



Governing Body

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

Policy Development Section

POL

Minutes of the Policy Development Section

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Social Dialogue Segment

1. Report on the implementation of the revised plan of action on social dialogue and tripartism for the period 2019–23 (GB.352/POL/1)

1. **The Employer spokesperson** said that as a guarantor of social dialogue, the ILO had a duty to take measures to strengthen it in all its forms. The activities carried out under component 1 of the plan of action, which related to capacity-building for constituents and social dialogue institutions, had proved vital and should be pursued further. Too often, a bottom-up approach was taken not only in the identification of activities, but also in the selection of countries to be targeted. Development projects had to be responsive to the needs of constituents, and constructive social dialogue had to be harnessed to promote formalization as a matter of priority. Insufficient attention was paid in the plan to maximizing the potential of workplace cooperation. It was imperative for the ILO to do more to foster all forms of social dialogue so that the social partners could choose the most effective form depending on the situation. Furthermore, the ILO should encourage social dialogue on the development of skills that met market demands.
2. Regarding component 2, on enhanced research and training, her group strongly supported evidence-based research and training. It was regrettable, however, that the ILO was not yet able to present solid quantitative and other data on their impact on social dialogue. In relation to future flagship reports, it would be crucial to stick to agreed themes. In addition, experience had shown that it was not feasible to present a flagship report every year. With respect to component 3, on standards-related action, it was important to focus on the effective implementation of international labour standards, especially those related to social dialogue.
3. Concerning component 4, on enhancing policy coherence, the ILO should continue to mainstream social dialogue and tripartism across all policy areas, development projects and Decent Work Country Programmes, and in the multilateral system. Contrary to the assessment made in the document, the Employers' group believed that the structure of the programme and budget policy outcome entitled "Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue" had not resulted in any notable positive developments, pointing once again to the need for dedicated outputs for employers' and workers' organizations. It was unfortunate that the document did not include adequate lessons learned and instead detailed only specific results without any clear indicators or metrics to assess the implementation and impact of the activities undertaken. That issue should be addressed in future plans of action, starting with the establishment of clear internal reporting mechanisms.
4. Regarding the conclusions, in addition to there being a limited number of social dialogue and industrial relations specialists, there continued to be an imbalance between worker and employer specialists; the Office should strive for better balance in the support provided to the constituents and ensure that its staff had knowledge relevant to them, including with regard to social dialogue. Her group remained unconvinced by the recently adopted integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining, which created significant duplication of efforts and went beyond the action agreed at the International Labour Conference. The Governing Body should avoid a proliferation of strategies that might prove counterproductive. Before commenting on the draft decision, she would appreciate a response from the Office to the points she had raised.
5. **The Worker spokesperson** commended the Office for the important work done within the scope of the plan of action. Efforts under component 1 needed to be strengthened, including

by mobilizing additional funds. She reiterated the importance of developing innovative means of overcoming obstacles to, and preventing serious violations of freedom of association and collective bargaining rights. The Workers' group highlighted the importance of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) in promoting social dialogue, in particular across borders and for vulnerable groups of workers in global supply chains. In those contexts, social dialogue was an essential tool for companies' due diligence in identifying, preventing and mitigating the negative impacts of their activities on human and workers' rights.

6. She congratulated the Office for adapting the plan of action during the COVID-19 pandemic, when collective bargaining had proven crucial in finding effective solutions. Unfortunately, many of the relevant documents prepared by the Office had not been translated into other languages, and she wondered whether there were any plans to do so according to the constituents' needs. Welcoming the progress made on gender equality at a time when successive crises had resulted in women's rights coming under attack, she said that it was essential for the ILO to reaffirm its ambitions in that area. Regrettably, the document lacked information on the progress made in terms of women's representation in negotiating bodies, as well as on results achieved through collective bargaining.
7. Regarding component 2, the Workers' group welcomed the first flagship report on social dialogue and looked forward to the publication of the second edition. Her group reiterated its request that each edition of the flagship report should address the role and impact of collective bargaining in terms of inequality, pay and working conditions. The Workers' group highlighted the importance of databases such as Industrial Relations Data (IRData) and the ILO Legal Database on Industrial Relations (IRLex), which should be translated into other languages and rendered more accessible. The Office's work in relation to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicator 8.8.2 should be strengthened, including in terms of budgetary resources. The training of ILO constituents in social dialogue and industrial relations, in particular at the International Training Centre of the ILO, remained a priority for her group.
8. With regard to component 3, she reiterated the importance of standards-related action, in particular the ratification and effective implementation 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); given that there had only been one ratification of each of those Conventions since 2019, the Office should further intensify its efforts to achieve universal ratification.
9. Turning to component 4, she said that to achieve tangible results for workers and employers, social dialogue must be based on freedom of association and collective bargaining. The inclusion of a distinct policy outcome on social dialogue and tripartism in the programme and budget would give social dialogue greater weight and visibility at the UN level, provided that sufficient resources were made available. The plan of action had been implemented during a difficult period, and the Office should strengthen its knowledge base on the essential role of social dialogue institutions in managing emerging issues, crises and transitions in the world of work. Her group would continue to prioritize the strengthening of mechanisms and institutions for social dialogue on policies regarding the changing world of work.
10. She underscored the need to intensify efforts to promote full respect for freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. The Office's commendable efforts to strengthen coordination on social dialogue and reinforce the collective bargaining strategy had been hindered by the lack of social dialogue and industrial relations specialists. The Workers' group supported the Office in intensifying its efforts to

ensure that UN Resident Coordinators integrated the promotion of social dialogue and tripartism into their regional activities. Closer attention should be paid to measuring the impact of social dialogue and developing more comprehensive knowledge of its effects.

11. The Workers' group reiterated the importance of recurrent discussions on social dialogue and hoped that the role of social dialogue in addressing key themes – including the living wage, informality, gender equality, digital and climate transitions and global supply chains – would be addressed at the third recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism at the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2026. Lastly, the Workers' group reaffirmed the central role of social dialogue in all the ILO's activities and the importance of allocating sufficient resources to the issue. The Office should draw on the lessons learned when implementing the plan of action in its execution of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25 and its preparation of the Programme and Budget for 2026–27 and the third recurrent discussion. She supported the draft decision.
12. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Mozambique said that his group appreciated the Office's efforts to train constituents and social dialogue institutions and strengthen development cooperation and related technical assistance. However, greater effort to provide training and technical assistance should have been made during the implementation of the plan of action, a time when Africa was still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan of action did not set out a strong strategy for the post-recovery period that would restore effective and inclusive tripartism and social dialogue in Africa.
13. The Africa group welcomed the Office's efforts to build constituents' capacities to formulate policies on the transition from the informal to the formal economy. In Africa, where over 85 per cent of workers were in the informal economy, it was essential to promote and support trade unions and employers' organizations in order for them to integrate informal economy organizations. It was also important to strengthen the capacity of labour administrations in order to address the decent work challenges in the informal economy. His group supported the planned emphasis on the plan of action and coherence in work on social dialogue and tripartism and in the ILO's engagement with the UN system. He supported the draft decision.
14. **Speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)**, a Government representative of the Republic of Korea commended the Office's achievements in strengthening social dialogue and tripartism. The ILO's guides, manuals and reports played a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge and supporting workers traditionally excluded from social dialogue and in expanding the scope of tripartite dialogue and building the capacities of constituents. ILO training programmes in areas such as gender equality, violence and harassment, and organizing techniques, delivered in collaboration with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Trade Union Council, should be expanded to other parts of the Asia and the Pacific region.
15. She commended the ILO's efforts to build the capacity of social partners in critical areas such as employment, adapting to the changing world of work and occupational safety and health. More attention should be paid, however, to challenges such as the just transition, climate change, the digital transformation and demographic shifts. In the area of research and training, the process of measuring freedom of association and collective bargaining rights must keep pace with rapid changes in the world of work, and ASPAG would engage constructively in further discussions on how to better monitor progress in line with SDG indicator 8.8.2.

