



Governing Body

353rd Session, Geneva, 10–20 March 2025

Institutional Section

INS

Minutes of the Institutional Section

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Opening remarks

1. **The Chairperson** welcomed participants and opened the 353rd Session of the Governing Body.
(The Governing Body adopted the agenda published in document [GB.353/Agenda\(Rev.2\)](#).)
2. **The Director-General** made an introductory statement to the Governing Body. The statement is reproduced in its entirety in [Appendix I](#).
3. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** said that she looked forward to a productive session and noted the importance of constructive engagement in a time marked by geopolitical shifts and tensions, economic volatility and evolving labour market dynamics and social challenges. Those trends were reinforced by technological developments, had a significant impact on the multilateral system and posed a serious challenge to the ILO – which should be addressed at the current session of the Governing Body. As the oldest United Nations (UN) organization and the only tripartite one, the ILO was rooted in the real economy and society of its Member States and had the potential to grow stronger during the reshaping of global politics.
4. Three areas would be critical to the ILO's future success: the Organization's mandate; multilateralism; and learning from past mistakes. The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work clearly set out the ILO's mandate for the twenty-first century; its promotion required a multilateral approach with all Member States treated equally, irrespective of the nature of their governments, societies and economic systems and the avoidance of politicization and ideological and geopolitical battles. In the past, the Organization had too often pushed for ideologies that excluded, sanctioned and shamed certain Member States – the multiplication of country cases in past years and the toxic debates around the programme and budget were symptoms of that problem, which needed to be resolved in order to strengthen the Organization during a period of change in the international political architecture.
5. Successful organizations analysed past mistakes and learned from them. Two years previously, the Governing Body had refused to engage in social dialogue on the right to strike and had referred the matter to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion. In seeking urgent clarification, the Workers' group had not been able to wait for dialogue, yet nearly two years later the International Court of Justice had not announced the oral hearing on the case and the matter was likely to be referred back to the ILO for dialogue. That would weaken the ILO as an institution and damage its reputation. The Organization must learn from that experience in order to avoid similar mistakes in the future.
6. To promote the ILO's mandate in a sustainable way, sustainable enterprises, skills anticipation and improvements in productivity should remain at the forefront of the Organization's priorities; they were the foundations of economic resilience which was a precondition for decent work and shared prosperity. Education and training needed to be aligned with labour market demands in order to equip workers with future-ready skills. The empowerment of enterprises with tools, regulatory frameworks and access to finance would drive job creation, while the reinforcement of social dialogue and tripartite cooperation would shape fair and effective policies. Such action would bring workers and companies into the formal economy and promote the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work.
7. To achieve sustainable progress, the ILO must integrate economic imperatives with social objectives and allocate proper resources to that end. A focused and transparent programme and budget that was aligned with resources and measurable outcomes would be key to boosting the credibility of the Organization.

8. A strategic and forward-thinking approach to agenda-setting was needed for future sessions of the International Labour Conference. Although the inclusion of discussions on technology, structural and economic transformation and gender equality was a positive step, tackling multiple standard-setting items in a single year diluted focus and stretched resources. Future agenda items must be relevant and balanced and should contribute to tangible progress for employers and workers, and not overstretch the capacities of the Governing Body and the Conference. A timely evidence-based and action-oriented approach was needed for supply chains, since standard-setting may prove ineffective and lead to adverse effects on the global economy and decent work.
9. The democratization of the ILO remained a top priority for her group, which supported measures to enhance representation, improve decision-making and ensure fair participation for all constituents. Although efforts continued to achieve the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization, she urged all members to remain open to alternative solutions to enhance governance more efficiently. The credibility of the ILO depended on its ability to adapt to the evolving global landscape while upholding its tripartite principles. A renewed commitment to multilateralism was essential to that process. Her group would support any measures that improved representativeness and the legitimacy of the decision-making process.
10. The second World Summit for Social Development, later in 2025, would offer an opportunity for the Organization to raise its profile within the United Nations family, and she welcomed the preparatory work undertaken for it. The ILO needed to ensure that it was the agency tasked with implementing the recommendations and conclusions of the Summit.
11. Her group reaffirmed its commitment to constructive dialogue and pragmatic solutions. The focus must be on the Organization's mandate to foster an environment in which business and workers thrived together and that enabled sustainable enterprises as an underlying condition for decent work and decent job creation. Multilateralism must be strengthened. The ILO must demonstrate its added value and act as a pillar of stability to ensure that social dialogue translated into solutions for security, resilience and shared prosperity.
12. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** said that the Governing Body was meeting in times of great turmoil and insecurity. In the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, millions were fleeing the violence caused by competition for rare earth minerals. The ongoing conflict in Sudan had devastated communities, leading to large-scale displacement and a humanitarian crisis that had been compounded by the effects of climate change. In Gaza, 2 million civilians were living under constant fear of bombing by the Israeli military, with the unjust war increasingly extending to the West Bank and beyond. Ukraine too was under constant attack by the Russian Federation, while its freely elected leaders had been excluded from peace talks, leaving people in the occupied territories uncertain about their future. The military regime was continuing to strengthen its grip in Myanmar, with workers under threat from ever harsher conscription laws and the establishment of a fake trade union.
13. In the face of the existential threats of nuclear war and climate change, in combination with a toxic mix of rising poverty and inequality, extremism, nationalism, gender-based violence and shrinking democratic space, the ILO must speak out for social justice and peace, and uphold international human and labour rights and the rule of law, including through its supervisory bodies and technical support. Indeed, the Organization's unique tripartite and normative mandate was of key importance given the threats to the multilateral system. Its constituents must defend that mandate as far as possible.

14. As stated in the Declaration of Philadelphia, poverty anywhere constituted a danger to prosperity everywhere. Economies and societies were interconnected and mutually dependent; it was not possible to simply withdraw behind national borders. In the spirit of diversity, equality and inclusion, the ILO must renew its commitment to the social contract between governments, business and labour to tackle the poverty and inequality that was driving conflict and insecurity, and build more inclusive, resilient and peaceful societies. An effective social contract hinged on democracy and the right to self-determination, which required workers' unhindered access to the enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining. The Governing Body would discuss how the ILO could contribute, through the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda and the Global Coalition for Social Justice, to the debate within the United Nations on the new social contract.
15. Expressing solidarity with the workers of the world who were risking their lives and livelihoods fighting for fundamental rights and freedoms, she paid particular tribute to trade union colleagues who had been imprisoned for standing up for workers' rights and democracy, and against dictatorship and military rule. They included Governing Body member Aliaksandr Yarashuk who was currently detained in Belarus.
16. The ILO must safeguard the supervisory system that enabled it to enforce respect for the fundamental rights. There were several serious country cases on the agenda of the current session that required targeted action. To that end, the ILO constituents must demonstrate their capacity to peacefully resolve conflict and protect workers' rights through social dialogue and meaningful discussion. They must demonstrate that diplomacy and multilateral solutions were not only possible, but more effective than military aggression and oppression.
17. The Workers' group stood ready to contribute to discussions on the future of the ILO, notably in relation to the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27. Those discussions must take place with the involvement of the staff of the ILO, who formed the backbone of the Organization and would feel the impact of any decisions made. In terms of the priorities for the Organization, she recalled its proud history of taking a stance on a wide range of issues based on its constitutional mandate. On the right to strike, the rule of law included the possibility to refer an issue to court when a difference of opinion could not be resolved. The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice would help guide the ILO on the issue.
18. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico said that tripartism and social dialogue must form the basis of discussions during the session. The strength of the Organization was rooted in its unique governance structure, which united governments, workers and employers under a joint commitment to social justice. Tripartism made it possible to build consensus and ensure that the views of all stakeholders were taken into account in policy development. The Government group looked forward to a productive and successful session.

1. Approval of the minutes of the 352nd Session of the Governing Body (GB.353/INS/1)

Decision

19. **The Governing Body approved the minutes of its 352nd Session, as amended.**
(GB.353/INS/1, paragraph 2)

2. Agenda of the International Labour Conference

2.1. Agenda of future sessions of the Conference (GB.353/INS/2/1(Rev.1))

20. **The Employer spokesperson** called for a strategic approach to agenda-setting, with priority given to emerging issues that significantly affected the world of work and required timely attention by the ILO. Including two standard-setting items on the agenda of a single session of the International Labour Conference was neither appropriate nor practical in terms of time and resources and ran contrary to established practice. The exception made for the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference was not to become the rule. Standard-setting items should be subject to a double discussion; single discussions risked compromising quality and effectiveness by placing severe strain on the Office and constituents alike.
21. The group endorsed the proposed title of the general discussion item merging the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work with the item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity to be placed on the agenda of the 115th Session (2027) of the Conference. Standard-setting items on ergonomics and manual handling and on guarding of machinery should be placed on the agendas of the 117th and 118th Sessions (2029 and 2030) of the Conference. The group supported the convening of a tripartite meeting of experts prior to standard-setting, which would allow constituents to deal with the complexities arising in connection with the modernization of the relevant instruments. In addition, her group supported the proposal to place an item concerning the abrogation of the Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 112) on the agenda of the 118th Session (2030) of the Conference. In the light of the forthcoming meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), she noted the relevance of placing on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference the approval of proposed amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006.
22. The focus of any discussion of labour market implications of demographic change, intergenerational solidarity and decent work for older workers should be on worker needs, skills adaptation, reskilling opportunities for older workers and best practices for sustainably integrating an ageing workforce. While her group was open to the idea of holding a general discussion on the topic at a future session of the Conference, it would be appropriate to hold a tripartite meeting on human resources management before taking a decision in that regard.
23. Her group took note of the other possible items for consideration as proposed in the document and looked forward to the tripartite meeting of experts on the protection of personal data in the digital era. The group would take a position on the issue of the protection of whistle-blowers in the public service sector after analysing the research undertaken by the Office.
24. With respect to scheduling a standard-setting discussion on decent work in supply chains, she recalled that a gap analysis carried out by the Office had confirmed that, when ratified and fully implemented, the body of international labour standards addressed most of the decent work deficits associated with supply chains. Furthermore, as the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains would run until at least 2027, discussing standard-setting on that topic before that date would be both inappropriate and premature.
25. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the Office's efforts to ensure a strategic and coherent approach to agenda-setting. Following the merging of the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work with the item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity, the Office's proposals

provided a clearer view of the connections between structural transformation and important matters such as the uptake of technology and the climate emergency. However, the protection of workers in the light of the emergence of new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, was not mentioned in the provisional title of the general discussion item, despite the importance of discussing the positive and negative consequences of new technologies for workers' well-being. Noting the potentially harmful impact of an excessive focus on increased productivity, she proposed deleting the words "higher levels of productivity" from the provisional title of the general discussion item.

26. Her group agreed on the need to include a standard-setting item on ergonomics and manual handling and would appreciate further information from the Office on the time frames for taking decisions to that end. She endorsed convening a tripartite meeting of experts to begin preparations for the standard-setting discussion. As the road map for the upcoming normative discussions on occupational safety and health instruments was quite dense, she requested the Office to organize an informal briefing session for constituents prior to the next session of the Governing Body to allow an opportunity to discuss the proposals and provide clarity on the possibility of simplifying the process of amending instruments, as mentioned in paragraph 34 of Appendix I to document GB.353/INS/2/1(Rev.1).
27. She underscored the importance of advancing discussions on the issue of decent work in supply chains, including through initiatives that complemented the body of international labour standards. Noting that there were no rules limiting the number of standard-setting items on the agenda of a given session of the Conference, she expressed a preference for the standard-setting process to begin in 2028. As different ILO departments would be involved in the preparation of separate standards on chemical hazards and supply chains, her group was given to understand that addressing both issues at a single session of the Conference was unlikely to impose an unbearable burden on the Office. It would be important not to pre-empt the outcome of the discussions on decent work in supply chains to be held later in the current session of the Governing Body; she therefore suggested that subparagraph (b) of the draft decision should be amended so as to defer the decision on the agendas of the 117th and 118th Sessions (2029 and 2030) of the Conference to a later date to allow constituents the opportunity to express their views in that regard.
28. The Workers' group supported subparagraph (d) of the draft decision. Abrogation of Convention No. 112 must be accompanied by greater worker protection. She called on the Office to provide technical assistance to the four Member States in which the Convention was still in force to ensure that the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), was effectively applied to the fishing sector and that fishing was included in lists of hazardous work established pursuant to the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Prior to abrogating Convention No. 112, the Office should provide a full report on progress in eliminating child labour in the fishing sector and a report on the situation concerning national lists of hazardous work established in line with Convention No. 182. Her group could support subparagraph (d) of the draft decision under those conditions.
29. She expressed appreciation for the update on the follow-up to the conclusions of the technical meeting on the protection of whistle-blowers in the public service sector, and asked the Office to prepare a report for discussion by the Governing Body at the earliest opportunity on possible follow-up actions, including the convening of a cross-sectoral meeting of experts to explore normative or non-normative actions to improve protection of whistle-blowers in the world of work. She requested the Office to provide details at the next session of the Governing Body on the possibility of updating the current code of practice on the protection of workers' personal data with a view to scheduling a meeting of experts in the second half of 2026 or early

2027. Research and information sessions were needed to better inform the focus of a possible general discussion on labour market implications of demographic change, intergenerational solidarity and decent work for older workers.

30. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Benin recapitulated the position expressed by her group at the 352nd Session of the Governing Body regarding the agenda of future sessions of the Conference. Her group did not support subparagraph (a) of the draft decision and called for the topics of technological innovation and structural transformation to be discussed under separate items on the agendas of the 114th and 115th Sessions (2026 and 2027) of the Conference. She suggested holding a single discussion on ergonomics and manual handling at the 119th Session (2031), preceded by a preparatory tripartite technical meeting in 2030. She reiterated her group's opposition to including two standard-setting items on the agenda of a single Conference session and its suggestion that matters related to whistle-blowers in the public service should be discussed in the form of tripartite technical meetings or meetings of experts.
31. **Speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)**, a Government representative of Australia remained mindful of the recommendations of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group (SRM TWG) on future standard-setting. Her group was open to the ILO considering labour market implications of demographic change, intergenerational solidarity and decent work for older workers. The Organization must remain flexible and responsive to competing and pressing issues in the world of work over the coming years. ASPAG supported subparagraphs (a), (c) and (d) of the draft decision. Regarding subparagraph (b), while her group remained open to consensus, it would prefer to defer decision-making on the agendas of sessions of the Conference beyond 2027.
32. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Peru welcomed the inclusion of an item on the ILO's tripartite input to the Second World Summit on Social Development on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference and the inclusion of an item on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality on the agenda of the 114th Session (2026). He reiterated his group's support for the standard-setting discussions on protection against biological hazards and on decent work in the platform economy and endorsed the inclusion of a standard-setting item on chemical hazards on the agenda of the 115th and 116th Sessions (2027 and 2028).
33. GRULAC welcomed the merging of the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work with the item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity under the title proposed by the Office. In principle, the group supported placing an item concerning the approval of proposed amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006, on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025), considering that only a brief discussion would be required in that regard. GRULAC agreed that standard-setting action on ergonomics and manual handling should begin in 2029 and standard-setting on the guarding of machinery should be scheduled for 2031.
34. **Speaking on behalf of the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland supported the proposal to place a standard-setting item on ergonomics and manual handling on the agenda of the Conference promptly after 2028, based on a double discussion procedure. The group was also open to the proposal to hold a single standard-setting discussion on the guarding of machinery in 2031 or 2032, preceded by a tripartite meeting, and wished to maintain the possibility of holding a normative discussion on decent work in global supply chains at a future session of the Conference, possibly the 116th Session (2028).

Holding two parallel standard-setting discussions during a single session of the Conference posed a challenge for some constituents and should therefore not become common practice.

35. IMEC welcomed the merging of the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work with the item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity, as well as the provisional title. The Office and constituents should consider the outcomes and areas of possible overlap arising from the general discussion on informality at the 113th Session (2025) and the standard-setting discussions on decent work in the platform economy at the 113th and 114th (2025 and 2026) Sessions of the Conference. IMEC supported the draft decision.
36. **A Government representative of Barbados** said that the appropriate adoption, governance and use of technology could offer many advantages to small States, and such technology must therefore be shared for the benefit of all; to that end, it would be important to determine whether technology could be considered a public good. For small island developing States, the intersection of technology and the crisis-level impacts of climate change must be taken into consideration. Any discussion on the development, adoption and implementation of technology must be guided by the principles of social justice and a human-centred approach to development. Technological transitions must be just. In the light of the impact of rapidly aging populations in the Caribbean on the workforce and development – as well as the links between demographic changes, migration, the functioning and quality of the care economy and economic sustainability – his Government was in favour of holding a discussion on the impact of demographic change as soon as possible.
37. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) recalled that the Governing Body had decided at its previous session to merge the item on harnessing the fullest potential of technology to achieve decent work with the item on structural transformation of the economy towards higher levels of productivity and to hold a double discussion on ergonomics and manual handling. For the standard-setting discussions on ergonomics and manual handling to take place in 2029 and 2030, the Governing Body would have to take a final decision at the latest in March 2027. The Office would be grateful, however, if such a decision could be taken already by November 2026.
38. The decision to include a standard-setting item on decent work in supply chains on the agenda of the 116th Session (2028) of the Conference would have to be taken by March 2026 at the latest. She confirmed the assertion made by the Workers' group that two different departments would be involved in the preparation of standard-setting discussions on ergonomics and manual handling and on decent work in supply chains. The Office was prepared to hold technical briefings concerning the follow-up to the recommendations of the SRM TWG.
39. Regarding the general discussion to be held at the 115th Session (2027) of the Conference, there appeared to be general support for the provisional title proposed by the Office. However, she noted that the Workers' group had proposed removing the reference to "higher levels of productivity" and sought the views of the Employers' group regarding that proposal. She observed that subparagraphs (b) and (c) of the draft decision appeared to have achieved consensus, despite some divergence in views regarding the dates of the standard-setting discussions on ergonomics and manual handling, and almost all speakers had expressed support for subparagraph (d); in that regard, she would appreciate clarification from the Workers' group regarding its request for a report on the abrogation of Convention No. 112, advising that the Office could prepare a report for submission to the Governing Body in 2028.

40. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group would welcome the submission of a full report to the Governing Body providing information on actions required to address issues of concern in relation to the matters covered in Convention No. 112.
41. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the title proposed by the Office was acceptable to her group and appeared to have broad support. Deleting the reference to higher productivity would undermine the clarity and precision of the discussion. Higher levels of productivity were correlated with better pay, better working conditions and social progress. Including that wording would ensure that all avenues for increasing productivity would be explored during the discussion.
42. It would be inappropriate to impose preconditions on the abrogation of Convention No. 112, particularly as constituents had already discussed and assessed that the instrument was no longer relevant. Lastly, as to the protection of whistle-blowers, her group did not support the suggestion made by the Workers' group regarding the convening of a cross-sectoral meeting of experts. The Governing Body had already discussed whether the topic should be cross-sectoral and had instead mandated the Office in 2022 to focus on the public sector in line with a suggestion originally made by the Workers' group.
43. **The Worker spokesperson** took it that her group's concerns about the consequences of focusing on increased productivity would be taken into account in the preparation and discussion of the agenda item. She clarified that her group did not wish to place conditions on the abrogation of Convention No. 112; however, abrogation was not a solution to a problem, and follow-up must be given to the recommendations of the SRM TWG by taking action when certain issues remained unresolved and unaddressed. In addition, while her group had indeed agreed to begin the discussion on the protection of whistle-blowers by focusing on the public sector, that did not preclude the need for further discussions on whistle-blowers beyond the public sector.
44. Her group was not of the view that the Governing Body was divided on subparagraph (b) of the draft decision. However, it was important to recognize that there was a connection between the scheduling of discussions on standard-setting on ergonomics and manual handling and on global supply chains, particularly as the Employers' group had suggested that it would not agree to holding two standard-setting discussions at a single session of the Conference. The Governing Body therefore needed time to discuss possible normative or non-normative action on global supply chains at its current session and at its 355th Session (November 2025) before taking a decision about agenda items for the 117th and 118th Sessions (2029 and 2030) of the Conference. The only decision that needed to be taken at an earlier stage was the decision to convene a tripartite meeting of experts prior to standard-setting on ergonomics and manual handling, which appeared to have achieved consensus. In the light of the above, she proposed amending subparagraph (b) of the draft decision so as to defer the decision on placing a standard-setting item on ergonomics and manual handling to the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body.
45. **The Employer spokesperson** said that it was disappointing to hear other groups using the term "global supply chains", as the Governing Body had decided in 2021 to move the ILO's focus from global supply chains to all supply chains.
46. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom said that her group remained flexible with respect to the timing and sequencing of future discussions on standard-setting at the International Labour Conference.

47. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru said that his group remained flexible regarding the draft decision.
48. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger reiterated his group's view that it would be crucial to avoid holding two standard-setting discussions at a single session of the Conference. His group remained flexible regarding the draft decision.
49. **The Worker spokesperson** said that it appeared from the current discussion that it would be beneficial to hold a briefing prior to the next session of the Governing Body to provide constituents with background information on the debates surrounding occupational safety and health instruments.
50. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed support for the amendment proposed by the Workers' group.

Decision

51. The Governing Body:

- (a) approved an item with a view to a general discussion on the agenda of the 115th Session (2027) of the International Labour Conference entitled "Harnessing the fullest potential of technology to foster structural transformation of the economy, higher levels of productivity and decent work for all as a pathway towards social justice" and requested the Office to take into account the guidance provided in preparing the relevant report to be considered by the Conference at its 115th Session (2027);
- (b) deferred to its 356th Session (March 2026) the decision to place on the agenda of the 117th Session (2029) and 118th Session (2030) of the Conference an item on ergonomics and manual handling for standard-setting on the basis of a double discussion and requested the Office to present to its 355th Session (November 2025) proposals for a tripartite meeting of experts prior to standard-setting;
- (c) decided to place on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference the approval of proposed amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, subject to the adoption of any amendments by the Special Tripartite Committee established under Article XIII of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, at its fifth meeting to be held in April 2025;
- (d) decided to place an item concerning the abrogation of the Minimum Age (Fishermen) Convention, 1959 (No. 112), on the agenda of the 118th Session (2030) of the Conference and invited the four Member States in which Convention No. 112 is still in force to effectively implement the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), with the technical assistance of the Office;
- (e) requested the Office to take into account the guidance provided in preparing the document concerning the agenda of future sessions of the Conference for its 355th Session (November 2025).

(GB.353/INS/2/1(Rev.1), paragraph 46, as amended by the Governing Body)

2.2. Arrangements for the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference (GB.353/INS/2/2(Rev.1))

52. **The Employer spokesperson** said that adherence to the scheduled sitting times remained a significant concern, and late-night sittings should be avoided to maintain the quality and effectiveness of discussions. She urged the Director-General to make every effort to publish his report at least one month before the session to facilitate a high level of participation and thorough preparation. Preparatory meetings with constituents for technical committees must remain informal in order to minimize the financial and time impact of participation. She highlighted the value of separate meetings with each constituent group to achieve a common understanding of the points for discussion and programme of work.
53. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the fact that the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference would continue to be held at the Palais des Nations. She emphasized the importance of Employers' and Workers' delegates arriving in Geneva in time for preparatory meetings on Sunday, 1 June, and requested the Office to continue supporting the visa issuance process. She encouraged the Credentials Committee to monitor the composition of tripartite delegations and continue to promote increased numbers of women and young delegates. She welcomed the Office's efforts to ensure the early nomination of Committee chairpersons with the required competencies, which would promote efficient decision-making and thus improved time management. The organization of consultations and information sessions on amendments and voting procedures and the efforts to disseminate pre-session information and practical arrangements in a timely manner were also welcome. As to the arrangements for proxy badge collection at registration, any technical difficulties must be resolved in advance of the session. She requested more information and guidance for her group on voting procedures before and during the votes, and prior information on the Coalition partners who would be presenting activities during the Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
54. She reiterated the call for groups to nominate substitutes for the Credentials Committee to ensure the continuity of its work. She supported the proposals concerning the Finance Committee and the General Affairs Committee and expressed the hope that informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards would ensure that its discussions ran smoothly, including the special sitting on Belarus. She supported the proposed schedule of technical committees and measures to improve time management; all constituents should be committed to reaching conclusions and finding compromises so that the schedules could be adhered to. Concerning the World Day against Child Labour, she emphasized the need for greater solidarity in resource mobilization to combat child labour effectively. She requested the Office to provide regular updates on ongoing discussions with the Swiss authorities concerning an alternative venue in Geneva for the 114th Session (2026). Her group supported the draft decision.
55. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Benin welcomed the fact that the Office had taken account of the guidance provided by the Governing Body at its two previous sessions. She urged the Office to publish the Conference documents as early as possible to enable constituents to prepare their statements effectively. The delay in the renovation of the Assembly Hall was regrettable, and she urged the Office to guarantee sufficient seating for delegates during plenary sittings in Room XX. Noting the concern that delegates should arrive in Geneva in time for preparatory meetings, her group requested the Office to contact the host country authorities and Swiss missions in Member States to support the visa application process. She welcomed the new conference management and accreditation system and requested the Office to ensure that it was implemented effectively.

She also requested the Office to provide all necessary information before and during the voting procedures. As to the proposed programmes of work for the technical committees, she expressed her group's concerns regarding late-night sittings, which were not conducive to promoting the principle of decent work. She recognized the work of the Office in developing an appropriate programme for Governing Body and Conference sessions, but emphasized the need to take into account the timing of religious festivals, particularly those celebrated in Islam. The Africa group supported the draft decision.

56. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Japan expressed regret that the Assembly Hall might not be available for the 2025 session and requested that the Office adopt a transparent process to set appropriate limits on the number of participants using Room XX in order to ensure fair representation, and that the arrangements be communicated to constituents in a timely manner. She welcomed the continuation of the procedure for collecting Conference badges by proxy and requested that the planned briefing on accreditation and registration procedures should be held in good time to allow a smooth transition to the new conference management system. The group insisted that all sittings of technical committees must end by 9 p.m., rather than 10 p.m. as proposed by the Office. That would promote decent work and was especially important for delegations with a significant time difference from Geneva. At the previous session, sittings had frequently started late without an explanation. Additional time management measures were therefore required, such as setting clear restart times based on the expected duration of informal consultations and communicating the information to delegations. She welcomed the Office's response to the group's previous request to separate briefings on practical matters from those on substantive matters and the fact that remote participation was still offered. She called for Conference documents to be published on time to allow proper preparation by Member States.
57. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Uruguay expressed regret that the Assembly Hall might not be available but commended the Office for its contingency planning. However, if the plenary were to be held in Room XX, the seating assignments would need to be adapted to promote more inclusive tripartite participation of all delegations. The group would continue to do its utmost to support the early nomination of Officers of the Conference and its committees. He requested the Office to continue improving the Conference accreditation and registration processes, and asked when the new conference management and accreditation system would be in use and how it would function for tripartite delegations. He also asked the Office to continue supporting the tripartite constituents on the voting procedures. He had no objections to the time management measures proposed, but found it regrettable that it had not been possible to reduce the number and duration of evening sittings. The group therefore urged constituents and the Office to commit to more efficient management of time in accordance with the measures proposed in paragraph 52 of the Office document. GRULAC supported the draft decision.
58. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Official Meetings, Documents and Relations Department) welcomed the comments made by constituents, which the Office would take into account, including when preparing the briefing sessions. Time management remained a concern during the Conference despite the Office's constant efforts to improve it. Time management was a shared effort. The Office would continue to put in place a conducive framework for the programme and time management measures, but the tripartite constituents had a role to play in arriving on time for the start of a sitting and abiding by speaking limits. As previous efforts to have evening sittings in committees end by 9 p.m. had not proved feasible, the Office was proposing for this year's session that some sittings end by 10 p.m., taking into account that there would be two standard-setting committees. Committee

sittings often began late because delegates arrived late from group meetings. At the previous session, sittings had been delayed by attempts to negotiate outside the committee meetings. The Office could discuss further at the preparatory sessions how the committee chairpersons could be supported to ensure that time could be used more efficiently.

59. The new online accreditation system for the Conference would go live on 2 May 2025. Each Member State would need to nominate a focal point responsible for the accreditation of its delegates. On 2 May, Member States would receive a hyperlink that would need to be forwarded to the designated focal points to begin the accreditation process. Credentials should be deposited with the Office by 12 May 2025. Briefings on the new process would be organized by the Office in late April and information would be published on the Conference website.

Decision

60. The Governing Body:

- (a) **endorsed the proposed programme of work appended to document GB.353/INS/2/2(Rev.1), subject to any adjustments that might be necessary until its adoption by the International Labour Conference at the opening sitting of the 113th Session;**
- (b) **requested the Office to implement all the arrangements outlined in the document, in particular the measures to improve time management set out in paragraphs 51 and 52, taking into account the guidance provided.**

(GB.353/INS/2/2(Rev.1), paragraph 55)

3. Review of annual reports under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022 (GB.353/INS/3(Rev.1))

61. **The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the inclusion in the annual review of a dedicated section on development cooperation and the reference to efforts to align development cooperation initiatives with the plan of action for the period 2024–30 to give effect to the conclusions concerning the third recurrent discussion on fundamental principles and rights at work adopted by the International Labour Conference in June 2024.
62. However, it was concerning that the global reporting rate was still below 50 per cent, and many reports lacked relevant and up-to-date information. Reporting was not an end in itself, but a starting point to identify actions required of Member States and the ILO. Inadequate and inconsistent reporting impaired the Organization's ability to identify needs, allocate resources effectively and assist Member States. The Office must urgently and proactively address barriers to robust reporting and enhance quality and consistency in reporting. The next annual review should outline the measures taken to that end, including any steps taken to ask governments what difficulties they faced, offer direct support in preparing questionnaire responses, reinforce the value and constructive purpose of the reports, and promote the engagement of social partners in reporting.
63. The annual review was once again too focused on ratification and failed to devote sufficient attention to substantive efforts to give effect to the fundamental principles and rights at work. For example, although 37 countries had indicated their intent to ratify the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), few had provided information on specific measures

taken to strengthen workplace safety. The Office must shift its focus from commitments and compliance to action and impact.

64. The annual review had the potential to be an incredibly valuable tool for identifying the needs of countries and strengthening the effectiveness of development cooperation and technical assistance. To realize that potential, the Office must prioritize and focus on national policy reforms and implementation rather than ratification figures, address implementation barriers with targeted technical assistance and strengthen reporting as a tool for targeted support, not just compliance. His group supported the draft decision.
65. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the decrease in the global reporting rate compared to 2023 indicated that improvements in reporting were needed. She called for increased involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in the reporting process, noting that the submission of annual reports provided a framework for national social dialogue.
66. She congratulated the Member States that had indicated their intention to ratify one or more fundamental Conventions and urged them to intensify their efforts to that end with the involvement of trade unions. She welcomed the ratifications of Convention No. 155 and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), that had been registered since the 2023 annual review, but found it regrettable that there had been no new ratifications of the remaining fundamental instruments. She urged Member States that had not yet done so to ratify those instruments, noting that ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), would be particularly timely in view of the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour, to be held in 2026. The Office should strengthen the technical assistance provided to Member States to promote universal ratification of the fundamental instruments.
67. The Office was to be commended for integrating information on development cooperation and technical assistance into the annual review. It was regrettable that some countries benefiting from development cooperation projects on fundamental principles and rights at work had failed to submit reports. The submission of reports should be a quantifiable objective of such projects. Moreover, the Office should enhance monitoring of pathfinder countries for Sustainable Development Goal target 8.7 that had not ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. Her group shared the Office's concerns about the uneven quality of reports and the failure to meet deadlines and encouraged Member States to clarify their requests for technical assistance in order to optimize proposed solutions. She supported the draft decision.
68. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Paraguay welcomed the collection of data on Conventions Nos 155 and 187, which would help in promoting their ratification and identifying areas for improvement. GRULAC remained committed to submitting annual reports and noted with satisfaction that around 50 per cent of reporting countries had indicated their intention to ratify one or more of the ten fundamental Conventions. Latin America and the Caribbean was one of the regions with the highest number of ratifications, in part because fundamental labour rights were enshrined in domestic laws and, in some cases, constitutions. The Office should provide support to the 39 Member States that had indicated their intention to ratify the Protocol of 2014. It should also step up its technical assistance, especially in Latin America and the Caribbean, in view of the region's high ratification rates. Her group supported the draft decision.
69. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Canada said that the annual review played a crucial role in informing the provision of technical assistance to Member States and efforts to achieve universal ratification and implementation of the fundamental

Conventions. It was therefore important for governments to submit quality and timely reports. IMEC was in favour of engaging in dialogue to identify barriers to reporting, an exercise that would also help to streamline reporting under article 22 of the ILO Constitution. The online questionnaire remained an area for improvement, as not all replying countries had submitted their reports in that manner. The brief window for completing the questionnaire was one possible obstacle, and although the online questionnaire had been made available earlier than in previous years, most Member States had found it difficult to meet the reporting deadline owing to the addition of questions on occupational safety and health (OSH). She would therefore appreciate an indication of whether a simplified reporting form was envisaged for OSH questions. She supported the draft decision.

70. **Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. It was encouraging that several countries had indicated their intention to ratify one or more fundamental instruments. The EU and its Member States recognized the invaluable contribution of the social partners to the implementation of specific fundamental principles and rights at work and welcomed the inclusion in the annual review of Conventions Nos 155 and 187. However, it was regrettable that the only new ratifications registered since the 2023 annual review had concerned those two instruments, and that 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), were still among the least ratified fundamental Conventions. The global reporting rate was also of concern, as was the unexpectedly low number of reports received from pathfinder countries. The EU and its Member States supported efforts to bolster the supervisory system and welcomed the inclusion in the annual review of information on development cooperation and technical assistance in countries that had not ratified one or more fundamental instruments. She called for further efforts to promote universal ratification of all fundamental Conventions and expressed support for the draft decision.
71. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that constructive approaches should be taken to achieve universal ratification and full realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work. Such approaches included promoting the Conventions and highlighting their shared benefits for employers, workers and governments in terms of greater productivity, sustainability, labour protection and employment opportunities and better implementation of national economic development plans. The use of local languages and smart adaptation to local contexts might also yield better results.
72. Making the provision of development cooperation and technical assistance contingent on ratification of the fundamental Conventions could have an adverse impact on the employment landscape, sustainability of enterprises and decent work deficits in countries facing conflict and climate challenges. Equally, it would not encourage ratification among countries that did not require support. It was not pragmatic to promote ratification through intense efforts and then assign full responsibility for implementation to Member States. The Office must identify resource and capacity constraints and challenges in ratifying Member States at an early stage and report them to the Governing Body so that appropriate assistance could be provided. He supported the draft decision.
73. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) thanked the members of the Governing Body for their comments and suggestions. She had taken note of the calls to strengthen technical assistance with a view to improving the global reporting rate and the quality of information reported. The Office would

step up its efforts to raise constituents' awareness of the annual review process through its specialists in the field, including officials from the Bureau for Employers' Activities and the Bureau for Workers' Activities. It would also increase the remote provision of assistance through webinars, which had proved to be practical and effective, and further enhance the accessibility of the online reporting system.

74. A simplified reporting form for OSH questions would be considered in due course. For the time being, the Office was prioritizing the collection of detailed information. While the Office shared the concerns raised regarding the need for robust information on action taken to give effect to the fundamental principles and rights at work, it was worth noting that the quality of the annual review was dependent on the quality of the information submitted by Member States, and continuous efforts were being made to drive improvement in that regard. Action to campaign for the universal ratification of all the fundamental Conventions would continue beyond the current biennium. She thanked the members of Alliance 8.7, who were contributing to strengthening countries' commitment to reporting on the fundamental principles and rights at work.

Decision

75. The Governing Body:

- (a) **took note of the information presented in the Annual Review under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work for the 2024 period;**
- (b) **invited the Office to continue its support to Member States to ensure timely reporting on all unratified fundamental Conventions and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, and to ensure priority follow-up to requests for technical assistance to address obstacles to ratification and realization of the fundamental principles and rights at work;**
- (c) **reiterated its support for the mobilization of resources with a view to further assisting Member States in their efforts to respect, promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work, including through universal ratification of all fundamental Conventions and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930.**

(GB.353/INS/3(Rev.1), paragraph 181)

4. Progress report on the implementation of the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains (GB.353/INS/4(Rev.1))

76. **The Worker spokesperson**, while welcoming the progress report, regretted that it did not demonstrate whether the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains had led to any improvement for workers. Concerning action area 1, the Office should reinforce its promotion of the ratification and effective implementation of existing international labour standards. Additionally, the impact of the transnational nature of global supply chains on the application of standards should be addressed specifically. The establishment of an international labour standard should be a priority.
77. Regarding output 2, she asked the Office to consider decent work in global supply chains in the upcoming standard-setting discussions on biological hazards, the platform economy, and chemicals, in light of the global nature of those areas of work. Outputs 4 and 5 would enhance

the ILO's normative work, and her group looked forward to the results of the planned mapping and analysis activities. Strong normative solutions must be developed to fill gaps in international labour standards and improve working conditions in global supply chains. She asked for more information on the planned discussion of the options paper setting out possible initiatives that complemented the body of international labour standards to be considered by the Governing Body.

78. Regarding action area 2, her group welcomed efforts to promote the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration), which could promote responsible business conduct through effective social dialogue. A more data-driven assessment of those efforts would, however, have been useful, as it was unclear what improvements the ILO's activities had made to labour rights, working conditions and dialogue between enterprises and trade unions; she asked the Office to provide an analysis on the use of, and obstacles to, such dialogue. There was also a lack of information regarding the tripartite national focal points for the MNE Declaration, despite progress in some countries; that tool should be promoted. She welcomed the integration of activities under the strategy at the sectoral level. Access to effective remedy was crucial, and she highlighted the conclusions of the Tripartite Technical Meeting on Access to Labour Justice for All in that regard. Turning to action area 3, she said that the effective application of the 11 fundamental instruments was vital to promoting decent work in global supply chains. Commending the work done to combat child labour and forced labour, her group called on the Office and constituents to promote the ratification of Conventions, particularly those relating to safe and healthy work environments, freedom of association and collective bargaining. She welcomed the focus on sector-specific challenges.
79. Under action area 4, her group welcomed the research undertaken on decent work and trade and on good practices and innovative approaches adopted by multinational enterprises in supporting transitions towards formality. She welcomed the review of existing knowledge-sharing platforms and efforts to identify opportunities for the ILO Helpdesk for Business on International Labour Standards to contribute to due diligence processes. The Office should continue to develop and share new data collection approaches to measuring decent work in supply chains. On action area 5, her group recognized the value of development cooperation in promoting decent work and agreed that supply chains should be used as an entry point for development cooperation interventions. The conclusions relating to living wages of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, should be integrated into the strategy. Living wage initiatives in multinational enterprises could improve minimum wages, but they should be aligned to the ILO's wage-setting principles and consider the importance of social dialogue and collective bargaining.
80. Concerning action area 6, her group welcomed efforts to interact with other multilateral organizations and the leading role of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. She asked for more information on the ILO's collaborative initiatives referenced in the report and on how the trade-related institutions mentioned promoted the fundamental principles and rights at work. It was important to promote alignment with international labour standards in other UN organizations and international financial institutions, especially the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94). Coherence with international financial institutions was insufficient, and she asked for more information on collaborative activities with such institutions, many of which supported public and private entities in countries and businesses where labour rights violations occurred. She welcomed the promotion of labour provisions within trade agreements and encouraged the ILO to ensure that they were enforced. Coherence in policies and action was required between international organizations and

international financial institutions, but also among country-specific approaches and sectors, and at the regional and international levels. Lastly, under action area 7, it was essential to enhance policy coherence within the ILO to enable knowledge-sharing, the integration of actions and the strategic use of resources. Her group supported the draft decision.

