International Labour Organization

▶ GB.355/PV(Rev.1)

Governing Body

355th Session, Geneva, 17–27 November 2025

Minutes of the 355th Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office

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Abbreviations

ACT/EMP	Bureau for Employers’ Activities
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers’ Activities
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASPAG	Asia and Pacific group
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CINTERFOR	Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EU	European Union
EPZs	Export Processing Zones
GCC	Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
GRULAC	group of Latin American and Caribbean countries
IAO	Office of Internal Audit and Oversight
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IMEC	group of industrialized market economy countries
Turin Centre	International Training Centre of the ILO
IOE	International Organisation of Employers
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
MSME	micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
MNE Declaration	Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
OSH	occupational safety and health
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SRM TWG	Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group
UN	United Nations
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

Introduction

1. The 355th Session of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office was held in Geneva, from 17 to 27 November 2025. It was presided over by Ms Anousheh Karvar (Government, France) as Chairperson. Mr Matthias Thorns, Employer member, was the spokesperson for the Employers' group and Ms Catelene Passchier, Worker member from the Netherlands, was the spokesperson for the Workers' group.

Officers of the Governing Body

Chairperson:	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)
Employer Vice-Chairperson:	Mr Matthias THORNS
Worker Vice-Chairperson:	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Chairing and speaking responsibilities by section

Institutional Section (INS)		
Chairperson:	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
1	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
2	Ms Anne Vauchez (France)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
3/1	Mr Farooq Ahmed (Bangladesh)	Mr Anthony Baah (Ghana)
3/2	Ms Sonya Janahi (Bahrain)	Mr Magnús Norddahl (Iceland)
4	Ms Sonya Janahi (Bahrain)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
5	Mr Syed Hussain Syed Husman (Malaysia)	Mr Rafael Lamas (Belgium)
6	Ms Miriam Pinto Lomeña (Spain)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
7	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
8	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Amanda Brown (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
9	Mr Fernando Yllanes (Mexico)	Mr José Enrique Oñate Vera (Mexico)
10	Mr Fernando Yllanes (Mexico)	Mr Jeffrey Vogt (United States of America)
11	Mr Matthias Thorns	Mr Jeffrey Vogt (United States)
12	Mr Blaise Matthey (Switzerland)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
13	Mr Guido Ricci (Guatemala)	Mr José Enrique Oñate Vera (Mexico)
14	Mr Atul Sobti (India)	Ms Amanda Brown (United Kingdom)
15	Ms Jacqueline Mugo (Kenya)	Ms Leida Marcela Leon Molina (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Institutional Section (INS)		
Chairperson:	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
16	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
16/1	Mr Adewale-Smatt Oyerinde (Nigeria)	Mr Jeffrey Vogt (United States)
16/2	Mr Abdulghani Alsayegh (Saudi Arabia)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
16/3	Mr Syed Hussein Syed Husman (Malaysia)	Ms Sylvia Choo (Singapore)
16/4	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
17/1	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
17/2	Ms Laura Giménez (Argentina)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
18	Ms Emiko Nagasawa (Japan)	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)

Policy Development Section (POL)		
Employment and Social Protection Segment		
Chairperson: [1]	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
1	Mr Matthias Thorns	Mr Plamen Dimitrov (Bulgaria)
2	Ms Nancy Chenard (Congo)	Ms Michele O'neil (Australia)
Social Dialogue Segment		
Chairperson: [1]	H.E. Ms Nahida Sobhan (Bangladesh)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
3	Mr Ton Schoenmaeckers (Kingdom of the Netherlands)	Mr José Enrique Oñate Vera (Mexico)
Development Cooperation Segment		
Chairperson: [1]	H.E. Ms Nahida Sobhan (Bangladesh)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
4	Mr Matthias Thorns	Ms Catelene Passchier (Kingdom of the Netherlands)

[1] Delegation of authority from the Chairperson (see paragraph 2.2.5 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body).

Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section (LILS)		
International Labour Standards and Human Rights Segment		
Chairperson: [1]	H.E. Ms Alejandra De Bellis (Uruguay)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
1	Mr Matthias Thorns	Mr Jeffrey Vogt (United States)
2	Mr Matthias Thorns	Mr José Enrique Oñate Vera (Mexico)
3	Mr Kaizer Moyane (South Africa)	Ms Amanda Brown (United Kingdom)

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section (PFA)		
Programme, Financial and Administrative Segment		
Chairperson:	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
1	Mr Juan Mailhos (Uruguay)	Ms Eulogia Familia (Dominican Republic)
2	Mr Blaise Matthey (Switzerland)	Mr Plamen Dimitrov (Bulgaria)
Audit and Oversight Segment		
Chairperson:	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
4	Mr Blaise Matthey (Switzerland)	Mr Rafael Lamas (Belgium)
5	Mr Khelil Ghariani (Tunisia)	Mr Magnús Norddahl (Iceland)
6	Ms Sheena Mayers-Granville (Barbados)	Mr Plamen Dimitrov (Bulgaria)
7	Mr Douglas Opio (Uganda)	Mr Rafael Lamas (Belgium)
Personnel Segment		
Chairperson:	Ms Anousheh Karvar (France)	
Item	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
9	Mr Manuel Terán (Ecuador)	Mr Magnús Norddahl (Iceland)
10	Ms Miriam Pinto Lomeña (Spain)	Mr Magnús Norddahl (Iceland)

Other bodies

Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA)		
Chairperson:	Mr Evance Kalula (Zambia)	
Government spokesperson	**Employer spokesperson**	**Worker spokesperson**
Mr Pascal Appredérisse (France)	Mr Thomas Mackall (United States)	Ms Amanda Brown (United Kingdom)

▶ Institutional Section

Opening remarks

2. **The Chairperson** opened the 355th Session of the Governing Body. She welcomed the participants and thanked all those who had contributed to the extensive consultations and preparatory work in the run-up to the session.

(The Governing Body adopted the agenda published in document GB.355/Agenda(Rev.2).)

3. **The Director-General** made an introductory statement to the Governing Body. The statement is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix I.

4. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** said that the Governing Body was meeting at a moment of profound institutional significance for the ILO. The discussions on the Director-General's proposals for organizational reform would shape its ability to deliver on its core mandate, which was to advance decent work. The Organization was facing serious financial constraints, with outstanding arrears threatening operational continuity. The situation was a wake-up call, not just for an immediate strategy to secure financial stability, but also for action to ensure that the Organization would become more efficient, effective and relevant, and could better serve its Members. Furthermore, employers around the world were constantly having to reform, adapt and transform in response to the many challenges presented by the current geopolitical context. The reform therefore presented an opportunity for the ILO to become more balanced, more impartial and more results-oriented.

5. For the reform to succeed, it had to rest on three pillars. The first was clarity of purpose. In that regard, the ILO should concentrate its limited resources on the areas where it had the greatest comparative advantage and the biggest impact, namely: ensuring the practical implementation of the fundamental principles and rights at work; advancing social dialogue; promoting full and productive employment; becoming a global leader in skills development; promoting sustainable enterprises; and fostering transitions from the informal to the formal economy. The second pillar was balance and impartiality, which involved ensuring that tripartism guided every aspect of the ILO's work. The third pillar was efficiency and accountability, under which the ILO must become a leaner, more coherent organization, eliminating duplication both within the wider United Nations (UN) system and internally, avoiding unnecessary meetings, optimizing the work of the governing organs, and focusing on measurable outcomes that improved the lives of workers and the sustainability of enterprises.

6. Indeed, the Employers' group wanted to transform the ILO into the most efficient and impactful UN specialized agency. In an ever-evolving world, a more efficient and effective multilateral system was crucial for addressing common global challenges, promoting decent work, sustainable growth, improving the environment for enterprises – especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises – and harnessing the full potential of artificial intelligence (AI) and digitalization.

7. While the ILO's work on international labour standards was of crucial importance, it meant little if countries lacked the means to implement them. Accordingly, one of the Office's most important roles was institutional capacity-building. It was therefore key for the ILO to have a better understanding of the realities and needs of Member States to ensure that its technical support was impactful and led to sustainable change on the ground. In that regard, the decisions and conclusions of the International Labour Conference should be recognized as tools to operationalize the ILO's mandate and guide the ILO's strategy. When new international

labour standards were discussed, there should be greater clarity about their added value. For the ILO to succeed, a proper change management strategy was needed with clear roles and responsibilities and lean and transparent processes.

8. While the Tripartite Meeting on the Review of the Functioning of the Governing Body, held in May 2025, had yielded some procedural recommendations, much remained to be done. It was regrettable that a number of key issues, such as the delegation of authority, the conditions for convening special sessions and decision-making procedures, remained unresolved. In order to strengthen confidence in the Organization, it was important to ensure that the Governing Body operated under rules that were transparent, predictable and consistent with the ILO Constitution. Furthermore, practical measures should be adopted to increase the efficiency of the Governing Body's work. The review process should therefore be continued as part of the broader reform effort, to ensure that the Governing Body became a model of good governance within the UN system.

