

Informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (14 April 2025)

1. Informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards ("the Committee") took place on 25 March 2024, from 2 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
2. The meeting was facilitated by Ms Corinne Vargha (Director of the International Labour Standards Department). The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Marc Leemans, spoke on behalf of the Workers' group and Mr Kaizer Moyane, the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, spoke on behalf of the Employers' group. The Government representatives of Algeria and Egypt spoke on behalf of the Africa region, the Government representatives of China and Japan spoke on behalf of the Asia and the Pacific region, the Government representatives of Canada and Peru spoke on behalf of the Americas region, and the Government representatives of Spain and Poland spoke on behalf of the Europe Region. A number of observers from all regions also participated in the meeting.
3. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** welcomed the meeting participants and proposed that the discussion be structured around the topics addressed in the background note. She indicated that she would welcome the participants' general comments on last year's Committee functioning as well as any introductory remarks.
4. **The Employer spokesperson** indicated that, from their perspective, most aspects of the process had worked well. However, time management remained a key factor that could either support or hinder continued progress. He emphasized the importance of maintaining discipline, with the Chair enforcing speaking times, consulting regularly with the Vice-Chairs, and adapting as needed based on the complexity of each case. He also acknowledged the significant progress made so far and expressed the Employers' desire to see this progress continue.
5. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the background note provided a good overview of the previous Committee's functioning as well as of the many changes implemented in the past years. He reaffirmed the usefulness of the informal tripartite consultations, noting that they allowed for the evaluation of the Committee's working methods and consideration of ways to strengthen the effectiveness of its work. He observed that the changes made had evolved positively over time, contributing to the successful functioning of the 2024 Committee. While certain topics would still warrant observations, he welcomed the upcoming Committee and expressed hope for the same spirit of cooperation that characterized the previous year.
6. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** reaffirmed his group's commitment to the current consultations with a view to producing recommendations to optimize the effectiveness of the Committee's work. He recalled that suitable working methods should be adopted to allow the Committee to carry out its obligations in full, without detracting from its mission. The Africa group noted the significant improvements made to the working methods since 2006, including the exceptional measures introduced during the pandemic and those which had allowed a return to normal business.

7. **The Government representatives of Canada, Japan, Peru, Poland and Spain** thanked the Office for the preparation of the consultations.
8. **Speaking on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC), the Government representative of Peru** also highlighted the importance of continuing to enhance the Committee's working methods, particularly in relation to the appropriate involvement of governments in its deliberations, predictability in the decision-making process and the consistent nature of its conclusions.
9. **The Government representative of Canada** recalled that Canada and the United States of America shared one of the two seats of the America region. She noted that the informal consultations had led to notable improvements in the Committee's working methods since 2006. She emphasized the critical importance of the Committee's effective functioning, as it lied at the core of the ILO's supervisory system. Highlighting the value placed on participating in these discussions, she expressed her commitment to continued collaboration with the Office and colleagues to further enhance the Committee's efficiency.
10. **Speaking on behalf of the Western European group, the Government representative of Spain** said that the Committee's working methods had functioned satisfactorily.

Preliminary list and submission of written information

11. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled that, in accordance with the agreed practice, the preliminary list was to be published 30 days before the start of the Conference-on Friday, 2 May 2025-and that Governments appearing on the long list of individual cases may submit written updates on any developments that have occurred since the publication of the Committee of Experts' report. These submissions-limited to a maximum of 2,000 words and provided in one of the three working languages-would be published and considered by the Vice-chairs prior to the publication of the final list. The deadline for these submissions is Monday, 19 May.
12. **The Worker spokesperson** considered that publishing the preliminary list 30 days before the start of the Conference was the earliest feasible date, given the extensive work required to analyse the Committee of Experts' report which was published in February. An earlier publication would have significant implications and was simply not feasible under the current functioning of the supervisory bodies. The Worker spokesperson acknowledged that, as long as some Governments continue to raise concerns, reflection could continue, but for the time being, these arrangements remain the only feasible option. He also expressed appreciation for the voluntary submission of written information by Governments included on the preliminary list as this information was considered when selecting cases for the final list. Such submissions are particularly valuable for assessing current developments, including how Governments intend to follow up on the Committee of Experts' observations and the extent of their engagement with social partners. The spokesperson also noted with satisfaction that this information had generally been submitted within the deadlines and urged all Governments to make use of this opportunity, while respecting the agreed word limit.
13. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed to the publication of the preliminary list of cases on 2 May. He emphasized that, although submitting written information was at the discretion of governments, it remained a valuable practice to support the Vice-chairs in finalizing the selection of cases. He strongly encouraged the Governments to take advantage of this opportunity. He noted that six Governments submitted their information after the deadline last year and urged timely submissions and respect of the word limit, to ensure that the information could be fully considered, given the limited time available to the Vice-chairs for

review. Finally, the Employer spokesperson confirmed agreement on 19 May as the deadline for submissions.

14. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** noted that the publication of the list would still take place on 2 May, 30 days before the Conference. While understanding the concerns of the Workers' group, he reiterated the proposal to extend the deadline, unchanged since 2011, to 40 days, to allow governments to prepare better. He reiterated the group's support for the possibility for governments to submit written information, by 19 May at the latest, on recent developments not examined by the Committee of Experts, and emphasized the need to demonstrate flexibility as regards the word limit. It should be possible to submit these documents in any official United Nations language, to avoid governments whose official language was not one of the three ILO working languages facing additional delays. The Office should ensure that this information was published on the Committee's website and allow the information to be submitted in electronic or paper format. Finally, he relayed the concerns of certain members, according to which the written information did not seem to have been taken into account during the discussions, and questioned whether the social partners had distributed this information to the national social partners.
15. **The Government representative of Japan, speaking in his national capacity**, emphasized the importance of publishing the list prior to the Conference delegate registration deadline which has been set at 12 May this year.
16. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** reiterated the need to retain the possibility of remote participation with the right to take the floor where it was justified. He supported the practice of publishing the preliminary list 30 days prior to the opening of the Conference and considered, in the face of the 2,000-word limit, that there should be some flexibility for complex cases.
17. **The Government representative of Canada, speaking in her national capacity**, emphasized that the publication of the preliminary list on the Committee's website 30 days before the start of the Conference was essential for Governments to prepare their statements before the Committee. She expressed support for the continued practice of inviting Governments on the preliminary list to voluntarily submit updated written information, which helped to ensure that the Committee had the most current details.
18. **The Employer spokesperson** confirmed that information submitted by Governments was taken into account and could be referenced by the Vice-chairs during individual cases discussions. He noted that repeating written information in plenary may not be the best use of the allocated time and encouraged Governments instead to use that time to explain how the information is changing the situation at the national level. He confirmed that the Vice-chairs' final selection of cases was informed by the submitted information, which was shared with and verified by national social partners.
19. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated that the 30-day period for publishing the preliminary list ahead of the Conference was a long-standing agreement and that extending this period was simply not feasible. Regarding flexibility for exceeding 2,000 words in complex cases, he noted that Employer and Worker spokespersons were not given additional time for such cases, and no criteria existed to define a case as "complicated". He therefore urged Governments to respect the 2,000-word limit and focus only on the new information to maintain efficiency. He also encouraged Governments of countries on the preliminary list to take all measures to ensure their representation at the Committee.

20. In response to the questions raised by the Africa group, **the Director of the International Labour Standards Department** specified that governments could submit information in both electronic and paper format, and that this information was published and directly accessible on the Committee's web page, in one of the three ILO official languages, as the Office did not have the resources available to translate it. However, if a government was included in the final list, the documents were subsequently translated and published in the three ILO official languages.

Adoption of the final list of individual cases

21. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** said that the Vice-Chairs had been reactive in responding to the repeated requests made by governments to adopt the final list of individual cases as early as possible, while specifying that such adoption could not take place before the first sitting of the Committee in the afternoon of 2 June.
22. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed that the final list could not be published before 2 June, as its adoption was a decision of, and must be made by, the Conference. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed, while acknowledging the expectations surrounding the adoption of the final list. He expressed appreciation for the understanding shown regarding the challenges involved and assured that both Worker and Employer spokespersons would do everything possible to fulfil this commitment.
23. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** considered the adoption of the final list during the Committee's first sitting to be one of the major achievements made as a result of the tripartite consultations. Furthermore, noting that two of the five cases placed in a double footnote for the current year concerned African countries, he asked whether the Committee of Experts took account of geographical distribution in the choice of such countries.
24. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, while recognizing the challenge that existed to adopt the final list during the first sitting, **the Government representative of Peru** reiterated the importance of disseminating this list as far in advance as possible to the governments concerned, in order to guarantee high-quality participation.
25. **The Worker spokesperson** clarified that the labelling of cases as "double footnotes" is the responsibility of the Committee of Experts. He pointed out that the process for the selection of countries in the preliminary and final lists was not a part of the Committee's working methods and should therefore not be discussed. However, he confirmed that the Experts' information on double-footnoted cases was taken into account.
26. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that while there was no rule requiring Vice-chairs to select double footnoted cases for the final list, it had become common practice to discuss them due to their serious nature. The Vice-chairs aimed to ensure overall fairness in selecting cases-not only geographically but also in terms of the conventions involved, but there was no mathematical rule or mandate for the inclusion of double-footnoted cases.
27. **The Government representative of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, acknowledged that tripartite consultations focused on the Committee's methods of work but drew attention to paragraph 26 of Document D.1, which listed several criteria for case selection – including geographical balance.
28. **The Employer spokesperson** confirmed that, following previous consultations, the Committee of Experts had been asked to consider geographical representation when selecting

