



Governing Body

354th Session, Geneva, 14 June 2025

Minutes of the 354th Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office

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1. The 354th Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office was held in Geneva on Saturday, 14 June 2025. It was presided over by the outgoing Chairperson, Mr Seong Deok Yun (Republic of Korea), and Ms Anousheh Karvar (France) as incoming Chairperson.
2. The spokesperson of Workers' group was Ms Catelene Passchier (Netherlands) for all items on the agenda, except for item 8, on which Mr Jeffrey Vogt spoke for the group.
3. For the Employers' group, the spokespersons by item were as follows:

Item	Employer spokesperson
5, 7, 11	Mr Matthias Thorns (Germany)
3	Ms Sonya Jahani (Bahrain)
4	Mr Kaizer Moyane (South Africa)
6	Mr Blaise Matthey (Switzerland)
8, 9	Mr Thomas Mackall (United States of America)

► Institutional Section

1. Election of the Officers of the Governing Body for 2025–26 (no document)

4. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico nominated Ms Anousheh Karvar from France for the post of Chairperson of the Governing Body for the period 2025–26. Ms Karvar had worked as an academic, with her country's largest trade union and in senior roles in the French public administration, receiving high honours and decorations for her services in areas including social affairs and social policy. In 2023, she was made an honorary member of the French National Assembly. She had represented France in the Governing Body for some years, chairing the Policy Development Section on a number of occasions, and had chaired the general discussion on inequality and the world of work at the 109th Session (2021) of the International Labour Conference. The Government group was convinced that with her broad experience and deep knowledge of the ILO, Ms Karvar would be an outstanding Chairperson of the Governing Body.
5. **The Employer and Worker spokespersons** endorsed the nomination.
6. **Speaking on behalf of the Employers' group**, an Employer member from Japan nominated Mr Matthias Thorns as Employer Vice-Chairperson.
7. **Speaking on behalf of the Workers' group**, a Worker member from Ghana nominated Ms Catelene Passchier as Worker Vice-Chairperson.

Decision

8. **The Governing Body elected for the 2025–26 period:**
 - Ms Anousheh Karvar (France) as Chairperson;
 - Mr Matthias Thorns (Germany) as Employer Vice-Chairperson;
 - Ms Catelene Passchier (Netherlands) as Worker Vice-Chairperson.

Opening remarks

9. **The outgoing Chairperson** said that serving as Chairperson of the Governing Body had been an honour and a profoundly enriching experience. The ILO's tripartite structure enabled genuine social dialogue that could shape inclusive, durable outcomes rooted in respect and mutual understanding. He had been humbled and inspired to witness the power of negotiation and shared commitment to decent work as a fundamental human right. The complex debates in the Governing Body reflected real world pressures worldwide; during the past year, he had witnessed how negotiation and dialogue had brought divergent views within it together to strengthen the institution. He was grateful to have contributed to reflections on the democratization of the ILO and supported its engagement with the upcoming Second World Summit for Social Development. He thanked the Director-General, the Office and all who had worked with him for their unwavering support, professionalism and tireless efforts, and extended heartfelt congratulations to his successor.
10. **The Director-General** thanked the outgoing Chairperson for a rich, if at times difficult, year. His ability to remain calm in testing situations was exemplary, as was his grasp of complex matters and his time management. In keeping with tradition, he presented him with the gavel of the Governing Body.
11. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** commended the outgoing Chairperson for his firm and fair approach and expressed appreciation for the excellent cooperation enjoyed in meetings of Officers of the Governing Body.
12. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** expressed appreciation for the outgoing Chairperson's skills, impartiality and unwavering commitment to dialogue and his calm leadership through a complex period for the Organization and the multilateral system.
13. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Mexico thanked the outgoing Chairperson for his unstinting efforts to make consensus possible. He had risen to every challenge in negotiations during his term and had also assumed the presidency of the Tripartite Meeting on the Review of the Functioning of the Governing Body, lending his characteristic patience and calm to every endeavour. He had represented his country and the Government group with honour, promoting the Organization's interests and those of all its constituents.
14. Mexico was ending its presidency of the Government group with pride and a sense of achievement after a year of collaboration and commitment to ILO fundamental principles. The focus of had been on the quest for decent work and gender equality, strengthening tripartite dialogue and defending the rights of the most vulnerable. It had fulfilled its role with deep conviction and firm commitment to multilateralism, social justice and feminist diplomacy. She congratulated Australia for taking over the Chair and expressed hope that under its leadership, the group would rise to future challenges with the same collaborative spirit. Lastly, she thanked the Director-General for entrusting her to lead on sexual orientation and gender identity and all who had participated in discussions on that issue to progress towards preventing future discrimination against any vulnerable group.

(Ms Karvar took the Chair.)

15. **The incoming Chairperson** thanked her predecessor for his leadership of the Governing Body, the Government group for its support and the European region for nominating her for the position. She pledged to work tirelessly to guide the Governing Body, on which the smooth functioning of the Organization relied, to remain independent as Chairperson and work closely with her Employer and Worker colleagues, the Government group and the regional

coordinators. The agenda for the year ahead was full and included exciting challenges. She would strive to maintain tripartite balance, as the height of the Governing Body's achievements would depend upon its cohesion, for which each tripartite constituent was responsible.

2. Approval of the minutes of the 353rd Session of the Governing Body (GB.354/INS/2)

Decision

16. **The Governing Body approved the minutes of its 353rd Session, as amended.**

(GB.354/INS/2, paragraph 2)

3. Questions arising out of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference requiring immediate attention (no document)

17. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked all ILO staff who had made the Conference possible. The session had proved that it was possible to have two standard-setting discussions in parallel. The one on biological hazards had achieved excellent results and on platform economy progress had been made towards a convention and a recommendation. The tripartite constituents' strong engagement in those and other committees demonstrated the importance of social dialogue in the implementation of the ILO's normative mandate. She welcomed the conclusions of the general discussion on informality. Her group hoped that renovations would soon improve basic working conditions at the *Palais des Nations*. It would be helpful to evaluate the functioning of committees that had faced greater difficulties than the others. The Government group was responsible for nominating committee chairpersons who understood how the ILO worked.
18. The ILO's invocation of article 33 of its Constitution against Myanmar for a second time indicated the gravity of the situation in that country. She requested the Office to prepare a plan, with sufficient funding for its full implementation, for presentation to the Governing Body in November. The resolution adopted on Palestine was important. Recognition of the right of Palestine to exist also recognized the right of the people of Gaza to live in freedom. She called on all States to stop the war and violence and ensure the immediate provision of humanitarian assistance, considering inaction tantamount to complicity. The prevalence of wars, including recent developments in the Middle East, was concerning, particularly as spending on social issues was being reconsidered in favour of defence spending. Against that background, it was all the more important to cherish and preserve the ILO, with its mandate focused on social justice for peace, for the future.
19. **The Employer spokesperson** commended the Office for the smooth logistics and operation of the Conference. Her group was satisfied with the outcomes achieved. The reduction in late night sittings was a positive development. The annual Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice had been a major success; earlier provision of information on the agenda, speakers and topic would enable partners to provide greater support. The accreditation process could be further improved, particularly for last-minute submissions. She thanked the Official Relations and Correspondence Unit (RELOFF) and the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller for their invaluable support and guidance on various matters.
20. Turning to the Committee on the Application of Standards, she emphasized the importance of adhering to the agreed programme of work to allow adequate preparation and effective time management. The Standard-Setting Committee on Biological Hazards had shown that

decisions should be taken promptly once the social partners reached agreement. Standard-setting discussions on the platform economy had been complex, diverse and challenging, and holding two standard-setting discussions simultaneously had reduced participation in other committees. The Office could provide better support to the Chairperson on procedure and rules. Voting should remain a last resort and be handled with care; the process had felt rushed, with confusion among delegates over badge collection and voting strength. Her group would welcome the opportunity to address those concerns with the Office ahead of next year's Conference. Her group was satisfied with the work of the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions Towards Formality; the excellent background report had reflected all constituents' views, fostered constructive dialogue and produced concise draft conclusions, and the Chairperson had led with impartiality and professionalism.

21. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Senegal said that the Conference had produced significant results, including the approval of the budget by consensus and the decision to invite Palestine to participate in ILO meetings as a non-member observer State. The online accreditation system could be further improved by communicating more information to permanent missions and governments. The Office should increase governments' involvement in the development of Conference reports to ensure equality in technical committee negotiations. Advance discussion by constituents of documents posted early would expedite and facilitate the work of the committees, including amendments and sub-amendments. The Office should ensure that amendments and sub-amendments were displayed in the three official languages to enable all delegates to participate adequately.
22. Conference working days remained excessively long. Consultative regional meetings held ahead of each session could optimize the time allocated for discussion during the Conference. That approach would be valuable for the second standard-setting discussion on the platform economy in 2026. Her group reiterated its proposal to review the committees' methods and programme of work to ensure that sittings did not continue past midnight; that practice had a negative impact on the quality of discussions and decision-making and on participants' safety, security and well-being. The Office should ensure that food, drink and transport were available when meetings exceeded scheduled hours. The length of the Conference session should also be reviewed, as the two-week session did not allow participants adequate rest and ran counter to the principle of decent work. Furthermore, it was important to ensure that meetings were not scheduled to coincide with significant Muslim festivals. Lastly, since visas remained a major obstacle to the participation of regional experts in the Conference, she urged the Office to communicate with the relevant authorities to ensure that they were not issued late or refused.
23. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Paraguay said that in order to facilitate and expedite the work of future sessions, texts must be visible on screen in the different languages. While the electronic voting system offered multiple advantages, technical flaws had created some uncertainty about the actual casting of votes. With respect to accreditation and registration, maintaining established practice in respect of registration categories would avoid confusion. The new meeting management system had worked satisfactorily and focal points had facilitated the accreditation process for participants.
24. **Speaking on behalf of the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)**, a Government representative of Canada concurred that late Conference committee sittings should be avoided and food, drink and transport should be provided when that was unavoidable. The Office should ensure that the Finance Committee and the General Affairs Committee did not meet in parallel in future, as delegations had struggled to attend both sittings. The documents to be considered by the General Affairs Committee had been

published too late. All documents should be published on time to facilitate constituents' preparation for the Conference.