81. **The Employer spokesperson** reaffirmed her group's support for the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains, especially its guiding principle of addressing root causes, which was essential given that systemic governance and capacity issues, rather than sector-specific challenges, drove decent work deficits. In that regard, particular attention must be paid to governance, capacity-building, formalization and poverty reduction at the country level. Her group also appreciated the emphasis on evidence-based action informed by the needs of constituents and lessons learned from development cooperation programmes, and on Member States' responsibility to uphold the fundamental principles and rights at work and enforce ratified ILO Conventions, including by enabling employers to comply with their obligations.
82. At the mid-point of the strategy, it was vital to improve the implementation of international labour standards by strengthening national capacity to support a balanced approach to worker protection, enterprise sustainability and respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work. Greater attention should also be given to domestic supply chains. To date, the primary focus had been on export-oriented supply chains, even though domestic supply chains accounted for the larger part of gross domestic product and employed the vast majority of workers. In addition, the strategy must move beyond its current focus on Western consumers and multinational enterprises to address systemic challenges in all economies. Small and medium-sized enterprises required particular support in implementation, and governments must be empowered to create an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises that enhanced productivity and promoted human and labour rights.
83. Efforts to further implement the strategy must remain faithful to its agreed building blocks. On output 2, the Office had deviated from those building blocks by failing to take decent work in supply chains fully into account in the broader work of the Organization. Unilateral information notes caused unnecessary debate and should be avoided. On outputs 4 and 5, the gap analysis of ILO normative and non-normative measures to ensure decent work in supply chains had confirmed that most supply chain-related deficits were already covered by standards. No new standards were therefore needed; efforts should instead focus on practical implementation tools. Future work on output 10 should be aligned with previous Governing Body discussions, prioritizing workplace cooperation, dispute resolution and capacity-building for employers' organizations, particularly those supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and for such enterprises themselves.
84. Research carried out under output 11 must explore root causes, good practices and decent work challenges across all economic levels and in both developing and developed countries, not just within multinational enterprises. Formalization remained primarily the responsibility of Member States. On output 15, development cooperation initiatives must reflect national priorities and be designed jointly with constituents to maximize their impact. Here too, a better balance was needed between projects targeting global supply chains and those targeting domestic ones, and between sectors.
85. The strategy should be used as the framework for the Organization's action on supply chains, including global and regional meetings. To that end, the ILO's leadership on the issue must continue beyond 2027. The Employers' group supported the draft decision, on the

understanding that its comments would be duly taken into account in future implementation of the strategy.

86. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa said that, despite the success of initiatives to improve labour conditions in specific supply chains, systemic failures continued to perpetuate decent work deficits across the African continent. It was therefore vital to move beyond isolated initiatives to a comprehensive strategy that addressed the root causes of exploitation and restored the fundamental dignity of millions of workers. Africa's vast resources were fuelling the green transition and supplying luxuries to the world, but its miners, farmers and artisans remained trapped in poverty, and child labour, forced labour and illicit financial flows continued to blight the continent.
87. Voluntary frameworks such as the MNE Declaration could not by themselves dismantle exploitative structures. The very low percentage of active development cooperation projects targeting supply chains that promoted the ratification of international labour Conventions mirrored the global ambivalence towards binding accountability. Various economic actors, shielded by legal fragmentation and governance gaps, continued to profit from regulatory voids, leaving African Member States to bear the human cost. Injuries and hardship due to poor working conditions were not isolated tragedies, but symptoms of a supply chain model that relegated Africa to a source of raw materials, rather than a beneficiary of value. Workers across the continent were likewise marginalized, with their labour undervalued and heavily informalized. The ILO's piloting of a cloud-based electronic case management system for labour inspection might offer some hope, but it would be a long time before those tools were in widespread use.
88. He acknowledged the ILO's participation in the work of the UN Secretary-General's Panel on Critical Energy Transition Minerals and Alliance 8.7, but called for more decisive action. The Office's mapping of development cooperation projects must evolve into binding norms that required due diligence, penalized labour abuses and criminalized environmental degradation. Voluntary guidelines would not secure living wages or recover public funds that had been illicitly diverted. Fears of deterring investment should not prevent steps towards binding instruments; there was no justice in investment that thrived on exploitation. Partnerships must be rooted in equity, not predation, and trade policies must support supply chains that honoured the humanity of all workers, in line with the ILO's founding principle that labour was not a commodity. The report should pave the way for binding instruments rooted in solidarity that made supply chains drivers of shared prosperity and dignity. The Africa group supported the draft decision and stood ready to collaborate with the Office in further work on the issue.
89. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the progress made in implementing the strategy. Nevertheless, given the significant proportion of global supply chains hosted in his region, increased attention should be given to regional initiatives, particularly those addressing the informal economy and supporting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. In terms of work on the transition to formality, targeted programmes should be set up to support the formalization of small and medium-sized enterprises in the handicraft and agricultural supply chains, covering incentives, access to global markets and management training.
90. The research on the relationship between supply chains and environmental sustainability should be used to develop integrated policy frameworks in key industries such as palm oil and electronics, in order to simultaneously improve working conditions, reduce carbon footprints and support vulnerable local communities. He suggested rolling out the toolkit on grievance mechanisms to other sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, to address the

challenges faced by migrant and informal workers. The research into migrant workers' access to justice should inform pilot schemes in countries of destination to ensure social protection and access to grievance mechanisms and combat forced labour, especially in the construction and domestic service sectors. The national dialogues detailed in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the report should be expanded to other countries in his region, particularly those with emerging industrial sectors entering global supply chains. Similarly, the innovative survey methodology piloted in the electronics supply chain in Viet Nam would be valuable in other countries and sectors, particularly agriculture and textiles, as it would improve understanding of the decent work indicators across multiple tiers.

91. The Office should strengthen its collaboration with international financial institutions to improve labour standards in special economic zones and large infrastructure projects, including through training for labour inspectors and the development of digital monitoring systems. He called for joint training courses for government representatives, trade unions and employers in emerging areas such as labour rights in the digital economy and green supply chain management, in collaboration with the Turin Centre, which should incorporate such courses into its existing training initiatives where appropriate. His group also recommended developing initiatives similar to those undertaken in the coffee and cotton supply chains for the electronics, textile and garment, palm oil and seafood sectors, which were particularly important in his region.
92. An enhanced focus on skills development was needed throughout supply chains to support the technological transition and improve productivity. To that end, the Office should incorporate more targeted skills development interventions in supply chains in his region, which could complement the existing work mentioned in paragraph 36. The existing South-South and triangular cooperation should be expanded to enable governments in his region to share best practices in areas such as labour inspection, enterprise formalization and the integration of small and medium-sized enterprises into global supply chains. ASPAG supported the timeline proposed in the draft decision.
93. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Colombia welcomed the creation of the cross-Office data working group and publication of the repository of data collection tools on the ILO intranet. The ongoing analysis of ILO data to increase transparency and consistency in human rights due diligence reporting would also be very useful, as it would enable Member States to evaluate the real impact of due diligence measures in supply chains; the analysis should therefore be made widely available. Another positive development was the piloting of a cloud-based electronic case management system for labour inspection, which would hopefully serve as an effective capacity-building mechanism in his region once it had been rolled out globally. Action on partnerships under output 16 would also be key to ensuring that the projects financed considered the promotion of labour rights within supply chains.
94. He requested further support to increase the impact of the resource mobilization strategy that was under development in countries in his region. In closing, he called on the social partners to address efforts on decent work in supply chains during the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference given the urgent need to establish regulations that improved safeguards and offered a concrete reference framework for employers and workers.
95. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that the following countries aligned themselves with her statement: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Norway and Armenia. The ILO, as the only tripartite international organization, must continue its work to ensure that social standards were harmonized

equitably within supply chains – particularly global supply chains – so as to level the playing field and ensure healthy, fair competition for businesses and guarantee decent work for workers in producing countries, regardless of where the parent company providing their employment was headquartered.

96. She noted with satisfaction that significant progress had been made in promoting the ratification and implementation of the international labour Conventions and establishing national and regional dialogues to address decent work deficits. She also welcomed the actions taken to promote fundamental principles and rights at work in supply chains, including capacity-building efforts to tackle child and forced labour. It was likewise positive to see efforts to strengthen cooperation both within the ILO and with other international organizations, thereby improving multilateral coherence in social, trade and investment policies.
97. In relation to outputs 4 and 5, she highlighted the need to present both non-normative and normative alternatives in the options paper, as a smart mix was indispensable to achieve tangible, sustainable results. In that regard, corporate due diligence, as defined in the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the MNE Declaration, was crucial to ensure decent work in supply chains. The ILO should continue to play an important role in offering such a smart mix of tools to support work on enabling environments. On the normative aspect, the options paper should consider the trend towards binding regulations and initiatives, based on the gap analysis of ILO normative and non-normative measures. The prevention of labour rights violations in supply chains and access to effective remedy must be at the heart of ILO efforts. The options paper should therefore also focus on promoting effective cooperation between governments, businesses and social partners throughout supply chains, particularly at lower levels. The updated progress report should provide a more detailed evaluation of budgetary and human resources and identify the most urgent workstreams for the draft strategy for 2028–31. Her group supported the draft decision and looked forward to participating in the forthcoming informal consultations, which must be inclusive.
98. **Speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, Japan, Switzerland and the United Kingdom**, a Government representative of Canada expressed her appreciation for the progress made in implementing the strategy and for the information note shared with the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group in September 2024. She called on the Office to ensure that the options paper was submitted on time and that it built on relevant research, including the gap analysis. She welcomed the progress made under output 9 and the ILO's support for governments, social partners and enterprises in ensuring access to effective remedy.
99. She encouraged the Office to allocate sufficient resources to ensure that all fundamental principles and rights at work in supply chains were promoted and realized, and she supported the Office's planned mapping of countries' interventions on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. She called on the Office to strengthen efforts to support constituents in combating child and forced labour in supply chains, and she would appreciate an update on the linkages between the Forced Labour Observatory and the strategy. She fully supported the promotion of policy coherence and cooperation on decent work in global supply chains across the UN system and with international financial institutions. Trade and labour were mutually supportive, and trade should not come at the expense of fundamental labour protections. She encouraged the Office to continue its increased efforts to support Member States in considering and implementing labour provisions within trade and investment agreements, and she supported the draft decision.

- 100. Speaking on behalf of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam commended the Office for its unwavering efforts to promote fair working conditions in global and domestic supply chains. He urged the ILO to enhance its capacity-building programmes and exchange initiatives. Support must be tailored to diverse supply chain structures within his region. Underscoring the importance of expanding social security coverage to informal and supply chain workers, he urged the ILO to work closely with national governments to align social protection policies with social security systems.
- 101.** He called for grievance mechanisms and social dialogue to be strengthened by drawing on regional experiences. The ILO should support the development of effective and accessible complaint and remediation mechanisms that addressed labour rights violations promptly and transparently. As economic transformation, climate change and technological advancements reshaped industries, he emphasized the need for an actionable plan on green jobs, a just transition and enhanced skills development. He reaffirmed ASEAN's commitment to fostering regional and global partnerships by engaging in constructive dialogue with multinational enterprises, governments and workers' organizations. Sharing best practices would help address challenges in supply chains. He welcomed the targeted promotion of the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards and encouraged continued collaboration between the ILO and its Member States to further advance decent work globally. ASEAN stood ready to contribute actively to the development of the strategy for 2028–31 through stronger, more inclusive policies for decent work in supply chains.
- 102. A Government representative of India**, outlining measures adopted at the national level to ensure responsible and sustainable business practices, address the root causes of child and forced labour and promote decent work in supply chains, welcomed the progress report and the ILO's efforts. He reiterated his country's commitment to advancing decent work in supply chains through greater cooperation with the ILO, the Global Coalition for Social Justice, social partners and other stakeholders.
- 103. A Government representative of China** said that in the context of sluggish global economic growth and rising trade protectionism, safeguarding the resilience and stability of industrial supply chains worldwide was crucial for the recovery of the world economy. His country supported the Office's effective implementation of the strategy. Noting with interest the progress achieved across all seven action areas, he emphasized that the specific political, historical and cultural context of each Member State must be fully considered when promoting decent work in supply chains; that should be achieved through enhanced experience-sharing and support for stakeholders at all levels in resolving decent work deficits through dialogue and consultation. He opposed all illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed under the guise of protecting labour rights. He attached great importance to the role of international labour standards in addressing decent work deficits in supply chains, and he stressed the need to fully utilize existing standards to avoid the fragmentation of the international labour standards system. Normative measures were not the sole solution, and he encouraged the Office to adopt comprehensive approaches and to enrich its policy toolkit. He supported the draft decision.
- 104. A Government representative of Nepal** recalled that decent work demanded equality, fairness, worker safety and respect for labour rights in all formal and informal sectors, including supply chains. Decent working conditions in supply chains helped empower the workforce, enhance productivity and increase efficiency. His Government was therefore ready to work with all stakeholders to promote decent work in supply chains through constructive social dialogue and tripartite consultations. He supported the draft decision.

- 105. A Government representative of Japan** noted that her country had established Guidelines on Respecting Human Rights in Responsible Supply Chains and had conducted several ILO voluntary contribution projects to promote decent work in supply chains. The dialogue event held in Jakarta in September 2023 had highlighted the importance of harnessing synergies between inclusive growth and respect for human rights. She expressed appreciation for the ILO's contribution in responding to the tripartite constituents' requests on regional supply chain agreements. She hoped that the options paper would reflect constituents' views, and she supported the draft decision.
- 106. A Government representative of Malawi** welcomed the ILO's support for a project undertaken in his country to eliminate child labour in supply chains. He encouraged the Office to continue and intensify the implementation of the strategy. Consideration should be given to strengthening labour inspection services, and the transition from the informal to the formal economy would contribute to ensuring decent work in supply chains.
- 107. A representative of the Director-General** (Deputy Director-General) said that the possible initiatives contained in the options paper would complement the body of international labour standards and take into account the changing world of work, the challenges of cross-border supply chains, implementation gaps and national circumstances through new normative measures, the revision of existing measures or supplementary tools and guidelines. The paper would be informed by the Office's research and analysis and the tripartite consultations that would be held in the second and third quarters of 2025. The mapping and analysis would assess the impact and effectiveness of the various regulatory and non-regulatory measures to strengthen the State duties and corporate responsibilities in relation to decent work in supply chains, and the results would be shared during the tripartite consultations.
- 108.** The conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, had been developed after the strategy on decent work in supply chains. They recommended that the Office should continue to support the strengthening of the wage-setting process, including by building on the strategy. Although the progress report contained fewer examples of efforts involving domestic supply chains than of those involving global supply chains, almost a third of all development cooperation projects focused specifically on them, and they were also addressed in other work. The Governing Body's comments would be taken into account in the implementation of the strategy, the drafting of the options paper and the development of the next strategy.
- 109. The Worker spokesperson** said that she had been surprised to hear the Employer spokesperson imply that the ILO's action was driven by ideology, given that violations of workers' rights in supply chains were well documented. It was now time for normative action, since voluntary guidelines had not enabled workers to exercise their rights fully, and the private sector must bear its share of the responsibility.
- 110. The Employer spokesperson** said that it was clear that much remained to be done to improve the situation for companies in national contexts and to tackle the root causes of problems in supply chains; a whole-of-government approach to such efforts should be adopted. Addressing those root causes would allow local companies to increase their productivity, in turn enabling them to improve working conditions in a sustainable manner and pay higher wages.

Decision

- 111. The Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in further implementing the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains and to submit an updated progress report on the implementation of the strategy to its 359th Session (March 2027) for its consideration, together with a draft strategy for the next four years (2028–31).**

(GB.353/INS/4(Rev.1), paragraph 57)

5. Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and the Bonn Declaration: Implications for the ILO and proposed follow-up action (GB.353/INS/5)

- 112. The Worker spokesperson** said that urgent action was needed to address the health crisis stemming from occupational exposure to chemicals and waste, which caused more than a million deaths and many more illnesses and injuries every year. The Workers' group firmly supported the adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals, particularly the commitments to the protection of human and labour rights, the responsibility to ensure environmental and worker protection from hazardous chemicals and waste along the entire supply chain in all relevant sectors, achieving change through a just transition and the promotion of normative measures. However, it was concerning that the Framework lacked effective multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder engagement, as governance would be exercised primarily by environmental ministries and the United Nations Environment Programme. As a result, pressing issues in the world of work, such as asbestos and silica, and the specificities of high-risk sectors, including construction and mining, could receive insufficient attention. It was important to ensure that the Framework's governance mechanisms gave an equal voice to constituencies responsible for labour and health, including the ILO and trade unions. Therefore, informal discussions should be initiated with the Bureau and the Executive Board with a view to changing the governance of the Framework through a formal agreement at its first conference in 2026. Without a change in governance, it was unlikely that the process of the Global Framework would achieve multi-stakeholder engagement or multi-sectoral cooperation to reduce the number of global fatalities, injuries and illnesses resulting from exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- 113.** The Workers' group welcomed the follow-up action proposed by the Office, including support for the ratification of ILO Conventions and Protocols, addressing knowledge gaps, increasing awareness, advocacy and multilateral cooperation as well as providing technical assistance on incorporating issues related to chemical hazards in the national occupational safety and health system. However, resource constraints were likely to hinder its implementation. Therefore, the group strongly recommended that: the Global Framework procedures should be amended to allow the ILO and other members of the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals to access funds for technical assistance; additional support should be provided for preventive campaigns, capacity-building and awareness-raising activities on the ground; and additional resources should be allocated to the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health and Working Environment Branch (OSHE), given that it currently had only a 0.4 full-time equivalent worker dedicated to chemicals to prepare for the standard-setting activities on the consolidation of instruments on chemical hazards in 2027 and 2028. The Workers' group supported the draft decision.

- 114. The Employer spokesperson** noted that the ILO already had a well-established and effective framework for chemical management and occupational safety and health, but that continued progress required strengthened multilateral cooperation and further capacity-building and technical support. The Employers' group endorsed the proposed follow-up action, which was coherent and in line with the ILO's Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health (2024–30), and agreed with the five priority action areas. Action by the ILO in the context of the Global Framework should be guided by the needs and priorities of constituents and should aim to support constituents in the sound management of chemicals. The Office should not enter into new activities that had not been discussed or approved by the Governing Body, such as its engagement with the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides. There was a need for robust governance, transparency and clear information-sharing with the Governing Body on the Office's engagement in the multilateral process.
- 115.** She acknowledged the appropriateness of the proposed follow-up actions and priorities. However, her group had concerns about certain elements of the Global Framework and the Bonn Declaration. They had been negotiated exclusively by and for governments, limiting the group's capacity to endorse them fully. For example, paragraph 7 of the document stated that the consolidation of ILO instruments on chemical hazards would ensure an up-to-date approach "in accordance with" the Global Framework, whereas the consolidation of instruments was a separate process within the ILO that must be driven by constituents. A clear understanding of the purpose of the draft decision was critical, as although the group supported the proposed follow-up action, that should not be interpreted as an ILO endorsement of the governmental process.
- 116.** The group supported many of the elements of the Global Framework, including the call for the ILO to contribute to the generation of reliable chemicals- and waste-related data and to facilitate relevant action and collaboration based on scientific evidence, but noted that the Framework contained provisions whose scope went beyond established standards and practices. The Bonn Declaration lacked a concrete framework and sufficient resources for implementation. Target D7 and paragraphs 42 and 43 of the Framework raised concerns, as they extended beyond the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, imposing excessive and impractical responsibilities on businesses and the private sector. Furthermore, paragraph 67 required the private sector to bear many of the responsibilities associated with compliance with the Framework, even though it had been developed exclusively by governments.
- 117.** The Employers' group firmly supported the involvement and consultation of the social partners in the proposed follow-up, capacity-building and technical assistance activities, which must remain within the scope of the ILO's mandate and be aligned with international labour standards. Indeed, paragraph 14 of the Bonn Declaration stated that relevant international organizations should support the Framework within their respective mandates. She supported the draft decision but asked the Office to clarify how the proposed follow-up action would be integrated into the programme and budget and how the Safety and Health for All programme would be used.
- 118. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the Congo welcomed the proposed follow-up action and supported the draft decision. The adoption of the Global Framework on Chemicals and the Bonn Declaration would strengthen efforts to address many of the complex challenges facing the global community and would provide further support for the sound management of chemicals, including chemical waste. The ILO's Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health 2024–30 shared similarities with the Global Framework on Chemicals and would foster the establishment of partnerships between the ILO

and other international organizations and strengthen collaboration to address major crises, including climate change and pollution.

- 119.** The Africa group was hopeful that that multilateral and multi-stakeholder cooperation would foster African innovation in the area of green chemicals. The group would support the adoption of sound policies at the national and workplace levels and would strengthen the operational capacities necessary to implement initiatives that promoted sustainable development. As the Global Framework did not provide for how its implementation would be financed, he asked the Office how that would be reflected in the Programme and Budget for 2026–27, particularly in the light of the budgetary constraints it faced.
- 120. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran endorsed the proposed follow-up actions on the five areas of action. He suggested the following actions to respond to the specific circumstances of the Asia and the Pacific region: technical assistance to support implementation of relevant key Conventions, taking into account national circumstances and development priorities; research on common chemical hazards in key economic sectors in the region and in the informal economy; engagement with regional bodies to support advocacy work and advance chemicals safety within existing regional cooperation frameworks; technical assistance to build regional and national capacity for the surveillance of hazardous chemicals; technology transfer and South–South and triangular cooperation, drawing on the experience of countries that had made significant progress in chemicals management systems; establishment of formal collaborative relationships with specialized research bodies to facilitate knowledge exchange and strengthen the scientific basis for policy decisions; identification of potential sources of funding, including through the Safety and Health for All programme, particularly for least developed countries and small island developing States; development of special training programmes for women working in agriculture and the textiles sector; improved access to health services for groups in vulnerable situations who are exposed to hazardous chemicals; awareness-raising activities targeting workers in the informal economy and children who are exposed to hazardous chemicals, in particular in the e-waste sector; and partnerships with local organizations to facilitate access to personal protective equipment. The group also recommended that follow-up action should pay particular attention to the impact of climate change on chemical hazards, the dangers posed by pesticides to agricultural workers, and chemical safety challenges related to the management of e-waste. ASPAG supported the draft decision.
- 121. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Uruguay reaffirmed that the sound management of chemicals and waste was directly linked to the world of work and observed that the impact of exposure to chemicals was different for men and women, depending on the productive activities carried out. Institutions of work could play a pivotal role in formulating national policies that promoted safe working environments and fostered a just transition to more sustainable enterprises. In view of the adoption in 2023 of the Framework and the Bonn Declaration, which invited cooperation and coordination among UN entities, he said that it was timely for the Governing Body to give consideration to how the ILO could support the activities of the Framework. In particular, synergies between the Framework and the Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health 2024–30 could be exploited. Accordingly, his group welcomed the proposed follow-up action.
- 122.** Reaffirming GRULAC’s strong commitment to ensuring the well-being of current and future generations through the sound management of chemicals and waste, he said that his region was proud to host the first meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group for the Global

Framework on Chemicals, to be held in June 2025 in Uruguay. His group supported the draft decision on the understanding that its observations would be duly taken into account.

- 123. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Norway aligned themselves with the statement. Recognizing that a safe and healthy working environment – one of the fundamental principles and rights at work – must be a key objective of the global management of chemicals, she said that competent authorities and the social partners could make a significant contribution to achieving that objective. Accordingly, she supported the five areas of follow-up action.
- 124.** In particular, she supported the promotion of the ratification and implementation of international labour standards on chemicals, the forthcoming standard-setting discussion on chemical hazards starting in 2027, and the Office's ongoing efforts to ensure an up-to-date approach. In that context, she urged the Office to focus its action on OSH and to avoid issues beyond its mandate. She welcomed the objective of providing technical support and capacity development for mainstreaming sound chemicals management into national OSH systems, which should include support for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. The list of Framework targets that were particularly relevant to the world of work should include promoting reliable information on chemicals in products and materials through the value chain. The ILO should engage with multilateral environmental agreements and participate in relevant inter-agency initiatives and UN conferences with a view to ensuring that labour concerns were appropriately reflected in multilateral action on chemicals and waste. Recognizing the growing need to support the constituents in addressing labour-related chemical hazards, she welcomed the integration of the strategic objectives and targets of the Framework in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27 and in future action by the Office, and endorsed the draft decision.
- 125. A Government representative of India**, commending the inclusion of the item on the Governing Body's agenda, reaffirmed her Government's commitment to protecting and promoting the welfare, safety and health of workers and described the progress it had made in that regard. Capacity-building for the constituents was key to developing an integrated and holistic chemicals management framework. She called for strengthened collaboration between the ILO and other UN agencies to promote healthier, safer workplaces through sustainable chemical management practices.
- 126. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Governance and Tripartism Department) welcomed the constituents' comments and suggestions, which helped guide the Office's work. Responding to the questions raised, she said that the governance of the Global Alliance on Highly Hazardous Pesticides was undergoing a review, the outcome of which would be brought to the attention of the Governing Body in due course. The road map on the sound management of chemicals and waste in the world of work was fully aligned with the Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health 2024–30; it built on, but did not add to, the commitments detailed in the Strategy. The Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27 included activities to strengthen the capacities of OSH institutions, employer and business membership organizations, workers' organizations and tripartite advisory bodies to address the specificities of different categories of hazards and risks, with a focus on preventing them, including chemical hazards.

Decision

127. The Governing Body:

- (a) **took note of the Global Framework on Chemicals – For a Planet Free of Harm from Chemicals and Waste and the Bonn Declaration;**
- (b) **endorsed the follow-up action proposed in paragraphs 6–8 of document GB.353/INS/5 and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance when implementing the Programme and Budget for 2026–27 and in future action by the Office.**

(GB.353/INS/5, paragraph 9)

6. Democratization in the ILO's governance and update on the status of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO (GB.353/INS/6)

- 128. The Worker spokesperson** reaffirmed his group's commitment to the Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, 1986 (the 1986 Amendment). The fact that 70 per cent of ILO Member States had ratified it could not be ignored, and he called on all Member States, especially the Members of chief industrial importance, to prioritize its ratification. The lack of progress in that regard was frustrating. However, he welcomed the positive steps taken by the Government of Brazil and two governments in the Asia and the Pacific region and requested further details on those cases. Initiatives to promote ratification at the regional level should be strengthened as a matter of institutional priority, with directors of ILO regional and country offices playing a key role in those efforts.
- 129.** The Office must redouble its efforts to implement sustained and concrete measures to accelerate the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. He suggested preparing a questionnaire for relevant Member States on the obstacles to ratification and holding an exchange of views with ratifying Member States. The Office should then report to the Governing Body on the findings and encourage Member States to share the actions taken and the challenges faced. Although ratification remained a priority, the Workers' group remained open to discussing alternative options pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. His group supported the draft decision.
- 130. The Employer spokesperson** said that balanced representation, democratic participation and proper tripartite governance were vital to maintaining the Organization's legitimacy and authority. Her group was concerned that the delays in ratification of the 1986 Amendment appeared to be systemic and indicated a lack of political will on the part of the Members of chief industrial importance that had not yet ratified the instrument. While the Employers' group supported efforts to strengthen democratization of the ILO's governance, the lack of progress achieved over nearly four decades had led the group to wonder whether the 1986 Amendment would ever enter into force.
- 131.** Her group was open to the "pragmatic approach" described in document GB.352/INS/7,¹ but maintained its doubts about some of the legal aspects. It did not object to increasing the number of Governing Body members, but believed any such step must be carried out

¹ GB.352/INS/7.

according to the proper procedures. An ad hoc decision by the Governing Body to grant deputy members the same rights as regular members might contradict article 7(1) of the ILO Constitution. While regular members had the prerogative of being replaced by deputy members, they did not have the discretion to grant rights to others.

132. The Employers' group favoured the preparation of a new constitutional amendment, as proposed in document GB.352/INS/7, which could function as an interim measure until the 1986 Amendment came into force. That option would provide a legally sound way to advance towards the overall objective of more democratic representation in the Governing Body, in full compliance with article 36 of the ILO Constitution and articles 66 and 67 of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference. Such an approach was unlikely to incur any significant delays in effecting the required change, as similar constitutional amendments had entered into force within relatively short time frames in the past. The group was open to discussing existing and new proposals to find a way forward that was both practical and legally sound. The Employers' group would reserve judgement on the draft decision until it had heard the views of other constituents.
133. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger (Minister for the Civil Service, Labour and Employment) said that the 1986 Amendment must remain the priority in efforts to democratize the ILO's governance. She called on the Members of chief industrial importance that had not yet done so to ratify that instrument and to provide information on any steps taken towards ratification. The Office should provide any assistance required in that regard.
134. The current situation risked destroying trust in the Organization. It was impossible to combat inequalities and promote social justice while continuing to grant privileges to certain groups on the basis of outdated realities. Indeed, the notion of States of chief industrial importance and the associated conditions were unjust, unequal and stigmatizing for the Africa region and its people and represented a relic of colonialism that must be eliminated. The brevity of the update provided in GB.353/INS/6 was inversely proportional to the importance of the issue. She asked whether the Office truly believed it had exhausted all avenues for progress on the matter.
135. She proposed amending the draft decision to replace the current wording with alternative text, to read:

The Governing Body decided to remove the category of the Member States of chief industrial importance, together with the conditions as they appear in the Constitution of the International Labour Organization.
136. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh reaffirmed his group's commitment to the 1986 Amendment and called on the Members of chief industrial importance that had not yet done so to ratify that instrument. Addressing the current imbalance was vital to enhancing representation within the Governing Body; maintaining the status quo was unacceptable. Compared with similar international organizations, the Governing Body lagged far behind in its representation of the full membership of the ILO.
137. Previous changes concerning the deputy members had been made without any legal concerns and in line with key ILO governance documents, including the ILO Constitution. Granting voting rights to deputy members would not be out of step with existing practice, as deputy members had joined and blocked consensus at the Governing Body in the past and had voted on committees. His group did not support the proposal to introduce a new constitutional amendment, as it offered less than the 1986 Amendment and represented a rejection of the position of the two thirds of Member States that had ratified the instrument. The efforts

needed to operationalize a new amendment would be better spent promoting ratification among the Members of chief industrial importance. ASPAG supported the adoption of the pragmatic approach as an interim arrangement until the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. However, his group was also open to other ideas; he therefore requested the Office to propose additional options for consideration by the Governing Body.

- 138. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru acknowledged the Director-General's efforts to engage with Member States to promote ratification of the 1986 Amendment. Discussions at the previous session of the Governing Body had shown that there was convergence regarding the need to make the ILO more inclusive and representative of its membership. The entry into force of the 1986 Amendment must remain the priority. Noting the efforts towards ratification made by the Government of Brazil, he urged the other Members of chief industrial importance to follow suit as soon as possible. Pending issues, including legal questions, should not prevent the Governing Body from engaging in frank and creative discussions and seeking consensual solutions on democratizing ILO governance. It was vital to maintain momentum in that regard. GRULAC supported the draft decision.
- 139. Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Germany welcomed the Office's ongoing efforts to promote ratification of the 1986 Amendment and the steps taken in that direction by the Government of Brazil. Her group appreciated the Office's efforts to seek alternative solutions to enhance the representativeness of the Governing Body. She reaffirmed her group's continued support for the democratization of the Governing Body and its commitment to more inclusive governance, noting that the group had participated constructively in recent discussions on the matter. IMEC would continue to support efforts to find legally sound and consensual solutions. The 1986 Amendment must remain the priority, and she called on all Member States that had not yet ratified it to accelerate ratification. IMEC supported the draft decision.
- 140. Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Malaysia reiterated her group's commitment to the principles of full, fair and equal representation in the ILO's governance and stressed the importance of supporting the Director-General's initiatives to promote ratification of the 1986 Amendment. The ILO should continue working towards transparent and inclusive governance in order to remain effective and responsive to the needs of all its constituents. While ASEAN supported the pragmatic approach, which could serve as a temporary practical step towards fair representation, it must not replace the ultimate objective of securing the full implementation of the 1986 Amendment. She therefore urged the Office to continue providing technical assistance to Member States to accelerate the ratification process.
- 141. Speaking on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan**, a Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran asked the Office to identify the Member of chief industrial importance that had refused to ratify the 1986 Amendment and what objections that country had raised. It would also be useful to know what time frame had been set by the Government of Brazil for its ratification process; what measures had been taken by the Office in the intersessional period to engage with the seven Members of chief industrial importance that had not indicated a position on ratification; and what proactive steps had been taken to initiate consultations on alternative options.
- 142.** He would like to know whether the Office had carried out a legal assessment to establish the legitimacy of the current situation, in which the ILO continued to operate under a governance structure that had been rejected by an overwhelming majority of its Member States. He asked whether the Office had undertaken a legal assessment of the pragmatic approach and, if so,

whether it was considered to comply with the ILO's constitutional framework. He also wished to know whether a resolution of the International Labour Conference would be sufficient to grant voting rights to deputy members without an amendment to the Standing Orders of the Governing Body.

143. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that the current global context demanded more inclusive, representative and effective institutions. She called upon all countries, and particularly those Members of chief industrial importance that had not yet ratified the 1986 Amendment, to engage in the democratization of the ILO's governance.
144. **A Government representative of the United States of America** said that her Government was open to considering governance reforms aimed at enhancing the representativeness, efficiency and effectiveness of the ILO's governance structures. However, it could not support the proposal to grant new voting rights by bypassing the established procedure for constitutional amendments. Since there was no consensus on the pragmatic approach, continued discussion of that proposal served no useful purpose. The Governing Body's time would be better spent examining the status of the regional protocols for the distribution of seats of Government members and engaging in other tasks that would provide greater clarity on the impact of the potential entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. Ratification remained the sovereign prerogative of Member States.
145. **A Government representative of Cuba** said that the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment would enable much-needed amendments to be made to the Constitution. However, to advance the full, equal and democratic representation of constituents at the ILO, it would be essential to continue improving the supervisory bodies and working methods to enable the ILO to better fulfil its mandate and ensure that there would be no room for manipulation for political purposes. She supported the draft decision.
146. **A Government representative of Malawi**, noting that further efforts from the Office were required to prevent the democratization process from reaching an impasse, said that the Office should have set out tangible steps towards the full ratification and implementation of the 1986 Amendment in document GB.353/INS/6. As things stood, the will of two thirds of Member States continued to be resisted by a few countries. The situation was not only unfair but also undemocratic. Democratization of the ILO's governance structures would avoid the need to address the matter through dispute resolution.
147. **A Government representative of Colombia** encouraged all countries that had not yet ratified the 1986 Amendment to make ratification a priority. His Government had faith that the Office would continue to make every effort to promote ratification of the instrument and ensure its entry into force. He supported the draft decision.
148. **A Government representative of Sudan** said that it was regrettable that eight Members of chief industrial importance continued to impede the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. It was unacceptable for certain Member States to be granted privileges that were not enjoyed by all. While the Office's efforts to facilitate the instrument's entry into force were appreciated, the brevity of the document submitted to the Governing Body appeared to suggest that its capacities in that regard had been exhausted. It would therefore be crucial to explore new ways of promoting ratification among Members of chief industrial importance, such as the convening of a conference on justice and equity and the enhancement of multilateral diplomatic activities, including through the ILO regional offices and international and regional organizations. He urged the Office to take concrete measures to that end.

- 149. A Government representative of Mexico** said that, if there was insufficient political will to advance towards the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment, adopting a new constitutional amendment that could enhance the equality, fairness and representativeness of the ILO's governance through approval by a majority of its Members – rather than ratification by a specific set of countries – would be a viable option. The democratization process could not be delayed indefinitely. He urged all parties to show willingness to engage in genuine negotiations to fulfil the ILO's commitment to ensuring fair representation of all Members.
- 150. Speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC)**, a Government representative of Zimbabwe said that the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment remained the only viable option to democratize the ILO's governance. The pragmatic approach was not feasible, since it referred to a temporary administrative measure that had no legal grounding in the ILO Constitution and could be subject to legal challenge. Furthermore, the conferral of voting rights did not fall within the scope of the Governing Body's mandate as defined in article 7(8) of the Constitution, and the Constitution did not make provision for the status of deputy members. The proposal for a new constitutional amendment was not acceptable either, since it sought to maintain the status quo with respect to the Members of chief industrial importance, contravening the will expressed by ratifying Member States.
- 151.** The situation had reached an impasse. The Member States that had ratified the 1986 Amendment could no longer rely on the goodwill of the Members of chief industrial importance that had made no attempt to democratize the Organization. It was high time to seek legal guidance to ascertain whether the Constitution, in particular article 7(2) and 7(3), remained fit for purpose. However, the SADC would be in favour of referring the matter to the International Labour Conference to allow ratifying States to hold comprehensive discussions aimed at ending the deadlock.
- 152. A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) recalled that in November 2024, the Governing Body had: (a) requested the Director-General to continue to use all means within his authority for bringing about the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment; and (b) decided to defer its decision on alternative options to the current session of the Governing Body and requested the Director-General to facilitate any consultations that might be requested to that end.
- 153.** To address promotion of the 1986 Amendment, the regional offices concerned had gathered information on the situation at the country level and that information was reflected in the document. Concerning the Members of chief industrial importance, the Director-General had held a meeting with representatives in June 2024, the details of which had been reflected in the document submitted to the Governing Body at its 352nd Session in November 2024. Certain Members of chief industrial importance had indicated clearly that the ratification and acceptance of the 1986 Amendment was a sovereign decision that was subject to national procedures.
- 154.** With regard to seeking alternative options, the Office had understood that it was not mandated to proactively arrange consultations but rather to wait for a request from Governing Body members; no such requests had been received but the Office had provided briefings upon request. In addition, the Office had circulated a note on 13 January 2025 on the determination of Members of chief industrial importance and the allocation of elective seats in the Governing Body further to a request made at the last session of the Governing Body.
- 155.** As to the pragmatic approach, the Office had stated in the document submitted to the previous session its position on why it considered it to be legally sound. The Office acknowledged that not all Governing Body members shared that assessment. The regional protocols mentioned

by the Government representative of the United States were referred to in article 7 of the 1986 Amendment and would contribute to its implementation, should it enter into force. The protocols had been discussed by the tripartite working group on the full, equal and democratic participation in the ILO's tripartite governance and, as they had been concluded in the 1980s, the governments had been invited to review them in light of developments.

- 156. Another representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) noted that the agenda item had been discussed at the March, June and October–November sessions in 2024 and a document had been prepared for each discussion. The decision adopted in November 2024 reflected the lack of consensus on how to move forward, and the document prepared by the Office for the current session was short as it reflected the lack of additional arguments to present to Governing Body members rather than any lack of interest of the Office. From the outset, the Office had stated clearly that unanimous agreement rather than consensus was needed to adopt the proposed pragmatic approach. The only point on which the Governing Body had agreed unanimously was that the Office should continue its efforts to promote ratification of the 1986 Amendment. To that end, the Director-General had requested regional and country directors to promote ratification and to engage with countries that had not ratified it. She understood that it was frustrating to be unable to make progress; however, the Office had no additional ideas to offer. It had also received no requests for consultations as there were no new ideas on which to consult. Ratification of the 1986 Amendment was a priority for the Office and it would continue to report on its efforts. Nevertheless, ratification was a decision that had to be made by individual States.
- 157. The Director-General** said that it was time for the Governing Body to be honest about the reality of the situation. Discussions were at a total impasse. The Office had done – and would continue to do – everything it could, including on bilateral engagement. He was not hopeful, however, that the three ratifications required would be achieved in the near future. The strategy adopted had not worked, and it was unlikely that the problem could be resolved in isolation within the ILO without consideration of the broader geopolitical situation and the ongoing discussion on the governance of the multilateral system. From a pragmatic viewpoint, the two main options were either to grant deputy members of the Governing Body similar rights as regular members, including the right to vote, or to no longer have ten countries with unelected seats and to allow the regions to decide on their seats. The Office had made every possible effort to promote ratification of the 1986 Amendment and had acted on all suggestions received from the Government group. Even if Brazil ratified it, two further ratifications would be required. As it was an institutional matter, not even a change in government in the remaining States of chief industrial importance could be expected to change the situation. The Office stood ready to receive suggestions on any further action it could take.
- 158. The Worker spokesperson** requested clarification on whether it would be feasible to implement the amendment proposed by the Africa group at the current session. He accepted the draft decision proposed by the Office, which asked the Director-General to continue to use all means to bring the 1986 Amendment into force. Pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment, his group remained open to discussion of any alternative that would provide an opportunity to move forward on the issue.
- 159. The Employer spokesperson** noted that a variety of views had been expressed yet no common ground found. Many valid questions had been raised and she appreciated the responses given by the Office. It would be helpful to receive a copy of the regional protocols. Her group had been ready to support the draft decision proposed by the Office, but would need time to consider the amendment proposed by the Africa group before taking a position on it.