double-footnoted cases and to provide greater transparency regarding their criteria. This request aimed to ensure clearer insight into how such designations are made.

General discussion

29. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** clarified that the general discussion pertained to the Committee of Experts' general report. Noting that only two speakers, aside from the Vice-chairs, addressed this segment last year, it was proposed to apply the same speaking time arrangements as those used for the General Survey discussion.
30. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that current modalities on this point were satisfactory and required no further developments. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed, emphasizing the importance of the general discussion and the need to allocate maximum speaking times. He took due note that the speaking times follow the same format as for the General Survey: 20 minutes for Employers and Workers spokespersons, 12 minutes for Governments, and 5 minutes for other members.
31. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa Group, the Government representative of Algeria** reiterated his support for aligning the speaking time for the general discussion with the time allocated to the discussion of the General Survey.
32. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** expressed support for continuing with the established speaking time limits, with the necessary flexibility being granted to the Committee Chairperson, according to the number of registered speakers.
33. **The Government representative of Canada, speaking in her national capacity**, expressed support for the proposal and emphasized the importance of early registration of speakers to ensure effective time management.

Cases of serious failure to respect reporting obligations

34. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** proposed proceeding as in the previous year. She informed that the Office would send letters to the Governments on the list of cases of serious failure to report, highlighting their situation, inviting them to submit information in advance, and offering technical assistance from labour standards specialists in the field. The Office would activate these specialists to proactively reach out to the Governments concerned.
35. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for its efforts to remind Governments of their reporting obligations, stressing that these obligations are non-negotiable as they form the basis of the supervisory system. He expressed concern at the number of non-reporting Governments. Such cases should be avoided unless serious challenges existed, in which case technical assistance should be offered. He expressed support for the measures adopted in 2022 encouraging written submissions and also allowing Governments to take the floor for up to two minutes.
36. **The Worker spokesperson** fully endorsed the Employer spokesperson's remarks, agreeing that non-reporting was a serious and concerning issue that required progress. He expressed full support for the proposed measures.
37. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa Group, the Government representative of Algeria** supported the retention of the practice established since 2022, which allowed governments to submit written information prior to the examination of their failure to report, thus promoting constructive dialogue with the Committee. The Africa group also supported the prior dispatch

of specific letters reminding governments of their obligations and of the offer of technical assistance.

38. **The Government representative of China, speaking in her national capacity,** recommended that the Office continue reaching out to enhance dialogue with the Governments that fail to meet their reporting obligations. Acknowledging the difficulties faced by some countries, she supported offering technical support to help overcome these challenges and encouraged more countries to actively fulfil their reporting obligations.
39. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** supported governments being able to submit information in writing in relation to the difficulties experienced in fulfilling the obligation to report and valued the personalized follow-up by the Office through letters and contact with standards specialists.
40. **The Government representative of Canada, speaking in her national capacity,** thanked the Office for its follow-up on this crucial issue, noting that failure to report undermined the integrity of the supervisory system. She strongly encouraged the Governments concerned to submit written information or inform the Committee of the difficulties they face in meeting reporting obligations.

Discussion of the General Survey

41. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** indicated that the proposal was to maintain the same speaking time allocations as last year.
42. **Both the Employer and Worker spokespersons** as well as the **Government of Canada, speaking in her national capacity,** supported the proposal.
43. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** expressed appreciation that last year's discussion stayed within the four-hour limit and supported continuing this practice.

