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Progress report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25

Diversity, accountability and respect

Summary: At its 343rd Session (November 2021), the Governing Body endorsed the Human Resources (HR) Strategy for 2022–25. The Strategy is aimed at ensuring a workforce of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity, with due regard being given to the Action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce, including in terms of gender and geographical diversity, and also addressing under-representation, experience relevant to the three constituent groups and opportunities for youth and young professionals. This document describes the progress made by the Office in 2024 in respect of the key deliverables of the HR Strategy.

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Related documents: [GB.347/PFA/INF/7](#); [GB.343/PFA/14](#); [GB.337/PFA/11](#); [GB.350/PFA/10](#).

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► Introduction

1. At its 343rd Session (November 2021), the Governing Body endorsed the [Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25](#). It requested the Office to take the guidance provided into account in implementing the Strategy, with a view to attracting, recruiting and retaining a workforce of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity, with due regard being given to gender; geographical diversity, also addressing under-representation; experience relevant to the three constituent groups; and opportunities for youth and young professionals and persons with disabilities. A report on the implementation of the Strategy during its first year of implementation was discussed at the 347th Session (March 2023) and a progress report, including interim milestones at the mid-point of the Strategy, was discussed at the 350th Session (March 2024). The Governing Body provided guidance to the Office on these occasions.
2. The HR Strategy for 2022–25 includes the following outcomes:
 - (1) **Diverse workforce with the right skills to face the future:** Fostering employee engagement and inclusion – attract, develop, engage and retain diverse and qualified staff and leaders.
 - (2) **Respectful and empowering environment:** Strengthening leadership, ethical behaviour and accountability for a respectful environment.
 - (3) **Leveraging technology for efficient HR services through innovation and digitalization of the HR function:** HR technologies, digitalization and analytics.
3. This document describes the progress made by the Office in 2024 in respect of the key deliverables of the HR Strategy. Specific reporting on progress made against the targets for each of the selected key indicators will be compiled at the end of 2025, in accordance with the defined milestones, and provided to the Governing Body in due course.

► Progress on key deliverables

Outcome 1: Diverse workforce with the right skills to face the future

1.1 Focus area: Plan for future workforce needs

4. Skills visioning, mapping and gap analysis are essential components of strategic workforce planning. Together, they offer crucial insights to guide decision-making on resource programming, targeted recruitment and staff development priorities. **The Office-wide skills mapping exercise** was launched in 2023, with a first phase which focused on skills required to deliver on the technical policy outcomes. A total of 1,002 Technical Specialists, Legal Specialists, Branch Chiefs, Chief Technical Advisers and National Officers (85 per cent of those invited) participated in the self-assessment process to map their abilities against the taxonomy of core, technical, managerial and outcome-specific skills developed for this group. Aggregated data on current and desired skill levels was analysed to understand the potential gaps and where these were manifesting globally, to gauge the level of appetite for skills development and to highlight risks of skills loss due to upcoming retirements. The data was also used to build an

awareness of untapped skills and to identify colleagues worldwide with skills associated with the priority action programmes.

5. The analysis revealed that, in general, the specific skills for the different outcomes were at the level needed. However, across headquarters and all regions, there is a consistent need to build cross-cutting core and technical skills in four key areas, and then contextualize these to the relevant outcomes. These key areas are:
 - (1) **Use of artificial intelligence** (for everyday tasks and for creating tools).
 - (2) **Data analysis** (data analytics and management, quantitative analysis, statistical software analysis, modelling, forecasting and projection).
 - (3) **Effective communication** (including social media, mass media, storytelling).
 - (4) **Integrating green topics** (such as climate change literacy, environmental awareness and efficient use of energy/water).
6. In addition, it was identified that **cross-fertilization of methods and approaches** across the Office could be improved. The findings were fed back to senior management to discuss priorities for skills development, and a catalogue of capacity-building activities has been designed, in collaboration with the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) and relevant policy departments.
7. The second phase of the exercise covers two distinct groups – (a) Field Leadership and (b) General Administration and Office Support Assistants. The taxonomy development, skills mapping and gap analysis for field-based directors, deputy directors and country coordinators was completed in December 2024 and the priorities for skills development are now under discussion with the regional directors. The skills mapping stage for the General Administration and Office Support Assistants worldwide was completed in January 2025.
8. The project to revise the **generic job descriptions** for both the General Service category at headquarters and the Professional level worldwide continued to progress in 2024, following the same consultative approach as in the past, engaging impacted staff, managers, subject matter experts and staff union representatives. By assessing how the roles of ILO staff have evolved, this project ensures that the job descriptions accurately capture the duties, skills, competencies, experience and educational requirements, for both current and future needs. New generic job descriptions were developed for the Legal (Labour Law) Specialists job family (grades P2–P5) and for the Document Production Assistants job family at headquarters (grades G4–G6). In December 2024, these were annexed to the existing collective agreement between the Office and the ILO Staff Union (signed in May 2023) and 69 job descriptions were subsequently assigned to the relevant staff.