- 160. The Government representatives of Bangladesh, Peru and Brazil** also requested time for consultations to consider the viability of the amendment proposed by the Africa group.
- 161. A Government representative of the Niger** asked the Legal Adviser for an interpretation of article 7, paragraphs 1 to 3, of the Constitution. He also requested an explanation of whether there was any provision in the Constitution that created ten permanent seats for Members of chief industrial importance, and whether Governing Body members were entitled to change the criteria for choosing the Members of chief industrial importance.
- 162. The Government representative of Bangladesh**, speaking in his national capacity, noted that article 7(2) of the Constitution referred only to the nomination of ten persons by the Members of chief industrial importance. The implication was that there could be any number of Members of chief industrial importance and that they would nominate ten persons, not necessarily from their own countries. He asked whether the Director-General had engaged with all three branches of power in the countries concerned, particularly the lawmakers. He sought clarity on whether it was legally possible to propose a second amendment that did not require ratification by the Members of chief industrial importance.
- 163.** As the matter was a dispute between the 127 Member States that had ratified the 1986 Amendment and those that had not, he asked whether it would be possible for the Governing Body or the International Labour Conference to refer the dispute to the International Court of Justice. Consideration was needed of whether, in the Constitution, the term “chief industrial importance” was used in context and whether it served the context of the ILO and the world of work. The words “as occasion requires” in the Constitution were unclear, as they did not define how that would be decided. National constitutions were amended when major changes needed to be reflected. He sought clarification of the basic tenets of international law for maintaining a constitution that did not serve 127 countries and asked what the 127 countries that had ratified the 1986 Amendment could do under international law to change the ILO Constitution in the interests of equal participation in the ILO.
- 164. A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) responded that article 7(2) of the ILO Constitution stated unambiguously that, “of the twenty-eight persons representing governments, ten shall be appointed by the Members of chief industrial importance and eighteen shall be appointed by the Members selected for that purpose by the Government delegates to the Conference”. In 1919, the Constitution provided for eight Members of chief industrial importance. In 1953, a constitutional amendment was adopted that increased that number to ten. The ten Members of chief industrial importance to which the Constitution referred were not elected, not permanent, members of the Governing Body. The Members of chief industrial importance could change, in accordance with a procedure that had been codified by constitutional amendment of 1946 and included in the Standing Orders of the Governing Body in 1948. Under that procedure, the criteria for determining the Members of chief industrial importance were decided by the Governing Body after consulting an impartial committee. The criteria themselves were not set out in the Constitution, as at the time it was considered that the Governing Body and the impartial committee should have some flexibility in determining the criteria, to ensure that the determination of the ten Members of chief industrial importance reflected the needs of the world of work. Since 1946, each time the Governing Body had reviewed the list of Members of chief industrial importance, it had appointed an impartial committee and followed its advice. The exercise had last been carried out in 1983, when the only criterion identified was gross domestic product.
- 165.** In response to the comment by the Government representative of Bangladesh on the wording “as occasion requires”, she explained that it had been interpreted to be applied whenever a

new development of sufficient importance occurred, for instance, when a Member of chief industrial importance left the ILO or if a Member considered that it fulfilled the criteria and requested the Governing Body to review the list of Members of chief industrial importance.

166. **The Worker spokesperson** asked whether the amendment that had been submitted was the appropriate way to proceed.
167. **The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) said that, under paragraph 5.7.1 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, any regular member of the Governing Body could move amendments. As the representative of the Niger had submitted the amendment on behalf of a group, it did not need to be seconded by another member of the Governing Body. As to the substance of the amendment, the objective could be achieved only through a constitutional amendment, which would require the Governing Body to initiate a procedure for the amendment of article 7(1) and (2) of the Constitution and which would ultimately have to be adopted by the Conference.
168. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, the Government representative of Peru said that he understood from the Legal Adviser's explanation that the proposed amendment was therefore not the legally correct way to proceed.
169. **The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) repeated that the Governing Body could rather initiate a process of amendment of the Constitution with a view to removing the category of Members of chief industrial importance from the Constitution as was done in the context of the 1986 Amendment.
170. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger called for further clarification on article 7(2) of the Constitution, as it did not explicitly provide for ten Members of chief industrial importance.
171. **The Government representative of Bangladesh** requested that the Office take some time to reply with legal clarity on the questions that he had raised.
172. **The Employer spokesperson** requested further information on the impartial committee provided for in article 7(3) of the Constitution.
173. **The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) said that the concept of Members of chief industrial importance dated back to the Organization's inception. In 1919, it was envisaged to designate nominally the victors of the First World War before the decision was made to refer to "Members of chief industrial importance". The number had been increased from eight to ten in 1953. Since that time, the Conference had elected 18 regular members of the Governing Body, not 28. Further clarification on the questions raised by the Government representative of Bangladesh would require referring to the preparatory work on the Constitution, which she could explain further in writing. The composition of the impartial committee was governed by paragraph 1.3.2 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, which provided that the committee was appointed by the Governing Body and included "experts qualified to advise on the most appropriate criteria of industrial importance and on the relative industrial importance of States assessed on the basis of such criteria". The practice of the ILO had been to appoint independent experts renowned for their expertise in statistics.
174. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Government representative of the Niger welcomed the Legal Adviser's proposal to consult the *travaux préparatoires* of the Constitution and asked her to consider whether the interpretation of article 7 might have evolved since 1953. The world had changed fundamentally since 1919. The ILO Constitution had its origins in the social reality of the nineteenth century after the industrial revolution, particularly in the

countries of Europe and North America. The subsequent constitutional amendment of 1953 had entered into force the following year, whereas the 1986 Amendment was still not in force 39 years after its adoption. As the Legal Adviser had indicated that his group's proposed amendment to the draft decision was receivable, he requested clarity on the next steps.

- 175. The Chairperson** proposed to adjourn the discussion, which would also give the Office time to provide additional clarifications.

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

- 176. The Chairperson** summarized the views expressed during the first part of the discussion and recalled that an amendment had been submitted by the Africa group proposing that the Governing Body decide to remove the category of the Members of chief industrial importance from the Constitution. He noted that the Office had circulated additional information on aspects that the Office could not address during the earlier discussion for lack of time. Those related to the Members of chief industrial importance, adoption of constitutional amendments and submission of disputes to the International Court of Justice. In particular, as explained by the Office, the Governing Body could not decide to remove the category of Members of chief industrial importance, since that would entail an amendment to the ILO Constitution which the Governing Body did not have the power to adopt; it could only decide to initiate an amendment procedure.
- 177. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger said that the Director-General's statement on the ratification of the 1986 Amendment during the first part of the discussion had been discouraging. His group now realized that any path towards democratization would always lead back to article 36 of the ILO Constitution. It had therefore decided to withdraw its proposed amendment to the draft decision. It was regrettable that the ratification of the 1986 Amendment had not been met with more enthusiasm from those who could help to move it forward. He asked the Office to specify what other options were available.
- 178. The Employer spokesperson** reiterated that the Employers' group was keen to find a way forward and to have active discussions on achieving a balanced representation.
- 179. The Worker spokesperson** said that his group was unable to change its position. Any possible alternative options pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment should be consistent with the ILO Constitution.
- 180. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that it was necessary to break the impasse on granting voting and other rights to deputy members of the Governing Body. He requested the Office to develop more innovative approaches to promote further ratification of the 1986 Amendment, especially by Members of chief industrial importance. The draft decision gave no clear indication of next steps; without an action point, the Governing Body's efforts would be fruitless. ASPAG therefore requested Governing Body members to consider the pragmatic approach.
- 181. A Government representative of Malawi** said that, in her Government's opinion, the authors of the ILO Constitution had not intended to have permanent members sitting in the Governing Body. Rather, cognizant that changing dynamics would require changes to the Members of chief industrial importance, they had envisioned a pool of such Members – who would present the interests of that group – that would grow as more countries developed over time. Consequently, the Governing Body's composition had initially been fluid, although it seemed to have become fixed after 1983; it was important to ask why that had happened. Her Government considered that the additional information prepared by the Office outlined what the Office thought the Constitution should have said, rather than what it was actually saying.

The matter had remained on the Governing Body's agenda for too long, and it was high time for it be taken up at the International Labour Conference.

- 182. A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that given the rigidity of the ILO Constitution, which did not offer any scope for a way forward other than the ratification of the 1986 Amendment by three more Members of chief industrial importance, the Governing Body was left at the mercy of those who denied other Member States an equal footing in the ILO, despite Member States' explicit preference for equal and democratic participation for all. Even acceptance of the 1986 Amendment by over two thirds of Member States could not help to achieve its implementation.
- 183.** It was therefore high time to review the composition of the Members of chief industrial importance. Ten such reviews had been carried out in the first 64 years of the ILO's existence, and none in the following 42 years. In those reviews, the criteria for selecting Members of chief industrial importance had been modified and the countries changed accordingly. The world – and the world of work – had since changed significantly, and an immediate review of the current Members of chief industrial importance was needed. His Government had therefore proposed an amendment to the draft decision for it to read:

11. The Governing Body:

(a) requested the Director-General to continue to use all means within his authority, including organizing a high-level event during the 113th Session (June 2025) of the International Labour Conference, for bringing about the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, and to update the Governing Body at its 354th Session (June 2025) on the latest status;

(b) requested the Director-General to include an item on the agenda of its 354th Session (June 2025) on democratization, and to propose the composition and other relevant details of an impartial committee to be appointed by the Governing Body at that Session with a view to reviewing the countries of Chief Industrial Importance;

(c) requested the Director-General to organize a tripartite consultation before its 354th Session (June 2025) on possible alternatives of granting voting and other rights to the deputy members pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment.

~~(b) provided guidance on alternative options pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment.~~

- 184. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** seconded the amended version of the draft decision proposed by Bangladesh, which demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity. He welcomed the call for tripartite consultations on granting voting rights to deputy members pending the ratification of the 1986 Amendment. The establishment of an impartial committee to advise the Governing Body on the determination of Members of chief industrial importance would be a vital safeguard against outdated biases; it would enhance transparency, foster trust among Member States and reinforce the ILO's role in overseeing the implementation of international labour standards. Targeted advocacy in regions with low ratification rates and support to countries where ratification processes were under way must be intensified. The continued efforts of the regional offices were essential to achieving universal ratification. Bangladesh's proposal provided for pragmatic and tangible steps towards meaningful reform and democratization. He urged all Member States, particularly those of chief industrial importance, to prioritize ratification and support reform. By endorsing the amended version of the draft decision, the Governing Body would reaffirm the ILO's leadership in promoting social justice and decent work for all in an ever-changing global economy.

- 185. The Director-General** said that, while he recognized the need to build on the momentum, it would be difficult to hold a tripartite consultation before the 354th Session (June 2025) of the Governing Body, given the already heavy programme of ILO meetings before then. Furthermore, he did not think that there was anything more that could be meaningfully discussed at the current stage. It would be preferable to hold the consultation a year later than proposed. He firmly believed that engaging in dialogue was preferable to referring any dispute to the International Court of Justice. The consideration of any alternative options that did not fall within the scope of the ILO Constitution required broad consensus, and the current geopolitical climate must be considered when attempting to reach a solution. It was important to ensure that the experts appointed to participate in the impartial committee established to advise on the determination of Members of chief industrial importance were completely impartial. In his experience, such an appointment process could take months.
- 186. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger said that the fact that ten countries had a major say in how the ILO Constitution was revised had resulted in a constitutional crisis, and calls for dialogue to resolve the issue had gone unheeded. He was prepared to support the amended version proposed by Bangladesh, which offered some hope of a way forward, but he first wished to have clarification from the Office as to whether the review of the Members of chief industrial importance mentioned in subparagraph (b) of the amended version met the requirements under the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. If not, he wished to know how that subparagraph could be reworded to ensure compliance. His group was flexible about whether the event for bringing about the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment – which did not need to be high-level – was held in 2025 or in 2026. He wondered which Conference committee would host the discussion. Regarding subparagraph (c), he said that his group was open to holding consultations since it believed that the proposed alternative option of granting voting and other rights to the deputy members was not constitutional. If voting rights could be granted to deputy members without amending the Constitution, perhaps the category of Members of chief industrial importance could be removed also without amending it.
- 187. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru reiterated his group's commitment to the inclusivity and representativeness of the ILO and to the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment. The group was open to considering all new proposals. That said, it questioned the viability, including in legal terms, of the options proposed by Bangladesh. In view of the comments made by the Director-General and given that the 354th Session (June 2025) of the Governing Body was scheduled to take place in a single day, the Governing Body should consider adjusting the time frames outlined in the proposed amended version. He wished to hear the opinion of other groups in that regard.
- 188. A Government representative of Malawi** asked whether there had been any change in the composition of the Members of chief industrial importance since 1983.
- 189. The Worker spokesperson** also voiced concern about the schedule contained in the proposed amended version, noting the need for sufficient preparatory time. He urged Governing Body members to move forward in a spirit of cooperation.
- 190. A Government representative of Brazil** gave his assurances that his country was sparing no effort to ratify the 1986 Amendment. In accordance with the process set out in the Constitution of Brazil, the ratification had to be debated and approved by the parliament.
- 191. The Employer spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the efforts being made by Brazil to ratify the 1986 Amendment. She also welcomed the efforts by Bangladesh to find creative ways of moving forward. While she was in favour of taking concrete action and supported the spirit

of Bangladesh's proposal, she shared the concerns that had been raised about the timeline set out therein. With regard to subparagraph (a), she recalled the resource implications of holding high-level events. With regard to subparagraph (b), she said that her group remained open to discussing the issue of the selection of Members of chief industrial importance, but agreed that it would be important to take into account the broader geopolitical situation. As to subparagraph (c), she emphasized the importance of social dialogue in the democratization process and of keeping the door open to alternative means of finding common ground. Her group therefore supported the essence of Bangladesh's proposal.

- 192. The Director-General** noted with appreciation the statement made by the Government representative of Brazil and said that he was cognizant of the fact that the parliamentary process of ratification was under way in the country. He looked forward to being able to report back to the Governing Body on the progress made in that regard.
- 193.** Responding to questions, he proposed that the Office could report back to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026) with a historical analysis of the list of Members of chief industrial importance and with a proposal concerning the composition of an impartial committee of experts to review that list. It would not provide the names of candidates at that point, as it would need the Governing Body's guidance in that regard. The Governing Body could then decide whether it wished to set up such a committee. He was in favour of an approach based on the principle of "more haste, less speed".
- 194. The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser), responding to the question by the Africa group as to whether the process referred to in subparagraph (b) of the amendment moved by the Government representative of Bangladesh was compatible with the Standing Orders, recalled that the rules governing the process of the determination of Members of chief industrial importance were set out in article 7(3) of the Constitution and article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. She drew attention to paragraph 16 of an Office note on the allocation of Government seats in the Governing Body that had been circulated to Governing Body members in January 2025, which set out further explanations on the process. She recalled that, according to article 7(3) of the ILO Constitution, it was the Governing Body that determined which were the Members of chief industrial importance and initiated that process of determination, as occasion required.
- 195.** Both the Constitution and the Standing Orders made it very clear that the Governing Body could not make the determination without taking the advice of an impartial committee, appointed by the Governing Body. According to paragraph 1.3.2 of the Standing Orders, the impartial committee should include experts qualified to advise on the most appropriate criteria of industrial importance and on the relative industrial importance of States assessed on the basis of such criteria. That meant that the experts had to be both independent and renowned for their knowledge in statistics. Proposals would be made by the Director-General to the Officers of the Governing Body, who in turn would make recommendations to the Governing Body, which ultimately had the authority to appoint the experts.
- 196.** Once its members had been appointed, the impartial committee would establish the criteria to be used to determine the ten Members of chief industrial importance. There were no set criteria. Once the committee had completed its work, it would submit a report to the Officers of the Governing Body, in line with paragraph 1.3.2 of the Standing Orders. The Officers would examine the report and make a recommendation to the Governing Body. She recalled that the note that had been circulated in January 2025 included an annex containing a table synthesizing all the reviews that had been carried out to date, with links to the relevant reports. Once the Governing Body had received the report of its Officers, it could make its decision.

197. Moreover, the Governing Body could not decide on any question relating to the selection of Members of chief industrial importance unless the question of modification of the list of such Members was included in the agenda of one of its sessions as a specific item, as specified in paragraph 1.3.1 of the Standing Orders.
198. In response to the question by the Government representative of Malawi, she confirmed that, since 1983, there had not been any review of the list of Members of chief industrial importance, because the Governing Body had not taken a decision to carry out such a review.
199. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger asked whether the adoption of subparagraph (b) would mean that an item relating to the modification of the list of Members of chief industrial importance would be included on the agenda of the session of the Governing Body in question and that a review process would be triggered.
200. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) suggested that, the Government representatives of Bangladesh and the Niger, on behalf of the Africa group, consider moving a subamendment that covered the points that had been raised. She recalled that the Office would prepare a document for submission to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026) explaining the process and that a list of potential candidates for the impartial committee would be drawn up at a later stage.

(The Governing Body resumed consideration of the item after the Office had circulated a subamended version of the draft decision following consultations.)

201. The Governing Body had before it the draft decision subamended by the Government representative of Bangladesh and the Government representative of the Niger, on behalf of the Africa group, which read:

11. The Governing Body:

(a) requested the Director-General to continue to use all means within his authority, including organizing a high-level event in the margin of during the 114th Session (2026) 113th Session (June 2025) of the International Labour Conference, to promote the ratification for bringing about the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, and to update the Governing Body at its 354th Session (June 2025) on the latest status;

(b) **decided** requested the Director-General to include an item on the agenda of its 356th Session (March 2026) 354th Session (June 2025) on the process of determination of the Members of democratization, and to propose the composition and other relevant details of an impartial committee to be appointed by the Governing Body at that Session with a view to reviewing the countries of Chief Industrial Importance;

(c) requested the Director-General to organize a tripartite consultation before its 354th Session (June 2025) on possible alternatives of granting voting and other rights to the deputy members pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment;

(b) provided guidance on alternative options pending the entry into force of the 1986 Amendment.

202. **The Worker and Employer spokespersons** said that they wished to hear the views of the Governments before stating their positions on the subamended version of the draft decision.
203. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger expressed support for the subamended version of the draft decision.

- 204. The Government representatives of Bangladesh and Brazil** also expressed support for the subamended version.
- 205. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru proposed an adjustment to the wording of the Spanish version of subparagraph (b) to make it clear that the item would relate to the process of determination and not the determination itself.
- 206. The Director-General** agreed that the item should be on the process of determination. The Governing Body would need to provide guidance to the Office on how to proceed.
- 207. A Government representative of Colombia** wondered whether it would be more appropriate to refer to the determination of criteria for selecting the Members of chief industrial importance. The intention was to allow for the determination of new criteria of industrial importance, leading to a more diverse list of Members of chief industrial importance. He asked how the Governing Body could ensure that the impartial committee would develop such criteria.
- 208. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said, in response to the question posed by the Government representative of Colombia, that the subamended version of the draft decision sought to place an item on the agenda of the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body to discuss the process of determining the Members of chief industrial importance. The item could not be on the development of criteria of industrial importance, as that was for the impartial committee to develop; the Governing Body did not have authority in that regard. The process, however, could include the establishment of an impartial committee, the role of which would be to develop such criteria and present them to the Governing Body.
- 209. Another representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) said, in response to the question posed by the Government representative of Colombia, that, as she understood it, the objective of subparagraph (b) was to place an item on the Governing Body's agenda allowing for a comprehensive discussion of the process leading to the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance, in line with the relevant provisions of the ILO Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. The discussion could cover the establishment and composition of an impartial committee, the rules applicable to the selection of the experts that would serve on it and the means by which the committee would report to the Governing Body as well as the examination by the Governing Body and the decision-making. Establishing the criteria for determining Members of chief industrial importance would be part of the work of that committee.
- 210. A Government representative of Brazil** asked whether the Office was planning to submit at the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body a list of experts to serve on an impartial committee, or whether the Governing Body would simply begin discussing the process at that session.
- 211. The Director-General** recalled that the discussion at the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body would be focused on a comprehensive analysis of the current and historical processes applicable to the determination of Members of chief industrial importance to enable the Governing Body to provide, on an informed basis, the Office with guidance on how it wished to move forward, within the boundaries of the ILO Constitution and other applicable rules.
- 212. The Employer and Worker spokespersons** indicated their willingness to join the consensus on the subamended version of the draft decision.

- 213. The Director-General** recalled that the discussion of the 1986 Amendment had been a standing item on the agenda of the October–November sessions of the Governing Body since 2018. He took it that the Governing Body agreed that the item would not appear on the agenda of the 355th (November 2025) Session, to allow the Office time to prepare for the planned discussion at its 356th (March 2026) Session. After that, the standing item could be reinstated if necessary.
- 214. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger asked the Legal Adviser to confirm that the process set out in paragraph 1.3.1. of the Standing Orders was being followed.
- 215. The representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) confirmed that the correct legal procedures, set out in the ILO Constitution and in the Standing Orders, were being followed, and that the language used in subparagraph (b) of the subamended version of the draft decision – and in particular the reference to the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance – reflected that used in those texts.
- 216. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries**,² a Government representative of Denmark said that, as Governments that had ratified or accepted the 1986 Amendment and that had demonstrated continued engagement in the discussions to support a solution to achieve better representation in the Governing Body as swiftly as possible, they were willing to join the consensus and accept the subamended version of the draft decision.

Decision

217. The Governing Body:

- (a) **requested the Director-General to continue to use all means within his authority, including organizing a high-level event in the margins of the 114th Session (2026) of the International Labour Conference, to promote the ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation;**
- (b) **decided to include on the agenda of its 356th Session (March 2026) an item on the process of determination of the Members of chief industrial importance.**

(GB.353/INS/6, paragraph 11, as amended by the Governing Body)

7. Follow-up to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the Constitution on the subject of Belarus (GB.353/INS/7(Rev.1))

- 218. A Government representative of Belarus** (Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection) authorized to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders on a matter concerning his Government, said that Governing Body members should carefully study the information provided by his Government to form an objective and unbiased view of the situation in his country. From the moment the recommendations by the Commission of Inquiry had been adopted, the Government and the social partners had worked to implement them through measures developed with the involvement of ILO experts. He outlined the main steps taken in that regard since 2009, noting that the assertion that his Government had not taken

² Belgium, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

any action was false; his Government had significant positive experience of cooperation with the ILO, including on the implementation of recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

219. The adoption in 2023 of the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the Constitution on the subject of Belarus had been the result of lobbying by Western countries that could not come to terms with the gradual improvement in relations between his Government and the ILO. The resolution should be withdrawn because it was unjust and politically motivated. It would not improve the situation or lead to constructive dialogue. He called for a reset of relations with the ILO in order to establish comprehensive and constructive cooperation. The resolution impeded efforts in that direction and was intended to place undue pressure on his country's economy and population through the application of economic sanctions and other restrictive measures. In that context, his Government did not support the proposal to send any kind of mission to his country. That proposal was part of the attempt to present extremists and law-breakers as victims.
220. He called on the Western countries and the leadership of the Workers' group to take a more balanced position and listen to his Government's arguments. A smear campaign had been launched at the ILO against the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB) and the Workers' group had blocked the participation of its representatives in the current session. Instead, they had accredited former members of the so-called Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) – which had ceased its activities – who had not been involved in the trade union movement in Belarus for some time. He strongly opposed that discriminatory approach and called on the Director-General to take charge of the situation. The ILO was no place for double standards.
221. The exclusion of an extremist pseudo-trade union like the BKDP from the legal field had no impact on social dialogue and tripartism in the country. All social partnership institutions were functioning as normal. The Office and the Workers' and Employers' groups should launch a dialogue with the real representatives of tripartism in Belarus: the Belarusian Government and the social partners in the form of the FPB and the Belarusian Confederation of Industrials and Entrepreneurs (Employers). The first step could be the participation of representatives of the ILO in meetings of the Belarusian tripartite bodies, which could be organized by videoconference.
222. The draft decision was neither objective nor even-handed. It should not be approved; it should instead be put to a vote.
223. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that there had been no positive developments in the case of Belarus and no let up in the Belarusian Government's repression of union activists and workers seeking to exercise their right to freedom of association, including those in exile. Trade unionists continued to be branded terrorists and extremists and to be subjected to criminal and administrative sanctions for the exercise of fundamental rights. More than 30 worker activists were currently detained, including Governing Body member Aliaksandr Yarashuk, who was unable to attend the current session due to his imprisonment for trade union activities. Others being held in detention included Leonid Soudalenko, Vatslau Areshka, Hennadz Fedynich and Aliaksandr Kapshul. Maksim Pazniakou, acting Chairperson of the BKDP, had been charged with offences including the facilitation of extremist activities. His harassment was doubtless linked to his interaction with the ILO.
224. Employers were forced to recognize the FPB alone and only members of the FPB were covered by collective bargaining agreements. The UN human rights bodies and the European Parliament considered the FPB to be embedded in the Government's structure. Indeed, the most recent report of the Committee on Freedom of Association had noted that the role of

Chairperson of the FPB was included in the personnel register of the Head of State under Presidential Decree No. 46. Trade union independence was a key issue in the recommendations by the Commission of Inquiry, which had gathered evidence of government and management interference in the functioning of trade union organizations. The Belarusian Government, however, had not changed its approach and denied any involvement in the election or other activities of trade unions.

225. Her group noted the developments set out in the document, including the steps taken to engage with UN human rights bodies and other relevant international bodies and to set up a working group of international institutions to address the topic. The measures taken by Thailand and other States to reaffirm their commitment to the principle of non-refoulement and provide humanitarian protection to those fleeing persecution were welcome.
226. Her group agreed with the draft decision and wished to emphasize the urgent need for progress. The proposed international humanitarian mission involving independent doctors was needed immediately and she called on the Government of Belarus to accept that mission and an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation in the country, including by visiting trade unionists in prison or detention. She welcomed the call for the appointment of a special envoy without delay, with a mandate that included facilitating the release of all in detention and exploring avenues for the re-recognition of the BKPD. The Office should provide updates on that process. She encouraged all constituents to hold national high-level tripartite meetings to assess and intensify efforts on follow-up to the resolution. Her group urged the Belarusian Government to fully implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the supervisory bodies, and to take the necessary steps to ensure that workers' organizations were free and independent.
227. **The Employer spokesperson** emphasized that the treatment of country cases should be based on the ILO's mandate and the factual situation on the ground, and must not be politicized. Dialogue with representative social partners on the ground should be taken seriously, irrespective of their membership of the International Organisation of Employers or of the International Trade Union Confederation. The same standards for the assessment of the independence of trade unions, and their subsequent treatment, should be applied to all countries. Although the case of Belarus had been dealt with by a number of ILO supervisory bodies, it was difficult to agree that it was the same case as had first been addressed by the Committee on Freedom of Association in 2003. Instead of adding new names to the list each year, it would be more appropriate to close one case before considering others.
228. Her group took note of the oral and written information provided by the Government of Belarus, including documents that had previously been transmitted to the Governing Body and the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) that the Government of Belarus considered had not been taken into account. She urged the Government of Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the supervisory bodies, and expressed appreciation for the willingness expressed by the representative of the Government of Belarus to engage with the ILO. All parties concerned should cooperate and provide the requested information. The ILO should keep an open mind and engage in good faith dialogue with all representative social partners in Belarus. It should promote dialogue and avoid politicization, and ensure all work on the case remained within the Organization's mandate. She noted that most of the Government representatives included on the list for the discussion were Member States of the European Union, which was unlikely to help the efficiency of discussions and avoidance of politicization.

229. Her group welcomed the information provided on follow-up by the Office and the continued efforts to solicit information on the case. Noting the assignment entrusted to the ILO Special Envoy to Belarus in paragraph 16, she emphasized the need to remain within the ILO's mandate and focus on labour and employment issues. Her group looked forward to receiving the report by the Special Envoy at the 355th Session of the Governing Body.
230. Concerning the draft decision, she highlighted that the tripartite mission was tasked with assessing the situation in the country, which would require dialogue with all social partners.
231. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland expressed regret regarding the persistent failure of the Government of Belarus to meet its obligations under 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), and to implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. The Government should agree to the appointment of an ILO special envoy and implement all requests of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), including amending Presidential Decree No. 3 on foreign gratuitous aid, the Mass Events Act, the Criminal Code and the Labour Code.
232. The worsening human rights situation in Belarus was of concern, and he condemned the persecution of trade unionists, civil society organizations, democratic opposition forces and other independent segments of Belarusian society. He deplored the arbitrary arrest and detention of trade unionists and the removal of their children. The lack of free and fair elections was also concerning. Thus, the European Union had imposed several rounds of sanctions, condemning the climate of State violence, intimidation and fear, and the erosion of the rule of law. He noted with concern the growing practice of conducting trials in absentia and without fair trial guarantees, leading to lengthy prison sentences, confiscation of assets or the death penalty. He reiterated the importance of the impartiality and independence of the judiciary and justice administration. He expressed concern regarding the prison conditions of political prisoners and reports of deaths in detention. He demanded the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners, and a moratorium on the death penalty. Expressing concern about the prison conditions of detained trade unionists, he requested the Government with the utmost urgency to accept an international humanitarian mission and an ILO tripartite mission to visit them.
233. He urged the Government to nominate non-government delegates and advisers to the International Labour Conference in agreement with the most representative, genuine and independent workers' and employers' organizations. He reiterated his group's support of the article 33 process. The ILO should strengthen its cooperation with UN bodies to ensure the implementation of all recommendations. His group supported the draft decision.
234. **Speaking on behalf of a group of countries**,³ a Government representative of the Netherlands said that, since the Commission of Inquiry and the adoption of the resolution invoking article 33 of the Constitution, the Government of Belarus had continued to violate its obligations under Conventions Nos 87 and 98. Repression of trade unions had continued and the human rights situation had deteriorated further. The Government's lack of action to implement the requests of the ILO's supervisory bodies was regrettable.

³ Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

235. He expressed concern that the right of workers to organize had been eradicated, as reported by the BKDP and human rights bodies. The use of criminal sanctions against legitimate trade unionists and reports of judicial harassment were deplorable, a situation that had worsened following the Government's involvement in the war of aggression perpetrated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. He condemned persecution of trade unionists, including severe restrictions on those released from detention. He called on the Government to halt the alarming practice of trials in absentia and without fair trial guarantees, and to ensure that all individuals had access to legal representation and transparent judicial proceedings. He reminded the Government of its obligation to ensure a climate free from violence, threats or pressure, to respect human rights and to release all arbitrarily detained persons.
236. He urged the Government to nominate non-government delegates and advisers to the International Labour Conference, in agreement with the most representative, genuine and independent workers' and employers' organizations. He supported the Office's efforts to implement the 2023 Conference resolution and the recommendations of the CAS. The ILO should coordinate efforts with other UN agencies, special procedures and international stakeholders to ensure the Government's compliance with international labour standards. He called for the urgent appointment of an ILO special envoy. He reiterated that the Government should comply with its international obligations, including accepting an international humanitarian mission to visit imprisoned trade unionists and engaging with the ILO special envoy, once appointed. His group supported the draft decision.
237. Speaking in his national capacity, he turned to the regrettable comment made by the Employer spokesperson about Government delegates being represented under multiple group statements. That practice was not uncommon, nor limited to the current agenda item, and was permitted by the rules applicable to the Governing Body.
238. **Speaking on behalf the Nordic-Baltic countries (Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden)**, a Government representative of Lithuania said that, in the time since the complaint had been made against Belarus and since the adoption of the resolution invoking article 33, no progress had been made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, the CEACR and the CAS. The repression of trade unions and workers had escalated. He denounced the complete disregard of international labour standards and condemned the violation of human rights, including trade union rights. Workers had been deprived of the ability to organize and advocate for their rights. He condemned the State-sponsored persecution of trade unionists, through prolonged imprisonment, judicial harassment and criminal charges. Many Belarusians in exile were facing trials in absentia, threats against family members and confiscation of property. Detained persons were subjected to degrading treatment and denied the right to a fair trial, and those released faced severe restrictions on their movement, employment and finances. He acknowledged the dangerous prison conditions of political prisoners, including trade unionists, and demanded their immediate and unconditional release.
239. He called for the Government of Belarus to end its support for the war of aggression perpetrated by the Russian Federation against Ukraine. He supported the ILO's stance against the Government's non-compliance and urged the ILO to coordinate action with other UN agencies and international stakeholders. He supported the establishment of a working group to coordinate those actions and ensure a strong response. He called for the appointment of an ILO special envoy without delay.
240. **Speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom**, a Government representative of Canada urged the Government of Belarus to fully comply with

the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, noting that it had repeatedly failed to protect the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, in violation of international labour standards. She expressed concern regarding the growing number of attacks on human and labour rights of workers and trade unionists in Belarus; the number of trade unionists imprisoned, under restrictions or released without exoneration; the use of the judicial system to persecute trade union and labour leaders; and the harassment of and threats against relatives of trade unionists, including children.

- 241.** She urged the Government to accept a humanitarian mission and an ILO tripartite mission; release all trade unionists detained for exercising their fundamental rights; and cease attacks against workers and labour leaders, including mass detention and arbitrary dismissals. Invoking article 33 of the ILO Constitution had been the only available option to urge the Government to comply with its obligations freely agreed under the ILO Constitution. She reiterated her group's support for the ILO supervisory system and urged the Government to respect its expertise, impartiality and integrity and to cooperate with the ILO to implement all outstanding recommendations. She requested the Director-General to continue reporting on the situation to the Governing Body.
- 242. A Government representative of France** echoed the comments of the members of the French tripartite committee established pursuant to the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), who had deplored the number of independent trade unionists who had been imprisoned for several years. She expressed concern regarding the persistent failure to comply with Conventions Nos 87 and 98, as noted by the CEACR, the CAS, the Committee on Freedom of Association, UN special rapporteurs and trade unionists in exile. That situation had a negative impact on working conditions and on the operation of enterprises and trade unions and had led to daily persecution of trade unionists and their families, as had been noted at a side event organized jointly by the Permanent Representatives of Poland, Germany, the Netherlands and France. She therefore urged the Government of Belarus to commit to implementing all outstanding recommendations, with support from the ILO. That would guarantee the right to a fair trial and the independence and impartiality of investigations into allegations against trade union representatives, the right to form workers' organizations, to protest and strike, and to consult truly representative workers' and employers' organizations, among other obligations assumed by the Government on joining the ILO. She emphasized that such a commitment implied recognizing both the legitimacy of the supervisory mechanism and the need to comply with the obligations arising from the ratification of ILO Conventions.
- 243. A Government representative of the United States** expressed support for the ILO's supervisory system. Despite being subject to article 33 of the ILO Constitution, the Government of Belarus had still failed to implement the recommendations issued by the Commission of Inquiry and other ILO supervisory bodies. She noted the continuing deterioration of freedom of association in Belarus. She expressed concern regarding reports from the BKDP of trade union and labour leaders imprisoned or subjected to movement restrictions, and of those released but not exonerated. She noted the growing practice of trials in absentia, and reports of the forced removal of children from persons convicted under new extremist legislation. She urged the Government to cooperate with the ILO and implement all outstanding recommendations, including accepting an ILO tripartite mission to visit all those in detention.
- 244. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that the persistent disregard of the position of the Belarusian Government and the ongoing political bias were regrettable. The ILO had formed its position on the basis of unilateral statements from an illegitimate organization; the activities of the BKDP in Belarus had been terminated three years previously.

Thus, the accusations of persecution against the leaders and members of the BKDP were a political provocation, unrelated to the processes of social dialogue and the realization of trade union rights and freedoms. Furthermore, the BKDP could have no objective knowledge of the situation in the country. The rule of law remained in force in Belarus and all entities were obliged to respect trade union rights, including the right to organize and hold meetings, marches and demonstrations in accordance with the law. Citizens had the right to join trade unions, and trade unions had the right to carry out legitimate activities. He noted that the most representative workers' organization in Belarus was the FPB, which operated independently.

245. His Government opposed the unprecedented political and economic pressure placed on Belarus within the framework of ILO activities and the action plan, as well as the appointment of an ILO special envoy, which would only discredit the Belarusian Government and its legitimate authorities. He called for a vote on the draft decision, which his Government could not support.
246. **A Government representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic** commended the efforts undertaken by the Government of Belarus to meet its obligations emanating from ILO Conventions and the Organization's supervisory and governing bodies. He noted activities to promote employment, raise income, provide social guarantees for vulnerable population groups, and tripartite engagement to implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. Concerning the action plan and the proposed appointment of an ILO special envoy, he said that ILO assistance should only be provided on the basis of a Government's request in line with its needs and priorities and should be conducted through genuine cooperation. Thus, his Government did not support the draft decision.
247. **A Government representative of Spain** regretted the fact that the Government of Belarus was continuing to violate its obligations under Conventions Nos 87 and 98 and ignore the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and ILO supervisory bodies. The accounts provided by Belarusian trade union leaders highlighted the severe repression suffered in the country, which, in many cases, had resulted in humanitarian emergencies. His Government agreed with the majority trade union organizations in Spain that the measures adopted to date had been insufficient and needed to be strengthened. It was a matter of utmost urgency to call on the Belarusian Government to accept an international humanitarian mission to enable detained trade union leaders to receive medical assistance.
248. He had been surprised to hear the Employer spokesperson anticipating a desire to politicize the discussion, based on the list of speakers, and hoped that she was not calling into question Member States' right to participate in the Governing Body's discussions. His Government supported the draft decision.
249. **A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** acknowledged the Belarusian Government's continued engagement with the ILO and its efforts to address labour and social protection matters through tripartite mechanisms to undertake legislative reforms aimed at strengthening social dialogue and trade union rights. He also recognized its steps to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and ILO supervisory bodies. The approach to the case within the ILO was concerning, as issues related to national sovereignty, internal governance and judicial processes required careful consideration to remain within the ILO's technical mandate. However, he was confident that ILO officials remained committed to ensuring that country cases were not politicized. He reiterated his Government's position against unilateral coercive measures. The ILO decisions on Belarus, including the resolution adopted at the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference, lacked broad consensus, particularly among global South countries. The ILO should prioritize

technical assistance and cooperation over punitive measures. He called for a renewed focus on the core principles of decent work and social justice, in line with the ILO's constitutional mandate and with respect for Member States' sovereignty. His Government supported continued engagement between the ILO and the Belarusian Government, grounded in mutual respect. He also encouraged all parties to resolve outstanding issues through dialogue, impartiality and adherence to the ILO's foundational principles.