16. Social dialogue had come under pressure during the COVID-19 pandemic, and some social partners had been excluded from governmental decision-making processes. The Office and constituents must therefore renew their efforts to build mutual trust in social dialogue, in particular in times of crisis. ASPAG emphasized the need for adequate budget allocation for social dialogue and tripartism, especially for countries in the ASPAG region where resources were limited. ASPAG acknowledged the Office's efforts to strengthen cooperation within Decent Work Teams and between field offices and headquarters in order to address the shortage of social dialogue and industrial relations specialists; cost efficiency and effective outcomes must be prioritized. She supported the draft decision.
17. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Uruguay welcomed the tangible progress made under the plan of action during a period marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, threats to fundamental labour rights, geopolitical tensions and economic insecurity. GRULAC agreed with the Office's conclusions regarding the importance of social dialogue in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic; countries' different experiences should highlight the impact of social dialogue on policy development and how the maintenance of social dialogue institutions allowed them to respond rapidly and effectively in times of crisis. GRULAC recognized the Office's important role in capacity-building for constituents, in particular through the International Training Centre of the ILO. The experience of adapting training formats during the pandemic should be drawn on to reach the broadest audience. He supported the draft decision.
18. **Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Ukraine, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with the statement. Countries with strong frameworks for social dialogue and extensive collective bargaining coverage tended to have more competitive and resilient economies, underscoring the importance of enhancing social dialogue globally. She therefore encouraged the Office to continue to strengthen its research, policy guidance and capacity-building efforts. Moreover, collective bargaining served as a unique mechanism for the mutual benefit of workers and employers. The ratification and implementation of Conventions Nos 87 and 98, as well as the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), were critical in that regard, and the Office should continue assisting Member States in their ratification and effective implementation.
19. She welcomed the report's emphasis on capacity-building among tripartite constituents. The EU and its Member States reiterated its view that institutional capacity-building for social dialogue actors and mechanisms should be integrated across all ILO policy outcomes and Decent Work Country Programmes. It was essential that the Office intensified its efforts at all levels and continued to demonstrate the added value of social dialogue and tripartism, in particular in the context of UN reform. However, the lack of social dialogue and industrial relations specialists in the field and at headquarters was concerning. She welcomed outcome 2 of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25, which focused on tripartism and social dialogue, and urged the Director-General to allocate adequate resources to it. She encouraged the Office to prioritize measuring the impact of its activities to ensure their effectiveness, and she supported the draft decision.
20. **A Government representative of Mexico** welcomed the results achieved under the plan of action and called for continued focus on strengthening and promoting the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization at the national level. The ILO played a fundamental role in providing guidance to strengthen tripartite institutions and social dialogue processes in Member States. The Organization must assume a global strategic role that went beyond

technical cooperation and present itself as a leading actor in promoting effective social dialogue processes. Her Government was in favour of action to increase the number of social dialogue and industrial relations specialists in field offices in order to provide the necessary technical assistance in the area of social dialogue and tripartism. The results obtained through the plan of action should inform the third recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism.

21. **A Government representative of the United States of America** welcomed the Office's efforts to implement the plan of action, highlighting, inter alia, the publication of the first flagship report on social dialogue and the development of an integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining. Efforts to promote the full realization of freedom of association and collective bargaining should be intensified.
22. The lack of social dialogue and industrial relations specialists was a serious constraint, and the Office should take the issue into consideration in implementing the Programme and Budget for 2024–25 and developing the draft Programme and Budget for 2026–27. The Office should continue to identify lessons learned through ongoing social dialogue efforts and include them in the background paper for the third recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism. She supported the draft decision.
23. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) said that the Governing Body's guidance would be reflected in the draft Programme and Budget for 2026–27. The report was not intended to be an evaluation or exhaustive list of the activities conducted by the Office since 2019; the lessons learned related only to the implementation of the activities mentioned, and a full evaluation would be conducted in 2025 in preparation for the third recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism. As reflected in the document, the Office was working on different forms of social dialogue, including tripartite dialogue, collective bargaining, workplace cooperation and the handling of grievances in the workplace. Indeed, outcome 2 of the Programme and Budget 2024–25 had specific indicators related to workplace cooperation, collective bargaining and tripartite social dialogue, increasing the Office's accountability in those areas.
24. The Office was endeavouring to enhance the synergies between tripartite dialogue at the national and sectoral levels, collective bargaining and workplace cooperation, since they were mutually reinforcing. The Office was keenly aware of the need to produce empirical evidence of the impact of social dialogue and tripartism. Furthermore, it had intensified its research activities in order to promote social dialogue and tripartism also in the UN system.
25. The Office was working to generate more specific, granular indicators to measure the status of social dialogue institutions, and the 21st International Conference of Labour Statisticians had adopted a decision aimed at developing a new statistical standard on industrial relations indicators. The availability of resources in different languages was dependent on funding, although the Office had tried to ensure that the publications and tools for which there was most demand were translated into other languages.
26. **The Employer spokesperson** said that she looked forward to the comprehensive evaluation to be conducted in 2025. She welcomed the Africa group's mention of the need to work towards greater formalization, and she supported the draft decision.
27. **The Worker spokesperson** said the Office's future work should focus on the right to collective bargaining, which was a fundamental right and an issue of central importance to the Workers' group.

Decision

- 28. The Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into account the views expressed during the discussion when implementing the Programme and Budget 2024–25, developing the Programme and Budget 2026–27 and preparing the third recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism at the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference in 2026.**

(GB.352/POL/1, paragraph 59)

2. Sectoral meetings held in 2024 and proposals for sectoral work in 2025 (GB.352/POL/2)

- 29. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, proposed by the Employers' group and circulated by the Office. According to the proposal, subparagraph (e) would be amended to read:**

(e) requested the Director-General to provide at its 353rd Session (March 2025) an analysis on the scope, elements and procedural aspects of the possible revision of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), including related procedural aspects, and requested the Director-General to engage in informal consultations to prepare the discussion of the Governing Body;

- 30. The Governing Body had before it a subamendment to the amendment to paragraph (e) proposed by the Employers' group. The subamendment, proposed by the Industrialized Market Economy Countries (IMEC) and circulated by the Office, read:**

(e) requested the Director-General to provide at its 353rd Session (March 2025) an analysis on the scope, elements and procedural aspects of the possible revision of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), including related procedural aspects, and requested the Director-General to engage in informal consultations to prepare the discussion to place this item on the agenda of the 353rd Session of the Governing Body;

- 31. The Governing Body had before it another amendment to the draft decision, proposed by the Workers' group and circulated by the Office, to add a new subparagraph (e), which read:**

(e) decided to convene a meeting of experts to devise and adopt guidelines on the application of the fundamental principles and rights at work in the professional sports sector, and also on violence and harassment in the world of sport in 2025;

- 32. The Worker spokesperson** noted with interest the outcomes of the fifth meeting of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters and the Joint ILO-IMO Meeting to Adopt Guidelines for the Medical Examination of Fishers/Fishing Vessel Personnel. The code of practice on safety and health in forestry work as the outcome of the Meeting of Experts to revise the 1998 version of the code should be widely disseminated to help prevent injury and death in that highly hazardous sector. He called for the code to be translated into Portuguese and Bahasa and for implementation at the regional and country levels. He welcomed the section on the follow-up to the outcomes of sectoral meetings and asked for this to be maintained at future Governing Body sessions. His group acknowledged the implementation of the outcomes of sectoral meetings and requested that the funds allocated to the Sectoral Policies Department be increased and included in the next programme and budget. Regional meetings on the impact of digitalization in the financial sector should be held as soon as possible in the Asia and the

Pacific and the Americas regions. He underscored that the joint work with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) should include measures to implement the conclusions of the technical meeting in the civil aviation sector.