Discussion of the individual cases

44. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** explained that this section addressed the allocation of speaking times and the alphabetical sequencing of individual cases – starting with the letter “S” this year. Flexibility would be applied to ensure that discussions on cases were concluded on the same day as they commenced. She also recalled that conclusions regarding country cases would be communicated to the designated representative of the concerned country two hours prior to their adoption.
45. **The Employer spokesperson** acknowledged that the introduction of time limits in 2023 effectively advanced the work, while allowing reasonable flexibility for more complex cases requiring additional time. He emphasized that remote participation in discussions of individual cases should be permitted only on an exceptional basis. He concurred with maintaining the working methods outlined in the background note.
46. **The Worker spokesperson** stressed the importance of addressing all 24 individual cases in a timely and effective manner, noting that the Committee had successfully achieved this in previous years, particularly in 2024. He highlighted the fact that there were only five evening sittings last year, all of which concluded early as well as the collaborative efforts of the Workers and Employers groups in avoiding night sittings and expressed the hope that any concerns in this regard had been alleviated. He agreed with the various elements outlined in the background note.

47. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** commended the process of examination of individual cases conducted last year. His group agreed with the possibility for the Officers to make limited adjustments to the order of examination of cases in consultation with the countries concerned, to ensure that each was completed within the same day. In addition, he proposed extending the time allocated to Governments under examination from 15 to 20 minutes for both opening and closing statements, to allow sufficient opportunity to address observations and comments from the social partners. Recognizing the importance of time management, he also suggested, on a trial basis, to reduce the speaking time for other members from five to four minutes, with the understanding that this could be adjusted at the Officers' discretion. He further noted concerns raised by some Africa group members regarding the challenge of receiving case conclusions only two hours before they are read in plenary, especially when sittings are scheduled in the morning. Lastly, he considered that Government representatives of a country under examination could be allowed to participate remotely in exceptional circumstances.
48. **The Government representative of Japan, speaking in his national capacity,** sought clarification regarding the adoption session of the joint ILO–UNESCO report scheduled for discussion on 3 June.
49. **The Government representative of China, speaking in her national capacity,** observed that discussions on individual cases occupy the most substantial portion of the Committee's work and recommended that the Chairperson of the Committee place special emphasis on time management to enhance efficiency.
50. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** considered it fundamental for the order of cases to be adjusted so as to guarantee that the examination of each case be concluded on the same day that it began. He insisted on maintaining remote participation with speaking time being allowed where it was justified and emphasized the importance of the draft conclusions being made available sufficiently in advance to the person designated by the Government concerned.
51. **The Government representative of Canada, speaking in her national capacity,** expressed support for the proposals outlined in the background note and indicated openness to exploring options aimed at enhancing the Committee's functioning.
52. In response to the request from the Africa group to explore options for earlier communication of conclusions, **the Employer spokesperson** acknowledged the challenge of improving the current two-hour time frame for providing conclusions but deferred to the Workers' group for their perspective. Additionally, he expressed openness to increasing the speaking time allocated to Governments under examination by five minutes, provided that this adjustment was well managed and balanced by a corresponding reduction in the speaking times of other participants.
53. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that draft conclusions are jointly formulated by the Workers and Employers after thoroughly reviewing all available information. In the past, these conclusions were either read out in plenary without prior sharing or provided to governments merely 15 minutes before their adoption. He encouraged Governments to ensure that their designated representatives were available to receive the conclusions, even for early morning sessions. He expressed opposition to the proposal of extending the speaking time for Governments, emphasizing that such an extension would necessitate reducing the time allocated to individual interventions. He noted that, based on past practice, well-prepared Governments should be able to deliver their statements within the existing 15-minute time

frame and an additional five minutes was unlikely to make a difference. Therefore, he recommended maintaining the current speaking time allocations.

