



Governing Body

355th Session, Geneva, 17–27 November 2025

Policy Development Section

POL

Employment and Social Protection Segment

Date: 10 October 2025

Original: English

First item on the agenda

Report on the implementation of the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages

Purpose of the document

This document outlines the progress achieved in implementing the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages adopted by the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024). The Governing Body is invited to take note of the report and to request the Director-General to consider its guidance in the continued implementation of the conclusions, and to provide a further report on their implementation at its 359th Session (March 2027) (see the draft decision in paragraph 27).

Relevant strategic objective: Social protection.

Main relevant outcome: Outcome 6: Protection at work for all.

Policy implications: Providing guidance and strategic direction for ILO action on wage policies, including living wages.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Progressing implementation of the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, as per guidance provided by the Governing Body.

Author unit: Inclusive Labour Markets, Wages and Working Conditions Branch (INWORK), Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY).

Related documents: [GB.350/POL/1](#); [GB.350/PV](#).

► Introduction

1. At its 350th Session (March 2024), the Governing Body adopted the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages (Geneva, 19–23 February 2024) (hereafter, “the conclusions”) and requested the Director-General to present an implementation report at its 355th Session.¹
2. The conclusions identify key institutions and ILO principles of wage setting, provide a joint understanding of the concept of a living wage, define principles for the estimation of living wages and specify how the operationalization of living wages should take into account key ILO principles of wage-setting processes, including by consideration of the needs of workers and their families and economic factors. They further establish a set of recommendations for future action by the Office under three areas, namely: (i) providing support towards strengthening wage-setting processes; (ii) carrying out activities related to living wages; and (iii) continuing other related activities.
3. This document provides an overview of the work accomplished by the Office under these three areas and concludes with a section on future planned activities, particularly the development of the new ILO Programme on Living Wages.

► Recommendations for ILO action: Progress so far

Actions related to strengthening wage-setting processes

4. This section reviews progress made in implementing paragraph 14 of the conclusions, which emphasizes strengthening wage-setting processes. The activities undertaken by the Office in this area fully align with output 6.2 of the ILO Programme and Budget for 2024–25, which focuses on increasing the capacity of ILO Member States to set adequate wages through social dialogue, taking into account the needs of workers and their families as well as economic factors.
5. Substantial progress was made during the period under review in respect of promoting the ratification and implementation of all relevant Conventions and international labour standards related to wage policies and wage setting. In terms of governance Conventions, the Philippines ratified the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), Suriname ratified the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) and Thailand ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). With respect to technical Conventions, Angola and Barbados ratified the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); Belgium, Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana ratified the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188); Egypt, Guinea-Bissau and Pakistan ratified the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006); and Uzbekistan ratified the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95). Belgium and Suriname ratified the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), bringing the total number of ratifications for this Convention to 56.

¹ GB.350/PV, para. 734.

6. Supporting the implementation of wage-related Conventions, the Office provided technical assistance to various countries. Examples included support for: a new national minimum wage in Namibia; the development of guidelines for monitoring and evaluating the minimum wage in South Africa; an evaluation of the minimum wage system in Albania and in Viet Nam; technical inputs for the revision of adjustment formulas in Costa Rica and Cyprus; and the adjustment of the minimum wage rate in Georgia and Nigeria. The Office also provided capacity-building support to tripartite minimum wage commissions or consultative bodies engaged in minimum wage setting, including in Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, selected states in India (Assam and Telangana), Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam.
7. Collective bargaining of wages was strengthened through targeted technical assistance and capacity-building for employers' and workers' organizations. This support contributed, inter alia, to new collective agreements at the enterprise level in the Namibian fishing sector, a national collective agreement adjusting wages for civil servants in Zimbabwe and a revised sectoral collective agreement introducing minimum wage categories in the mining industry of Guinea. Additionally, multi-country analysis on inflation-linked wage adjustments informed training activities in Bulgaria, Guinea, Morocco and São Tomé and Príncipe carried out to enhance the capacity of social partners to negotiate adequate wages.
8. The Office continued its engagement to promote equal pay for work of equal value, with a focus on reducing the gender pay gap. Technical reports investigating the gender pay gap, its evolution and underlying factors were prepared in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan, using the methodology developed in the ILO Global Wage Report 2018–19. The same methodology was used to estimate gender pay gaps in 16 countries in Latin America. Drawing on technical support from the ILO, the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration adopted on 31 July 2025 endorsed a new Brisbane–eThekweni Goal, with G20 countries pledging to reduce the gender pay gap by 15 per cent by 2035. In order to support countries in this area, the Office is also currently updating the ILO guide on equal pay.
9. In support of its technical assistance on wages, the Office published two complementary guidance documents: an updated version of its methodology to assess the needs of workers and their families for the purpose of wage setting,² and a compendium of economic factors for wage setting.³ Together, these documents form part of the development of an "assessment framework for wage setting," recommended under paragraph 14(e), supporting governments and social partners in determining adequate wage levels that take into account both the needs of workers and their families as well as economic factors. As stated in the conclusions, these two elements, also highlighted in Convention No. 131, are the two pillars of wage-setting processes.
10. In implementing the ILO mandate to provide capacity-building to constituents on wage setting, the Office developed and implemented a training course on wage policies and living wages, in partnership with the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCilo) in Turin. The course, delivered online in English, French and Spanish between June and July 2024,⁴ covered various subjects including minimum wages, collective bargaining of wages, living wages and gender pay gaps. The 63 registered participants from 20 countries rated it highly (4.7 out of 5, above