1.2 Focus area: Attract, recruit and engage diverse staff

9. In 2024, a **review of recruitment practices** and processes was undertaken, an action plan to address bottlenecks and increase efficiency was developed, and changes were introduced following consultation with the ILO Staff Union. In particular, the Recruitment, Assignment and Placement System (RAPS), whereby vacancies were grouped and published together at specific points in the year, was replaced by a rolling system of publication for regular budget core (RBC) positions. The transition was supported by new SharePoint applications, which provide collaborative online approval processes for each vacancy. In 2024, 64 **vacancy announcements** were published either through RAPS or the RBC system. Across the year the average time from the close of the vacancy announcement to the selection decision was

215 days (compared to 234 in 2023). Although further efforts are needed to reach the optimal response times, the changes have enabled the Office to reduce the backlog of open competitions. Work on this action plan continues in 2025.

10. The lead time for the **development cooperation appointment process** continues to be regularly monitored for all positions and in particular essential ones. Forty-three vacancies were filled for Professional positions throughout 2024. Across the year, the average time from the close of the vacancy announcement to the selection decision was 73 days. The average time from the selection of the candidate to the candidate being on post at all Professional levels was 58 days (compared to 67 days in 2023). For senior staff at the P5 level, the average is 62 days, which is a substantial improvement over previous years (it was 73 in 2023 and 75 on average in the period from 2018 to 2022).
11. The Office continues to take actions to attract, recruit and engage diverse staff, including through outreach, policy development, career development and culture change, as well as engaging with and supporting networks, communities and employee resource groups.
12. Regarding **outreach**, in 2024 the ILO participated in 16 careers fairs with the aim of attracting diverse candidates. Targeted activities were also undertaken for difficult-to-fill vacancies, through specialized job boards and social networks. The Office continued to reach out to candidates through corporate social media channels, and to Member States and workers' and employers' organizations through the agreed official channels, with the aim of increasing the number of applicants with experience relevant to the three constituent groups. The Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme is an important tool in the rejuvenation of the ILO workforce due to its positive retention rate (57 per cent). The Office proactively seeks to expand the donor base for the JPO Programme, with a focus on under-represented countries, and in 2024 new agreements were signed with the United States of America, Uzbekistan and Australia.
13. A number of existing **career development programmes** aimed at diverse groups continued in 2024. The Office's ambitions to achieve gender equity were supported by the EMERGE inter-agency Programme for Emerging Women Leaders at the P3 level, the ILO career mentoring programme for women, and engagement in the United Nations System Staff College "Leadership, Women and the UN Programme". Efforts to build talent pipelines to improve geographical representation included the National Professional Officers leadership programme and the Director-General's special allocation to support travel costs for interns who are nationals from under-represented countries.
14. **Culture change** is being supported through awareness-raising, special initiatives and experiential learning. In January 2024, a training activity on disability inclusion was organized for the Global Management Team, who then identified specific commitments that they would make to champion disability inclusion. As a follow-up, a new initiative was launched to welcome more colleagues with disabilities into the ILO internship programme. Eleven profiles were published, specifically for interns with disabilities, with stipends partially funded by a special allocation from the Director-General. A rich database of contacts for targeted outreach purposes was established and used effectively to bring in many qualified applicants. Hiring managers and their teams were provided with guidelines and training on how to support persons with disabilities during the interview and onboarding processes and were made aware of mechanisms in place to support reasonable accommodation requests. The impact of this initiative is expected to go beyond the internship programme, building the ILO's reputation as an employer of choice for persons with disabilities and increasing the pool of such candidates for regular budget and development cooperation staff positions.