33. The ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) should be urgently updated to address the challenges of the twenty-first century, such as digitalization, climate change and the acute shortage of teachers worldwide. An updated version should be based on the solid foundations of the 1966 Recommendation and the ILO should lead the revision process, with the full support and inclusion of teachers and their unions. He commended the Director-General for his leadership on the United Nations (UN) System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation. More than a billion people did not have access to drinking water and 2 billion lacked adequate sanitation. Building the capacity and promoting formalization of sanitation workers was a priority and he supported the Strategy to improve the poor working conditions in the sector, which was a key public service.
34. He approved of the proposed list of meetings to be held from the fourth quarter of 2024 to the third quarter of 2025, including the revised purpose of a meeting of experts to adopt guidelines on the promotion of decent work in the recycling industry. Furthermore, the Governing Body should decide on the future action and social dialogue necessary to apply the fundamental rights and principles at work in the world of sport. As the brief had identified significant barriers to the promotion and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work for professional athletes, which affected young people in particular, a meeting of experts should be convened in the current biennium to devise and adopt guidelines for the sports sector. His group had submitted a proposed amendment to the draft decision to that effect. The funds to organize such a meeting were available but the political will has so far been lacking.
35. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group supported the outcome of the sectoral meetings held in the first half of 2024. He paid tribute to Mr Selwyn Bailey, who had passed away shortly after chairing the Joint ILO-IMO Meeting to Adopt Guidelines for the Medical Examination of Fishers/Fishing Vessels, and whose profound expertise and warm presence had left a lasting impression on all. He extended heartfelt condolences to Mr Bailey's family and his colleagues from the Government of South Africa.
36. He expressed concern regarding the unilateral decision of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to change the title of the guidelines, agreed by the tripartite constituents of the Joint ILO-IMO meeting, which undermined consensus and policy coherence across the multilateral system. He urged the Office and the Director-General to ensure that it remained an isolated incident. Emphasizing the importance of support for effective implementation, he endorsed the recommendation for Member States to become parties to various international fishing-related instruments. He appreciated the Office's proposal and accompanying rationale to amend the title and purpose of the meeting of experts on decent work in recycling; policy guidelines, having broader scope, were more suitable than a code of practice. His group supported the proposal to schedule a technical meeting on decent work in the railways sector for 1–5 September 2025.
37. With reference to the amendment proposed by the Employers' group, he recalled that at the International Labour Conference in June 2022, the group had called for an analysis of the teaching profession, which was necessary to guide a possible revision of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. Without such an analysis, the group was not in a position to decide on the placement of an item on a possible revision on the agenda of the 353rd Session of the Governing Body.

38. He requested clarification of the nature of the proposed follow-up action to the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation.
39. His group did not support the Workers' proposal to convene a meeting of experts to devise and adopt guidelines on the application of the fundamental principles and rights at work in the professional sports sector. The schedule for 2025 was full, with five sectoral meetings, in addition to the Second World Summit for Social Development and the 20th American Regional Meeting. Increasing the workload would be unreasonable. Furthermore, the Governing Body had already approved, at its 347th Session in March 2023, the programme of sectoral meetings for the biennium 2024–25. He requested that the Workers' group present its proposal at the January 2025 session of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies, when the tripartite constituents would again have the opportunity to assess a set of proposals for the biennium 2026–27. He cautioned against undermining the instrumental role and relevance of those bodies in scheduling sectoral activities.
40. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Sudan welcomed the joint efforts undertaken by the FAO, IMO and ILO to address illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and the valuable outcomes of the discussions on safety and working conditions, protection of the marine environment, and inter-agency cooperation to promote and implement internationally agreed measures on the matter. Her group endorsed the ILO Guidelines on the medical examination of fishers and the revised code of practice on safety and health in forestry work, and requested the Office to publish records of the proceedings and the outcomes. She supported the adoption of a code of practice to advance decent work in recycling and the proposed technical meeting to be held on decent work in the railways sector. She supported the amendment proposed by the Employers' group, with the subamendment proposed by IMEC.
41. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru expressed the group's appreciation for the outcome of the fifth meeting of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters. He welcomed efforts to strengthen inter-agency cooperation with other international organizations such as the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and to combat forced and child labour in the fishing sector. He acknowledged the cooperation with the IMO on the adoption of guidelines for the medical examination of fishers and stressed the importance of having the necessary framework to protect their safety and health. He welcomed the fact that the revised code of practice on safety and health in forestry work included general provisions and technical safety guidelines applicable to all forestry operations. He agreed with the Office's proposal to amend the purpose of the meeting of experts to advance decent work in recycling.
42. He welcomed the Office's efforts to ensure follow-up on the conclusions and recommendations resulting from sectoral meetings and highlighted that strengthening collaboration with the IMO and ICAO was essential to promote decent work and foster best practices in the maritime and aviation sectors. A revision of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers was important since it could contribute to improving the quality of education and foster a more inclusive and equitable teaching environment; regulations should be adapted to the current realities of the sector, which underwent constant transformation. The UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation should address issues related not only to infrastructure but also social aspects, such as access to water and sanitation in the workplace. His group supported the amendment proposed by the Workers' group, given the importance of promoting decent work in the world of sport.

43. **Speaking on behalf of the Industrialized Market Economy Countries (IMEC)**, a Government representative of the Netherlands said that his group welcomed and fully supported the outcomes of the sectoral meetings held in 2024 and the proposed work for 2025. The Joint ILO-IMO meeting to adopt guidelines for the medical examination of fishers sought to ensure that workers in that crucial sector were medically fit, and the revised code of practice on safety and health in forestry work would bring about vital improvements to working conditions in that sector. As the world shifted towards a sustainable global economy, it was essential to ensure fair and safe working conditions in the recycling industry and supports the proposal for policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling. In addition, the emphasis on decent work in the railways sector was both timely and necessary.
44. He welcomed the ongoing discussions on the possible revision of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. IMEC supported the Employers' proposed amendment requesting an analysis on the scope, elements and procedural aspects, but had proposed a subamendment to ensure discussion of the matter at the 353rd Session of the Governing Body. He called for effective follow-up of the UN System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation, which would enhance multilateral coordination and accelerate progress on water and sanitation priorities worldwide. He noted the positive developments from the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, and encouraged the Office and constituents to continue their efforts in that area. He wished to hear whether sufficient resources were available to schedule a meeting of experts to devise and adopt guidelines on the application of the fundamental principles and rights at work in the professional sports sector in 2025, as requested by the Workers' group, before expressing his position on the draft decision.
45. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Sectoral Policies Department) said that the requested analysis regarding the possible revision of the Joint ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the status of teachers could be provided by March 2025. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had conducted an analysis of aspects related to the education sector within its purview and submitted it to the UNESCO Executive Board in October 2024.
46. **The Employer spokesperson** said that, while he preferred not to set such a short time frame for the analysis, he would be willing to support the subamendment proposed by IMEC in the spirit of compromise.
47. **The Worker spokesperson** said that, as the Organization should not fall too far behind UNESCO, which was an important partner, he supported the subamendment proposed by IMEC.
48. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru also expressed support for the IMEC subamendment.
49. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Niger proposed restructuring the IMEC subamendment to read: "requested the Director-General to place this item on the agenda of its 353rd Session and to provide at its 353rd Session (March 2025) an analysis on the scope, elements and procedural aspects of the possible revision of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966)".
50. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) proposed that the subparagraph in question be further subamended, for the sake of clarity, to read: "requested the Director-General to provide an analysis on the scope, elements and procedural aspects of the possible revision of the ILO-UNESCO

Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), and to place this item on the agenda of the 353rd Session (March 2025) for its consideration”.