54. **The Employer spokesperson** emphasized that the Committee operated under significant time constraints and that any proposals should aim to save time. He noted that implementing the Africa group's proposal to extend speaking times for all Governments under examination would substantially increase the overall duration of discussions. As an alternative, he suggested that, in exceptional cases where the complexity of a matter warranted it, the Chairperson could exercise discretion to allow additional time, provided that overall time frames were respected.
55. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, clarified that the group's priority would be to extend the speaking time allocated to Governments under examination during their opening statements, rather than closing statements. The proposal included a corresponding reduction in the speaking time for other speakers from five to four minutes, to accommodate this adjustment. This change could be implemented on a trial basis for the current year. He also proposed monitoring the actual speaking times used by each country to assess the necessity and effectiveness of these adjustments.
56. **The Employer spokesperson** emphasized the importance of managing the Committee's programme in its entirety, aiming to address all cases within the existing time slots and avoiding night sittings. He suggested that one way to do this would be to exercise flexibility regarding allocated speaking times in exceptional circumstances. Another way could be reducing the threshold for triggering reduced speaking times for other members-from 17 speakers to 15.
57. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that Governments could submit additional written information before the case discussion-an option preferable to extending speaking time by five minutes at the start of the discussion. The Workers did not support the proposal, as it would reduce the time allocated for individual interventions, many of which come from participants who travelled from all around the world to be present. Speaking times were already reduced to three minutes when 17 speakers were registered on the list. Further reductions were not acceptable. He encouraged governments to maximize the use of written submissions, noting that presenting new information orally at the start of discussions left no time for verification. He considered that the current speaking time arrangements had worked well in 2024 and should be maintained.
58. **The Employer spokesperson** concurred with the Worker spokesperson's position on maintaining the current speaking times. He emphasized that Governments should present their information succinctly, noting that an additional minute or two could be acceptable in exceptional cases where particularly valuable information was provided. He highlighted that any genuine need for extended speaking times could be reconsidered within the framework of discussions on working methods.
59. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, reiterated that the group's primary request was to increase by five minutes the speaking time of Governments under examination during their opening statements, while reducing the speaking times for other members and lowering the threshold that would trigger a reduction in speaking times, ensuring that the overall duration of discussions remained the same.
60. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** summarized the discussion and suggested to allow the Governments under examination to increase their

opening statements from 15 to a maximum of 20 minutes, without reducing the speaking times allocated to other members.

61. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed concern that increasing the speaking time for Governments would inevitably lead to reduced speaking times for other members, which he deemed unacceptable. He noted that, in the previous Committee session, speaking times were reduced in 14 cases due to the number of speakers exceeding 17, a situation resulting from the collective decision of those who chose to speak. He emphasized the importance of not instituting automatic reductions in speaking times across all cases, particularly not to accommodate longer opening statements by Governments. As an alternative, he suggested that if a government wished to extend its opening statement to 20 minutes, its closing statement should be correspondingly shortened to 10 minutes, thereby maintaining the overall allocated time.
62. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** proposed that the total speaking time of 30 minutes for Governments be maintained, allowing them the flexibility to divide this time between their opening and closing remarks as they see fit.
63. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, recalled that their request for additional speaking time had come from several members of the group. He accepted the proposal but emphasized the importance of closely monitoring the practice during the next session of the Committee to better assess the needs for the following year.
64. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** concluded that the speaking times would remain unchanged, on the understanding that the speeches would be monitored for further assessment.

Programme of work

65. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** presented the main aspects of the programme of work proposed in Appendix 2 of the background note, stressing in particular the discussion of the final report of the joint ILO–UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel, scheduled on the evening of Tuesday, 4 June; and the special sitting on the implementation by Belarus of Conventions Nos 87 and 98, scheduled for the morning of Saturday, 7 June. She also stressed that the Committee had held five evening sittings out of the six possible last year, thus delivering on the collective commitment to strictly manage time and avoid night sittings. Furthermore, in response to a question from the Government representative of Japan, the Director clarified that the report of the joint ILO–UNESCO Committee of Experts would be subject to discussion only, without the adoption of conclusions.
66. **The Employer spokesperson**, while expressing general agreement with the proposed working programme, which was in line with the working methods of the Committee, raised two points. Firstly, night sittings should remain the exception and, as such, should not be scheduled as a matter of course, but should be marked with an asterisk to indicate that an additional sitting could be scheduled from 18:30 to 21:00 if necessary. The second concern related to the number of individual cases. It was agreed that the capacity of the Committee was to consider 24 individual cases. The Conference resolution did not suggest that Belarus should be a 25th case. The Committee should work to accommodate 24 cases, even if one of them was treated as a special sitting. Although Belarus was exceptionally taken up as an additional case last year, this should not be seen as an acceptance of a decision that it would always be “24 plus”, especially considering that more cases could be taken up through special sittings, which would be untenable. Furthermore, the Committee’s workload should as much

as possible be managed within the serious budgetary constraints faced by the Organization. The Employers requested that any special sitting on a country case be included in the total of 24 cases.

