian Federation and Central Asian countries had a positive impact on the employment indicators referred to in paragraph 7 of the report, and the accusations in paragraph 10 concerning forced membership of Russian trade unions were not credible. Infrastructure and the safety of workers was under threat in some regions of his country, including Kursk and Bryansk provinces, where

enterprises had been attacked by the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The report made no reference to those events, and no reference to amendments to Ukrainian labour law that allowed the de facto use of forced labour. In that regard, he drew attention to the principles of Convention No. 29 and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105).

- 690.** The draft decision and the report were biased; the report was mostly based on Ukrainian sources and information from Western non-governmental organizations. Despite the insinuations in subparagraph (d) of the draft decision, his Government complied in full with its obligations under the Conventions it had ratified and no official query had been received on the observance of international agreements. His Government disagreed with the contents of the report and the original wording of the draft decision. He had submitted a number of amendments to the draft decision that rendered it more balanced and removed the most objectionable passages. Should the Governing Body prove unwilling to accept those amendments, he would be obliged to request a vote on the draft decision.
- 691. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries,**⁸ a Government representative of Poland thanked the Office for the report and reiterated his resolute condemnation of the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine, which constituted a manifest violation of international law and was incompatible with the values and principles of the ILO. He reaffirmed his group's unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and its inherent right of self-defence against the illegal Russian war of aggression. His group deplored the toll of the war on lives, livelihoods, enterprises and civilian infrastructure. His group and its international partners financially supported the ILO's work in Ukraine and welcomed the implementation of the ILO Transitional Cooperation Strategy for Ukraine 2024–25, and the ILO's cooperation with UN agencies and international partners to assist other affected countries in the region.
- 692.** He commended the activities of social partners in Ukraine and expressed serious concern at reports of violations of fundamental workers' rights in Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, including – according to the ILO brief published in May 2023 – at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. His group requested the Office to prepare briefs on other sectors and areas. Strengthened cooperation between the ILO and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights would shed more light on the violations.
- 693.** Given the Russian Federation's ongoing violation of the ILO Constitution and its commitments as an ILO Member State, his group continued to question the appropriateness and feasibility of maintaining the DWT/CO–Moscow. His group reiterated its request for a broad cost-benefit analysis of the ILO's continued presence in Moscow, including with regard to that office's diminished occupancy rate. His group supported the original draft decision and rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.
- 694. Speaking on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries,**⁹ a Government representative of Lithuania thanked the Office for the report and expressed regret that the Russian Federation

⁸ EU Members Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Albania, Georgia, Iceland, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Switzerland and Ukraine.

⁹ Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, United Kingdom and United States.

had not heeded calls by the international community and the ILO to cease its war of aggression against Ukraine. He reaffirmed his group's unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders and its inherent right to self-defence. Ukraine's workers, employers and their families continued to suffer, with millions displaced as refugees and repeated attacks against citizens and civilian infrastructure. He called on the Office to continue reporting on abuses of labour rights in the Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation, including in cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

- 695. He requested an Office update on the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which was profoundly concerning. Despite the difficulties caused by the war of aggression, the Ukrainian people continued to work, organize, and plan for reconstruction. His group commended ILO staff for their steadfast support of the tripartite constituents of Ukraine, in particular through the Transitional Cooperation Strategy, and appreciated the ILO's efforts to safeguard technical assistance in the region. Given that the international staff of the DWT/CO-Moscow mostly worked from outside the Russian Federation, locally engaged staff worked exclusively on projects outside the country, and the number of subregional countries in receipt of ILO technical assistance from that office had decreased, it was doubtful that its maintenance constituted responsible use of the ILO's core budget, particularly given budgetary constraints and the drive for cost-saving measures.
- 696. His group reaffirmed the call of the Governing Body for the Russian Federation to immediately and unconditionally cease its war of aggression against Ukraine and implement without delay the resolution adopted by the Governing Body in March 2022. His group rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation and supported the original draft decision.
- 697. **A Government representative of France** noted that the discussion pertained to a major violation of the UN Charter and reiterated his Government's resolute condemnation of the pursuit by the Russian Federation of its war of aggression against Ukraine and unwavering support for Ukraine and its people. The Russian Federation must immediately cease the attacks and withdraw fully and unconditionally from all occupied Ukrainian territory in order to restore peace and an international order founded on the rule of law.
- 698. Given the impact of the war on the labour market, businesses and the essential services sector, he welcomed the commitment of the ILO and its staff who had returned to CO-Kyiv. That office's capacity should be further strengthened as its staff members worked to implement the Transitional Cooperation Strategy. The situation in the territories occupied and illegally annexed by the Russian Federation was a cause for serious concern due to the unacceptability of annexation and the impact on employment. Recalling that the Organization was founded on the concept of social justice as essential to peace, his Government supported the original draft decision and rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.
- 699. **A Government representative of China** expressed concern that the crisis in Ukraine had led to a deterioration in the humanitarian situation and had seriously hindered economic and social development. She encouraged the ILO to enhance efforts to address the crisis and support conflict-affected countries through development cooperation and other social and economic development projects. The draft decision contained in the report was the same as that considered at previous sessions; some of its elements, such as sovereignty and armed conflict, fell outside the ILO's mandate and much of the analysis in the report displayed clear political bias. Discussion on the agenda item should focus on the labour sector and the ILO should focus on its primary role as the specialized agency of the UN for labour affairs. The Governing Body must remain alert to the politicization and instrumentalization of the ILO,

which could damage the Organization's reputation. Her Government did not support the original draft decision.

- 700. A Government representative of Ukraine**, authorized to speak in accordance with article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, said that the Russian Federation's armed aggression against her country had caused devastation across the country, including in the Ukrainian territories under Russian occupation. She expressed appreciation for the report and the continued attention of the Director-General to the issue. Since March 2024, attacks on the power generation and supply infrastructure had intensified and the people of Ukraine were preparing for a harsh winter. Missiles and drones rained down on Ukrainian cities as citizens went to work and sent their children to school. The destruction of infrastructure had severely disrupted supply chains and the destruction of schools and health facilities indicated the indiscriminate nature of attacks, which were not only war crimes but crimes against humanity.
- 701.** The violation of workers' rights in the temporarily occupied territories remained a cause of grave concern as workers faced coercion that constituted a violation of international labour standards and fundamental human rights, and trade union properties were seized by the occupation authorities. She encouraged the Office to further strengthen its cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine to identify violations and work towards holding the perpetrators accountable.
- 702.** She commended the unwavering support of CO-Kyiv and its staff, and their commitment to addressing the urgent needs of Ukrainian constituents and assisting with labour law reform. The ILO's participation in the alliances launched at the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024 was appreciated and her Government looked forward to the ILO's participation in the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2025. The recent visit by the Director-General was particularly welcome. She drew attention to the situation of the DWT/CO-Moscow and she called on the Office to conduct a detailed cost-benefit analysis of its viability and the value of using it as an intermediary for operations in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Any State that waged a war of aggression and violated international rules had no right to host an ILO office.
- 703.** The Russian Federation had not complied with any of the seven Governing Body decisions on its aggression in Ukraine – a pattern of non-compliance that warranted further examination by the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference. Decisive measures were needed in response to the ongoing disregard for the UN Charter and the ILO Constitution, and international pressure must be maintained in the interests of peace.
- 704. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia) thanked members for their words of appreciation for the work performed by ILO colleagues, which was conducted in difficult circumstances. She also thanked development cooperation partners for their generous contributions to the implementation of the ILO Transitional Cooperation Strategy.
- 705.** In preparing the document, the Office had collected and corroborated information from constituents, UN agencies and international financial institutions. It had strengthened its collaboration with the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission and some of the cases mentioned by the Workers' group had been reported to that mechanism.
- 706.** Responding to a request by the Government representative of Poland on behalf of a group of countries for a broader cost-benefit analysis of DWT/CO-Moscow, she confirmed that the Office could conduct such an analysis if requested to do so by the Governing Body.

- 707. The Chairperson** observed that the majority of members seemed to be in favour of the draft decision as drafted by the Office.
- 708. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that, in view of the limited support for the amendment proposed by his Government, he felt compelled to call for a vote on the amendment.
- 709. The Chairperson** said that he had taken note of the position of the Government representative of the Russian Federation, which would be duly reflected in the minutes.
- 710. The Government representative of China** expressed her Government's support for the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation and seconded the motion to put the draft decision to a vote.
- 711. The Chairperson**, having consulted with the other Officers of the Governing Body, said that the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation could be put to a vote by a show of hands.

(The amendment proposed by the Russian Federation was rejected with 3 votes in favour, 41 votes against and 7 abstentions.)

Decision

- 712. In the light of the developments in Ukraine outlined in document GB.352/INS/16 and the resolution concerning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted at its 344th Session (March 2022), and taking into account the discussions held and the guidance provided during its 352nd Session, the Governing Body:**
- (a) noted the information provided in the document;
 - (b) reiterated its most profound concern at the continuing aggression by the Russian Federation, aided by the Belarusian Government, against Ukraine, and at the impact that this aggression is having on the tripartite constituents – workers, employers and the democratically elected Government – in Ukraine, and on the world of work beyond Ukraine;
 - (c) urged the Russian Federation again to immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine;
 - (d) urged once again the Russian Federation to meet all the obligations following from its ratification of ILO Conventions, including the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), in particular in relation to the repatriation of seafarers and access to medical care; the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), in relation to the exposure of workers to ionizing radiations in the course of their work; and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and its accompanying Protocol of 2014, and to ensure the full protection provided by these instruments to all workers currently performing work under its control;
 - (e) reiterated its unwavering support for the tripartite constituents in Ukraine, and requested the Director-General to continue to respond to the constituents' needs in Ukraine and to expand the ILO's resource mobilization efforts, including in forthcoming international donor conferences on recovery and reconstruction;
 - (f) requested the Director-General to continue to enhance resource mobilization efforts for other affected countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia;

- (g) requested the Director-General to continue to monitor the impact on the world of work of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and to report to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) on developments in the light of the resolution, including the ILO's continued engagement with the relevant United Nations bodies involved in monitoring human rights violations and the situation of maritime and nuclear workers.

(GB.352/INS/16, paragraph 40)

17. 408th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association (GB.352/INS/17)

- 713. The Chairperson of the Committee on Freedom of Association** recalled that, at its October 2024 session, the Committee had welcomed new members, who he was confident would serve it with pride and commitment. He thanked the Government member from France for having skilfully chaired the session, which he had been able to attend only virtually. The Committee had examined 20 cases on their merits, of which 3 had been closed. He appreciated the efforts made by governments to provide their observations in a timely manner, which had enabled the Committee to carry out its work in full knowledge of the circumstances, and appealed to all governments with cases pending before the Committee to ensure that any communications were submitted before 10 January 2025, noting that information received after the deadline might not be taken into account. He drew the attention of the Governments of Belarus, Haiti, Hong Kong (China) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the requests and urgent appeals issued by the Committee.
- 714.** The Committee had examined seven cases in which governments had kept it informed of the measures taken to give effect to its recommendations, and had concluded its examination with respect to four of them.
- 715.** He drew attention to three serious and urgent cases. In the first (No. 3263), the Committee had urged the Government of Bangladesh to provide information on the outcome of independent investigations into allegations of the excessive use of force against protesters and the ill-treatment of arrested and detained trade unionists, and had requested the release of, and the dropping of charges against, workers who had engaged in trade union activities. It had expressed the firm hope that the conclusions and recommendations it had made in that case would assist the current and future Governments in taking steps towards the development of a constructive and harmonious industrial relations climate where freedom of association could be exercised free from violence, intimidation and fear.
- 716.** The second case (No. 3395) concerned the murder of a trade union official in El Salvador. The Committee had trusted that the criminal proceedings under way would identify and punish both the instigators and the perpetrators of the crime and had urged the Government to ensure that all competent State authorities took the necessary actions to provide the members of the union in question with adequate protection.
- 717.** The Committee had found it regrettable to have had to examine the grave allegations in the third case (No. 3451) in the absence of a reply from the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. It had strongly urged the Government to ensure that the persons detained, on trial or convicted as a result of their trade union activities were released and that the charges against them were dropped. Moreover, it had recalled that all appropriate measures should be taken to guarantee that trade union rights could be exercised in a climate free of violence, pressure, fear and threats of any kind. It had urged the Government to ensure that the

allegations be addressed at the earliest possible moment in the framework of the meetings provided for under the plan of action adopted at the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum.

- 718.** He expressed appreciation to the members of the Committee for their unwavering efforts to find solutions and to the Office for all its work. He was grateful to have had his term as Chairperson extended and would continue to strive to fulfil the Committee's mandate.
- 719. The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** recalled that the rights of workers' and employers' organizations could be exercised only in a climate that was free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against the leaders and members of those organizations, and that it was for governments to ensure respect for that principle.
- 720.** In addition to the three serious and urgent cases, the Committee had considered a significant number of complaints concerning workers suffering violations that the authorities had either perpetrated or failed to take steps to end. Case No. 3424 (Cambodia) concerned fresh allegations of threats against union members by an enterprise in the hotel sector, prompting the Committee to reiterate its calls for the Government to protect freedom of association. In Case No. 3425 (Eswatini), the parties had agreed to a voluntary conciliation process, which had resolved some matters and had resulted in the development of a time-bound road map to address outstanding issues. While the Committee had been encouraged by the commitment of the parties in that regard, it had urged the Government to deal promptly with all its recommendations and to report tangible progress as soon as possible. With regard to Case No. 3403 (Guinea), which had been examined by the Committee at its October 2023 session, she said that the Committee had received further allegations, including in relation to the harassment of workers who had expressed support for the trade union in question and the encouragement of temporary staff to join a subcontracting company, excluding them from union participation. The Committee had noted that the lack of protection of freedom of association appeared to extend to several hotels and included hostility to holding trade union elections, marked by delaying tactics, reprisals and even other acts of intimidation. Case No. 3210 (Algeria) concerned dismissals as one element of anti-union harassment by an energy enterprise. The authorities had failed to put an end to the harassment and had ordered the dissolution of the union, placed intense police pressure on its leaders, prosecuted them for extremism and terrorism, and subjected them to ill-treatment in detention. Even though the dismissals had been found to be unlawful, reinstatements had not been ordered or enforced. While the Committee had made detailed recommendations to ensure an environment in which trade union rights were respected and guaranteed, it had also taken note of a new law that should ensure the reinstatement of workers dismissed for trade union activities.
- 721.** The Committee had also considered a number of cases concerning the right to collective bargaining. In Case No. 3436 (Republic of Korea), it had requested the Government to initiate consultations to address concerns on the instability of employment in the construction industry and prevent recruitment conflicts on construction sites. It had indicated that it expected the establishment of guidelines for negotiation, which would create a clear framework for the exercise of the right to freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. The Committee's conclusions in Case No. 3421 (Colombia) raised two important points. First, union representatives should be able to participate in union meetings in person. Remote communication was not an appropriate substitute. Second, the Government must ensure that accords reached through direct negotiation, without union representation, did not undermine trade unions and were possible only in the absence of a union. Furthermore, it was not acceptable for the employment terms of union members to be

simply matched with those agreed with other workers, as doing so jeopardized the *raison d'être* of the collective bargaining process and, ultimately, trade union membership.