51. **The representative of the Director-General** (Director, Sectoral Policies Department) said, with reference to the amendment proposed by the Workers’ group, considering scheduling and financial constraints, it would be difficult, although not impossible, to hold a meeting on sports in the second half of 2025. He noted that while the Sectoral Advisory Bodies decided on eight meetings to hold every biennium, in practice the Sectoral Policies Department organized additional meetings and the total number for the current biennium was 12. Should there be a decision for an additional meeting, there would be a trade-off, as less time and resources would be allowed for follow-up on outcomes to previous meetings.
52. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the needs of workers in the sports sector needed to be examined more thoroughly. Although it might be difficult to schedule a meeting in the second half of 2025, that possibility should be considered as an option. It was important to give consideration to the amendment proposed by the Workers’ group.
53. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the issue of sport, while important, was not sufficiently pressing to merit subverting the Sectoral Advisory Bodies process. Allocating resources to it would detract from work being done elsewhere. The issue could be discussed at the meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies in January 2025 for inclusion as part of the subsequent programme.
54. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Niger expressed support for the amendment proposed by the Workers’ group.
55. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the Netherlands said that, in view of scheduling and financial constraints and since the Sectoral Advisory Bodies would meet in early 2025, he favoured the inclusion of a meeting on sports on the agenda at that point rather than seeking to organize such a discussion during the current biennium.
56. **Speaking on behalf GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru reiterated his group’s support for the amendment.
57. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the schedule for 2025 was full. Adding another, non-urgent, item would not be the correct course of action.
58. **The Worker spokesperson** asked the Office to clarify whether it would be feasible to hold a meeting of experts on the matter in 2025, given the amount of support for doing so.
59. **The representative of the Director-General** (Director, Sectoral Policies Department) said that while organizing such a meeting in the second half of 2025 was not impossible, resources were finite and doing so would reduce the work to be carried out elsewhere.
60. **The Employer spokesperson** said that he remained unconvinced that the issue was sufficiently urgent to be added to the agenda for 2025.
61. **The Worker spokesperson** said that, in the interests of reaching consensus, his group could be flexible on the timing of such a meeting, which could be scheduled as the first meeting of January 2026.
62. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the Netherlands said that, as this has been a pending issue, and if there was agreement that there was a certain degree of urgency, his group would support the meeting to be held in January 2026. It was important not to put excessive strain on the Sectoral Policies Department.

- 63. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Niger said that there appeared to be a consensus forming. The Employers' group had indicated the possibility of a meeting in the next biennium, which would start in 2026, and the Workers' group had indicated that it could take place in January 2026.
- 64. The Employer spokesperson** clarified that his group had not indicated willingness to put the issue on the agenda for January 2026. Under the existing Sectoral Advisory Bodies process, the subject could be discussed in January 2025. That would be the best time to have the conversation and to create a programme of meetings for the next biennium. Pursuing a different course of action could undermine that process. It would be helpful to have a clear view of meetings currently scheduled for 2026 and what might be rescheduled, were the meeting in question to be scheduled for January that year.
- 65. The representative of the Director-General** (Director, Sectoral Policies Department) said that all meetings up to the end of 2025 had been finalized. Decisions on the meetings to be scheduled for 2026 remained to be taken. A meeting on sports could therefore probably be scheduled as early as the first quarter of that year.
- 66. The Employer spokesperson** said that, in the spirit of compromise, he was willing to agree that a meeting on rights at work in the professional sports sector would be held in 2026. However, the Sectoral Advisory Bodies would consider this meeting to be one of the meetings to be held in the 2026–27 biennium. He therefore proposed that the amendment proposed by the Workers' group should be subamended to refer to the year 2026.
- 67. The Worker spokesperson** said that he would like the amendment to reflect that such a meeting would be held during the first quarter of 2026.

Decision

68. The Governing Body:

- (a) **approved the ILO Guidelines on the medical examination of fishers and the revised code of practice on safety and health in forestry work and authorized the Director-General to publish the respective notes on the proceedings, including the outcome documents;**
- (b) **requested the Director-General to bear in mind, when drawing up proposals for future work, the recommendations made by the meeting referred to in section I(A) of document GB.352/POL/2;**
- (c) **endorsed the revised purpose of the meeting of experts to adopt a code of practice to advance decent work in recycling, amended as "to discuss and adopt policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling", and the corresponding adjustment of the title of the meeting;**
- (d) **endorsed the proposal relating to the dates, duration, official title, purpose and composition of the technical meeting on decent work in the railways sector as presented in paragraphs 24 and 25 of document GB.352/POL/2;**
- (e) **requested the Director-General to provide an analysis on the scope, elements and procedural aspects of the possible revision of the ILO-UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), and to place this item on the agenda of the 353rd Session (March 2025) for its consideration;**
- (f) **decided to convene in the first quarter of 2026 a meeting of experts to devise and adopt guidelines on the application of the fundamental principles and rights at work**

in the professional sports sector, as well as on violence and harassment in the world of sport;

- (g) took note of the United Nations System-wide Strategy for Water and Sanitation referred to in section V of document GB.352/POL/2 and requested the Director-General to ensure appropriate follow-up action.

(GB.352/POL/2, paragraph 58, as amended by the Governing Body)

Development Cooperation Segment

3. Enhanced programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories (GB.352/POL/3)

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

40. Guided by the principles enshrined in the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, the Governing Body:

- (a) reaffirmed the need to fully respect ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work, and that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice;
- (b) took note of all relevant resolutions on the Middle East and recalled Security Council resolutions 2720 (22 December 2023), 2712 (15 November 2023) and 2735 (10 June 2024), and the decision it had adopted concerning document GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1), which included a call for all parties to facilitate full, rapid, safe and unhindered access to the Gaza Strip;
- (c) recalled the decision adopted at its 350th Session (March 2024) on the report on crisis-related ILO work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (~~d~~a) took note of the information provided in document GB.352/POL/3, including the severe and lasting repercussions of the ongoing crisis on the Palestinian labour market, Palestinian tripartite constituents, and their families; and the progress made under the Office's emergency response plan recovery programme to address the urgent needs of Palestinian workers and employers;
- (e) stressed the urgent need to take all necessary measures to promote social justice, advance decent work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and respect relevant international labour standards;
- (f) expressed again its most profound concern at the increasingly dire and further deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, including the mass displacement of workers and employers, and recognized the severe impact it is having on the physical and mental health of workers, employers and the civilian population, particularly women, children and others in vulnerable situations, due to the ongoing crisis;
- (g) expressed as well its strong concern regarding the destruction of workplaces, as a result of the ongoing conflict in Gaza, as well as the dismissals and non and late payment of wages of the Palestinian workers and the restrictions they face in the West Bank;
- (h) reaffirmed the call to remove restrictions on the access and movements of the ILO staff in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as ensuring their safety and security;
- (~~i~~b) welcomed the outcome of the fund-raising meeting of 10 June 2024, which was held on the sidelines of the International Labour Conference, and acknowledged the

financial support already provided to the ILO programme by several Member States, and commended the work undertaken so far by the Office in this respect:

- (j*e*) called upon other Member States to contribute towards the full implementation of the emergency response plan recovery programme, in close coordination with the ILO constituents, to promote decent work and social justice for all Palestinians; ~~thereby contributing to the humanitarian development peace nexus.~~
- (k) requested the Director-General to continue offering his good offices to support Palestinian workers' access to their wages and workplaces in conditions of occupational safety and health as well as to continue to address long-term priorities as highlighted in several Director-General's annual reports to the International Labour Conference, such as the issue of social security funds and permit system reform;
- (l) requested the Office to update the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) on the following:
 - (i) impact of the current crisis on the world of work and the tripartite constituents in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the implementation of the ILO's emergency response plan;
 - (ii) dismissals and non-payment of wages of the Palestinian workers due to the current crisis, and the efforts exerted by the Office to address this matter, in addition to the current restrictions on their access to existing and new jobs in the labour market;
 - (iii) recommendations to follow up on the special sitting discussion that took place in the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference.