67. **The Worker spokesperson** recalled that, last year, the Committee had dealt with the 24 individual cases as well as with an additional case referred to it by the Conference. There was a long-established agreement that the Committee would deal with 24 cases selected by the employers and the workers vice-chairs, on the basis of the report of the Committee of Experts. The situation was identical this year, and the Conference had not indicated that the discussion on Belarus would replace any of the 24 individual cases. The Committee dealt well with this exceptional situation, and completed its work without delay, with a limited number of evening sittings, which ended between 7 and 8 pm. The workers considered that the Committee should once again accept the responsibility assigned to it by the Conference and restated their commitment to the 24 cases and the special sitting. They also expressed the hope that this would not be repeated every year.
68. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group**, requested that the Office provide background information on the history of special sittings. This request was supported by the **Government representatives speaking on behalf of ASPAG**.
69. **The Government representative of China** supported the Employers' proposal considering that limiting the Committee's capacity to 24 cases would ensure the efficiency of the discussions and effective time management. She also requested that once adopted the programme of work kept unchanged to avoid some inconvenience for the delegates.
70. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** valued early and efficient planning, and urged the Office to maintain direct proactive communication with the governments of countries with cases under discussion. He emphasized the importance of preserving flexibility in the programming where duly justified reasons existed. As regards the approach adopted by the Employers' group, he expressed concern as to the possibility that special cases would continue to be added and that, according to one scenario, there may in the end be 24 cases, plus three or four special cases.
71. **The Government representative of Canada** supported the proposed programme of work and, regarding the special sitting, considered that, as the worker spokesperson had rightly pointed out, the Committee had managed its programme and time well over the past year.
72. **The Government representative of Poland** stated that the **Eastern European Group** had no comments on the proposed programme of work and that, **speaking in her national capacity**, she supported the workers' position.
73. **The Government representative of Spain, speaking in his national capacity**, also supported the position of the Workers' group.
74. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled that, in accordance with the 2023 Conference resolution, as of the 112th Session of the Conference (2023), the Committee would hold a special sitting to examine the follow-up by the Government of Belarus to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, so long as Belarus has not been shown to have fulfilled its obligations. In the past, special sittings were held for ten years, from 2001 to 2011, on the follow-up by Myanmar to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. In terms of the number of individual cases discussed, the figure of 24 resulted from an agreement that was part of the "2014 package deal", which also agreed to hold annual informal tripartite consultations to improve the Committee's working methods.

75. **The Worker spokesperson** referred to the document submitted to the March 2025 session of the Governing Body according to which the Committee would examine 24 individual cases and hold a special sitting on the case of Belarus. He considered that it would not be wise for the informal tripartite consultations to overrule a decision of the Governing Body.
76. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed that the Governing Body referred to a special sitting on Belarus without indicating that the special sitting would be in addition to the 24 individual cases, as it was for the Committee to decide on its own programme of work. The examination of Belarus as part of the 24 individual cases should not be seen as a defiance of the decisions of the Conference or the Governing Body. The Committee was not expected or instructed to examine “24 cases plus” but to adjust its workload to include a special sitting on Belarus. He further pointed out that according to the Conference resolution the special sitting would take place until Belarus had been shown to have fulfilled its obligations, so it could be every year and other countries could also be examined through special sittings. It was therefore not wise to consider examining such cases in addition to the 24 individual cases as the Committee’s capacity was to discuss 24 cases and not “24 plus”. He recalled that last year’s decision had been taken on an exceptional basis and on the understanding that it would be revisited this year in the light of new developments.
77. **The Worker spokesperson**, while recognizing that the employers had agreed to the decision on an exceptional basis, stressed that the Committee’s last year experience had shown that it could be managed within the time allotted and that it would then again be possible to examine 24 individual cases and hold a special sitting in 2025. He reiterated his view that the Governing Body decision indicated that the Committee would consider 24 individual cases “and” hold a special sitting on Belarus and not “including” a special sitting. If, in the future, the Committee had to deal with more additional cases, maybe two or three, then the exceptional nature of the situation would be considered, as the Committee had done during the Covid. In the light of last year’s positive experience, the Workers’ group did not see any reason to go against the decision of the Governing Body to examine 24 cases and to hold a special sitting.
78. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group**, recalled their concerns from the previous consultations and their understanding that the decision was exceptional. They referred to the agreement to discuss 24 individual cases which had been part of the 2014 package deal and had been applied since 2015. Whilst the Committee had been able to consider 24 cases plus one, to go beyond this would have an impact on time management and the number of evening sittings. This would be a burden on everyone and had to be stopped at a certain point. In the light of the language of the document of the Governing Body, the Africa group could accept the 24 cases in addition to the special sitting but on an exceptional basis. The Office should flag this in the notes of the meeting and in future documents of the Governing Body. He considered that nothing in the rules of procedure could prevent the Committee from deciding on the maximum number of cases to be examined.
79. **The Employer spokesperson** reiterated his understanding that the Governing Body had not requested the Committee to discuss 24 individual cases plus Belarus, as this was not for the Governing Body to decide but for the tripartite consultations. Based on the Governing Body request to the Committee to include a special sitting on Belarus in its programme of work, the tripartite consultations were discussing the necessary arrangements to determine the Committee’s capacity to absorb the special sitting. The Committee also had to include in its agenda the discussion of the joint ILO–UNESCO report. The Employer spokesperson cautioned that the exception made last year to take up Belarus as an additional case should not become the rule and referred to the concerns expressed by other participants about the workload involved.

80. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group**, noted that, while the Governing Body document indicated that the Committee would consider 24 individual cases and hold a special sitting on Belarus, further adjustments to the Committee's working methods would be determined by recommendations arising from the informal tripartite consultations. This meant that the tripartite consultations had an input on the matter and as a result, the Africa group would support 24 cases only, not "24 plus".
81. **The Government representative of Japan, speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, indicated that there was no group position on this but that time management was very important. **Speaking in his national capacity**, he stressed that the feasibility of adding new cases needed to be discussed. An additional case was discussed last year and time management efficiency was very important. The issue was more about time management than adding a new country.
82. **The Government representative of China, speaking in her national capacity**, supported the employers' proposal, and stressed that it should be up to the Committee to decide on the number of cases to be discussed according to its capacity. She suggested to keep 24 cases in total.
83. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** said that there was no problem with the original programme, but that various doubts arose owing to the fact that it was being discussed. In that regard, he did not want to support something that was unlawful. To his understanding, the Committee was not a forum for correcting a decision taken by the Governing Body. He requested clarification as to the way in which the Governing Body document was interpreted.
84. **The Government representative of Canada** echoed the question raised by GRULAC. She reiterated her support for the proposed programme of work which included 24 individual cases and the special sitting.
85. **The Government representative of Poland, speaking in her national capacity**, considered that the special sitting on Belarus should be a 25th case as it differed from other individual cases, and it had been placed on the agenda by the Conference.
86. **Speaking in his national capacity, the Government representative of Spain** reiterated his support for the programme of work proposed by the Office.
87. **The Workers spokesperson** recalled that the time allocated for the discussion of the joint ILO–UNESCO report was only one hour and that it would not interfere with the timing of the discussion of individual cases scheduled to begin on Wednesday. In addition, he considered that it would be very difficult to explain to the outside world that, the Committee decided to deal with one case less under the same circumstances as in 2024. he acknowledged that if new cases were selected for additional special sittings of the Committee, such exceptional circumstances would merit prior reflection. The Workers agreed on a timely and thorough discussion to address this possible situation which could get worse. For this year, however, they would stick to the discussion of 24 cases and the special sitting for Belarus as, this was possible last year, albeit on an exceptional basis and within the time constraints of the Committee.
88. **The Employer spokesperson** pointed out that the employers' reading of the Governing Body decision was 24 individual cases, ensuring that one of them would be the special sitting on Belarus. The Governing Body also recognized that this meeting would review the working methods of the Committee and could therefore influence its programme of work. Last year, the employers agreed to an exception and the intention was not to keep on adding more individual cases because the Committee had been able to examine them within the time

allocated. The decision to limit the number of cases to 24 was a sensible one, based on the need to be faithful to a proper examination of the allegations concerned, to allow discussion to be meaningful, and to give proper consideration to the drafting of impactful conclusions. There would be no point in simply going through the volumes. Moreover, the preparation of special sittings required more time and resources. In conclusion, the Employer spokesperson pleaded for being faithful to the working methods of the Committee and observed that many participants had expressed their preference for 24 cases, including Belarus.

89. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** noting that participants were divided suggested a pragmatic approach for this year's programme. She stressed that, while the provisional programme of work suggested that 24 individual cases and a special sitting could be accommodated in the schedule, there was a strong call for an in-depth discussion on the matter. She asked the participants if they would agree to proceed on the basis of the provisional work programme contained in Appendix 2 of the background note with the clear understanding that the exception should not become the rule and that the tripartite informal consultations would return to the issue in due course next year well in advance of the Conference.
90. **The Government representative of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Africa Group,** indicated that the Group would accept the consensus if there was an agreement to accept it on an exceptional basis. This should be reflected in the brief report of the meeting and the matter should be dealt with in due course to avoid its recurrence.
91. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, the Government representative of Peru** expressed agreement with the pragmatic solution. He shared his concern that the current scenario would recur in the coming years and requested that the drafting of the document to be submitted to the Governing Body should not be open to interpretation.
92. **Speaking in his national capacity, the Government representative of Spain** said that what the Office was proposing was a good solution. He specified that it was difficult to foresee whether the Conference was going to adopt more cases for follow-up by the Committee and that the situation should be analysed in the future.
93. **The Government representative of Japan, speaking in his national capacity,** considered that the Office's proposal was the most appropriate, also stressing that the discussions of the joint ILO-UNESCO report would be limited to one hour. He requested the Office to keep a record of the discussion for the next tripartite consultations, with a view to further improving the Committee's working methods.
94. **The Employer spokesperson** noted from the participants interventions that the situation would be treated again as exceptional this year. Recalling that this had already been the case last year he asked at what point did the exception become the norm and wished to make sure that it was absolutely clear that the capacity of the Committee was limited to the examination of 24 cases and that any additional case referred to the Committee as a special sitting, would be considered within this limit of 24. On this understanding, the employers could accept the proposal.
95. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the situation last year had been treated as an exception because according to the employers it was uncertain whether the Committee would be able to examine all the items on its agenda within the time constraints. It appeared that the employers were more focused on the numbers than on the timing actually needed to examine the cases. They agreed to discuss the 24 individual cases and the special sitting on Belarus, with a future

meeting to discuss the situation after the November session of the Governing Body, in the hope of knowing whether the situation would be repeated or worsened.

96. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** thanked the participants for their support of the pragmatic approach proposed which would be duly reflected in the minutes. She informed the participants that paragraph 38 of the background note did not correctly reflect the final outcome of the Governing Body's discussion with regard to the request to the Committee's officers to approve any request received from an international employers' or workers' organization to make a statement through a representative of employers and workers of Myanmar. It was erroneously mentioned that these requests were limited to matters specifically concerning the situation in Myanmar. A revised version would be published. She thanked the interpreters for their willingness to stay longer than planned and informed the participants that there wouldn't be any interpretation from now on.
97. **The Employer spokesperson** referred to a problem faced by the Worker and Employer vice-Chairs last year where a participant used unparliamentary language and they had not been able to correct it, despite agreement between them. This was due to the Committee's rule according to which only the person who had spoken could present amendments. He proposed that social partners secretariats be able to submit amendments to the draft minutes as they de facto were the representatives of workers' and employers' delegates, and they coordinated the groups positions. In addition, delegates who were legitimately speaking on social partners behalf, might have left when minutes are open to amendments.
98. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled the Committee's practice of accepting amendments to the verbatim draft minutes published prior to their adoption. Delegates could submit amendments to correct errors in the transcription of their own statement. It was not possible to amend someone else's statement. In addition, if a delegate did not abide by the rules agreed by the Committee, including the use of parliamentary language, other delegates could raise a point of order with the Chairperson. This would be recorded, and the Committee would decide whether or not to reflect the statement in the minutes. A post factum correction without the agreement of the person concerned seemed difficult.
99. **The Employer spokesperson** pointed out that this was precisely the impediment they had faced last year and the reason why, as part of the discussion on the Committee's working methods, they asked for the rule on amendments to be changed.
100. **The Worker spokesperson** confirmed that, despite the Vice-chairs' request, it had not been possible to remove a nasty expression used by a delegate from the transcriptions. As the meeting had already exceeded its allotted time by one hour, he expressed his willingness to discuss this issue in due course in the light of the employers' proposal, stressing the importance of parliamentary language and respect between the parties.
101. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled that there was no interpretation. She reiterated that raising a point of order would help to avoid the situation described, and also stressed that Government participants might not be aware of it. Considering that this was an important point on which the Government representatives needed to properly engage, with some background information, she proposed that it be placed on the agenda of the next informal tripartite consultations.
102. **The Employer spokesperson** stressed that this was an important issue which the employers wished to address as soon as possible. There was no disagreement between the employers and workers on this proposal, which would not necessarily disadvantage Governments.

- 103. The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** concluded the meeting thanking the participants for their interest and commitment to the discussions which resulted in a longer meeting than anticipated. She apologized for the inconvenience this might have caused. On the basis of the outcome of the discussions, the Secretariat would prepare Documents D.0 and D.1 and publish the minutes of the meeting.