9. The Employers' group welcomed the report on the implementation of the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages, and recognized the constructive progress made by the Office in establishing the ILO Programme on Living Wages, jointly with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE). The initiative reflected a balanced approach that took into account both the needs of workers and the economic realities of enterprises. His group encouraged continued focus on strengthening wage-setting institutions, improving data quality and supporting national tripartite processes. The ILO's guidance should remain practical and non-prescriptive and align with productivity and enterprise sustainability goals. The necessary resources should be made available to ensure that the ILO could deliver on that important priority.

10. Discrimination in any form was unacceptable. Equal access to opportunities based on merit, skills and performance was essential for inclusive, innovative and productive workplaces. However, ILO action in that area should always respect national contexts and be undertaken at the request of the constituents. The diversity of legal and social frameworks among Member States should be seen as a strength, and not as a weakness. The ILO must continue to support equality through social dialogue and evidence-based approaches, consistent with the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

11. The Employers' group remained concerned about the proliferation of country cases on the Governing Body's agenda. Repeated discussions of the same situations, without progress or closure, risk diluting attention from cases involving serious violations of freedom of association. The ILO's credibility depended on maintaining focus on genuine and serious cases. The group urged the Office to ensure the equal treatment of employers' and workers' complaints, to remain impartial, and to make consistent use of all supervisory procedures available. It was essential to avoid the politicization of cases.

12. Regarding the preparations for the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference, the Employers' group supported the continued efforts to modernize the Conference's working methods while safeguarding its tripartite and in-person character. It looked forward to advancing the strategic agenda-setting for future sessions and to ensuring that the discussions addressed the most relevant, pressing and emerging issues of the world of work, where the ILO could offer a genuine comparative advantage.

13. If successful, the discussions at the current session of the Governing Body would not only advance reform but also reaffirm the value of constructive dialogue as the foundation of the ILO's future.

14. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** said that the Governing Body was meeting in times of great turmoil and insecurity and that there were many major conflicts in the world that required urgent attention, including from the Governing Body. For instance, in the Sudan, where communities had already been struggling to survive in a context of conflict, drought and floods, the fall of El Fasher in Darfur after more than 550 days under siege by the Rapid Support Forces had resulted in a bloodbath, with atrocities so grave that the bloodstains on the ground could reportedly be seen from space. Nearly 100,000 people had fled in the previous two weeks, reporting unimaginable horrors, while an estimated 180,000 remained trapped without food, medicine or safe passage. The world's response had been shamefully inadequate and the collective indifference inexcusable. Governments and other actors inciting and supporting the violence had to be stopped. A ceasefire was urgently needed and unrestricted humanitarian corridors had to be opened immediately.

15. In the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, millions were fleeing the violence caused by competition for rare earth minerals. In Gaza, which had mostly been reduced to rubble, 2 million people still had no safe place to go, despite a fragile ceasefire having been reached. The denial of humanitarian aid was once again being used as a tool in the unjust war that Israel was waging on the whole of the Palestinian population, increasingly extending to the West Bank and beyond. Ukraine was under constant attack by the Russian Federation, which was targeting the energy and transport infrastructure, in particular, leaving 3.5 million people in the occupied territories uncertain about their future and facing another winter, which would have a devastating impact on them. The military regime was further strengthening its grip on Myanmar, ignoring the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject, adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 113th Session (2025), which had exposed the dire situation in the country and urged the military authorities to engage without delay in the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. In the Caribbean, the military build-up by the United States, targeting the boats of fishers allegedly trafficking drugs without any due process, was raising tensions in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Colombia, and beyond, threatening attempts to strengthen peace and stability and the rule of law in the region.

16. In the face of the existential threats of nuclear war and climate change, in combination with a toxic mix of rising poverty and inequality, extremism, jihadism, nationalism and gender-based violence and shrinking democratic space, and in a context of heightened economic and social anxiety and discontent among workers around the world, a strong and impactful ILO was needed more than ever. The Governing Body had to determine how the ILO could continue to deliver on its historical and unique mandate in the current challenging context.

17. It was not the first time that the ILO had been called upon to speak out for social justice and peace, and to uphold international human and labour rights and the rule of law, including through its supervisory bodies and technical support. However, as the multilateral system seemed to be under stronger attack than ever, it was of key importance at the current session to recall that the ILO's social mandate built on its special and unique tripartite and normative mandate. All constituent groups must therefore defend that unique mandate as far as possible, by: developing standards to safeguard minimum protection for workers and a level playing field for businesses; ensuring the full functioning of the supervisory system and supporting implementation and application; promoting respect for freedom of association and civil liberties; and supporting social dialogue and collective bargaining to develop workplaces and societies that were able to adjust to current and future insecurities.

18. The ILO continued to support democratization efforts, including internally. Equality and inclusion were in the Organization's DNA and had to be preserved and safeguarded. Regrettably, there was evidence across all continents of shrinking democratic space, with attacks on trade union rights and freedoms and on civil society organizations working to protect vulnerable groups and against discrimination. Nevertheless, there were some signals of hope, with the younger generations in many countries demonstrating for basic social rights and protections, showing that, more than 100 years after the creation of the ILO, social justice was still at the heart of people's dreams and demands.

19. While the Workers' group welcomed the Doha Political Declaration, which had been adopted the previous week at the Second World Summit for Social Development, it was disappointed that no clear plan of action for implementation was foreseen.

20. Expressing solidarity with the workers of the world who were risking their lives and livelihoods fighting for fundamental rights and freedoms and for social justice, she paid tribute in particular to all trade union colleagues who had been imprisoned for standing up for workers' rights and democracy and against dictatorship and military rule. They included Governing Body member Aliaksandr Yarashuk, who had recently been released from prison in Belarus, but had then been deported to Lithuania without his passport.

21. When a strong and impactful ILO was needed more than ever, the financial challenges currently facing the ILO had meant that, over the past few months, attention had been focused inwards rather than outwards. The threat of job cuts and austerity measures did not create a climate that was conducive to creativity and investment in the strengths of the Organization. The Workers' group agreed that a serious discussion on review and reform was necessary and it would not shy away from discussing painful measures when and where inevitable. However, the ILO must lead by example and ensure that fundamental changes were developed and implemented through proper social dialogue and collective bargaining where appropriate. Rather than talking about "cuts" and "freezes", emphasis should be placed on the positive aspects of the reform, such as the need to allow the ILO to grow stronger and to prioritize and ensure business continuity while preserving key expertise. Focus should be shifted from the fact that one country – which had for some time been critical of the ILO's mandate – had withheld its contribution in what increasingly looked like an arbitrary and irresponsible game with the multilateral system, to the financial contributions of all those Members that had paid their dues with additional voluntary contributions. The Governing Body had to ensure that the ILO could continue to deliver on its crucial mandate for social justice and peace, in the interest not of the few but of the many.

22. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Australia said that the Governing Body was meeting at a time of continued global and institutional challenges and changes. In that context, the ILO's mandate remained more relevant than ever. She expressed appreciation to the Office for having provided information on the ILO's proposed response to some of those challenges and had consulted with the tripartite constituents ahead of the session. It was critical that all Governing Body members should work towards achieving consensus on the proposals to ensure that the ILO continued to deliver on its mandate in a changing multilateral environment

23. The Government group reaffirmed its strong support for the ILO's unique tripartite structure and its commitment to open dialogue with and consensus-building among the Governments, Employers and Workers. It welcomed the opportunity to engage constructively on the many items before the Governing Body, some of which would help shape the Organization's future and effectiveness. Her group encouraged all the constituents to engage in a spirit of cooperation and good faith, noting that such engagement would be supported by effective time management. It was confident that, through open dialogue and a shared commitment to the ILO's core mandate, it would be possible to achieve meaningful outcomes.

1. Approval of the minutes of the 354th Session of the Governing Body (GB.355/INS/1)

Decision

24. The Governing Body approved the minutes of its 354th Session.

(GB.355/INS/1, paragraph 2)

2. Agenda of future sessions of the International Labour Conference (GB.355/INS/2)

25. **The Employer spokesperson** said that her group supported a coherent and rigorous strategic approach to drawing up the International Labour Conference's agendas, emphasizing that the agenda-setting was an institutional tool that must remain relevant, feasible and impactful. She stressed that adding agenda items had significant resource implications and required adequate time for preparation and meaningful participation by constituents. For this reason, she said that her group did not accept the principle of holding two standard-setting discussions in the same year, as this was neither practical nor sustainable for the Office or constituents. She reaffirmed that standard-setting must follow the established double-discussion procedure to ensure technical quality, build consensus and guarantee legitimacy. Condensing complex processes into a single discussion would exert undue pressure and risk producing weak or imbalanced outcomes.

26. She said that her group supported the implementation of recommendations from the Standards Review Mechanism (SRM) as an institutional priority and emphasized the need for a relevant and updated corpus of ILO standards. She reiterated her group's position that standards on ergonomics and manual handling and on guarding of machinery should be treated as priorities for standard-setting and discussed through a double discussion. In light of the ongoing discussion on chemical hazards, which would conclude in 2028, she supported inclusion of ergonomics and manual handling on the agenda for the 117th (2029) and 118th (2030) Sessions of the International Labour Conference, and said that any future discussion on guarding of machinery should follow the same pattern to avoid overlap with other occupational safety and health processes.