- 70. 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/POL/3, said that the ILO had released its fifth bulletin in collaboration with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics analysing the labour market situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The bulletin revealed the devastating impact of the previous year of war: real gross domestic product had declined by 85 per cent in Gaza and 22 per cent in the West Bank; the poverty rate in Gaza had reached 100 per cent; and the unemployment rate had risen to almost 80 per cent in Gaza and 35 per cent in the West Bank, reflecting a severe and worsening employment crisis. Since November 2023, the ILO development cooperation portfolio for the Occupied Palestinian Territory had grown to more than US\$13 million, enabling the Office to accelerate early recovery efforts for Palestinian workers and employers with a focus on employment promotion, social protection and business recovery support. She expressed thanks to the Organization's development partners for their generous support. Although access to Gaza had posed a real challenge, the Office was currently scaling up its pilot emergency employment scheme in Gaza with a view to reaching more than 1,200 vulnerable workers.
- 71. The Worker spokesperson** said that the Workers' group stood in unwavering solidarity with Palestinian workers and their families. The ILO had a crucial role to play in paving the way towards justice, peace and prosperity, and she urged the international community to join the effort to provide the necessary resources and political will to make that vision a reality. She invited the General Secretary of the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions to comment on the present item on behalf of her group.
- 72. Speaking on behalf of the Workers' group**, a Worker member from the Occupied Palestinian Territory expressed deep regret that the Palestinian people continued to suffer. In the previous 376 days, the war had cost the lives of more than 43,000 Palestinians, including 17,000 children and 11,500 women. He thanked the Director-General for document GB.352/POL/3, which outlined the extent of the destruction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. As a Palestinian

trade unionist, he denounced the catastrophic situation for enterprises in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in the West Bank, where 98 per cent of enterprises were fighting for survival. Those figures represented the distress of thousands of workers unable to support their families. The emergency response plan launched by the ILO in line with the decision adopted by the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024) in respect of document GB.350/POL/4(Rev.1) had provided crucial support for those most in need. However, the scale of the crisis required more support. The ILO's US\$20 million funding appeal remained to be met. He called on the international community to allocate more resources to the emergency response.

73. The International Court of Justice Order of 26 January 2024 called on Israel to take reasonable measures to prevent genocide and to ensure the passage of humanitarian aid to civilians in Gaza. Nevertheless, humanitarian aid continued to be blocked and the crisis continued. Urgent measures must be taken. The Workers' group called for an immediate and sustained ceasefire. Peace and stability were not possible while innocent civilians continued to perish. Israeli forces must withdraw from occupied territories and international diplomacy must be prioritized. The group further called for the blockade on humanitarian aid to be lifted to allow the passage of essential humanitarian aid, including food, water and medicines; and for the creation of jobs for young people and for women, as part of a lasting strategy to enable Palestinian families to regain dignity and stability.
74. Accountability was important to putting an end to the violence. Those responsible for committing atrocities and war crimes, including the targeting of hospitals and civilians, must be brought to justice before international courts. His group called for capacity-building support to be provided to the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions to allow it to provide Palestinian workers with the legal and social protections they needed. The group reiterated its call to the international community to guarantee the Palestinian people their right to self-determination and to recognize Palestine as a sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital.
75. The Israeli ban on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) preventing the Agency, which was a lifeline for many Palestinians, from performing its essential work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was deeply concerning and would have grave consequences. His group urged Israel to lift the ban immediately. The group also called on those Governments that had cut funding for UNRWA to restore it fully. Recent budget cuts had deprived thousands of people from access to food, education and healthcare. His group further called for an immediate stop to the construction and expansion of illegal settlements in the occupied Arab territories and for the dismantling of existing settlements, which were in violation of international law. The issue at hand was not purely a political matter; it was a humanitarian crisis. The Palestinian people stood fast but could not stand alone. Immediate action must be taken to provide the support needed to rebuild their lives, homes and futures. The Workers' group supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
76. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for the comprehensive report, which outlined the staggering economic costs of the conflict. The Employers' group stood in deep solidarity with the people of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, who were suffering unimaginable hardship. She commended the ILO for its support efforts, including implementing the emergency employment scheme in Gaza, which had provided displaced workers with income and a sense of purpose; assisting the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in addressing supply chain disruptions; and, through the Enterprise Support and Advocacy Unit and other services, equipping small and medium-sized enterprises with the resilience needed to operate under such challenging conditions. In addition, the ILO's vocational training programmes were invaluable in preparing workers, in particular young

people, for roles in rebuilding the economy. The continued alignment of those programmes with the private sector would ensure that training directly supported job creation and economic recovery. However, with only US\$5.4 million pledged out of the US\$20 million target, the funding gap remained a significant barrier to sustaining those programmes. She urged the international community and development partners to continue their support and to fill the US\$14.6 million shortfall.

77. Recognizing the difficult conditions under which ILO teams were working, in order to enhance the impact of the aforementioned programmes the Office might boost the presence of ILO staff in the region to ensure sustained hands-on support; introduce mental health support services for workers affected by conflict; emphasize gender equality in recovery efforts, ensuring equal opportunities for women; and continue to develop vocational training, especially in high-demand sectors such as renewable energy, healthcare and information technology. Notwithstanding the ILO's commendable efforts, sustainable progress was impossible without peace. Her group firmly believed that social justice and decent work were inherent to peace and stability. Without a resolution to the conflict, all efforts to rebuild labour markets, strengthen institutions and foster economic growth would remain fragile. She urged the international community to prioritize peacebuilding as the foundation for sustainable recovery in the region. Regarding the draft decision, her group had noted the proposed amendment and wished to hear from Governments before pronouncing its view.
78. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab Employers' group**, an Employer member from Bahrain said that she was deeply sorry to address the Governing Body again on the present item following the decision adopted at its 350th Session. One year on from the onset of the conflict, the ongoing human tragedy in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was without parallel since the Second World War. Document GB.352/POL/3 outlined only part of the damage sustained by the Palestinian economy since the aggression against Gaza and the West Bank began. Palestinian workers and employers were struggling to survive. The conflict had spread to Lebanon and elsewhere in the Middle East and threatened to undermine the international order. The occupying authorities had flouted calls by international organizations, such as the ILO, to end the aggression and open aid routes. The ILO must be allowed to discharge its mandate and play its role. The necessary work permits and visas must be granted to ILO representatives. In addition, the Office must play its role in ensuring that Israel respected the rights contained in the international labour standards which it had ratified. She expressed support for the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
79. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Libya expressed deep concern at the failure to comply with the International Court of Justice Order of 26 January 2024, which called for the cessation of military operations in Gaza and the guaranteed provision of food, medicines and shelter. Her group had repeatedly expressed deep concern at the serious humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and noted the increase in indiscriminate hostilities across the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The situation in Gaza was desperate. An immediate and unconditional ceasefire was urgently needed to protect Palestinian lives and preserve the remaining healthcare infrastructure. The Knesset bills against UNRWA would exacerbate the already dire situation, including by depriving more than 650,000 children of education.
80. Her group commended the progress achieved through the emergency response plan and emphasized the importance of ILO development cooperation in the occupied Arab territories. Both immediate and long-term financial support were crucial to rebuilding the Palestinian economy, Palestinian enterprises and the Palestinian social protection system. The Gaza Strip needed an immediate ceasefire and a significant increase in humanitarian aid. She called again

on the Office to take the necessary measures to uphold the fundamental principles and rights of Palestinian constituents and respect for international labour standards and social justice in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Her group would prefer the draft decision to be more closely aligned with the Governing Body's decision adopted at its 350th Session.

81. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Iraq expressed deep concern at the unprecedented tragic situation caused by the occupying power and the negative impacts of the war in Gaza and the West Bank on the Palestinian labour market. The expansion of the current aggression into Lebanon by the occupying power, its repeated attacks on the Syrian Arab Republic and possible further expansion into other countries would have catastrophic consequences for the social partners and the labour market in the Middle East. His group once again strongly condemned the brutal aggression against Gaza and the grave crimes and violations committed by the occupying authorities in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, and called on constituents to pressure the occupying power to comply with the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice in July 2024. It further called on the occupying power to return withheld funds to the Palestinian Authority and on the ILO to take the necessary measures to improve living conditions for constituents in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
82. He welcomed the progress made through the ILO emergency response plan recovery programme in responding to the pressing needs of workers and employers. The programme was crucial to development cooperation in the occupied Arab territories. His group thanked countries that had already supported the programme and encouraged all Member States to support the Palestinian people and promote decent work and social justice.
83. He called on the Office to draft a strategy to address the current crisis facing the social partners across the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to present a detailed follow-up report to the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) and at the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference. The strategy should include both the ILO's response to the damage caused by the occupying power and the ILO's working methods. In addition, the Office should present an information document to the Governing Body, at its 353rd Session, about the special sitting discussion that took place at the 112th Session (2024) of the Conference. Furthermore, the Office should draft a document detailing the ILO's response to the violations in the occupied Arab territories on which it had reported to the Conference for more than 40 years.
84. It was disappointing that the draft decision in document GB.352/POL/3 did not address all matters specified in the Governing Body's decision adopted at its 350th Session in March 2024. The Arab group had therefore proposed an amendment, which it invited the Governing Body to support.
85. **Speaking as coordinator of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Qatar said that the proposed amendment, based on extensive consultations, enjoyed broad support. It better responded to needs on the ground and better reflected the responsibility of the Governing Body and the Office, as well as reflecting in greater detail the wording of the decision adopted by the Governing Body at its 350th Session.
86. **Speaking on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)**, a Government representative of Oman said that the document represented a pivotal step in addressing the major challenges facing the Palestinian labour market in the current circumstances of conflict and escalating humanitarian crisis, which affected the foundations of social justice and human rights globally. The ILO's role in working towards a solution involved supporting effective initiatives focused on economic recovery, rebuilding institutions and

creating employment opportunities. The financial and political support of all Member States would be needed if those objectives were to be met.