25. While interest in the standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy had been high, certain arrangements had proven insufficient. She called on the Office to ensure that the 2026 discussion was assigned a meeting room with adequate power outlets that accommodated all delegates, to display amendments in English, French and Spanish and to make contingency plans to ensure the provision of interpretation should sittings be extended. In view of constituents' strong commitment to committee discussions and inclusive social dialogue, the absence of key officers for committee discussions should be avoided as it caused unnecessary delays. It would also be helpful for them to cultivate a strong shared responsibility regarding the timing and management of the committee's proceedings.
26. With respect to the plenary, concerns had been voiced over the short notice of times allocated for plenary remarks, which had made the scheduling of bilateral meetings and other engagements difficult for ministers and other high-level delegates. More efforts should be put in ensuring gender parity among speakers at the opening of the annual Forum of the Global Coalition.
27. With respect to facilities, the Office should ensure that doors remained unlocked after business hours during the Conference to allow constituents and staff to re-enter the premises without difficulty. Since the 114th Session of the Conference was likely to be held across multiple sites in Geneva, IMEC urged the Office to communicate dates and information promptly for preparatory purposes and would welcome early briefings and consultations on that matter.
28. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) said that the Office would immediately undertake all follow-up actions called for in the resolution concerning Myanmar and a document containing proposals for a monitoring mechanism and the financial implications thereof would be submitted to the Governing Body in November.
29. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Official Relations, Meetings and Language Services Department) said that the points raised had been duly noted and would be addressed in the document presented to the Governing Body in November. There seemed to be overall support for the new meeting management system and the Office had taken note of the areas for improvement. The Office would continue to work with the Swiss authorities to facilitate visas for delegates. In 2026, it would also endeavour to address the logistical issues raised. The Office would explain the arrangements for the 2026 session at the earliest opportunity. Additional efforts would be made to ensure that the committees finished work as early as possible and to provide better facilities and support for delegates attending late sittings, including access to the building.
30. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) said in response to the Africa group that the scheduling of meetings entailed analysis of both religious dates and other meetings occurring in Geneva, a matter of particular importance to delegates from smaller missions. The avoidance of clashes with religious holidays was a matter of priority, but sometimes impossible to apply.
31. **The Director-General** added that the dates of the March 2026 session of the Governing Body had been adjusted based on comments received from the Arab group and the Africa group to avoid clashing with Ramadan. The Office would also reflect on ways to minimize the risk of working into the small hours so that delegates did not face difficulties returning to their accommodation.

4. **Proposed amendments to the form for reports to be requested under article 22 of the ILO Constitution in relation to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006) (GB.354/INS/4)**

- 32. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group supported the draft decision.
- 33. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the amendments approved by the Conference in 2022 referred to six different Regulations of the Convention and to its appendices. The proposed amendments to the report form captured the necessary adjustments. Her group supported the draft decision.
- 34. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Ethiopia said that the proposed amendments were timely and essential to ensure that the report form remained fit for purpose. The MLC, 2006, was a fundamental instrument, widely ratified, that protected the rights and welfare of maritime workers worldwide and evolved through amendments in response to the realities and challenges facing seafarers. It demonstrated a strong, proactive commitment to safeguarding fundamental principles and rights at work in the maritime sector. Her group supported the draft decision.

Decision

- 35. **The Governing Body approved the proposed changes to be inserted in the report form for the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), to be used as the basis for the preparation of reports due under article 22 of the ILO Constitution.**

(GB.354/INS/4, paragraph 29)

Statement by the Chairperson of the ILO Staff Union Committee

- 36. The Chairperson of the ILO Staff Union Committee was authorized to exceptionally address the Governing Body at its June session on the fifth item on the agenda. Her statement is reproduced in the appendix.

5. **The ILO in a changing multilateral environment: Towards better effectiveness and efficiency (GB.354/INS/5)**

- 37. **The United Nations (UN) Under-Secretary-General for Policy** said that the Secretary-General had referred on numerous occasions and in public to a crisis of multilateralism, which had three components. The first was the rise of geopolitical tensions and divisions in the multilateral community, which had had a deep impact on how multilateralism operated in New York and elsewhere. The number of conflicts had multiplied, and the world had been witness to the inability of the Security Council to act in the manner that many would expect of it. The crisis was compounded by the fact that only moderate progress had been made on delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and that action to combat climate change was proceeding at a much slower pace than climate change itself.
- 38. The second component to the crisis of multilateralism was an acute financial crisis. The UN Secretariat was running an operational level of 80 per cent of its approved budget, as it was uncertain of what the contributions to the Secretariat would be in 2025 and 2026. Some Member States were unwilling to pay their assessed contributions in full or on time or at all, and the Secretariat was in constant danger of being unable to meet its financial obligations. The third component to the crisis of multilateralism was a questioning of the value of

multilateralism itself. Did the international community consider that multilateralism was the preferred way of addressing the multiple global challenges that it faced?

39. In March, the UN Secretary-General had launched the UN80 Initiative, as he considered it normal and appropriate, on the 80th anniversary of the UN, to subject the Organization to rigorous scrutiny to be in a better position to meet future challenges. The first work stream of the UN80 Initiative involved making improvements and increasing efficiencies within the UN Secretariat. The Secretary-General would therefore present revised budgetary proposals for 2026 to the General Assembly, involving a 20 per cent reduction in posts and a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in the assessed budget. The Secretariat was also exploring relocations from higher to lower cost duty stations.
40. The second work stream was an examination of how the UN Secretariat implemented the mandates which had been handed down to it by Member States. Since the founding of the UN, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the Human Rights Council had handed down a total of 40,000 resolutions and decisions, of which some 4,000 were cited in the 2025 programme and budget documentation. The Secretariat was therefore trying to identify duplication to streamline the mass of mandates.
41. The third work stream was an examination of the structures of the UN system and the identification of possible structural changes and programme realignments. The current system was extraordinarily complex, with a very large number of entities, which had very different characteristics in terms of their governance, financing and substantive mandates. Several entities that were in financial difficulties might need to find a home in other parts of the system.
42. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group understood the gravity of the current financial situation and stood ready to support the Director-General. Several countries had yet to pay their dues and were putting the work of the ILO at risk. The Workers were worried about the recent decisions taken on the programme and budget, as zero nominal growth was already austerity, and austerity usually prioritized numbers over people. ILO staff wanted to be part of the solution and deserved to be taken seriously. They must be given every opportunity to contribute to developing solutions, which would help to create ownership for difficult decisions on matters that might have an enormous impact on them and their families. The Workers understood that the reform was part of a wider reform process under the UN80 Initiative, but asked for more clarity on how the proposals regarding the ILO itself were embedded in that process. They also wished to better understand how the priorities identified in the programme and budget would continue to guide the ILO. If efficiency cuts were unavoidable, the Workers could not simply agree to a generalized approach to cut spending across departments. The integrity of the ILO's normative work, including the functioning of its supervisory system and technical assistance, must be preserved.
43. The Workers agreed that work in silos should be reviewed and improved. While they saw the rationale for strengthening the ILO's work in the field, they were not convinced that the departments at headquarters were overstaffed. It was not clear whether the document proposed dismantling and/or merging departments or rationalizing operations, and the Workers sought further clarification on paragraphs 8 and 9. Were there any plans to merge with other UN entities and, if so, in which areas? The Workers were very concerned that such mergers might be considered without sufficiently analysing the fundamental differences in mandates.
44. The Workers sought further clarification on how Director and Professional staff positions would be reduced and/or reprofiled. The ILO needed to keep a strong team in Geneva with a global vision and the capacity to make multilateralism stronger. The ILO had chosen Geneva

for its headquarters because it was where the international economic development and rights-based UN agencies met and where almost all countries had missions with diplomats who were highly trained in multilateral negotiations, including labour attachés.

45. The Workers were not in favour of relocating ILO departments because they saw the ILO as one ILO. A constant flow of knowledge and expertise between the various departments and continuous exchanges with the diplomatic missions and social partners based in Geneva must be ensure. Moreover, the Workers considered that the International Labour Conference should continue to be held in Geneva, as the hybrid format used during the pandemic had not been conducive to social dialogue and had not permitted the informal exchanges that were a substantive part of building consensus.
46. Lastly, although artificial intelligence (AI) could facilitate the work, the Workers asked the Office to proceed with the utmost caution and to avoid simply replacing human beings with AI, taking into account the ILO's commitment to a human-centred approach to the future of work. Moreover, AI and technical innovations must be realistically budgeted in discussions about cost efficiency. The Workers hoped to have a clear picture of the various plans and proposals in November and not be faced with a *fait accompli*. They expected full consultation and negotiation with the ILO Staff Union and a clear commitment to preserving the core mandate of the ILO and preventing the fragmentation of multilateralism.
47. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group acknowledged the serious financial and institutional pressure facing not only the ILO, but the entire multilateral system. Given that multilateralism was under strain, the ILO's value proposition must be clearly articulated. What did the ILO offer that no other institution could? First, it supported sound social dialogue and robust labour market institutions, particularly at country level. Second, it provided practical technical assistance that delivered measurable outcomes for constituents. Third, it promoted sustainable enterprises and productive employment, which were indispensable for social progress and decent work. Fourth, it provided an efficient and effective standard-setting and supervisory system that was fit for the current realities and responsive to the evolving working environment. That was where the ILO's comparative advantage lay and where it must concentrate its efforts.
48. The Employers supported streamlining overlapping functions, reducing unnecessary expert meetings, rationalizing sectoral activities and focusing Governing Body sessions on strategic issues. They also reiterated that any discussions on AI and technology should not be driven by fear and should focus on potential instead. The Employers expected the ILO to provide enterprises with relevant practical guidance on international labour standards and to support skills development aligned with labour market needs and enterprise demands. They also called for a much stronger and more visible enterprise agenda supporting small and medium-sized enterprises within the ILO's strategic framework.
49. Noting the proposal to seek full funding of the ILO's representation offices in some countries, the Employers cautioned against reforms that might undermine the neutrality, independence and strategic role of such offices, particularly in regions where the ILO engaged with donors, business and governments on development cooperation issues. While the Employers supported strengthening technical cooperation in the field, moving departments out of Geneva would not strengthen technical cooperation and would only make collaboration between departments more challenging. Some functions could be relocated or even outsourced, but the core policy work must remain in Geneva. The Employers called for close collaboration with Switzerland, as good and trusted relations with the host country was of critical importance and must not be undermined in the reform process.