27. On demographic change and its impact on the labour market, she welcomed attention to this issue and supported its inclusion as a topic for future general discussion, ideally after the recurrent discussion on employment scheduled for 2028. She said that the ILO could add value by taking an evidence-based approach to skills and training in the context of an ageing population, promoting productive working lives, intergenerational contact and sustainable workforce management.

28. Regarding protection of personal data of workers in the digital era, she noted that preparations were under way for an expert meeting and said that this topic was closely linked to the outcome of the standard-setting discussion on the platform economy and the future general discussion on harnessing the full potential of technology in 2027. She looked forward to reviewing proposals on the scope and modalities of this discussion once the expert meeting had taken place.

29. On protection of whistleblowers in the public service, she reiterated her group's previous position that reopening the topic would be premature, as the Office was still undertaking research and follow-up work based on the conclusions of a recent technical meeting.

30. On decent work in global supply chains, she said that her group did not support inclusion of a standard-setting item on this topic in the International Labour Conference's agenda. She explained that there was no standards gap in the ILO system, as existing instruments addressed decent work deficits in supply chains, provided they were ratified and implemented. The challenge lay in effective implementation not in creating new standards. She noted that the ILO already had a strategy on supply chains, accepted by constituents and running until 2027, which included operational support for countries, enterprises and workers. Introducing new standards would be premature, divert resources from real needs and risk politicizing an issue that had already consumed significant time without producing results. She urged the Governing Body to remain coherent with previous decisions and focused on successful implementation and possible future extension of the current strategy.

31. To conclude, with regard to the point for decision in paragraph 39(a) of the Office document, acknowledging the importance some Governments attached to the matter and noting the challenging context of the upcoming International Labour Conference, her group remained flexible to its inclusion in the agenda from 2027 onwards. Her group therefore supported the proposed decision.

32. **The Worker spokesperson** said that she acknowledged the effort made by the Office to prepare a solid document under conditions of increasing tension and diminishing resources. She welcomed the proposals aimed at ensuring a strategic and coherent approach, including synergies between International Labour Conference agenda-setting and other institutional processes, and alignment with UN human rights developments, notably on business and human rights. She also appreciated efforts to link General Surveys and recurrent discussions in line with the Social Justice Declaration and its follow-up.

33. She reiterated the importance of maintaining annual General Surveys mandated by the ILO Constitution. She stressed that these surveys are vital instruments providing a comprehensive overview of national law and practice, identifying obstacles to ratification, and assessing implementation of ILO instruments. She emphasized that priority should be given to enhancing the visibility and ensuring effective and substantive follow-up of General Surveys and related discussions, including as part of recurrent discussions.

34. Regarding the timing of the International Labour Conference agenda item on gender and inappropriate terminology in international labour standards, she noted that the Governing Body is invited to decide only on the timing and supported placing the item on the agenda of the 2027 International Labour Conference, with the draft resolution to be presented in November 2026. She proposed that the General Affairs Committee addresses this matter.

35. Turning to supply chains, she recalled the importance of advancing this agenda and emphasized that further discussions and decisions should include initiatives that complement the body of international labour standards, as outlined in Output 5 of the ILO strategy on decent work in supply chains. She stressed that an ILO normative action addressing decent work deficits and normative gaps in supply chains is long overdue. The lack of progress in this area, she noted, prevents the ILO from exercising its legitimate leadership role internationally. Meanwhile, multiple self-help initiatives at corporate, national, regional, and international levels are emerging to address this gap, creating legal uncertainty and insecurity regarding workers' rights, company responsibilities, and state obligations, which she considered detrimental to all stakeholders. Securing normative action at the ILO as soon as practicable is, for her group, an utmost priority.

36. She recalled that several Government groups supported standard-setting on supply chains during the last Governing Body session and proposed that the standard-setting process start in 2028. She acknowledged the Employers' group's persistent opposition to having double discussions at the International Labour Conference and to addressing certain matters through single discussions. However, she pointed out that the Employers' group have repeatedly called for efficiency, effectiveness and flexibility in managing the large and challenging agenda, which she viewed as contradictory to their position. In her view, adhering strictly to double discussions for every issue would push agendas far into the 2030s, which is neither appropriate nor practicable. She argued that some issues are suitable for single discussions, as the Office has explained, particularly when preceded by technical discussions to address highly technical aspects with expert input.

37. She noted that the International Labour Conference of this year demonstrated that it is possible to have two standard-setting items in a single session, provided they involve different departments and staff. In this specific case, she considered that preparing standards on chemicals and supply chains in 2028 would involve distinct departments and would not impose an unbearable burden on the Office, unless the Office indicated otherwise.

38. On SRM follow-up, she reaffirmed its institutional priority and welcomed the Employers' group's agreement on this matter. For this reason, she reaffirmed support for standard-setting on ergonomics, which could run in parallel with standard-setting on global supply chains. She noted that this would be a second discussion, starting in 2029 if initiated in 2028. Given the technical nature of the topic, she strongly supported convening a meeting of experts in 2027 on ergonomics and manual handling to advise the Office on the scope of issues to be covered, as proposed in paragraph 9 of Appendix I.

39. Regarding the revision of instruments concerning the guarding of machinery, she noted that the earliest opportunity for a standard-setting discussion would be the 119th Session of the Conference in 2031. She expressed support for a single discussion, preceded by a tripartite meeting one or two years in advance, which could take place in 2029 or 2030. She called on other groups to remain flexible on this option to ensure that the standard-setting agenda can be managed proactively in line with SRM recommendations, without preventing other issues from being addressed in the near future. She indicated openness to continuing discussions on exact dates at a future session.

40. Taking into account the dense road map for upcoming normative discussions on occupational safety and health instruments, she reiterated her request for the Office to organize an informal tripartite briefing session during the second semester of 2026. This session should elaborate on proposals and provide constituents with an overview of all elements to be considered for next steps, including presentation of relevant guidelines, possible meetings of experts, and technical preparatory meetings.

41. On whistleblowers, she supported the proposal to schedule a discussion within the policy development section of the Governing Body on the protection of whistleblowers. This discussion would aim to offer guidance to ILO Members and inform Governing Body decision-making on the need for future action, without excluding any action within the ILO mandate, as requested by the conclusions of the 2022 technical meeting. She noted that extensive work has already been agreed by constituents and developed by the Office, focusing so far on the public sector. However, she expressed openness to broadening the discussion to other sectors should other Governing Body members propose it. She recalled that the issue is gaining increased recognition, including within the ILO, and highlighted that six ILO instruments call for measures to promote anti-corruption efforts and/or require protection of whistleblowers, including the recently adopted Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Convention, 2025 (No. 192). She therefore requested the Office to develop a proposal within the policy development section taking these elements into account.

42. In conclusion, she agreed with the decision point, noting that regarding point (a), the item on gendered and inappropriate language should be placed on the International Labour Conference agenda for 2027, and the other dates in point (a) of the decision point should be adapted accordingly.

43. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Benin reaffirmed the group's position regarding the proposed technical items for the 114th to the 119th Sessions of the Conference. She said her group supported holding, at the 114th Session, the second discussion on decent work in the platform economy and the recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of social dialogue and tripartism as well as a general discussion, at the same session, on harnessing the fullest potential of technology for decent work, with a view to reviewing the implications for the ILO's mandate of the Global Digital Compact adopted at the 2024 Summit of the Future.

44. She said that, for the 115th Session, her group supported standard-setting on chemical hazards as well as a general discussion on the structural transformation of the economy for higher productivity. The group also supported holding the first discussion on occupational safety and health for chemical hazards in 2026 and the second discussion at the 116th Session. Furthermore, for the 119th Session, her group supported placing on the agenda standard-setting discussions on ergonomics and manual handling and on the guarding of machinery, as well as a discussion on promoting a transformative agenda for gender equality.

45. Turning to recurrent discussions, she said that her group supported consideration of the strategic objective of social protection and social security at the 115th Session; the strategic objective of employment at the 116th Session; the strategic objective of social protection, with a focus on protection of workers, at the 117th Session; and the strategic objective concerning fundamental principles and rights at work at the 118th Session, all within the framework of follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

46. For reasons of consistency and efficiency, her group considered that two standard-setting discussions should not be placed on the agenda of the same International Labour Conference's session, noting that the 113th Session had been an exceptional case in this respect. Regarding the item on gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in international labour standards, she said that her group considered that it should be placed on the agenda of the 2027 Session of the Conference.

47. In light of this, she said that her group supported paragraph (a) of the document and requested the Director-General to prepare a draft resolution for consideration by the Conference in 2027.

48. **Speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)**, a Government representative of Australia said that her group continued to support a strategic and coherent approach to setting future agendas of the International Labour Conference, noting the large number of important topics scheduled or under consideration and the tight fiscal environment in which the Organization operated. Her group appreciated the Office's sustained efforts to ensure that the Conference remained relevant to the changing world of work.