- 722.** The Committee had been compelled to consider several complaints in the absence of a government reply. She recalled that the Committee's work relied on receiving timely responses and urged governments to duly provide their observations. She thanked the Office for its support.
- 723. The Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** said that achieving consensus outcomes on 20 cases boded well for the work of the Committee with its current membership. The failure of governments to provide information undermined the objective of the Committee's complaint procedure, which was not to cast blame or call for punishment but to engage in constructive tripartite dialogue to promote freedom of association. Cases Nos 3263 (Bangladesh), 3413 (Plurinational State of Bolivia) and 3395 (El Salvador) had all involved repeated requests for information that had gone unanswered. Three other cases, namely Cases Nos 3403 (Guinea), 3448 (Guinea-Bissau) and 3451 (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), had been examined without a government response. Governments should indicate when they were truly unable to provide information, should explain why and should consult with national employers' and workers' associations as appropriate. In Case No. 3263 (Bangladesh), the Committee had noted the change in government and encouraged the new Government to respond expeditiously to pending requests.
- 724.** The Committee's mandate was to address concerns about the actions or inaction of governments, not private enterprises, which were neither parties to nor a subject of the Committee's work. The Committee was not, and could not be, a substitute for local judicial and administrative procedures, and neither could it call for intervention in respect of a private enterprise without regard to those procedures, as illustrated by Cases Nos 3424 (Cambodia) and 3402 (Peru). That point was also relevant to Cases Nos 3056 and 3267 concerning Peru, which had been closed.
- 725.** The Committee's role was to decide the matters before it based on the allegations presented, not to surmise about other potential issues. In Case No. 3449 (Mexico), the union involved had negotiated a coordination agreement with the Government. While the Committee had kept the case in follow-up to enable it to stay informed of certain developments, the resolution of matters through agreements obviated the need for the Committee to continue to consider them actively.
- 726. Speaking on behalf of the Government group of the Committee,** a Government representative of France noted that the Committee's work had been characterized by a shared commitment to promoting the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining and to providing guidance to the constituents in that regard. The discussions had been very constructive. She drew the Governing Body's attention to the three cases identified as serious and urgent. She appreciated the willingness shown by a number of governments to meet with representatives of the Committee and the Office and the initiatives taken by the Chairperson of the Committee to promote tripartite dialogue. Indeed, the Committee's complaint procedure sought to engage in constructive tripartite dialogue to promote respect for workers' and employers' rights in law and practice while remaining aware of the diversity of national realities and legal systems. The replies of governments to allegations were therefore key to its work. During its session, the Committee had been obliged to examine four cases without any response from the government concerned, despite the issuance of urgent appeals. Urgent appeals had been issued for a further three cases for which no observations had been received. She called on the governments concerned to recognize the importance of providing detailed

responses to allegations in a timely fashion, in order to ensure the speedy examination of cases.

- 727. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that the discussions held between his group and the Chairperson of the Committee had helped to increase his group's understanding of the work of the Committee and had provided an opportunity for the group to share its concerns. He noted with satisfaction that four follow-up cases concerning countries in his region had been closed and welcomed the explanation of the categories of closed cases provided in paragraph 3 of the report. The right to freedom of association was broadly recognized in his region and the vast majority of governments strove to promote that right, to provide observations to the Committee within the requested time frame and to cooperate with the ILO's supervisory bodies. He called on the ILO to provide technical assistance to the constituents that requested it. He noted with concern that a high number of cases concerned countries in his region. More than 80 per cent of the cases mentioned in paragraph 10 of the report, in relation to which the Committee had received the Governments' observations, concerned countries in his region. Governments in his region continued to seek and assess solutions to address the high number of complaints, including through a joint effort with the ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean to assess initiatives to strengthen social dialogue in the region. He encouraged the Committee to continue its efforts to improve the process of determining the receivability of cases.

(The Chairperson opened the discussion on individual cases.)

- 728. A Government representative of Mexico**, referring to Case No. 3449, welcomed the analysis of the case and the recommendations made. His Government had provided all relevant information to explain the decision to terminate the Mexican state news agency, Notimex, which had been closed because it was no longer needed for the functioning of the State – as concluded by the executive and legislative branches of power – and not due to any labour conflict. The procedure for termination was set out in the national legal framework, which ensured full respect for the labour and human rights of the workers of the Unitary Union of Notimex Workers. His Government was firmly committed to social dialogue and, following consultations, had resolved the conflict by signing an agreement on compensation. All those working for Notimex had had their individual contracts terminated and had agreed to terminate their collective labour relationship. His Government had acted in accordance with Conventions Nos 87, 98, the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), and the national regulatory framework, and had upheld the rights of workers and freedom of association. His Government would continue to strengthen and apply national regulations in that area, based on the criteria and recommendations of the Committee and the authorities responsible for safeguarding those rights.

Decision

- 729. The Governing Body took note of the introduction to the Report of the Committee, contained in paragraphs 1–85, and approved the recommendations made in paragraphs: 122 (Case No. 3210: Algeria); 147 (Case No. 3308: Argentina); 171 (Case No. 3311: Argentina); 209 (Case No. 3263: Bangladesh); 223 (Case No. 3413: Plurinational State of Bolivia); 246 (Case No. 3424: Cambodia); 265 (Case No. 3280: Colombia); 313 (Case No. 3421: Colombia); 332 (Case No. 3380: El Salvador); 342 (Case No. 3395: El Salvador); 413 (Case No. 3425: Eswatini); 432 (Case No. 3062: Guatemala); 453 (Case No. 3403: Guinea); 478 (Case No. 3448: Guinea-Bissau); 520 (Case No. 3449: Mexico); 568 (Case No. 3402: Peru); 599 (Case No. 3438: Peru); 662 (Case No. 3436: Republic of Korea); 671 (Case No. 3067:**

Democratic Republic of the Congo); 703 (Case No. 3451: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and adopted the 408th Report of its Committee on Freedom of Association as a whole.

(GB.352/INS/17)

18. Report of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO (GB.352/INS/18)

- 730. The Worker spokesperson**, recalling that the 88th Session of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO (the Turin Centre) had taken place during celebrations of the Centre's 60th anniversary, said that the founding principles of the Turin Centre – freedom of association, equality, fair wages and social justice – remained vital, guiding workers in the ongoing fight for dignity and rights in the workplace. The Implementation Report for 2022–23 highlighted the Centre's achievements in finance, outreach and impact. Nevertheless, the high proportion of non-constituent participants benefiting from its services over the course of the previous biennium raised concerns about the Centre's focus and the potential for non-constituent participants to inflate its performance and provide feedback that influenced decision-making in a manner that did not align with constituents' priorities and needs.
- 731.** With respect to online learning services, there was a need for continued support for workers from low-income countries. The fact that women comprised just 39 per cent of online participants raised concerns about the underlying causes of that gender gap. Her group was also concerned at the increased focus being given to commercial services. While it was pleasing to note the Turin Centre's impressive financial performance, its priority should be to advance social justice through education and innovation, rather than adopting a profit-driven business model. Budget surpluses should be reinvested to enhance the participation of core constituents, particularly workers, in the Centre's activities.
- 732.** She expressed disappointment that the Office had not ensured the completion, before the session of the Board, of a draft circular prepared in cooperation with ACTRAV, ACT/EMP and the International Labour Standards, Rights at Work and Gender Equality team regarding the use of the Fellowship Fund. She understood, however, that such a circular would soon be finalized, and she anticipated that it would constitute an agreement containing provisions that guaranteed accountability, transparency and prioritization in allocations to the constituents most in need of assistance from the Fund, namely workers. She looked forward to a favourable report in that regard at the next Board meeting.
- 733.** She noted with satisfaction the extremely positive external evaluation of training courses under the Workers' Activities Programme and was also pleased to note the reported efficiency and effectiveness of ACTRAV-Turin, the flexibility of team members and their ability to develop new skills, particularly given the increasing importance of online learning. The report pointed out that participants still preferred blended and face-to-face training, and, notwithstanding the practical advantages of online training, it must be borne in mind that the digital divide remained a reality for 2.6 billion people globally. She welcomed the planned efforts to facilitate access for workers' and employers' representatives to courses organized by units other than the Workers' and Employers' Activities Programmes, while respecting the social partners' autonomy, and she commended the positive steps taken under the leadership of the Centre's new Deputy Director to improve cooperation with the Staff Union.
- 734. The Employer spokesperson** highlighted the important role that the Turin Centre had played in fostering social dialogue, advancing skills and promoting decent work globally for more than 60 years and noted the commitment to unity and progress that lay at the heart of its mission.

The Turin Centre's strong financial performance underscored its operational resilience and effective management and would help the Centre to expand its reach, adapt to emerging needs and invest in innovative training solutions. Its ability to adapt and to extend its resources to an ever-growing audience was already reflected in the high level of participation in its offerings.

735. To ensure that the Centre continued to serve its core mission effectively, the Employers' group was of the view that it should prioritize steps to increase ILO constituents' participation in training at the Centre. In order for the Turin Centre to gain a more accurate reflection of its reach and impact, it was important to ensure clear reporting that distinguished between direct beneficiaries of its training programmes and those involved through external partnerships. The Turin Centre should also prioritize greater support and resources, including staffing, to help ACT/EMP address effectively the evolving needs of employers and employers' organizations. Strengthening ACT/EMP would empower employers to engage more fully in ILO discussions, contribute meaningfully to social dialogue and actively advance decent work goals.
736. The Employers' group welcomed the Turin Centre's commitment to leveraging technology and artificial intelligence to expand its training offerings. Enhancing distance learning programmes would help reach more participants globally, particularly in regions where in-person attendance may be challenging. Her group also encouraged continued efforts to increase gender inclusivity in the Centre's programmes, particularly in online courses, where women's participation rates remained below the target. Many lessons could be learned from evaluating the courses offered at the Centre, which must identify barriers to completion and ascertain whether the lack of interpretation affected course take-up. Consideration could also be given to decentralizing the Turin Centre and hosting training courses at the national level, in cooperation with social partners, in order to reduce costs.
737. While the Turin Centre's budget surplus was commendable, there remained a critical need to diversify funding sources to reduce over-reliance on limited contributions from key donors. The Employers' group strongly supported the Centre's efforts in relation to the EU Pillar Assessment, which could help secure its future financial resilience. She would welcome clearer details on the progress made in relation to that initiative at the next session of the Board; such diversification was essential to ensuring that the Turin Centre remained adaptable and well-prepared to respond to future challenges.
738. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of France reaffirmed her group's commitment to working constructively to help guide the management and operation of the Turin Centre so that it could continue to contribute to the ILO's mandate. She commended the Centre's efforts to achieve a financially sustainable business model, congratulated it on once again receiving an unmodified audit opinion and welcomed the significant increase in the Fellowship Fund in 2023 which she believed would support significant growth in face-to-face and online training activity.
739. Her group would like to see the continued expansion of the scope of the Turin Centre's training activity, with a particular focus on developing countries and an increase in online courses. The Centre was uniquely positioned to support the development of knowledge and skills across the global workforce. Longer-term qualitative impact assessments of the training provided by the Centre were required, along with the reinstatement of tripartite peer review mechanisms and the exploration of innovative means of fostering interdisciplinary cooperation.
740. The Government group recognized the critical role played by the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight in maintaining strong internal financial controls and conducting effective audits. The

report of a case of sexual harassment at the Centre was deeply concerning, however. Dealing with such incidents in a transparent and accountable manner was essential to maintaining a safe and respectful working environment. She stressed the critical need for transparent and accessible reporting channels and thorough training for staff on reporting and prevention mechanisms. She commended the Centre's management for recognizing and committing to addressing that gap and called on the ILO to strengthen its support to the Turin Centre to ensure that staff had access to the ILO Ethics Officer and that the Centre implemented best practices in addressing issues of misconduct, including making entries in the UN ClearCheck database where appropriate.