50. The Employers believed that the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin Centre, was vital to translating the ILO's normative work into practical training, capacity-building and technical assistance for constituents. The Centre's role could be expanded so that it: supported the upskilling and reskilling of social partners, particularly in emerging areas such as AI, productivity and informality; served as a hub for knowledge-sharing, training trainers and delivering modular flexible learning that could be adapted to country-level realities; and provided cost-effective support to capacity-building, reducing the need for extensive travel or missions.
51. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa said that the reform of the ILO could not proceed as a technocratic process detached from the human consequences. Across Africa, ILO-supported programmes were lifelines that built social protection systems, reduced informality and equipped young people with the skills and dignity they needed to thrive. Deep funding cuts had already led to suspended initiatives and staff reductions, weakening the ILO's ability to support its constituencies.
52. Any reform must protect and enhance the ILO's core mandate, including labour standards, social protection, tripartism and employment creation, and be based on transparent consultations with Member States and social partners, including the ILO Staff Union. The Africa group requested that the Office allocate more staff to duty stations in Africa, due to the urgent and complex challenges confronting the continent. Any relocation of staff should strengthen, not diminish, the ILO's technical presence in Africa.
53. Any digital transformation must prioritize accessibility and reflect the socio-economic realities of labour markets. If fiscal savings were achieved, a share must be reinvested directly into regions with the greatest need. The Africa group supported the draft decision with the expectation that Africa would not be left behind in the process.
54. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Paraguay said that the prioritization process should take due account of the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and establish indicators based on the specific needs of each country and region. While GRULAC believed that relocating staff from Geneva to the regions was essential for bringing the Office closer to the needs of its constituents, it should be done in a careful, balanced way to safeguard the working conditions of officials and the efficiency of the Office. GRULAC also recommended having a mandatory staff mobility policy that enabled the necessary rotation of technical staff from headquarters to regional and country offices.
55. For the review of operational procedures, internal governance and institutional procedures, GRULAC called for the maintenance of an inclusive and transparent approach so that the process was carried out with comments from Member States. It also recommended that the Office continue to strengthen communication and coordination between the specialized agencies to avoid the duplication of mandates. GRULAC supported the draft decision.
56. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Spain said that any reform process should be guided by enhancing delivery on the ILO's core mandate and be grounded in a careful understanding of the ILO's existing assets, both financial and non-financial, some of which were linked to the ILO's presence in Geneva. IMEC noted with concern that the ILO Review Group was composed entirely of men and encouraged the Office to consider revising its composition.
57. IMEC underscored that ILO constituents should be involved in discussions on efforts to identify efficiencies and improvements within the specialized agencies cluster. It asked the Office to prepare an overview of the ILO mandates that might overlap with work of other UN agencies

and to make appropriate recommendations for eliminating duplication, which could then be considered by Member States.

58. The ILO's primary means of fulfilling its core mandate was through the establishment and monitoring of international labour standards, as well as the promotion of their implementation through technical support to constituents. Regular budget resources should be allocated to ensure that that core mandate could be delivered irrespective of fluctuations in voluntary contributions. IMEC asked how reforms would take account of recent oversight and evaluation recommendations and whether there would be a mechanism to monitor the implementation of reforms and assess their impact on the fulfilment of the ILO's mandate. It welcomed proposals to leverage technology to enhance efficiency and realize cost savings, to rationalize the ILO's top heavy management structure, and to review the current siloed approach to strategic and work planning and move towards operational budgets that prioritized impact by aligning authority, responsibility and accountability more effectively. While IMEC supported enhancing field capacity to deliver technical support to constituents, it strongly recommended first developing a strategic, evidence-based vision for how the ILO could more effectively deliver in the field before initiating relocation plans.
59. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with the statement. The EU and its Member States supported reinforcing the Office's core mandate and mission-critical functions while improving effectiveness in the allocation of resources, structure and operating models. He underlined the importance of social dialogue and a human-centred approach and the involvement of ILO staff in the reform process. The reform must not affect the ILO's ability to fulfil its mandate to advance social justice, and the normative system and its supervisory mechanisms were central to that mandate. He asked the Office for information on the ongoing consultations with other parts of the UN system, in particular on operational presence at country level. When considering the relocation of staff to the field, the Office should take into consideration the record of potential host countries in terms of their ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions, especially the fundamental Conventions.
60. **A Government representative of Denmark**, speaking also on behalf of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, said that the Nordic countries considered it essential for the ILO to constructively engage in the UN80 Initiative and asked the Office to elaborate on how it expected to contribute to the process, including as a joint coordinator for the specialized agencies cluster.
61. **Speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community**, a Government representative of Barbados said that while the Caribbean Community supported efforts to improve efficiency and eliminate redundancies, efficiency must not become austerity, and improvements to the Organization must not destroy its ability to fulfil its mandate. Reform efforts in the ILO must remain grounded in the pursuit of decent work and social justice and uphold its role of normative leadership. Moreover, the ILO's Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean located in Trinidad and Tobago must be properly resourced to fulfil its mandate.
62. **A Government representative of Gabon** said that the careful review of the organizational structure under way was essential to identify the departments, service and units that could be merged, with a view to reducing the number of Assistant Director-General posts. Any restructuring should not result in the systematic dismissal of officials who had valuable expertise and experience that could be used in new projects and initiatives, and any changes, including those relating to technological innovation, must be human-centred. Gabon

expressed the hope that, despite budgetary constraints, subsidies to subregional bodies would continue, particularly those for the African Regional Labour Administration Centre. Such bodies must be preserved.

63. **A Government representative of China** said that the fundamental goal of the reforms should be to provide higher-quality services to Member States. Reforms were not a stopgap measure, and cost savings were only a means to an end. Human resources were the core asset of the ILO. Reforms should not undermine staff morale or impede efforts to improve the geographical representation of staff. Any relocation should enhance the professional expertise of field offices while protecting the rights of relocated staff. Reforms should be implemented in a coordinated manner, upholding the four pillars of decent work; enhance transparency and create a more streamlined, efficient, responsive, fiscally responsible and influential Office; and align with the democratization of international relations and take into account the legitimate interests of developing countries. Reforms should also actively respond to the needs of tripartite constituents in developing countries by reforming the supervisory bodies, strengthening field-level capacity and building teams that were more geographically representative with a better understanding of conditions in developing countries.
64. **A Government representative of India** said that India had consistently advocated for structural reforms of the UN system, which went beyond financial or procedural improvements. It noted the broad contours of the ILO's proposed reforms, encouraged the Office to continue its transparent, consultative approach and looked forward to receiving more substantive details going forward.
65. **A Government representative of Japan** said that his country believed that strategic reform was essential to avoid a situation in which specialized agencies became smaller but overlapping mandates remained. While Japan fully supported the idea of delivering impact on the ground, the importance of standard-setting to the ILO's core mandate must not be forgotten. The Office should not rely solely on percentage-based cuts when considering reforms, but present concrete proposals based on objective and rational analyses. While results-based management was important, Japan was concerned that the programme cycle had become somewhat self-serving and questioned whether the exercise truly enhanced the impact of ILO's activities in the field. It asked the Office to not only reduce travel, but also review travel class policies for air travel, and recommended that it accelerate its shift to digital formats for departmental and unit policies and projects.
66. **A Government representative of Colombia** said that any relocation of staff should be accompanied by a detailed study on the needs of the various regions and countries, so that the relocations addressed the most pressing needs of constituents. As to the examination of vacant positions and whether they should be reprofiled or cancelled, the Office must bear in mind whether such steps would undermine the ILO's essential programmes. Colombia believed that AI should not be used for interpretation, or only in cases where there was no other option for budgetary reasons, and would welcome the use of a more neutral, less Eurocentric accent.
67. **A Government representative of Uzbekistan** recommended expanding the international labour standard technical presence at national and subregional levels to enhance capacity-building and deepen understanding of labour standards in diverse contexts, so that international labour standards became concrete national actions, especially in countries with complex implementation needs.
68. **A Government representative of the Niger** said that the Niger would welcome more information on the proposed reforms and the new strategy referred to in the document; the

magnitude of the crisis at the ILO; the number of ILO staff at headquarters and in the regional and country offices; and the urgency of the reform.

69. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that his Government called for caution in taking the decisions at hand, especially given the rather radical nature of some of the measures proposed. The UN80 Initiative should not fully determine the steps to be taken at the ILO, which was a specialized agency with its own structure, characteristics and needs. The Russian Federation hoped that the restructuring of staff would be carried out in full compliance with the principles of equitable geographical distribution and multilingualism. It joined the Niger in requesting additional information and looked forward to receiving a more detailed report on the proposed reforms.
70. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that given the uncertainty surrounding the future, planning for various scenarios, including zero nominal growth, made sense. The United Kingdom shared a deep belief in the ILO, its mandate and its importance, based on its impact on the ground changing people's lives for the better. An unwavering focus on value for money, concrete measurable statistics and evidence on the impact of reforms were required, as they contributed to the ILO's proof of concept and core mandate, enhanced transparency and built confidence.
71. **A Government representative of Switzerland** said that any reforms should follow long-term strategic guidelines and not be based on short-term budgetary needs alone. The Governing Body had allocated a stable budget and had not requested any reductions. The Organization was in a good financial position, which allowed it to engage in strategic planning without haste. A strategy for greater efficiency and effectiveness required identifying priority objectives and was a prerequisite for any decision on the location of functions. Any reform initiative should focus on consolidating synergies and strategic alignment rather than dispersing and fragmenting headquarters. Switzerland was currently discussing the development of shared services and tools, such as joint infrastructure and financial management and interpretation and translation tools, with all the UN agencies based in Geneva. It wished to strengthen the ILO's action in the field and its contribution to the effectiveness and relevance of the multilateral system, with Geneva as its central pillar.
72. **The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Policy**, in response to questions about the impact of the UN80 Initiative on the ILO, said that it made sense for the system to react in a cohesive way, as the pressures facing the UN system were systemic pressures. A system-wide response was good for the system, even if the crisis had a very different and uneven impact on different agencies, some of which had already been hit extremely hard. As the Russian Federation had rightly pointed out, it was up to each specialized agency to determine how it wished to react to the UN80 Initiative, but the intent was for the UN agencies to extract the full benefits of acting as a system.
73. **The Director-General** said that he wished that there had been a contingency plan in place two years previously to prevent, or at least mitigate, the impact of terminations among development cooperation staff whose projects had been closed. Efforts were ongoing to find alternative solutions for the individuals affected. Taking into account recent budgetary discussions, he assumed that the 2028–29 budget would, at best, be adopted at a zero nominal growth level, and that official development assistance might decrease in the coming years. While he did not believe the ILO was in financial crisis, it would be a mistake to maintain a business-as-usual approach.
74. The Office's preparations of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2028–29 would begin in April or May 2026. If reform measures were envisaged, they would need to be addressed by

the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body at the latest. It was important for all parties to work together and engage in social dialogue with the shared goal of achieving the Organization's objectives while minimizing job losses. Unfortunately, parties did not have the luxury of time to engage in lengthy negotiations. Discussions on leasing the ILO's premises would resume later that month.