49. She said that her group looked forward to the second discussion on decent work in the platform economy at the 2026 Conference and appreciated the information sessions organized by the Office in preparation for that discussion. ASPAG strongly suggested convening a meeting of experts to address emerging and priority issues affecting the world of work, including the impacts of climate change, in line with the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Her group noted the region's diverse vulnerability to climate impacts and underscored the need to share experiences and strengthen cooperation on just transitions, labour market resilience and climate-adaptive employment policies.

50. She added that experts should address protection of workers' personal data in the digital era, emphasizing the importance of data privacy, ethical digital practices and safeguarding workers' rights amid rapid digitalization. Her group further recognized the need for discussion on, and enhanced support for, enterprises involved in global supply chains.

51. ASPAG supported holding a recurrent discussion on social protection in 2027, noting that this remained a regional priority. She emphasized the need to expand coverage, strengthen social security systems and ensure portability of social protection benefits, particularly for migrant workers. Her group called on the ILO to provide technical assistance to help achieve those goals.

52. With regard to the decision points in paragraph (a), she said that her group preferred that the resolution on gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in international labour standards be placed on the agenda of the 2027 Conference, with the draft resolution to be considered by the Governing Body in March 2026, while remaining flexible on this matter.

53. **Speaking on behalf of the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)**, a Government representative of France said that his group supported a strategic and coherent approach to agenda-setting, aimed at striking a balance between ensuring sufficient flexibility to address pressing and emerging issues and taking into account constituents' priorities and the recommendations of the SRM Tripartite Working Group.

54. He reaffirmed his group's strong support for the mandate of the SRM and the pivotal role it played in ensuring that the ILO maintained a clear, robust and up-to-date body of standards. Noting that a safe and healthy working environment is one of the fundamental principles and rights at work, he said that his group took note of the proposals to place a double standard-setting discussion on ergonomics and manual handling on the agenda of future sessions after the 2028 Session of the Conference, as well as the proposal to hold a single standard-setting discussion on guarding of machinery thereafter, preceded by a tripartite technical meeting.

55. He said that his group thanked the Office for the consultations held in recent months on Outputs 4 and 5 of the strategy on decent work in supply chains and looked forward to the finalized documents to be presented to the March 2026 Governing Body, setting out possible initiatives to complement the body of international labour standards

56. He also expressed support for the adoption of a draft resolution concerning gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in international labour standards, subject to reviewing its specific language. His group requested that the Office consider placing that item on the agenda of the 115th Session of the Conference in 2027 to allow sufficient time for preparation.

57. He said that IMEC supported keeping under consideration a general discussion on the labour market implications of demographic change, including intergenerational solidarity and decent work for older workers. On the basis of that guidance, his group supported the proposed decision point.

58. **Speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that the candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, as well as Norway, aligned themselves with the statement. She said that her group aligned itself with the statement delivered by France on behalf of IMEC.

59. She said that Conference sessions were key moments in the life of the Organization, offering strategic direction to its work and, in particular, guiding the elaboration and adoption of international labour standards. Her group supported the strategic and coherent approach to setting the Conference agenda, as approved in 2014, and was strongly committed to ensuring that the Organization maintained an up-to-date body of standards.

60. In that regard, she said that her group supported two important points in the Office document. First, her group supported the Governing Body's follow-up to the recommendations of the SRM Tripartite Working Group on occupational safety and health by scheduling normative discussions on ergonomics and manual handling, and on machinery protection, in the coming years. Second, her group supported ensuring that outdated formulations using inappropriately gendered language, colonial connotations or offensive and discriminatory terms were no longer used in international labour standards. She said that it was essential that such standards remain relevant, inclusive and respectful of human rights, while preserving their authority and effectiveness in an evolving world. Her group suggested placing the issue of gendered language and other inappropriate terms and references in all international labour standards on the agenda of the 115th Session of the Conference in 2027.

61. She said that her group regretted that the issue of supply chains had not been addressed in greater detail in the Office document, noting that the topic had already undergone substantial preparatory work, including the mid-term evaluation of the strategy and an analysis of normative gaps. Her group therefore looked forward to finalizing Outputs 4 and 5 of the ILO strategy in order to enable a fully informed discussion on the subject at the March session. Until then, her group wished to keep open the possibility of holding a standard-setting discussion on that topic in 2028.

62. On this basis, she said that her group supported the draft decision point.

63. **Speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam said that ASEAN continued to support a strategic and balanced approach to setting the agenda of future sessions of the International Labour Conference. His group thanked the Office for its continued efforts to ensure that the Conference remained relevant and responsive to the changing world of work.

64. He said that his group took note of the proposals before the Governing Body and reiterated its support for convening meetings of experts to discuss topics of growing importance. In particular, ASEAN supported the proposed meeting of experts on climate change and the world of work, noting that the region was among the most vulnerable to climate impacts, from typhoons and floods to rising temperatures and drought. ASEAN also supported the proposed meeting of experts on the protection of workers' personal data in the digital era, stressing that rapid digitalization made the protection of workers' privacy and the ethical and fair use of data increasingly vital.

65. Looking ahead to the future agenda of the Conference, he said that ASEAN welcomed the upcoming second discussion on decent work in the platform economy scheduled for June 2026. His group thanked the Office for the information sessions held in October, which had helped enhance understanding among social partners. He noted that in 2026 ASEAN would put

forward labour market and social resiliency as a key priority, which aligned closely with the Organization's work on inclusive labour markets and social protection. He said that his group saw great potential for synergies in promoting sustainable and resilient employment systems.

66. Concerning 2027, he said that ASEAN welcomed the recurrent discussion on social protection, a long-standing regional priority. As ASEAN continued efforts to expand coverage and strengthen systems, it underscored the importance of ensuring the portability of social protection benefits, particularly for migrant workers. Migrant workers worldwide continued to face systemic barriers in accessing, maintaining and transferring their entitlements due to fragmented systems, insufficient bilateral or multilateral coordination, and weak enforcement mechanisms.

67. Those challenges resulted in severe protection gaps, particularly in pensions, healthcare, maternity, employment injury and unemployment benefits. As highlighted by the Governing Body's in its 2022 discussion, it was necessary to deepen understanding of obstacles to expanding social protection and portability for migrant workers through new research, and to analyse the reasons for the low ratification levels of relevant ILO instruments, including the Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19), the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118) and the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157). Greater advocacy and action were needed, and ASEAN considered that the topic would be valuable for a future General Survey and/or a technical meeting of experts.

68. He said that ASEAN also noted with interest the planned standard-setting discussion on chemical hazards, building on the recently adopted instruments on biological hazards. He said that his group fully supported such continuity in advancing occupational safety and health, which remained a shared priority.

69. He said that ASEAN further welcomed continued consideration of emerging issues, including the labour market implications of demographic change, intergenerational solidarity and decent work in supply chains, which were all highly relevant to the ASEAN's pursuit of inclusive and sustainable growth.

70. With respect to the draft decision points in paragraph (a), he said that ASEAN supported including an item concerning gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in international labour standards, recognizing the importance of ensuring that ILO instruments used language reflecting equality, inclusiveness and respect. ASEAN was flexible regarding whether the item should be placed on the agenda of the Conference in 2026 or 2027 and would support consensus. Regarding paragraph (b), ASEAN supported the request for the Office to take into account the guidance provided by the Governing Body in preparing the document concerning future Conference agendas for the Governing Body's 356th Session in March 2026.

71. He reaffirmed ASEAN's firm commitment to working constructively with all constituents to ensure that the Organization's agenda continued to reflect the priorities and realities of all regions.

72. **Speaking on behalf of a group of countries**, [2] a Government representative of Uruguay said that the group supported the practice for determining the Conference agenda based on the strategic and coherent approach adopted by the Governing Body at its 322nd Session.

[2] Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Honduras, Peru, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Uruguay.

73. Particular importance was attached to the item on decent work in the platform economy, and the group intended to participate actively in the second discussion with a view to the adoption of a Convention and a Recommendation after the 114th Session of the Conference.

74. The group welcomed the inclusion of a general discussion on the impact of a transformative agenda to achieve gender equality on the agenda of the 114th Session. Regarding the draft decision, the group did not express a preference as to whether the item concerning gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in international labour standards should be placed on the agenda of the 114th or 115th Session and remained flexible in seeking a consensus-based solution.

75. The group took note of the guidance concerning possible agenda items for 2028 and expressed a preference for including a standard-setting discussion on decent work in supply chains during the 116th Session in 2028. Such timing would allow for the consideration of ongoing initiatives and provide the basis for an informed tripartite discussion, given the strategic importance of strengthening the ILO's standard-setting framework to promote fairer and more sustainable labour markets.

76. **A Government representative of Barbados** said that his country aligned itself with the statement made by Uruguay on behalf of the group of countries and noted that his country faced demographic challenges similar to those of many countries in the Caribbean. He noted that the population in his country had been both ageing and declining and pointed to the fact that on the basis of current trends, persons over 65 years of age were expected to represent 50 per cent of the population by 2050. These trends had significant implications for social and economic development, labour-market composition, consumption, production, gross domestic product, social security sustainability and the identification of what constituted decent work for older persons. Older persons were also expected to be particularly affected by the climate crisis.