- 741.** Her group welcomed the role that the Turin Centre would play in the implementation of the ILO Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27; its full inclusion in the ILO's operational planning would allow both entities to fulfil their mandate and encourage transparency in their relationship. The Centre's adaptations to future training provision had strengthened its mission to serve the ILO's tripartite constituents. She reaffirmed her group's commitment to cooperating actively, promoting training innovations that responded to the changing needs of the global workforce and ensuring that the Turin Centre continued to be a driving force of social justice, decent work and equality.
- 742. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa commended the commitment of the Board of the Turin Centre to strengthening training initiatives to empower all constituents, as well as the Centre's impressive recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, including its expansion into online training. He praised its focus on gender parity and expressed support for its efforts to enhance equitable inclusion, including of women and persons from low-income and under-represented countries, across all training initiatives. He recognized the impact of the work of the Centre, particularly among workers, and he welcomed its focus on long-term impact assessment, which helped to translate skills training into real-world benefits. Blended learning approaches held immense potential to bridge the digital divide. The Turin Centre's alignment with the ILO's strategic objectives for 2024–25, and its dedication to embracing emerging technologies and forging partnerships to expand its reach, were welcome. His group would continue to support the Turin Centre's self-sustaining business model, recognizing the part that all constituents had to play in that regard.
- 743. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Paraguay congratulated the Turin Centre on its 60th anniversary and emphasized its key role in promoting learning, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building. She welcomed the election of the Vice-Chairpersons of the Board for the period 2024–27 and the Brazilian Government's commitment to representing GRULAC on the Board. She recognized the increase in online and in-person training activities during the 2022–23 biennium, which demonstrated the Turin Centre's successful recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Centre should constantly seek to improve its qualitative impact assessments to identify successes and shortcomings with greater precision. She expressed concern that, between January and August 2024, the proportion of women participating in training activities fell below the established target and emphasized the need to take immediate and effective action to promote the equal participation of men and women in all training activities offered by the Turin Centre. She urged the Centre to continue to expand its offer, which would require an increase in the support offered to representatives of the constituents, particularly representatives from developing countries, for example through bigger grants and reduced fees. She expressed appreciation for all those who had supported the work of the Centre over the previous six decades.
- 744. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of the Philippines commended the Turin Centre for its invaluable contribution to the ILO's mandate. ASPAG would continue to

support the Centre's mission to empower the social partners to address the challenges of the evolving world of work. She congratulated the Centre on its 60th anniversary, which was a testament to its resilience and adaptability, as exemplified by its introduction of the digital and blended learning options that had significantly broadened its reach. The Centre should further diversify its training modalities, including by expanding affordable and accessible online courses. Training courses should be designed to support regional priorities. She encouraged the Centre to integrate emerging technologies and artificial intelligence into its curriculum, alongside training on modern labour market governance. There was a need for enhanced labour market intelligence and a just transition to address the impacts of climate change. She encouraged the Turin Centre to establish financial assistance programmes for participants from developing countries with budgetary constraints. Moreover, the Centre should strengthen its partnerships with national and regional institutions to develop tailored training programmes. She recognized the role that the Turin Centre would play in the implementation of the ILO Programme and Budget for 2026–27 and its integration into the ILO's operational planning, which would ensure that common goals were attained.

745. A Government representative of Italy welcomed the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Turin Centre and its commitment to promoting social justice and decent work. She noted the positive financial results for the 2022–23 biennium, which demonstrated its effective operational model and the dedication of its staff and management. She encouraged the Turin Centre to continue to develop more and innovative training activities.

746. A representative of the Director-General (Director, International Training Centre of the ILO) expressed appreciation for constituents' support of the Turin Centre. The Board would continue to consider the proposals made, including with regard to the Centre's programme and budget and its strategic plan. He recalled that a special session of the Board had been held to celebrate the Centre's 60th anniversary, chaired by the Director-General and with the participation of the Italian Government and local and regional Italian partners. At that meeting, speakers had recognized the Centre's purpose to serve the ILO's tripartite constituents and promote social justice and, importantly, its role as an instrument of dialogue and multilateral exchange. He thanked the staff of the Centre, both past and present, for their commitment and professionalism. He stressed that there was a general sense of optimism about the Centre's future role and mission in a world of profound transformation that would require ever-increasing training and capacity-development efforts.

(The Governing Body took note of the report of the 88th Session of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO.)

19. Report of the Director-General: Regular report (GB.352/INS/19(Rev.1))

747. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, a Government representative of the Niger paid tribute to Mr Membathisi Mphumzi Shepherd Mdladlana, a former Government member of the Governing Body and Minister of Labour of South Africa who had passed away in October 2024. Mr Mdladlana had dedicated his life to promoting labour rights and social justice and to eradicating inequality in his country and beyond. His tireless efforts had helped to transform the South African labour market, previously divided by the legacy of apartheid, into one grounded in equality and fairness. Under his leadership, many ILO Conventions had been ratified by South Africa, including all eight core Conventions, and his work had laid the foundations for its Decent Work Country Programme. He had been steadfastly committed to social dialogue, exemplified by his role as Chairperson of the Governing Body from 2006 to 2007, during which time he had embraced the ILO's Decent Work Agenda as a global

imperative. The Africa group extended its deepest condolences to Mr Mdladlana's family, friends and colleagues.

- 748. A Government representative of South Africa** said that Mr Mdladlana had played a pivotal role in advancing the South African trade union movement, which had helped to dismantle apartheid and shape the country's democratic labour relations system. As a teacher, he had embodied the transformative power of education, and his work with teachers' unions had advanced organized labour for educators at the national and global levels. As Minister of Labour, appointed by President Nelson Mandela in 1998, he had crafted and enforced progressive labour laws protecting millions. He had been a leading figure in building regional labour solidarity across Southern Africa and had championed workers' rights, social justice and sustainable development on the global stage as Ambassador to Burundi and High Commissioner to Canada. She also expressed sorrow at the recent passing of Mr Tito Mboweni, the first Minister of Labour of South Africa following apartheid, who had shared Mr Mdladlana's vision of inclusive economic progress and equal opportunity.
- 749. Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico paid tribute to Mr Mdladlana, a defender of social justice and equality who had served as a distinguished representative of South Africa to the ILO for more than a decade. His group had also been deeply saddened to learn of the recent passing of Mr Francisco Díaz Garaycoa, an Ecuadorian lawyer who had served as an Employer member of the ILO for nearly 30 years. During that time, Mr Díaz Garaycoa had advocated for employers' interests with clarity and authority, playing a key role in discussions on Convention No. 169. He expressed condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the deceased, whose legacy would be remembered with respect and gratitude by the international community.
- 750.** The Government group stood in solidarity with the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva in the light of the passing of Ms Ana Cecilia Gervasi Díaz, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru and the first woman Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of that country. During her short time in Geneva, she had served actively in her roles as the Second Vice-Chairperson of the Council Bureau of the International Organization for Migration, the Vice-Chairperson of the Geneva Chapter of the G77 and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The Government group offered its condolences to her family, friends and colleagues.
- 751. A Worker member from South Africa** conveyed her group's deepest sympathies to the family, friends and loved ones of Mr Mdladlana, who had been the founding president of the South African Democratic Teachers Union and a stalwart of the South African struggle against apartheid. Mr Mdladlana had believed fiercely in workers' rights and the right of all to live in peace and democracy and had been militant in the struggle for a non-racial and non-sexist South Africa during the apartheid era. As Minister for Labour, he had played a key role in strengthening and enforcing labour laws, and he had been passionate about supporting unorganized and vulnerable workers. He had played an active role in the ILO for many years, believing that it had a strategic role to play in addressing the struggle of workers across the world. A trade unionist at heart, he had nevertheless taken to his roles as Minister of Labour and Chairperson of the Governing Body with ease, acting as an ambassador for social dialogue in South Africa and at the ILO.
- 752. The Worker spokesperson** conveyed her group's condolences to the families and friends of Mr Mdladlana, Mr Díaz Garaycoa and Ms Gervasi Díaz.
- 753. An Employer member from South Africa** paid tribute to Mr Mdladlana, whose loss was saddening for the people of South Africa and the wider region. Mr Mdladlana had been active

in trade unionism in the region, particularly in the education sector, and his grounding in the ILO's principles and practices had made him a champion of tripartite social dialogue in Southern Africa and beyond. He had been a likable and impactful leader who had strengthened the relationship between his country and the ILO, and the Employers' group trusted that the people of South Africa and the region's social partners would be comforted by his legacy.

- 754.** He also paid tribute to Mr Díaz Garaycoa, a valued former member of the Employers' group who had provided valuable insights on complex issues at Governing Body meetings between 1978 and 2005 and had served as Employer spokesperson during negotiations on Convention No. 169. His passing had left a void in the business community, and his legacy would be remembered with gratitude and admiration. The Employers' group extended its condolences to his family and all who mourned his loss. Lastly, he expressed his group's solidarity with regard to the passing of Ms Gervasi Díaz and offered condolences to her family and friends.
- 755. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Peru paid tribute to Mr Díaz Garaycoa, who in 1992 had spearheaded some of the most significant labour reforms in his country's history. He had made a significant contribution to defending the interests of employers and free enterprise as an Employer member of the Governing Body, and his invaluable contribution as Employer spokesperson during negotiations on Convention No. 169 had helped to strengthen international movements in favour of indigenous peoples' causes and national and regional organizations advocating on those issues in Latin America. GRULAC extended its condolences to Mr Díaz Garaycoa's loved ones.
- 756. The Chairperson** paid tribute to Ms Gervasi Díaz, who, during a distinguished career, had held several high-level positions in the Peruvian Government and the Peruvian foreign service, including postings in the United States, Canada and Argentina, and had represented her country before several multilateral organizations. On behalf of the Governing Body, he offered condolences to the Government of Peru and the Peruvian Permanent Mission. Ms Gervasi Díaz would be remembered with great affection and respect and would be greatly missed by the international community.
- 757. A Government representative of Peru** thanked the Director-General and the Office for paying tribute to the memory of Ms Gervasi Díaz, and he expressed appreciation for the messages of condolence and solidarity conveyed by colleagues and friends from different permanent missions and international organizations in Geneva. As the first female head of the Peruvian diplomatic service, Ms Gervasi Díaz had sought to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in all areas, particularly in the multilateral sphere. Her service and dedication to Peru would always be remembered by those who had had the privilege of working with her.
- 758. The Worker spokesperson** highlighted the clear impact of making a safe and healthy working environment a fundamental principle and right at work. She noted with satisfaction that several countries had ratified a number of Conventions, including the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) and Convention No. 190, and recognized the Office's efforts to provide technical assistance to that end. It was also notable that Australia had ratified the Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, 1986.

Decision

759. The Governing Body:

- (a) took note of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/19(Rev.1) regarding obituaries, the membership of the Organization, the follow-up to the decision of the Governing Body to request an advisory opinion to the International Court of Justice, progress in international labour legislation and internal administration;
- (b) paid tribute to the memory of Mr Membathisi Mphumzi Shepherd Mdladlana and invited the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Mr Mdladlana and to the Government of South Africa;
- (c) paid tribute to the memory of Mr Francisco Díaz Garaycoa and invited the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Mr Díaz Garaycoa, to the Government of Ecuador and to the International Organisation of Employers (IOE);
- (d) paid tribute to the memory of Ms Ana Cecilia Gervasi Díaz and invited the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Ms Gervasi Díaz and to the Government of Peru.

(GB.352/INS/19(Rev.1), paragraph 24)

19.1. First Supplementary Report: Follow-up to Governing Body decisions (GB.352/INS/19/1)

Decision

- 760. The Governing Body** took note of the action taken by the Office to follow up to the decisions adopted between November 2022 and June 2024 and invited the Director-General to continue taking into account its guidance when preparing the report for the 355th Session (November 2025).

(GB.352/INS/19/1, paragraph 5)

19.2. Second Supplementary Report: The position of Chief Internal Auditor and Director of Internal Audit and Oversight (GB.352/INS/19/2)

- 761. The Worker spokesperson** thanked Mr Anthony Watson for his service to the ILO and commended the selection process undertaken to appoint a new Chief Internal Auditor and Director of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO). The Workers' group supported the draft decision.
- 762. The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the rigorous, transparent selection process and recognized the efforts made to meet the highest standards of professionalism. She thanked Mr Anthony Watson for his contribution to the Organization. The Employers' group supported the draft decision.
- 763. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United States expressed support for the draft decision. However, she requested clarification regarding the departure of Mr Anthony Watson. Article 11.1 of the ILO Staff Regulations stated that "[t]he Director-General shall consult the Governing Body before terminating the appointment of the Chief Internal Auditor", while document GB.352/INS/19/2 referred to the departure as "an agreed termination". She asked when the decision had been taken, the effective date of termination and why the issue had not been discussed at an earlier Governing Body session in 2024. In

addition, it was unclear why article 11.16 of the Staff Regulations had been applied. Given that regular reports had been received on the backlog of investigations at the Office of IAO, the Office should explain whether there had been any reduction in staff resources.

- 764.** Turning to the ex gratia payment to Mr Watson, she stressed that, in the interests of ethical standards and integrity, recognition for performance should be rewarded through the established performance management systems. The Governing Body should be informed of the total amount of compensation granted in the form of both the termination indemnity and the ex gratia payment.
- 765. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Human Resources Development Department) said that Mr Anthony Watson had departed on 31 August 2024 after reaching a mutual agreement with the Office. As his departure had been agreed on both sides, it was not considered a termination and had not therefore been reported to the Governing Body. In accordance with the Financial Rules, all ex gratia payments would be duly reported in the annual financial statements. Lastly, she confirmed that the departure was not associated with any loss of resources in IAO.

Decision

- 766. The Governing Body took note of the Director-General's decision concerning the agreed termination of the appointment of Mr Anthony Watson, and endorsed his proposal concerning the appointment of Ms Sarah Bouaka (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) as Chief Internal Auditor and Director of Internal Audit and Oversight with effect from 15 November 2024.**

(GB.352/INS/19/2, paragraph 6)

19.3. Third Supplementary Report: Documents submitted for information only (GB.352/INS/19/3)

Decision

- 767. The Governing Body took note of the information contained in the following documents:**

- Approved symposia, seminars, workshops and similar meetings (GB.352/INS/INF/1);
- Report on the status of pending representations submitted under article 24 of the ILO Constitution (GB.352/INS/INF/2);
- Agreements concluded with other international organizations (GB.352/LILS/INF/1);
- Programme and Budget for 2024–25: Regular budget account and Working Capital Fund (GB.352/PFA/INF/1);
- Update on the headquarters building renovation project (GB.352/PFA/INF/2);
- Overview of ILO accommodation (GB.352/PFA/INF/3);
- Establishment of new country offices in Angola and Qatar (GB.352/PFA/INF/4);
- Amendments to the Staff Regulations: Performance appraisals (GB.352/PFA/INF/5);
- Appointment of an Assistant Director-General (GB.352/INS/19/4).