15. The reverse mentoring programme piloted in 2022 was launched on a larger scale, with 24 mentoring pairs, in September 2024. In this six-month programme, the mentoring relationship is flipped on its head. Instead of senior managers offering career advice and guidance to younger colleagues, the more junior staff take the lead as mentors, offering insights and support in a range of areas, such as digital skills development, communication, branding and employee engagement. This programme aims to stimulate learning around digitalization, to encourage innovation and to create a more inclusive culture for young colleagues. The mentors are JPOs and other staff in G5 or higher grades who are below the age of 31. The mentees are advisers, directors of departments, branches and offices, and country coordinators at the D2, D1 and P5 level. Further intergenerational exchanges took place on the International Day of Older Persons, with an event jointly organized by HRD, the ILO Staff Union and “Les Anciens”, a section of the Staff Union representing former ILO officials. The event included a round table discussion with the ILO retirees and officials and a world café for intergenerational exchange.

1.3 Focus area: Develop capacity to deliver

16. In addition to the new frameworks for skills development that are being designed to respond to the results of the skills mapping exercise, the Office provides a broad selection of standard offerings, including language training, communication skills, conflict management, people management and internal governance. Staff also have access to the LinkedIn learning library. With the shift to online formats, many of these training courses have become accessible to staff worldwide, leading to increased interest and demand.
17. In an effort to be more inclusive, the 2024 ILO Orientation workshop was revamped to welcome 262 new officials (compared to 60 participants per year in previous editions) irrespective of their source of funding and of their location. The online ILO Orientation Journey consisted of a twice-a-year two-week onboarding phase as the foundation and then five individual workshops for each region.
18. The Development Cooperation Learning Journeys were also transformed into pathways that build upon the journeys of the past two biennia. At the end of 2023, a Training Needs Analysis showed that a wealth of content already existed and that leveraging this content cost-effectively was paramount. The overarching strategy of the pathways is to consolidate and enhance the existing resources. It creates a cohesive and recognizable ILO staff development offering on specific and larger topics of development cooperation and partnerships, in many formats, accessible in many ways, with the intention of allowing the constitution of tailored individual learning pathways. The pathways will be launched in 2025.

Outcome 2: Respectful and empowering environment

2.1 Focus area: Reinforce accountability for performance

19. The ILO has a robust **Performance Management Framework** with strong compliance results (90 per cent as at the end of December 2024), and the Office continuously seeks to improve its performance management processes and practices.
20. Changes to introduce more flexibility in the appraisal roles and to streamline the workflow were developed in 2024 and submitted to the Governing Body in November 2024 for implementation in the 2025 performance cycle.

21. Ongoing efforts to **improve performance management practices** were supported through a comprehensive offering of learning activities, informal knowledge exchange meetings and individual coaching sessions. Learning activities included: “Giving and receiving feedback” (22 persons); “Maximizing my performance conversations” (46 persons); “GROWTH conversations” (11 persons); and “Effective performance management” (37 persons). Furthermore, in 2024 a total of 59 officials (including 9 senior managers) were provided with individual training sessions on the Performance Management Framework upon joining the Office or upon a transfer to a new managerial position, and 17 individual performance management coaching sessions were offered to managers and staff.
22. The Reports Board is one of the established mechanisms for **reinforcing accountability for performance** in the Office. The Reports Board reviews the appraisals of staff on probation and of staff where the ratings and/or comments indicate that their performance does not meet requirements. In 2024, the Reports Board reviewed the cases of 33 underperforming staff and requested 11 performance improvement plans, 9 of which resulted in an improved performance, while 2 are under continued scrutiny by the Board. The Board also requested 16 mid-term reviews for underperforming staff, 13 of which reported an improved performance over the period. In terms of cases of continued underperformance, in total eight staff members left the Office in 2024 as a **result of consequence management**, through administrative decision, resignation or end of contract.