² ILO, *A Methodology to Estimate the Needs of Workers and their Families for the Purpose of Wage Setting, including Living Wages*, 2025.

³ ILO, *Economic Factors for Wage Setting*, 2025.

⁴ Further information is available on the ITCilo website, <https://www.itcilo.org/courses/wage-policies-and-living-wages>.

the ITCILO average). The course modules are now available for self-paced learning on the ILO website,⁵ and a new round of ITCILO training is scheduled for the end of 2025. In addition, the ILO organized the Asia-Pacific Regional Course on Effective Evidence-Based Wage Policies, including Living Wages (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 24–26 September 2025), in which tripartite delegations from 16 countries from Asia and the Pacific participated actively and engaged in cross-country exchanges. Looking ahead, the event helped identify opportunities for ILO technical assistance on living wages in several participating countries, some of which also committed to joining the living wage initiative under the Global Coalition for Social Justice (Global Coalition).

11. The ILO Global Wage Report 2024–25 shows that efforts in many countries to reduce wage inequalities were reflected in global trends. The report, based on data for 72 countries representing three quarters of the world's total employees, indicates that wage inequality has declined in two thirds of those countries since the early 2000s. While this is encouraging, wage inequality remains high in many countries and women continue to earn lower wages than men. The report also shows that, following a period of sustained price increases which drove real wage growth into negative territory, real wage growth was again positive globally in 2024. However, it finds that many workers' wages remain below pre-crisis levels, reflecting the enduring impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Another ILO publication provides wage estimates adjusted by purchasing power parity, a metric of relevance for international comparison of mean and minimum wages.⁶
12. Lastly, building on the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains, the ILO developed and launched the new, AI-enabled ILO Decent Work in Supply Chains Evidence Hub, which provides users with easy access to ILO evidence from the past ten years. Specifically, the hub showcases ILO evidence from more than 140 publications on the relationship between participation in supply chains, trade, foreign direct investment, other factors and wages. It also highlights potential focus areas for future research on wages and supply chains, contributing to the ILO research agenda on supply chains. The Office also actively promoted the uptake of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, including the guidance contained therein on wages and benefits.

Activities related to living wages

13. This section reviews progress in implementing paragraph 15 of the conclusions, which outlines recommendations for ILO activities related to living wages. Several activities aimed at raising awareness on living wages, (paragraph 15(a)), engaging with living wage initiatives to promote alignment with ILO living wage principles (paragraph 15(b)), and promoting the conclusions in the multilateral system and through partnerships with other United Nations (UN) bodies, including through the Global Coalition (paragraph 15(g)). The ILO also developed a new thematic web page on living wages,⁷ where enterprises, initiatives and others can easily find the conclusions of the expert meeting and related methodologies and tools.
14. The dedicated key initiative on living wages within the Global Coalition gained significant traction, with growing engagement from a wide range of stakeholders following its launch meeting on 10 April 2025. Important milestones included the global event on Operationalizing

⁵ ILO, "Living wages: Training tool".

⁶ Sonia Gontero, "Ingresos del trabajo en América Latina: ¿Cómo se miden y comparan internacionalmente?" (Spanish only), ILO Brief, May 2025.

⁷ ILO, "Living wages".