75. The ILO must focus on its normative mandate, which included establishing standards, advocating their ratification and helping Member States to implement them through the provision of technical assistance. Issues had to be identified up front in order for targeted support to be made available on the ground. Global labour policies must be shaped in Geneva; however, policies were also required at the regional and country levels. It was important for efforts to be directed towards data analysis and research, which was one of the Organization's comparative advantages.
76. He felt strongly that the ILO's supervisory function should not be outsourced to another agency. Doing so would risk detaching the Organization from realities on the ground. Over the years, financial constraints had led to development cooperation resources being used to fund activities that ought to be covered by the regular budget. Regular budget technical cooperation should be reviewed to free up resources while continuing to provide technical expertise on key issues.
77. To date, he had not heard many specific money-saving proposals from constituents. He was aware that relocating staff from Geneva would be problematic, but that was not an excuse for inaction. The ILO had to lead the way in upholding labour rights and discharging its duty of care to staff members. Historically, ILO staff had enjoyed greater entitlements than other employees in the UN system, but in the current circumstances, it might be wise to bring such entitlements into line with the average entitlements, which were already subject to criticism. In so doing, the ILO could forestall accusations of favouritism and perhaps avoid further terminations.
78. It was in the Organization's interests to remain anchored in Geneva, and he was grateful to the host country for its support. At the same time, it would be intellectually dishonest to argue against the relocation of some staff to the regions. There were staff in the field who had been at the same duty station for many years and wanted, but were unable, to return to headquarters owing to a lack of capacity. Geneva was a privileged duty station. Courage was therefore required to consider relocation as a means of redirecting resources to where they were needed most. In the International Labour Standards Department, staff at headquarters were stretched, yet there was a need for more field specialists. Unless some staff could be relocated from Geneva, new experts would have to be recruited, which could be done only if resources were made available through measures to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. Similarly, some development cooperation projects managed from Geneva could and should be managed from the countries or region they were serving. It was likely that decisions on relocation would be made in the run-up to the 355th Session (November 2025) of the Governing Body.
79. The review of the ILO's operations had been announced at the 353rd Session (March 2025) of the Governing Body, at around the same time as, but not in response to, the launch of the UN80 Initiative. On 13 June, as joint coordinator of the specialized agencies cluster, he had reported on the agencies' preliminary thoughts on the Initiative. The UN Secretary-General had clearly stressed the need to respect each organization's legal processes. The High-Level Committee on Management had already identified more than 20 opportunities for inter-agency collaboration, such as the sharing of field offices to split costs. Synergies could be also

achieved through the harmonization of staff rules and regulations. Through information-sharing, it was hoped that the specialized agencies could draw lessons from the experiences of other participants in the Initiative.

80. Labour migration, social protection and combating discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS were just three examples of areas of work in which the ILO carried out activities in tandem with other UN entities. Discussions were needed to improve coordination and assess the division of responsibility with a view to reassigning functions if necessary. The implementation of the MLC, 2006, illustrated what could be achieved through successful cooperation. Ultimately, the ILO would face a greater challenge in the internal reprioritization of functions than in the readjustment of its relationship with other agencies.
81. The Evaluation Office had been asked to conduct an analysis to identify areas of improvement in terms of the impact of the ILO's work. The fact that certain areas were mission-critical did not necessarily mean that they were being addressed in the best manner. It would also be essential to gauge the impact of any reform measures agreed over the coming months and to allow for that impact in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2028–29. He therefore encouraged all parties to provide guidance that would help to clarify the way forward to achieving a budget oriented more towards accountability and results.
82. **The Employer spokesperson** said that it was clear that the ILO had to step out of its comfort zone. He had heard support from many Member States to boost effectiveness and efficiency. He had also heard calls for the ILO to concentrate on real issues in the world of work. The Director-General was right to emphasize the importance of helping Member States to implement standards on the ground. Progress could not be made by focusing on the establishment of standards alone.
83. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the Director-General's assertion that the ILO was not yet in crisis showed that such discussions need not be held in haste. Collective bargaining often resulted in better outcomes for workers. During the ongoing review process, the concerns of staff should not be viewed too simplistically. She had not heard opposition to change or unwillingness to discuss mobility, the staff wanted to be part of the solution. The Director-General was committed to social dialogue, but further discussions were required to determine what exactly that entailed, and some uncomfortable discussions might have to take place on relocation and mobility. She urged all constituents to focus on preserving the ILO, which had survived many crises by showing that it could innovate in a tripartite manner.

Decision

84. **The Governing Body requested the Office to submit more detailed and concrete proposals to the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025), taking into account the guidance it provided.**

(GB.354/INS/5, paragraph 30)

6. 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.354/INS/6)

85. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, which had been proposed by the Government representative 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) of the draft decision to read:

30. In the light of the developments in Ukraine outlined in document GB.354/INS/6 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 354th Session, the Governing Body:

...

- (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 ~~armed activities 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), all parties to the conflict~~ 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 355th Session (November 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.

- 86. The Worker spokesperson** said that, to date, no initiatives to end the Russian Federation's war of aggression had borne fruit. The war had caused massive loss of life and immeasurable human suffering and destruction, making peace and social justice seem further away than ever. The Ukrainian economy was on the brink of destruction. Six million people had left the country and over 3 million were internally displaced. The new reality had affected both democracy and the world of work; the arms industry and its shareholders were the only winners. Hostilities had escalated markedly in the first half of 2025. Civilian areas, workplaces and essential infrastructure had been relentlessly targeted, taking and endangering the lives of workers in crucial sectors simply for doing their jobs. Disappearances and killings, including of journalists, civil servants and trade unionists, persisted in Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation. She called on the ILO to support those groups of workers and their unions. She also demanded the immediate release of the 13 IndustriALL Global Union members reportedly abducted from the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant by Russian occupying forces and full respect for workers' rights and freedoms. She called on the Office to update the 2023 brief on violations of fundamental principles and rights at work at the plant, to produce new briefs on workers' rights violations in other sectors in occupied areas of Ukraine and to include a section on labour rights violations in occupied Ukrainian territories in future Governing Body documents, noting that numerous trade union assets and facilities had

reportedly been confiscated by the occupying forces in violation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

87. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) faced colossal losses and labour market shortages were acute, worsened by internal displacement and the challenge of reintegrating some 1 million veterans, many unemployed and many others earning below subsistence levels. Social dialogue should be the basis for reconstruction, and the ILO's continued partnership with the tripartite constituents in Ukraine remained vital. She welcomed the ILO's support to trade unions on the ground and commended its efforts to strengthen labour inspection and promote compliance to combat forced labour and trafficking, especially among displaced persons and refugees. The Office's promotion of Conventions such as the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), remained crucial. She requested further information concerning the efforts under way to compensate for the cut in funding from the Government of the United States of America which had affected some countries in the subregion. Her group supported the original draft decision.
88. **The Employer spokesperson** reaffirmed his group's support and solidarity with the people, businesses and workers of Ukraine. The war continued to have a severe impact on economic and labour markets, investment and business continuity in Ukraine, with MSMEs bearing the brunt of the losses. Extensive damage caused to the energy infrastructure further challenged productivity and persistent labour shortages were straining the national economy, forcing many enterprises to suspend or scale down operations. Business confidence remained low. His group commended the ILO's continued efforts to support Ukrainian employer and business membership organizations. Ukrainian private sector and employers' organizations had demonstrated resilience despite the persistent challenges before them. His group also appreciated the ILO's ongoing close work with the Government of Ukraine on labour market and labour law reforms, among other areas, including support for the design of sustainable social protection systems, which would be critical in consolidating economic and social recovery. Lastly, he commended the ILO country office for Ukraine (CO-Kyiv) for maintaining operations even under aerial attacks on Kyiv. His group trusted that the country agreement would soon be signed to enhance the Office's operational capacity and ensure greater protection for staff. Furthermore, it appreciated the ILO's continued support to Ukraine, building on its current work and operations with a clear focus on the core areas of its mandate as well as strengthening partnerships for development and resource mobilization. His group supported the original draft decision.
89. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that the document, which referred to the resolution adopted by the Governing Body in 2022 and developments since that time, and the draft decision were politicized. The draft decision, which contained unjustified accusations of aggression against Ukraine and incorrect legal qualifications, was clearly biased against the Russian Federation and ignored not only the true causes of the conflict but also the Kyiv regime's flagrant disregard of ILO standards. It did not reflect the realities of the situation and far exceeded the ILO's mandate. The resolution itself represented a flagrant violation of the ILO's mandate and was, consequently, illegitimate. The politicization of the ILO's work undermined its credibility, its authority and the fundamental principles of its Constitution. The intention of the proposed amendment was to make the decision less politicized and more balanced. Should the amendment not be accepted by Governing members, he requested to put it to a vote.

- 90. Speaking on behalf of a group of countries,**¹ a Government representative of Denmark expressed regret that the Governing Body was discussing the item for the eleventh time since the unprovoked, full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The Russian Federation had shown no intention of ceasing to violate international law, nor had it responded to calls to cease its illegal aggression against Ukraine. He reaffirmed the group's support for the independent sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within internationally recognized borders and its inherent right of self-defence. Respect for human rights, including labour rights, was an obligation for all Members. The ongoing aggression by the Russian Federation was a direct attack on sovereign Ukraine and on the rules-based system. Ukrainian workers, employers and their families continued to suffer as a result of the brutal Russian attacks, which had displaced millions of people and severely affected the Ukrainian economy. More than 12.7 million people required humanitarian assistance.
- 91.** He commended the Office's commitment to reporting on labour rights violations and abuses in temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories and called on the Russian Federation to respect international rules, facilitate effective monitoring and ensure the safety of workers in those territories. He commended the ILO for its continuous support to Ukraine and called for strengthened engagement with the Government and social partners supporting strategic areas of labour market and social policies.
- 92.** He noted with concern the loss of control of 13 Ukrainian trade unions over their offices and the laws allowing property confiscations, which impeded the right to freedom of association. The situation at the nuclear power plant remained concerning; the abduction and disappearance of 13 workers, a grave violation of fundamental labour rights and occupational safety and health standards, was alarming. He called on the ILO to help secure their immediate and safe release and to demand an end to the unlawful deprivation of their liberty.
- 93.** The planned joint research and training initiatives with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) were welcome. The Office should expand assistance to Ukrainian constituents in gathering evidence of labour rights violations. The resilience of Ukrainians was commendable and the ILO's efforts to safeguard technical assistance in the region was appreciated. However, reiterated the group's view that it would best serve the region's constituents to relocate the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (DWT/CO-Moscow) and reclassify it as a country office.
- 94.** He reaffirmed the Governing Body's call for the Russian Federation to cease its aggression against Ukraine immediately and unconditionally, and to implement the Governing Body's resolution of March 2022. His group could not support the proposed amendment.
- 95. Speaking on behalf of a group of governments,**² a Government representative of Poland said that the report clearly demonstrated the extent of human suffering and economic devastation caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in particular for workers and

¹ Albania, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

² Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Republic of Moldova, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Ukraine.

employers, and the Russian Federation's persistent and systemic violations of international law and disregard for ILO values and principles. In recent weeks, that country had repeated multiple large-scale attacks on Ukrainian cities. Its strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure must stop immediately. Millions of Ukrainians required humanitarian aid and millions faced food insecurity. The country faced major labour challenges, including the integration of veterans. Essential workers in key sectors faced constant threat as attacks targeted critical infrastructure. In temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories, an atmosphere of violence, fear and coercion extended to workplaces. He expressed concern at the killings, arrests by the occupying forces and continued disappearances of civilians and alarm at the persistent fundamental labour rights violations of Ukrainian staff of the illegally seized nuclear power plant.