77. In response to demographic challenges, Barbados, together with Dominica, Belize and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, had introduced full free movement arrangements for their nationals and implemented social security reforms, including extending the pensionable age. The issue was urgent for many Caribbean countries and should receive early attention by the Conference. Support was expressed for the proposed standard-setting on ergonomics and manual handling and for work on the guarding of machinery.

78. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) said that the items on harnessing technology for advancing decent work and on structural transformation and its implications for productivity had been merged into a single item, which had already been inscribed for a general discussion on the agenda of the Conference in 2027. The item on the transformative agenda for gender equality had already been placed on the agenda of the next session of the Conference. The Office had taken note of the request from the Workers' group for briefings in the second semester of 2026 on preparatory work relating to normative action on occupational safety and health.

79. Views diverged on a possible standard-setting item on global supply chains, and the Governing Body would have the possibility in March 2026 to consider an options paper proposing a range of regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives to supplement the existing body of international labour standards. She considered that the Governing Body would have firmer grounds in March 2026 to take a decision on the future of this item in the agenda of the Conference.

80. Regarding the timing for placing a resolution on gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in international labour standards on the Conference agenda in 2027 would allow sufficient time for the preparation of a draft resolution.

81. **The Employer spokesperson** said that while two standard-setting discussions had been concluded successfully during the same session of the Conference in 2025, this should not become a general practice, given the heavy workload for constituents and the Office and the difficulty of ensuring high-quality outcomes under such conditions. The group reiterated the importance of avoiding regular scheduling of dual standard-setting discussions. Concerning global supply chains, the group awaited the options paper and considered that all options should remain open pending discussion in March.

82. **The Worker spokesperson** said that all standard-setting discussions were demanding, including the first discussion on the platform economy and the second discussion on biological hazards, and it was easier when the two items were not both at first reading. While agreeing that dual discussions should not become a general rule, the group considered that flexibility should be maintained where it could help advance the ambitious standard-setting agenda and respond to the recommendations of the SRM. Flexibility was also needed to consider, on specific issues, the possibility of a single discussion preceded by a technical meeting.

83. On supply chains, broad support had emerged for recognizing the importance of the issue. There had also been support for considering a standard-setting discussion in 2028, although further discussion would be required on whether that timing and that decision would be appropriate. Supply chains were an important part of economic systems globally, and further discussion in March would be welcome.

84. The Workers' group was also interested in work on demographic change, which presented different challenges across regions, including for countries with very young populations and significant youth employment needs. The issue was linked to migration, ageing and care needs, and brain drain, and it would be important not to attempt to tackle all related challenges at the same time. She supported further debate on how best to address the matter.

85. The Workers' group would continue to be interested in further developing work on whistleblowers and wished to hear more about that issue in the future.

Decision

86. **The Governing Body:**

(a) decided to place on the agenda of the 115th Session (2027) of the International Labour Conference an item concerning gendered and other inappropriate terms and references in all international labour standards, with a view to the adoption of a resolution and requested the Director-General to prepare for its 358th Session (November 2026) a draft resolution for consideration by the International Labour Conference at its 115th Session (2027);

(b) requested the Office to take into account the guidance provided in preparing the document concerning the agenda of future sessions of the Conference for its 356th Session (March 2026).

(GB.355/INS/2, paragraph 39)

3. Matters arising out of the work of the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference

3.1. Follow-up to the resolution concerning the general discussion on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work (GB.355/INS/3/1)

87. **The Employer spokesperson** said that he welcomed the follow-up report and acknowledged its alignment with the conclusions adopted by the Conference in 2025 and with the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), while stressing the need for a more balanced approach. He emphasized that productivity growth, enterprise viability, and an enabling business environment are essential for sustainable formalization and noted the disproportionate emphasis on social protection and regulation. It requested that references to social protection align with agreed language. Furthermore, in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, he emphasized the importance to engage systematically with formal employers' and workers' organizations and ensure the voices of those in the informal economy are heard. He also underlined that the ILO's leadership role should enable national ownership and remain focused on supporting implementation by constituents rather than expanding coordination mandates beyond tripartite structures.

88. The Employers urged that the global road map be practical, adaptable to national realities, and measurable in terms of enterprise formalization, productivity gains and job creation. They called for stronger focus on research into the productivity–informality nexus and drivers of enterprise growth, and for diagnostic tools to integrate business-environment indicators. Under capacity-building, the representative stressed the need to recognize productivity and sustainable enterprise development as cross-cutting drivers, requiring strengthening national institutions and support to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) – finance, entrepreneurship ecosystems, advisory services – and accelerating digitalization. It stressed the importance of fair competition, property rights, skills development and vocational training. On responsible business conduct, the Employers reiterated support for the United Nations *Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights* and the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as amended in 2022 (MNE Declaration) and stressed that the ILO's mandate does not include support for binding or legislative due-diligence frameworks. The Employer spokesperson highlighted that supply-chain integration alone cannot reduce informality at scale and that structural transformation and viable MSMEs business models are needed.

89. The group cautioned against any shift towards "multi-stakeholder" or "Tripartite plus" approaches, reaffirming tripartism as the foundation. While promoting social dialogue is essential, the group cautioned against including informal actors as members of representative organizations. The Employers supported the draft decision and committed to sharing priority elements for an implementation-oriented road map with the Office.

90. **The Worker spokesperson** said that he welcomed the comprehensive plan of action and its three mutually supportive objectives, noting that it broadly responded to the resolution and conclusions adopted by the Conference. The Workers' group particularly welcomed the development of a global road map, stressing that it must ensure the inclusion of often invisible workers, such as migrants, rural and agricultural workers, domestic workers, home-based workers, care and support workers, street vendors, recycling and waste pickers, construction and mineworkers, through a sector-specific approach. The spokesperson further emphasized the need to address gender-responsive policy, climate resilience of informal economy workers and employment misclassification.

91. The Workers' group welcomed high-level outcomes such as the development of a policy brief on social dialogue, research on trade and supply chains, and work on the social and solidarity economy and labour inspection coordination. The group also supported the promotion of international labour standards, support for national statistical offices, work on living wages, and guidance for migrants and refugees, alongside regional initiatives and capacity-building for Decent Work Country Programmes. The group welcomed the promotion of policy coherence across the multilateral system, especially with international financial institutions and the full involvement of social partners. It further recalled that social protection and decent job creation must be the foundation of the transition to formality. The global road map should include clear targets for extending coverage to informal economy workers, including own-account workers, gender-responsive measures and portability for migrants, while stronger cross-Office collaboration was needed to enhance coordination and impact.

92. The Workers' group expressed reservation regarding public–private partnerships (PPPs) noting that the plan was more promotional and positive around the role of PPPs than what was agreed in the Conference conclusions. The Workers' group stressed that they do not agree with the Office undertaking any promotional work on PPPs. The Workers' group supported the draft decision.

93. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the Congo expressed its appreciation for the plan of action and its global road map, to be drafted next year, that would take into account fundamental principles and rights at work, Recommendation No. 204 and regional specificities. Technical assistance remained necessary for the continent but should be directed towards creating a fairer and more productive economic environment, facilitating the transition to the formal economy in line with the Abidjan Declaration of 2019. Structural transformation and productivity gains should be accompanied by measures to extend social protection, protect all workers, promote sustainable enterprises and improve skills development. He underscored the need to address the root causes of informality, which constitute a major structural obstacle to decent work and sustainable development. Noting that vulnerable groups such as women, young people, persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees and indigenous and tribal peoples were disproportionately affected, he called for inclusive social dialogue to encourage a gradual formalization of the informal economy that leaves no one behind. The Africa group invited the Global Coalition for Social Justice to include this theme in its programme and expressed full support for the plan of action.

94. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that he welcomed the ILC resolution and conclusions and the plan of action which build on lessons learned to accelerate the implementation of Recommendation No. 204. Highlighting the multifaceted nature of informality and its drivers in the region, he advocated for a gradual, sectoral approach supported by evidence-based research and pilot projects. He emphasized the need to incentivize transition by providing informal economic units with enhanced access to markets, finance and skills training, alongside ensuring fundamental principles and rights at work. ASPAG called for policy coherence through platforms such as the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, while urging special attention for migrant workers and workplaces affected by climate shocks. Finally, he requested sufficient consultations with constituents when drafting the global road map and called for clear financial arrangements, including through regional institutions, given the ILO's financial constraints. ASPAG supported the draft decision.

95. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Paraguay said that she expressed gratitude for the plan of action, recognizing that informality remains one of the most persistent structural challenges to decent work and sustainable development. GRULAC welcomed the four fundamental pillars of the plan also aligned with Recommendation No. 204: appropriate regulatory frameworks; inclusive social dialogue; a productivity-conducive environment; and work lived in dignity, all of which constitute a solid basis for the transition to formality. GRULAC underscored the importance of strengthening the knowledge base and internal coherence of the ILO, emphasizing the need for disaggregated and gender-sensitive data and a virtual centre to promote South–South cooperation. She also stressed the need to support integrated national and sectoral strategies through social dialogue. GRULAC reaffirmed the importance of revitalizing the ILO's global leadership by promoting international policy coherence and strategic alliances within the UN system. This leadership must address new informality challenges in the digital and platform economies, ensuring technology supports formalization. GRULAC reiterated its support for initiatives such as the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, reaffirming its commitment to the "leave no one behind" approach. GRULAC supported the draft decision.

96. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Denmark said that Norway, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Serbia and Ukraine, aligned themselves with her statement. The EU and its Member States welcomed the proposed plan of action for 2026–31, which focuses on three mutually supportive objectives and an integrated approach and reflects the complexity and diversity of informality. They recognized informality as a structural barrier hindering progress in social justice, sustainable development, and the realization of workers' rights, stressing that for most people, it is a consequence of limited opportunities in the formal economy and the absence of alternative livelihoods. They reaffirmed their commitment to improving the implementation of Recommendation No. 204 and Sustainable Development Goal 8, target 8.3. They appreciated that the plan prioritizes leaving no one behind, paying attention to women and persons in vulnerable or marginalized situations. They highlighted the relevance of coordinated strategies based on inclusive social dialogue, collective bargaining, and policy coherence among macroeconomic, employment, skills and social protection policies. They stressed the importance of accessible and well-resourced public institutions, strong legal frameworks, and supervisory mechanisms, including labour inspection systems and ILO technical assistance to advance the transition to formality and the application of international labour standards. They highlighted the ILO's crucial role in fostering cooperation within the multilateral system to advance joint actions towards formalization. While welcoming the organization of extensive consultations with constituents to inform the development of the global road map, the EU and its Member States supported the draft decision.

97. **Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam said that informality is a major structural barrier to decent work, social justice, and sustainable development, imposing severe hardships on workers, enterprises, governments and societies. He noted that informal employment remains widespread in the region, particularly among women, notably in domestic and home-based work, and highlighted the negative impacts on decent work, vulnerability and poverty for workers, productivity and sustainability of enterprises, and government revenue. ASEAN reaffirmed its commitment to addressing these challenges through a structured and deliberate approach, referencing its 2016 Declaration on Transition from Informal Employment to Formal Employment and the accompanying regional action plan. To advance this commitment, ASEAN has conducted a study on best practices for leveraging technology, such as digitalization, automation, and AI, to redesign employment systems and support inclusive growth. The study provides evidence-based recommendations to guide the region in promoting formalization. ASEAN welcomed the ILO's 2026–2031 plan of action as a strong framework for reducing informality and reiterated its readiness to engage constructively in developing a global road map that reflects diverse realities, regional priorities, and the need for strategic partnerships. ASEAN supported the draft decision.

98. **A Government representative of the Niger** said that she welcomed the analysis identifying the link between informality and the quest for decent work. She noted that her Government had prepared a study on the determinants of informal employment as a basis for evidence-based policy responses. The representative requested ILO technical assistance to address data gaps on informal economic communities and social and solidarity economy entities. Finally, the representative urged the Office to take these observations into account when developing the global road map for the 358th Session of the Governing Body and supported the draft decision.

99. **A Government representative of Nepal** said that he expressed support for the proposed 2026–2031 action plan, noting the complex and evolving nature of informality, which persists even within the formal sector. He highlighted his country's national action plan on formalization, which was developed through tripartite consultations. He reported progress in extending social security and collective bargaining rights to the informal sector and underscored the necessity of joint efforts to achieve the transition to formality. He supported the draft decision.

100. **A Government representative of India** said that she appreciated the plan's inclusive approach that places decent work, enterprise sustainability and social justice, and appreciated the recognition that transition requires tailored, country-specific strategies. She highlighted the need for tailored strategies able to address the multifaceted drivers of informality and outlined her country's holistic, technology-driven reforms. She reported major progress in extending social protection coverage supported by initiatives such as the e-Shram portal for informal workers and women-focused programmes promoting health, entrepreneurship and financial inclusion. Reaffirming its commitment to collaborate with the ILO and Member States, India's representative emphasized strengthening enterprises, extending social protection, and fostering innovation as key to achieving inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods.

101. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that she welcomed the comprehensive plan of action to address informality and specifically endorsed its recognition of the complex and dynamic nature of the issue, which disproportionally affects certain groups of workers and economic units. The representative emphasized the fundamental role of cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy as vehicles for formalization. Noting that cooperatives offer collective bargaining, shared resources, enhanced market access and act as an anti-cyclic buffer during economic downturns by providing resilience and stability, she strongly advocated for leveraging their potential to ensure a sustainable and just transition to formality for all.

102. **A Government representative of Japan** said that the transition from the informal to the formal economy is a highly important theme for promoting decent work, and a significant social issue in the Asian region. He highlighted Japan's support to initiatives in cooperation with the ILO to advance the transition to formality in the context of projects in South Asia promoting rights and social inclusion through organization and formalization for decent work for waste management, domestic, sewage, and construction workers, and more recently by supporting the extension of social protection coverage to informal workers, including platform and domestic workers. Japan welcomed the continued cooperation with the ILO.

103. **A Government representative of Colombia** said that he reaffirmed his country's commitment to the global agenda to address informality and promote formalization in line with Recommendation No. 204 and the conclusions of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference, noting that informality remains a major obstacle to social justice and sustainable development. He noted that his country has advanced integrated strategies, including awareness campaigns, labour formalization agreements to correct improper outsourcing, and territorial employment plans to improve job access. A key milestone is Law 24/66/2025, which strengthens formal employment by regulating platform work, redefining apprenticeship contracts, and introducing incentives for inclusive hiring, alongside measures for rural and domestic work. The representative expressed strong support for reinforcing the ILO's global leadership to promote policy coherence and strategic alliances and endorsed the proposed decision to intensify joint efforts against informality with ILO technical assistance.

104. **A Government representative of Mozambique** said that the ambitious action plan to accelerate the transition to formality ensuring that no one is left behind was essential for overcoming structural barriers to decent work, social justice and sustainable development. He noted that his Government has adopted concrete measures such as simplified procedures with licensing exemptions for most activities, streamlining taxation, and promoting cooperatives to include small businesses. These efforts are reinforced through strategic partnerships with the ILO. He stated that Mozambique fully supports the proposed action plan, viewing it as a milestone for advancing decent work and social justice worldwide.

105. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Priority Action Programme "Transition from the informal to the formal economy") thanked the Governing Body for its guidance, acknowledging that the richness of the comments underscored the importance of informality and the challenges inherent in the transition to formality across diverse national contexts, emphasizing the crucial role of ILO support through tools and policy approaches aligned with Recommendation No. 204.

106. The representative stressed three key points. First, he said that the Office had sought to ensure a balanced approach that addressed the root causes of informality, promoting, in the spirit of Recommendation No. 204, integrated approaches that respond to the various constraints encountered by workers and economic units in the informal economy, notably by promoting an enabling environment for the transition to the formal economy. This balanced perspective was, and will continue to be, safeguarded through the systematic consultation and involvement of the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) when agreeing on activities to be developed and implemented. This commitment extends to addressing the issue of strengthening the voice of those in the informal economy without weakening social dialogue frameworks and tripartism.

107. Second, the representative recalled that the first reference to social protection in the plan of action refers to "universal access to comprehensive, sustainable, effective and adequate social protection" and is aligned with the agreed language adopted in the conclusions of the 113th International Labour Conference. Lastly, the representative addressed the role of public–private partnerships, noting that the plan of action focuses on research to better understand their potential contribution to formalization and the conditions required for them to play a positive role.

Decision

108. **The Governing Body requested the Director-General to:**

(a) **take account of its guidance concerning the proposed plan of action on addressing informality and promoting the transition to formality for decent work for 2026–31 as set out in document GB.355/INS/3/1, notably the preparation of the global road map towards formalization;**

(b) **submit the draft global road map, including the corresponding financial implications, for its consideration at its 358th Session (November 2026);**

(c) **take account of the outcome of its discussion of the global road map towards formalization at its 358th Session in the preparation of the draft Programme and Budget for 2028–29 and subsequent programme and budget proposals.**

(GB.355/INS/3/1, paragraph 25)

3.2. Analysis of the functioning of the 113th Session and arrangements for the 114th Session (2026) (GB.355/INS/3/2)

109. **The Worker spokesperson** said that his group agreed with most points outlined in the document. Good faith negotiations were the basis for the smooth functioning of the Conference. Misuse of speaking time and poor understanding of procedural rules, particularly regarding accepting majority decisions, did not facilitate work, particularly in standard-setting committees. He invited governments to ensure that delegations to the Conference were fully tripartite and to comply with funding obligations. Late sittings were sometimes necessary to achieve progress and make important decisions. It was unacceptable to object to them while misusing the Standing Orders to delay progress intentionally; that demonstrated neither good faith nor a constructive attitude. The ILO was far from achieving gender balance in the composition of the Conference, including within his group; everyone should do better in that regard. Having two standard-setting committees on the agenda had not burdened the Conference. He welcomed the proposals regarding areas for further improvement, noting the importance of paragraph 13(a)(i), (ii) and (iv). The Office should engage early with the social partners to ensure full understanding of the Standing Orders and agreement on working methods for decision-making that allow consensus to be reached democratically, avoiding repetitions of arguments. Regarding paragraph 13(a)(iii), and in respect of the discussion on decent work in the platform economy, he concurred that lengthy draft instruments should be avoided, with the proviso that paragraphs linked to the normative gap identified in GB.347/POL/1 should remain as the core of the Convention. He welcomed proposals for early identification of committee chairpersons.