(GB.352/INS19/3, paragraph 3)

19.4. Fourth Supplementary Report: Appointment of an Assistant Director-General (GB.352/INS/19/4)

(This document was submitted for information only.)

19.5. Fifth Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representations alleging non-observance by Chile of the Old-Age Insurance (Industry, etc.) Convention, 1933 (No. 35), and the Invalidity Insurance (Industry, etc.) Convention, 1933 (No. 37) (GB.352/INS/19/5)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

768. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.352/INS/19/5, the Governing Body:

- (a) approved the report of the Committee;
- (b) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the procedures initiated by the two representatives.

(GB.352/INS/19/5, paragraph 9)

19.6. Sixth Supplementary Report: Report of the tripartite Committee set up to examine the representations alleging non-observance by the Republic of the Sudan of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) (GB.352/INS/19/6)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

769. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in GB.352/INS/19/6, the Governing Body:

- (a) approved the report of the Committee and, in particular, the conclusions formulated in paragraphs 27 and 29;
- (b) requested the Government to provide the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations with information on the matters addressed in the report and in the Committee's conclusions;
- (c) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the procedure initiated by the two representations.

(GB.352/INS/19/6, paragraph 8)

19.7. Seventh Supplementary Report: ILO support for the emergency response to the crisis in Lebanon (GB.352/INS/19/7)

770. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, proposed by the Arab group and circulated by the Office, which read:

23. The Governing Body:

- (a) took note of the information provided in document GB.352/INS/19/7 and the progress made by the Office in addressing the urgent needs of ILO constituents in Lebanon, and called upon Member States to contribute towards the full implementation of the emergency response plan;
- (b) expressed deep concern over the acute humanitarian crisis, the long-term impact on the socio-economic situation, and the grave repercussions for workers, employers, and the labour market in Lebanon;
- (c) underscored the importance of the protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population in compliance with relevant international humanitarian law, recalled the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006), and welcomed all diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a ceasefire;
- (d) welcomed the rapid implementation of the ILO emergency response plan for Lebanon and its alignment to the UN response, and called for mobilizing further resources to facilitate continued ILO support to the country in line with the ILO's mandate;
- (e) stressed the need for the ILO Regional Office for Arab States and the Decent Work Technical Support Team to continue providing support to the Government and the social partners in Lebanon as part of the broader UN response, to assist them in mitigating the impact of the crisis, given the increased urgent need of constituents for ILO's support at this critical time; and
- (f) requested the Director-General to submit for its consideration at its 353rd Session (March 2025), an assessment of the impact of the crisis on workers, employers and the labour market at large, and provide an update on the implementation of the ILO emergency response plan.

771. A representative of the Director-General (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States), providing an update on developments since the publication of document GB.352/INS/19/7, said that more than 3,000 people had been killed and 13,400 injured as a result of the ongoing hostilities. Some 1.2 million people had been displaced, two thirds of whom were women and children. The situation had escalated in recent days, with the Israeli army issuing more evacuation orders to residents, which included the ILO Regional Office. The UN Secretary-General had issued a statement the previous evening expressing extreme concern at the escalation of the conflict and considerable alarm at the large number of civilian casualties, including women and children. Crucial infrastructure had been attacked and destroyed, including 60 attacks on health centres in which 108 healthcare workers had been killed while on duty. A UN staff member and her son had been killed, and several members of the UN peacekeeping force had been injured in attacks, including attacks in which white phosphorus had been used. Lebanon was in dire need of assistance, and an international conference hosted by France in October 2024 and generous contributions made or pledged by Member States to support Lebanon had been greatly appreciated.

772. Solid progress had been made with the emergency response plan for Lebanon. The emergency top-up allocation had been provided to 500,000 beneficiaries of the national disability allowance in the affected areas, and the ILO was working with the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to extend access to social health protection to a further 47,000 beneficiaries in November 2024 by reimbursing a large share of the

healthcare costs borne by patients. Work was under way to prepare collective shelters for displaced families for the winter. In the coming weeks, specially trained youth workers would be hired to install solar panels to provide electricity in six shelters. The ILO was cooperating with the Association of Lebanese Industrialists in helping its members access the procurement processes of UN humanitarian agencies to ensure that food and non-food aid required for the displaced population was locally sourced where possible. While ILO staff in vulnerable areas had been relocated, the situation remained very difficult, and she praised the staff for their high level of professionalism and unwavering dedication to the ILO's mandate.

- 773. The Worker spokesperson** said that Lebanon was grappling with a multilayered crisis that had shattered the country and left the population in despair. She reiterated her urgent call for a ceasefire in view of the hostilities' devastating humanitarian toll. The country's trade unions, particularly the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers and the National Federation of Workers' and Employees' Trade Unions of Lebanon, had remained incredibly resilient, despite being stretched thin and overwhelmed as they worked tirelessly to meet the rapidly increasing demands for humanitarian assistance and to provide critical front-line support to workers and their families. Many of the country's 250,000 migrant workers, primarily women and often domestic workers, had been left vulnerable and unsupported, compounding the already harsh conditions that they faced. The country's unions required significantly more resources to offer such workers adequate protection and aid, and she urged the international community to support Lebanon's migrant workers. She echoed the International Trade Union Confederation's global call for solidarity and implored the international community to contribute to the Arab Trade Union Confederation solidarity fund to ensure that Lebanon's workers received desperately needed financial aid.
- 774.** The ILO's emergency response plan was a beacon of hope that addressed the core needs of Lebanon's workforce. However, those efforts must be scaled up; without further international support, the unions' ability to continue offering essential services was at risk. She called on the Governing Body and the international community to intensify efforts and increase resource allocations to help Lebanon's labour force recover and rebuild. Furthermore, she stressed the need to involve the ILO Staff Union in exploring options for the relocation of ILO staff in Beirut.
- 775.** The amendment proposed by the Arab group rightfully stressed the need for the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States and the Decent Work Technical Support Team to continue providing support to the Government and the social partners in Lebanon as part of the broader UN response. However, she wished to know how such support could be provided when the Regional Office had had to be evacuated and the staff were under constant threat of attack.
- 776. The Employer spokesperson** said that the intensifying conflict had taken a horrific toll in terms of the number of people killed or displaced and the scale of infrastructure destroyed. It had exacerbated the challenges facing a country that had already been grappling with prolonged economic instability, overburdened public services and a significant refugee population. She reaffirmed her group's position regarding all conflicts: while emergency interventions were essential for sustaining livelihoods in the short term, true recovery and sustainable economic and social progress required peace and a stable environment. Accordingly, she urged the international community to make peacebuilding an integral part of all support efforts in Lebanon and the broader region.
- 777.** The ILO's emergency response plan was crucial for addressing Lebanon's immediate needs, and the country's resilience would be increased by strengthening institutional capacities and involving the social partners in the recovery process. Robust and capable local institutions provided stability, which encouraged economic growth, investment and job creation. She

welcomed the ILO's employment-intensive infrastructure programme, which provided essential job opportunities and improved living conditions. She encouraged the ILO to expand those efforts, especially in urban areas where displaced populations and families were highly concentrated. Ongoing evaluation and upscaling were vital to adapt to the rapidly evolving situation.

- 778.** The ILO's collaboration with the Association of Lebanese Industrialists was a valuable source of support for Lebanon's small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which was crucial for immediate recovery and for building a sustainable economic future. That support should be expanded to address the pressing needs of SMEs and other enterprises to ensure that they could continue to secure livelihoods and foster economic development under difficult circumstances. As the conflict had forced many farmers off their land, she recommended that the ILO, in partnership with the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), should support agricultural activities by ensuring access to inputs, markets and storage facilities to reduce food insecurity and sustain jobs in agriculture. In addition, creating short-term jobs for displaced agricultural workers could address immediate needs and strengthen food production. Given the considerable impact of trauma on productivity, resilience and mental health, she encouraged the ILO to prioritize mental health care, especially for workers in front-line roles affected by the crisis, as a resilient workforce would be essential for effective recovery.
- 779.** She commended the ILO staff in Beirut for continuing to deliver services in dangerous circumstances. She expressed confidence that the Office would make every effort to minimize risks to staff and hoped that normal operations would resume soon. Her group supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group.
- 780. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group,** a Government representative of Oman condemned in the strongest terms the aggression by the occupying power in Lebanon, the impact of which on civilians had been catastrophic. It had caused 3,000 deaths, injured 13,000 people, caused the displacement of more than 1 million people and prompted 400,000 to flee the country. In addition, it had resulted in the widespread destruction of infrastructure, including healthcare facilities, factories and farms. The bombing and devastation by Israel of entire residential neighbourhoods, in which innocent civilians had died along with UN staff, constituted a flagrant violation of international law. He expressed deep concern about the serious repercussions on ILO activities in Lebanon and the wider region. The estimated cost of reconstruction and land restoration exceeded US\$25 billion, excluding the cost of long-term effects such as disruption to the education sector.
- 781.** He expressed solidarity with, and appreciation for the efforts of, international organizations such as the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). He strongly condemned Israel's attacks on those organizations and stressed the need for the international community to take firm measures to prevent them, in accordance with international law. He welcomed the ILO's efforts, including the emergency response plan, to alleviate the suffering of the Lebanese people and safeguard their jobs and livelihoods. He urged the Governing Body to endorse efforts to end the aggression and call for a ceasefire. In addition, he called on the Director-General to submit to future sessions of the Governing Body a broader report on the implementation of the response plan and a comprehensive assessment of the long-term impacts of the crisis on the constituents, labour market and socio-economic landscape in Lebanon. Furthermore, he called on Member States and donors to secure the financial resources required for the ILO to increase its support to Lebanon. After extensive consultations with regional groups and employers' and workers' organizations, his group had proposed a

number of amendments to the draft decision in view of the deteriorating humanitarian situation and its impact on the Lebanese labour market.

- 782. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the Niger said that his group was deeply concerned by the extremely serious crisis, which had devastating consequences for the entire civilian population, including employers and workers. He paid tribute to all national and international staff who risked their lives to continue working in such a hostile environment, and called on the international community to make every effort to bring the escalating violence to an end. He encouraged the Office to strengthen its laudable emergency response with the support of its partners and donors, taking into account the situation on the ground. Collective action was required to prevent conflicts such as those in Lebanon and the occupied Arab territories. He invited the Director-General to use all the means at his disposal, in cooperation with the UN Secretary-General and the international community as a whole, to achieve an immediate and permanent ceasefire in all conflict zones and create an environment conducive to the promotion and realization of social justice. His group supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 783. Speaking on behalf of Indonesia and Malaysia,** a Government representative of Malaysia commended the ILO's recognition of the impact of the crisis in Lebanon on workers and small businesses. As part of the wider response, he welcomed the four pillars of the ILO's emergency response plan and the corresponding funding, which would serve as a catalyst for humanitarian response and recovery, particularly for displaced persons. He expressed concern regarding the impact of the escalation of conflict on ILO operations and the safety of staff and noted the change in classification of the Beirut duty station. He commended the ILO's collaboration with social partner organizations to address employment needs and engage enterprises in humanitarian supply chains. He noted that a long-term recovery plan was being developed, which included the integration of decent work standards and the employment needs of Syrian refugees. In the current context, he supported the decision to temporarily relocate the Regional Office for the Arab States and the Decent Work Technical Support Team. He called for an urgent ceasefire to avoid exacerbating the humanitarian and security situation in the region. He expressed support for the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 784. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Hungary said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Iceland aligned themselves with the statement. She welcomed the ILO's emergency response to the crisis in Lebanon and deplored the unacceptable civilian cost of the military escalation. She called for the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure and respect for international law and for Lebanon's sovereignty. Her group called for an immediate ceasefire and the full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). She expressed support for the emergency response plan. She urged partners to respond to the growing humanitarian crisis and highlighted the EU's additional allocation of €40 million in humanitarian assistance. She supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 785. A Government representative of Iraq** recognized the devastating consequences of the occupying forces' aggression for civilians and their livelihoods. The humanitarian situation in Lebanon was catastrophic, and the policy of attacks against UN staff and civilian targets violated international law. Moreover, he warned that the violence could spread to other areas in the region, which would have serious repercussions for the social partners and the labour market. He expressed support for the emergency response plan, which would also facilitate long-term recovery through the ILO's ongoing activities and collaborations in the country.

- 786. A Government representative of Sudan** condemned the Israeli aggression against Lebanon and the serious violations of international law and international humanitarian law. The consequences were catastrophic. Experience in his own country had shown the impact such violence had on employment in various sectors, including through the destruction of labour infrastructure. The ILO should recognize that it had a key role in countries experiencing, or emerging from, conflict. He proposed that a working group should be created to consider the allocation of a specific budget for emergency response. He called on Member States and other donors to contribute to the emergency response in Lebanon.
- 787. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** expressed grave concern regarding the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Lebanon as a result of Israeli attacks, which had compounded the economic and labour-related challenges facing the country since 2019. He strongly condemned the military operations across Lebanon, which violated Lebanon's sovereignty. He supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group, emphasizing the need to protect infrastructure essential for survival, the call for a halt to the violence, and the importance of maintaining an ILO presence in Lebanon and assessing the impact of the crisis on workers, employers and the labour market. He welcomed the recognition in the proposed amendment of the long-term socio-economic impact of the crisis on the Lebanese labour market, workers and employers and called for the mobilization of additional resources to enhance ILO support and provide humanitarian assistance.
- 788. A Government representative of Colombia** said that the worsening humanitarian situation in Lebanon only exacerbated the existing financial and economic crisis. The high number of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons represented an additional burden. He welcomed the measures implemented by the ILO to support the social partners and called on all Member States to contribute to the full implementation of the emergency response plan. Lasting peace was required for any economic or social recovery to begin. He called on all parties to respect international law, the civilian population and civilian infrastructure. He supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 789. A Government representative of Brazil** recognized the urgent need for emergency measures to support the civilian population of Lebanon in light of the worsening humanitarian crisis. She welcomed the emergency response plan and the measures taken by the ILO in partnership with other international organizations and Government authorities on the ground, including the support provided to social partner organizations. She reiterated the need to comply with international humanitarian law, with particular regard to evacuation orders and access for humanitarian response. The ILO should continue to cooperate with other stakeholders, including UN organizations, to provide urgent aid and to promote social justice and decent work in the post-conflict recovery phase. She called on donors to support the implementation of the emergency response plan and related activities. Lastly, she reiterated the call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire.
- 790. A Government representative of France** said that the ILO had to act in light of the social and economic consequences of the military operations in Lebanon. The employment and labour situation had deteriorated substantially, and essential sectors had suffered. He expressed support for the emergency response plan, which began to prepare for the post-conflict recovery phase. He reiterated his Government's call for a ceasefire, which would allow parties to build a diplomatic solution on the basis of UN Security Council resolution 1701. The sovereignty of Lebanon must be restored. He expressed support for the draft decision as amended by the Arab group and commended the spirit of consensus that had led to its development.