96. He commended the Office for its sustained support to Ukrainian constituents, welcoming its focus on vulnerable groups and its work on labour inspections and support for the ratification of international labour standards. Those efforts were vital for the country's recovery and future accession to the European Union. He also welcomed the Office's collaboration with HRMMU and commended CO-Kyiv for its active cooperation with United Nations agencies despite extreme conditions. Given the cost-saving measures being implemented by the Office, the group appreciated the current reflection on the relocation of ILO DWT/CO-Moscow to a more cost-effective location. The group reaffirmed its unwavering support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within internationally recognized borders and its determination to continue to work with the European Union and other international partners to build global support for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine. The group supported the original draft decision.
97. **A Government representative of China** said that the item had been under consideration by the Governing Body since the outbreak of the conflict and decisions put to a vote at each session. Their actual impact had been negligible, and they had become something of a low-quality political playbook for the countries and forces involved. Repeated consideration of the item consumed valuable time and resources. Expressing deep concern about the humanitarian crisis faced by conflict-affected countries as a result of the Ukraine crisis and its persistent negative impact on the world of work, she noted the ILO's practical progress in coordinating efforts to provide assistance to tripartite constituents in those countries and in implementing its transitional cooperation strategy and encouraged it to continue that work. The document was not comprehensive and the draft decision continued to be politically biased as instead of focusing on the ILO's mandate, it addressed political and military matters. As a specialized UN agency for labour issues, the ILO should focus on its core mandate. Her Government had on multiple occasions reiterated its opposition to attempts by certain forces to instrumentalize the ILO. She urged the Governing Body to remain vigilant against such attempts, which were detrimental to the ILO's reputation. Her Government supported amendment proposed by the Russian Federation and the motion to put it to a vote.
98. **A Government representative of Ukraine**, 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, said that the document highlighted the catastrophic consequences of the Russian war on the labour market and socio-economic conditions in Ukraine, which should remain high on the Organization's agenda. Systematic violations of workers' rights in temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories, including coercion and forced membership of Russian trade unions, remained matters of grave concern, as did the conditions of workers at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. He called on the Office to further strengthen cooperation with specialized UN agencies to identify violations and hold perpetrators accountable. The call upon the Russian Federation, in the draft decision, to meet all of its obligations under ILO

instruments included all Ukrainian workers currently working under Russian occupation. As the occupying power, that was its obligation under the Geneva Conventions. Since March 2022, the Russian Federation had not complied with any of the Governing Body's nine relevant decisions, in a clear and persistent breach of the ILO Constitution and outright defiance of the Organization's principles. He reiterated his country's request to the Office to conduct a detailed cost benefit analysis of the viability of maintaining a subregional office in Moscow. In addition, he commended the CO-Kyiv and staff in Ukraine for their courageous work under extraordinary conditions and welcomed the ILO's assistance in the area of labour law reform.

- 99. A representative of the Director-General** (Regional Director, Europe and Central Asia) said with respect to the funding situation that previous Governing Body decisions had requested the Director-General to enhance resource mobilization efforts not only for Ukraine but also for countries in the subregion of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. While the recent reduction in voluntary contributions had led to the suspension of some operations, every effort was being made to compensate and find alternative funding sources. She noted the different comments and requests, in particular the request to provide further detailed analysis of the situation of workers in specific sectors. She would consult with the concerned constituents to discuss how that could be done.
- 100. The Chairperson** observed that a significant majority appeared to support the original draft decision. Noting that the Government representative of the Russian Federation, seconded by the Government representative of China, had 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, 41 against, and 9 abstentions.)

Decision

- 101. In the light of the developments in Ukraine outlined in document GB.354/INS/6 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 354th 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 355th Session (November 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.354/INS/6, paragraph 30)

- 102. A Government representative of Brazil**, speaking in explanation of vote, expressed solidarity with all parties to the conflict in Ukraine. The Governing Body's decision should remain within the Organization's mandate and focus on the impact of the conflict on the world of work. His country had abstained from voting on the proposed amendment as it maintained the call for armed activities to cease, which was properly a matter for the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly. His country did not support those provisions in the proposed amendment and would not have supported them in the draft decision, had a vote been called.
- 103. A Government representative of the United States**, speaking in explanation of vote, said that her President had stated clearly that the war must end, as the longer it continued the greater the suffering for both nations. She called on the Russian Federation and Ukraine to continue negotiations to end the conflict, the only path to resolving the war being diplomacy. However, she noted that discussions on the geopolitical considerations of the war were outside the remit of the Governing Body, which must avoid supporting mandate creep. She urged the Governing Body and the Office to remain focused on advancing and delivering on the ILO's core mandate.

7. Appointment of the members of the Commission of Inquiry established in accordance with article 26 of the ILO Constitution to examine the non-observance by Nicaragua of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 111 and 144 (GB.354/INS/7)

- 104. The Employer spokesperson** acknowledged the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry concerning Nicaragua as a grave and historic step. The persistent refusal of the Nicaraguan Government to engage with the ILO supervisory bodies had left the Organization little choice but to act under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. The establishment of the Commission reflected the magnitude of the violation and the ILO's responsibility to defend its core principles. He trusted that the members appointed would approach their task with the requisite impartiality, rigour and determination. His group would follow the process closely, in solidarity with those whose rights had been seriously violated.
- 105. The Worker spokesperson** expressed regret at the decision of the Nicaraguan authorities to leave the Organization and hope that they would reconsider their position. Given that Nicaragua remained bound by its obligations under the international labour standards which it had ratified, she requested the Office to continue to invite the Nicaraguan Government to

engage with the ILO and to facilitate the work of the Commission of Inquiry, which would provide support for it to comply with those obligations. Her group supported the nomination of the three members of the Commission, all of whom were highly qualified.

- 106. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Poland expressed confidence that the Commission would fulfil its mandate with independence, integrity and resolve and that its findings would contribute meaningfully to addressing the serious labour rights concerns in Nicaragua and to advancing respect for international labour standards in that country. The EU reiterated its call for the Nicaraguan Government to reconsider its intention to withdraw from the Organization and would continue to monitor the situation closely and support the legitimate aspirations of the people of Nicaragua, including on labour rights. She supported the draft decision.

Decision

- 107. The Governing Body appointed the following persons to serve on the Commission of Inquiry: Ms Kemelmajer de Carlucci (Argentina) as Chairperson and Ms Pardo Schlesinger (Colombia) and Ms Bensusán Areous (Mexico) as members.**

(GB.354/INS/7, paragraph 3)

8. Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association (GB.354/INS/8)

- 108. The Chairperson of the Committee on Freedom of Association** said that, at its May–June 2025 session, the Committee had examined 17 cases on their merits, two of which had been closed. He drew the Governing Body's attention to eight serious and urgent cases. In case No. 3203, concerning allegations of the systematic violation of freedom of association rights in Bangladesh, the Committee had welcomed the interim Government's expressed commitment to reducing anti-union violence and the progress made in bringing the case of the murder of Mr Shahidul Islam to trial. The Committee expected those court proceedings to be expeditious and that the measures referred to by the Government would effectively result in an increased protection of trade unionists.
- 109.** Regarding case No. 3184, the Committee had noted with deep regret the persistent reports submitted by the complainant since 2016 alleging that the Government of China had arrested, detained and prosecuted labour activists for engaging in peaceful protest to defend the economic and social interests of workers. It had urged the Government to submit the remaining information requested without further delay and had once again invited the Government to accept a direct contacts mission to understand better the situation on the ground and resolve any pending matters.
- 110.** Cases Nos 2761 and 3074 concerned alleged murders, attempted murders and death threats against trade union leaders and members in Colombia. While welcoming the significant actions taken to date and the results achieved, the Committee had requested the Government to continue intensifying inter-institutional efforts to solve, punish and prevent all cases of anti-union violence.
- 111.** The Committee had expressed its deep concern over the seriousness of case No. 2609, which involved allegations of numerous murders and acts of violence against trade union members and flaws in the system that resulted in criminal and labour-related impunity in Guatemala. Nevertheless, it was encouraged by the Government's demonstrated commitment to the protection of freedom of association and expected that the actions taken in that respect would soon lead to tangible progress.

112. Case No. 2508, lodged against the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2006, concerned alleged acts of repression against the local trade union at a city bus company and the arrest and detention of large numbers of trade unionists. The Committee had highlighted the need to address its long-standing concerns relating to the inadequate legislative framework for the protection of freedom of association and had once again firmly urged the Government to guarantee the immediate release and safe return to their country of Ms Cécile Kohler and Mr Jacques Paris, two French trade unionists who had been in detention for over three years.
113. Case No. 3405 contained grave allegations of continuing attacks by the military authorities of Myanmar against trade unionists, workers and civil servants who were calling for the return to civilian rule following the coup d'état on 1 February 2021. The Committee had called for steps to be taken without delay to ensure the immediate release of trade unionists and workers arrested or detained for action in relation to the restoration of their trade union rights and democracy in the country. It had also urged the military authorities to immediately cease the ongoing violence against workers and trade unionists and any action that could reasonably be considered as interference in the internal affairs of independent trade unions.
114. In case No. 2254, concerning long-standing allegations by representatives of employers' organizations in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Committee, while welcoming the holding of the fourth session of the social dialogue forum in the country, had noted persistent deficiencies in relation to consultations. The Committee had requested the Government to provide detailed information on the holding of the fifth and following sessions of the social dialogue forum and on the specific measures taken to generate a climate of trust based on respect for employers' and trade union organizations with a view to promoting stable industrial relations. It had also strongly encouraged the Government to avail itself of technical assistance from the Office, especially through in-person assistance from the ILO special adviser on social dialogue.
115. The Committee had examined eight cases in which governments had kept it informed of the measures taken to give effect to its recommendations. Seven of those cases had been closed. Measures to give effect to its recommendations in these cases had included the adoption of legislation in Chile, the signing of collective agreements in Colombia, the reinstatement of trade unionists in Panama and the implementation of measures to support dismissed workers in the Philippines.
116. 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, Bangladesh, El Salvador, Eswatini, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zimbabwe, to send relevant communications as a matter of urgency.
117. The Committee's report once again attested to the strength of tripartite dialogue and consensus. He expressed appreciation to the Committee members for their unwavering efforts to find solutions to the challenges that confronted freedom of association. He also thanked the Office, the Committee's secretariat and the interpreters. Lastly, he paid tribute to Ms Karen Curtis, who had served the Committee for the final time at the current session. Ms Curtis was an exception to the rule that no one was irreplaceable. Her conviction and commitment to social justice and the principles of freedom of association had been unshakable, and her wealth of knowledge was second to none. Her tact and diplomacy in searching for solutions had been particularly appreciated by Committee members.