87. It was essential to focus on strengthening social protection, labour market stability and support for the reconstruction of small and medium-sized enterprises in order to safeguard the livelihoods of tens of thousands of Palestinian families. Such efforts needed to be supported by reinforcing the partnership between the ILO and local and international partners. The GCC called on all Member States and the international community to strengthen their commitment and support by providing direct financial support or technical resources and expertise to build local capacity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group and the programme set out in the document which, if successfully implemented, would increase the chances of stability and peace throughout the region.
88. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Hungary said that Albania, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Ukraine and Iceland aligned themselves with the statement. The EU reiterated its deep concern about the worsening humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, the loss of civilian lives and the imminent risk of famine caused by the insufficient entry of aid. It strongly condemned the brutal attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel on 7 October 2023 and called on all parties to ensure the protection of civilians in line with international humanitarian law. It insisted on the need for an immediate ceasefire, the unconditional release of all hostages and the unhindered delivery of humanitarian aid to those in need, safely and at scale.
89. The dramatic military escalation in the Middle East and the risk it represented for the entire region was deeply alarming. All parties should exercise the utmost restraint, end hostilities immediately and abide by international law. The EU was fully committed to helping de-escalate the situation and reduce tensions. It supported the continued implementation of the ILO's three-phase emergency response programme. The EU and its Member States had provided €940.8 million in humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people since 7 October 2023 and continued to provide support to the Palestinian Authority.
90. **Speaking on behalf of a group of 20 Asian countries, namely, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that the group aligned itself with the statements delivered by the Arab group and the GCC. It strongly condemned the continued acts of violence and aggression by Israel against Palestinians and the resulting devastating loss of life, widespread destruction and severe humanitarian crisis. The targeting of civilians, hospitals and vital infrastructure was a blatant violation of international law and human rights, and the ILO's estimates of job losses across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, daily labour income losses and rates of unemployment were of grave concern. Immediate steps were needed to address the crisis and create sustainable employment opportunities.
91. The group strongly supported the emergency response plan recovery programme and urged all ILO Member States to contribute generously to its implementation. In addition, it commended the establishment of the tripartite committee to coordinate ILO recovery interventions and urged its active engagement in setting priorities. Furthermore, the group called on the ILO to continue its vital work in assessing the impact of the crisis, providing evidence-based policy recommendations and supporting the Palestinian Authority in implementing social protection measures.

92. The aggressive and destructive actions of the occupying regime had extended into Lebanon; its invasion of that country had caused a massive catastrophe there also. The ILO needed to address the plight of oppressed Lebanese workers, employers and their families, assess the impact on them and to develop targeted interventions to support their recovery and resilience.
93. He reaffirmed the group's unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their struggle for their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination and the establishment of an independent State of Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. He called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, the lifting of the blockade on Gaza and the resumption of meaningful peace negotiations based on international law. The group was ready to work alongside the ILO and fellow Member States in addressing the pressing challenges faced by Palestinian and Lebanese workers and employers.
94. **Speaking on behalf of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia and Malaysia**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam said that her group aligned itself with the statement delivered by the GCC. She commended the international community for providing timely financial support for an emergency response to alleviate the difficulties faced by Palestinian workers and employers in the worsening crisis. The labour market in Gaza and the West Bank had been severely affected since October 2023 and the humanitarian situation was deteriorating. The document indicated troubling trends in the West Bank. Fundamental rights, including workers' rights, were being violated.
95. She commended the ILO's swift launch of its emergency response plan in November 2023, highlighting its three-phase emergency response programme. She welcomed the establishment of the Enterprise Support and Advocacy Unit and the Workers' Protection and Advocacy Unit and called on the ILO and other stakeholders to protect the corresponding rights in all development and recovery initiatives, emphasizing the importance of promoting gender equality to ensure that women and men had an equal opportunity to rebuild their lives and their communities.
96. Security concerns and access restrictions continued to hamper the ILO's ability to deliver assistance in Gaza. She urged all Member States to redouble efforts to resolve the crisis and foster peace and security. She expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for the ILO's efforts to create a more resilient and inclusive labour market in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She called for new and renewed funding from donors to sustain the full implementation of essential ILO programmes there.
97. **A Government representative of the United States of America** said that he appreciated the Office's efforts to mobilize resources for the emergency response plan. He welcomed the provision of sustainably transferring programmes in the future to ensure ILO interventions supported both immediate and longer-term needs. He further supported the establishment of a tripartite committee to coordinate recovery work and encouraged the ILO to continue to work in coordination with other UN agencies.
98. The United States remained focused on achieving a durable end to the war, consistent with UN Security Council resolution 2735 (2024). Deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation in Gaza, particularly as winter approached, his Government continued to work with international partners and non-governmental organizations to ensure food and essential aid reached Palestinian civilians in need and to reduce bureaucratic obstacles blocking its delivery. It had made clear to the Israeli Government that it must do substantially more to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. A surge of food and winterization supplies was needed in Gaza, along with humanitarian pauses; a polio vaccination campaign needed to be completed and civilians inoculated against other infectious diseases; and emergency shelter needed to be

provided to vulnerable families, many of whom who had been displaced multiple times since October 2023.

99. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories was worsening daily. Children and women, the most vulnerable groups in Gaza, felt the harmful effects of hostilities most acutely. ILO staff in the region were also suffering from dire working conditions. Unfortunately, in the short term, there did not seem to be a foreseeable solution to the appalling situation. However, Brazil could not act with indifference. The situation should never be considered normal or unavoidable, and the people of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank must not be abandoned. The current conflict was merely exacerbating the urgent and increasingly unmet needs of the local population after decades of occupation and lack of autonomy and effective sovereignty.
100. He commended the ILO's programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories and, in particular, the emergency response plan recovery programme to address the urgent needs of Palestinian workers and employers. Full engagement with all ILO and UN Member States and other partners was necessary in order to assist the people in the occupied Arab territories.
101. **A Government representative of Cuba** said that Israel and its allies were guilty of the murder of more than 40,000 Palestinians and the destruction of much of the civilian infrastructure in the occupied Arab territories. The genocide, perpetrated by Israel with the full complicity of the United States, was a continuation of seven decades of illegal occupation and disregard for international law and principles and was unjustifiable. The ILO had an obligation to do more for Palestinian workers. It must condemn the genocidal actions of Israel more strongly and demand a permanent and immediate ceasefire in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which Israel occupied illegally.
102. The response of ILO Member States in terms of funding to provide immediate relief and long-term assistance to Palestinian workers was disappointing. Cuba demanded a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the conflict that guaranteed the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. Israel must also cease its attacks against and interference in the affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
103. **A Government representative of South Africa** said that the principles enshrined in the ILO Constitution and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), as amended in 2022 (Social Justice Declaration) were being ravaged daily by the onslaught of Israel in Gaza and beyond. Its genocidal actions throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which it occupied illegally, were having a devastating impact on lives, livelihoods and economic stability, denying the Palestinian people their humanity and potentially violating fundamental international labour Conventions. Such actions constituted economic genocide, deeply affecting the Gazan economy, workers and businesses.
104. The ILO's programme made an important contribution to meeting some of the most urgent needs. He called on Israel to end ILO staff movement restrictions and appealed to Member States to contribute to the full implementation of the emergency response plan recovery programme, in close coordination with the ILO constituents.
105. It was necessary to secure an unconditional ceasefire, ensure the immediate flow of humanitarian aid and ultimately bring an end to the Israeli occupation. He called on Israel to comply with the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, as well as its recent landmark advisory opinion declaring the Israeli occupation unlawful.