Living Wages (Geneva, 28–29 April 2025), which brought together governments, social partners and living wage initiatives to share experiences in estimating and operationalizing living wages, with a view to promoting convergence towards ILO principles. Building on this event, Shaping the Living Wages Agenda in Asia and the Pacific – a high-level regional dialogue under the Global Coalition for Social Justice (Colombo, Sri Lanka, 23 September 2025) enabled constituents and stakeholders to exchange views, explore alignment with ILO principles and launch the ILO Minimum Wage Systems repository, which includes information on countries in the Asia and the Pacific region. The repository centralizes data on minimum wage systems, minimum wage rates and related labour market indicators, providing wage-setting institutions and social partners with evidence to support more transparent and informed decision-making. The spotlight session on living wages during the annual Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice (Geneva, 12 June 2025), held in the margins of the 113th Session (June 2025) of the International Labour Conference, also provided an opportunity for a high-level exchange on the challenges, opportunities and potential solutions for alignment with the conclusions.

15. In order to disseminate the conclusions and promote alignment with ILO principles, the Office has engaged actively with other UN bodies and numerous living wage initiatives. Among others, it has engaged with the UN Global Compact as part of its Forward Faster initiative; the World Banana Forum hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, including in working groups and at the Fourth Global Conference of the World Banana Forum (Rome, March 2024); the European Commission, informing relevant European Commission Directorates-General about the conclusions and participating in the consultation on the revision of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards; and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), in order to ensure the inclusion of references to the conclusions in the OECD *Handbook on due diligence for enabling living incomes and living wages in agriculture, garment and footwear supply chains*. The Office also disseminated the conclusions at the G20 Employment Working Group in 2024 and 2025, and engaged with multiple other actors, including GIZ, the Responsible Business Alliance, amfori, the Watch & Jewellery Initiative 2030, the Sustainable Trade Initiative (IDH), Sustainable Textiles Switzerland 2030, the Action, Collaboration, Transformation (ACT) initiative, Acción Empresas, the Anker Research Institute, the WageMap initiative and the Association of Latin American Sugar Producers (UNALA), to name a few.
16. The Office also informed the process leading to the draft political declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development, which refers to living wages, by publishing a policy brief on “Advancing decent work for all: The role of wage policies, including living wages” and informing the UN Commission for Social Development about the conclusions. Recognizing the importance of this topic for the upcoming World Social Summit and the political declaration, the ILO is co-organizing a side event on living wages at the World Social Summit in Doha in November 2025, in which high-level representatives of workers’ and employers’ organizations will participate.
17. As recommended in the conclusions, the Office also reviewed the ILO methodology for estimating the needs of workers and their families for the purpose of a living wage to ensure alignment with the principles for estimating a living wage. It also supported living wage estimates in several countries, including Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Philippines, Uganda and Viet Nam. All estimates were produced by the ILO in consultation with governments and social partners, except in Côte d’Ivoire where the ILO provided technical support to the National Statistical Institute to produce its own estimate of living wages, using the ILO methodology. These estimates, to be used in conjunction with the recently published ILO compendium on economic factors for wage setting, support constituents’ efforts in

operationalizing living wages. In India, for example, the ILO is working with the Government to explore the possible development of an action plan on living wages based on the conclusions, taking into account both the needs of workers and their families and economic factors. The Office has also engaged in a stocktaking exercise to identify existing household income and expenditure surveys in all ILO Member States and assess their availability in ILO repositories or on the websites of national statistical offices.

18. With a view to further advancing research and knowledge-sharing on living wages, the Office is conducting research on the gender dimension of living wages. In addition, it is participating in the research on living wages undertaken by the International Panel on Social Progress, which focuses on the benefits and impacts of living wages; the barriers and enablers of living wages; and informality and living wages.

Other related activities

19. The conclusions emphasize that a sustainable approach to promoting living wages should go beyond the realm of wage-setting mechanisms and include a broader consideration of factors such as sustainable economic growth and structural transformation to raise productivity. Such an approach should also ensure that productivity growth results in wage growth – which is possible only through strong and effective labour market institutions and social dialogue. This section presents selected activities undertaken during the period under review, beyond those mentioned in previous sections.
20. In response to the recommendation that the Office should continue to offer technical assistance to constituents on skills development, productivity improvement and strengthening an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, the Office undertook research in Ethiopia and Colombia using enterprise-level survey data to examine the relationship between firm-level productivity and wages in the manufacturing sector, with a focus on the agro-processing industry. Guided by the recently published compendium of economic factors for wage setting, these contributions have enriched the literature on wage-setting mechanisms and labour market dynamics by providing empirical evidence on the links between wages, productivity and sustainable enterprise development. As part of its Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work programme, the Office supported national statistical offices in Ghana, South Africa and Viet Nam in initiating or improving the production of productivity statistics making use of their data on output, value addition and the labour market. These statistics, alongside data on the needs of workers and their families, will be available to policymakers and social partners for wage setting, including for minimum wage setting and wage negotiations.
21. With a view to strengthening the effectiveness of labour inspectorates and other relevant authorities to enhance compliance, the Office organized a two-day online webinar in early 2025 to support the implementation of the newly adopted Namibian national minimum wage law. The event convened leading experts from the Australian Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman, the Ministry of Labour and Employment of Brazil, the Labour Directorate of Chile and the University of Cape Town in South Africa to exchange actionable strategies and institutional innovations for ensuring compliance with minimum wage legislation across diverse development contexts. The workshop attracted strong engagement from tripartite constituents in Namibia, including labour inspectors and social partners, and fostered a practical dialogue on advancing compliance. The experience and knowledge gathered can be used for future ILO activities related to compliance.