- 118. The Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** recommended adopting the report and called upon governments in serious and urgent cases to take prompt measures and share detailed information with the Committee on any progress made. He also urged Cuba and Jordan to accept a direct contacts mission in cases Nos 3271 and 3337, respectively.
- 119.** Regarding cases Nos 3349 and 3440, he welcomed deferral to local independent judicial authorities that took fair account of the facts and made careful determinations in accordance with domestic laws. He highlighted the need for expeditious action in those cases and in cases Nos 2761, 3074 and 3203, in respect of which the Governments of Bangladesh and Colombia should swiftly complete thorough investigations into long-standing allegations and share details of the outcomes with the Committee.
- 120.** Case No. 3450, which had arisen following a lengthy strike in the State education sector in Norway, was instructive. In previous cases involving the same country, the Committee had encouraged the establishment of minimum services to balance interests during public sector strikes and foreclose premature recourse to compulsory arbitration in so-called non-essential sectors. In response to those earlier cases, lengthy tripartite consultations had taken place, during which it had been agreed that the adoption of minimum service levels was not compatible with the Norwegian system. In case No. 3450, minimum services had not been introduced, and, more than 100 days into the strike, the Government had imposed compulsory arbitration. While the complainant organization had reiterated an argument for minimum service levels, the Committee's conclusions reflected proper respect for the tripartite consultations. Rather than resorting to a wooden mechanism for balancing interests during an extended public strike, the Committee had fairly put the onus back on local parties to find solutions compatible with the domestic system. While no country should criminalize or punish engagement in matters at the core of freedom of association, long-lasting solutions that protected that freedom most readily stemmed from tripartite consultations that fully understood and respected local laws and circumstances.
- 121.** While some progress had recently been made in case No. 2254, several key recommendations remain unfulfilled. The implementation of recommendations was dependent on strong, sustained pressure and continued engagement and accountability. With that in mind, the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should fully facilitate the in-person assistance of the ILO special adviser on social dialogue.
- 122.** Ms Curtis had brought a deep and humane commitment to the Committee's mission, incredible competence, integrity and a personable approach. She reflected the best of the ILO and would be missed.
- 123. The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** said that the eight serious and urgent cases had been considered as such for some time, demonstrating a worrying lack of progress. In case No. 3184, the Committee had received updated information indicating a continued pattern of arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of workers and trade unionists for exercising the right to freedom of association. Case No. 3405 contained grave allegations of continuing attacks by the military authorities against trade unionists, workers and civil servants since the coup d'état in Myanmar on 1 February 2021. In case No. 3203, justice had still not been served for the murder of Mr Shahidul Islam. Regarding case No. 2508, a large number of trade unionists in the Islamic Republic of Iran continued to suffer acts of repression, including arbitrary arrest and detention. The exercise of freedom of association worldwide was in genuine crisis, and her group feared that the cases before the ILO were just the tip of the iceberg.

- 124.** In a growing number of cases, the Committee had been forced to repeat its recommendations, without any evidence of progress towards a resolution. The Committee had issued its first report on cases Nos 2177 and 2183 in 2002, case No. 2609 in 2008 and case No. 2761 in 2012. He urged the governments concerned to act with urgency and purpose to address the Committee's recommendations. With regard to cases Nos 2177 and 2183, Japanese legislation continued to restrict the basic trade union rights of public employees. Concerning case No. 3337, he urged the Government of Jordan to accept a direct contacts mission and make progress in amending its legislation in line with the principle of freedom of association. In case No. 3450, the complainant had raised a long-standing issue, namely the use of compulsory arbitration to settle a collective labour dispute in the education sector. With respect to case No. 2609, violence against trade unionists and impunity for such violence remained all too common in Guatemala. While the current Government had made numerous commitments, many cases of crimes against trade unionists had been dismissed for lack of evidence, allowing murderers to walk free. Moreover, the Government's failure to provide a complete response to the complaint in a timely manner was delaying the opportunity for the social partners to have their allegations examined by the Committee.
- 125.** In closing, he wished to recognize the incredible career of Ms Curtis. Workers around the world were unquestionably better off as a result of her meticulous work. Her efforts in Myanmar in particular were greatly appreciated and would leave an enduring legacy.
- 126. Speaking on behalf of the Government group of the Committee,** a Government representative of Senegal said that, once again, there were too many serious and urgent cases. It was worth recalling that the objective of the complaints procedure was not to blame or punish but to engage in a constructive pre-adjudicatory dialogue to promote respect for trade union rights in law and in practice. The Committee took into account different national realities and legal systems. In its most recent report, it had reiterated recommendations in several long-standing cases in which little progress had been made. Her group looked forward to future discussions on the Committee's working methods aimed at improving the situation. It appreciated the willingness of some governments to meet with Committee members in Geneva and wished to thank the departing Ms Curtis for her invaluable expert support.
- 127. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Paraguay said that, while it was pleasing to see the closure of several cases involving countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the region continued to account for a significant proportion of the total caseload. Work should continue to ensure a regional balance in the Committee's agenda. Nearly two thirds of the cases in which a government response was pending concerned Latin American and Caribbean countries. Her group wished to highlight the efforts of governments in the region to strengthen their cooperation with the supervisory bodies and to respond within established deadlines. Nevertheless, institutional challenges remained. It was therefore crucial for the ILO to provide technical assistance to Member States on request. GRULAC continued to promote the regional initiative to bolster social dialogue and labour relations with a view to addressing the structural causes of complaints lodged with the Committee. It encouraged the Committee to apply its working methods rigorously and to fulfil its mandate in an impartial and technically sound fashion. It was grateful to Ms Curtis for her outstanding work and wished her every success in her future endeavours.
- 128. A Government representative of China,** referring to case No. 3184, said that the Government of China had consistently cooperated with the Committee, had explained the circumstances of the individuals involved in the case and had provided a comprehensive overview of domestic laws and practices that safeguarded workers' right to participate in and organize trade unions. However, it was important to emphasize that freedom of association was not unrestricted.

Workers exercising their right to it had to comply with domestic laws and regulations, refrain from disrupting public order and avoid infringing upon the legitimate rights and interests of others. The individuals in the case at hand had been investigated and punished for using illegal means during the resolution of a labour dispute. Some had even used the pretext of protecting workers' rights to engage in activities that endangered national security or incited subversion of State power. Such acts were not permissible in any country. He called on the Committee to maintain an objective and impartial stance, fully consider the information provided by the Government and conclude its examination of the case as soon as possible.

Decision

- 129. The Governing Body took note of the introduction to the Report of the Committee, contained in paragraphs 1–92, and adopted the recommendations made in paragraphs: 149 (Case No. 3434: Algeria); 165 (Case No. 3203: Bangladesh); 188 (Case No. 3184: China); 213 (Cases Nos 2761 and 3074: Colombia); 251 (Case No. 3271: Cuba); 280 (Case No. 3349: El Salvador); 300 (Case No. 2609: Guatemala); 321 (Case No. 3459: Honduras); 349 (Case No. 2508: Islamic Republic of Iran); 406 (Cases Nos 2177 and 2183: Japan); 439 (Case No. 3337: Jordan); 469 (Case No. 3405: Myanmar); 511 (Case No. 3450: Norway); 526 (Case No. 3440: Peru); 556 (Case No. 2254: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and adopted the 411th Report of its Committee on Freedom of Association as a whole.**

(GB.354/INS/8)

9. Report of the Director-General – Obituary (GB.354/INS/9)

- 130. The Employer spokesperson** paid tribute to Ambassador Thomas Niles, whose life and contributions had a lasting impact in the ILO community, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the United States Council for International Business (USCIB) and the Government of the United States. His remarkable career, outlined in document GB.354/INS/9, reflected his seamless transition from highly respected government diplomat to highly respected business diplomat.
- 131.** A model for social dialogue, he engaged with professionalism and clarity and worked effectively with business, government, trade unions and others, seeking common ground and always on the lookout for emerging issues affecting the world of work. As a leader, his approach was inclusive and personal, and his staff always knew they had his support. His memory would serve as a guide in the spirit of dialogue, understanding and shared progress.
- 132. The Worker spokesperson** recognized the extensive career and contributions of Ambassador Thomas Niles, both as a former Employer member of the Governing Body and as a United States diplomat.
- 133. A Government representative of the United States** paid tribute to Ambassador Thomas Niles, who served his country as a professional diplomat, in the interest of advancing peace and economic prosperity globally, across a rich career of 37 years. From his work as a young diplomat and until 1997, he served in critical leadership roles to maintain and deepen partnerships, strengthen economic ties and promote mutual understanding. Following his retirement from government service, he brought his rich expertise and commitment to dialogue to serve the ILO, as a member of the Governing Body.

Decision

- 134.** The Governing Body paid tribute to the memory of Ambassador Thomas M. T. Niles and requested the Director-General to convey its condolences to the family of Ambassador Niles, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), the United States Council for International Business (USCIB) and the Government of the United States of America.

(GB.354/INS/9, paragraph 5)

9.1 First Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Mexico of Conventions Nos 102 and 155 (GB.354/INS/9/1)

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

Decision

- 135.** In the light of the conclusions set out in paragraphs 23 to 40 of the report of the Committee contained in document GB.354/INS/9/1 with regard to the matters raised in the representation, the Governing Body:

- (a) approved the report of the Committee;
- (b) reminded the Government of Mexico that it could request technical assistance from the ILO, if it so wished;
- (c) invited the Government to submit, in its next report on the implementation of Convention No. 155, information relating to the Committee's conclusions, in particular those set out in paragraphs 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34 of the Committee's report;
- (d) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the procedure initiated by the representation.

(GB.354/INS/9/1, paragraph 8)

9.2 Second Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Romania of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) (GB.354/INS/9/2)

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

Decision

- 136.** In the light of the conclusions set out in paragraphs 20 to 31 of the report of the Committee contained in document GB.354/INS/9/2 with regard to the matters raised in the representation, the Governing Body decided to:

- (a) approve the report of the Committee and, in particular, the conclusions in paragraphs 29 to 31;
- (b) request the Government to provide the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations with information on the matters addressed in the report and the Committee's conclusions in 2026;

- (c) make the report public and close the procedure initiated by the representation.