- 250. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the positive progress made by the Belarusian Government demonstrated its willingness to apply the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry to the extent possible under the legal framework in force. The ILO supervisory bodies must examine, impartially, without politicization and in strict adherence to its mandate, the information submitted by governments and respect the sovereignty of Member States. It was worrying and unacceptable that they did not consider replies sent by some governments on an equal footing with allegations of the social partners. She rejected the politicization, partiality and double standards of the supervisory bodies, which undermined the ILO's prestige and credibility. For example, no measures had been taken to create working groups or appoint an ILO special envoy to provide an effective response to the humanitarian situation and labour crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- 251.** Her Government could not support the action plan, which contained elements that were clearly outside the ILO's mandate. No results would be seen unless the Governing Body's decisions took into account the Belarusian Government's willingness to cooperate and ensured respect for its sovereignty. The focus must be respectful dialogue and genuine cooperation, not punitive approaches and coercion. The ILO must act according to the fundamental principles of tripartite dialogue and consensus-building.
- 252. A Government representative of China** noted with regret that the rights of workers and employers in Belarus had been undermined since article 33 of the ILO Constitution had been invoked to sanction the country. It was lamentable that, for years, the substantial information submitted by the Belarusian Government had been disregarded. The Governing Body should read carefully the detailed information submitted by the Government and not base its conclusions on misinformation. The ILO's primary mandate, as a UN agency, was to provide support to Member States, not to sanction them. The Governing Body should adopt a constructive approach to formulate relevant follow-up measures and help the Belarusian Government strengthen its capacity and level of compliance. She did not support the draft decision and seconded the motion by the Government representative of the Russian Federation to put it to a vote.
- 253. The Director-General** reported that the Officers of the Governing Body had been helping to examine different options for the appointment of a special envoy, but the selected candidate had recently declined the offer.
- 254. The Employer spokesperson** clarified that she had not questioned the right of Governing Body members to speak but rather invited a reflection on the appropriateness of multiple speakers repeating points when other groups did not do the same. It was disappointing and discouraging that the person the Officers had agreed on as special envoy had not accepted; the politicized context was likely a dissuasive factor. Resolving the current impasse was vital. Her group understood that the Office would examine the manner in which it led the dialogue with the Belarusian Government and would avoid politicization and reference to external bodies not mandated by the ILO. She also hoped that any tripartite mission to Belarus would engage with all representative social partner organizations in the country to assess the situation. Only on that basis could she agree with the draft decision.

- 255. The Worker spokesperson** asked when the Director-General hoped to announce the name of the special envoy to the Governing Body and noted that there could be many reasons why the first person approached had declined. She thanked all Governing Body members who had spoken of the grave situation of repression and impunity, where trade union colleagues were imprisoned or facing exile due to exercising their fundamental trade union rights.
- 256. The Director-General** said that he would be in consultation with the Officers of the Governing Body and hoped to announce the appointment of the special envoy at either the June or November 2025 session.
- 257. A Government representative of Belarus** thanked the members of the Governing Body who had expressed support for Belarus. His Government stood ready to cooperate fully and constructively with the ILO. It was not responsible for the suspension of cooperation and it had positive experience of cooperation with the ILO that could serve as a starting point for new joint projects. The serious systemic work taking place in Belarus to develop social dialogue and tripartism was an important element of domestic policy, with a view to balanced and sustainable socio-economic development. There was continuous dialogue between the Government, trade unions and employers to reach mutually acceptable decisions, such as the signing in January 2025 of the general agreement between the Government and national employers' and workers' associations for the period 2025–27, which formed the basis for collective bargaining processes for the entire country. As a direct participant in those negotiations, he refuted as baseless all doubts and criticism concerning the legitimacy of the national tripartite bodies.
- 258.** The discussion showed that there remained serious obstacles to the reestablishment of cooperation between his Government and the ILO, in particular the discriminatory resolution concerning measures under article 33 of the Constitution. The biased and politically motivated position of the Workers' group and the Western countries left them unwilling to consider his Government's arguments and was based exclusively on the views of marginalized extremist structures abroad that had no links to his Government. Indeed, his Government had long shown that it would defend its interests and would not crumble under the pressure of far-fetched accusations. The application of any special procedures or measures was unacceptable. He was against double standards and called on the Western countries and leaders of the Workers' group to cease their speculation about so-called independent trade unions and alleged prosecutions for trade unionist activity; his Government welcomed real trade union activity. The citizens mentioned had been prosecuted for committing offences that had nothing to do with trade union activities and each case had been fully examined in court. The call for the immediate dismissal of charges against all offenders was irresponsible.
- 259.** He called on Governing Body members to consider the situation in his country objectively and put a stop to the politicization of ILO decisions and the deviation of the Organization from its mandate. His Government could not agree to the draft decision and called for it to be put to a vote.
- 260. The Chairperson** observed that it did not seem possible to reach a decision by consensus, since two Governments in addition to Belarus had requested a vote. Having consulted with his fellow Officers, he had decided to put the draft decision to a vote by show of hands.

(The decision was adopted with 40 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 8 abstentions.)

Decision

261. The Governing Body:

- (a) took note with growing concern of the information provided in document GB.353/INS/7(Rev.1);
- (b) noted with deep regret that the Government of Belarus once again provided no new information on the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and subsequent recommendations of the Committee on Freedom of Association, the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the Committee on the Application of Standards;
- (c) urged the Government of Belarus to submit to the Director-General all information on concrete steps taken in this regard following the 353rd Session of the Governing Body by 26 September 2025 for transmission to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025);
- (d) once again requested the Government of Belarus with the utmost urgency to accept:
 - (i) an international humanitarian mission to ensure that independent doctors can visit all imprisoned trade unionists to assess their health and offer medical assistance, as necessary; and
 - (ii) an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation in the country, including a visit to trade unionists that are currently in prison or detention;
- (e) drew the attention of the Credentials Committee at the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference to the information set out in documents GB.352/INS/10(Rev.1) and GB.353/INS/7(Rev.1);
- (f) took note of the steps taken by the Office to implement the Conference resolution and the conclusions of the Committee on the Application of Standards and expected the Director-General to:
 - (i) appoint without delay a special envoy to Belarus with the mandate outlined in document GB.353/INS/7(Rev.1); and
 - (ii) report to the Governing Body at its 355th Session on the outcome of the ongoing engagement with the United Nations human rights bodies and other international entities in relation to the creation of a working group of the ILO and other UN institutions and the steps taken to coordinate and bolster joint action towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the supervisory bodies;
- (g) invited the Organization's constituents – governments, employers and workers – to continue to take steps to ensure an effective follow-up to the Conference resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus, including by holding national high-level tripartite meetings to assess and intensify efforts and to report back thereon to the Director-General for transmission to the Governing Body;
- (h) requested the Director-General to prepare an updated report for the 355th Session of the Governing Body.

(GB.353/INS/7(Rev.1), paragraph 19)

8. Developments in the full implementation by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of the agreed plan of action to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in respect of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 (GB.353/INS/8(Rev.1))

- 262. A Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Deputy Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) was authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders. She recalled her Government's rejection of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on the basis that they would violate the Venezuelan Constitution, the separation of powers and the country's legal system, independence, sovereignty and self-determination. The recommendations also exceeded the Commission's competence by addressing issues raised by the Workers, rather than being limited to the complaint submitted by the Employers. The report on which they were based contained assertions, assessments, criticisms and conclusions that seemed to be insuperable and opprobrious judgments against the branches of the National State Authority. Nevertheless, over the previous six years her Government had never failed to report on the progress made in implementing the Conventions addressed in the complaint and had always been open to those recommendations that it considered pertinent, provided that they did not conflict with its principles or the domestic legal system. It had organized four sessions of the Social Dialogue Forum, laying the foundations for structured, ongoing and sincere dialogue among all stakeholders. It had received the ILO's technical assistance through its Special Adviser on Social Dialogue, who had been given the opportunity to meet with all the country's social partners over a period of approximately five months, without restrictions or limitations.
- 263.** The Government, working with employers' and workers' organizations, had made progress on many of the highlighted cases relating to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). In those cases, legal proceedings had been brought against individuals for reasons other than their trade union activities, including proven acts of terrorism. Nevertheless, and despite the facts having been determined while respecting due process and the legitimate right to defence, those cases had been used to accuse her country of violating the rights of alleged union leaders. She recalled that, in accordance with article 8(1) of Convention No. 87, workers, employers and their respective organizations, like other persons or organized collectivities, must respect the law of the land.
- 264.** With regard to the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26), as part of the Government's efforts to boost workers' incomes in the public and private sectors despite the illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed on her country, in January 2025 consultations on the national minimum wage had been launched with all actors in the world of work. The consultations that had taken place to date had followed the methodology agreed with the employer and worker sectors and had proven constructive. Substantial progress had been achieved in developing permanent consultation mechanisms pursuant to the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). For example, the National Assembly had been holding regular consultations on laws and other instruments with the mandatory participation of representatives of trade unions and business associations.
- 265.** The Government had made such headway despite the illegal, decade-long economic blockade that had asphyxiated the country's public finances, foreign trade and oil industry. Between 2014 and 2022, the national economy had contracted by almost three quarters under the weight of more than 1,000 unilateral coercive measures and sectoral sanctions, which had

limited the Government's ability to maintain social programmes and basic services, affecting employers and workers alike. Even so, since 2021, the country had enjoyed sustained economic growth, with significant improvements in the agricultural, trade and manufacturing sectors. The Government was determined to develop a diversified economic model based on national production, the promotion of investment and strengthened cooperation. It had adopted a seven-point national plan up to 2030 in which the fundamental role of workers and employers in the national transformation was recognized and highlighted.

266. The Government considered social dialogue to be the mechanism best suited to guaranteeing peace, sovereignty and labour stability. Accordingly, all business associations and most trade unions were represented at high-level government meetings to discuss the major transformations that were needed in the country. The newly created Constitutional Reform Commission would encourage transformative dialogue to broaden and deepen democracy and build a self-sustaining and productive economy. The Commission comprised representatives from all sectors of society, including trade unions and employers' organizations. She noted the concerns surrounding the Commission voiced by some trade unions and included in the document; they would be allayed once mechanisms to allow participation in the constitutional reform process had been established.
267. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continued to spare no effort in fulfilling its international human rights commitments and to adapt its approach to changing circumstances, although always with the same vision. It remained willing to cooperate with the various ILO supervisory mechanisms, provided that their actions were objective, impartial, transparent, lawful and independent of political interests that ran counter to it. In order to be consistent with the positions taken by her Government on previous occasions, she could not support the draft decision, which sought to impose actions that would not contribute to advancing social dialogue in her country.
268. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that scant progress had been made in implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and that the Government's repeated rejection of the recommendations made by the Governing Body at its last session was unacceptable and unjustified. He expressed appreciation for the ILO's efforts to collaborate with the Government and the social partners of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela but noted with concern that the Government had still not made the necessary arrangements to ensure that the Special Adviser on Social Dialogue could continue to provide support on a constant basis and give the appropriate follow-up to the achievements of the Social Dialogue Forum. It was also regrettable that the Government had failed to respect the deadline for the submission of information on any new concrete steps taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the commitments made in the plan of action as updated by the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024, and that it had not yet organized the fifth session of the Forum. Furthermore, while representatives of the Federation of Chambers and Associations of Commerce and Production of Venezuela had been invited to meetings to discuss specific issues, those meetings did not qualify as spaces for effective social dialogue, which thus remained fragmented and lacking in tangible results.
269. Some progress had been made in implementing Convention No. 26 through the establishment of a methodology for minimum wage-fixing and an advisory group to discuss it. However, the determination of the minimum wage still lay exclusively within the purview of the Government and, given the country's macroeconomic situation, it must be based on reliable economic indicators and be subject to the availability of State funds. At recent meetings on the issue, the ILO had been unable to provide technical assistance, either in person or virtually. It was also worrying that no agenda had been set for the discussion of important issues under

Conventions Nos 87 and 144. The Government's refusal to follow the plan of action, agreed in a tripartite manner and with the assistance of the ILO, was extremely serious and jeopardized the progress made to date. The Social Dialogue Forum must be reconvened with the utmost urgency and with the continued technical assistance of the ILO. There was a need to specify the scope of such assistance, which had been abruptly and unilaterally suspended without explanation. Moreover, it was not acceptable for the Government to continue to ignore the ILO's supervisory mechanisms without consequence.

270. Accordingly, his group urged the Government to facilitate the special adviser's continued presence in the country to ensure adequate follow-up of agreements and commitments, convene the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum without delay and establish a clear agenda to address outstanding issues, present detailed and verifiable information on the concrete measures adopted to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, ensure that any discussion on the fixing of the minimum wage had the technical assistance of the ILO and was based on objective economic criteria, return confiscated lands to employers' leaders and guarantee freedom of association without State interference. He supported the draft decision.
271. **The Worker spokesperson** regretted that the Venezuelan Government had rejected the decision adopted by the Governing Body in November 2024. The tripartite discussions and the subsequent recommendations of the Governing Body were intended to provide constructive pathways for progress and the resolution of challenges. Those recommendations were not meant to be imposed but rather to serve as a framework for dialogue and cooperation, contrary to how the government had characterized them. Since that session of the Governing Body, the political situation in the country had remained highly concerning and unstable. From a strictly labour perspective no progress had been observed, but nor had there been any clear signs of deterioration. On a positive note, the Government had resumed cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
272. The National Assembly has been advancing reforms to electoral laws but, to date, Venezuelan workers' organizations had not been consulted on any of those proposals. Both the Commission of Inquiry and the CEACR had identified specific articles of the Constitution and labour legislation that are not in conformity with Convention No. 87 and must be amended or annulled. She urged the Government to put in place meaningful consultation processes with the social partners to ensure that freedom of association and international labour standards were not further undermined through the proposed legislative changes.
273. On the issue of minimum wages and the application of Convention No. 26, she mentioned that the indexed economic war bonus, and the CestaTicket food voucher scheme were no replacement for fair wages and negotiated agreements. While the wage consultation process was an important step forward, the President's announcement regarding the continuation of the indexed integral income policy would artificially suppress minimum wages and, therefore, the wages fixed in collective agreements. She remained hopeful that the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum would be convened before the 355th Session of the Governing Body.
274. She urged the Government to reconsider its stance on appointing a Special Adviser on Social Dialogue, or renewing the mandate of the current special adviser, and to ensure that he or she played a more active role and acted as a mediator to facilitate consensus and solutions on key labour issues. The special adviser should be taken seriously and his or her role firmly embedded in ILO processes. She called for concrete mechanisms to guarantee that the ILO's technical assistance was directly implemented on the ground, especially given the ongoing constitutional and legal reform processes, and she underlined the importance of the Bureau

for Workers' Activities in that regard. She proposed holding a dedicated session with the social partners in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to assess the action plans agreed by the Social Dialogue Forum and fulfilment of its terms of reference. She supported the draft decision and called on the Venezuelan Government to do likewise. The Governing Body's decisions were expectations, rather than impositions, and she hoped that the Government would recognize the draft decision as a positive step, rather than accusing the Governing Body of making inappropriate demands.

- 275. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that the following countries aligned themselves with her statement: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Norway and Switzerland. She regretted the Venezuelan authorities' rejection of the Governing Body decision adopted in November 2024 and remained deeply concerned at the state of the civic space and of labour rights in the country. All acts of repression against dissenting voices must stop. She called on the authorities to end arbitrary detentions and unconditionally release all political prisoners, including trade unionists. Underscoring the importance of an independent judiciary, she condemned the threats faced by trade unions and employers' organizations and reiterated the need to guarantee their independence, autonomy and protection. Action must be taken in respect of allegations of violations of civil liberties and trade union rights to ensure fair trials, reparations and the reinstatement of individuals proven innocent.
- 276.** Welcoming the tripartite meetings on minimum wage consultation, she encouraged the authorities to increase transparency and allow ILO experts to attend in person and to ensure a sufficiently informed social dialogue process. She echoed the social partners' call for the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum to be organized at the earliest opportunity. She expressed concern at the authorities' lack of engagement with the ILO and deep regret that they had not arranged for the ILO special adviser to attend any relevant meetings. She urged the Government to facilitate his return to the country to ensure the continuity and effectiveness of the ILO's technical assistance. She called on the Venezuelan authorities to translate their expressed willingness into tangible action and to accept and implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. She supported the draft decision.
- 277. Speaking on behalf of Canada and the United Kingdom**, a Government representative of Canada said that she remained deeply concerned about the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Government's failure to accept the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. She deeply regretted that the Venezuelan authorities had rejected the Governing Body's decision of November 2024 and urged them to implement all their commitments under the plan of action as updated by the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024. The Government should immediately make the necessary arrangements to allow the ILO special Adviser to operate effectively. She regretted the continued lack of meaningful progress on issues related to the Workers' Production Councils, the National Electoral Council and the functioning of the National Register of Trade Union Organizations. She remained deeply troubled by the situation of freedom of association, particularly for trade unionists who were arbitrarily arrested, and by the continued cancellation of the passports of trade union and civil society leaders. She welcomed the Director-General's ongoing efforts to engage with the Government on those issues and supported the draft decision.
- 278. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the progress made in implementing the plan of action was the result of the Venezuelan Government's willingness to continue fulfilling its obligations and commitments to the ILO and strengthening social dialogue at the national level. It had continued to move forward with the implementation of the ILO Conventions in line with the recommendations and suggestions made by various bodies. The ILO's technical

assistance had contributed to progress towards the Government's aims. The Social Dialogue Forum, for instance, had achieved its objectives, and permanent mechanisms for dialogue between stakeholders in the Venezuelan labour sector had been established. She welcomed the Government's reiterated willingness to continue to build consensus at the national level, with technical assistance from the Office.

- 279.** The Governing Body should allow time for governments to implement measures appropriate to their national legislation and economic circumstances. If the Governing Body wished to accelerate the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, it should call for the lifting of the unfair unilateral coercive measures that directly affected the enjoyment of fundamental rights. The Governing Body's decisions could not be binding, and the ILO could not be used to further certain political interests. The sovereignty and self-determination of Member States was inviolable, and her Government would always defend dialogue, cooperation and negotiated solutions as the sole effective means for the ILO to fulfil its mandate.
- 280. A Government representative of China** recalled that, since the establishment of the Commission of Inquiry, the Venezuelan Government had maintained communication and dialogue with the ILO, formulated social dialogue policies and organized multiple sessions of the Social Dialogue Forum, demonstrating a proactive commitment to fulfilling its obligations under the ILO Conventions. The Governing Body should respond positively to that progress. Decisions by the Governing Body must not undermine the sovereignty of Member States or interfere in their internal affairs. Although international labour standards were universally applicable, the national circumstances and realities of Member States must be given due respect. She encouraged the ILO to continue cooperating with the Venezuelan Government to advance dialogue and communication and to explore various channels to resolve differences. She supported the ILO in providing robust technical assistance to help the country fulfil its obligations.
- 281. A Government representative of the United States** expressed her Government's continued deep concern at the Venezuelan Government's failure to accept the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and regretted its rejection of the Governing Body's decision of November 2024, which called into question its stated unwavering and ongoing commitment to continuing to honour its obligations. It was also deeply regrettable that neither the ILO special adviser nor any other ILO official had received requests to support follow-up action since November 2024. No information had been provided on any concrete measures adopted to support genuine tripartite dialogue without the ILO's support. She was concerned that no update had been provided on the five cases being considered by the Committee on Freedom of Association and that no meaningful progress had been made on them. She called for the immediate acceptance and implementation of the Commission's recommendations and supported the draft decision.
- 282. A Government representative of Colombia** highlighted that the measures adopted by the Venezuelan Government to enhance its implementation of the ILO Conventions could be improved with technical assistance from the Office. He called for efforts to keep the channels of communication and dialogue with the Office open and for all local and national actors to be heard. Transparency and inclusion must be the guiding principles of the ILO's supervisory tools. He urged the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to comply with the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and the related decisions of the Governing Body, and to effectively implement Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. His Government stood ready to provide assistance in that regard, and he reiterated its call for inclusive, sustainable social dialogue and the protection of labour rights.

- 283. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** recognized the Venezuelan Government's efforts to implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, including its launch of consultations with the social partners on the minimum wage, despite the pressures of the unilateral sanctions imposed on the country. In accordance with Convention No. 144, social dialogue and consultation with social partners had been improved, and their ability to contribute to the development and review of legislation had been strengthened. In light of the Government's willingness to make progress, he expressed concern regarding the impact on tripartite dialogue of the decision adopted by the Governing Body in November 2024. Moreover, the decision ignored the reality of a country besieged by unilateral restrictive measures contrary to international law. The politicization of the ILO and its supervisory bodies was unacceptable, and decisions made by the Governing Body or other ILO entities must not undermine national sovereignty.
- 284. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** acknowledged the Venezuelan Government's constructive engagement with the ILO, despite challenging circumstances. It must be recognized that the illegal unilateral coercive measures imposed on the country contravened international law and directly affected the country's ability to guarantee its citizens' fundamental rights, social security and livelihoods. He welcomed the Government's progress in implementing the plan of action. The ILO must maintain its focus on labour issues. Its decisions and recommendations must be balanced and take countries' full contexts into account. He supported the Venezuelan Government in its commitment to continuing to improve the application of international labour agreements through dynamic and flexible consultation mechanisms, and he called on the Governing Body to recognize the progress made, acknowledge the challenging circumstances facing the country and adopt a constructive approach that respected national sovereignty while encouraging continued dialogue.
- 285. A Government representative of Sudan** welcomed the commitment of the Venezuelan Government to advancing dialogue among all stakeholders in the world of work and promoting social dialogue in a spirit of mutual respect, as well as its commitment to upholding its international human rights obligations. He also noted the Government's willingness to provide useful information to the Office while respecting national legislation. He recalled that, like the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Sudan had been subjected to unjust unilateral coercive measures that had undermined economic growth and labour rights and hindered efforts to adapt to challenging circumstances. He stressed the need for the ILO to remain a platform for justice and fairness. He expressed his delegation's support for the provision of technical assistance to the Venezuelan Government with a view to achieving sustainable solutions that would benefit all stakeholders.
- 286. A Government representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** said that her Government did not support measures that would undermine rapprochement and dialogue between the various actors. She welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the plan of action, which showed a willingness to comply with ILO Conventions. Members should not overlook the fact that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was a victim of unilateral sanctions, which affected its people and the enjoyment of their rights. She encouraged the Office to foster dialogue and cooperation and build trust among the various social partners. To that end, it would be important to work with the Government to ensure the implementation of Conventions in national legislation and avoid politicizing the issue or imposing a decision on the country.
- 287. A Government representative of Barbados** said that over the past four years, his Government had made and supported calls for the provision of technical assistance to the

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, given that some progress had been made in the fulfilment of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. He welcomed the assistance that the ILO had provided thus far, but reiterated that the logistics regarding assistance provided to a Member State should be based on an agreement with the Government and the social partners and should not feel like an imposition. He encouraged the Venezuelan Government to respect the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and continue the implementation process.

- 288. A Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Deputy Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) thanked every Government that had highlighted her Government's efforts regarding social dialogue and compliance with Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. Progress in the country was evident at the economic, political and social levels, despite the imposition of unilateral coercive measures on the country. Her Government was continuing to strengthen the world of work by boosting production through the efforts of the Venezuelan people. It had laid the cornerstone for robust social dialogue and was able to discuss and build joint solutions with the social partners despite their differences. In the midst of adversity, the country was building a new productive and diversified economic model with high levels of investment and cooperation, including through the National Council for the Productive Economy, in which employers' organizations were active participants. Discussions in that forum reflected the commitment of all actors to building a more resilient and sustainable economy to improve the quality of life of Venezuelan workers.
- 289.** It was regrettable that those pointing to the country's non-compliance with international labour standards were the same as those who, for political reasons, were calling for the continued application of sanctions. The Office should review the impact of illegal unilateral coercive measures on the world of work in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Her Government rejected the draft decision, which was being forced on the country in the same manner as the decision adopted by the Governing Body at its 352nd Session (November 2024) and would undermine the progress made thus far.
- 290. The Employer spokesperson** said that it was regrettable that the Venezuelan Government had rejected the draft decision outright despite having repeatedly stated its intention to fulfil its obligations. The draft decision merely echoed the points raised by the Governing Body over many years and envisaged ways of building bridges and establishing mechanisms to support and assist compliance. He urged the Venezuelan Government to take note of the draft decision and translate its contents into action.
- 291. The Worker spokesperson** said that the draft decision did not impose anything on the Venezuelan Government or refer to any sanctions. The provision concerning the offer of continuous support from the ILO special adviser constituted a reasonable condition for the Office's support. The Office and tripartite constituents had made several efforts to support the Government and Venezuelan constituents; the Workers' group would therefore be grateful if the Government would make good use of the Office's expertise for the benefit of the country.

Decision

292. The Governing Body:

- (a) **took note of the Director-General's report on developments in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and reiterated once again its call to the Government to accept and implement in full the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry adopted in 2019;**

- (b) deeply regretted that, through communications sent in November 2024 and January 2025, the Government had rejected the Governing Body's decision of November 2024;
- (c) urged the Government, with utmost urgency, to redouble its efforts to accelerate further the implementation of all commitments made in the action plan as updated by the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024, in order to achieve tangible and measurable results without any further delay, in particular with regard to those areas where no progress has been made;
- (d) deeply regretted that, despite its requests in March and November 2024, the Government has not yet agreed to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the ILO Special Adviser on Social Dialogue could continue to provide support on a constant basis in the country;
- (e) recalling the decision adopted in November 2023 concerning the posting of an ILO special adviser to the country to accompany and support the implementation of the action plan and preparation of the Social Dialogue Forum meetings, urged the Government to take immediate steps to facilitate the presence of the ILO special adviser in the country, recalling that ILO technical assistance, especially in relation to social dialogue, could only be effective if delivered in person on the ground;
- (f) invited the Government to organize the fifth Social Dialogue Forum at the earliest opportunity and report to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025);
- (g) requested the Director-General to collaborate with the Government and the social partners of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the full implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, the related Governing Body decisions and the effective application of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 in law and practice, on the condition that the ILO special adviser could continue to provide support on a constant basis in the country and to submit to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025) a further report on any developments concerning the above;
- (h) invited the Government to submit to the Director-General by 26 September 2025 information on any new concrete steps taken in respect of subparagraphs (c), (d), (e) and (f) above with a view to transmitting the information to the Governing Body at its 355 Session (November 2025).

(GB.353/INS/8(Rev.1), paragraph 17)

9. Report by the Government of Bangladesh on progress made in the implementation of the road map to address all outstanding issues mentioned in the article 26 complaint concerning alleged non-observance of Conventions Nos 81, 87 and 98 (GB.353/INS/9(Rev.1))

293. A Government representative of Bangladesh (Adviser, Ministry of Labour and Employment) stated that Bangladesh had changed. Reports of Human Rights Watch and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights had highlighted the interim Government's commitment to an open and transparent reform process. To ensure widespread ownership and sustainability of reforms, the Government was building national consensus on the recommendations of the Labour Reform Commission. Bangladesh had made substantial

progress in meeting its commitments. Almost half of the politically motivated cases against workers and trade union activists in the ready-made garment sector had been either withdrawn or closed and the rest were in progress. Moreover, for the first time in the country's history, trade bodies with true representation of workers and employers had been established. Multiple employers' organizations that were non-representative had been dismantled. Interest-free loans had been made available to employers to deal with factory closures and unpaid wages.

294. In recent months, 101 points for amendment to the Bangladesh Labour Act had been finalized on a tripartite basis to align the law with international labour standards and were expected to be promulgated in the near future. They included extending the Act to apply to workers in non-profit organizations, granting trade union rights to workers in managerial, administrative and supervisory positions, increased penalties for unfair labour practices, anti-union discrimination, child labour, and gender-based violence, harassment and discrimination, prohibiting forced labour and imposing penalties, penalizing blacklisting of workers, reducing the number of documents and meetings required for registration of trade unions and ensuring confidentiality of registration and increasing the allowed number of trade unions in an enterprise from three to five. Several other points, including on the minimum threshold for registration, still needed to be agreed upon; they should be resolved in the near future so that the amended law could be enacted by Ordinance. Regular consultations had been held with all stakeholders on amending the Bangladesh Export Processing Zone (EPZ) Labour Act and the law should be amended after amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act.
295. To ensure that the online trade union registration process was effective and transparent, a comprehensive assessment of rejected and filed applications would be conducted in the first half of 2025 with ILO support. Furthermore, the number of posts of labour inspectors had increased and recruitment into the posts would be expedited. The number of labour inspections had also increased significantly, including unannounced inspections. Six new labour courts had been established and the alternative dispute resolution mechanism was fully functional, with a standard operating procedure for conciliation adopted. The interim Government was working closely with the ILO to develop an online case management system for labour courts and to finalize a standard operating procedure for arbitration. It was also examining the legal and institutional framework to make the alternative dispute resolution mechanism easily accessible in industrial disputes. Support provided to the Government was welcome and the international partners and a tripartite team were invited to visit Bangladesh to assess progress made in implementing the road map. Given the Government's commitment, openness and progress made, he requested the Governing Body to consider closing the case.
296. **The Worker spokesperson** said that, despite the more constructive attitude of the interim Government, important and long-standing labour rights issues were still unresolved. Concrete actions to amend the Bangladesh Labour Act were long overdue, despite intensive ILO technical support. Although several meetings of the National Tripartite Consultative Council had been held, the interim Government had not yet acted on recommendations of workers' representatives concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining. The interests of the garment industry had frustrated efforts to meaningfully improve the Bangladesh Labour Act. The amendment process of the EPZ Labour Act was being conducted in a non-transparent manner, in consultation only with worker welfare associations but not the mainstream labour movement, and the interim Government had not acted on the ILO's recommendations.
297. The trade union registration process was deeply flawed in both law and practice, and allowed government officials to exercise discretion to accept or reject applications, thereby impeding

workers' ability to exercise their fundamental right to freedom of association. The online database for registration included significantly more trade unions than were currently active and steps were needed to clean and update the entries. The online registration process continued to pose serious difficulties for trade unions, which still had to submit paper applications.

298. While factory safety in the ready-made garment industry had improved following the Rana Plaza disaster, occupational safety and health was still a concern, including in other sectors such as agriculture, shipbreaking and construction. The figure of 441 labour inspectors was well below the targeted 800, and inspectors' lack of enforcement power meant that little could be done to compel compliance. Despite recent reforms allowing the Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments to enter EPZs, most workers reported never having seen a labour inspector. Although the establishment of new labour courts was a positive step, insufficient resources and staffing hampered efforts to reduce the burden on the judiciary. Moreover, only the Government, not workers, could file cases concerning unfair labour practices with the courts; cases were often poorly handled and workers were not informed of developments.
299. The Committee of Experts had repeatedly observed that a truly free and independent trade union movement could only develop in a climate free from violence, pressure and threats of any kind against their leaders and members; however, the perpetrators of the murder of union organizer Shahidul Islam, and of attacks against other trade union leaders, had not been prosecuted. The Workers' group strongly condemned the unlawful arrest, the previous week, of the Joint General Secretary of the National Garment Workers' Federation, Mohammed Kabir Hossain, and demanded his immediate unconditional release. Despite the Government's repeated assurances, many criminal cases against workers had not yet been withdrawn. Moreover, 17 points of the much-vaunted 18-point agreement remained incomplete, with progress achieved only in relation to annual increments.
300. The Governing Body could agree to give the interim Government more time to act, but would need to decide on a commission of inquiry. The Workers' group could agree to a tripartite mission to support and assess the implementation of the road map, but opposed closing the case as so much work remained to be done.
301. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that since the Governing Body's previous discussion, progress had been made in addressing the outstanding issues arising from the complaint. Bangladesh was still led by an interim Government, which was undertaking comprehensive labour sector reform, including amending the Bangladesh Labour Act and the Bangladesh EPZ Labour Act.
302. The Employers' group encouraged the interim Government to undertake extensive consultations with the national social partners on labour, employment and industrial relations matters. The group would like to see a focus on sustainable enterprises and their needs and on productivity ecosystems to facilitate lasting progress. If the labour law reform was to be successful and the road map implemented before the 2026 deadline, it was important to work with employers as well as trade unions and civil society, as employers had to be able to implement the changes.
303. She supported providing technical assistance through the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups and adopting a balanced approach respecting the needs of employers and workers alike. The Employers' group strongly encouraged the interim Government to continue its efforts towards the full implementation of the road map and to continue providing detailed information on the process. The group stood ready to work closely with the Bangladesh

Employers' Federation to support the interim Government in the implementation of all necessary actions and ongoing initiatives. The Employers' group supported the draft decision.

- 304. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with the statement. She welcomed efforts to improve the labour rights situation in the country, but expressed concern that the interim Government had only partially implemented the labour reforms to which it had committed. She reiterated the call for the timely delivery and comprehensive implementation of the road map.
- 305.** Removing restrictions on freedom of association and safeguarding the right to collective bargaining were key to ensuring lasting social peace and justice. Trade union registration should be possible for all workers in all sectors, facilitated by a fair and transparent process that limited administrative hurdles and was free from outside interference. She called on the interim Government to ensure that the Bangladesh Labour Act did not provide for excessive penalties on workers exercising labour rights or enforce unjustified restrictions on the right to strike. At the same time, penalties for employers engaging in unfair labour practices, anti-union discrimination, and child or forced labour must be genuinely dissuasive.
- 306.** She urged the Government to fully investigate cases of workers and labour activists who had been injured, killed, harassed, blacklisted or intimidated, to hold those responsible to account and to effectively implement preventive measures. Continued and intensified efforts were needed to train law enforcement authorities to apply the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality, and to respect human rights, including labour rights. She encouraged the interim Government to continue its work on rendering labour inspectorates fully functional, with a sufficient number of adequately trained inspectors to conduct independent inspections; to strengthen national social dialogue to ensure an inclusive tripartite consultation process for policy development; and to adopt the employment injury insurance scheme for all sectors.
- 307.** Through the Team Europe Initiative on decent work, the EU and its Member States were providing substantial technical and financial support for the Government to expedite the necessary labour reforms, and would continue to closely monitor progress in the implementation of the road map. She supported the draft decision.
- 308. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Qatar acknowledged the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh to cooperate with the Office and its strong commitment to addressing all the issues raised in the complaint. In particular, his group welcomed the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission, the reform of the National Tripartite Consultative Council and the ongoing efforts to promulgate the amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act. It commended the adoption by the social partners of the landmark 18-point agreement and joint declaration on key labour issues. Furthermore, it appreciated the Government's ongoing efforts to strengthen labour inspection and enforcement mechanisms. It encouraged the Government to commit to the continued implementation of the road map, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. In addition, it called on the Office to continue providing technical assistance to support the Government's labour reform efforts and urged all parties to strengthen their collaboration in order to resolve all outstanding issues and close the complaint.
- 309. A Government representative of South Africa** said that the steps taken by the Government of Bangladesh to promote labour law reform, trade union registration and social dialogue demonstrated its commitment to advancing workers' rights. Furthermore, the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission and the adoption of the 18-point agreement between

workers and employers were important steps toward inclusive tripartism. The ongoing efforts to amend relevant legislation, strengthen labour inspection mechanisms and introduce a digital case management system provided further evidence of tangible progress. She commended the piloting of the Employment Injury Scheme, noting its importance in strengthening social protection for vulnerable workers. Acknowledging a number of outstanding challenges, including the slow pace of legal reform and significant case backlogs, she encouraged Bangladesh to maintain its momentum in those areas. ILO technical assistance could play a critical role in advancing progress. She stressed the importance of a developmental approach to labour standards while encouraging incremental context-sensitive improvements. The Governing Body should continue to support Bangladesh through constructive dialogue and capacity-building and should refrain from imposing punitive measures. Noting that collective action was needed to ensure that the benefits of globalization were equitably shared, she reaffirmed her country's commitment to fostering environments in which labour rights and economic growth were mutually supportive.

- 310. A Government representative of the Niger** commended the sustained and significant progress made by the Government of Bangladesh in implementing the road map, including the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission and the reform of the National Tripartite Consultative Council. She welcomed the ongoing efforts to promulgate the amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act, simplify the trade union registration process and recruit and train additional labour inspectors. She also welcomed the Government's commitment to improving worker protections through training and awareness-raising programmes targeting workers, employers and relevant authorities, and noted that the report was the eighth in a series of regular reports, reflecting the Government's transparency and willingness to address the issues raised. In view of the progress achieved by Bangladesh and its ongoing cooperation with its social partners and the ILO, it was time to close the complaint.
- 311. A Government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania** commended the dedication shown by the Government of Bangladesh in complying with the guidance and directives of the Governing Body. Key achievements in recent years included legal, administrative and procedural reforms in the labour sector and a significant increase in trade union registrations. She welcomed the Government's ratification in 2022 of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, as well as the measures it had taken to address anti-union discrimination, unfair labour practices and cases of anti-union violence. She encouraged the Government to maintain its commitment to ILO standards, while acknowledging that it required ongoing technical and financial support to ensure full implementation of the road map. In view of the progress achieved and the Government's engagement with the social partners, development partners and the ILO, she supported the closure of the complaint.
- 312. A Government representative of Canada** welcomed the progress made by Bangladesh in implementing the road map. She commended the efforts to pursue labour sector reforms, which had resulted in the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission, and the agreements reached between workers and employers on key issues such as the minimum wage and workers' welfare. However, she expressed concern that the amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act had yet to be promulgated and urged the Government to work with its social partners to expedite that process. She encouraged it to continue seeking technical assistance from the ILO. Noting the slow progress in the implementation of other reforms outlined in the road map, she called on the Government to take steps in line with international standards to strengthen preventive measures against discrimination, violence and harassment, address the backlog of cases in labour courts, and ensure a full complement of

qualified labour inspectors, including in EPZs and special economic zones. Canada would continue to offer support to Bangladesh to achieve those objectives. She voiced support for the draft decision.

- 313. A Government representative of the United States** commended the continued prioritization of labour sector reform. He urged the Government to work closely with the social partners to ensure the full implementation of its road map. He expressed concern that the amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act had yet to be promulgated and called for accelerated action in that regard, emphasizing the need for meaningful tripartite consultation and reforms that would simplify trade union registration, lower the threshold to form a union, increase penalties for unfair labour practices and prohibit worker blacklisting. He noted that workers continued to face barriers to exercising their right to collective bargaining and that independent trade unions remained banned in EPZs. In that regard, he called on the Government to extend the Bangladesh Labour Act to those zones and to authorize unannounced labour inspections in them. He echoed the recommendation of the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Conventions and Recommendations for the Government to strengthen its efforts to increase the number of labour inspectors, ensure sufficiently dissuasive penalties for rights violations, and address the backlog of labour cases. He welcomed the withdrawal of some unwarranted criminal charges filed against workers and labour organizers in the context of the 2023 minimum wage protests and encouraged the Government to expedite its review of the remaining cases. He expressed interest in the establishment of a minimum wage review committee and called for more frequent and transparent wage reviews for the ready-made garment sector. The United States looked forward to continued engagement with Bangladesh and supported the draft decision.
- 314. A Government representative of the Philippines** welcomed the detailed report and acknowledged the progress made in the four priority areas, including the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission, the reform of the National Tripartite Consultative Council and the implementation of training and awareness-raising programmes for government stakeholders and the social partners to promote respect for trade union rights and civil liberties. She expressed the hope that the Government of Bangladesh would continue working with the social partners, particularly on amendments to the Bangladesh Labour Act, and commended the ongoing support of the ILO to facilitate the effective implementation of the road map.
- 315. A Government representative of Nepal** welcomed the adoption and amendment by Bangladesh of various labour law provisions and the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission. The restructuring of the National Tripartite Consultative Council would facilitate the meaningful representation of workers and employers, while enhanced labour inspections would help to protect workers from abuse and exploitation. Nepal welcomed the establishment of new labour courts to address the backlog of cases and protect workers' rights and took note of the increase in the minimum wage for workers in the ready-made garment sector. Nepal encouraged the Government of Bangladesh to maintain its efforts to strengthen social dialogue and to implement the road map in full. In the light of the progress achieved and the Government's demonstrated commitment to reform, Nepal supported the closure of the complaint.
- 316. A Government representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic** commended the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh to implement the road map. It was clear that it was committed to cooperating with the ILO and the social partners in implementing decisions and recommendations adopted during previous Governing Body sessions, particularly in the four priority areas outlined in the road map. ILO technical assistance should be provided based on the specific needs and priorities of the Government, in order to support effective

implementation. Given the complexity of the challenges faced, further support and additional time would be essential to allow the Government to adopt necessary measures to sustain progress. He expressed support for the draft decision.