- 106. A Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that the intolerable situation in Gaza would be exacerbated by the onset of winter. The fighting had to end, the hostages must be freed and aid must flow freely and safely. Work needed to be pursued with fresh vigour towards a two-State solution that would allow both Palestinians and Israelis to live in safety and security.
- 107.** The ongoing conflict was having a profound impact on the Palestinian economy, not only in Gaza but also in the West Bank. Private-sector workers were bearing the brunt of the crisis with 99 per cent of West Bank enterprises facing challenges that impacted their operations, production capacity, sales and profits. In the light of those challenges, the United Kingdom had strengthened its support to the private sector. She urged Israel to remove restrictions on trade, sustain Palestinian jobs, support the recovery of the Palestinian private sector and reinstate the work permits of Palestinian workers. She called on Israel to ensure that all Palestinians in the West Bank could participate in the olive harvest, which provided an income for some 90,000 families. International law obliged Israel to protect Palestinians and not to obstruct their economic development.
- 108.** She commended the actions of ILO staff in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the continued roll-out and expansion of the emergency response programme and the ILO's close collaboration with other UN partners. Her Government supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 109. A Government representative of China** said that the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the increasing tension in the region were deeply concerning. His country prioritized de-escalation, a ceasefire and the delivery of humanitarian aid and considered that a two-State solution was fundamental to resolving the conflict. China appreciated the ILO's support to workers and employers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and supported its efforts to strengthen coordination, mobilize and effectively allocate more resources, advance the programme of development cooperation and build on the emergency response plan. Such actions would help the labour market to recover and alleviate the humanitarian catastrophe. China supported the amendment to the draft decision proposed by the Arab group.
- 110. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that his Government aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of the GCC. The Islamic Republic of Iran was deeply concerned at the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Gaza resulting from the relentless military operation waged by the Israeli regime. The ongoing genocide was having a devastating impact on Palestinian workers and their families and, in particular, on women and children. The ILO's latest figures represented not just statistics but shattered livelihoods and desperate families struggling to survive.
- 111.** He strongly condemned the widespread destruction of workplaces, mass displacement and deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure. Such actions violated international humanitarian law and made any prospect of economic recovery and decent work nearly impossible. The aggressive and destructive actions of the occupying regime had spread into Lebanon, displacing and making thousands of workers and their families homeless and causing the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians. The ILO must therefore also address the plight of Lebanese workers, employers and their families.
- 112.** He called for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, unimpeded access for humanitarian aid and urgent implementation of the ILO's emergency response plan with a focus on employment creation, social protection and business recovery in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. He further called for increased financial support from Member States to fully fund the ILO's

recovery programme and for an independent investigation into violations of international labour standards and workers' rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and affected areas in Lebanon.

113. **A Government representative of Tunisia** thanked the Office for the document, which laid bare the impact of the current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory on Palestinian institutions, workers and their families. The crisis would have dire and lasting repercussions on the Palestinian labour market and population; it had been estimated that, once a ceasefire was reached, Gaza would need 350 years to return to its 2022 gross domestic product level.
114. The war crimes and genocide committed by the occupying power had led to more than 150,000 dead and wounded in Gaza, including many children. It had caused the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and was subjecting an entire people to bombing, siege and starvation that could drive them out.
115. Tunisia welcomed the ILO's efforts to respond to the crisis by implementing the programme of development cooperation and the recovery phase of the emergency response plan. However, real and effective technical and technological assistance could not be provided as long as the Palestinian people in Gaza were denied their basic rights. He called on the international community to assume its legal, moral and humanitarian responsibility to stop the aggression; activate the mechanism of accountability, justice and redress for the Palestinian people; and strongly condemn the systematic and ongoing violations and crimes that amounted to genocide against the Palestinian people.
116. Tunisia supported the amendments to the draft decision proposed by the Arab group, in particular with regard to the request to the Office for recommendations on follow-up to the special sitting discussion, held in June 2024, on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories.
117. **A Government representative of Mexico** recognized the ILO's efforts to address the urgent needs of Palestinian workers and employers affected by the conflict. He called for the immediate and permanent cessation of attacks against the civilian population and essential civilian infrastructure in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. His Government supported the implementation of a two-State solution as a means of bringing a comprehensive and permanent end to the conflict.
118. The ILO's initiatives to rebuild the labour market were vital, although emergency programmes and economic recovery initiatives must ensure inclusiveness and a gender-sensitive approach. He acknowledged the efforts to develop a strong social protection system in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, emphasizing the importance of the triple nexus approach linking the humanitarian, development and peace sectors. He called on other Member States to contribute to the emergency response plan recovery programme.
119. **A Government representative of France** welcomed the commitment of the ILO's staff of the Regional Office for the Arab States and headquarters. Workers in Gaza and the West Bank were paying a heavy price for the crisis through the destruction of their livelihoods. His Government deplored the adoption by the Israeli parliament of two laws aimed at prohibiting the activities of UNRWA which would have irreversible consequences for the humanitarian situation in Gaza and throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory by depriving civilians of essential aid and Palestinian workers of their jobs.
120. An end must be brought to the military escalation in the region, and international humanitarian law must be respected by all. He reiterated the need for an immediate and lasting ceasefire, full humanitarian access to the population, the immediate release of all

hostages and the resumption of negotiations to effectively implement the two-State solution. In the light of the suffering endured by Palestinians in Gaza, his Government stood ready to provide the necessary humanitarian aid together with international organizations and its partners in the region. He welcomed the Office's focus on the aftermath of the conflict and on building the foundations of a recovery that respected international social standards and decent work through its emergency response plan.

121. **Speaking on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, a Government representative of Pakistan, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, welcomed the Office's unwavering support of the Palestinian people and its bulletin entitled *A Year of War in Gaza: Impacts on Employment and Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, which had shed light on the scale of the profound human suffering endured by Palestinian workers and their families – particularly women and children – due to the ongoing conflict. His group commended the ILO for its timely and comprehensive response to the crisis and its emergency response plan. His group fully supported the ILO's vision of building forward better and the call for urgent financial support from the international community, development partners and donors.
122. Nevertheless, the focus on development in the occupied Arab territories as reflected in the draft decision was cause for concern; greater attention was needed to effectively address challenges in the region. His group urged the Governing Body to resume its dedicated focus on the situation in the occupied Arab territories in future sessions, including during a special sitting on the topic and through regular updates to ensure sustained commitment to promoting decent work and social justice across the occupied Arab territories. He urged the ILO to continue its essential work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and called on the international community to support recovery and reconstruction efforts. His group supported the amended draft decision.
123. **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, noted with concern that the document, like others previously, failed to provide a full or fair overview of the situation on the ground, demonstrating a biased approach. The ILO continued to ignore the embedding into civilian infrastructure in Gaza of military assets of Hamas and its allies that were used to attack Israel, in violation of international humanitarian law. The document and the original draft decision dismissed the local authorities' responsibility to improve and sustain the livelihoods of the Palestinian population; legislation adopted by the Palestinian Authority continued to provide for salaries and benefits for the families of terrorists. Ignorance of the reality on the ground was an obstacle to conciliation and the implementation of international labour standards.
124. His Government therefore rejected the original and amended draft decisions; their adoption would indicate that the Governing Body disregarded Member States' security concerns. As long as rockets were launched indiscriminately at the civilian population of Israel, his Government's focus would remain on the safety and security of all residents. Efforts to improve the situation of Palestinian workers should begin with stopping the ongoing attack against Israeli civilians. The ILO's efforts must remain within its mandate and area of expertise: promoting decent work for all.
125. **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, expressed his appreciation for the Office's efforts to address the crisis affecting the Palestinian people, particularly workers and their families, through the emergency response plan recovery

programme. The statistics contained in the document were concerning and reflected the situation caused by the Israeli war machine in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The continued crimes of the occupier aggravated the situation, and its expansion of its actions to Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic presaged another humanitarian crisis and threatened peace and security in the region.