(GB.354/INS/9/2, paragraph 8)

9.3 Third Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Costa Rica of Conventions Nos 87, 98 and 135 (GB.354/INS/9/3)

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

Decision

137. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.354/INS/9/3, the Governing Body:

- (a) approved the report of the Committee;
- (b) requested the Government of Costa Rica to, in the framework of the application of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), take into account the observations set out in paragraphs 43, 45, 53, 59, 60 and 63 of the report;
- (c) requested the Government to provide information in that respect for review by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations;
- (d) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the representation procedure.

(GB.354/INS/9/3, paragraph 10)

9.4 Fourth Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Uruguay of Conventions Nos 155 and 161 (GB.354/INS/9/4)

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

Decision

138. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.354/INS/9/4, the Governing Body:

- (a) approved the report of the Committee and, in particular, the conclusions formulated in paragraphs 21 to 35;
- (b) requested the Government to submit, in its next report on the application of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No 155), and the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161), information related to its conclusions, in particular with regard to the matters covered in paragraphs 28, 29 and 34 of this report;
- (c) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the representation procedure.

(GB.354/INS/9/4, paragraph 8)

10. Reports of the Officers of the Governing Body

10.1 First report: Representation alleging non-observance by Uruguay of Conventions Nos 103, 155 and 161 (GB.354/INS/10/1)

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

Decision

- 139.** In the light of the information contained in document GB.354/INS/10/1, 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.354/INS/10/1, paragraph 5)

10.2 Second report: Closure of the representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the MLC, 2006, and Convention No. 187, pursuant to a successful conciliation process (GB.354/INS/10/2)

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

Decision

- 140.** The Governing Body, noting that an agreement had been reached between the parties concerned following a conciliation process, and on the recommendation of its Officers, decided to close the procedure of the representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

(GB.354/INS/10/2, paragraph 3)

11. Composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meetings (GB.354/INS/11)

- 141. The Worker spokesperson** explained the proposal set out in subparagraph (d) of the draft decision. At recent meetings of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group (SRM TWG), progress had been hindered by a fundamental disagreement over how to achieve the SRM's overall objective of ensuring that the ILO had a clear, robust and up-to-date body of international labour standards. A particular point of contention was the meaning to be attributed to "robust" and "up to date" considering that some ILO Conventions were over 100 years old. While certain standards enshrined therein had been modernized over time, there was no automatic means whereby older instruments were superseded by newer ones. Outdated instruments could continue to form part of a robust framework and remained relevant for governments that had not yet ratified more modern instruments. The Workers' group was of the view that the SRM's function was not just to abrogate outdated Conventions but also to ensure meaningful follow-up action, but the Employers' group held a different opinion. Although her group was strongly committed to fulfilling the mandate of the SRM TWG and acknowledged the efforts of governments to reach consensus, the approach outlined in paragraphs 22–23 of the document and subparagraph (d) of the draft decision had been deemed the most appropriate to overcome the impasse. A smaller meeting involving only the SRM TWG Officers and the Government group coordinator would explore ways forward to be

presented to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026). The proposal in no way sought to ignore the key role played by governments in the SRM TWG or to backtrack on the implementation of its mandate.

142. The Workers' group welcomed the proposed appointments and reappointments to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) and reiterated its call to strengthen the International Labour Standards Department. The group also welcomed the agreement reached on the appointment of the Special Envoy to Belarus, whom she hoped would be able to initiate a dialogue with the Government aimed at assisting imprisoned trade unionists and promoting respect for freedom of association, and supported the draft decision.
143. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the outcomes of the proposed meeting between the SRM TWG Officers and the Government group coordinator would be submitted for consideration by all governments at the 356th Session (March 2026). His group welcomed the proposed appointments and reappointments to the CEACR and supported the draft decision.
144. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of the Netherlands said that her group remained fully committed to the mandate of the SRM TWG and acknowledged the existing divergence of views as to the next steps to be taken in relation to the possible abrogation of outdated Conventions. It was of the utmost importance to identify or develop possible follow-up measures and arrive at consensus on the matter, which demanded thoughtful attention and constructive engagement from all constituents. It was regrettable that not all SRM TWG members had been consulted on the proposal to defer the tenth Meeting, given the importance of inclusivity and transparency in tripartite processes. IMEC considered it essential for the Government members of the SRM TWG to be actively involved in efforts to find a consensual path forward to ensure legitimacy, alignment with national responsibilities and effective implementation. It therefore proposed an amendment to subparagraph (d) of the draft decision to approve the deferral of the tenth meeting but provide for another meeting in 2025 to address the issue of abrogation with the participation of Government members.
145. **A Government representative of Colombia**, speaking in his capacity as Chairperson of the SRM TWG, said that the aim of the proposed deferral was to agree, outside the pressurized setting of a regular meeting, on how to proceed with regard to outdated Conventions in order to avoid protection gaps. It did not mean suspending the review function of the SRM TWG, which would continue to be performed as planned. At the ninth meeting, it had proved impossible to make many decisions that were vital to the proper fulfilment of the SRM TWG's mandate. A smaller meeting involving only its Officers and the Government group coordinator would enable it to carry out its duties without being mired in the debate over abrogation, in which there had been no softening of the opposing stances. Although government members had largely served as mediators in the debate, opening the proposed meeting to all could result in an endless discussion and make it difficult for the Workers' and Employers' groups to reach agreement. He encouraged IMEC to withdraw the amendment.
146. **A Government representative of Brazil** welcomed the recommendation to appoint Mr Lelio Bentes Corrêa as Special Envoy to Belarus and said that Mr Corrêa was a knowledgeable and respected professional with many years of ILO experience. He had demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the promotion of social justice and decent work and to ensuring compliance with international labour standards. At the domestic level, he had served as a labour prosecutor and later as a minister of the Superior Labour Court. He had devoted special attention to the protection of children, having been Secretary-General of the International Coalition for the Elimination of Child Labour and for Education, coordinator of the global march

against child labour in South America and a member of the Advisory Board of the Abring Foundation for Children's Rights. The Special Envoy had to have the ability to engage in dialogue with the Government of Belarus and all other relevant stakeholders. Mr Corrêa was perfectly suited to the task.

147. **The Employer spokesperson** said that he agreed with IMEC on the importance of inclusivity and that the proposed smaller meeting would be inclusive, with one representative each from the Workers' and Employers' groups and two Government representatives. The group would not make any decisions, but develop recommendations and submit them to the Governing Body for consideration by all governments.
148. **The Worker spokesperson** said that, in the proposed smaller meeting, the Workers' and Employers' groups would endeavour to reach a consensus that had proved elusive in regular SRM TWG meetings. She encouraged the Office to provide support in devising creative solutions to the impasse, urged constituents to view the deferral optimistically and cautioned against further burdening a process that was already at a standstill.
149. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) recalled that the source of the deadlock was the issue of abrogation, in relation to which governments, employers and workers had expressed frustration and called for innovative solutions. She believed that the proposal outlined paragraph 23 of the document and in subparagraph (d) of the draft decision fit the bill and would give fresh impetus to the SRM TWG, whose work on all other issues would continue as normal.
150. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, the Government representative of the Netherlands pointed out that the SRM TWG Government group coordinator was nominated at each SRM TWG meeting; therefore, the position was unoccupied. She requested clarification on how the coordinator who would take part in the smaller meeting would be nominated, a cost estimate and an explanation of the authority under which the proposal had been brought before the Governing Body.
151. **The representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) said that it would be for the Government members of the SRM TWG to choose a coordinator for the smaller meeting. As the Governing Body had approved a budget for a regular meeting, the smaller meeting would incur fewer travel expenses, enabling a cost saving. The decision providing for a regular meeting of the SRM TWG in 2025 had been made by the Governing Body, and thus only the Governing Body could revise it. The current session represented the only opportunity for it to do so, which was why the proposal had been submitted for its consideration.
152. **The Government representative of Colombia** suggested that the Government group coordinator could be the member from Canada, who had participated in the SRM TWG on many occasions and had in-depth knowledge of its work.
153. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, the Government representative of the Netherlands said that she would be interested to hear the views of other governments on the proposal. Her group had concerns about the process followed to prepare the proposal and found it regrettable that the Government members had not been included in it. Nevertheless, it was prepared to be flexible and withdraw its proposal.
154. **The Government representative of Brazil** said that, for the sake of efficiency, which the Governing Body had failed to achieve at the current session, he could accept the original draft decision.

- 155. The Worker spokesperson** thanked IMEC for its flexibility and expressed regret that, owing to the last-minute nature of the proposal, there had not been time for proper consultations with the Government members. The issue to be resolved was complicated, which was why she could not offer any guarantees about the outcomes of the smaller meeting.
- 156. A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that, while he would have preferred wider participation in the smaller meeting, in the interests of consensus, he accepted the draft decision.

Decision

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

- (a) **appointed for a period of three years, the following four new members of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations;**
 - (i) **Doctor A.L. Molokomme (Botswana);**
 - (ii) **Professor K.A. Sándor (Hungary);**
 - (iii) **Ms R. Vélez Juárez (Mexico);**
 - (iv) **Professor K. Banks (Canada);**
- (b) **reappointed for a period of three years, the following three members of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations;**
 - (i) **Mr J.R. Herrera (Colombia);**
 - (ii) **Mr B.B. Kanyip (Nigeria);**
 - (iii) **Ms A. Sreenevasan (Malaysia);**
- (c) **approved the arrangements for the Meeting of Experts on occupational safety and health in extreme weather events and changing weather patterns to be held on 2–6 February 2026;**
- (d) **approved the deferral of the Tenth Meeting of the Standard Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group to 14–18 September 2026 and the follow-up action outlined in paragraph 23 of document GB.354/INS/11;**
- (e) **authorized the Director-General to invite the Governments of Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom to the 20th American Regional Meeting, as well as the intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations as listed in Appendix II of document GB.354/INS/11 to that meeting and other ILO official meetings listed therein;**
- (f) **approved the arrangements for the tripartite representation at the Second World Summit for Social Development to be held in Qatar from 4 to 6 November 2025;**
- (g) **appointed Mr Lelio Bentes Corrêa (Brazil) Special Envoy to Belarus;**
- (h) **took note of the programme of meetings contained in Part II of document GB.354/INS/11, subject to further Governing Body decisions.**

([GB.354/INS/11](#), paragraph 37)

► Appendix

Statement by the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee (14 June 2025)

Chairperson, Worker Vice-Chairperson, Employer Vice-Chairperson, Director-General,
Mr Guy Ryder, Members of the Governing Body,

Dear colleagues, and all of you here today, in this room or online,

First of all, I would like to thank you for giving me the floor in this Governing Body. I know your time is precious, and that you have a full agenda for today's Governing Body, following a Conference that has come to an end after long days and nights of toil. We are certainly all tired today and anxious to get back to our families and loved ones, and I look forward to being reunited with the colleagues with whom we share our daily professional lives. We have experienced some unique, seemingly infinite moments together, but which have enabled us to make headway together in key areas for the world of work.