- 317. A Government representative of Oman** thanked the Government representative of Bangladesh for the detailed update on the progress achieved and welcomed the ongoing cooperation between the Government and the ILO in that area. Positive steps taken by the Government included increasing the number of labour inspectors, establishing the Labour Reform Commission, reforming the National Tripartite Consultative Council and adopting new legislation to strengthen respect for workers' rights. He welcomed the ongoing efforts to recruit and train labour inspectors and to develop inspection strategic compliance plans for priority sectors. The Government should strengthen its cooperation with relevant stakeholders with a view to sustaining progress in that regard. In view of the commitment to reform demonstrated by the Government and the tangible progress achieved, the ILO should continue to provide technical support to Bangladesh to facilitate the labour reform process. He called for the full engagement of all stakeholders so as to accelerate implementation of the road map and close the complaint.
- 318. A Government representative of Libya** acknowledged the efforts by the Government of Bangladesh to engage with the ILO, which reflected its genuine commitment to improving labour rights. She commended the important measures taken by the Government, including the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission, the restructuring of the National Tripartite Consultative Council and other tripartite bodies and the establishment of new labour courts. She also welcomed the ongoing recruitment and training of labour inspectors. The Government should continue its efforts to implement the road map, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, and the Office should continue providing the necessary technical assistance to support the labour reform process. In view of the Government's commitment to implementing the road map and the progress made, Libya urged all parties to cooperate with a view to closing the complaint.

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

- 319. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** commended the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh to addressing the outstanding issues mentioned in the complaint and to aligning its national frameworks with international labour standards. He welcomed the significant legal reforms undertaken. The extension of labour protections to special economic zones and the amendment of the EPZ Labour Act would establish a robust foundation for workers' rights. The increased success rate of trade union registrations and the introduction of new inspector posts and the Labour Inspection Management Application were also positive developments. He commended the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission and the impressive progress made with regard to social dialogue, as evidenced by the high number of industrial disputes settled through conciliation mechanisms and the withdrawal of nearly half the cases filed against workers during the minimum wage movement. His Government would continue to support efforts to create a fair and equitable labour environment in Bangladesh and called on Member States to support the closure of the case through dialogue, impartiality and adherence to the principles of decent work and social justice.
- 320. A Government representative of China** said that the Governing Body should acknowledge the significant progress made, notably the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission, the reform of the National Tripartite Consultative Council, the adoption by the social partners of an agreement on critical labour issues and consultation of stakeholders on amendments to

labour legislation. She also welcomed the increase in the number of registered trade unions and the continued availability of the publicly accessible online database on registration, the enhancement of labour inspections and the training provided to the industrial police and other officials. The proactive approach and concrete actions of the Government of Bangladesh reflected its respect for the ILO's supervisory mechanisms. Given the substantial progress achieved, she recommended the closure of the case as soon as possible.

- 321. A Government representative of Tunisia** noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Government of Bangladesh to cooperate with the Governing Body and with the ILO. The significant progress towards the full implementation of the road map demonstrated its strong commitment to improving workers' rights. Key steps included the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission, the restructuring of the National Tripartite Consultative Council and other tripartite bodies and the amendment of labour legislation to strengthen the rights of trade unions in the country. The Government should continue its efforts to implement the road map in cooperation with the ILO and the social partners and the ILO should continue to provide the necessary technical assistance to support the country's reform efforts. He urged all parties to cooperate constructively to bring the complaint to a close.
- 322. A Government representative of Sudan** noted with appreciation the efforts made by the Government of Bangladesh to cooperate with the Governing Body and the ILO and the constructive attitude of the Government representative. He commended the significant measures taken to address the issues raised in the complaint, which included facilitating the adoption by the social partners of an 18-point agreement on critical labour issues, establishing the Labour Reform Commission, formulating amendments to the country's labour legislation and restructuring the National Tripartite Consultative Council. He also welcomed the engagement of the Government of Bangladesh with the ILO with a view to strengthening the labour inspection system and its development of inspection strategic compliance plans for priority sectors. Sudan encouraged the Government to continue its efforts to implement the road map in collaboration with all relevant parties. In the light of the progress achieved, Sudan called for the closure of the complaint.
- 323. A Government representative of Ethiopia** commended the progress made in implementing the road map, in particular the establishment of the Labour Reform Commission and the reform of the National Tripartite Consultative Council. The Government of Bangladesh had shown a firm commitment to labour rights and its continued cooperation with the ILO and the social partners was reflected in its legislative amendments and in its efforts to strengthen labour inspection, enhance protection against unfair labour practices and engage in tripartite consultations. Encouraging the Government to continue with its reforms in collaboration with the Office, she expressed support for the closure of the case.
- 324. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that, against a backdrop of political and social upheaval, the Government of Bangladesh had made progress in improving social and labour conditions in the country, in accordance with the road map. He acknowledged the ongoing labour law reform and efforts to simplify trade union registration, improve the efficiency of labour inspections, combat anti-union discrimination and prevent violence against trade unionists. The ratification in 2022 of the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), were of note. The Government of Bangladesh had, through such initiatives, demonstrated its genuine commitment to addressing the concerns set out in the complaint. He welcomed the proposal to defer the decision on further action in respect of the complaint to the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body, which would enable the Government to make further

progress. Furthermore, the Governing Body should seek to close the complaint as soon as possible and remove the item from its agenda.

- 325. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the action taken by the Government of Bangladesh had strengthened tripartite social dialogue and cooperation with the Organization. Indeed, the progress made demonstrated what could be achieved when the Governing Body gave a government time and space to work with the relevant stakeholders, within the framework of its national legislation, to comply with its obligations and commitments in relation to the ratified ILO instruments. Reports on the progress made in applying the road map had been considered at seven previous sessions of the Governing Body; each time, the Government had shown a sustained commitment to meeting its responsibilities and working with the ILO. She therefore supported its request to close the case.
- 326. A Government representative of Spain** said that the interim Government of Bangladesh had shown a firm commitment to structural reform and to establishing the conditions for free, fair democratic elections. The scale of the work required time, patience, cohesion and international support. The establishment of the Labour Reform Commission was an important step forward, although it was regrettable that its proposals had not yet been published. Efforts to modernize labour legislation to bring it into line with international standards were also welcome. The Government's close collaboration with the ILO was key in that regard, as was its dialogue with the Organization on important issues such as the relationship between the minimum wage and the living wage, the revitalization of social dialogue, the establishment of mechanisms to resolve labour disputes and the creation of a new occupational risk scheme and comprehensive social protection system. He urged the Government to ratify the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), with a view to developing a comprehensive national occupational health system. His Government supported the draft decision.
- 327. A Government representative of the Congo** said that the report testified to the ongoing engagement of the Government of Bangladesh to upholding workers' rights and occupational safety. He welcomed the enhancement of the labour legislation framework in the country and encouraged the Government and the social partners to continue their tripartite consultations on the matter. In addition, the Government should push forward with the development of the Labour Reform Commission, the reform of the National Tripartite Consultative Council and the further implementation of the road map. His supported the draft decision.
- 328. A Government representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** said that the legislative and administrative reforms undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh demonstrated a willingness to enter into tripartite dialogue. Further work should be done to address anti-union discrimination, unfair labour practices and violence against workers. Noting the Government's commitment to working with the ILO at a challenging time and its progress in implementing the road map, she expressed support for the request to close the case.
- 329. The Government representative of Bangladesh** expressed appreciation for the encouragement and also for the constructive comments, assuring the Governing Body of his Government's continued commitment to implementing the road map and addressing the concerns raised. However, certain reform efforts were taking longer than expected due to the need for extensive negotiations within the current legal framework.
- 330.** Responding to the comments, he said that there was no conflict of interest and the Government was doing what it was expected to do in relation to the implementation of the road map. He recalled that the ready-made garment industry had yielded social as well as

economic dividends. Referring to the attacks against trade union officials, he said that although the Code of Criminal Procedure of Bangladesh did not allow for independent inquiries, the Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs had indicated that if the matter were put before a court, the court could allow for an independent inquiry. An analysis would be conducted to identify the gaps between the amended Bangladesh Labour Act and the EPZ Labour Act and the Government was persuaded that there should be unions in EPZs. The requirements for trade union registration had been simplified, but further discussions were needed to establish the threshold – which would be expressed as a number and not a percentage – for trade union registration. The aim was to strike a compromise, as had been done when increasing the number of trade unions permitted within an institution or enterprise from three to five. The Office and the social partners would be welcome to visit Bangladesh to learn more about the changes taking place, in particular with regard to the Bangladesh Labour Act. Indeed, the further support of the ILO would be greatly appreciated.

- 331. The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the positive attitude of the interim Government, which should continue its work to implement the road map. He also welcomed its willingness to allow a mission to observe the changes being made, and asked whether the Office could facilitate such a mission. Regarding the amendments to the EPZ Labour Act, he asked the Government to confirm that the objective was to ensure full freedom of association both inside and outside EPZs.
- 332. The Employer spokesperson** underscored the importance of entering into dialogue with employers' organizations to ensure that employers, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, were able to implement any new legislation in practice. That was the only way to ensure that regulations would be effective. Her group stood ready to help with those efforts.
- 333. The Government representative of Bangladesh** clarified that, while his Government was certainly in favour of establishing trade unions within EPZs, such a step would require further dialogue with the stakeholders concerned. There were no conflicts of interest in that regard.
- 334. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) said that the Office would be prepared to organize a mission to Bangladesh on the basis of the guidance provided by the interested parties.

Decision

- 335. Taking note of the report on progress made with the implementation of the road map of actions to address all outstanding issues mentioned in the article 26 complaint concerning the alleged non-observance of Conventions Nos 81, 87 and 98, and mindful of the political changes which led to an interim Government, the Governing Body:**
 - (a) **urged the Government of Bangladesh to fully commit to a timely implementation of its road map of actions in all its priority areas and take all necessary action to that effect;**
 - (b) **welcomed the measures taken by the Government to advance the labour reform agenda and encouraged the Government and the social partners to pursue their tripartite consultations on the labour law reform in a constructive manner with a view to bringing about all necessary reforms as a matter of priority, with the ILO technical assistance and the support that could be provided by the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups;**

(c) requested the Government to report on further progress made in the implementation of the road map of actions to address all the outstanding issues mentioned in the article 26 complaint at its 356th Session (March 2026);

(d) deferred the decision on further action in respect of the complaint to that session.

(GB.353/INS/9(Rev.1), paragraph 11)

10. Complaint alleging non-observance by Nicaragua of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144 (GB.353/INS/10(Rev.1))

- 336. The Employer spokesperson** emphasized that the Nicaraguan Government's non-observance of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), continued to have a serious impact on tripartite social dialogue and the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and non-discrimination in the country. The Governing Body and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards had been examining the case of Nicaragua since 2022. Despite the Governing Body's repeated appeals to the Government to re-establish the normal functioning of the country's institutions, the Government had demonstrated a total lack of cooperation, and a culture of intimidation, repression and basic human rights violations still prevailed. Over 5,700 non-governmental organizations and independent organizations had been closed down, including all employers' organizations and trade unions, and their leaders persecuted or forced into exile. A recent constitutional reform effectively depriving employers and workers of their right to participate in decision-making – indeed, of their right to exist – had been the coup de grâce for tripartism in the country.
- 337.** The Government had systematically ignored all requests for information and the recommendations made by the ILO supervisory mechanisms. It had failed to respond to any of the Office's communications or to show any willingness to address the legitimate concerns of the international community. Its failure to acknowledge the Governing Body's invitation to define the modalities of a high-level tripartite mission to the country was illustrative of the gravity of the situation and the lack of political will to address the reported problems. The Government's worrying decision to withdraw from a number of international organizations, including the ILO, was symptomatic of its rejection of the principles of social dialogue and labour justice and augured a continued deterioration in fundamental labour rights. In February 2025, the UN Group of Human Rights Experts on Nicaragua and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had noted that repression in the country had been exacerbated and called for urgent global action.
- 338.** Such a lack of respect for employers' and workers' rights was incompatible with the principles of social justice and equity. The Governing Body must therefore strongly support the decision to establish a commission of inquiry under article 26 of the ILO Constitution and demand that the Government respected its international obligations. The ILO must send a clear message that impunity and contempt for fundamental rights would not be tolerated. The establishment of a commission of inquiry would signal unequivocally the seriousness of the situation and would express the ILO's commitment to the people of the country. The social partners of Nicaragua were not alone: the international community would continue to demand compliance with fundamental principles and rights at work and human rights.

- 339. The Worker spokesperson** said that her group remained concerned about violations of fundamental labour rights in Nicaragua, including a pattern of intimidation against employers and a climate of violence. Despite repeated calls for engagement and compliance with ILO standards, the Government had continued to ignore its obligations and had failed to provide any meaningful response to the Office, the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards and the Governing Body. Meanwhile, various international and regional human rights bodies had expressed concerns regarding the broader deterioration of civil liberties in the country, which significantly affected trade unions and other civil society organizations.
- 340.** In that context, the refusal of the Nicaraguan Government to engage with the ILO – as illustrated by its recent refusal to accept the Governing Body's decision to send a high-level tripartite mission to the country and its disregarding of repeated requests for information on accusations and judicial proceedings against several individuals – was unacceptable and showed a blatant disregard for the principles of tripartism and social dialogue. The Governing Body was now also confronted by the Government's decision to withdraw from the ILO altogether. Her group deeply deplored that decision and was concerned about the devastating impact that it would have on labour rights and the well-being of Nicaraguan workers. Her group was also concerned about the persistent climate of violence and attacks on the life and physical integrity of indigenous communities in the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, as noted by the Committee of Experts in its latest comments on the application of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169). Those ongoing violations demanded urgent action to ensure the protection of indigenous peoples and their fundamental rights.
- 341.** The Workers' group had previously urged the Government to take specific steps towards compliance with the Conventions in the belief that fostering dialogue and cooperation would be the most beneficial approach for the social partners and workers of Nicaragua. The Government's complete lack of cooperation had, however, left her group with no choice but to support the establishment of a commission of inquiry. She nonetheless urged the Office to step up its efforts to resume dialogue with the Government with the aim of convincing it to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the ILO in the interests of the workers and general population of Nicaragua.
- 342. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. The EU and its Member States remained deeply concerned at the labour rights situation in Nicaragua, including reports of intimidation and harassment of members of independent workers' and employers' organizations, and arbitrary arrests and detentions of employer leaders. She regretted that the Higher Council for Private Enterprise of Nicaragua (COSEP) was not able to operate without interference and deplored the climate of violence, insecurity and intimidation in the country that fostered discrimination in employment and occupation based on political opinion, as well as the ongoing human rights violations, including gender-based violence and discrimination. She urged the Government to act on the conclusions that had been adopted since 2022 by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards and to ensure that all ratified ILO fundamental and governance Conventions were effectively implemented in law and in practice.
- 343.** The EU and its Member States deplored the Nicaraguan authorities' failure to engage with the Office to explore the possibility of technical assistance and their rejection of the Governing Body's proposal to send a high-level tripartite mission to the country. The recent notice of the Government's intention to withdraw from the ILO was regrettable, and she invited it to

reconsider. The Government's repeated unwillingness to engage had left the EU and its Member States with no choice but to support the establishment of a commission of inquiry. It nonetheless remained open to genuine dialogue with the Nicaraguan authorities and would continue to support Nicaraguans in their legitimate aspirations. She supported the draft decision.

- 344. A Government representative of the United States** said that her Government joined the CEACR and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards in deeply deploring the persistent climate of intimidation and harassment of independent employers' and workers' organizations in Nicaragua and the total deterioration of protections for workers' rights. The Nicaraguan Government's failure to engage with the ILO following the Governing Body's decision to send a high-level tripartite mission to the country was particularly regrettable. Her Government believed that the establishment of a commission of inquiry was the most appropriate way to shed light on the situation on the ground and identify solutions. She supported the draft decision.
- 345. A Government representative of Cuba** stressed that the nature of the case and the manner in which it had been declared receivable demonstrated a lack of transparency and serious shortcomings in the complaints mechanism. Such decisions should not be made solely by the Officers of the Governing Body, who did not adequately represent its members. The use of such inefficient, outdated procedures left room for political manoeuvring. Her Government had therefore opposed the inclusion of the item on past agendas of the Governing Body. Dialogue and coordinated cooperation based on respect for state sovereignty were key to finding solutions and making progress in upholding labour rights while considering national contexts. The Governing Body could not request a State to violate its national legislation to the detriment of its sovereignty and self-determination.
- 346.** Her Government rejected the use of punitive measures, which were not in keeping with the mandate of the ILO and were destined to fail, serving only to squander the Organization's resources. Her Government reaffirmed its full support for the efforts of the Government and people of Nicaragua to achieve sustainable development, peace, justice and social emancipation. It firmly opposed the politicization of the ILO and the illegitimate use of its bodies and mechanisms to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign States.
- 347. A Government representative of Spain**, expressing grave concern at the situation, highlighted that the Government's deeply regrettable decision to withdraw from the ILO did not exempt it from fulfilling its obligations under the Constitution and ratified ILO Conventions. He called on the Government to reconsider that decision. He condemned the revocation in August 2024 of the legal status of the Spanish Chamber of Commerce, along with that of 150 other business associations. The Chamber had been a not-for-profit organization working to strengthen ties between the two countries and, in so doing, contribute to the development and well-being of the Nicaraguan people. The Nicaraguan Government's repression of trade union leaders and employers' organizations and its use of the revocation of nationality as a deterrent were unacceptable. He supported the establishment of a commission of inquiry.
- 348. The Employer spokesperson** confirmed that his group supported the draft decision. He also supported the Workers' proposal that the Office should call for the Nicaraguan Government to reconsider its decision to withdraw from the ILO, even though recent history suggested that such an appeal was unlikely to achieve the desired outcome.
- 349. The Worker spokesperson** recalled that the Governing Body and trade unions in the region had made considerable, but ultimately unsuccessful, efforts to initiate a constructive dialogue with the Nicaraguan authorities. The establishment of a commission of inquiry, which was not

a punitive measure, was a regrettable decision not to be taken lightly and, given the Nicaraguan Government's unwillingness to cooperate, one that might prove extremely difficult to implement. However, it was not a course of action that the Governing Body should seek to avoid at all costs. Her group asked the Office to make every effort to re-establish lines of communication with the Government in order to set up the commission and to reiterate the benefits of ILO membership for both it and the Nicaraguan population.

Decision

- 350. Recalling that Nicaragua is bound by all international labour Conventions it has sovereignly ratified, including all obligations arising thereunder or relating thereto, and noting with regret the total lack of meaningful engagement of the Government in addressing the deep concerns expressed by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards in their latest examination of the implementation by the Government of Nicaragua of the Conventions that are the subject of the article 26 complaint, the Governing Body decided to establish a commission of inquiry to consider the allegations set out in the complaint, as per the procedure provided for under article 26 of the ILO Constitution, subject to the approval of the related financial implications.**

(GB.353/INS/10(Rev.1), paragraph 8)

Addendum: Financial implications of a commission of inquiry (GB.353/INS/10(Add.1))

Decision

- 351. Having decided to appoint a commission of inquiry to examine the complaint alleging non-observance by Nicaragua of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144, the Governing Body decided that:**
- (a) an honorarium of US\$350 per day be paid to each member of the commission of inquiry;**
 - (b) the cost of the commission, which is estimated at US\$1,262,869, be financed in the first instance from savings that may arise under Part I of the budget for 2024–25 or, failing that, through the use of the provision for unforeseen expenditure, in Part II. Should this not prove possible, the Director-General would propose alternative methods of financing at a later stage in the biennium.**

(GB.353/INS/10(Add.1), paragraph 5)

11. Complaint alleging non-observance by Guatemala of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 (GB.353/INS/11(Rev.1))

- 352. A Government representative of Guatemala (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare) said that, within the context of the road map on freedom of association, progress had been achieved in complying with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). The Government was fully committed to tripartite social dialogue, as shown by the 12 meetings held by the National Tripartite Committee on Labour Relations and Freedom**

of Association (CNTRLLS) in 2024, addressing issues such as collective bargaining, the adoption of the Guide to Freedom of Association and legislative reforms. The National Wage Commission provided tripartite input that allowed the Government to set the minimum wage increase for 2025. In 2024, assistance had been provided to 80 trade unions through 160 hearings in which disputes on subjects including the registration of trade unions had been resolved. Furthermore, 42 round tables had been held by the General Labour Inspectorate across 107 meetings to promote and harmonize labour relations between employers and workers. In the context of efforts to update the national policy on decent work, a consultation process had been carried out with interested groups, including employers and workers, and would conclude with consultations within the CNTRLLS. Two regulations on collective bargaining developed for the public and private sectors had been submitted to the CNTRLLS and were expected to be approved in May 2025. In 2024, 26 collective agreements on working conditions had been signed, a two-fold increase compared with 2023.

353. In 2024, 41 trade union organizations had been registered, including the first trade union in the palm oil sector, and legal personhood had been granted to 308 entities. A new communication strategy had been created to raise awareness of the Guide to Freedom of Association, and her Government stood ready to further disseminate the Guide with the Office's technical assistance.
354. Concerning the situation of violence and impunity, she reaffirmed her Government's commitment to protecting human rights and promoting freedom of association. According to data provided by the Public Prosecutor's Office, 82 homicide cases had a procedural outcome (21 cases with convictions, 5 with acquittals, 1 with a security and correctional measure, 6 cases in which criminal proceedings had expired, 49 cases shelved). With respect to the protection of trade unionists, in 2024, the Ministry of the Interior granted 81 security measures to trade union leaders, 160 investigations were carried out and 5 meetings of the trade union technical round table were held, at which the review of the protocol for protective measures for trade unionists was resumed. For 2025, an awareness campaign was planned on the protection of trade union leaders and trade unionists.
355. Concerning legislative reforms, she noted that a meeting had been held in February 2025 with the First Secretary of Congress to schedule discussions on Bills 5508 and 6162 with the relevant commissions in coordination with the CNTRLLS.
356. Her Government thanked the Office for the technical assistance it had provided and looked forward to it being continued. The Government welcomed the possibility of receiving a joint mission of the ILO and the social partners to support the implementation of the road map on freedom of association. She reiterated her Government's commitment to the multilateral system and to continuing to work towards a fairer and more equal society. The Government would continue to promote democratic spaces enabling national dialogue with a view to strengthening the national development agenda.
357. **The Worker spokesperson** took note of the steps taken by the Government to promote respect for labour rights in Guatemala, which was an important break with the past. However, the political and economic powers that had stymied progress for so long remained deeply entrenched. With this context in mind, the progress made to date was unfortunately insufficient. It was concerning that the Government had not yet fulfilled its commitments to pass legislation to provide a legal basis for the continued existence and functioning of CNTRLLS and address some of the observations issued by the CEACR. He would be interested to know whether progress had been made towards an agreement on a legislative proposal on the formation of sectoral unions and the machinery for sectoral bargaining. His group strongly

urged the Office to support a mission to Guatemala to stress to the legislature the urgent need to complete those reforms.

358. While noting the Government's short- and medium-term commitments to addressing anti-union violence and impunity, he said that the only new information on the murders of trade union members concerned 49 cases that had been shelved because the accused could not be identified. That meant that there was no justice for the families or the unions of those trade unionists who had been murdered. It would be useful to know whether all parties had been notified of those decisions and whether any objections had been brought before the judges overseeing the investigations into the killings. He was profoundly alarmed by the murder of nine trade unionists in 2024. He urgently requested detailed information on the investigations conducted in that respect, including steps taken to bring the perpetrators to justice and ensure accountability. He appreciated the information on the security measures granted to trade union leaders and the strengthening of coordination between State authorities and trade unions on security matters.
359. Trade unionists in the public and private sectors continued to be dismissed for union activities. His group took note of the information that judges had been appointed to handle cases in which employers had ignored a final court order for the reinstatement of trade union members. It also noted the Government's efforts to facilitate a meeting between the CNTRLLS and judges of the Chamber of Constitutional Protection and Preliminary Proceedings to examine the functioning of the collegial peace court in criminal matters for cases involving offences of non-compliance with labour decisions. He would welcome further information on the cases referred by that court to the Chamber, since it appeared that no criminal judgments had been issued for failure to reinstate workers unjustly dismissed.
360. He welcomed the approval of the Guide to Freedom of Association and the registration of a trade union for the palm oil industry. However, specific measures were urgently needed to ensure that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare fulfilled its obligations, expedited the approval of collective agreements, issued trade union authority certificates in a timely and appropriate manner and guaranteed the prompt recognition of trade unions. While it was encouraging to hear that the CNTRLLS had been meeting regularly, his group urged further action to ensure the full recognition of and respect for the most representative and legitimate trade unions.
361. He stated that the Government's window of opportunity remained open but that it would not last forever. The Government must take decisive action to honour the commitments made under the road map on freedom of association and the priority actions. His group agreed that the decision over whether to establish a commission of inquiry in respect of the complaint should be deferred, in the hope that further progress would be made before the 355th Session (November 2025) of the Governing Body.
362. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the Government's efforts to promote tripartite social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining. He welcomed the information provided about the activities of the CNTRLLS and the significant budget allocated to the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Judicial Officials and Trade Unionists in 2025. Nevertheless, serious challenges remained that required a more determined response. The registration of a further five cases involving the killing of trade unionists in 2024 was a matter of concern. Those killings, allegedly motivated by anti-union persecution, must be investigated and resolved without delay, and there was an urgent need for more effective measures to ensure the safety of workers. While appreciating the Government's commitment to protecting trade union leaders and members, exemplified by the continued implementation

of security measures and the reactivation of the Ministry of the Interior's trade union technical round table, it was imperative to translate those actions into concrete results with a view to strengthening compliance with Conventions Nos 87 and 98. The Government should also seek to accelerate the passing of Bills 5508 and 6162 by Congress and he expressed the hope that it would be able to inform on their adoption in its next report.

- 363.** He encouraged the Government to continue working with the social partners to implement the road map on freedom of association. He stressed that the international community must continue to support the ILO's technical assistance programme and highlighted in that respect the active participation of the European Union. Confirming the Employers' group's commitment to strengthening a safe and equitable work environment in Guatemala in line with international standards, he expressed support for the draft decision and requested that the Governing Body be kept informed of the Government's progress made in implementing the Conventions.
- 364. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Republic of Moldova, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She thanked the Office for its continued commitment to supporting the implementation of the road map on freedom of association and advancing the priority actions identified by the joint ILO, IOE and ITUC mission. She appreciated the Guatemalan Government's commitment to promoting tripartite social dialogue and taking legislative action to address the observations of the Committee of Experts, as well as its efforts to speed up judicial proceedings and strengthen the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Judicial Officials and Trade Unionists. However, in the light of the serious acts of violence committed against trade union members, she called on the Government to take urgent action to guarantee their protection, including by ensuring that all cases of violence were investigated in a prompt and impartial manner and perpetrators were brought to justice. She also urged the Government to take the necessary steps to resolve existing legislative and institutional barriers that hindered trade union registration, including delays, restrictions on establishing sectoral unions and limited access to remedies for unregistered unions.
- 365.** The EU had increased its cooperation with Guatemala in the framework of the association agreement between the EU and Central America aimed at improving the application of the fundamental Conventions. Through the second phase of the promotion of decent work project, it was financing initiatives to strengthen tripartite social dialogue and build capacities among trade unions and employers in the country. The EU was also supporting projects aimed at strengthening the labour movement and civil society and promoting responsible business conduct in key agricultural supply chains. She supported the draft decision.
- 366. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries,**⁴ a Government representative of the Dominican Republic welcomed the Guatemalan Government's sustained efforts to strengthen tripartite dialogue as a fundamental tool of democracy, as well as the decisive action taken to strengthen the CNTRLLS, noting that the ILO's technical assistance to Guatemala was of crucial importance in strengthening its functioning. She urged the international community to step up its contribution to the technical assistance programme to ensure continued progress in the implementation of the Conventions. She supported the draft decision.

⁴ Barbados, Brazil, Plurinational State of Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay.

- 367. A Government representative of the United Kingdom** said that the Guatemalan Government's commitment to protecting and upholding the rights set forth in Conventions Nos 87 and 98 was encouraging. However, his Government was concerned by reports of persistent labour rights violations in the country, mass dismissals in retaliation for participating in labour-related activities, assassinations of trade union leaders and threats made against trade union activists. He urged the Guatemalan Government to continue to work constructively with the ILO and all other stakeholders in order to fully implement the road map on freedom of association and push through Bills 5508 and 6162. He supported the draft decision.
- 368. A Government representative of the United States** expressed appreciation for the Guatemalan Government's efforts to enhance tripartite dialogue through the CNTRLLS and increase trade union registration. It would be useful to know how many applications for registration had been processed within the legal time frame and what impact the Guide to Freedom of Association had made on the quality of those applications. While welcoming the steps taken by the Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate violence against members of trade unions, she shared the Committee of Experts' deep concern regarding the murders of five trade unionists in 2024 and called on the Government to take further action to increase the effectiveness of measures to prevent anti-union violence and punish perpetrators. She encouraged the Government to strengthen the capacities of the entities responsible for enforcing labour law; enhance coordination between the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare; and work closely with social partners and the ILO. She supported the draft decision.
- 369. A Government representative of Spain** welcomed the progress made by the Guatemalan Government towards ensuring the full implementation of Conventions Nos 87 and 98, particularly its efforts to strengthen tripartite social dialogue through the CNTRLLS. The Government and the judiciary should take the strongest action possible to eradicate all violence and threats against trade unionists. The positive impact of the Office's technical assistance to Guatemala demonstrated the importance of continuing to support the Guatemalan Government in aligning national legislation with ILO Conventions.
- 370. A Government representative of Guatemala** (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare) said that her Government would analyse the points raised during the discussion with a view to strengthening its efforts to implement the road map on freedom of association and would enhance its collaboration with the legislature and the judiciary to address the concerns expressed.

Decision

371. The Governing Body:

- (a) requested the Government of Guatemala to continue intensifying its efforts to implement the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98);
- (b) requested the Office to continue expanding its technical assistance programme to ensure further progress in the implementation of the referred Conventions;
- (c) strongly encouraged the international community to contribute to the above-mentioned technical assistance programme by providing the necessary resources;

- (d) **deferred to its 355th Session (November 2025) the decision to consider further action in respect of the article 26 complaint.**

(GB.353/INS/11(Rev.1), paragraph 15)

12. Follow-up to the report of the Commission of Inquiry established in accordance with article 26 of the ILO Constitution concerning the non-observance by Myanmar of Conventions Nos 87 and 29, and to the resolutions concerning Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 102nd (2013) and 109th (2021) Sessions (GB.353/INS/12(Rev.2))

- 372. The Worker spokesperson** noted that the discussion was taking place against the backdrop of a major human rights crisis. It was deeply frustrating that the military authorities had made no progress whatsoever on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. They had instead used their time and resources to oppose a decision by the Governing Body on a potential resolution under article 33 of the ILO Constitution, including by threatening social partners in the country to state under duress their opposition to the application of article 33. She noted that the military authorities had invited the ILO to send a high-level mission to Myanmar, but they had not responded to the Director-General's request for clarification on how that mission would relate to the implementation of the 11 most urgent recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, or whether the necessary assurances and safeguards for such a visit would be put in place. In their latest communication, they had only claimed that they needed more time to comply with the recommendations, but had not stated any steps that they had taken to implement them, including on the release of prisoners and return of unionists' passports, and they had not ceased all violence and military attacks. The request for the postponement of a decision on article 33 was clearly not credible and was aimed only at frustrating the functioning of the ILO supervisory system.
- 373.** The situation was worsening and the only free trade union organizations, the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM) and the Myanmar Industry, Craft and Services Trade Union Federation (MICS-TUsF), were experiencing extreme violence and prosecution, with their leadership and members imprisoned, tortured and sexually abused. They included the General Secretary of MICS-TUsF, Thet Hnin Aung, who was still in prison, and Khine Thinzar Aye, who had testified of her sexual abuse while in prison. They were all looking to the ILO to act on their behalf and the Workers' group stood in solidarity with them. Furthermore, the military authorities had committed an extremely serious violation of the fundamental right to freedom of association by establishing fake trade unions under the name of the CTUM and the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar (IWFM), with individuals convening a congress, using the unions' logos and banners and holding leadership elections under military surveillance, without the consent of the legitimate leaders, who were in exile. Employers in industrial zones around the capital were asked by the Ministry of Labour to send workers to those meetings to "elect" a new leadership from a predetermined list of candidates. At the workplace level, workers faced threats, retaliation and dismissal for exercising their fundamental labour rights, including for raising grievances or attempting to organize. They were unable to seek redress due to intimidation or legal barriers.
- 374.** The military authorities had not responded to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry concerning the exaction of forced labour by the army and forced recruitment into the armed forces. The situation had continued to deteriorate, with forced military conscription

being extended to include young people, the elderly, civil servants and citizens living abroad. Failure to register and evasion of military service carried significant penalties, and military service education was being integrated into the national school curriculum. That had resulted in a mass exodus from Myanmar; however, some governments were returning civilians to Myanmar, contrary to international law. She noted the numerous examples of labour rights abuses in the private sector reported by the CTUM, including instances of overtime without consent or adequate compensation and other allegations of forced and child labour.

375. It was obvious that the junta was not committed to implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The Workers' group did not see the added value of a high-level mission, which would only confirm the information provided in existing reports, but the group would not oppose a mission. The Office must ensure that the necessary conditions, including absolute safeguards for witnesses and victims inside and outside Myanmar, were ensured to the fullest extent possible and must take care not to inadvertently legitimize the military authorities. She urged the Office to consult with social partners and relevant stakeholders prior to any mission. Furthermore, the Office must demand that the military authorities would guarantee unhindered access to all relevant stakeholders, without fear of retaliation against them or their families.
376. She called on the Governing Body to adopt the draft decision and support the draft resolution it contained concerning measures under article 33 of the ILO Constitution.
377. **The Employer spokesperson** reiterated her group's solidarity with the people of Myanmar. The security and humanitarian crisis was impacting all levels of society and contributing to economic instability. Therefore, it was essential to ensure business and employment continuity and sustainability. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accounted for 90 per cent of businesses, were the backbone of Myanmar's economy and needed to be preserved to safeguard people's livelihoods. The presence and engagement of global firms, to which SMEs were suppliers, should not be interpreted as complicity with the military authorities. The ILO had a vital role in maintaining dialogue with all parties – including the military authorities, regardless of whether they were recognized by the UN – to ensure that the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations were implemented. Engaging constructively was necessary to drive positive outcomes for political stability and for the labour market and the broader business community.
378. She recognized the importance of the ILO's continued support for the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (UMFCCI) in ensuring that it could continue to provide essential services to its members and asked for more information from the ILO regarding suggested measures to support businesses. One of the 11 recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry highlighted the need to avoid any action that would interfere with the freedom of business to operate, including the ability to open and close establishments, which must be respected. Freedom of association remained paramount. The business community, including legitimate business associations and the UMFCCI, must not be subject to undue restrictions or closures, which could have long-term negative consequences for workers and their families. The reported collapse of vital industries was concerning, as it had left families struggling to survive. Stability and sustainability must be prioritized to avoid further economic distress.
379. Her group encouraged the Office to continue and, if possible, strengthen its operations in Myanmar, particularly projects to raise awareness and build the capacity of social partners to combat child and forced labour to ensure that fundamental rights at work were upheld and that the social partners received the necessary support. The invitation from the authorities for

a high-level mission was a significant gesture and would enable the ILO to gather factual insights from the ground to enable the Governing Body to make informed decisions and assessments. Furthermore, the group was following the developments in the Five-Point Consensus of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, of which Myanmar was a member.

380. She emphasized that imposing economic sanctions risked exacerbating the suffering of workers and employers. Instead, collective measures should promote economic resilience and sustainable business practices, and provide the necessary assistance to workers and enterprises on the ground. She called for a balanced and pragmatic approach within the mandate of the ILO, focused on sustaining Myanmar's business environment while protecting fundamental principles and rights at work. The Employers' group supported the draft decision.
381. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She expressed concern regarding the appalling human rights and humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. She condemned in the strongest possible terms the violence of the military against trade unionists, as well as oppression of trade unions and widespread violations of labour rights and freedoms and called for the rapid release of the General Secretary of the MICS-TUsF. She expressed concern regarding the reported establishment of a military-backed trade union confederation using the CTUM name in Burmese, and was gravely concerned by the continuing systematic and widespread use of forced labour by the military, including children, the Rohingya and members of other ethnic and religious minorities.
382. The military authorities seemed not to understand the gravity of the situation and the urgency of implementing the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, and had taken no demonstrable action to implement them. She thanked the Office for having prepared a balanced draft resolution that recognized that any measures taken under article 33 of the ILO Constitution should be effective and targeted at those responsible for the violations and press for the full respect of labour rights but should not adversely affect the people of Myanmar; her group therefore supported the draft resolution. She reiterated the call for the full implementation of all urgent recommendations without delay and requested the Office to continue closely monitoring the situation.
383. **Speaking on behalf of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom acknowledged the work being done by the ILO Liaison Officer in Myanmar and the staff at the ILO office in Yangon, who were working under extremely difficult circumstances. He called on the Myanmar military authorities to release all arbitrarily detained persons, including trade unionists.
384. The persistent failure of the military regime to implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and its ongoing far-reaching violations of labour law and human rights were regrettable. He called on the regime to cease targeting civilians and trade unionists for exercising, or attempting to exercise, their rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. The active suppression of unionization efforts, surveillance, harassment and dismissal of those engaging with union activities, as well as the wider suppression of civil liberties and human rights across Myanmar, demonstrated that the military regime had not engaged on the issue in good faith. The establishment of a parallel labour confederation further highlighted its suppression of independent trade unions. The systemic exploitation of civilians, including children, for the exaction of different types of forced labour violated the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), which Myanmar had ratified in 1955. The conflict in

Myanmar had displaced an additional 900,000 people in a year and the introduction of nationwide conscription had created further instability.

- 385.** Invoking article 33 of the ILO Constitution would communicate the Governing Body's increasing frustration with the regime's disregard for the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. However, any measures taken must not exacerbate the dire humanitarian and economic situation in Myanmar or the situation of its workers. International businesses should be able to operate in Myanmar while respecting responsible business practices, including human rights. His group supported the draft Conference resolution and reiterated the call on the constituents to review any relations with Myanmar that enabled, facilitated or prolonged violations of workers' rights. The group also supported the proposed development of a monitoring mechanism to ensure compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and to document abuses and labour rights violations faced by workers in Myanmar. He expressed the hope that that action would compel the military regime to address the grave issues in the recommendations and to cooperate with the ILO. His group stood in solidarity with the people of Myanmar and supported the draft decision.
- 386. A Government representative of the United States** said that his Government remained deeply concerned about the worsening crisis in Myanmar, including the repression of workers and increasing violations of their human and labour rights, and remained steadfast in solidarity with the people of Myanmar. He deplored the continued imposition of forced labour and violations of civil liberties and labour rights. It was regrettable that the Myanmar military authorities were portraying the CTUM as a non-genuine, foreign-based organization, when the reason that many trade unionists were operating from abroad was to escape persecution by the military authorities for their trade union activities. He expressed deep concern that the military authorities had not accepted, fully responded to or implemented the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, showing continued failure to address the violation of obligations under Conventions Nos 87 and 29. Any mission to review steps taken by the military authorities must be organized such that the military authorities could not obscure the actual working conditions in the country. His Government supported the draft resolution concerning measures under article 33. Each measure must be assessed to ensure that it targeted forced labour and promoted freedom of association without disproportionately harming workers and businesses. The resolution must aim to achieve compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry without exceeding what was necessary. He supported the draft decision including the resolution.
- 387. A Government representative of Japan** expressed serious concern that the situation in Myanmar had not improved. He strongly urged the military authorities to immediately stop the violence, release those detained and swiftly restore Myanmar's democratic political system, and called for action to implement the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. He encouraged all stakeholders to engage sincerely in dialogue to improve the situation. When discussing measures under article 33 of the ILO Constitution, all aspects of the situation should be taken into consideration, including their impact on the people and society of Myanmar.
- 388. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that the discussion and decision regarding invoking measures against Myanmar under article 33 of the ILO Constitution had been biased and politicized, as was the draft decision and resolution currently being discussed. He reiterated his Government's objection to the continued practice of imposing obligations on the authorities of Myanmar while preventing them from defending their position at the Governing Body, which was not only a gross violation of the rights of representation at the ILO, but also defied common sense. If the Office was seeking genuine cooperation with the Government of Myanmar, it should reconsider that. It was regrettable

that the background report and the draft decision had once again ignored the Government's position because of political bias. Instead, they contained commentary on the internal situation in Myanmar far beyond the mandate of the ILO. Such biased reporting should not be the basis for sanctions that would result in the deterioration of the social and labour situation. The ILO's supervisory and governing bodies should not be politicized any further. He called on the Governing Body to scrutinize the problem from all sides and to reject the draft decision and resolution.