2.2 Focus area: New ways of working

23. The year 2024 was the first full year of implementation of the policy **on flexible working arrangements**, which was introduced on 1 July 2023. The policy enables staff, subject to the exigencies of service, to request the use of a range of flexible arrangements intended to help support better work-life balance while ensuring operational delivery through better productivity and creativity. All ILO offices have now established core working hours which ensure that all staff assigned to the duty station are working during the day regardless of their physical location. Many offices, departments and teams have implemented at least one day per week where all staff must attend the office as a means to ensure adequate in-presence time for meetings, teamwork and co-creation. Managers are assisted in the fair and transparent implementation of the policy by a Time Management Dashboard in IRIS which enables them to see the use of telework and cumulated hours leave as well as other forms of absence.
24. The IRIS data for 2024 reflects a much higher use of the telework modality than cumulated hours, with telework accounting for 16 per cent of total working time across the Office; with 22 per cent of working time teleworked at headquarters and 13 per cent in the regions. Conversely, absence from the Office due to mission travel accounts for up to 14 per cent of working time in the regions compared with a maximum of 6 per cent in headquarters clusters. A total of 654 days of leave were taken across the Office using cumulated hours leave, with only 3 per cent of this time taken in the regions, and the majority of the time accumulated at headquarters used in the Corporate Services Cluster where the departments have a more client-facing role and more staff whose work is less suited to telework.
25. The results of the Organizational Health Index Survey administered in September 2024 reflect a very high rate of staff satisfaction in relation to the policy on flexible working arrangements. A total of 82 per cent of respondents agreed that the policy has had a positive impact on work-life balance, enabling them to better manage their personal and professional responsibilities; 79 per cent agreed that the policy was administered in a fair and transparent manner; 60 per cent agreed that the policy had improved collaboration and teamwork; while

67 per cent confirmed that the policy had not had a negative impact in these areas. However, 15 per cent considered that there had been a negative impact.

26. HRD, in consultation with the Staff Union Committee, is now engaged in a review of the implementation of the policy and its consequent impact on ways of working. The review will use the results of the Organizational Health Index Survey together with feedback from a set of specific consultations with managers and staff across headquarters and in the field. Appropriate recommendations for any adjustments will then be made to the Director-General.
27. The now well-established use of telework and the availability of the necessary IT equipment and infrastructure have also been key in enabling the efficient and effective use of **alternate working arrangements** to ensure continued delivery by ILO staff in a number of crisis situations involving temporary evacuation of ILO offices or mandatory work from home advisories due to war, other forms of civil unrest or disaster.
28. The Office continues to implement the three-year **Mental Health and Well-being Action Plan**, finalized in late 2023, which is based on the United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy, to which the ILO has actively contributed.
29. The Office continues to encourage both managers and staff to participate in the **“Lead and Learn”** programme for managers, available online through the **United Nations System Staff College Blue Line platform** since 2022. This course offers guidance and practical tools on maintaining personal well-being, supporting colleagues experiencing mental health challenges and addressing stigma. In 2024, the managers were asked to incorporate the “Lead and Learn” programme into their development plans at the beginning of the performance management cycle.
30. Key messages on promoting and safeguarding mental health and well-being have been further embedded into ILO training on people management and performance management.
31. The Office has published **Guidelines on Return to Work and Reasonable Accommodation after Extended Sick Leave** and hosted an event with the participation of United Nations representatives and global experts to mark their release. The Medical Service (MEDSERV) and HRD are proactively engaging to ensure good management of return to work after extended absence, which is vital to effective outcomes for the staff member concerned and the team in general.
32. Mental health and well-being resources are made available to staff throughout the year. A session for all staff entitled “Working and Living with Greater Well-being and Less Stress” was held with a world-renowned expert on mindfulness and meditation. The session provided practical insights and techniques to help staff enhance their well-being and manage stress more effectively in both their professional and personal lives.
33. The **ILO Staff Welfare Officer** has provided individual and group support sessions for staff in high-stress duty stations, including Kyiv, Moscow, Beirut and Jerusalem. In addition, she continues to provide support to all staff and their families across a wide range of issues and stress factors. ILO staff also have access to United Nations counsellors, a regularly updated list of whom is available through HR partners worldwide.
34. Work has begun on a **psychosocial risk assessment**, set to be finalized in 2025, which will enable the implementation of targeted **mitigation measures** to further enhance workplace mental health and well-being

35. **World Mental Health Day 2024**, themed “Mental Health at Work”, was celebrated in October with a series of activities. These included a video message from senior management, featuring contributions from both field and headquarters staff. Additionally, the **Medical Adviser, Staff Welfare and HRD** engaged with staff at the Office entrances, responding to questions and gathering insights on what is needed to enhance staff well-being.