I would like to thank you on behalf of myself and the 3,600 colleagues I represent. The fact that many of them are here today, in this room or online, is testimony to their desire to be heard and that the reality for staff must be taken into account in your forthcoming discussion on document GB.354/INS/5, entitled "The ILO in a changing multilateral environment: Towards greater effectiveness and efficiency".

As we know, the Staff Union is not normally expected to make a statement in the June Governing Body sessions. Exceptional circumstances call for exceptional measures. Together, we must face up to a worrying reality. When I last spoke to you in March this year, I shared with you the importance of trust, which is necessary if we are to be effective architects of social justice, each in our respective roles and with our respective responsibilities. This trust is not insignificant: it is rooted in respect for universal human rights, respect for international labour standards, and respect for social dialogue. This trust should enable us to work together to reinvent the best way of promoting social justice, to ensure that the ILO can meet the legitimate expectations of the world of work and that people remain at the heart of our actions and commitments.

This reinvention cannot be achieved through hasty, unilateral measures and against the very staff who will be implementing these decisions. It requires time and trust.

Members of the Governing Body, this trust has been sorely tested in the current context of insecurity, with many of our reference points upended and a pace of change in the world that is accelerating, at times overwhelming us.

Unfortunately, this trust now seems to be giving way to anxiety and the need to make hasty decisions to deal with the urgency of decisions over which we have no control.

Since March, we have had to put in place emergency measures to support our colleagues whose projects have been pulled overnight. So far 150 colleagues have been made redundant, from Mexico to Fiji, including Viet Nam, Myanmar, Kenya, Brazil, Ghana, Costa Rica, Nigeria, Indonesia, Haiti, United Republic of Tanzania, Lebanon, Thailand, Egypt, China, Peru, Türkiye, Nepal, Armenia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Mauritania, Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chile, Pakistan, Lesotho, Côte d'Ivoire, Geneva and Malaysia. Out of the blue, 8 per cent of all staff learned that the projects they were working on were ending. These

projects were working towards the promotion of fundamental rights at work, the elimination of child labour, putting an end to human trafficking; they were providing technical support to strengthen freedom of association, and to promote the ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions. These colleagues are left without jobs, without a social safety net – given there is no unemployment insurance scheme or automatic coverage by other social security systems – and in some cases without residence permits in the places to where they have had to move. These are colleagues who have no idea what will become of their lives, who are fearful of the limited prospects of finding a job in a development labour market that is collapsing with a radical review across the United Nations system. These are colleagues for whom the redundancy terms and conditions and other legal issues remain unresolved, even after their departure.

These redundancies also mean that many of the commitments and objectives agreed with our constituents can no longer be fulfilled, given it is impossible to meet the demand for expertise when the experts are no longer there. So, there you have it – we have “done our best”, both the Administration – and I would like to thank the many managers and colleagues who have rallied in the human resources and finance departments – and the Staff Union, through its representatives, who have demonstrated the importance of solidarity and benevolence. But this is far from enough.

We were also saddened and shocked by the news from other agencies in the United Nations system of mass dismissals, with no safety net for staff and no real consultation with staff representative bodies. We are losing colleagues and in some instances friends with whom we have worked for a long time. Let us be clear: the absence of rights at work and genuine social dialogue in these agencies is also our collective failure.

Since March, we have also had to embark on a review process, as outlined in the famous document under discussion today, entitled “The ILO in a changing multilateral environment: Towards greater effectiveness and efficiency”.

Members of the Governing Body, let me get straight to the point: this document, and the proposed measures it contains, is not the result of consultations or of a process of social dialogue with the Staff Union. It is true that from the outset of the proposal preparation process, the Director-General stated his willingness to hold consultations with staff and to consult – or negotiate – with the Staff Union when necessary. The Staff Union was consulted on the immediate cost-saving measures announced to staff on 16 May. The Staff Union passed on a number of questions about the implementation of certain measures – and, like the staff, we are still waiting for clarifications. Questions concerning the scope of these measures – with doubts over their adaptability to our operations in the field, the implementation of our technical assistance and the real impact of cost savings and efficiency. The Staff Union was also there in person to negotiate, as quickly as possible, measures involving changes to the Staff Regulations or collective agreements to meet the Administration’s stated requirements. Negotiations are currently under way on ways to optimize the use of ILO office space, on the review of the travel policy, and on the specific measures that will have a direct impact on our working conditions. However, at this time we question their real objective and genuine contribution to the stated need for cost savings and efficiency.

Yet, the other “reform measures initiated by the Office to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its operations” included in the agenda document were not the subject of consultation, let alone negotiation. The Staff Union discovered this document on the eve of its publication. We also discovered, through media articles, rumours and whispers in the corridors, the possible locations to where some of us might be called on to move.

This document before you caught us unawares, as the deadline we had been given for proposing solutions based on collective bargaining was November of this year. Accordingly, we had set up our staff consultation process, which would enable us to make haste without rushing and allow us to put forward solutions that would best respond to immediate requirements, while keeping on track towards our common objective – to promote social justice with quality services that are best adapted to your needs.

Our ambition is, together, to define what efficiency gains might consist of and how they could be measured; to base our proposals on a shared understanding of the precise efficiency gains sought, in accurate cost-benefit analyses; and to distinguish between short-, medium- and long-term financial constraints, between temporary measures and necessary structural reforms.

We would have liked, therefore, to question the measures to decentralize services to less expensive countries, which are not for the moment based on any costed study; the same goes for the intention to make savings by getting rid of “costly” staff, rather than looking at the added value that our colleagues with decades of experience can bring to the quality of the services provided. We would have liked to ask about the implications for the ILO’s vulnerable staff – our colleagues with disabilities, our colleagues from the LGBTIQ+ community, our colleagues with specific family responsibilities – who need a living and working environment that ensures they are respected and that their needs are taken into account. The ILO seeks to be a forerunner in diversity and inclusion; it must give itself the means to do so.

For the Staff Union, the priority in these negotiations should be on efficiency gains rather than on cutting posts, on quality of services rather than on short-term savings and, of course, above all, on people.

Local colleagues, who account for 47 per cent of staff in the regular budget, including 300 in Geneva, cannot be “relocated”, unless their jobs are reclassified as international contracts, which raises a number of questions about the consequent legal aspects and financial impact. Let me be clear: relocating will not save all jobs, and the worst affected will be local colleagues who are facing uncertain fates.

It should also be noted that the forced mobility of international staff is contrary to the Staff Regulations. A move to other countries would therefore involve going against not only the current rules, but also the mobility policy that we have just renegotiated in 2025 with an approach to negotiations based on shared interests and aimed at improving and promoting better staff mobility. The risk of choosing one department or another to be moved, without even consulting on the criteria for this selection, goes against the very principles of fairness and equity on which this process should be based.

Arbitrariness should never be the solution.

We would also have liked to be able to put on the table proposals resulting from a process of staff consultations, giving the Staff Union a negotiating mandate allowing it to move forward on the basis of shared interests and within the framework of principles clearly defined by all the colleagues I represent, and valuing our in-depth knowledge of the inner workings of the Organization, its inefficiencies, its successes to preserve, its innovations to promote.

Lastly, we could have expressed our concern at the proposal to “align” in principle with the United Nations Secretariat, which could lead to a race to the bottom, more precarious working conditions and a loss of the Office’s expertise. Yes, we are privileged, but the current situation shows how much the structural problems linked to our contracts policy are leading to real precariousness and fragility.

We would like to call on the Office to reaffirm its responsibility to set an example across the United Nations system and beyond, in labour law, organizational integrity, contracts policy, inclusion and collective bargaining. This is a prerequisite for the quality of the future services we will be able to provide to you, but above all for our alignment with our highest values of decent work and social justice.

To those who might think that the United Nations system agencies would be able to defend part of the ILO's mandate under the UN80 Initiative reform, where responsibilities would be mixed and redistributed, I would have called for a close look at the redundancy terms and conditions that are currently being applied, with no regard for rights or standards. These arbitrary actions, which are highly regrettable, also preclude any potential ambition these agencies might have to become the custodians and defenders of some or all of our Organization's standards. I hope that Mr Ryder will be able to reassure you – reassure us – in the next hour about respect for the principles of social dialogue and to shed some light on these ongoing processes and their implications for a specialized agency such as the ILO.

Members of the Governing Body, we hope it is not too late to ask all these questions. Based on the guidance you will provide to the Office as part of the discussion of the next item, it is vital that the Office refrains from presenting the Staff Union – and the staff we represent – with a fait accompli of a mandate that it would deem to have received without first being able to hold the necessary internal consultations and negotiations.

I will say this in earnest: we will continue to support the Administration in proposing measures that give us the means to be more effective in our work, while respecting these rights and social dialogue, but we will oppose by all appropriate means measures that affect the employment and working conditions of our colleagues if these measures are hasty and without clearly identified benefits.

The Staff Union remains committed to the principles of change management, which are also the subject of joint guidelines under our Bipartite Collective Bargaining Committee, which state that “change and restructuring often provide opportunities to improve work organization and the content of jobs and for changes in roles and responsibilities (...) However, change and restructuring may also impact on the stability of staff – management relations and create concerns among staff affected by the change or restructuring” and therefore stress the importance of having “an approach which optimizes the interests of both staff and the Office”.

Members of the Governing Body – make no mistake. The staff are not rejecting change per se. Moreover, over the past two weeks we have strongly asserted our desire to contribute to solutions to address the current situation, which we know to be difficult and uncertain, and which calls into question the principles of multilateralism. We have also expressed our firm belief in the values of social dialogue.

As the elected representative of the ILO's historic Staff Union, I have no choice but to continue fighting to ensure that the framework for social dialogue and collective bargaining is respected internally. In this context of uncertainty, this is the cornerstone underpinning and anchoring my action, not only in the interests of the staff but in the interests of the Organization, which is yours as much as it is ours, and for which I have worked with passion and self-sacrifice over the last 24 years.

I have made a commitment to my colleagues, as Chairperson of the Staff Union, to remain faithful to these values and principles, and to move forward in the coming months within the framework that has been patiently developed throughout our joint history and perfected by our predecessors. I have also made this commitment to the Administration. I hope that this

will, in fact, be a reciprocal commitment, underpinning each step in the coming months. We have a shared responsibility to demonstrate that, even in times of crisis, any negotiated solution may not be perfect, but it is the best. I hope that at the next Governing Body session, in November, we can all be proud and note with ease that this founding principle – social dialogue – has not been reduced to ashes but that, on the contrary, it will have allowed our Organization to decide on measures that will enable us to emerge from this crisis more resilient, stronger and more effective, so as to fulfil the mandate you have given it.

Thank you for your attention.