- 389. A Government representative of China** expressed regret that the Government of Myanmar had been unable to attend Governing Body meetings to provide explanations directly. He commended the Government for submitting information in writing and maintaining active communication with the ILO, and encouraged it to continue to submit detailed information to enhance mutual communication and resolve existing issues. The Governing Body should acknowledge the Government's efforts to actively engage in international labour affairs, support the work of the ILO Liaison Office and meet its obligations under ratified Conventions. Invoking article 33 was not an appropriate option at that time. Sanctions would threaten socio-economic development and harm the rights and interests of workers and employers. He urged the Governing Body to follow a more positive approach to reviewing the case.
- 390. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) thanked the Governing Body members who had expressed appreciation towards the ILO Liaison Officer, who was present at the meeting, and his team. Concerning the proposed high-level mission, she reassured the Governing Body that the Director-General had sent a note verbale to the military authorities of Myanmar requesting full guarantees of unhindered access to all relevant stakeholders and full guarantees and assurances that there would be no retaliation, sanction or other prejudice of any other sort against persons in contact with the mission. While the military authorities were not in attendance because of the situation with their credentials, the information they had provided to the Office had been made available in the appendices to the report.
- 391. The Worker spokesperson** expressed her group's appreciation to the ILO Liaison Officer. Concerning the proposed high-level mission, she emphasized that even with assurances from the military authorities, the persistent climate of fear and intimidation would make it difficult for individuals to speak freely. Prior to the discussion at the Conference, the proposed high-level mission should investigate whether it was possible for businesses to operate in Myanmar and apply responsible business conduct. It should also investigate the forced conscription policy that meant that workers could be taken from their workplace to do forced labour in the military and employers were still required to pay their wages, which had an enormous impact on society. The report of the Office provided sound material on what was happening in Myanmar, without politicizing the situation. Her group looked forward to action being taken to improve the situation of workers and the people of Myanmar. The next step was a procedure under article 33 of the ILO Constitution.
- 392. The Employer spokesperson** said that the ILO should engage with Myanmar, irrespective of whether its authorities were internationally recognized, as that was the only way to make improvements on the ground. Most, if not all, SMEs did not have the ability to leave the country or engage in political opposition. Furthermore, experience had shown that foreign companies leaving developing countries left local suppliers and SMEs without work and their workers without income. The Government was showing signs of engaging and had offered for a delegation to visit Myanmar and examine the situation on the ground. The Office should ensure that the mission went ahead. The outcome of the mission would enable the Conference to decide on the next steps. She found it incoherent that the Organization was asking a

Member State to take actions while refusing to engage with it and grant it an opportunity to be heard; that was a contradiction that should be recognized.

- 393. The Worker spokesperson** clarified that, as there was no recognized government of Myanmar, the practice at the ILO was to refer to the military authorities. The Commission of Inquiry had directed 11 recommendations at the military authorities as, being in power, they were answerable for a number of violations. Other recommendations were directed at a future democratically elected government to further improve the situation regarding the observance of labour rights. The ILO was acting in accordance with the requirements of its supervisory system.

Decision

- 394. Recalling the resolution for a return to democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021), and noting with utmost concern the continued absence of any concrete action towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in its 2023 report, which emphasized the urgency of the national situation, the Governing Body:**

(a) as regards the 2021 resolution:

- (i) deplored once again the continued absence of progress towards respecting the will of the people, democratic institutions and processes, and the fact that, over four years since the military coup, the democratically elected government had yet to be restored;**
- (ii) called once again on the military authorities to end immediately all acts of violence, and the arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of trade unionists, labour activists and others, including the Rohingya, in the exercise of their human rights and ensure the immediate release of those detained;**

(b) as regards the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry:

- (i) called on Myanmar to immediately cease all violations identified by the Commission of Inquiry and to ensure that employers' and workers' organizations are able to exercise their rights in a climate of freedom and security, free from violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, and to revoke without delay any military orders, legislative or other measures, decreed since February 2021 and identified as restricting freedom of association and the basic civil liberties of trade unionists;**
- (ii) expressed once again its profound concern over the conclusions set out in the Commission's report concerning the exaction of forced labour by the military authorities and called for immediate action to be taken to put an end, in law and in practice, to any forced recruitment into the military contrary to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), including the forced recruitment of children;**
- (iii) requested the Director-General to:**
 - **continue to ensure that no technical cooperation or assistance to Myanmar takes place, except for the purpose of direct assistance to implement immediately the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry or in accordance with the UN Country Team programmatic engagement guidelines;**

- reinforce the ILO's engagement, within the framework of the UN system, to ensure that the Commission's recommendations are acted upon within the respective mandate of each body and continue to inform the Governing Body in that respect;
 - continue to closely monitor the situation in Myanmar with regard to the exercise of freedom of association and the prohibition of forced or compulsory labour and submit to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025) a document providing an update on relevant developments in the country and progress made by Myanmar regarding compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry;
 - consider sending an Office mission to review steps taken by the military authorities to implement the 11 recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, explore their willingness to engage with the ILO to ensure the further implementation of these recommendations, and report thereon to the Conference for its consideration;
- (iv) recommended to the International Labour Conference to consider, taking into account the findings of a possible Office mission, the measures under article 33 of the Constitution to secure compliance by Myanmar with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry outlined in the following draft resolution, in accordance with its decision to place this matter on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference;
- (v) invited the Myanmar military authorities to submit to the Director-General by 26 September 2025 any relevant information for transmission to the Governing Body;
- (c) called once again on the military authorities, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21 November 1947, to continue to ensure that no restrictions are placed on the operation of the ILO's bank account, to approve all international staff visa extensions requested and to facilitate the ILO's continued operations to bring benefit to the people of Myanmar despite the expiry of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Decent Work Country Programme in September 2022.

Draft resolution

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization meeting in Geneva at its 113th Session, 2025,

Considering the proposals by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, under the twelfth item of its agenda, with a view to the adoption, under article 33 of the ILO Constitution, of actions to secure compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry established in accordance with article 26 of the ILO Constitution to examine the non-observance by Myanmar of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29),

Having taken note of the additional information provided by the military authorities which does not indicate any sign of meaningful acknowledgement of the recommendations formulated by the Commission of Inquiry in its 2023 report *Towards Freedom and Dignity in Myanmar*, or demonstrate any action taken for their implementation,

Expressing concern over the repeated extension of the state of emergency under military rule, preventing the restoration of a democratically elected government called for in the resolution for a return to democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021),

Recalling the overall operative framework for engagement in Myanmar set out in the United Nations Country Team programmatic engagement guidelines and its focus on delivery of principled, rights and needs-based humanitarian assistance and activities that result in benefits that accrue directly to people or local communities,

Observing with deep concern the continuing egregious violations of the fundamental rights to freedom of association and freedom from forced labour and the basic civil liberties of the people of Myanmar, as well as the manifest efforts to fully transplant the free and independent trade union movement in the country,

1. Decides to hold at its future sessions a special sitting of the Committee on the Application of Standards for the purpose of discussing the application of Conventions Nos 87 and 29 by Myanmar and the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, so long as this Member has not been shown to have fulfilled its obligations.
2. Invites the Organization's constituents – governments, employers and workers – to:
 - (a) engage, at the national, regional and international level, with a view to coordinating comprehensive and strategic action to contribute to the implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, including all steps that can support the creation of a climate that promotes freedom of association and the elimination of all forms of forced labour in the country;
 - (b) enable continuing support for activities that benefit directly the Myanmar people and their communities and, in particular, through independent and confidential monitoring and reporting systems that provide avenues for complaints of violations to be rapidly and effectively addressed to ensure accountability where freedom of association and forced labour violations occur;
 - (c) review, in the light of the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry, the relations they may have with Myanmar military authorities and take appropriate measures to ensure that such relations in no way enable, facilitate or prolong the violations of workers' rights in respect of freedom of association and forced labour. In particular, any relations that may contribute or enable the perpetuation of ongoing harm or violence or acts of repression and intimidation of workers and employers peacefully exercising their fundamental rights through the support or supply of military equipment or means, including jet fuel, or the free flow of funds to the military authorities, should be comprehensively reviewed with the aim to disable all means that have abetted or empowered the perpetuation of the above-mentioned egregious violations;
 - (d) ensure that the principle of non-refoulement is respected in line with international law, given that trade union and human rights defenders fleeing Myanmar are at serious risk of irreparable harm, including persecution, ill-treatment and other grave human rights violations;
 - (e) report to the Director-General on any initiatives or steps taken, or other relevant developments, for transmission to the Governing Body.

3. Invites the Director-General to:
 - (a) accelerate and intensify with all relevant actors all necessary support to the trade unions and workers of Myanmar as well as employers so that they may be able to exercise fully their fundamental rights addressed in the report of the Commission of Inquiry;
 - (b) develop relevant and appropriate monitoring mechanisms for the confidential and credible documentation of ongoing fundamental rights' violations in the country with a view to transparent reporting, ensuring accountability and delivering expeditious and effective redress to the victims;
 - (c) call on the relevant bodies of international organizations referred to in article 12(1) of the ILO Constitution to continue to keep under review, within their terms of reference and in the light of the conclusions of the Commission of Inquiry, any engagement with the Myanmar military authorities and report any activities that may be found in the course of their work to have the effect of directly or indirectly enabling or abetting the practice of forced labour or compulsory labour or violations of freedom of association in the country;
 - (d) reinforce engagement and collaboration with the United Nations (UN), including the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy on Myanmar, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar and other specific thematic special rapporteurs relevant to the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, such as the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, with a view to ensuring coordinated action on the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the implementation of this resolution;
 - (e) explore further within the UN system the support and assistance that may be provided to Myanmar trade union activists and their families who have been displaced or have fled their country;
 - (f) explore additional avenues of collaboration between the ILO and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar established by the UN Human Rights Council within their respective mandates;
 - (g) engage with other relevant regional bodies, in particular the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, special envoys and others with a view to exploring possible frameworks for coordinated action towards the full implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in Myanmar;
 - (h) submit to the Governing Body a periodic report on the outcome of the measures set out in subparagraphs (a)–(g) above.
4. Urges the Myanmar military authorities to engage without further delay in good faith implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and subsequent recommendations of the supervisory bodies of the ILO, with a view to securing a climate promoting freedom of association and the elimination of all forms of forced labour.

(GB.353/INS/12(Rev.2), paragraph 59)

13. Developments in the application of the resolution concerning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization (GB.353/INS/13)

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

(b) reiterated its most profound concern at the ~~continuing aggression by the Russian Federation, aided by the Belarusian Government, against situation in~~ Ukraine, and at the impact that this ~~aggression~~situation is having on the tripartite constituents – workers, employers and the democratically elected Government – in Ukraine, and on the world of work beyond Ukraine;

(c) ~~urged the Russian Federation again all parties to the conflict to immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine~~cease armed activities;

(d) ~~urged the Russian Federation~~all parties to the conflict, in line with the request made by the Committee of Experts at its 95th Session (25 November to 7 December 2024), to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of appropriate ILO Conventions, including the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and of the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), including the protection of workers against ionizing radiations in the course of their work; and to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006);

...

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

396. The Worker spokesperson said that the discussion was taking place against the strange backdrop of talks on peace that were being held without the involvement of Ukraine. The ongoing war had caused immeasurable human suffering and destruction, and there was little hope of achieving the ILO's mandate of peace and social justice. The Ukrainian economy was on the brink of destruction, and information from trade unions on the ground revealed concerns at intensified Russian aggression and attacks on infrastructure, alongside enormous environmental damage.

397. She called on the Office to focus further on the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons. In that connection, it would be important to ensure careful labour market planning through social dialogue, using an inclusive and rights-based approach, since the governments of certain major countries of destination wished to cease affording them temporary protection. Noting with concern that high rates of inflation were far outpacing wage growth, she stressed the need for negotiations on fair wages to form part of reconstruction efforts. Labour inspectors must be able to return to full operation as soon as possible. The concerns expressed by the CEACR about the war's impact on protection for seafarers demonstrated the urgent need to ratify the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006). She reiterated her group's concerns surrounding disappearances of workers, forced labour and a severe deterioration in working conditions for the more than 3 million workers in Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories, as well as the illegal detention and prosecution of trade

union and civil society activists. Ukrainian trade unions were banned, with workers forced to join Russian unions. The Office should continue to monitor the situation in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and provide updates on the violation of workers' fundamental rights and principles at work.

398. Her group was disappointed that subparagraph (d) of the draft decision did not contain a reference to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), should also be considered for inclusion since it contained guidance for the human-centred reconstruction of Ukraine, with a central role for tripartism. She encouraged the Ukrainian Government to ratify the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), and tripartite constituents to monitor its subsequent implementation to prevent an increase in precarious working contracts for workers engaged in reconstruction efforts. She welcomed the partnerships between the ILO Country Office for Ukraine (CO-Kyiv) and other UN agencies, yet she wished to know why the International Atomic Energy Agency had been omitted from the list provided in the document. Further analysis of the environmental situation was needed, since military activities were causing pollution and environmental destruction. She called on the Office to ensure that workers were represented at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in July 2025 to ensure that a rights-based and tripartite approach was taken to reconstruction. The proposed reskilling of women and vulnerable people, while welcome, must be developed, implemented and evaluated in full consultation with the social partners.
399. Her group reiterated its solidarity with workers in a context where labour rights were at risk under martial law and noted the efforts of employers' organizations and the difficulties faced by business. She welcomed the development cooperation programmes and the Office's support for constituents. Her group accepted the draft decision; it could not accept the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.
400. **The Employer spokesperson** took note of the report but emphasized that much of the information provided therein, and the majority of points raised by the Worker's group, fell outside the mandate of the ILO; in exceeding its mandate, the Organization created polarization. Once more, unverified claims had been presented as fact. The Organization must return to its mandate and undertake a facts-based analysis of the situation. She reaffirmed her group's solidarity with the employers and workers of Ukraine, noting the severe impact of the ongoing conflict on economic and labour markets, investment and business continuity across the subregion. She acknowledged the ILO's efforts to respond to constituents' needs in Ukraine and neighbouring countries within its mandate and available resources, and she welcomed its continued support for national employers' organizations in enhancing their membership services. The social partners would play a critical role in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.
401. She expressed appreciation for the ILO regular budget supplementary account project on social dialogue aimed at strengthening the capacities of tripartite constituents in Ukraine. The continued operation of CO-Kyiv and its prioritization of staff safety were commendable, and her group trusted that the host country agreement would be signed in the near future to enhance the Office's ability to deliver assistance to constituents and improve staff protection. She welcomed the fact that the Office's duty of care for ILO staff members extended to the staff of the Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in Moscow. The ILO's intention to build on its efforts in support of Ukraine and neighbouring countries and to strengthen partnerships for development was appreciated. She wished to hear the governments' comments before setting out her position on the draft decision and the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.

- 402. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that the report once again contained unjust accusations against his country. The foreign policy activities of the Russian Federation had not caused the labour shortage in the countries of Eastern Europe and were not intended to destroy their economies. Ukraine had suspended the transit of natural gas from the Russian Federation through its territory, which had made it more difficult to heat homes in Europe. The Russian Federation complied in full with its obligations under the Conventions that it had ratified, including the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155). Nuclear safety was a shared global responsibility, and he therefore called for efforts to ensure safety at such facilities, including on the part of Ukraine. His Government had established an interdepartmental committee on the application of the MLC, 2006, and thoroughly implemented its provisions.
- 403.** The use of words such as “aggression” did not align with the mandate of the ILO and led to politicization unrelated to ensuring the rights and interests of workers. The Organization must not violate its principles and values related to social and labour rights for all. Another anti-Russian decision would mostly affect the civilian population; the anti-Russian resolutions that had been in place for three years prevented the ILO from providing expert support on social and labour issues, and the programme of cooperation had been suspended. The banning of Russian experts from participating in certain ILO activities had harmed the Organization and prevented other countries from learning about Russian measures in the social and labour spheres. His Government disagreed with the content of the report and the original wording of the draft decision, which relied on Western and Ukrainian sources alone. He had submitted an amendments that rendered it more balanced and removed the most objectionable passages. Should the Governing Body prove unwilling to accept the amendment, he would be obliged to request a vote on it.
- 404. Speaking on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries,**⁵ a Government representative of Denmark lamented the fact that the Governing Body was still discussing the item three years after the unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. It was profoundly regrettable that the Government of the Russian Federation had shown no intention of ending its violations of international law nor heeded the numerous calls by the international community and the ILO to cease its aggression. His group reaffirmed its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders and for its inherent right to self-defence. The ongoing Russian aggression constituted an attack on the common international rules and principles that were fundamental to the ILO and its constituents.
- 405.** Ukrainian workers, employers and their families continued to suffer, and targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure continued. He asked the Office to provide information on the ongoing labour rights violations and abuses in the Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation and requested continued updates on the matter, including in cooperation with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. He urged the Office to continue providing support to social partners in Ukraine. Noting the deeply concerning situation regarding labour conditions at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, he called on the Office to help to ensure the safe release of the ten workers who had reportedly

⁵ Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

disappeared. It was deeply regrettable that Ukrainian maritime workers were exposed to significant risks owing to the impact of the war.

- 406.** He called on the Office to strengthen its technical assistance to Ukraine and maintain strong engagement through the country office in Kyiv. It should also expand monitoring and reporting on the dire labour rights situation in the temporarily occupied territory in Ukraine and enhance assistance to Ukrainian constituents in those areas. While the Office's efforts to safeguard its technical assistance in the region were appreciated, concerns remained regarding the appropriateness and feasibility of maintaining the ILO subregional office in Moscow, particularly as almost all its international staff worked from Budapest and locally engaged staff worked exclusively on projects outside the Russian Federation. Its relocation would enable the Office to increase technical assistance in other Member States in the subregion and could contribute to cost-saving measures. The Office should therefore examine that option in its cost-saving exercises and consider reclassifying the DWT/CO-Moscow as a country office.
- 407.** The Government of the Russian Federation must immediately and unconditionally cease its war of aggression against Ukraine and implement without delay the resolution adopted by the Governing Body in March 2022.⁶ He rejected the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.
- 408. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries,**⁷ a Government representative of Poland condemned the brutal, illegal, unprovoked and unjustified full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, which constituted a gross violation of international law and fundamentally contradicted the ILO's values and principles. The group deplored the devastating impact of the war of aggression on human lives, employment, livelihoods and businesses and strongly condemned the attacks on the energy infrastructure and health workers of Ukraine. The reports of fundamental labour rights violations and increasing risks to nuclear safety and security at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant were deeply concerning. It was expected that strengthened cooperation between the ILO and the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine would shed more light on labour rights violations in territories temporarily controlled by the Russian Federation.
- 409.** He thanked the Office, especially staff in Kyiv, for its dedication under challenging conditions. His group remained committed to collaborating with the ILO, including by supporting the Ukrainian Government to continue aligning its labour reforms with international standards and the EU acquis. His group applauded international efforts to aid the recovery of the Ukrainian economy and society and commended the resolve and active engagement demonstrated by social partners. He echoed the questions raised regarding the appropriateness and feasibility of maintaining the DWT/CO-Moscow in the light of the ongoing violation of the ILO Constitution by the Government of the Russian Federation as well as that office's diminished occupancy rate and the ILO's drive for cost-saving measures. He supported the original draft decision and rejected the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.
- 410. A Government representative of the United States** said that the war must end. His Government was committed to securing lasting peace and would play a meaningful and

⁶ GB.344/Resolution.

⁷ Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

constructive role in the process. Achieving peace would require significant effort, including discussions with both the Russian and Ukrainian Governments.

411. **A Government representative of China** expressed concern about the severe impact of the Ukraine crisis on the labour markets of countries affected by the conflict. She encouraged the Office to strengthen efforts to support tripartite constituents in those countries through development cooperation and Decent Work Country Programmes. The Office must provide impartial support to all Member States and focus on the ILO's core mandate. While the report addressed critical issues, it lacked comprehensiveness. The draft decision showed clear political bias, with certain elements falling outside the ILO's mandate. She urged the Government Body to resolutely oppose any attempts to politicize, instrumentalize and weaponize the ILO. She did not support the draft decision and endorsed the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation.
412. **A Government representative of Hungary** stressed the importance of avoiding over-politicizing the ILO's work. Prioritizing constructive dialogue and meaningful engagement based on mutual respect would be more effective than criticizing and could lead to more tangible and sustainable results on labour rights. Her Government advocated for using diplomacy to facilitate lasting peace and welcomed the potential rapprochement between the United States and the Russian Federation. The conflict had had a serious impact on the Hungarian national minority living in Transcarpathia, who had been deprived of their rights by the current legislative framework.
413. **A Government representative of Ukraine** was authorized to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body on a matter concerning the situation in his country. The armed aggression directed against Ukraine by the Russian Federation had caused unprecedented devastation and catastrophic consequences for socio-economic conditions and the world of work. Since late 2024, attacks on energy infrastructure had been scaled up, disrupting business operations and limiting civilians' access to essential services. In the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, workers had been forced by the Russian Federation to sign employment contracts, work extended hours without compensation and join Russian trade unions. The Office should work with other UN organizations to identify labour rights violations and hold perpetrators accountable. He echoed the calls for the Office to conduct a detailed cost-benefit analysis of the viability of maintaining the DWT/CO-Moscow. In addition, he asked the Office to clarify why, in contrast to previous Governing Body decisions on the matter, paragraph (d) of the draft decision contained no reference to protecting Ukrainian workers currently performing work under Russian occupation.
414. The persistent failure of the Government of the Russian Federation to comply with Governing Body decisions violated the ILO Constitution and defied the principles of social justice and the rule of law. He urged the Governing Body to hold that Government accountable for its ruinous actions.
415. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia) thanked members for their words of appreciation for the work performed by ILO colleagues in what were difficult circumstances. She also thanked development cooperation partners for their generous contributions to the implementation of the ILO Transitional Cooperation Strategy. Concerning paragraph (d) of the draft decision, she said that the Office had invested in training and coordination with the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which had the resources and mandate to monitor the situation in areas under the control of the Russian Federation and to verify individual cases of labour rights violations. Since

no new cases of forced labour had been verified by that mechanism since November 2024, the Office had omitted the reference to Convention No. 29 from the draft decision and had instead included a reference to the request made by the Committee of Experts concerning other Conventions. The Office would provide the relevant information should any new cases be verified. She also confirmed that the Office maintained a communication channel with the International Atomic Energy Agency. In response to comments made by some Government representatives, she assured that in the context of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27, the Office would explore all cost saving options with regard to the subregional ILO Office in Moscow.

- 416. The Worker spokesperson** said that the lack of reports did not mean that violations were not occurring. She encouraged all actors to share relevant information as it became available.
- 417. The Employer spokesperson** questioned whether, in the light of the comments made by some Government representatives, the draft decision as proposed by the Office was compatible with their calls for diplomacy and dialogue. It was time to consider how to bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict.
- 418. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia) reassured the Governing Body that the Office was following events closely and all the Office's activities were focused on the ILO's mandate.
- 419. The Worker spokesperson** said that she found the comments just made by the Employer spokesperson difficult to hear. As the war in Ukraine entered its fourth year, her group would welcome a ceasefire and opportunities to begin reconstruction. However, it was important to note that while talks on bringing peace to Ukraine had begun, they often did not include all parties that should be present, such as people on the ground, whose voices were only heard when reporting on attacks on workers and businesses. The ILO could only call for a cessation of aggression, as reconstruction and recovery would only be possible in a context of social justice and peace.
- 420. The Chairperson** observed that the majority of members seemed to be in favour of the draft decision as contained in the document. Noting that the Government representative of the Russian Federation, seconded by the Government representative of China, requested to put the amendment to a vote, and having consulted the Vice-Chairpersons of the Governing Body, the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation would be put to a vote by a show of hands.

(The amendment proposed by the Russian Federation was rejected with 3 votes in favour, 35 votes against and 11 abstentions.)

- 421. A Government representative of Brazil** explained that, while his Government continued to advocate for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine, the Governing Body's decisions should focus on the conflict's impact on the world of work. The adoption of a draft decision urging parties involved in conflicts to cease armed activities went beyond the ILO's mandate. Such requests were the responsibility of the UN Security Council and General Assembly. Thus, his Government had abstained from the vote on the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation and would have voted against those provisions in the draft decision, had a vote on the draft decision been called.

Decision

422. In the light of the developments in Ukraine outlined in document GB.353/INS/13 and the resolution concerning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted at its 344th Session (March 2022), and taking into account the discussions held and the guidance provided during its 353rd Session, the Governing Body:

- (a) noted the information provided in the document;
- (b) reiterated its most profound concern at the continuing aggression by the Russian Federation, aided by the Belarusian Government, against Ukraine, and at the impact that this aggression is having on the tripartite constituents – workers, employers and the democratically elected Government – in Ukraine, and on the world of work beyond Ukraine;
- (c) urged the Russian Federation again to immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine;
- (d) urged the Russian Federation, in line with the request made by the Committee of Experts at its 95th Session (25 November to 7 December 2024), to take all necessary measures to ensure the effective implementation of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and of the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), including the protection of workers against ionizing radiations in the course of their work; and to ensure the scrupulous implementation of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006);
- (e) reiterated its unwavering support for the tripartite constituents in Ukraine, and requested the Director-General to continue to respond to the constituents' needs in Ukraine and to expand the ILO's resource mobilization efforts, including in forthcoming international donor conferences on recovery and reconstruction;
- (f) requested the Director-General to continue to enhance resource mobilization efforts for other affected countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- (g) requested the Director-General to continue to monitor the impact on the world of work of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and to report to the Governing Body at its 354th Session (June 2025) on developments in the light of the resolution, including the ILO's continued engagement with the relevant United Nations bodies involved in monitoring human rights violations and the situation of maritime and nuclear workers.

(GB.353/INS/13, paragraph 41)

14. Reports of the Committee on Freedom of Association

14.1 409th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association (GB.353/INS/14/1)

Addendum: Presentation of the Committee on Freedom of Association annual report for the year 2024 (GB.353/INS/14/1(Add.1))

14.2 410th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association (GB.353/INS/14/2)

- 423. The Chairperson of the Committee on Freedom of Association** said that, at its March 2025 session, the Committee had examined 15 cases on their merits, four of which had been closed. The Committee had also examined three cases in which governments had kept it informed of the measures taken to give effect to its recommendations. Two of those cases had been closed. Details of all the cases were set out in the Committee's 409th Report.
- 424.** He drew the Governing Body's attention to three serious and urgent cases. Case No. 2318, concerning the murder of three trade union leaders and the continuing repression of trade unionists in Cambodia, had been lodged over 20 years previously and had been examined by the Committee on numerous occasions. The murder of one of the leaders had been reinvestigated. The Committee had urged the Government to ensure that the reinvestigation report contributed to bringing the case to a conclusion and ensuring that the perpetrators and instigators of the crime were brought to justice. It had also reiterated its urgent request to the Government regarding all other pending investigations and relevant court decisions.
- 425.** Case No. 3185 involved allegations of extrajudicial killings of trade union leaders and members, attempted assassinations, illegal arrests and detention, red-tagging, harassment, intimidation and threats against unionists, trade union repression and intervention in union affairs in the Philippines. The Committee had requested the Government to keep it informed of any developments in relation to all pending cases concerning murders of trade unionists, including the possible reopening of archived cases. The Committee expressed its trust that all measures taken by the Government as well as its commitment to fully investigate and monitor any serious allegations of violations of civil liberties and freedom of association would contribute to the full respect of freedom of association by all State and non-State actors and thus improve the environment for the exercise of trade union rights in the country.
- 426.** In Case No. 3277, the complainant organizations had denounced the killing of a trade union leader, acts of persecution, intimidation and harassment against and arbitrary detentions of trade unionists and trade union leaders and dismissals of trade union leaders at a steel enterprise in the public sector in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Committee had firmly urged the Government to ensure that the competent authorities expedited and concluded the investigation into the killing of a trade union leader and took full account in the investigations of all relevant elements relating to his trade union activity. The Committee expected that proceedings initiated in 2017 on the dismissal of a trade union leader would be completed without further delay. The Committee had also requested the Government to provide information on other dismissals and alleged anti-union discrimination and had invited it to continue to avail itself of ILO technical assistance regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry.

427. The Committee had noted recourse to voluntary conciliation in respect of a number of representations under article 24 of the Constitution. In particular, it had noted with satisfaction, that the parties in a representation concerning Chile had successfully reached an agreement. The Committee welcomed the efforts made by all parties in that case and the resulting agreement which had brought the procedure to a close.
428. The Committee appreciated efforts by governments to provide observations on time, thereby enabling it to examine cases in full knowledge of the circumstances. He appealed to governments whose cases were pending before the Committee, in particular Afghanistan, Argentina, Colombia, El Salvador, Haiti, Honduras, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Republic of Korea and Myanmar, to send relevant communications as soon as possible, or, at the latest, by the deadline of 15 April 2025. Communications received after the deadline might not be taken into account.
429. The 410th Report contained information on measures taken by the Government of Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry established to examine the observance by the Government of Conventions Nos 87 and 98. It was the 15th time the Committee had examined the implementation of the recommendations since their adoption 20 years previously. The Committee had deplored the continuing deterioration of freedom of association in the country, the total lack of progress in implementing the recommendations and the Government's failure to address the outstanding recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies and the conclusions of the Governing Body. The absence of a response from the Government, beyond the reiteration of information that had already been examined by the Committee as well as by other ILO supervisory bodies and the Governing Body, further reinforced the reality of the Government's wilful non-compliance with its obligations stemming from its membership in the Organization. The Committee had once again urged the Government to engage with the ILO with a view to fully implementing all outstanding recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies without further delay and in that regard to accept an international humanitarian mission to ensure that independent doctors could visit all imprisoned trade unionists to assess their health and offer medical assistance, as necessary, and an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation in the country, including a visit to trade unionists currently in prison or detention.
430. The Committee's annual report for 2024 contained information, supported by figures, on the developments over the years in the use of the special procedure, the progress made and the serious and urgent cases the Committee had examined. The number of cases had decreased in the last decade, but the number of cases emanating from Latin America remained significant. Among the many reasons for that was the active engagement of the tripartite constituents and civil society organizations in the region.
431. The three reports attested to the strength of tripartite dialogue and consensus. He expressed appreciation to the Committee members and others who had contributed to the Committee's work, including the interpreters, Member States that had agreed to meet with the Committee, and the Committee's secretariat, which was too small for the amount of work it carried out.
432. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** said that, in Case No. 3185 (the Philippines), the Committee had urged the Government to combat violence against trade unionists, ensure that peaceful strikes were not met with disproportionate use of force, prevent anti-terrorism laws from being implemented in a manner that restricted trade union activities and prioritize investigative or court proceedings into killings and other necessary investigations. In Case No. 2318 (Cambodia), the Committee had noted that the failure to protect trade unionists against acts of intimidation and physical violence amounted to a de facto impunity, which could

only reinforce a climate of fear and uncertainty that was highly detrimental to the exercise of trade union rights. In Case No. 3277 (the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), the Committee had firmly urged the Government to take all necessary measures to make tangible progress and ensure that the National Union of Workers of Venezuela was able to exercise its legitimate rights in a climate free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind.

433. The Committee had also considered cases of insufficient protection against anti-union practices, barriers to union registration and accreditation, and failure to respect collective bargaining rights and agreements. Case No. 3315 (Argentina) involved multiple instances of interference in the functioning of trade unions. The Committee had again asked the Government to avoid interference in trade union elections and unnecessary delays in registration and to ensure thorough investigations of anti-union practices. In Case No. 3455 (United Kingdom), which concerned food delivery riders, the Committee had recalled that the fundamental right to collective bargaining applied to all workers, whether employed, self-employed or under another work arrangement. In its submissions, the Government had indicated its intention to consult widely on updating the provisions for recognizing trade unions and to explore ways to enhance protections for self-employed workers.
434. She drew the Governing Body's attention to the further information contained in the 410th Report, concerning the situation in Belarus. Pursuant to a 2024 presidential decree, the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus, which the Government of Belarus had claimed was independent, was in fact one of the bodies over which the Government exerted personnel policy authority. The Committee had deplored the continuing deterioration of freedom of association in the country and made 11 recommendations, including reiterating its request for the Government to release all imprisoned trade unionists and ensure that no one was detained for trade union activities and for the relevant laws to be amended.
435. It was indicated in the Committee's annual report for 2024 that there were 93 active cases, many of which could not yet be considered because the governments in question had failed to provide full replies to the complaints made. Her group was concerned about the remarkable and unexplained drop in the number of complaints submitted to the Committee over the previous two decades. Key factors were likely to include the resources of unions, knowledge and understanding of the complaints process and belief in its capacity to resolve situations on the ground. The reduction might also be attributable in part to national conciliation processes, which her group supported. The Committee had agreed it would be helpful to explore the reasons behind the decrease.
436. The Committee had discussed the difficulty it faced in resolving long-standing complaints in relation to which its recommendations had not been adequately implemented. Measures it could take in such cases included holding meetings to encourage direct dialogue and proposing technical assistance or on-the-spot missions. It intended to discuss the matter further at future sessions.
437. She wished to thank the Chairperson of the Committee, the Committee members and the Office and reiterated that the supervisory system formed part of the ILO's core mandate and should therefore be provided with the resources it required.
438. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** also expressed appreciation to all involved in the work of the Committee. It was made clear in the annual report that the work of the Committee was essential to the core mission of the ILO and a living example of the power of social dialogue to find consensual and constructive pathways to realize freedom of association across diverse legal systems. His group took note of the comments by the Chairperson of the Committee on the 410th Report on the measures taken by the Government

of Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. He recalled that the work of the Committee was to consider specific claims of a failure to protect freedom of association within a specific national context and engage in constructive tripartite dialogue to promote respect for freedom of association in law and practice, not to blame or punish.

- 439.** With reference to the three serious and urgent cases the Committee had discussed, in Case No. 2318, his group was pleased to see the Cambodian Government provide detailed information and engage in the investigation of murders of trade union leaders. Similarly, on Case No. 3185, the Philippine Government had followed up with more detailed information about its investigations into the murders of trade unionists and the suppression of freedom of association. In both cases, however, delays in follow-up and investigations had significantly reduced the likelihood of just outcomes. On Case No. 3277, he urged the Venezuelan Government to address the murders and incarceration of trade union leaders without delay and to continue to avail itself of the Office's technical assistance.
- 440.** An atmosphere of violence and impunity for violence against persons based on their activities in relation to trade unions and employers' organizations fundamentally undermined freedom of association. The Committee had considered several cases concerning allegations that the authorities had used administrative procedures to interfere in the activities of and right to join organizations, and concerning the right of organizations to elect their representatives in full freedom and to organize their administration and activities. Case No. 3315 (Argentina) involved allegations of effective dissolution through administrative cancellations of union registrations, excessive delays in processing registration applications and accreditation of officials, and restrictions on judicial access to remedy the issues. Case No. 3258 (El Salvador) involved allegations of interference through annual election requirements coupled with administrative delays in registrations of committees and statutes. In both cases, the Committee had called on the Government to address the issues in consultation with the social partners. In Case No. 3384 (Honduras), the Committee had asked to be kept informed about necessary steps to ensure that local administrative authorities respected the democratic outcomes of organizations' elections in their registration processes. In Case No. 3456 (Panama), the Committee had called on the Government to take immediate measures regarding decisions by a competent judicial authority to enable a union to regain access to funds that had been frozen without explanation. In Case No. 3435 (Peru), the Committee had called on the Government to ensure that national federations had the capacity to represent individual union members in legal proceedings in accordance with the rules of the federation and the unions. In Case No. 3441 (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), the Committee had called for specific actions as soon as possible to release dues withheld from unions and to regularize their payment. He emphasized that administrative procedures should not be used as a pretext for interfering in freedom of association.
- 441.** Cases Nos 3282 and 3336 (Colombia) had been closed thanks to the presence of ongoing dialogue and collective bargaining, while in Case No. 3455 (United Kingdom) the Committee had not needed to address directly the scope of collective bargaining rights in the country as the case had been properly closed and referred to the CEACR in the light of ongoing consultations and clear judicial outcomes. In Case No. 3324 (Argentina), the Committee had recognized that it did not need to intervene where a judicial decision had removed trade union immunity because of malfeasance.
- 442. Speaking on behalf of the Government group of the Committee,** a Government representative of France said that the world of work was in a sensitive phase and safeguarding the principles of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, which were enshrined in the ILO Constitution and other foundational documents, was key to social justice

and decent work. The Committee was tasked with examining infringements of those principles. Its complaints procedure did not intend to be punitive or to blame, but rather aimed to engage in a constructive tripartite dialogue to promote respect for workers' and employers' rights in law and practice, taking into account different national realities and legal systems. The replies of governments to the allegations made were key to the work of the Committee. Thanks to a spirit of mutual understanding, the efforts of Member States, Employers and Workers as well as the leadership of the Chairperson of the Committee and the assistance provided by the Office, discussions at the March session had been fruitful and constructive.

- 443.** One case examined during the session had addressed the issue of platform workers. Her group looked forward to the legislation and practice that would be developed on the freedom of association and collective bargaining rights of platform workers as part of the standard-setting exercise by the International Labour Conference in 2025 and 2026. In this session as well, given the little progress of several long-standing cases, the Committee had repeated the same recommendations it had been making over the years. The Government group had proposed a discussion of how to address that situation as part of the Committee's consideration of its working methods, and she welcomed the positive response and input from the social partners. In other cases, the Committee had been obliged to carry out its examination in the absence of a government response. She recalled that the Committee issued urgent appeals for information when it was going to examine a case at its next session even in the absence of a response from the government concerned. She emphasized that the purpose of the procedure established by the ILO to examine allegations of violations of freedom of association was to ensure respect for that freedom both in law and in fact. While the procedure protected governments against unreasonable accusations, she encouraged governments to recognize the importance of providing detailed information in time for the Committee to examine a particular case objectively. She expressed appreciation for those governments that had respected the deadline and those that had agreed to meet and discuss with representatives of the Committee and the Office in Geneva.
- 444. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Peru welcomed the opportunity for his group to hold a dialogue with the Chairperson of the Committee to enhance understanding of the Committee's work and air concerns. He expressed satisfaction that, of the three cases that had been subject to follow-up, the two relating to his region had been closed, and welcomed the explanations provided on the classification of cases in the reports. He requested the Office to provide technical assistance to constituents on request, particularly given the number of cases involving his region. He expressed satisfaction with the role of the subcommittee, set out in paragraph 6 of the Committee's annual report, which included setting the agenda for Committee meetings to ensure the rapid examination of serious and urgent cases.
- 445.** Although various cases in Latin America had been closed, the region still represented a high number of cases: 22 of the 34 cases for which observations had been received from governments. Governments in the region were continuing to seek solutions to address the situation, including cooperating on a regional initiative with the ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean to bolster social dialogue and labour relations with a view to reducing the number of complaints submitted each year. His group encouraged the Committee to continue to rigorously apply its working methods and comply with its mandate to enhance the process for determining the admissibility of complaints.

(The Chairperson opened the discussion on individual cases.)