110. Concerning arrangements for the 114th Session, he supported keeping the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards in the ILO building, including Workers' group's meetings; committee and group meetings should be accommodated in rooms of adequate capacity. He welcomed the smooth functioning of the Committee on the Application of Standards and the informal tripartite consultations on its working methods. He noted that the Conference had adopted the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Myanmar, which would require the Committee to hold a special sitting on Myanmar in 2026. He welcomed the proposals to keep the Conference in Geneva and expressed appreciation for the support of the Swiss and Geneva authorities in coordinating arrangements across the three venues. General group meetings should follow established practice and be scheduled taking into account

sufficient transit time between locations. He supported the suggestion to hold consultations in the first quarter of 2026 on the second discussion on the platform economy and welcomed the proposed pre-Conference briefing sessions. He requested clarification on the implications for the Conference programme of holding an event to promote the ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution.

111. **The Employer spokesperson** said that her group had been satisfied with the logistical and substantive arrangements of the 113th Session. Preparations for the 114th Session were under way in a context of constrained resources and renovation works, requiring efficient planning, clarity and timeliness. She thanked the Government of Switzerland for its crucial help in providing alternative conference facilities and financial support. In addition to the lessons learned integrated into the background paper, further improvements were necessary. Holding two standard-setting items at the same session had proved challenging and should not be repeated. It had placed significant pressure on the Office and constituents, necessitating additional time and resources during the preparatory stages to conduct proper national consultations and provide meaningful responses to the questionnaire.

112. More ambitious efforts were needed to reduce late-night sittings; the Committee on Decent Work in the Platform Economy in particular had faced excessively long working hours. His group had observed a direct correlation between the length and level of detail of draft instruments and the need for extended sittings. An overly long questionnaire had led to the drafting of prescriptive text, making consensus harder to achieve and prolonging discussions. Constituents would be better served by concise, principle-based drafts that reflected the mandate provided. The same principle applied to the tentative conclusions in general and recurrent discussions, which should be short, focused and reflect the consensus expressed during discussions. There should be a standard template outlining what worked during the Conference, such as short draft conclusions. Unnecessary elements that had not been requested should be avoided, such as the simplified amendment process for international labour standards included in the proposed conclusions on decent work in the platform economy. During committee sittings, unsolicited procedural explanations had contributed to unnecessary delays and made it more difficult to achieve consensus. Countries could support efficiency by aligning national statements with regional ones, as appropriate. The limited pool of qualified chairpersons had compounded the difficulty. Strict impartiality when moderating was essential to guide discussions effectively and facilitate consensus. When the social partners had reached agreement after extensive negotiations, chairpersons should move decisions forward rather than reopen the floor. Continuous procedural support from the Office was important to prevent unnecessary delays and reduce interruptions. It would be beneficial for the social partners to be consulted on nominations for committee chairpersons. The Chairperson role could be rotated among the three constituents, particularly among those with strong experience in tripartite processes.

113. She supported the holding of early consultations prior to the Conference. Strict adherence to the agreed programme of work was essential. Voting in committees should be approached cautiously, only after exhausting other efforts to achieve consensus. The format and modalities of the Global Coalition for Social Justice should be reviewed to avoid interference with committee work and general and recurrent discussion committees should be scheduled to conclude at the same time. Welcoming improvements to the accreditation system, further refinements would be useful and particularly important given the three separate venues for the 114th Session; last-minute changes should not require restarting the PDF and signature process. Commuting time between locations must be realistically factored into schedules rather than compensated for through extensive evening and late-night sittings. Her group supported the draft decision.

114. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Senegal welcomed the successful organization of the 113th Session despite constraints and noted the significant progress made in standard-setting with the adoption of the Convention and Recommendation concerning the prevention and protection against biological hazards in the world of work. Better work planning and fewer night sittings had led to more effective deliberations. The modernization of the electronic accreditation system had facilitated delegate registration and participation, and timely document publication had allowed better preparation for discussions. The Africa group welcomed the strong presence of ministers and social partners, which had been crucial for the success of the forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and noted with satisfaction the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2026–27. While the 113th Session had worked well overall, the issue of excessively long working hours for certain committees remained unresolved. She encouraged the Office and to review working methods and committee programmes to ensure that work did not extend past midnight, particularly for the second standard-setting discussion on the platform economy scheduled for 2026. Committee chairpersons should be appointed before the end of the first quarter of 2026 to allow for better preparation. Having two standard-setting items for discussion at the 113th Session had caused challenges for many delegations, particularly for small ones with limited financial resources and an insufficient number of delegates to cover both committees. In view of persistent visa-related difficulties preventing several African delegates from attending ILO meetings, she requested the Office to work with the Swiss authorities to make it easier for African participants to obtain visas. She expressed satisfaction with the choice of the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG) as an alternative venue for the 114th Session and urged the Office to ensure early technical and logistical preparations to guarantee balanced participation from all regions. The Africa group supported the draft decision.

115. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Japan said that ASPAG appreciated Office support to secure alternative venues in response to cost-saving requests. It was essential for the Office to provide information related to Conference logistics in a timely and easily accessible manner, along with appropriate support, to ensure inclusive participation. She welcomed improvements in the publication of reports and documents and asked that documents for the 114th Session be published well in advance to facilitate thorough preparation. ASPAG reiterated the importance of avoiding late-night sittings and called for further strengthening of time management. While informal consultations may be necessary when committee discussions were prolonged or suspended, clear information, such as estimated duration and resumption times, must be shared in an accessible format with all delegations. It was vital for the Conference to run smoothly, without any operational issues, to ensure efficient and productive discussions. For the technical committee foreseen to meet at the Palais des Nations at the 114th Session, ASPAG requested confirmation that a sufficiently large meeting room could be secured. As the discussion on decent work in the platform economy was expected to attract significant interest, ASPAG asked that it be held in a room that would accommodate all delegates involved, provide sufficient power outlets and enable the display of the draft texts in the three official languages, and ensure interpretation services throughout the discussion. Her group appreciated that, pursuant to its long-standing request, a separate briefing had been held ahead of the 113th Session to explain both Conference logistics and substantive matters and would welcome the continuation of that practice. She requested additional briefings during the Conference on amendments submission and voting procedures. Welcoming the new Conference management and accreditation system, she noted that there had been some technical issues with badges. She requested confirmation that remote participation would continue to be available in the interest of ensuring inclusive engagement. ASPAG supported the draft decision.

116. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Uruguay said that his group welcomed the various texts adopted at the 113th Session, including the Programme and Budget for 2026–27, the Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Convention (No. 192) and Recommendation (No. 209), 2025, and the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. In general terms, it welcomed the overall management of the Conference, particularly the implementation of a new Conference management and accreditation system, the reduction in the number of night sittings and the timely publication of reports and documents. Those measures had made the Conference more efficient. Regarding arrangements for the 114th Session, GRULAC noted the logistical challenges involved and expressed appreciation for the resilience and proactive efforts of the Office in securing alternative venues. It thanked the Government of Switzerland for providing additional conference facilities and financial support. He requested the Office, as part of preparatory work for the session, to consider implementing specific transportation measures as well as additional security and logistical arrangements. GRULAC noted the proposed programme of work and the high-level and parallel events scheduled. It stressed the importance of achieving the entry into force of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution and requested further information on the event proposed in the document to promote its ratification. GRULAC supported the draft decision.

117. **Speaking on behalf of the group of IMEC**, a Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed the proposals to enhance the 114th Session of the Conference despite logistical challenges, and in particular, the detailed information on technical committees. It appreciated the uptake of IMEC’s recommendations from the 354th Session of the Governing Body. While IMEC agreed that the overall management of the 113th Session had been satisfactory, it regretted the decline in the proportion of women accredited compared to that of 2024 and encouraged all constituents to promote equal opportunity and strive for greater participation by women at the 114th Session. Regarding late sittings, IMEC encouraged the Office and all constituents to find ways to ensure focused and productive discussions so as to avoid late sittings and protect the health – including mental health – and safety of participants. IMEC would welcome a detailed explanation from the Office on what triggered the conditions for extended sittings and called on the Office to ensure the provision of adequate food and transportation at all three venues for late sittings foreseen at the 114th Session. It thanked the Office and the Swiss Government for resolving the venue arrangements and urged the Office to ensure that rooms for technical committees, especially the standard-setting committee, were fully equipped to accommodate all participants. Regarding the CICG, he asked whether the Office would be providing a short briefing, either virtual or on site, to familiarize participants with the venue, and whether staff would be present to assist with navigation. It would be important to know whether all venues met accessibility standards, including overflow rooms. IMEC supported the Office’s aim to secure committee officers by early March 2026. Nominees should have a strong grasp of the ILO, including its tripartite structure and complex procedures, particularly consensus-building. IMEC supported the early publication of background reports for the recurrent and general discussions, urged the Office to ensure timely consultations and the prompt release of discussion points for both items, and supported the organization of consultations to facilitate productive discussions, in particular on the platform economy during the first quarter of 2026. IMEC encouraged further examination of appropriate modalities for the forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice. It underscored the need for clear, accessible channels to report issues of violence and harassment, and sexual harassment, at the Conference and other ILO events in line with the zero-tolerance policy. Reporting information should be consistent and easy to find on the website and ILO Events app, and front-desk staff must be well informed and able to guide participants on filing complaints, which should be monitored and have appropriate and timely follow-up.