► Looking towards the future: the ILO Programme on Living Wages

22. The ILO's work on wage policies, including living wages, comes at a crucial moment. International consensus on the importance of adopting living wage policies to advance sustainable and inclusive economic growth is increasing, as reaffirmed in the draft political declaration of the World Social Summit. Drawing on its extensive expertise in wage setting and its proven record of technical assistance on matters related to wages, the ILO is uniquely equipped to support ILO constituents in turning the commitments undertaken at the World Social Summit into reality.
23. With a view to further strengthening the capacity of the Office to implement the conclusions, the ILO, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and International Organisation of Employers (IOE) jointly launched the ILO's first-ever Programme on Living Wages in April 2025. This programme builds on previous groundwork by the Office, notably the methodology for estimating living wages and the compendium of economic factors, in order to accelerate the further implementation of the conclusions at the global and national levels. The programme is expected to be funded through both the regular budget and development cooperation projects and to become operational in early 2026. The employers' and workers' groups will be closely involved.
24. The programme will be based on two pillars. The first pillar consists of the development of a wage data hub, including living wages estimates in line with ILO principles and data on economic factors for wage setting. Under this pillar, the ILO will continue to provide technical assistance to constituents, upon request, on the ILO living wage methodology. The second concerns the operationalization of living wages in line with ILO wage-setting principles, including by strengthening wage-setting institutions, taking into account the needs of workers and their families as well as economic factors, and by addressing the root causes and challenges of low pay. Specific activities in individual countries will be developed in close consultation with ILO constituents through national dialogue processes. The programme will be tailored to the expressed needs and priorities of constituents and seek to strengthen the capacity of social partners, as well as the quality of data and analyses used in social dialogue. Ultimately, the programme should contribute to reducing wage inequality and gender pay gaps, since women are often disproportionately located at the low end of the wage distribution.
25. The ILO will continue its engagement with living wage initiatives and promote their alignment with the conclusions by developing guidance materials and raising awareness of the conclusions; by engaging with UN agencies and other multilateral organizations, including in the implementation of the political declaration of the World Social Summit; and by engaging with the partners of the living wage initiative under the Global Coalition. Following the global event on Operationalizing Living Wages in April 2025 and the high-level regional dialogue on the living wage in Asia and the Pacific in September 2025, the Office intends to hold further regional events in different regions, combining both awareness-raising and capacity-building.
26. It is expected that the ILO Programme on Living Wages and the activities described will contribute to strengthening and reaffirming the ILO's leadership role on the issue of wages, including living wages, and promote the centrality of social dialogue in wage-setting processes and the key role played by social partners therein. So far, the work concerned was carried out with regular budget resources, complemented with development cooperation projects funded

by the Governments of the Netherlands and Germany. These ongoing projects have supported global activities as well as country-level activities in six countries, namely, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India and Viet Nam. Other development cooperation projects have included support for wage-related work in Egypt and Uganda, among others. As the demand for technical assistance on this issue continues to grow, the programme will seek to secure adequate resources for its activities, including from extrabudgetary contributions. Finally, although many activities have been implemented since the adoption of the conclusions, the programme will enable the Office to advance pending activities, sustain ongoing activities and further elevate the prominence of wage-related work within the Decent Work Agenda.

► Draft decision

27. The Governing Body:

- (a) took note of the report on the implementation of the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages;**
- (b) requested the Director-General to allocate sufficient resources and take account of its guidance in the further implementation of the conclusions;**
- (c) requested the Director-General to provide a further report on the implementation of the conclusions at its 359th Session (March 2027).**