- 791. A Government representative of Tunisia** strongly condemned the Israeli aggression and highlighted its impact on civilian infrastructure, social protection mechanisms and basic services, as well as on lives and livelihoods. He commended the ILO's timely action to support employment and livelihoods and welcomed its cooperation with other international organizations and donor countries to provide humanitarian and technical assistance to social partners and the Lebanese authorities. He expressed concern regarding the repercussions of the aggression on the ILO's operations in Lebanon and the safety of staff members. He reaffirmed his country's support for Lebanon and its right to defend its security and sovereignty and called on the international community to support efforts to end the crisis. He supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 792. A Government representative of Qatar** welcomed the ILO's efforts to alleviate the consequences of the war, particularly in supporting employment and livelihoods, strengthening social protection and contributing to recovery efforts. He condemned the Israeli aggression and the targeted attacks on civilian infrastructure and essential services. The attacks, including those against UNIFIL, violated international law and threatened diplomatic efforts to maintain peace and stability in Lebanon and the region. He called for a ceasefire in both Lebanon and Gaza and for the protection of civilians. He urged the social partners to ensure that the ILO's emergency programmes were funded and implemented. He supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 793. A Government representative of Australia** expressed deep concern regarding the escalating conflict and reiterated her Government's call for a ceasefire in Lebanon, in compliance with UN Security Council resolutions. She recalled that her Government had donated an additional US\$10 million to support civilian access to basic services in Lebanon. The impact of the hostilities on the labour market and employment situation was profoundly concerning. She commended the emergency response plan and the ILO's contribution to addressing the humanitarian crisis and planning for recovery, in partnership with other UN organizations.
- 794. A Government representative of Libya** welcomed the ILO's efforts to alleviate the humanitarian suffering in Lebanon, its ongoing efforts to assess the situation on the ground and its emergency response plan. She strongly condemned the violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and the continuing aggression by the occupying forces against the Lebanese people, and against UNIFIL and UNRWA. The current situation for civilians was catastrophic, and the crisis would have serious repercussions for workers, employers and the labour market. She called for a lasting ceasefire and urged the ILO to strive to operate safely in Lebanon and to take measures to protect the tripartite constituents. She supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 795. A Government representative of Japan** expressed serious concern regarding the humanitarian situation in Lebanon, particularly for those forced to flee their homes. He reiterated the call for an immediate ceasefire and a diplomatic settlement of the crisis. He expressed appreciation for the emergency response plan, which included preparations for the recovery phase. He noted that his Government had donated US\$10 million for the crisis response in Lebanon, and a further US\$10 million to the Syrian Arab Republic to support persons displaced from Lebanon. He supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 796. A Government representative of China** expressed concern regarding the escalation of regional tension as a result of the overspill of the conflict in Gaza into Lebanon. She opposed any violation of Lebanon's sovereignty and condemned all actions that targeted civilians. She urged all parties to seek a political solution to the crisis. She called for the urgent provision of

humanitarian assistance and noted that her Government had sent humanitarian medical supplies to Lebanon. She expressed appreciation for the emergency response plan and the use of existing technical cooperation funds to finance those efforts and said that resource mobilization efforts should continue. She urged the ILO to continue its work to support employment and social security and protect the rights and interests of workers and employers in Lebanon. She supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.

- 797. A Government representative of the United Kingdom** recognized the catastrophic humanitarian situation and destruction of civilian infrastructure in Lebanon. She reiterated her Government's call for an immediate ceasefire and for a political solution to the crisis, in accordance with UN Security Council resolution 1701. The need for humanitarian support from the ILO and its partners continued to grow. Civilians needed access to basic services. She called for an effective humanitarian notification system. Her Government had increased its financial contribution to the emergency response to over £15 million in order to strengthen healthcare, improve protection and provide cash for basic needs. She expressed appreciation that the ILO had built on existing projects, including joint projects with her Government, in order to provide emergency social protection. She urged all parties to ensure that the response in Lebanon was inclusive, ensuring that vulnerable people and refugees had access to shelter. She supported activities that prepared for the recovery phase, including through supporting social partner organizations and sustaining jobs and livelihoods, particularly in the agriculture sector. She supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 798. A Government representative of the United States** expressed deep concern regarding the humanitarian impact of the conflict in Lebanon. As the largest donor to the humanitarian response in the region, the United States commended the ILO's timely redirection of existing programmes to support the immediate needs of the tripartite constituents in Lebanon. Recognizing the ILO's contribution to the broad emergency response, she urged the ILO to limit its activities to the framework of its mandate and expertise. Those areas included supporting the social partners and facilitating access to humanitarian support provided by other partners. The ILO would have a critical role in ensuring that the recovery centred on a jobs-rich and rights-based approach. She supported the decision to temporarily relocate the Regional Office in order to care for its staff members.
- 799. A Government representative of Canada** said that his country shared concerns over the devastating impact of the armed conflict on Lebanon. Canada continued to call for an immediate ceasefire and de-escalation across the region and reaffirmed its long-standing support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of Lebanon. It called on all parties to the conflict to uphold their obligations under international law to ensure the safety and security of civilians, humanitarian actors and UNIFIL personnel. It supported the development of the emergency response plan and paid tribute to the tireless efforts of ILO staff in the country. His country supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 800. A Government representative of South Africa** said that, on 24 October each year, the international community commemorated United Nations Day, which marked the anniversary of the entry into force of the Charter of the United Nations. Tragically, however, the very purpose of the Charter was being undermined daily by Israel in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon.
- 801.** South Africa was gravely concerned by the actions of Israel in Lebanon, which amounted to collective punishment of the Lebanese people and constituted the latest in a series of flagrant violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. The actions of Israel also

breached the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, regarded as sacrosanct in the Charter.

802. Since 8 October 2023, thousands had been killed or injured, many of them children, and hundreds of thousands displaced. South Africa welcomed the ILO's contribution to the wider UN response and was alarmed by the air strikes on 30 September and 3 October 2024, which had struck close to the ILO office.
803. The risk of a regional conflagration remained high. South Africa therefore reiterated its call for a ceasefire and the uninterrupted flow of humanitarian aid. It supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group and called on the international community to ensure that Israel complied with international law.
804. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** expressed deep concern at the deaths, injuries and destruction of infrastructure in Lebanon and the concomitant impact on livelihoods and decent work. He urged Israel to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries in the region. He also urged the international community to step up diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire, and global donors and ILO Member States to consolidate the emergency response plan, which was fully aligned with the Organization's mandate. His country supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
805. **Speaking on behalf of the OIC**, a Government representative of Pakistan expressed support for the amendment proposed by the Arab group.
806. **A Government representative of Lebanon**, thanking all those who had voiced their solidarity with his country, said that the ILO office in Beirut had been pivotal in facilitating the Organization's work in the region and that the safety of ILO staff was of paramount importance to the Government.
807. The humanitarian disaster in Lebanon was not simply a by-product of military operations. It had been caused deliberately, with irreversible consequences. Civilians had been killed, towns and villages flattened, aid workers, paramedics and hospitals targeted and more than 1 million civilians forcibly displaced, putting an impossible burden on water and power grids and health services. The occupying power had grossly violated international humanitarian law by systematically targeting vital infrastructure, economic assets and resources. Against that backdrop, the international community should act more forcefully to impose an immediate ceasefire, defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon and ensure compliance with international humanitarian law in Lebanon and Gaza.
808. The ongoing tragedy was affecting the labour market, further impoverishing a country racked by years of recession and economic and financial woes. Employers were being targeted and having to grapple with heavily damaged trade routes and inaccessible or destroyed farmland. Workers were losing their jobs, their savings and their most precious belongings, with many forcibly displaced. That situation was only the tip of the iceberg. The occupying power was forestalling the future progress of Lebanon through a scorched earth policy that included depriving children of a proper education.
809. As a constructive ILO Member State that had always upheld the ideals enshrined in the ILO Constitution, Lebanon hoped to count on the Organization's continued support.
810. **A Government representative of the Syrian Arab Republic** expressed the hope that the ILO would play its part by responding to the urgent needs of tripartite constituents in Lebanon. The aggression against Lebanon, the genocide against Palestinians in Gaza and the heinous crimes against his own country would not have been committed without the support and

protection of the United States and other Western States. Workers and others had been forcibly displaced and deprived of primary healthcare and nutrition. The UN and the international community must provide greater assistance to meet the needs of those people, in addition to taking clear and effective measures to end the occupying forces' aggression against the peoples of the region.

- 811. A Government representative of Algeria**, commending the efforts undertaken through the emergency response plan, said that document GB.352/INS/19/7 highlighted the tragic consequences of the occupying power's reckless aggression against a sovereign State, in blatant defiance of international law. Those consequences included thousands of deaths, the massive destruction of infrastructure and the displacement of more than 1 million people. The aggression had also had serious repercussions on the Lebanese labour market and vital sectors of the economy, including agriculture, tourism, services and SMEs. His country condemned the hostilities in the strongest terms, called on the tripartite constituents to support attempts to achieve a ceasefire and end the aggression, which threatened peace and security in the entire region, and emphasized the need to help international organizations operating in the region to protect their employees. Algeria supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 812. A Government representative of Türkiye** said that the Israeli attacks in Lebanon and Gaza must come to an end immediately. His country valued the detailed information provided by the Office and fully supported the ILO's timely interventions in Lebanon, particularly in the areas of social protection, infrastructure rehabilitation and employment. It recognized the importance of sustaining jobs and livelihoods, especially in the agricultural sector, to address economic instability and promote food security. Amid the ongoing challenges, it acknowledged the ILO's vital role in advocating decent work and reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the ILO's efforts to promote regional peace, security and stability. He expressed strong support for the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 813. A Government representative of Israel** said that, yet again, the ILO was acting outside its mandate. While the terrorist organization Hezbollah had embedded itself deeply in the civilian infrastructure of Lebanon, the ILO was blind to the danger that it posed to the fair and equitable distribution of resources and ignoring its responsibility for the economic disaster that the country had been facing for years.
- 814.** During its limited operation in southern Lebanon, the Israeli Defence Forces had uncovered a network of tunnels and fortified underground complexes containing weapons and command centres. However, the extent of the terrorist infiltration was not reflected anywhere in the document. The division of functions among international organizations was key to the advancement of their priorities. As an ILO Member State, Israel was deeply concerned by the Organization's sudden shift of focus to actions that had nothing to do with its mandate.
- 815.** Over the previous year, Hezbollah had indiscriminately launched over 15,000 rockets and armed drones at Israeli communities from Lebanon, as a direct result of which 63,000 Israelis remained displaced, over 600 had been injured and 70, including children, had been killed. That humanitarian toll appeared irrelevant to the ILO, which had failed even to recognize the devastating effect of such sustained violence. Israeli businesses in the north of the country had filed approximately 30,000 claims for compensation, having suffered significant losses, yet the ILO remained indifferent to the destruction of economic stability and workplaces in those communities.
- 816.** He urged the ILO to stick to its mandate and the Office to present a report that provided a full picture of the situation so that Governing Body members could make an informed decision.

The document contained a reference to ILO payments made to Lebanese workers. He asked the Office to clarify the steps taken to ensure that that money did not end up in the hands of Hezbollah terrorists and to comply with the recent Financial Action Task Force decision to place Lebanon on its “grey list”.