2.3 Focus area: Respectful and ethical workplace

36. Addressing disrespectful and unethical conduct by ensuring that it can be identified, addressed effectively and appropriately sanctioned remains a priority for the Office. This is vital to ensuring a **safe and respectful work environment** within the ILO. HRD continues to coordinate its efforts with the Mediator, the Ethics Officer, the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight and the Staff Union, to provide a range of briefing and training sessions on a respectful workplace, anti-harassment, the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, ethical conduct, and the prevention of fraud and misconduct, to staff across the Office. Using online training and meeting modalities, and dedicated mission travel, and also exploiting synergies with other meetings and staff development activities, sessions have been held for managers and senior managers at headquarters and globally, in a number of technical departments as well as at regional and country level. The methodology behind the ILO Respect training modules has been further tested in specific locations, including Islamabad and Karachi, and this is now being finalized into a fully developed set of campaign and training materials with a trainer-of-trainers component that will support delivery across the Office in a resource-efficient manner. Appropriate application of the HR regulatory framework is also key to ensuring fair and transparent management, which underpins a safe and respectful workplace.
37. The mandatory e-learning modules “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse” and “United to Respect: Preventing abuse of authority, harassment, sexual harassment and discrimination” have also been made mandatory for interns since January 2024. A total of 405 officials completed the mandatory training on prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in 2024, and overall compliance for the two training modules is currently 94 per cent and 91 per cent, respectively. Interns are also provided with a specific briefing and materials to ensure they are aware of the zero-tolerance approach to all forms of violence and harassment within the ILO from the first day of their internship. Work to develop an updated Ethics e-learning module has been completed and this will be launched in 2025.
38. The Office implemented a highly visible campaign on the **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** in March 2024 and the ILO intranet pages on anti-harassment have been updated accordingly with a range of campaign materials. The Office now benefits from a dedicated PSEA Officer position, which has reported directly to the Office of the Director-General since November 2024. The **code of conduct for the prevention of all forms of violence and harassment at ILO events**, is being used systematically; the practical implementation of the code was reassessed in 2024 and improved measures to ensure it is well communicated, understood and applied will be implemented at the International Labour Conference in 2025.
39. The encouragement of more open discussion of issues related to respect has helped to support **staff confidence in reporting concerns** and seeking to use informal conflict resolution early and as a first approach. Formal reports, although still few in number, have increased steadily over the last four years. In 2024 there were seven formal complaints filed under the harassment procedures, compared with only two in 2020. While zero instances of violence and harassment is an ideal, the Office is aware that it does occur and is pleased to see the increased confidence of colleagues to speak up and report.

40. All efforts to ensure a safe and respectful working environment free from all forms of violence and harassment are underpinned by a victim-centred approach and clear policies to prevent and address retaliation. This approach extends to the review and investigation of allegations of all forms of misconduct, while preserving the due process rights of all parties. **The Office anti-harassment policy** will be revised in 2025 to bring it into line with the principles and rights enshrined in the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and to make formal conflict resolution more accessible when needed.
41. Following a decision of the Governing Body in November 2023, the **internal disciplinary framework** as set out in Chapter XII of the Staff Regulations was revised and a Disciplinary Committee established to review misconduct cases and advise the Director-General on the appropriate sanctions. In 2024, the Disciplinary Committee reviewed a total of 11 cases. The outcomes of misconduct investigations and disciplinary proceedings are now published on the accountability and transparency pages of the ILO website and intranet, which are updated on a case-by-case basis. It is hoped that increased transparency will serve both to deter misconduct and to increase staff confidence in the accountability framework.
42. **Respect for all forms of diversity** is considered in the ongoing review of Office policies and procedures. Improved compliance with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy will be achieved through **a new policy on disability-inclusive employment** which will be implemented in 2025. The Employee Resource Group for colleagues with disabilities and colleagues with dependants with disabilities is now well established and a valuable interlocutor, raising awareness to ensure a better understanding of specific disability-related needs of staff and promoting enhanced workplace inclusion. Dedicated outreach to organizations of persons with disabilities continues in order to encourage a greater number of applications for ILO vacancies. An initiative has been launched to provide internships across a range of disciplines and subject areas exclusively for persons with disabilities, and it is hoped that this will also provide a pipeline for future employment. In December the Office celebrated the **International Day of Persons with Disabilities** with an event “How we’re championing change – the ILO’s Disability Inclusion Strategy (2024–2027)” which included discussion on strategies to promote disability inclusion within the Office and across the Organization as a whole.