126. His Government firmly condemned those hostile actions and urged the Organization and its constituents to call for an immediate and permanent ceasefire, an end to the crimes against civilians and the opening of humanitarian corridors. He called on the Office to prepare a document on the situation of workers for consideration at the following session of the Governing Body and to brief the Governing Body on the discussion held at the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference on the Director-General's report on the situation of workers in of occupied Arab territories.
127. **A representative of Palestine** (Minister of Labour), authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in keeping with past practice, said that she addressed the Governing Body with a heavy heart after a year of war that had erased life in Gaza and pushed back development by 70 years. The conflict had brought an existential crisis that threatened to eradicate the Palestinian people and had exacted a huge human and economic toll, with more than 43,000 Palestinians killed and the majority of the survivors living in poverty. The hard-won gains of the ILO's decent work programmes had been shattered. The immediate priority was to end the war and launch an emergency response to save what little remained. She appealed to the Governing Body to increase support for the programme of development cooperation in the occupied Arab territories and mobilize resources for immediate relief, take steps to restore Palestinian workers' rights and ensure their safe access to workplaces, and translate the special sitting of the International Labour Conference on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories and the Director-General's report on the situation of workers there into enforceable measures to address the ongoing violations against Palestinian workers.
128. She also called on the Governing Body to ensure that its decisions on labour rights were enforced and that social justice and dignity for Palestinians was promoted, and to engage actively in broader UN efforts to rebuild Palestine. Discussion of the Director-General's report should be made a standing item on the agenda of the Conference. She called on all countries and organizations to respect the Advisory Opinion of the ICJ of 19 July 2024 and related UN General Assembly resolution ES-10/24. She hoped that the Governing Body would adopt the necessary decision to grant Palestine non-member observer State status in the ILO and additional rights.
129. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Libya supported the amended draft decision.
130. **A Government representative of the United States** expressed dismay at the voicing of reckless accusations; his Government believed that the allegations of genocide were unfounded. It remained deeply concerned, however, by the number of civilians killed, injured and displaced in the conflict. Israel must comply with international humanitarian law and take every feasible step to prevent harm to civilians.
131. **A Government representative of Israel** said that while the war was a tragedy for Israelis and Palestinians alike, it was not a genocide. The emotive comments made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran were an example of moral hypocrisy on an industrial scale and an attempt to distract from the Iranian Government's responsibility for destruction and the provision of arms in Yemen and Gaza.

- 132. A representative of Palestine**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in keeping with past practice, said that while Palestine sought a responsible debate, the occupying force persisted with its policy of falsification and lies. The representative of the occupying power was not in a position to give lessons on genocide; the ICJ had issued rulings in January, March and May 2024 with the intention of preventing genocide against the Palestinian people, who had been experiencing State terrorism for 56 years and genocide for 13 months.
- 133. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that war crimes, crimes against humanity and gross violations of human rights and humanitarian law must not be normalized. The unprecedented gross violation of international human rights and humanitarian law in Gaza by the occupying military apartheid regime clearly constituted genocide.
- 134. A Government representative of Cuba** recalled that, according to the ICJ, the Palestinian people had suffered genocide. The representative of the United States should have mentioned the millions of dollars that had been given to the Israeli Government to support the genocide. His Government rejected direct involvement in the undermining of peace and security that had plunged the Middle East into an unprecedented humanitarian crisis. The genocide that Israel had committed in Palestine, with the full complicity of the Government of the United States, could not be justified.
- 135. The Employer spokesperson** supported the amended draft decision.
- 136. A Worker member from the Occupied Palestinian Territory** expressed hope that the emergency response plan and the programme of development cooperation would be implemented and that workers would receive compensation for their losses. He supported the statement by the Arab group.
- 137. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States) acknowledged that the document and the original draft decision did not do justice to the Office's actions to follow up on the decisions adopted by the Governing Body at its 350th Session. They included the convening of the special sitting on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories at the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference, the resource mobilization meeting convened on the margins of that Session, continued monitoring of the situation and the ongoing implementation of the emergency response plan. That plan, which was guided by a tripartite committee, was implemented using internal resources and donor funding, and there were plans to expand the ILO's presence on the ground by hiring five additional staff members. The Office had launched initiatives to review the institutional governance structures of the trade unions and the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture. Plans were in place to support the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions to expand its essential services, including to provide psychological support.
- 138.** As the lead UN agency for employment, the ILO was playing a crucial role in shaping the early recovery framework established by the UN country team, and the ILO Office in Jerusalem had recently joined the UN entities operating in Gaza under the Programme Criticality Framework, allowing it to recruit staff in Gaza and secure dedicated premises. The ILO had also undertaken a joint rapid assessment survey on conditions for workers and employers in the West Bank and launched a joint development cooperation project to improve access to social assistance. Other measures included the strengthening of the Palestinian Employment Fund, which would be supported in developing and implementing a large-scale employment programme; projects to support workers and employers in a range of areas and support for the launching of a labour

market gender equity strategy. Consultations were being held with the Federation of Chambers to evaluate key economic sectors and occupations with a view to addressing wage subsidies, job retention and training; resources had been allocated to foster the transition from learning to earning.

Decision

139. Guided by the principles enshrined in the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, the Governing Body:

- (a) reaffirmed the need to fully respect the ILO's fundamental principles and rights at work, and that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice;
- (b) took note of all relevant resolutions on the Middle East and recalled Security Council resolutions 2720 (22 December 2023), 2712 (15 November 2023) and 2735 (10 June 2024), and the decision it had adopted at its 349th Session (October–November 2023) concerning document GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1), which included a call for all parties to facilitate full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip;
- (c) recalled the decision adopted at its 350th Session (March 2024) on the report on crisis-related ILO work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory;
- (d) took note of the information provided in document GB.352/POL/3, including the severe and lasting repercussions of the ongoing crisis on the Palestinian labour market, Palestinian tripartite constituents, and their families;
- (e) stressed the urgent need to take all necessary measures to promote social justice, advance decent work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and respect relevant international labour standards;
- (f) expressed again its most profound concern at the increasingly dire and further deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, including the mass displacement of workers and employers, and recognized the severe impact it is having on the physical and mental health of workers, employers and the civilian population, particularly women, children and others in vulnerable situations, due to the ongoing crisis;
- (g) expressed as well its strong concern regarding the destruction of workplaces as a result of the ongoing conflict in Gaza, as well as the dismissals and non-payment and late payment of wages of the Palestinian workers and the restrictions they face in the West Bank;
- (h) reaffirmed the call to remove restrictions on the access and movements of the ILO staff in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, as well as ensuring their safety and security;
- (i) welcomed the outcome of the fund-raising meeting of 10 June 2024, which was held on the sidelines of the International Labour Conference, and acknowledged the financial support already provided to the ILO programme by several Member States, and commended the work undertaken so far by the Office in this respect;
- (j) called upon other Member States to contribute towards the full implementation of the emergency response plan recovery programme, in close coordination with the ILO constituents, to promote decent work and social justice for all Palestinians;

- (k) requested the Director-General to continue offering his good offices to support Palestinian workers' access to their wages and workplaces in conditions of occupational safety and health as well as to continue to address long-term priorities as highlighted in several Director-General's annual reports to the International Labour Conference, such as the issue of social security funds and permit system reform;**
- (l) requested the Office to update the Governing Body at its 353rd Session (March 2025) on the following:**
 - (i) impact of the current crisis on the world of work and the tripartite constituents in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and the implementation of the ILO's emergency response plan;**
 - (ii) dismissals and non-payment of wages of the Palestinian workers due to the current crisis, and the efforts exerted by the Office to address this matter, in addition to the current restrictions on their access to existing and new jobs in the labour market;**
 - (iii) recommendations to follow up on the special sitting discussion that took place during the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference (2024).**

(GB.352/POL/3, paragraph 40, as amended by the Governing Body)