- 817. The representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States) said that the top priority of the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States was the safety and security of its 105 staff, of whom 31 were international staff based in Beirut. The steps taken to protect staff still in Lebanon had included relocating them to safer areas, applying shatterproof film to the windows of their accommodation and enabling teleworking. In addition to the eight international staff identified as critical to programme implementation, the Regional Office continued to count on the contribution of Lebanese colleagues. Despite staff evacuations and temporary relocations, the ILO will maintain presence in Lebanon. Provided that Beirut airport remained open, the Regional Office should be able to maintain the capacity required to implement the emergency response plan in cooperation with partner UN agencies.
- 818.** Some of the measures taken by the ILO to support social partner organizations were detailed in paragraphs 15 to 18 of the document. Under the emergency response plan, the ILO was working to build the capacity of government institutions, including to deliver emergency cash assistance to an additional 47,000 beneficiaries and expand social health protection to displaced and other affected populations. The ILO was working with the Ministry of Agriculture to implement the Green Plan, a national plan to support the recovery of agricultural value chains, the restoration of land and the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure for small-scale agriculture. Furthermore, in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs, it was providing services to displaced people and ensuring the proper functioning of shelters.
- 819.** The rapid assessment mentioned in paragraph 18 of the report would provide insights into the impact of the conflict on SMEs. The ILO was offering recovery grants to micro- and small businesses and farmers in conflict-affected regions and cooperating with SMEs and other stakeholders in the private sector to maintain operations and prepare for a rapid economic recovery as soon as conditions allowed. It was also exploring the possibility of providing mental health support to front-line workers, as part of a life-saving package of care, and collaborating with workers and employers to conduct a rapid assessment, consisting of surveys and qualitative interviews, to inform measures to enhance labour market resilience and stability.
- 820.** She assured the Governing Body that the ILO was operating within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, in keeping with its mandate to promote decent work and social justice. The Organization was committed to fostering resilient communities, socio-economic recovery and sustainable peace in fragile, conflict-affected areas. Its intention, as reflected in the emergency response plan, was to bridge the emergency response with recovery through long-term solutions that offered affected populations real opportunities to rebuild their lives and realize their aspirations.
- 821. The Worker spokesperson** thanked the representative of the Director-General for the replies provided and expressed her group’s solidarity with ILO colleagues in Beirut.
- 822. The Employer spokesperson** reiterated her group’s strong and unwavering support for Lebanon and for the ILO’s emergency response to the situation in the country.
- 823. A Government representative of Lebanon**, speaking in exercise of the right to reply, said that, in the twisted logic of the occupying power, Lebanon should not defend itself or its legitimate rights and should instead remain silent in international forums, even though it was

in danger of total annihilation. The representative of Israel had claimed that his country's military operations in Lebanon had been targeted and limited. However, there had so far been 12,000 attacks in Lebanon, coupled with an attempted ground invasion and bellicose rhetoric and threats. The representative had also labelled Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Lebanon categorically rejected that label, which formed part of the usual Israeli propaganda equating legitimate resistance with terrorism. On the subject of terrorism, he could cite the horrific pager attacks of 17 and 18 September 2024, the heinous and deliberate targeting of municipal buildings in Nabatieh, the killing of children and the use of white phosphorus against civilians.

Decision

824. The Governing Body:

- (a) took note of the information provided in document GB.352/INS/19/7 and the progress made by the Office in addressing the urgent needs of ILO constituents in Lebanon, and called upon Member States to contribute towards the full implementation of the emergency response plan;
- (b) expressed deep concern over the acute humanitarian crisis, the long-term impact on the socio-economic situation and the grave repercussions for workers, employers and the labour market in Lebanon;
- (c) underscored the importance of the protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population in compliance with relevant international humanitarian law, recalled United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution 1701 (2006), and welcomed all diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a ceasefire;
- (d) welcomed the rapid implementation of the ILO emergency response plan for Lebanon and its alignment to the UN response, and called for mobilizing further resources to facilitate continued ILO support to the country in line with the ILO's mandate;
- (e) stressed the need for the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States and the Decent Work Technical Support Team to continue providing support to the Government and the social partners in Lebanon as part of the broader UN response, to assist them in mitigating the impact of the crisis, given the increased urgent need of constituents for ILO support at that critical time;
- (f) requested the Director-General to submit for its consideration at its 353rd Session (March 2025), an assessment of the impact of the crisis on workers, employers and the labour market at large, and provide an update on the implementation of the ILO emergency response plan.

(GB.352/INS/19/7, paragraph 23, as amended by the Governing Body)

20. Reports of the Officers of the Governing Body

20.1. First report: Proposed arrangements for the 20th American Regional Meeting (GB.352/INS/20/1)

- 825. The Worker spokesperson**, noting that the Government of the Dominican Republic and the ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean were already engaged in dialogue to ensure the success of the 20th American Regional Meeting, emphasized the importance of adopting a participatory approach from the outset, to ensure that the agenda was relevant to

and responded to the challenges faced by workers. She hoped that more extensive consultations would be held with ACT/EMP and ACTRAV at the earliest opportunity. At a regional coordination meeting held on 22 October 2024 in Bogotá, the Workers' group had identified its priorities for the region, which included: informal work and its economic implications; precarious employment, including in the platform and care economies; freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining; and social protection and decent work for migrants. The need to recognize the needs of young workers and to follow up on the MNE Declaration were also important for the group.

826. To ensure an impactful outcome of the meeting, it would be crucial for her group to reach prior agreements with the employers' group and other key stakeholders. The composition of the thematic panels would also be key to ensuring that fundamental issues, such as freedom of association and collective bargaining, were high on the agenda. A clear road map should be put in place with the support of ACT/EMP and ACTRAV to ensure the success of these efforts. She stressed the need to provide French and Portuguese interpretation services during the meeting.
827. **The Employer spokesperson** said that her group took note of the new modalities for regional meetings, which sought to make the meetings more impactful. Her group would follow closely the consultations on the arrangements for the 20th American Regional Meeting, including those for the functioning of the Credentials Committee, and was ready to participate actively in setting the agenda, and identifying the regional priorities to be considered. Her group supported the proposed subject matter of the Director-General's report. Given the growing complexities for ensuring the representation of the social partners in the region, the proposal to provide remote secretarial support to the Credentials Committee should be reconsidered. She thanked the Government of the Dominican Republic for its kind offer to host the Meeting and supported the proposal to hold it in the first half of October 2025.
828. **A Government representative of the Dominican Republic** (Minister of Labour) reaffirmed his country's commitment to the work of the ILO and to hosting the 20th American Regional Meeting, which would serve as an important platform for strengthening cooperation among stakeholders in the region and sharing strategies for addressing challenges such as the digital transformation and climate change. He recalled that his Government had been working hard to introduce policies to promote labour market inclusion and was implementing a labour reform to meet current and future needs and to guarantee more equal access to decent work. His Government looked forward to continue working closely with the ILO and its constituents towards a successful meeting that could contribute to enhancing the region's economy and to building a better future for all its workers.
829. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru noted with appreciation that the preparations for the Meeting, which would provide an opportunity to highlight the region's commitment to the fundamental principles of the ILO, were already under way. Important discussions were needed to address the challenges faced in the region associated with promoting productive employment and decent work, which were key to achieving a just transition and reducing poverty. The Meeting would present an invaluable opportunity to strengthen tripartite dialogue in the region, and an opportunity to address challenges and seize opportunities in the current world of work and to promote sustainable development and social justice.

Decision

- 830.** The Governing Body, on the recommendation of its Officers, noted with appreciation the invitation by the Government of the Dominican Republic to host the 20th American Regional Meeting in Punta Cana in the first half of October 2025 and deferred the final decision on the modalities of the Meeting to its 353rd Session (March 2025).

(GB.352/INS/20/1, paragraph 19)

20.2. Second report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 151 (GB.352/INS/20/2)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

- 831.** In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/2, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation:

- (a) was not receivable in respect of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- (b) was receivable in respect of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) and the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) and, as it relates to Conventions dealing with trade union rights, to transmit the representation to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination as per the procedures set out in the Standing Orders on articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the ILO.

(GB.352/INS/20/2, paragraph 5)

20.3. Third report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) (GB.352/INS/20/3)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

- 832.** In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/3, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and, as it relates to a Convention dealing with trade union rights, to transmit the representation to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination as per the procedures set out in the Standing Orders on articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the ILO.

(GB.352/INS/20/3, paragraph 5)

20.4. Fourth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 135 and 151 (GB.352/INS/20/4)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

833. In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/4 and on the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and, as it relates to Conventions dealing with trade union rights, decided to refer it to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination in accordance with the procedures set out in the Standing Orders on articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the ILO and as part of another representation made by the National Association of Officials of the Civil Registry and Identification Service of Chile (ANFURCICH) on 16 June 2023, which is pending before the Committee.

(GB.352/INS/20/4, paragraph 5)

20.5. Fifth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of Conventions Nos 87, 98 and 151 (GB.352/INS/20/5)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

834. In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/5, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and, as it relates to conventions dealing with trade union rights, to transmit the representation to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination as per the procedures set out in the Standing Orders on articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the ILO.

(GB.352/INS/20/5, paragraph 5)

20.6. Sixth report: Two representations alleging non-observance by Chile of Conventions Nos 35, 37 and 122 (GB.352/INS/20/6)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

835. In light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/6, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representations:

- (a) were not receivable in relation to the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122);
- (b) were receivable in relation to the Old-Age Insurance (Industry, etc.) Convention, 1933 (No. 35) and the Invalidity Insurance (Industry, etc.) Convention, 1933 (No. 37) and to set up a tripartite committee to examine them jointly.

(GB.352/INS/20/6, paragraph 7)

20.7. Seventh report: Representation alleging non-observance by the Government of Uruguay of Conventions Nos 95, 98, 151, 154, 155 and 161 (GB.352/INS/20/7)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

836. In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/7, and taking into consideration the recommendations of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and:

- (a) to establish a tripartite committee to examine the elements of the representation alleging non-observance of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161);
- (b) as the representation relates to Conventions dealing with trade union rights, to refer the elements relating to non-observance of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154), to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination as per the procedures set out in the Standing Orders on articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the ILO.

(GB.352/INS/20/7, paragraph 5)

20.8. Eighth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Saudi Arabia of Convention No. 29 and its Protocol of 2014, and Conventions Nos 81, 95, 100, 111, 138 and 182 (GB.352/INS/20/8)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

837. In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/8, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation:

- (a) was not receivable in relation to the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182);
- (b) was receivable in relation to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and to set up a tripartite committee to examine it.

(GB.352/INS/20/8, paragraph 6)

20.9. Ninth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Israel of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95) (GB.352/INS/20/9)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

- 838.** In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/9, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and to set up a tripartite committee to examine it.

(GB.352/INS/20/9, paragraph 5)

20.10. Tenth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Canada of Conventions Nos 87, 98 and 144 (GB.352/INS/20/10)

(The Governing Body considered this report in its private sitting.)

Decision

- 839.** In the light of the information contained in document GB.352/INS/20/10, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided:

- (a) that the representation was receivable;
- (b) to transmit it to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination, as it relates to Conventions dealing with freedom of association, including as regards the alleged violations of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144);
- (c) to grant a suspension of the examination of the merits of the representation under the conditions set out in article 5(1) of the Standing Orders concerning the procedure for the examination of representations under articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution, in view of the agreement expressed by the parties to participate in voluntary conciliation.

(GB.352/INS/20/10, paragraph 5)

21. Report of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda

21.1. Draft key messages of the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development (2025) (GB.352/INS/21/1(Rev.2))

Committee of the Whole (Thursday, 31 October 2024)

- 840.** The Chairperson of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda presented the Working Party, its members and mandate, and the draft key messages of the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development (2025), which had been prepared by the Working Party under the road map adopted by the Governing Body at its 350th Session. The draft key messages had been discussed at four Working Party meetings, in which the social partners had participated actively and had expressed their views at length.

However, it had not been possible for them to present a joint proposal on the draft key messages. Therefore, the text submitted for discussion had been prepared by the Office based on the comments made by the Working Party. The Government group had shared its comments and opinions both in writing and orally during the meetings. The draft key messages contained in the Appendix faithfully reflected the points discussed jointly and agreed upon by the tripartite constituents, and drew on key ILO instruments. They provided a sound tripartite perspective on each of the priorities for the Summit. As reiterated several times during the Working Party meetings, it was essential for the Summit to recognize and support the role of the world of work in the progress on the three pillars of social development. It was the responsibility of government representatives and the social partners to ensure that the draft key messages, if adopted by the Governing Body, would inform the preparation, discussions and outcomes of the Summit. The Working Party was willing to continue to support the Governing Body to ensure a strong tripartite contribution to the Summit.

- 841. The Employer spokesperson**, applauding the consensus achieved on the draft key messages, welcomed the inclusion, in the tripartite input to the Summit, of several priorities that aligned with her group's vision for economic and social development. The Employers particularly appreciated the priority on putting sustainable enterprises and economic development at the core of poverty reduction strategies, as poverty could not be fought without strong resilient businesses. They also welcomed the focus on skills development, which was a necessity for both workers and businesses as technology advanced and markets evolved. Other essential priorities were the enhancement of coordination between employment and macroeconomic policies, the prioritizing of quality education, lifelong learning and pathways to build youth employment, and the provision of support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises through the promotion of an enabling environment.
- 842.** The next step was to promote the tripartite input and make it relevant for the intergovernmental negotiations in New York, a process in which the ILO's role would be key. It was vital for the Office to strive to ensure that the views of its constituents were taken into consideration and that all constituents were a part of the Summit. She also called on the Office to continue to push social justice and decent work to the top of the Summit's agenda. The intergovernmental nature of the negotiations in New York should not prevent the ILO from playing a convening and facilitating role, as it had done in the dialogue with the co-facilitators of the process, on the sidelines of the 112th Session of the Labour Conference. The ILO could host similar dialogues with the UN General Assembly regional groups or with active negotiating governments and/or co-facilitators, to bring a new perspective to the negotiations. Her group stood ready to contribute to such informative dialogues, as collaboration with the social partners was key to developing policies that truly responded to current challenges and future opportunities to advance social justice and social progress. With the full involvement and engagement of the social partners, the ILO could ensure that the Summit delivered not just promises, but also tangible results that were actionable and beneficial for both workers and enterprises.
- 843. The Worker spokesperson** agreed with the UN General Assembly resolution on the modalities of the Second World Summit for Social Development that the three themes for the Summit, namely poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social integration, were interrelated and mutually reinforcing, and that an enabling environment should be created for those objectives to be pursued simultaneously. The Workers also agreed that the review of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development must be linked to the SDGs, in order for the Summit to provide momentum towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. On the topics included in the draft key messages, the Workers supported

prioritizing decent jobs and universal social protection for all at the heart of poverty reduction. Other essential issues raised in the draft key messages that must be reflected in concrete and bold commitments at the Summit included the centrality of Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth and of international labour standards, the role of social dialogue, the recognition of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, and the importance of the formalization of the informal economy. Regarding social inclusion, the Workers supported the call to take decisive action to tackle inequalities both within and between countries.