- 446. A Government representative of Paraguay** said that her Government had taken note of the Committee's recommendations in Case No. 3242 and was ready to provide all necessary information, including copies of the rulings requested. She wished to inform the Committee that the Labour Code was undergoing reform, through a tripartite process, that would include adjustments to ensure the effective enjoyment of freedom of association.
- 447. A Government representative of Belarus** (Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Belarus), authorized to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders on a matter concerning his Government, categorically disagreed with the conclusions and recommendations in the report on the measures taken by the Government of Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, as they were one-sided and partial, did not reflect the real situation of the development of social dialogue and tripartism or compliance with the principles of freedom of association. The ILO had exceeded its mandate and the case had become politicized. The Committee's report had based its conclusions and recommendations exclusively on information from the Belarus Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), an illegitimate organization whose activities had been suspended by order of the Supreme Court in 2022 for members' participation in extremist activities. The information the BKDP had provided was biased to suit its European sponsors and it did not represent the interests of Belarusian workers. The ILO's policy of supporting the representatives of the former BKDP would only lead to further confrontation and politicization.
- 448.** In reality, workers in Belarus were able to realize their right to freedom of association and engage in collective bargaining; 90 per cent of workers were union members. More than 20,000 collective agreements had been concluded, alongside the general agreement between the Government of Belarus and national employers' and workers' organizations for 2025–27. All social partnership institutions in Belarus were functioning normally. All the prerequisites for constructive cooperation with the ILO were in place; it was necessary only to take concrete steps in that direction.

Decisions

409th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association

- 449. The Governing Body** took note of the introduction to the Report of the Committee, contained in paragraphs 1–46, and adopted the recommendations made in paragraphs: 67 (Case No. 3315: Argentina); 89 (Case No. 3324: Argentina); 108 (Case No. 2318: Cambodia); 160 (Case No. 3406: China – Hong Kong Special Administrative Region); 188 (Case No. 3282: Colombia); 207 (Case No. 3336: Colombia); 232 (Case No. 3258: El Salvador); 259 (Case No. 3384: Honduras); 285 (Case No. 3456: Panama); 304 (Case No. 3242: Paraguay); 323 (Case No. 3435: Peru); 349 (Case No. 3185: Philippines); 400 (Case No. 3455: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland); 427 (Case No. 3277: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela); 445 (Case No. 3441: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and adopted the 409th Report of its Committee on Freedom of Association as a whole.

(GB.353/INS/14/1)

410th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association: Measures taken by the Government of the Republic of Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry

- 450. The Governing Body** approved the Committee's recommendations as set out in paragraph 56 of document GB.353/INS/14/2.

(GB.353/INS/14/2, paragraph 56)

Presentation of the Committee on Freedom of Association annual report for the year 2024

- 451. The Governing Body took note of the eighth annual report of the Committee on Freedom of Association which covers the year 2024.**

(GB.353/INS/14/1(Add.1), paragraph 4)

15. Report of the Director-General: Regular report (GB.353/INS/15)

- 452. The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the ratifications and appointments detailed in the document.
- 453. The Employer spokesperson** congratulated the newly appointed members of staff and said that the Governing Body had been wrong to request an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and should instead have taken the path of dialogue.

Decision

- 454. The Governing Body took note of the information contained in document GB.353/INS/15 regarding the membership of the Organization, the follow-up to the decision of the Governing Body to request an advisory opinion to the International Court of Justice, progress in international labour legislation, internal administration and publications and documents.**

(GB.353/INS/15, paragraph 21)

Addendum: Communication from the Government of the Republic of Nicaragua under article 1(5) of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization (GB.353/INS/15(Add.1))

- 455. The Worker spokesperson** requested clarification of the consequences of the withdrawal letter submitted by Nicaragua and of how the Office would deal with the ongoing proceedings.
- 456. The Employer spokesperson** said that Nicaragua's decision to withdraw from the ILO, made despite repeated efforts by the Office to engage in dialogue and provide technical assistance, was deeply regrettable and represented a setback for the promotion and protection of fundamental principles and rights at work. The decision should not be allowed to weaken the ILO's mandate. Rather, it should strengthen constituents' collective determination to ensure that those principles and rights remained at the heart of global efforts.
- 457. A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) drew attention to the letter acknowledging receipt of the communication from Nicaragua, in which it was explained that the notice of intention to withdraw would take effect on 28 February 2027, subject to Nicaragua having fulfilled all financial obligations arising out of its membership, and that, thereafter, Nicaragua would remain bound by all obligations arising from the Conventions to which it was a party or relating to them during the period provided for in those instruments. The same rules had applied to previous withdrawals.
- 458. The Worker spokesperson** said that withdrawing from the ILO in order to shirk obligations, including those arising under the supervisory system, was an unfortunate and regrettable course of action. Perhaps, over the coming two years, the Government of Nicaragua could be persuaded to change its mind. In any event, steps should be taken to ensure that the ILO's credibility remained intact.

Addendum: Obituaries (GB.353/INS/15(Add.2)(Rev.1))

- 459. An Employer member from Barbados** paid tribute to Mr Arni Walters, a former staff member of the Barbados Employers' Confederation and a champion of tripartite social dialogue who had passed away on 19 January 2025. Mr Walters had represented the Confederation on the National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health and had been a powerful advocate for embedding the provisions of the 2005 Safety and Health at Work Act into work culture across Barbados. He had also served as a senator and government minister and had made invaluable contributions in the field of human resources and industrial relations throughout his career. Those contributions continued to have an impact on the lives of employers and workers in the country.
- 460. A Worker member from Barbados** said that Mr Walters' achievements in the area of industrial relations had left an indelible mark on the labour movement and public service in Barbados. Prior to joining the Barbados Employers' Confederation, he had been an active trade union member. It should therefore be no surprise that he had worked tirelessly to bridge gaps between employers and employees by fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding. His legacy could serve as an inspiration to all.
- 461. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru paid tribute to Mr Walters, who, during his long career in industrial relations and human resources, had stood out for his impeccable work and human qualities.
- 462. A Government representative of Barbados** said that Mr Walters had been a stalwart of the Barbadian labour landscape who had served in the Human Resources Management Association of Barbados until his death and had performed various roles in the public and private sectors. As a government minister, he had represented his country in the Governing Body and had participated in two sessions of the International Labour Conference. The Government recognized his valuable contribution at the local, regional and international levels to labour relations, a field he had loved.
- 463. An Employer member from Senegal** paid tribute to Mr Youssoufa Wade, a leading figure in the business world who had died on 6 February 2025. From 1994 to 2002, Mr Wade had served as President of the National Council of Employers of Senegal and had played a major role in developing the private sector and creating sustainable jobs. As Vice-President of the International Organisation of Employers for Africa, he had defended the interests of employers on the continent and had promoted the integration of African countries into the global economy. His commitment to the Governing Body had been evident through his involvement in the development of labour standards worldwide. In 2004, in recognition of his leadership and vision, he had been elected Employer Vice-President of the International Labour Conference at its 92nd Session. Mr Wade had also been admired for his exceptional human qualities. His abilities to build consensus, listen attentively and establish sincere dialogue had made him a deeply respected figure. The Employers' group extended its condolences to Mr Wade's family and to all those fortunate enough to have worked with him.
- 464. A Worker member from Senegal** said that Mr Wade had been a great humanist who had contributed significantly to promoting social dialogue in his home country. He had been behind the signing of several tripartite agreements, including on wages, working conditions and social protection, and the establishment of what had become the High Council for Social Dialogue, a body of which he had been President for many years.
- 465. A Government representative of Senegal** said that Mr Wade had been a remarkable figure who had made an inestimable contribution to social dialogue and tripartism. He had always

known how to forge links between the social partners and had played a key role in the conclusion of the first national social stability and economic emergence pact.

Decision

466. The Governing Body:

- (a) **paid tribute to the memory of Mr Arni Walters and invited the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Mr Walters and to the Government of Barbados;**
- (b) **paid tribute to the memory of Mr Youssoufa Wade and invited the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Mr Wade and to the National Council of Employers of Senegal and the International Organisation of Employers.**

(GB.353/INS/15(Add.2)(Rev.1), paragraph 9)

15.1. First Supplementary Report: Documents submitted for information only (GB.353/INS/15/1)

- 467. The Worker spokesperson**, drawing attention to the report on the status of pending representations submitted under article 24 of the ILO Constitution (GB.353/INS/INF/3), expressed her group's concern at the time that it was taking to constitute ad hoc tripartite committees to examine representations. According to the report, the designation of a Government member was urgently awaited in 13 committees and the designation of an Employer member was urgently awaited in 6 committees. As a result, representations that had been declared receivable by the Governing Body as far back as 2020 had still not been examined. Stressing the importance of the representations procedure to the overall supervisory system for international labour standards, she urged the Employers' group and the Government group to designate its members for those committees without further delay. With that in mind, and in light of the Governing Body's discussion the previous day on the situation of Palestinian workers, the appointment of the Government member to the committee tasked with examining the representation concerning Israel's alleged non-observance of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), should be treated as a matter of particular urgency.
- 468. The Employer spokesperson** confirmed that her group was finalizing all issues related to the cases mentioned and would shortly be designating its representatives to sit on the six committees mentioned in the report.

Decision

469. The Governing Body took note of the information contained in the following documents:

- **Approved symposia, seminars, workshops and similar meetings (GB.353/INS/INF/1);**
- **Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (Geneva, 25 November–7 December 2024) (GB.353/INS/INF/2);**
- **Report on the status of pending representations submitted under article 24 of the ILO Constitution (GB.353/INS/INF/3);**
- **The ILO's performance results under the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women (GB.353/INS/INF/4);**

- Programme and Budget for 2024–25:
 - Position of accounts as at 31 December 2024 (GB.353/PFA/INF/1/1);
 - Collection of contributions from 1 January 2025 to date (GB.353/PFA/INF/1/2);
- Third progress report on the implementation of the Information Technology Strategy 2022–25 (GB.353/PFA/INF/2);
- Update on the headquarters building renovation project (GB.353/PFA/INF/3);
- Update on the premises for the ILO Regional Office for Africa and Country Office for Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Togo in Abidjan and for the ILO Country Office for Pakistan in Islamabad (GB.353/PFA/INF/4);
- External audit plan (GB.353/PFA/INF/5);
- Follow-up to the report of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 December 2023 (GB.353/PFA/INF/6);
- Progress Report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 (GB.353/PFA/INF/7);
- Composition and structure of the staff at 31 December 2024 (GB.353/PFA/INF/8(Rev.1));
- Report of the Board of Trustees of the Special Payments Fund (GB.353/PFA/INF/9);
- Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the International Civil Service Commission for 2024 (GB.353/PFA/INF/10);
- Decisions of the United Nations General Assembly on the report of the 78th session of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board (2024) (GB.353/PFA/INF/11).

(GB.353/INS/15/1, paragraph 3)

15.2 Second Supplementary Report: Appointment of an Assistant Director-General and Regional Director (GB.353/INS/15/2)

- 470. The Chairperson** announced the appointment of Ms Nakamura-Osaka as Assistant Director-General and Regional Director with effect from 1 January 2025.
- 471. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Japan, **the Employer Vice-Chairperson** and **the Worker spokesperson** congratulated Ms Nakamura-Osaka on her appointment.

Decision

- 472. The Governing Body** took note of the appointment made by the Director-General after having duly consulted the Officers of the Governing Body and invited Ms Nakamura-Osaka to make and sign the prescribed declaration of loyalty as provided under article 1.4(b) of the ILO Staff Regulations.

(GB.353/INS/15/2, paragraph 4)

(Ms Nakamura-Osaka made and signed the declaration of loyalty.)

15.3. Third Supplementary Report: Report of the tripartite Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by the Dominican Republic of Conventions Nos 95, 102, 111 and 118 (GB.353/INS/15/3)

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

Decision

473. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.353/INS/15/3, the Governing Body:

- (a) approved the report of the Committee and, in particular, the conclusions formulated in paragraphs 24, 27 and 31;
- (b) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the representation procedure.

(GB.353/INS/15/3, paragraph 8)

15.4 Fourth Supplementary Report: Closure of the representation alleging non-observance by Chile of Conventions Nos 87 and 98, pursuant to a successful conciliation process (GB.353/INS/15/4)

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

Decision

474. The Governing Body, noting from the report of the Committee on Freedom of Association that an agreement had been reached between the parties concerned following a conciliation process, decided to close the procedure of the representation alleging non-observance by Chile 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).

(GB.353/INS/15/4, paragraph 6)

16. Reports of the Officers of the Governing Body

16.1. First report: Arrangements for the 20th American Regional Meeting (Punta Cana, October 2025) (GB.353/INS/16/1)

475. The Worker spokesperson thanked the Government of the Dominican Republic for its hosting of and active involvement in the preparations for the 20th American Regional Meeting. It was particularly important to ensure that the meeting was successful, as it would be the first regional meeting held in the new three-day format. The scope of the declaration and plan of action to be adopted should not be limited to the four core themes discussed during the thematic panels and round tables. The discussions and the declaration must be clearly aligned with the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29. Furthermore, the declaration and the plan of action should provide for the establishment of a tripartite committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the road map.

- 476.** In keeping with the mandate of the ILO, the central theme of the regional meeting should include the concepts of social justice and democracy. With respect to the thematic panels or round tables in the plenary, her group had requested that the first should include the concepts of universal social protection with adequate benefits and of full employment with rights; the second should focus on living wages; and the title of the third should include a just transition towards resilient societies and the impact of new technologies, including digital platforms, on the world of work. A possible fourth session could be used to discuss key topics such as the intersectional inequalities obstructing access to vocational training; labour rights in education, particularly freedom of association and collective bargaining; strengthening education budgets; and the importance of care policies. Lastly, she noted that in accordance with paragraph 1(a) of Annex II to the MNE Declaration, the Office must organize a special session to discuss the Declaration at regional meetings, which the Workers' group considered to be a key priority for the agenda.
- 477. The Employer spokesperson** also thanked the Government of the Dominican Republic for hosting and actively contributing to the preparation of the meeting. The progress made by the tripartite steering committee in preparing a programme reflecting the needs and expectations of different groups in the region was encouraging. The Report of the Director-General would provide a sound basis for the discussions and thematic panels on current and emerging challenges in the world of work. His group believed that the meeting provided a unique opportunity to consolidate the vision of a fairer, more productive and more resilient region. With the commitment of all parties, the meeting would become a milestone in the construction of a more inclusive and sustainable world of work.
- 478.** He found it surprising that the Worker spokesperson had spoken on the substance of the meeting, since, under the new trial format, the agenda and programme were agreed on in tripartite consultations at the regional level, not within the Governing Body. The preparatory steering committee had agreed that there would be four core themes, the content of which would be finalized at a forthcoming meeting in Lima. He would therefore not address the choice of themes within the Governing Body's discussion.
- 479. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru welcomed the proposed dates for the 20th American Regional Meeting and expressed the group's appreciation to the Government of the Dominican Republic for hosting it. The meeting would play an important role in strengthening social dialogue and cooperation across the region. The tripartite preparatory steering committee would be instrumental in establishing a programme reflecting the needs and expectations of all parties. The application of the new modalities for regional meetings would ensure that the thematic discussions were focused on political and technical issues of relevance to the region. His group welcomed the inclusion of high-level segments in the programme and the possibility for observers to attend, and looked forward to participating in discussions that would contribute to shaping labour policies in the region.
- 480. A Government representative of the Dominican Republic** (Minister of Labour) thanked the Office for the opportunity to organize the 20th American Regional Meeting, which would serve as an important platform for exchanging ideas and formulating strategies on crucial themes, such as a just transition to a resilient economy, the strengthening of social dialogue, inclusive development, job creation and vocational training. At the national level, his ministry was committed to promoting tripartite social dialogue; implementing inclusive policies on protecting workers' rights, providing social protection and improving access to employment for vulnerable groups; fostering the creation of decent jobs aligned with labour market needs; strengthening vocational training incorporating digital and technical skills; and initiating dialogue and tripartite consultations on the possible ratification of Conventions. His

Government was determined to play an active role in transforming work in the region, and looked forward to collaborating with other stakeholders to build a fairer and more sustainable future for the world of work.

- 481. A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General and Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean) extended her thanks to the Government of the Dominican Republic for hosting the upcoming 20th American Regional Meeting. Regional meetings were an important tool that resulted in a road map to guide the Office's work in the region for the following five years. The new modalities were a participatory process in which the true architects of the meeting were the constituents, who contributed to defining the agenda as well as preparing the conclusions of the meeting and following up on its outcomes. The Regional Office was supporting the meetings of the tripartite steering committee, which was preparing the agenda and would subsequently hold initial discussions on the outcome document and the follow-up. The Office had taken note of the points made by the Governing Body, which would enrich the discussions.
- 482. The Worker spokesperson** clarified that the substantive points that she had raised illustrated issues that were relevant to the interests of workers, and that her group remained committed to establishing the agenda through the tripartite dialogue process.

Decision

- 483. Noting with appreciation the actions taken by the Office to prepare for the 20th American Regional Meeting, which will be held in Punta Cana, Dominican Republic and considering that the agenda was being finalized by the preparatory steering committee based on the ILO's strategic framework, the Governing Body, on the recommendation of its Officers, approved the dates and modes of participation for the meeting proposed in document GB.353/INS/16/1.**

(GB.353/INS/16/1, paragraph 12)

16.2 Second report: Representation alleging non-observance by Mexico of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95) (GB.353/INS/16/2)

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

Decision

- 484. In the light of the information contained in document GB.353/INS/16/2, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and to set up a tripartite committee to examine it.**

(GB.353/INS/16/2, paragraph 5)

16.3 Third report: Representation alleging non-observance by Colombia of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) (GB.353/INS/16/3)

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

Decision

485. In the light of the information contained in document GB.353/INS/16/3, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and to set up a tripartite committee to examine it. In addition, taking into account the agreement expressed by the parties to participate in a voluntary conciliation procedure at the national level, the Governing Body granted a six-month suspension of the examination of the merits of the representation under the conditions set out in article 5(1) of the Standing Orders concerning the procedure for the examination of representations under articles 24 and 25 of the ILO Constitution.

(GB.353/INS/16/3, paragraph 5)

16.4 Fourth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Uruguay of Conventions Nos 95, 98, 151, 154, 155 and 161 (GB.353/INS/16/4)

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

Decision

486. In the light of the information contained in document GB.353/INS/16/4, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided to grant a suspension of the examination of the merits of the representation for a maximum duration of six months in respect of the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161).

(GB.353/INS/16/4, paragraph 6)

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

Draft resolution concerning the Second World Summit for Social Development for transmission to and possible adoption by the International Labour Conference at its 113th Session (2025)
(GB.353/INS/17)

Committee of the Whole

1. Dialogue with the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development

487. The Chairperson welcomed H.E. Ms Sophie De Smedt and H.E. Mr Omar Hilale, Permanent Representatives of Belgium and Morocco, respectively, to the United Nations in New York, who were attending in their capacity as co-facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development.

488. The Director-General warmly welcomed the two co-facilitators and underscored the important role that social dialogue had played in the adoption of the tripartite key messages to the Second World Summit for Social Development. The Summit was particularly important for the ILO and its tripartite constituents, as it placed the Organization's mandate within the broader framework of social development. Decent work was, of course, at the heart of social

development and lay at the intersection of the three core themes of the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen – namely poverty eradication, full and productive employment and decent work for all, and social inclusion. The Summit also represented an opportunity to strengthen cooperation among institutions dedicated to social development.

- 489.** At a time when the multilateral system was vulnerable, the Summit could, and perhaps should, help restore a minimum of consensus within the international community on urgent social objectives. The Pact for the Future adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2024 had laid the foundations for more effective and inclusive international cooperation. He dearly hoped that the Summit would place social issues back at the centre of the multilateral agenda and foster new and innovative collaborative efforts in favour of social justice, to ensure that no one was left behind.
- 490. The Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations in New York**, speaking in her capacity as co-facilitator of the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, recalled that the co-facilitators had worked closely with the ILO from the outset of the intergovernmental preparatory process, including by engaging in a strategic dialogue with the constituents during the 112th Session (2024) of the International Labour Conference. She thanked the Director-General and his team for their work and coordination in the past year. Those efforts would continue to prove highly valuable in the coming months.
- 491.** Recalling the adoption by consensus in 2024 of the UN General Assembly resolution, Modalities of the “World Social Summit” under the title “the Second World Summit for Social Development”, she said that the Summit, which was to be held in Doha in November 2025, would adopt a concise, action-oriented political declaration, agreed in advance by consensus through intergovernmental negotiations in New York. In the resolution, the UN General Assembly had explicitly recognized the role and contribution of the ILO and its tripartite constituents in promoting social justice and decent work for all.
- 492.** The co-facilitators had recently released a [Food for Thought paper](#), which was a document that was not for negotiation, was based exclusively on the submissions and contributions received from UN Member States and regional groups, and was intended to provide a basis for the preparation of the zero draft of the political declaration. Before drafting it, the co-facilitators had listened carefully to the views of Member States and civil society and had engaged with major groups in dialogues organized by the President of the UN Economic and Social Council. They had duly noted the tripartite key messages adopted by the Governing Body. Those messages had also been included in the contributions of many delegations. One way or another, the paper reflected multiple topics related to the ILO’s work, including decent jobs, social protection, informal employment, digitalization, gender equality in the workplace and the renewed social contract. A new hearing with stakeholders was due to be held in the coming weeks and the food for thought paper would be discussed with UN Member States in New York on 28 March 2025.
- 493.** The objective of the co-facilitators was to achieve a forward-looking, action-oriented and consensus-driven outcome that would lay the groundwork for a more just, inclusive and sustainable world. While significant progress had been made since the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen, many challenges and gaps remained. New challenges and opportunities had also arisen. Cooperation must be strengthened to put the needs, rights and aspirations of people at the centre of the decisions being made. Though the task ahead was difficult, the co-facilitators were optimistic that it was possible to collectively live up to the ambitions of the 1995 Summit.

- 494. The Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations in New York**, speaking in his capacity as co-facilitator of the intergovernmental preparatory process leading up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, said that the process towards shaping the structure and substance of the political declaration was now at a critical stage. The feedback on the food for thought paper and the positions to be shared by delegations on 28 March 2025 would provide a solid foundation for the zero draft of the political declaration, which was due to be disseminated in early April 2025. The co-facilitators remained committed to facilitating the intergovernmental negotiations with transparency and inclusivity and with the aim of achieving an outcome that was forward-looking, action-oriented and consensus-driven, and that laid the groundwork for more just, inclusive and sustainable work. When preparing the food for thought paper, they had endeavoured to reflect the inputs from delegations and stakeholders in a comprehensive and concise manner.
- 495.** The political declaration was intended to serve as a blueprint for advancing social development in line with the mandate established by the UN General Assembly. It would also help create an environment for building trust and for innovative solutions and inclusive cooperation. Many of the commitments made in Copenhagen remain unmet and the challenges faced by the world were more pressing than ever, requiring swift and agile action from the international community. More concrete and action-oriented proposals from UN Member States were needed in the subsequent phases of the process to deliver on the call for action of the political declaration. Several aspects of the food for thought paper were directly linked to the ILO's work. Furthermore, the ILO was specifically mentioned in the paper with regard to the role that the UN system could play in the implementation, follow-up and review of the political declaration. The co-facilitators hoped that the paper would provide a common ground for action and help delegates advance at the next stage of the negotiation process.
- 496. The Employer spokesperson** said that the Summit was an opportunity for the United Nations to reinforce its role as an agent of both social and economic growth, two processes that were inextricably linked. The Employers were confident that UN Member States would deliver a forward-looking and action-oriented political declaration. Several key points should be reflected in the zero draft of the political declaration. Those points were not just recommendations but were essential pillars for a future where economic prosperity and well-being went hand in hand.
- 497.** The zero draft should recognize the private sector's crucial role in sustainable development as the main provider of employment. Creating a conducive environment for businesses, particularly MSMEs, was key to inclusivity and job creation. The zero draft should also promote effective labour market governance and transparency, as public trust in institutions ensured prosperity and stability. Furthermore, it should recognize the key role of employers' and workers' organizations, particularly in fostering cohesion and productivity. Regrettably, the food for thought paper contained no reference to the social partners. In addition, the zero draft should highlight the value of investing in skills development and recognize productivity growth as a driver for social justice. It should also recognize the progress made since the 1995 Summit, the goals of which remained relevant. It was encouraging to see in the food for thought paper that Governments were prioritizing the assessment of that progress.
- 498.** She asked the two co-facilitators how they saw the process evolving from the negotiations in New York to the Summit in Doha in the light of the emerging global dynamics and challenges, and the current reshaping of the multilateral system. She also wished to know how they saw the role of non-State actors, particularly that of the social partners, in the process leading up to the Summit.

- 499. The Worker spokesperson** said that nationalism and a return to strategic competition were not the way to tackle common global challenges and that the Summit provided an opportunity to reform the multilateral system where necessary and reshape the global political economy to address the social dimension of globalization and make it deliver. She noted with satisfaction that the global trade union movement had been engaged throughout the consultation process and appreciated that some of its views had been reflected in the food for thought paper.
- 500.** Her group supported the structure of the political declaration proposed in the food for thought paper. Regarding the call for action, it would submit more detailed comments in writing and in future consultations. Her group welcomed the drawing of connections in the paper between social development, social justice, and peace and security, but wondered why there was no longer any reference to the rule of international law and the promotion of democracy, which were crucial for social development. It acknowledged that international law might have been applied unequally and even abused for economic benefit. It was a situation that needed to be corrected, and the ILO could play a crucial role in that regard.
- 501.** International labour standards and their monitoring could make a telling contribution to the proposed global indicator framework that went beyond GDP, while ensuring that any indicators and metrics developed were fully aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Her group appreciated the references in the paper to the fundamental principles and rights at work, just transition and gender equality, which should be placed at the forefront of the fight against poverty and complemented by a focus on living wages and maximum limits on working hours. Governments should develop road maps for the establishment and enforcement of living wages, and multinationals should be accountable for the payment of living wages in their supply chains. The establishment of a labour protection floor needed to be combined with investments to guarantee adequate social protection for all.
- 502.** References in the paper to decent work for women and the importance of the care economy were sorely missing, particularly in the section on social policies and the role of the family. In addition, more emphasis needed to be placed on fair migration and respect for the human and labour rights of migrant workers.
- 503.** She saw value in a quinquennial review of the political declaration but wished to stress the importance of consistency with existing UN monitoring systems. The institutional follow-up process could be strengthened through biennial ministerial declarations and by revitalizing the Commission for Social Development, further including labour ministries and social partners in its work and establishing structural cooperation between the Commission and the ILO. Greater weight should also be given to the work of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, which could complement the findings of the ILO supervisory system. To conclude, she would be grateful for further information on how the social partners' engagement in consultations would be facilitated before, during and after the Summit.
- 504. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of Gabon said that the Summit offered a unique opportunity to reaffirm the commitments made in Copenhagen in 1995 and gauge progress and address shortcomings in their fulfilment. It was also an opportunity to take up new challenges such as the digital divide, artificial intelligence, climate change, the migration crisis and food insecurity, and to strengthen the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Only with a new social contract that took a human-centred approach and was based on the three pillars of social development would it be possible to reduce inequalities in the world of work and achieve social justice. The ILO had the necessary expertise to play a pivotal role in work prior to, during and in follow-up to the

Summit, which should focus urgently on extending universal social protection in line with SDG target 1.3.

- 505.** Youth employment and child labour remained key challenges in Africa. The political declaration should support the ILO in implementing programmes and policies aimed at creating jobs for young people and promoting social justice and decent work. The creation of decent jobs would also enable migrant workers and refugees, together with their families, to benefit from adequate protection. The Summit should prioritize mitigation and adaptation to promote just transitions and underscore the importance of international labour standards in achieving social development.
- 506. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,**⁸ a Government representative of Peru said that Latin America and the Caribbean was the region with the highest rate of ratification of the fundamental ILO Conventions. It was also a growing region where job creation was a constant challenge, and migration, an important feature. The group recalled that the Governing Body had invited the Summit to renew the global social contract to bridge the implementation gaps of 1995 Summit. In the key messages to the Summit, adopted at its 352nd Session, the Governing Body reiterated that labour was not a commodity, emphasized the roles of the private and public sectors and called for the social partners' views to be taken into account in the preparations for and deliberations and outcome of the Summit. The draft resolution acknowledged the central role of social dialogue as a key labour market governance mechanism and called for policies leading to job-rich and inclusive economic growth. GRULAC was committed to the Summit, at which it hoped that the voices of all ILO constituents would be heard and that the outcome declaration would reflect the Governing Body's key messages. There was a need to establish mechanisms to monitor the commitments made at the Summit and for the ILO to be given a major role in that respect, in recognition of its constitutional mandate and leadership in matters within its competence.
- 507. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia aligned themselves with her statement. She commended the co-facilitators for their transparent and inclusive approach, which had included broad consultations. The world required more solidarity and multilateral cooperation to tackle challenges and ensure just transitions. The Summit was crucial to those efforts, serving as a forum where social issues took centre stage and offering an opportunity to renew the social contract.
- 508.** The political declaration adopted at the Summit should be anchored in human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the fundamental principles and rights at work, and should address major inequalities and transformative challenges. It should also be action-oriented and uphold the central role of international labour standards and the importance of ensuring effective social dialogue and adequate income, decent work, social protection and full, productive and freely chosen employment for all. Furthermore, the declaration should provide for a strong and transparent follow-up mechanism and recognize the ILO's vital role in promoting social justice, particularly through its normative framework. It would be useful to know from the co-facilitators how they intended to ensure an inclusive process in the run-up to and during the negotiation of the declaration, and whether any tangible outcome to the Summit other than the declaration was envisaged.

⁸ Argentina dissociated itself from the GRULAC statements on this item.

- 509. A Government representative of France** congratulated the co-facilitators for having built their initial proposals around the objective of strengthened social cohesion through a renewed social contract anchored in human rights and labour rights. Social support for environmental, digital and demographic transitions should lie at the heart of that renewed global social contract. The ILO must play a critical role. As noted in the tripartite contribution of France, fully integrating a social dimension would require efforts to be focused on two cross-cutting priorities: combating persistent economic informality; and extending, through appropriate funding, access to social protection floors to all, starting with workers, regardless of their employment status, and their dependants, with particular attention to the most vulnerable countries. Stakeholders' actions had to have adequate means and be based on clear principles, which entailed engaging in inclusive dialogue to increase the acceptability of government-proposed solutions, ensuring greater consistency between the development work of UN agencies and that of international financial institutions, and ratifying and implementing ILO Conventions. The regular monitoring and review of the outcomes of the Summit must involve all stakeholders and be based on simple, transparent and action-oriented governance and on measurable and realistic indicators, defined collectively and in advance. That follow-up could therefore be entrusted to a special multilateral team.
- 510. A Government representative of Switzerland** said that the ILO should play a significant role in the Summit, the success of which depended on ensuring an inclusive, transparent and structured preparation process. Priorities in the political declaration should include social dialogue, high-quality education, social protection, gender equality, full and productive employment and decent working conditions. She would be grateful for details of how the food for thought paper had been prepared, clarification of whether the contributions of non-State stakeholders such as the International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organisation of Employers had been taken into account, and an explanation of how the co-facilitators intended to guarantee that the contributions of the tripartite constituents were reflected in the political declaration. The co-facilitators should ensure that the social partners and other non-State stakeholders were regularly consulted throughout the negotiations and that their positions were actively communicated to Member States, for example in the form of concise reports. Switzerland intended to send a "tripartite-plus" delegation to the Summit, composed of representatives of the Government, workers, employers and civil society, including a youth representative.
- 511. A Government representative of Norway** said that the Summit was an opportunity to accelerate collective efforts to combat poverty and inequality, and that achieving decent work for all was key to those efforts. Social dialogue was crucial to creating a well-regulated and organized society in which rights were secured. Moreover, it was a powerful and efficient mechanism for ensuring sustainable development and preventing and solving conflicts. The political declaration should be based on human and labour rights, with a strong and consistent focus on gender equality and women's rights. It should underline the importance of social inclusion as a means of fighting inequality and ensuring that no one was left behind, particularly vulnerable groups such as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT+) persons, persons with disabilities and other minorities.
- 512. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action remained a pipe dream and that none of the SDGs would be achieved by the 2030 deadline. There had been a clear lack of coherence between those commitments and the political and financial priorities of developed countries. While resources to meet the commitments had been completely insufficient, military spending had grown for nine consecutive years, a trend that was likely only to accelerate. There could be no

real access to financing for development when countries of the global South were forced to spend more on servicing debt than on health, education and employment. The world had never been more unequal. Rich countries continued to bet on the preservation of an international order that transferred the highest costs and lowest benefits to the Global South, while political and economic power were concentrated in the hands of a select few. The imposition of unilateral measures as a means of political and economic coercion was an obstacle to sustainable development and had to stop. The Summit must have a genuine impact on the lives and livelihoods of people in the global South. Cuba was committed to participating in the process in a transparent, constructive and proactive manner and would push for tangible commitments and actions on poverty eradication, full and productive employment, decent work for all and social inclusion, among other issues.

513. **A Government representative of Egypt** said that the Summit would provide an important opportunity to recommit to the 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action, assess progress made in that regard, address related implementation gaps, accelerate implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and address emerging challenges impeding socio-economic development. The Summit would also provide an opportunity to mobilize the international community behind the common goal of advancing social justice.
514. The Summit would help to build consensus on additional steps that must be taken to eradicate poverty in all its forms, expand full and productive employment, create decent jobs for all, reduce unemployment, foster social inclusion, boost economic growth, and address emerging challenges, including deepening digital divides. He affirmed his country's support for the mandate of the Organization, underscoring the ILO's important role in supporting social development and promoting the Decent Work Agenda. The ILO would, moreover, play a key role in implementing the anticipated outcomes of the Summit. He welcomed the recent establishment of the Global Coalition for Social Justice.
515. In closing he asked the co-facilitators for their views on why the international community had failed to fulfil the commitments set out in the Copenhagen Declaration, and how Member States could avoid past mistakes and ensure that the Summit truly facilitated the achievement of the international community's social development objectives.
516. **A Government representative of Spain** said that several Ibero-American countries had proposed a global charter of labour rights to provide an international reference framework for universal rights that addressed the digital and green transitions, and to contribute to a successful outcome at the World Social Summit. The charter would establish basic labour rights, including the right to a fair wage, that were adapted to the twenty-first century and afforded protection against challenges such as the climate crisis and digital and demographic transformations. He wished to know whether the global charter could be addressed during the discussions on a renewed social contract at the Summit.
517. **A Government representative of Canada** said that, in line with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, the political declaration at the Summit should aim to promote the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work and investment in robust, efficient, inclusive and accountable labour market institutions; strengthen human rights; contribute to the socio-economic empowerment of groups that were often left behind; close the gender pay gap; advance decent work in the care economy; recognize a safe and healthy working environment, free from violence and harassment, as a fundamental principle and right at work; address key challenges in the changing work of work, including the digital transformation; ensure just transitions; and promote sustainable and inclusive trade, decent work in supply

chains, and the eradication of all forms of forced and child labour. Upholding internationally recognized labour standards benefited workers, employers and governments by allowing the gains from trade to be shared more widely.

- 518. A Government representative of Zimbabwe** commended the Working Party for arriving at a consensus draft resolution despite the differing views expressed during the extensive discussions. Concerted efforts were required to address increasing inequality occasioned by rising geopolitical tensions, natural disasters caused by climate change, debt crises, the rising cost of living, demographic shifts and mixed migration flows, all of which had a negative impact on the world of work. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action and the Abidjan Declaration had been instrumental in enhancing social development. The upcoming meeting of employers, workers and ministers of the Southern African Development Community, to be hosted by Zimbabwe, would provide an opportunity to discuss the key messages to be conveyed to the Summit. The attainment of social justice and sustainable development required an integrated approach, extensive consultations and investment in social dialogue structures and processes. Zimbabwe would continue playing its part in renewing the global social contract and achieving the Summit's aspirations.
- 519. A Government representative of Mexico** said that updated measures and a renewed international commitment were required to meet current needs and to promote resilience in the face of future challenges. Given the importance of linking poverty reduction with job creation, policies were required to foster economic growth, with emphasis on social justice and inclusive employment, and the productive use of labour must be promoted through policies that made use of market incentives, political and social institutions, infrastructure and technology. It was important to have a clear definition of the term "enabling environment" in relation to sustainable enterprises and the transition from the informal to the formal economy. International sustainable development commitments needed to be revised to incorporate the ILO's contribution to the promotion of decent work and equal opportunities for all, given the increasing importance of work in the economic, social and political spheres.
- 520. The Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations in New York** said that he shared Members' ambitions and concerns regarding the political declaration. When preparing the draft, the co-facilitators had attempted to include all the proposals and suggestions made by the Member States and regional groups. The key points of the declaration would be reinforced according to the priorities outlined at the intergovernmental negotiations in New York. The declaration would be issued by Member States, but the views of stakeholders would be considered in a spirit of inclusivity, and he would welcome the inclusion of the social partners in Member States' delegations during the Summit. Options that had been proposed to follow up on the implementation of the declaration included establishing a review mechanism that met periodically, or entrusting the UN Commission for Social Development, the ILO and/or the World Health Organization (WHO) with follow-up functions. Member States would have the opportunity to discuss one or more of those options at the negotiations in March.
- 521. The Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations in New York** highlighted the importance of the Summit to refer to concrete actions and said that proposals for any outcomes other than a political declaration could be submitted and discussed during the upcoming negotiations. Robust data was important and any contributions would be welcome.

2. Exchange of views on the draft resolution

- 522. The Chairperson of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda** recalled that the draft resolution on the tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development, to be submitted to the International Labour Conference for adoption at its 113th Session (2025), had been prepared by the Office on the basis of input from the two meetings of the Working Party and text from previously agreed instruments. He acknowledged the respectful tone of the discussions, despite differing opinions, and expressed the hope that a consensus could be reached. The draft resolution included the tripartite key messages that had been agreed by the Governing Body at its 352nd Session. The draft resolution represented what was possible, and he noted that compromise had been offered on all sides. While the draft resolution was less ambitious than many had hoped, it would provide a solid contribution to the Summit and ensure that any commitments emanating from the Summit would be kept.
- 523.** The draft resolution focused on the role of the ILO and its constituents in implementing the Summit's conclusions. All constituents recognized that lasting peace required social justice and acknowledged the essential components of social development. All constituents should contribute to restoring trust in international institutions and governance, including through strengthening the rule of law, accountability and transparency. It was important to demonstrate the value of the ILO, tripartism and social dialogue within the multilateral system. He noted that the draft resolution acknowledged the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda and the ILO's role as custodian of the indicators for SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth. Government representatives should ensure the participation of the social partners in the Summit and its preparatory meetings; without them, a successful outcome could not be guaranteed. The ILO, including its tripartite constituents, should play a leading role in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit in areas pertaining to its mandate.
- 524.** The Governing Body should send a message to the world's workers and employers, emphasizing its commitment to a successful Summit through the vital and unique contribution of the ILO. Constituents should share the tripartite key messages at the country level to enable the social partners to contribute to the concept of the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda. Any such contract should be global, related to the world of work and applicable at the national level.
- 525. The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Office for its relentless support of the Working Party, which had increased the visibility of the ILO in the preparations for the Summit. The First World Summit had failed to build in safeguards to address the social dimension of globalization, thereby exacerbating inequalities within and between countries. It was regrettable that there was still reluctance regarding the place of the ILO in the global system for social development. She called on all constituents to be assertive and ensure a better outcome at the Second World Summit. The draft resolution was intended to be a political statement from the highest decision-making body within the ILO that could not be ignored.
- 526.** It was inevitable that a compromise text led to some level of dissatisfaction. For her group, it was incomprehensible that the draft resolution did not contain a reference to a living wage, despite it appearing in the tripartite key messages that had been approved by the Governing Body and in spite of repeated requests from Members and no significant opposition from the constituent groups. Her group would therefore be proposing an amendment to restore the inclusion of that concept, in line with the right enshrined in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019). Despite the adoption of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, the exclusion of the right to a living wage from the outcome of the First World Summit had led to the exploitation of low-wage

labour in developing countries at the expense of resilient and demand-driven local economies. Protecting the right to a living wage would reduce inequalities and contribute to social justice for all.

527. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the initial proposed text of the draft resolution had included concepts out of their original context that required further explanation. It was for that reason that consensus had not been reached on the draft resolution during the meetings of the Working Party. She welcomed the current version of the draft resolution, which emphasized the tripartite nature of the ILO's commitments. She expressed the hope that it would be taken into account when preparing the outcome of the Summit.
528. She welcomed the changes made to the draft resolution. The emphasis on the importance of evaluating the progress made since the First World Summit, rather than solely concentrating on implementation gaps, would enable the celebration of achievements while also identifying areas requiring attention. Linking youth employment policies to the sustainable integration of young people into the labour market, alongside quality apprenticeship systems, addressed the critical need for practical pathways that equipped young people with relevant skills and opportunities. The move towards specific, realistic social protection targets that took national contexts into account was also welcome. Despite those changes, her group called for greater emphasis on the complementarity of social and economic development, and the crucial role of promoting economic development as a basis for social progress. Decent employment opportunities were vital to sustainable development. A human-centred approach should be complemented by a robust consideration of economic growth and sustainability.
529. Her group expressed concern regarding the new preambular paragraph that read "Reiterating the need to address the social consequences that may arise from economic policy reforms and external debt restructuring," and said that the Office should offer a more positive view. Therefore, she proposed amending that paragraph to read: "Recognizing the importance of addressing potential social consequences arising from economic policy reforms and debt restructuring and preserving investment attraction and certainty as well as fostering sustainable economic growth, investment and job creation,".
530. She urged Governments to engage with national social partners to ensure that the outcome of the Summit struck a correct balance between social and economic strategies for sustainable development, and to promote a whole-of-government approach.
531. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon noted that the draft resolution focused on the role of the tripartite constituents in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. She welcomed efforts to reach consensus on the draft resolution. The ILO must play a leadership role in the implementation of the outcomes of all summits that were related to its mandate. She noted that the draft resolution took account of the priorities of her group. Her group supported the draft resolution, and the amendment proposed by the Employers' group.
532. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of China called on the Governing Body to agree on a draft resolution that was clear, concise and strong. ASPAG recognized the changing nature of the world of work and the fact that inequalities and deficits had persisted. The ILO had a key role to play in the Summit as the tripartite specialized United Nations agency responsible for promoting decent work and social justice. ASPAG supported the draft resolution that articulated a renewed global social contract with a human-centred approach and requested a greater policy coherence and international cooperation, taking into account national circumstances. The outcome of the Summit must be implemented at the global, regional and national levels. The three pillars of social development remained relevant priority

areas of work. ASPAG welcomed the wide range of initiatives referred to in the draft resolution and the proposed regional cooperation and bilateral exchanges of best practice for the implementation of the outcome of the Summit. Full, freely chosen and productive employment and decent work for all should be incorporated into the outcome of the Summit, as well as national plans. That would contribute to job-rich, inclusive economic growth and underpin social development. The outcomes of the Summit should be forward-looking, thus responding to opportunities and challenges resulting from technological innovations in the world of work. ASPAG called on the Summit to further enhance international cooperation on AI and build capacity to address digital divides.

533. ASPAG emphasized the need for just, democratic, equitable and representative participation in global decision-making. The needs and interests of developing countries, including small island developing States, should be taken into consideration. ASPAG supported the draft resolution and would consider the amendment proposed by the Employers' group.
534. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru welcomed the text of the draft resolution concerning the Second World Summit for Social Development and stressed his group's agreement with many of the points contained therein, including the need to consider options to help countries broaden their productivity by moving from low to higher productive activities, to strengthen institutions of work and people's capacities, to acknowledge migration and to explore international efforts aimed at ensuring decent working conditions for migrant workers and refugees and recognizing migrants' positive contribution to societies. Supporting the care economy would require investment, and he agreed that its societal value and economic potential must be recognized.
535. Support for the transition from the informal to the formal economy was especially important for Latin American and Caribbean countries, which also needed support for just transitions to a green economy. He therefore hoped that the Summit would address clearly the measures that should be adopted in that regard at the multilateral and national levels. GRULAC agreed that international financial institutions must work together more closely to address the root causes of inequalities both globally and nationally. It supported the draft decision.
536. **A Government representative of the Niger** highlighted that the Second World Summit for Social Development was taking place in an evolving multilateral context, and the international community needed to give new impetus to combating poverty and social inequalities by distributing resources equitably and investing in education and skills development by implementing social protection measures and supporting marginalized groups. She fully supported the draft resolution, which took into account her country's needs and priorities, including youth employment, the transition from the informal to the formal economy and training based on market needs. She supported the amendment suggested by the Employers.
537. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. While it was regrettable that the members of the Working Party had been unable to agree on all the points discussed, the EU and its Members States would make every effort to reach consensus so that the draft resolution could be transmitted for adoption by the International Labour Conference at its 113th Session.
538. The resolution should highlight the crucial role that the ILO, as a unique, specialized and tripartite standard-setting agency, and its constituents should play in implementing the Summit's outcome. She welcomed the reference to a renewed global social contract with a human-centred approach, although a reference to a human rights-based approach would have

been preferable. Similarly, in paragraph 3(b) of the draft resolution, it would have been preferable to see a clear reference to human rights in the context of the fundamental principles and rights at work, since labour rights were human rights. The EU and its Member States nevertheless supported the draft resolution as presented, as they recognized the importance of finding consensus. She wished to know what role the Office would play during the next phase of preparations for the Summit.

- 539. Speaking on behalf of the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)**, a Government representative of Oman highlighted that the food-for-thought paper recently circulated by the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process emphasized the importance of increasing investment in social protection mechanisms in order to eradicate poverty and promote social inclusion, as well as the need to draw up comprehensive policies to create decent jobs and invest in skills and lifelong learning. The GCC countries remained committed to the SDGs and had made significant progress towards them by expanding social protection programmes and enhancing job localization efforts. While his group affirmed its support for the original draft resolution, which would establish a solid foundation for further progress, it would take into consideration the amendments proposed by the Employers' group and looked forward to hearing the views of other delegations on that matter before making a final decision.
- 540. A Government representative of Switzerland** said that his country aligned itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The Second World Summit for Social Development presented a historic opportunity to breathe new life into work to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda and the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development, as well as to ingrain the promotion of social justice as a cross-cutting priority goal in the UN system. He therefore called on the international community to rise to the occasion by taking on strong and ambitious commitments to social development.
- 541.** The ILO must play a central role in preparing, executing and following up the Summit, including by advocating for the constituents' priorities. The Global Coalition for Social Justice was ideally positioned to implement the outcomes of the Summit. He therefore urged all governments to advocate for the comprehensive inclusion of the ILO's tripartite contributions throughout the intergovernmental negotiations on the Summit's outcome document. Switzerland supported the draft resolution, as it faithfully reflected the key messages of the tripartite constituents and reaffirmed the ILO's vital role in implementing and following up on the Summit.
- 542. A Government representative of Japan**, referring to paragraph 3(j) of the draft resolution, said that while he agreed with the need to protect refugees and migrant workers from exploitation, the creation of decent work was important for all, and he therefore suggested replacing "the creation of" with "ensuring", to read "ensuring decent work for workers at higher risk of exploitation, including refugees and migrant workers".
- 543. A Government representative of India** said that the draft resolution strengthened the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda and reaffirmed the collective commitment to building resilient social security systems. The Global Coalition for Social Justice was a remarkable initiative aimed at intensifying collective efforts to advance social justice, and India had recently spearheaded its first regional dialogue in New Delhi, as well as working tirelessly to expand its social security and social protection coverage.
- 544. A Government representative of Bangladesh**, noting the declining appetite for multilateral initiatives and the consequent vital need for the ILO to promote human-centric, pragmatic solutions to social development issues, therefore welcomed the draft resolution's references

to a human-centred approach in establishing the new social contract, as well as to the involvement of social partners and the promotion of job-rich and inclusive economic growth. A proper mechanism to follow up the Working Party's key messages should be established.

- 545.** To avoid gaps in the implementation of the ILO's key contributions to the Summit, he asked the Office to leverage the Global Coalition for Social Justice and explore the possibility of strengthening partnerships with global financial institutions and encouraging the involvement of national and regional non-government financing mechanisms. He would appreciate due recognition of the crucial role of private sector enterprises, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as governments' employment and rights-based approach, in realizing the three pillars of social development. The political declaration should recognize global justice as an enabler of social justice.
- 546. A Government representative of Colombia** expressed strong support for the draft resolution, which reflected a firm global commitment to social justice, social progress, sustainable development, peace and security. After outlining some of his country's recent achievements in the area of social development, he drew attention to the need for the renewed social contract to be human-centred and prioritize universal social protection, the formalization of jobs and the promotion of policies guaranteeing inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Moreover, the digital transformation must leave no one behind, and labour rights must be respected in the digital economy.
- 547.** He supported the draft resolution's promotion of gender equality and its recognition of care work, which should be distributed equally. The Second World Summit on Social Development should have a gender-transformative approach to remove structural barriers to women's social, economic and political empowerment. School-to-work transitions must be facilitated, and global agendas to ensure decent work for young people must be strengthened through the effective guarantee of their fundamental labour rights. Responses based on solidarity and coordination were needed in an increasingly interconnected world that faced issues such as climate change. The draft resolution's call to strengthen collaboration between Member States, international financial institutions and multilateral organizations was therefore highly relevant.
- 548. The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the convergence in the room. The three suggested changes to the draft resolution could be discussed with a view to developing a joint proposal. She suggested that a draft resolution adopted by the Governing Body could be circulated, as long as it was made clear to the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental preparatory process that the final draft of the resolution might still be amended following discussions by the International Labour Conference.
- 549. The Employer spokesperson** said that her group would be happy to continue discussions on the draft resolution.

Oral report by the Chairperson to the Governing Body on the work of the Committee of the Whole

- 550. The Chairperson** presented to the Governing Body an oral report summarizing the work of the Committee of the Whole. He recalled that the meeting had been opened by the Director-General, who had stressed the importance of the Second World Summit for Social Development at a challenging time for the multilateral system. He also recalled that, during the first part of the meeting, the Committee had engaged in a rich and fruitful dialogue with the co-facilitators of the Summit, focusing in particular on the food for thought paper prepared

by the co-facilitators. During the second part, the Committee had held an exchange of views on the proposed draft resolution. Participants had expressed support for the text, highlighting that it reflected the views presented at the two meetings of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda and the key messages adopted by the Governing Body at its 352nd Session (October–November 2024).

Discussion of the draft resolution

551. The Governing Body had before it a number of proposed amendments, which had been circulated by the Office.

552. The Employers' and Workers' groups had submitted a joint proposal to amend the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, to read:

Reiterating the need to address the potential social consequences ~~that may arise~~ from economic policy reforms and ~~external~~ debt restructuring and to foster sustainable economic growth, investment and decent work creation,

They had also proposed that paragraph 3(b) of the draft resolution could be amended to read:

(b) the setting, promotion, ratification and supervision of international labour standards and, through strong, influential and inclusive mechanisms of social dialogue, the need ~~to~~ address for adequate labour protection for all workers in line with the Decent Work Agenda, including all the fundamental principles and rights at work, namely freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the effective abolition of child labour, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, and the right to a safe and healthy working environment; a living wage in line with ILO principles; and maximum limits on working time, taking into account national circumstances;

553. The Government of Japan had proposed an amendment, seconded by the Government of Spain, to paragraph 3(j) of the draft resolution, so that it would read:

(j) ~~the creation of~~ ensuring decent working conditions for workers at higher risk of exploitation, including refugees and migrant workers;

554. The Government of the United States had submitted a proposal, seconded by the Government of Spain, to delete, from paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the words "as set out below", and to remove in its entirety the text of the key messages to the World Social Summit; and another proposal, also seconded by the Government of Spain, to remove the reference to the key messages from subparagraph (b) of the draft decision, which would therefore read:

(b) decided to transmit the draft resolution concerning the Second World Summit for Social Development, as prepared by the Working Party and set out in the appendix to the report, ~~and which includes the tripartite key messages to the Summit that were adopted by the Governing Body at its 352nd Session (October–November 2024),~~ to the International Labour Conference at its 113th Session (2025) for possible adoption;

555. The Worker spokesperson reiterated the importance of including in the draft resolution a reference to a living wage and maximum hours of work, in keeping with the key messages and the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. She noted with appreciation that, during consultations, the Employers' group had been willing to accommodate her group's concerns in that regard. She also noted that her group had backed a proposal by the Employers' group to include a reference in the ninth preambular paragraph to fostering sustainable growth, investment and decent work creation.

556. Her group had no objection to the amendment proposed by the Government of Japan. Concerning the amendments proposed by the Government of the United States, she asked whether the inclusion or not in the draft resolution of a reference to the key messages would have an impact on the discussions of the text by the Conference. Her group would prefer the Conference to focus on the draft resolution rather than hold another discussion on the key messages.
557. **The Employer spokesperson**, welcoming the momentum generated by the discussions in the Committee of the Whole, expressed support for the draft resolution and for the proposed amendments. In a spirit of compromise, his group could accept the inclusion of a reference to living wages in the draft resolution. Wage discussions encompassed more than living wages, however, and should take into account the full range of wage-setting mechanisms available to governments. The proposed amendment to the ninth preambular paragraph was intended to provide greater clarity and a more balanced and positive approach; his group had repeatedly emphasized the need for social and economic policies to go hand in hand.
558. He noted that, in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, Member States were invited to ensure “that the outcome of the Summit takes full account of the tripartite key messages” and that the messages were summarized in paragraph 3. As the key messages had been conveyed to the co-facilitators, as agreed, his group supported the proposal to remove from the draft resolution the text of the key messages, and was in favour of a shorter draft resolution that contained a clear message on the need to take into account both economic and social considerations to achieve prosperity and social development.
559. He called on the ILO to play a leading role in the UN Interagency Task Force to support the preparations of the Summit and to demonstrate its relevance, as the only tripartite UN agency, by hosting exchanges with social partners in New York. Governments should integrate the key messages in their negotiations and actively engage with the social partners at each stage of the negotiation process. He encouraged governments to consider bringing a tripartite delegation to the Summit.
560. **A Government representative of Japan**, explaining his Government’s proposed amendment, said that, while there was clearly a need to protect refugees and migrant workers from exploitation, the creation of decent work was important for all persons, regardless of their category, as stated in paragraph 3(a) of the draft resolution. He expressed support for the joint amendment proposed by the Employers’ and Workers’ groups. With reference to the amendments proposed by the Government of the United States, he asked whether including the key messages in the draft resolution would mean that the Conference would be able to discuss and make changes to them, even though they had already been agreed upon by the Governing Body.
561. **A Government representative of the United States**, explaining his Government’s proposed amendments, recalled that the Governing Body had determined that decent work was a vital component of social development and that the ILO, with its tripartite structure, must play an instrumental role in the Summit. Furthermore, the Governing Body had agreed to prioritize giving a strong voice to employers’ and workers’ organizations at the Summit and in discussions that affected them. The key messages, as endorsed by the Governing Body, should not be included in the draft resolution, as they should not be reopened for negotiation by the Conference.
562. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon reaffirmed his group’s support for the draft resolution, which took into account the priorities of his region. He also supported the amendments proposed jointly by the Employers’ and Workers’ groups.

Noting that the Working Party had almost completed its mandate, as agreed upon by the Governing Body in March 2024, he asked what steps were envisaged to enable the Working Party to carry out its final task of promoting and ensuring the participation of the ILO's tripartite constituents in preparations for the Summit at the national and international levels. He asked the Office to clarify the implications of subparagraph (c)(iii) of the draft decision, in which the Director-General was instructed to take into account the need for the ILO to play a leading role in the follow-up to the Summit when implementing the Programme and Budget for 2026–27. He would comment on the other proposed amendments at a later stage.

- 563. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of China noted the need for a strong, inclusive and focused draft resolution and supported the amendments proposed jointly by the Employers' and Workers' groups. The key messages were the most important contribution that the ILO had made to preparations for the Summit. They must be highlighted in the draft resolution, through their inclusion in the text. Thus, ASPAG could not accept the amendments proposed by the Government of the United States. He urged the Office to spare no effort to promote the key messages globally and to fully involve the ILO and its tripartite constituents in the Summit.
- 564.** Speaking in his national capacity, he suggested subamending the amendment proposed by the Government of Japan, so that paragraph 3(j) would start with the words "supporting efforts to ensure decent working conditions".

(The subamendment was not seconded and therefore, it was not considered.)

- 565. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She expressed appreciation for the insight provided at the meeting of the Committee of the Whole into the process that had led to the food for thought paper and welcomed the fact that the paper took into consideration the main elements of the key messages.
- 566.** The EU and its Member States called for the Summit to result in action to address major inequalities and transformative challenges, and to underline that social justice was essential to universal and lasting peace. The political declaration should be action-oriented and uphold the central role of international labour standards and the importance of adequate incomes and full, productive and freely chosen employment for all. Efforts should focus on combating persistent informality – which was one of the main factors behind inequality – and extending access to social protection floors through appropriate financing and with particular attention to the most vulnerable countries. The Summit would offer an opportunity to renew the social contract and should result in a transparent follow-up mechanism with measurable and realistic indicators. The contribution of the ILO, as the only tripartite UN agency, should be taken into account in the political declaration and the Organization should play a central role in the follow-up to the Summit.
- 567.** Although she welcomed the reference in the preamble to the draft resolution to a renewed global social contract with a "human-centred" approach, she would have preferred a reference to a "human-rights based" approach. Similarly, it would have been preferable in paragraph 3(b) of the draft resolution to include a clear reference to human rights in the context of the fundamental principles and rights at work. In order to achieve consensus, however, the EU and its Member States supported the draft decision and the proposed amendments.
- 568. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Qatar recalled that the Summit would be held in Doha in November 2025. The comprehensive comments made

during the exchange of views with the co-facilitators accurately reflected the aspirations of the ILO's tripartite constituents. He urged the Office to reinforce and disseminate the key messages, taking into account the input provided during the current session. He expressed his group's support for the amendment proposed by the Employers' and Workers' groups.

- 569. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru reiterated his group's appreciation for the efforts of the Working Party, noting in particular the commitment of its Chairperson, and the Office's support in that regard. He expressed support for the amendments proposed jointly by the Employers' and Workers' groups.
- 570. A Government representative of Nepal**, noting that the Governing Body should be guided by the principles of inclusivity, equality and sustainability, welcomed the incorporation of the key messages in the draft resolution. In a context of unprecedented challenges to development and social justice, in particular due to disruptive technologies and the impacts of climate change, tripartite cooperation and a multistakeholder approach were needed to shape the new social contract. He supported the draft decision.
- 571. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon suggested that the amendment proposed by the Government of Japan to paragraph 3(j) of the draft resolution could be subamended to read "ensuring decent work". His group would prefer to use the term "decent work" in that context, rather than "decent working conditions", as it was broader in scope.
- 572. The Worker spokesperson** observed that the reference to "decent work for all" in paragraph 3(a) of the draft resolution should be understood to include refugees and migrant workers and other vulnerable groups of workers. As she understood it, the intention of Japan's proposed amendment to paragraph 3(j) was to make a separate and additional point to that made in subparagraph 3(a), and her group continued to support that proposed amendment. It did not support the subamendment proposed by the Africa group, despite the good intentions behind the proposal.
- 573. A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) recalled that, at its 350th Session (March 2024), the Governing Body had decided to place on the agenda of the 113th Session (2025) of the Conference an item on the ILO's tripartite input to the Second World Summit for Social Development. At its 352nd Session (October–November 2024), it had adopted the key messages of the tripartite input prepared by the Working Party and had instructed the Working Party to prepare a draft resolution on that input, for examination by the Governing Body at its current session and transmission to the Conference for adoption at its 113th Session. The previous week, the Governing Body had endorsed the proposed programme of work for that session, according to which the examination of the item, including the draft resolution, would be referred to the General Affairs Committee. In accordance with the Standing Orders of the Conference, the General Affairs Committee could consider amendments to a draft resolution brought before it. It would therefore technically be able to amend the text of the key messages if that text was included in the draft resolution. However, it was expected that the Committee would take into consideration the fact that the text had already been adopted by the Governing Body – as was made clear in the wording used. If the text of the key messages was removed from the draft resolution, the General Affairs Committee would not be able to make amendments to it; it would examine only the text of the draft resolution submitted to it.
- 574. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster), responding to the question posed by the representative of the Africa group concerning the implications of subparagraph (c)(iii) of the draft decision, explained that the intention was to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated from the

budget to enable the Office to continue to engage with the co-facilitators and UN bodies in promoting the key messages.

- 575. The Worker spokesperson** said that removing the key messages from the draft resolution would avoid any potential confusion over the purpose of the discussion that would take place at the forthcoming session of the Conference. She proposed that a weblink to the online version of the key messages should be inserted in paragraph 2. Subject to that additional amendment, her group supported the draft decision, as amended.
- 576. The Employer spokesperson** also endorsed the draft decision, as amended.
- 577. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon asked what would happen if the Conference made changes to the draft resolution that substantially affected the key messages. In that eventuality, he wondered what would become of the key messages that had originally been transmitted to the co-facilitators.
- 578. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) recalled that, if the key messages were removed from the draft resolution, they could not be amended in any way by the Conference. They would continue to exist as an independent document in the form in which had been widely shared. It was true that, if the draft resolution was substantially amended, it might no longer be aligned with the text of the key messages.
- 579. The Worker spokesperson** clarified that, while her group agreed that the draft resolution should not include the key messages in full, it wished to retain the reference in paragraph 2 to ensuring that the outcome of the Summit would take full account of the key messages. The resolution adopted by the Conference at its 113th Session should therefore be closely aligned with the key messages. The discussion of the draft resolution by the General Affairs Committee would give Employer, Worker and Government representatives alike the opportunity to express their opinions concerning possible improvements.
- 580. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon asked whether the Conference, as the supreme decision-making body of the ILO, would be able to reopen discussions on the key messages. His group was of the view that Member States must be given the opportunity to make proposals to amend the key messages either before or during the 113th Session of the Conference, even if those messages had been adopted by the Governing Body.
- 581. The Worker spokesperson** observed that the majority of members of the Governing Body appeared to share the opinion that the General Affairs Committee should be invited to take into account the key messages, but should not be given the opportunity to re-open discussions on them, owing both to the size of that task and to the fact that the key messages had already been shared with the co-facilitators and UN bodies. By reopening discussions on the key messages, the ILO would risk sending confusing signals to all those who were currently preparing their positions for the Summit. However, there was nothing to prevent the Conference, as the supreme decision-making body of the ILO, from providing its own insights and passing comment on the key messages in its resolution, which remained open to amendment and improvement.
- 582. The representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) recalled that the key messages had been adopted by the Governing Body following a meeting of the Committee of the Whole, in which all Member States had been given the opportunity to participate. At that time, the text had been supported by all Member States. The General Affairs Committee would be perfectly entitled to amend the

draft resolution brought before it to reflect the views of any countries that wished to make changes to the key messages. Indeed, the Governing Body had decided to include the item in the agenda of the General Affairs Committee precisely because it would give participants the opportunity to express their opinions on the key messages. However, the key messages themselves had already been shared with the interested parties and it would be preferable not to have to retroactively modify them.

- 583. The Employer spokesperson** recalled that the purpose of the key messages was to ensure that the views of the constituents were taken into consideration in the political declaration of the Summit. Given that the negotiations on the zero draft of the political declaration had to be finalized by July, the timeline was very tight.
- 584. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon said that, in the light of the explanations provided, his group was prepared to join the consensus and adopt the draft decision, as amended.

Decision

585. The Governing Body:

- (a) **took note of the report of the Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda contained in document GB.353/INS/17;**
- (b) **decided to transmit to the International Labour Conference for possible adoption at its 113th Session (2025) the draft resolution concerning the Second World Summit for Social Development prepared by the Working Party and set out in the appendix to the report, in the amended form reproduced below;**
- (c) **instructed the Director-General:**
 - (i) **to continue to make the necessary arrangements to ensure the full contribution of the ILO to the Summit and its follow-up, in coordination with the Working Party and the ILO's tripartite constituents;**
 - (ii) **to take every opportunity to promote the tripartite key messages to the Summit;**
 - (iii) **to take into account the need for the ILO to play a leading role in the follow-up to the Summit when implementing the Programme and Budget for 2026–27.**

(GB.353/INS/17, paragraph 7, as amended by the Governing Body)

Draft resolution concerning the 2025 “World Social Summit” under the title “Second World Summit for Social Development”

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting in Geneva at its 113th Session, 2025,

Recalling the Declaration of Philadelphia (1944) and the key role that the ILO played in the 1995 World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and in its follow-up, including the adoption of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008), as amended in 2022, and the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019),

Welcoming the decision by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to convene a World Social Summit under the title “Second World Summit for Social Development”, which is to be held in Qatar in November 2025 and represents a unique opportunity to recommit to the 1995

Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action, assess the progress made, address related implementation gaps and strengthen the social dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Reaffirming that lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice, and that peace, security, human rights, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, and social justice are all essential components of social development,

Considering that the experience of the past century has confirmed that the continuous and concerted action of governments and representatives of employers and workers is essential to the achievement of social justice, democracy and the promotion of universal and lasting peace,

Underlining the significant role of the ILO in advancing the three interconnected and mutually reinforcing core themes of social development, namely the elimination of poverty, the expansion of full, freely chosen and productive employment and decent work for all, and the promotion of social integration,

Stressing the centrality of the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda, namely employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue, in advancing social development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Acknowledging that, since 1995, inequalities in the world of work have persisted while new opportunities and challenges have emerged, including those relating to technological innovation, demographic shifts and climate change, all of which have a direct impact on social development,

Reiterating the need to address the potential social consequences arising from economic policy reforms and debt restructuring and to foster sustainable economic growth, investment and decent work creation,

Highlighting the ILO's constitutional mandate for the promotion of decent work and social justice based on its unique tripartite constituency, its standard-setting function and its primary competence for the preparations for, conduct of and follow-up to the Summit on issues pertaining to its mandate,

Acknowledging the central role of social dialogue – both tripartite and bipartite – as a key labour market governance mechanism in reaching economically and socially balanced outcomes, and in advancing social development,

Recalling the Pact for the Future adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2024, in which Member States decided to “secure an ambitious outcome at the World Social Summit entitled ‘Second World Summit for Social Development’ in 2025” and the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development, in 2025, which will address the urgent need to fully implement the SDGs and to support the reform of the international financial architecture,

Acknowledging the role of the ILO as the main custodian agency for Goal 8 indicators,

Recognizing the importance of greater policy coherence and international cooperation that is fully aligned with national priorities, takes account of specific national circumstances, and complements national efforts to advance social development,

Calling on all Member States to fulfil their responsibility to deliver social justice and social development through a renewed global social contract with a human-centred approach, to be developed in close consultation with employers' and workers' organizations,

Invites all Member States, who hold the primary responsibility for their social development, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, to:

1. Ensure the appropriate involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in the preparations for, conduct of, and follow-up to the Summit by:
 - (a) involving these organizations in national preparations for Summit and in the implementation of its outcome;
 - (b) considering the inclusion of representatives of employers' and workers' organizations as advisers in the national delegations to the Summit;
 - (c) considering the practical arrangements for the effective participation of representatives of employers' and workers' organizations in the Summit;
2. Ensure that the outcome of the Summit takes full account of the [tripartite key messages adopted by the Governing Body of the ILO at its 352nd Session \(October–November 2024\)](#);
3. Entrust the ILO, including its tripartite constituents, to play a leading role in the implementation of the outcome of the Summit, in areas pertaining to its mandate, including with regard to:
 - (a) the creation of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all as a core objective of national plans, by implementing employment-friendly development strategies, including through policies leading to job-rich and inclusive economic growth;
 - (b) the setting, promotion, ratification and supervision of international labour standards and, through strong, influential and inclusive mechanisms of social dialogue, the need for adequate labour protection for all workers in line with the Decent Work Agenda, including all the fundamental principles and rights at work, namely freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the effective abolition of child labour, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation, and the right to a safe and healthy working environment; a living wage in line with ILO principles; and maximum limits on working time, taking into account national circumstances;
 - (c) the progressive achievement of sustainable universal social protection at an accelerated pace and in accordance with national circumstances, with a view to reaching SDG target 1.3 by 2030; [Footnote: SDG target 1.3 is to "implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable".]
 - (d) the scaling up of programmes and policies for youth employment leading to the sustainable integration of young people in the labour market, including by facilitating the transition from school-to-work and developing quality apprenticeship systems;
 - (e) the improvement of skills development and the promotion of lifelong learning to enhance employability;
 - (f) the promotion of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, including for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and entities within the social and solidarity economy;

- (g) the transition from the informal to the formal economy, including by creating the framework conditions that prevent the informalization of jobs and economic units;
 - (h) the strengthening of the social dimension of policies aimed at greening the economy and the creation of decent climate-friendly work through the design and implementation of just transition plans;
 - (i) the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation, the promotion of gender equality and the inclusion of persons and groups in vulnerable situations;
 - (j) the ensuring of decent working conditions for workers at higher risk of exploitation, including refugees and migrant workers;
 - (k) the strengthening of labour market institutions, including both tripartite and bipartite social dialogue;
 - (l) the development of care economy – including healthcare – frameworks that promote decent work for care workers and strengthen care infrastructure;
 - (m) the monitoring and the shaping of the response to the opportunities and challenges brought by technological innovation to the world of work, including by drawing on the knowledge produced by the ILO Observatory on AI and Work in the Digital Economy, in alignment with relevant UN resolutions;
 - (n) the promotion and implementation of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable strategies to tackle inequalities in the world of work;
4. Ensure the provision of appropriate means to implement the outcome of the Summit, including adequate levels of investments in decent work creation through the mobilization of both domestic and international resources;
 5. Develop a robust framework to monitor progress on the implementation of the Summit's outcome, which takes into account national circumstances and priorities, and acknowledges the constitutional mandate and the leading role of the ILO on issues pertaining to its mandate;
 6. Promote regional cooperation and the exchange of best practices between Member States in implementing the outcome of the Summit;
 7. Implement the outcome of the Summit, as appropriate, with the full involvement of the social partners, and through a coordinated approach among all organizations concerned, including international financial institutions, development banks and other development agencies;
 8. Collaborate through multi-stakeholder initiatives, such as the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, in supporting the implementation of the outcome of the Summit;
 9. Ensure that the outcome of the Summit informs discussions on advancing sustainable development by 2030 and beyond.

18. Composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meetings (GB.353/INS/18)

586. The Worker spokesperson expressed support for the draft decision.

- 587. The Employer spokesperson**, thanking the Office for preparing such a comprehensive document, expressed her group's concern at the ILO's overloaded schedule of meetings for the remainder of 2025 and 2026. Holding so many official meetings was placing considerable strain on resources, especially in view of the ongoing budget constraints. Rather than continuing to allocate resources to meetings that might have only a limited impact, the ILO should place greater emphasis on efficient use of resources and focus on providing capacity-building and technical support to ensure the effective implementation of outcomes.
- 588.** Drawing attention to the fact that two meetings would take place concurrently between 5 and 8 May 2025, she acknowledged that the Tripartite Meeting on the Review of the Functioning of the Governing Body presented an urgently needed and valuable opportunity to resolve long-standing issues. However, scheduling it over the same dates as a meeting of experts on the promotion of decent work in recycling could undermine both activities. Her group nonetheless supported the draft decision.
- 589. Speaking on behalf of the countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, a Government representative of Pakistan, welcoming the cooperation agreement signed in September 2024 between the ILO and the Labour Centre of the OIC, thanked the Governing Body for its decision to invite the Labour Centre to attend ILO meetings and events as an observer. His group looked forward to fruitful collaboration between the Labour Centre and the ILO on matters of mutual interest.
- 590. The Worker spokesperson** recalled that all groups were aware of the difficulties in finding dates for the meeting to review the functioning of the Governing Body and that there had been no other solution but to schedule it over the same dates as the meeting of experts on the promotion of decent work in recycling. She saw no problem with the number of meetings arranged for sectoral social partners, which were particularly appreciated by global union federations. The ILO was a vibrant organization that maintained a busy calendar of meetings, but the Office always endeavoured to avoid scheduling meetings on overlapping dates. Concerning the number of meetings scheduled in 2026, she recalled that the Employers' group had insisted on having a second meeting on the functioning of the Governing Body in early 2026.

Decision

- 591. The Governing Body, upon the recommendation of its Officers:**
- (a) **approved the special arrangements and rules of procedure applicable to the fifth meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006) contained in Appendix I to document GB.353/INS/18;**
 - (b) **took note of the arrangements for the Tripartite Meeting on the Review of the Functioning of the Governing Body;**
 - (c) **approved the date, composition and agenda of the Meeting of experts on paternity and parental protection and other care leave;**
 - (d) **took note of the cost estimates provided by the Office for tripartite meetings to be organized to give effect to the recommendations of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group;**
 - (e) **authorized the Director-General to invite the Labour Centre of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to future sessions of the Governing Body and to the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference;**

- (f) authorized the Director-General to invite the other organizations listed in Appendix II to document GB.353/INS/18, it being understood that it would be for the Conference to consider their requests to participate in the work of the committees dealing with the agenda items in which they have stated a special interest, and to inform the organizations concerned that they may nominate one person only for each of the agenda items in respect of which their interest has been recognized;
- (g) endorsed the proposals made in relation to the invitation of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations as observers to the other official meetings listed in Appendix II to document GB.353/INS/18;
- (h) took note of the programme of meetings contained in Part II of document GB.353/INS/18, subject to further decision-making by the Governing Body.

(GB.353/INS/18, paragraph 36)

Other business: Change of Employer Vice-Chairperson

Tribute to the outgoing Employer Vice-Chairperson

- 592. The Chairperson**, speaking in a personal capacity, expressed deep appreciation for the remarkable contributions that Ms Hornung-Draus had made to the ILO and the global landscape of labour and employment policy. A tireless advocate for employers, her strategic and unwavering commitment to tripartism, multilateralism and the fundamental principle of equal sovereignty among Member States had left an enduring mark on the Organization. She had contributed to critical discussions and landmark decisions, consistently championing policies in favour of sustainable enterprises, economic growth and social dialogue. Her leadership had set a high standard, and her legacy would continue to inspire all those who succeeded her. On behalf of the Governing Body, he conveyed heartfelt gratitude for her invaluable service and wished Ms Hornung-Draus every success in the next chapter of her life.
- 593. The Employer spokesperson** said that Ms Hornung-Draus was a global stateswoman and a champion of the private sector and real economy whose impact had been felt at all levels of the multilateral system. Possessing of extraordinary energy and resilience, as well as unwavering determination, she had been a powerful advocate for employers' interests. Ms Hornung-Draus had left an indelible mark on the priorities and operations of the ILO, and it was thanks in no small part to her persistence that the promotion of sustainable enterprises had become a matter of such significance for the Organization. Her strategic vision had been instrumental in shaping policy discussions, strengthening the Employers' collective voice and driving meaningful progress in global labour governance. Her legacy would continue to influence employers at the national, regional and international levels for years to come. The Employers' group expressed its deepest appreciation for her commitment and tireless efforts and wished her every success in her future endeavours.
- 594. The Worker Vice-Chairperson** said that the period during which she and Ms Hornung-Draus had served as Vice-Chairpersons of the Governing Body during Ambassador Anna Jardfelt's tenure as Chairperson had marked an important milestone for women's participation at the ILO. Ms Hornung-Draus had fought hard during negotiations of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, a document that remained a source of much pride for the Employers' group. She had also worked tirelessly to ensure that ILO documents reflected the role played by the private sector in guaranteeing employment. Stressing the importance of collaboration, rather than confrontation, in social dialogue to ensure greater stability and sustainability in the current climate of geopolitical volatility, she underlined her gratitude for

Ms Hornung-Draus' role in reaching an agreement on the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27. She expressed the hope that the spirit in which the social partners had approached those negotiations – with respect for diversity, equality and inclusion – would serve as a template for future ILO discussions. She thanked Ms Hornung-Draus for everything that she had done at the Organization and wished her well for the future.

- 595. Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico said that Ms Hornung-Draus had been at the forefront of international labour policy for several decades, defending the interests of employers and promoting the principles of equity, sustainability and cooperation. She had contributed her invaluable knowledge and vision to the work of the Governing Body and, as a member of the Committee on Freedom of Association, had helped to strengthen the fundamental principles protecting the rights of workers and employers. Thanks to her work with the Confederation of European Business and the Business 20 forum, not to mention her extensive publications, she had also helped to shape broader international discourse on labour policy, corporate social responsibility and the future of work. Ms Hornung-Draus had made a lasting impact on everyone at the ILO and would leave an enduring mark on the Organization. Thanking her for her unwavering commitment and leadership, his group wished her all the best for her future projects.
- 596. A Government representative of Germany** thanked Ms Hornung-Draus for her tireless work and leadership in representing the interests of the Employers' group. Her work on social dialogue at the multilateral level had been invaluable to the tripartite approach of the ILO. More than ever, the working world needed people like Ms Hornung-Draus who could build bridges and find compromises. Her considered criticism and pragmatic approach had helped strengthen the Organization, and she had always sought to strike a balance between the interests of employers, governments and workers. She had also made a significant contribution to the development of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, recognizing that the anniversary should be celebrated by establishing a road map for the future, rather than simply reflecting on past achievements. The Government of Germany wished her all the best for the future and looked forward to working with her successor.
- 597. The Director-General** thanked Ms Hornung-Draus for her intelligent, dynamic contribution to the Organization, noting her effective teamwork with the other Officers of the Governing Body. She had shown great energy in leading the Employers' group and advancing the cause of business, bringing an astute sense of international politics to the discussion and setting a high standard for the quality of debate. He had particularly appreciated her valuable views on the direction of the ILO and her firm belief in the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises and productivity.
- 598. The outgoing Employer Vice-Chairperson** said that she wished to thank everyone for their comments. Her time at the ILO had spanned the terms of office of four Directors-General, each of whom had made a particular contribution to the Organization. Under Mr Michel Hansenne, the International Labour Conference had adopted the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, a major achievement at a time when the introduction of social clauses into trade treaties was the subject of great debate. During the next period, Mr Juan Somavia had overseen efforts to raise the public profile of the Organization, notably by developing the concept of "decent work" to convey the aims of the ILO to a non-specialist audience. The adoption of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization had been another important step during that time, as it had reaffirmed the importance of ensuring that the Organization responded to the needs of its constituents, rather than imposing a top-down approach. After that, Mr Guy Ryder had prioritized social dialogue and collective bargaining and had overseen the negotiation of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future

of Work, something in which she was honoured and proud to have participated. Lastly, the tenure of the current Director-General had seen the development of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Despite its initial reservations, her group now recognized that the initiative could enhance the ILO's profile by encouraging a wide range of stakeholders to rally around key topics in the world of work.

- 599.** In the current challenging global context, it would be vital for the ILO, and the multilateral system in general, to reaffirm the principle of sovereign equality of all Members, as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. The Organization would be most effective working within its mandate of decent work, which meant promoting the twin pillars of sustainable enterprises and workers' rights, and ensuring that it remained respectful of cultural and societal differences. Such an approach would enable the ILO to succeed in the changing world, especially given its position as the only UN organization rooted in real life, thanks to the participation of the social partners. It had been a great pleasure to work at the ILO and she would continue to follow its progress.

Election of a new Employer Vice-Chairperson

- 600. Speaking on behalf of the Employers' group**, an Employer member from Switzerland nominated Mr Matthias Thorns as Employer Vice-Chairperson.
- 601. The Worker Vice-Chairperson** welcomed Mr Thorns and said that her group looked forward to fruitful cooperation with him.

Decision

- 602. The Governing Body elected Mr Matthias Thorns (Employer, Germany) as Employer Vice-Chairperson from 1 April 2025 for the remainder of the 2024–25 period.**