Outcome 3: Leveraging technology for efficient HR services through continued innovation and digitalization of the HR function

3.1 Focus area: HR technologies / digitalization

43. Progress towards the digitalization of key HR processes has continued, reaching 69 per cent completion by the end of 2024. This progress positions the Office well to achieve the target of 75 per cent digitalization of key HR processes by the end of 2025. This milestone underscores the Office’s commitment to streamlining HR operations, enhancing service delivery and reinforcing data security, in line with the Organization’s broader modernization efforts.

44. Building on previous advancements, the implementation of additional digital solutions has further strengthened the efficiency and accessibility of HR services:
- **Self-service attestation for legitimization cards** (headquarters) was introduced in July 2024, providing staff members with a seamless and user-friendly interface at the time of the renewal of their legitimization cards.
 - **SHIF Online submission of secondary insurance claims** was successfully launched in September 2024, offering staff members a more efficient and secure platform for managing medical reimbursements.
 - A new version of the **online Performance Appraisal Forms** was developed in 2024 for implementation in the 2025 performance cycle, streamlining the process flow to improve efficiency and user experience
 - The **E-filing process of personnel files** began in 2024, with the headquarters phase set for completion in the first quarter of 2025. The progressive roll-out to the regions will follow, ensuring a standardized and paperless approach to document management.
 - The development of a **global and integrated tool for processing separation payments** was initiated in 2024, with completion at headquarters and two pilot field offices expected by June 2025. A phased roll-out to the regions will follow, ensuring uniform application and operational coherence.
 - A **self-service application for family status certification and dependants' management** is under development, with the first phase – Family Status Certification – targeted for completion by September 2025. This initiative aligns with the Organization's efforts to simplify administrative processes and empower staff members through self-service functionalities.
45. These digital initiatives align with the Organization's commitment to modernizing HR services, enhancing operational efficiency and reinforcing transparency, while ensuring compliance with data protection and security standards.

3.2 Focus area: HR analytics

46. In line with ongoing efforts to leverage data-driven decision-making, enhancements in HR analytics continue to provide managers and staff members with real-time insights into key workforce trends.
47. A new version of the **Leave Dashboard** is under development, integrating live data and improved visualization tools to enhance transparency and planning efficiency. Completion is expected by June 2025
48. These analytics initiatives contribute to evidence-based HR management, fostering data-driven strategies for workforce planning and organizational performance enhancement.
49. The continuous evolution of HR digitalization and analytics underscores the Office's commitment to leveraging innovative solutions to support a dynamic and agile workforce in alignment with the evolving needs of the United Nations common system.

► Looking ahead to 2025

50. Over the past three years, significant progress has been achieved under the HR Strategy for 2022–25. In 2025, our efforts will concentrate on several key initiatives: launching a comprehensive campaign across both headquarters and field offices to promote a respectful workplace culture; revising the harassment policy and procedures to ensure they are up to date and effective; and completing the first two phases of the skills mapping exercise to develop and implement a skills development plan for technical specialists, field leadership roles and General Administration and Office Support Assistants.
51. In 2025, we will embark on the development of the new HR Strategy for 2026–29, laying the groundwork for future initiatives and ensuring alignment with the ILO vision and strategic priorities.