- 844.** Regarding the preparation of the draft resolution on the tripartite input to the Summit to be adopted at the 113th Session of the Labour Conference, the draft key messages should include a reference to democracy and its relationship with social justice, social development and peace. The joint calls for the Summit to include commitments on adequate financing of social policies needed to be more assertive. The Summit should be part of a broader set of UN processes aimed at reinvigorating multilateralism through the promotion of social justice for all. Policy coherence must be ensured with other key negotiations taking place in 2025, such as the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development. The Summit's conclusions must include global governance modalities that allowed the ILO to deliver more effectively on its mandate from the Declaration of Philadelphia. Regarding the negotiation process for the Summit, the ILO should effectively participate and be represented in the intergovernmental negotiations and be able to listen to and provide inputs on all relevant topics. It should also participate in the design of the Summit's agenda. The Summit should foresee a clear and time-bound follow-up process. The declaration of the Summit should include a review and follow-up mechanism, to ensure an effective accountability and monitoring process on the implementation of the commitments included. The ILO should be proactive in outlining the specific contribution it would make after the Summit. The Office and the Working Party should take on board the Workers' considerations in the preparation of the draft resolution for the next session of the International Labour Conference. She endorsed the draft decision.
- 845. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of Gabon, regarding the priorities on poverty eradication, said that her group agreed with the call for the Summit to reiterate the urgent need to extend coverage so as to guarantee universal access to comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection for all. Eliminating poverty meant addressing worsening migration issues; she supported the call for closer collaboration with financial institutions and States that wished to establish resilient social protection systems to support international efforts to ensure the rights of migrant workers and refugees. Concerning full and productive employment and decent work for all, she endorsed the invitation for the Summit to recommend enhanced coordination between employment and other macroeconomic policies at the national level, prioritizing quality education, skills development and lifelong learning, with a particular focus on young people. Her group also agreed with the recommendation for Member States to adopt effective and fair labour regulations and policies and to invest in robust and adapted labour market institutions. The Summit should also promote just transitions for the workforce and enterprises. The Africa group supported the priorities on strengthening rights and equal opportunities for persons and groups in vulnerable situations and taking decisive actions to tackle inequalities both within and between countries, for which the 2019 Abidjan Declaration should be taken into account. She wished to know which measures were envisaged to prevent overlap between the 355th Session of the Governing Body and the Summit, which were due to take place at the same time.

- 846. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of China, on the priorities of the draft key messages, fully agreed that universal, adequate and sustainable social protection systems were powerful tools for preventing and reducing poverty. Regarding the priorities on full and productive employment and decent work for all, pro-employment strategies combined with enhanced coordination between employment and other macroeconomic policies were key. Quality education, skills development, lifelong learning and accessible public employment services were significant facilitators to create decent jobs for young people. A strong call for international cooperation was critical to respond to the opportunities and challenges associated with the future of work. He strongly supported the priorities on social inclusion. Ensuring that no one was left behind was essential to achieving social development and social justice. It was vital for the multilateral system and its institutions to be just, democratic, equitable and representative of today's world to ensure that all Member States, particularly developing countries, could meaningfully participate in global decision-making and have their needs and interests taken into account. The unique challenges faced by small island developing States, in particular, must be acknowledged and addressed to ensure progress.
- 847. Speaking on behalf of a significant majority of Governments of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that the Second World Summit for Social Development was an ideal opportunity to focus attention on social justice and to tackle current global challenges through a renewed social contract. He welcomed the efforts made to achieve consensus on the draft key messages of the tripartite input to the Summit and the dedicated work of the Chairperson. The principal way the ILO could contribute to the Summit was through its tripartite composition, promoting free discussion and democratic decision-making for the good of all. The group was committed to working within their governments to align the Summit's declaration with the draft key messages of the tripartite input. He welcomed the clear message of the UN Pact for the Future in which Heads of State committed to securing an ambitious outcome at the Summit. He supported the Working Party's further preparation of the ILO's contributions to the Summit in a draft resolution to be adopted at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference. He hoped that the Global Coalition for Social Justice would strengthen the draft key messages and contribute to the general objectives of the Summit.
- 848. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United States, noting that the ILO was the only international organization named in the UN General Assembly resolution on the modalities of the Second World Summit for Social Development, said that it had a critical role to play in the Summit. IMEC was committed to working within its governments, including with its representatives involved in the negotiations to take place in New York, to align the Summit's political declaration with the draft key messages. He hoped that the ILO's forthcoming report on the state of social justice in the world would provide an evidence base for the contribution by the Global Coalition for Social Justice to the Summit's overall objectives.
- 849. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that Albania, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. She noted with appreciation that the draft key messages emphasized the unanimous support expressed by constituents for a renewed global social contract and reflected some of her group's priorities, adding that a human-centred and a human rights approach should be taken to the development of a renewed social contract in order to provide a proper framework for the ILO's messages. She expressed strong support for the transmission of the draft key messages to the UN Secretary-General. Her group was committed to engaging constructively in upcoming negotiations on the political declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development with a view to reinforcing the social dimension of sustainable development and addressing

major inequalities and transformative challenges in the world. She encouraged Member States to echo the draft key messages in negotiations to be held in New York over the coming months to ensure that the ILO's tripartite voice would be heard. Lastly, she encouraged the Working Party to continue its work and prepare a draft resolution on the tripartite input to the Summit, highlighting the role that the ILO and its constituents could play in the implementation of its outcome.

- 850. A Government representative of Barbados** said that the draft key messages correctly reflected the three critical pillars that must be part of any global discussion on social development. Humans must be the central focus of any development work undertaken by civilized nation States. He drew attention to the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for Small Island Developing States, which highlighted the inherent, unique and disproportionate vulnerability of those countries to losses arising from the multiple crises affecting them, and noted that gross domestic product and per capita income should not be the sole measures of countries' success. Addressing adaptation and mitigation measures in the face of those crises required embracing the Bridgetown Initiative 3.0, which called for measures aimed at reforming the rules of the international financial system, building resilience in vulnerable economies, including through debt restructuring, and increasing funding to enable countries to invest in resilience. He underlined the importance of addressing decent work in the care economy and moving workers from informality and precarious work to formality. While rapid technological advancement brought opportunities for small States, it was an area requiring the focus of the international community given the challenges posed if guard rails were not established.
- 851. A Government representative of Switzerland** noted that the Second World Summit for Social Development provided a historic opportunity to galvanize efforts to achieve the goals of the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the SDGs, highlighting the key role that the Global Coalition for Social Justice should play in achieving coherence among the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration. She expressed full support for the draft key messages, in particular those concerning full and productive employment and decent work for all. The Summit must explore how the international community could reduce poverty and inequality by ensuring stable and fair employment for all and emphasize that full and productive employment and decent work for all were essential to the promotion of inclusive, sustainable economic growth with working conditions that ensured respect for workers' rights and well-being. The ILO must be strongly committed to ensuring that those messages were heard during the negotiations; she therefore called on all Member State delegations to intensify their communications with their counterparts in New York and actively follow those negotiations.
- 852. A Government representative of India**, welcoming the draft key messages, expressed strong support for the emphasis on a renewed global social contract. She highlighted the importance of inclusive economic policies that could generate quality jobs, support social protection and promote gender equality, and described measures taken in her country to reduce poverty, boost job creation and enhance social inclusion. Her Government would work with the ILO and Member States to ensure that the Second World Summit for Social Development would lead to meaningful, action-oriented outcomes advancing social justice, sustainable development and inclusive growth.
- 853. A Government representative of Indonesia** said that the international community must demonstrate its commitment at the Second World Summit for Social Development to elevating labour conditions and strengthening social safety nets. He proposed six key priorities for discussion at the Summit: investing in education to prepare workers for the ever-changing job market; achieving universal coverage in social protection systems; elevating working

conditions for all workers, including migrants and informal workers; creating job opportunities, including for vulnerable groups; promoting social dialogue between governments, employers and workers; and ensuring inclusive social security systems. It was to be hoped that the Summit would promote advances in education, workers' rights and inclusive policies for a sustainable, equitable future for all in line with the achievement of the SDGs. He supported the draft decision.

- 854. A Government representative of Japan**, welcoming the draft key messages, requested the Office to include the topic of population ageing, a challenge facing an increasing number of Member States. Promoting employment among older persons, supporting upskilling and reskilling, and adapting social security systems would create a positive impact in terms of social development.
- 855. A Government representative of Chile** said that countries must centre their efforts around the three proposed pillars of the renewed global social contract. He welcomed the focus on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, underlining the importance of making enterprises more sustainable by improving regulatory and institutional frameworks, taking specific measures to improve productivity and access to credit for microenterprises and small enterprises, and focusing on measures aimed at extending social protection. It would be important to address the various challenges described in the document by strengthening social dialogue in the period leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development. The draft key messages provided the right approach to reducing inequalities in the context of the 2030 Agenda, particularly in terms of implementing a comprehensive strategy to reduce and prevent inequalities in the world of work. At the Summit, the international community should call on organizations in the multilateral system, including the UN and financial institutions, to work in closer cooperation to address root causes of inequalities at the global and national levels. He encouraged all countries to make progress in ratifying ILO Conventions relating to safe and healthy working environments as a concrete way to advance the new social contract. He supported the draft decision.
- 856. A Government representative of Colombia** said that the draft key messages reflected the shared commitment of constituents to inclusion, equality and sustainability. The three proposed pillars of the new global social contract provided the foundations for a more equitable society where everyone could have access to labour rights and social protection. She described a number of measures taken by her Government in that regard, including enhancing social protection, implementing labour reforms and fostering tripartite social dialogue.
- 857. A Government representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Second World Summit for Social Development provided an important opportunity to accelerate progress on the SDGs and drive forward poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all. She underscored her Government's support for the ILO's unique role in delivering the perspectives of governments, employers and workers with a view to promoting social justice and decent work.
- 858. A Government representative of Mexico** noted that the draft key messages reflected the ILO's mandate and would channel efforts towards the implementation of the SDGs and the Pact for the Future. Furthermore, they constituted a stronger demonstration of the commitment of tripartite constituents to the creation of a new social contract and their shared responsibility. Although it was the Governing Body that would endorse the draft key messages, they would represent the ILO's contribution to the discussion and should therefore be welcomed by all ILO constituents. Strengthening of labour rights, the transition to formality

and universal social protection should be incorporated into the vision for a new people-centred social contract with a view to reducing inequalities. He supported the draft decision.

- 859. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) thanked the members of the Working Party for their intersessional work. It was pleasing to note that the draft key messages reflected the views and priorities of all constituents, including non-members of the Governing Body.
- 860.** She gave an update on the preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development, noting that the head of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) had been appointed the Secretary-General of the Summit. That body would be providing support to a UN inter-agency task force, to be chaired by the UN Deputy Secretary-General, in which the ILO would participate. The Summit co-facilitators had recently held a meeting with permanent missions based in New York to gather information on their initial expectations of the procedures and potential outcome of the Summit. Consultations would continue, and there would be an opportunity for the social partners to participate before the opening of intergovernmental negotiations on the content of the outcome document. Although the initial intention had been to produce a first draft by November 2024, the process had been delayed somewhat. As the dates of the Summit would have clashed with the dates originally proposed for the 355th Session of the Governing Body in November 2025, the Office was working with the Officers of the Governing Body to postpone the session to mid-November.
- 861.** It was to be hoped that constituents would refer to the draft key messages during the Summit and that governments would seek to reflect them in their national positions. Since the negotiations scheduled to take place in New York would be intergovernmental negotiations, the Office and social partners would not be invited to provide input. However, the Office would actively participate in the inter-agency task force and would contact permanent missions to promote the draft key messages. The Office was also planning to promote the draft key messages at the 63rd session of the Commission for Social Development in February 2025, exploring the possibility of organizing a side event at the Summit with tripartite participation and considering inviting the two co-facilitators of the intergovernmental process to attend the 353rd Session of the Governing Body in March 2025. The Office would continue to engage with UNDESA and other bodies in the UN system to promote the draft key messages and constituent priorities and would encourage ILO regional and country offices to work with governments to do the same.
- 862.** A report on the state of social justice, to be drafted by the Office, would explore how different aspects of social justice had evolved since the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development with a view to informing discussions at the Summit. The Office planned to brief permanent missions in New York on the report to raise awareness of relevant issues. In closing, she noted the importance placed by several speakers on the role to be played by the Global Coalition for Social Justice in the follow-up to the Summit.
- 863. The Employer spokesperson** was pleased to note that the draft key messages had been well received by constituents. It would be crucial to ensure that the views expressed by government representatives in the context of the ILO would be reflected in discussions in advance of the Second World Summit for Social Development. It was her group's hope that national delegations to the Summit would be tripartite, as they had been at the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, and that the global delegation of the ILO as an organization was not only the Office, but a full tripartite delegation with all three constituents present. She thanked the Office for the information on initiatives aimed at promoting the tripartite input to the Summit and expressed hope that UNDESA would participate in ILO

activities in the future. Lastly, she took note of the role to be played by the Global Coalition for Social Justice as well as the importance of ensuring alignment between ILO activities and those of other international stakeholders.

864. The Worker spokesperson expressed hope that the draft key messages would be endorsed and that all parties would enthusiastically engage in the subsequent phase of preparations for the Second World Summit for Social Development.

865. The Director-General said that the Office was already working closely with UNDESA in preparation for the Second World Summit for Social Development. It was important to acknowledge that the geopolitical situation was markedly different from that of 1995, and the Office was considering how best to address that reality. One option was the possible secondment of an ILO staff member to UNDESA or the UN. He took note of points raised regarding the need for coherence between permanent missions based in Geneva and New York and said that the Summit co-facilitators were planning to travel to Geneva to meet representatives for that purpose. Subject to the agreement of the Officers of the Governing Body and the Screening Group, the Office would seek to brief the Governing Body on the report on the state of social justice in March 2025.

21.2. Oral report by the Chairperson on the exchange of views held during the first week of the 352nd Session concerning the key messages of the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development (2025)

866. The Chairperson recalled that the Governing Body had met as a Committee of the Whole on 31 October to exchange views on the draft key messages of the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development (2025) prepared by the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda.

867. The Chairperson of the Working Party had emphasized that the key messages, if approved by the Governing Body, would provide a solid input from the world of work to the Summit, and represented a meaningful compromise on the different views expressed throughout the negotiation process in the Working Party. He had also insisted on the role the tripartite constituents should play in promoting the key messages to influence the outcome of the Summit, and offered the support of the Working Party to continue assisting the Governing Body in preparing the ILO's contribution to the Summit.

868. The Employer spokesperson had stressed the leadership role the ILO should play in the preparations of and follow-up to the Summit and the importance of ensuring that tripartite delegations participated.

869. The Worker spokesperson had emphasized the interconnection between social development, social justice and peace. She had conveyed the importance her group attached to democracy, adequate financing for social development, and policy coherence within the multilateral system, and highlighted the need to have a clear and time-bound follow-up once the key messages had been adopted by the Governing Body.

870. The Government representatives speaking on behalf of the Africa group, ASPAG, IMEC, the EU and a majority of GRULAC members had welcomed the consensus reached. The Government representatives of Barbados, Switzerland, India, Indonesia, Japan, Chile, Colombia, the United Kingdom and Mexico had highlighted specific points of the draft key messages of particular relevance to their context. Several speakers had insisted on the important role the ILO, as the

only tripartite organization of the UN system, could play in the Summit preparations, deliberations and outcome, notably through the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Participants had stressed that priority should be given to ensuring consistency between the messages agreed upon in Geneva and those delivered in New York.

- 871.** The Office had provided updated information on the Summit preparations, stressing its ongoing engagement with the two co-facilitators and with UNDESA, the coordinating agency. The Director-General had concluded the session by highlighting the close cooperation between the ILO and UNDESA in the lead-up to the Summit.
- 872.** In response to a proposal made by the Government representative of Japan during the exchange of views, the Working Party had decided to add the sentence “This is particularly important in the context of ageing societies” to subparagraph 9(a)(ii) of the draft key messages, which had subsequently been reissued in document GB.352/INS/21/1(Rev.1).
- 873.** An amendment to the draft decision, which had been proposed by the Government of Colombia and circulated by the Office, proposed to insert the following additional subparagraph:
- (d) requested the Office to keep the Working Party informed over the course of the intergovernmental negotiations on the political declaration to help ensure coherence and the timely inclusion of key messages in the declaration;
- 874. A Government representative of Spain** and, **speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru seconded the proposed amendment.
- 875. The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for organizing the meeting of the Committee of the Whole, which had proven to be an inclusive and constructive format. She urged each Government to take concerted action at the national level to ensure that its Ministry of Foreign Affairs actively integrated the ILO’s input into the negotiations. The Organization’s expertise and insights would be vital to ensure that the outcomes were informed, relevant and reflective of the needs of workers and employers globally. She also urged Governments to consult with their social partners at the national level at each stage of the negotiation process; an inclusive approach would both strengthen the outcomes of the Summit and guarantee that voices were heard from across society. The Office could play a valuable role by organizing information sessions and meetings with the co-facilitators and regional groups to ensure that all stakeholders had an opportunity to contribute effectively to the dialogue. The Employers’ group welcomed the Director-General’s intention to involve the Office in working with UNDESA, which would provide an important basis for the ILO’s involvement in preparations for the Summit. The group was eager to provide substantive input for a political declaration that would have a strong and meaningful impact on employers, workers and governments alike and reflect constituents’ shared commitment for fair and effective labour practices worldwide. The Employers’ group supported the draft decision and the proposed amendment.
- 876. The Worker spokesperson** thanked all groups that had spoken in the Committee of the Whole in favour of adopting the draft key messages. The Working Party, in which her group was represented, had agreed to include a reference to population ageing in the draft key messages, as proposed by the Government representative of Japan. She nevertheless noted that some countries were facing challenges related to the increased proportion of younger generations. She expressed her group’s thanks to the Government representative of Colombia for his able leadership of the Working Party, the ILO staff members who had supported the process and the Employer and Government representatives who had participated in the Working Party for their commitment to working towards consensus. The Governing Body’s endorsement of the vision for a new social contract – the result of representatives of all groups coming together to

defend their respective rights and interests – would send a very positive signal. She welcomed the Director-General's promise to ensure high-level engagement in the process within the UN system and looked forward to working in the coming months to secure the ILO's rightful place at the centre of the organization of the Summit. The world needed a new social contract that could deliver for all working people. She supported the draft decision and the proposed amendment.

- 877. A Government representative of Colombia** speaking in his capacity as Chairperson of the Working Party, expressed his appreciation to the social partners for their efforts to reach consensus within the Working Party, which had demonstrated that it was possible if there was the will to do so. He explained that the intention behind his Government's proposed amendment to the draft decision was simply to request the Office to keep constituents informed of the situation, ensuring the smooth continuation of the process.
- 878.** Speaking in his national capacity, he underscored the importance of the Summit and its potential outcomes. He invited all stakeholders to participate constructively in future negotiations and the upcoming meetings of the Working Party with a view to developing a draft resolution that would eventually be submitted to the Summit. He encouraged all Governing Body members to support the draft decision with the amendment proposed by his Government.
- 879. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of Gabon welcomed the consensus reached by the Working Party and the views expressed in the Committee of the Whole. He commended the decision of the UN General Assembly to provide for the adoption of a political declaration at the Summit that would boost social development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. He supported the transmission of the draft key messages to the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the UN Secretary-General. In addition, he encouraged the Working Party to continue its work in accordance with the agreed timetable with a view to preparing a draft resolution. In view of its mandate to promote social justice and decent work, the ILO and its tripartite constituents should play a leading role throughout negotiations on the outcome document of the Summit and in its implementation. He therefore welcomed the commitment made to examining the possibility of scheduling the 353rd Session of the Governing Body so that it would not clash with the dates of the Summit, thereby enabling tripartite constituents to actively participate in both. He supported the draft decision and the proposed amendment.
- 880. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Peru expressed sincere gratitude to the Working Party for its efforts to reach consensus on the draft key messages and reiterated his group's appreciation for the dedication shown by the Chairperson of the Working Party. He thanked the Office for providing crucial support to the Working Party.
- 881. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of China expressed support for the draft decision with the amendment proposed by Colombia and reaffirmed his group's commitment to the preparatory process for the Summit. With concerted efforts, the tripartite constituents would be able to contribute successfully to the Summit.
- 882. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Hungary said that Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia aligned themselves with her statement. She congratulated constituents on their unanimous support for the draft key messages. The EU and its Member States were committed to engaging constructively in negotiations on the political declaration to be adopted at the Summit with a view to reinforcing the social dimension of sustainable

development and addressing major inequalities and transformative challenges in the world, such as those posed by demographic, ecological and digital transitions. She called on the Office and all Governments to ensure that the social partners played a key role in preparations for, and the discussions of, the Summit so that the draft key messages would be duly reflected in the political declaration. She encouraged the Working Party to continue its work on the basis of the mandate agreed by the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024). Her group supported the draft decision with the proposed amendment.

- 883. A Government representative of the United States** highlighted the importance of ILO constituents transmitting the draft key messages to their representatives participating in the intergovernmental negotiations on the political declaration of the Summit. Success in having the key messages reflected in the declaration would require constituents to remain engaged with their participating representatives throughout the negotiations. He welcomed the Office's active engagement in preparations for the Summit and the appointment of a senior adviser to support that work. He supported the draft decision with the proposed amendment, which underlined the important role of the Office and the Working Party in ensuring that the ILO's input to the Summit would be impactful. Keeping the Working Party informed about developments in the negotiations would enable its members to engage their regions and groups in the negotiation process.
- 884. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said that the Office would continue to support the Working Party in developing a draft resolution for consideration by the Governing Body and approval by the International Labour Conference. The Office remained fully committed to informing the Working Party and the Governing Body of developments during the negotiations on the political declaration. It would be important for delegations to advocate for issues of relevance to the ILO during those intergovernmental negotiations, as the Office would have limited capacity to participate. The Director-General had been invited to join a UN task force established by the UN Secretary-General to support preparations for the Summit, and the Office would continue engaging with UNDESA and other organizations in promoting the ILO's priorities and the participation of constituents.
- 885. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Government representative of Gabon said that he would like to know the reasoning behind the additional sentence proposed by Japan for inclusion in the draft key messages.
- 886. The Government representative of Japan** said that his Government had proposed including a reference to population ageing as the issue had not been reflected in the draft key messages, despite the fact that many countries were facing challenges relating to ageing societies.
- 887. The Worker spokesperson** said that, while ageing was indeed a concern in many regions, the major challenge in other regions was an increase in the number of young people in the labour market. It might therefore be appropriate to change the wording to refer to demographic change, including both ageing societies and expanding youth populations.
- 888. The Employer spokesperson** proposed to replace the words "ageing societies" with "very diverse demographic situations in the world" with a view to encapsulating all demographic developments.
- 889. The Worker spokesperson** suggested that a reference to ageing in some regions should remain, and that a reference to increasingly young populations in other regions could be added.

- 890. The Government representative of Japan** said that he had originally proposed including a specific reference to ageing as he was under the impression that there was already a reference to youth employment in the draft key messages.
- 891. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) confirmed that a subsequent sentence in the same subparagraph contained the wording "... invites the Summit to pay particular attention to youth employment...".
- 892. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Government representative of Gabon noted that the challenges in Africa, which had a largely young population, were very different to those experienced by countries with ageing populations. Therefore, if a reference to ageing was included, it would be equally important to include a reference to young people.
- 893. The Government representative of Colombia** explained that the Working Party had agreed to add the sentence on ageing societies to the document on an exceptional basis in the interest of consensus, despite the fact that it had not been presented during the Working Party and only the draft decision was open to amendments. He did not object to including references to both ageing and young people.
- 894. The Worker spokesperson** noted that the references to youth employment and the school-to-work transition and to lifelong learning were only indirect references to young people and older adults, and that both groups could be referred to explicitly in the context of demographic change.
- 895. The Government representative of China** agreed that it was important to highlight both ageing populations and young populations.
- 896. A Government representative of Malawi** agreed that references to both groups should be included, as the issues affecting both groups were intertwined and needed to be addressed in tandem.
- 897. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Government representative of Gabon proposed to replace the wording "in the context of ageing societies" with "in different demographic contexts".
- 898. The Worker spokesperson** said that it would be useful to include specific language regarding both ageing societies and young societies, particularly in the light of the comment regarding their interconnectedness, but she could support the proposal made by the Africa group, subject to the agreement of the Government representative of Japan.
- 899. The Government representative of Japan** said that, in the interest of compromise, he could accept the proposal made by the Africa group.
- 900. The Employer spokesperson** said that the wording appeared reasonable, and that the challenges faced by ageing societies and societies with a large youth population could be referred to explicitly in the statements made at the Summit.

Decision

901. The Governing Body:

- (a) **adopted the key messages of the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development prepared by the Working Party on a New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda, which are contained in the Appendix of document GB.352/INS/21/1(Rev.2);**

- (b) requested the Director-General to transmit the key messages to the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Secretary-General;
- (c) requested constituents to transmit the key messages to the representatives of their governments involved in the intergovernmental negotiations on the political declaration to be adopted by the Second World Summit for Social Development;
- (d) requested the Office to keep the Working Party informed over the course of the intergovernmental negotiations on the political declaration to help ensure coherence and the timely inclusion of key messages in the declaration;
- (e) instructed the Working Party to prepare a draft resolution on the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development, highlighting the role that the ILO and its constituents could play in the implementation of the Summit's outcome, for examination by the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) and transmission to the International Labour Conference for adoption at its 113th Session (2025).

(GB.352/INS/21/1(Rev.2), paragraph 6, as amended by the Governing Body)

22. Composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meetings (GB.352/INS/22)

- 902. The Worker spokesperson** noted with appreciation that the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference would be held at the Palais des Nations and hoped that restrictions on space would not be excessive. She supported the proposed dates for the 355th Session (November 2025) of the Governing Body, but noted that they meant a shorter period between that session and the 356th Session (March 2026). The Governing Body's workload would need to be considered when taking a final decision on the duration of those sessions to avoid having too many evening sittings as had been the case at the current session. She recalled that the first Convention adopted by the ILO had established an eight-hour working day. If the Governing Body was unable to reduce its agenda or demonstrate greater discipline in terms of time management, its sessions should be extended to include sittings on the Friday of the second week. Although many important decisions had been made despite the workload, the Governing Body must give serious consideration to how working conditions could be improved. She supported the draft decision.
- 903. The Employer spokesperson** took note of the proposed meeting dates for the meeting of experts on the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185) and the meeting of experts on occupational safety and health in extreme weather events and changing weather patterns. The agenda and composition of the latter should reflect economic and climatic diversity across sectors and regions. She urged the Office to ensure that discussions at the Technical Meeting on Access to Labour Justice for All: Prevention and Resolution of Labour Disputes would be efficient and effective and that unnecessary sittings would be avoided. While she supported the proposed list of observers contained in the appendix to the document, their contributions should not constitute a significant part of deliberations. The 355th Session (November 2025) of the Governing Body should finish on Thursday 27 November, as per usual practice; her group did not support extending that session to the Friday. She noted that the dates for the meeting of experts on paternity and

parental protection, and other care leave would be decided by the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025). Her group supported the draft decision.

Decision

904. The Governing Body, upon the recommendation of its Officers:

- (a) approved the holding of a meeting of experts on challenges to the implementation and ratification of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185), and its proposed arrangements;**
- (b) approved the holding of a meeting of experts on occupational safety and health in extreme weather events and changing weather patterns and its proposed arrangements, with the composition and agenda to be submitted to the 353rd Session (March 2025);**
- (c) approved the extension of the duration of the Technical Meeting on Access to Labour Justice for All: Prevention and Resolution of Labour Disputes;**
- (d) endorsed the proposals made in relation to the invitation of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations to official meetings, as listed in the appendix to document GB.352/INS/22;**
- (e) took note of the programme of meetings contained in Part II of document GB.352/INS/22, subject to further decision-making of the Governing Body.**

([GB.352/INS/22](#), paragraph 20)