118. **A Government representative of China** said that discussions at the 113th Session on decent work in the platform economy had attracted widespread attention. Considering that the committee had only reached preliminary agreement on four Articles of the proposed Convention and had resorted to voting to decide the form of the instruments; he expressed doubts as to whether the second discussion could be completed as scheduled at the 114th Session. If the Committee continued to rely solely on votes to determine key provisions, rather than proceeding through consensus, the final adopted standards would lack authority and fail to provide adequate global guidance for that emerging sector. It was the workers in the platform economy who stood to lose the most – for them decent work would remain confined to paper rather than become reality. He urged the Governing Body and the Office to provide advice on the Committee's working methods to ensure that the final outcome would live up to the expectations of the world of work.

119. **A Government representative of Benin** drew attention to the difficulties being encountered in obtaining visas. In Benin, obtaining a Schengen visa was a real challenge to overcome, generating stress and occasionally unpleasant experiences. For the current session of the Governing Body, his delegation had experienced considerable delays and received their visas after the session had begun, despite having submitted all the required documents, supported by a note verbale from the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He requested the Office to contact the authorities that issued those visas to request the possible issuance of longer-term visas in order to facilitate matters for the delegations of all countries that have had the same experience.

120. **A Government representative of the United States** recalled the long-standing practice of only one official side event at the Conference and did not support additional side events at the 114th Session as they would divert limited time and resources away from the primary work of the Conference. He expressed concern regarding the allocation of an entire day to the annual forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and did not support the proposal to hold the forum with a similar format to that used at the 113th Session. Stating that the Conference plenary should not be interrupted to convene a meeting of an initiative comprising a separate membership, he encouraged further examination of future modalities for the forum outside the Conference session, while considering the reintroduction of the World of Work Summit an alternative. In the context of ILO reform efforts, a disciplined focus should be kept on the ILO's core mandate. He supported the draft decision on the understanding that the proposals for high-level or side events were tentative and subject to any adjustments that might be necessary.

121. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Official Relations, Meetings and Language Services Department) thanked the Swiss Government for the support provided to identify alternative venues for the 114th Session of the Conference. In response to the statement by the Government representative of the United States and to the request for clarification of the modalities of the event to promote ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution, he confirmed that the event had been approved by a Governing Body decision and would be planned so as not to disrupt the work of the committees nor the plenary of the Conference. Regarding the request to consider alternatives to the forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, including a different modality for the high-level event to be included in the Conference programme, an updated proposal would be submitted in March for consideration. The policy would always be to limit the number of side events.

122. Regarding the accreditation system, the IT team was working on concrete improvements to make the system fit for purpose for the 114th Session, including the possibility to introduce last-minute changes without having to resubmit full PDF forms. He acknowledged the call for greater assistance to obtain visas and stressed that a key condition for the Office to be able to provide adequate support for visa applications was a timely receipt of credentials by the submission deadlines. The Office would continue to work with the Swiss authorities to ease the process where possible. Regarding the wider call for suitable logistical arrangements for the 114th Session, the Office would engage with delegations early on to provide guidance and would arrange for visible signage at all conference venues, for which it was liaising with local Geneva counterparts. Alternative transportation means could include the possibility of using bicycles. To reduce pressure on cafeterias inside the premises, food trucks could be installed close to the meeting venues. The CICG was well equipped for international conferences and the renovated assembly hall at the Palais des Nations would be modular. The Tempus building at the Palais des Nations, which was close to the entrance facing the Place des Nations, would be used for plenary sittings and provided room for delegations to gather prior to those sittings. The accessibility of meeting rooms at all venues would be assessed. Regarding the hotline for the reporting of inappropriate behaviour, the Office had built on lessons learned and would take into account IMEC's suggestions for further improvements and better training of front-desk staff.

123. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for the clarifications presented. She agreed with the suggestion to limit side events. She was not opposed to the themes and intentions of the events, but logistical aspects and the ILO reform must be considered.

124. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed with ASPAG regarding the need for appropriate arrangements for a committee with a heavy workload. Good and healthy working conditions increased productivity and improved the quality of the discussions. There was no empirical evidence suggesting that the two standard-setting items had created the anticipated level of pressure and he expressed confidence that the Office would ensure the success of the 114th Session. His group supported the draft decision.

Decision

125. The Governing Body:

(a) requested the Office to take into account the guidance provided concerning the lessons learned from the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference when finalizing the arrangements for the 114th Session to be considered by the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);

(b) endorsed the proposed programme of work for the 114th Session outlined in document GB.355/INS/3/2, subject to any adjustments that might be necessary until its adoption by the Conference at the opening sitting of that session.

(GB.355/INS/3/2, paragraph 55)

4. Follow-up to the outcome of the Second World Summit for Social Development (GB.355/INS/4(Rev.1))

126. **The Chairperson** opened the discussion by recalling that she had had the honour to be part of the tripartite ILO delegation attending the Summit in Doha together with the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons of the Governing Body.

127. **The Employer spokesperson** congratulated the ILO for an active presence at the Summit, which elevated the ILO's visibility and convening power. She thanked the Director-General for his strong statement at the private sector forum. She called for balanced ILO contributions, including on issues such as enterprise sustainability, skills development and productivity. She welcomed the Doha Political Declaration which made a significant contribution to social development. She particularly welcomed the references to skills development, private sector development, entrepreneurship and social protection. While social dialogue was referenced, more needed to be done to strengthen it at the multilateral level. Her group could not agree with the language of the Declaration on living wages as it did not respect the autonomy of the social partners in wage setting and was not aligned with the tripartite agreement. The group broadly supported the proposed ILO follow-up strategy and was committed to contributing to the outcome of the Summit. Finally, she noted that the contribution of the Global Coalition for Social Justice to the implementation of the Political Declaration should complement and not replace the ILO's contribution.

128. **The Worker spokesperson** considered the Declaration as an essential reference in international engagement. She commended the decisive role played by the ILO in the preparatory process as well as the recognition of its mandate as central to social development. Her group particularly welcomed the link between social justice, democracy, human rights and peace. The Declaration obliged the ILO to discharge its mandate including the protection of workers' rights and the promotion of decent work throughout the world. A number of commitments required immediate attention, including fundamental rights, living wages and the transition to formality. Technical and financial support were urgently required to extend social protection by at least 2 percentage points per annum. The commitment to non-discrimination, gender equality and investment in care constitute areas of progress. The Workers' group supported the proposed strategic follow-up approach underscoring the following points: the need to involve the social partners and guide UN resident coordinators in implementing the Declaration; the need to upgrade the UN Commission for Social Development to become an intergovernmental body at the ministerial level with formal representation of the social partners; and the need for higher coherence with the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The group further recommended the inclusion of clear indicators to measure progress in the implementation of the commitments.

129. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Gabon welcomed the success of the Summit and the important role played by the ILO. The group welcomed the new impetus given to the Sustainable Development Goals. He expressed support for the proposed strategic approach noting that the mainstreaming of the Declaration's commitments into ILO work's programme was of particular importance. The group called on the ILO to spread the understanding that social dialogue is an essential tool to achieving social development, while also enabling social partners to take part in the UN Commission for Social Development. Regarding the institutional follow-up, the group underscored the need to ensure that the ILO reports on its mandate as part of the five-year follow-up process under the UN General Assembly and asked for further clarification on the relation with the Global Coalition.

130. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of China welcomed the ILO's efficient and effective actions towards the Summit which brought a message of hope. Recognizing the ILO's key role, the group supported the proposed strategic follow-up approach including the biennial reporting which needed to be implemented effectively. ASPAG continued to support the three core themes of social development and welcomed the integration of the Declaration's commitments into the ILO programme of work while acknowledging the deep social transformations generated by demographic shifts, technological innovation and climate change. The group supported particularly the importance of age-sensitive policies. In line with the Pact for the Future and the UN80 Initiative, the group reiterated the importance of championing a strengthened and effective multilateralism centred on social development and social justice. ASPAG supported the active promotion of the Global Coalition in the implementation of the Declaration.

131. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She expressed strong appreciation for the very positive outcome of the Summit. The Declaration captured many ILO and EU priorities. The active involvement of the ILO at the Summit had demonstrated the Organization's leadership and convening power in shaping solutions for a fair future. The group welcomed the proposed strategic approach as a solid framework for advancing the commitments of the Declaration and encouraged the Office to assist constituents in translating the commitments into concrete results at the country level. The group valued the proposal for biennial reporting and requested information on the development of measurable indicators to track progress. Moving forward, the group highlighted three priorities: (i) policies should rely on social dialogue; (ii) greater cooperation and coherence between the UN and international financial institutions; and (iii) ratification and implementation of ILO Conventions. The group reiterated the central role of the ILO in the Summit follow-up and counted on the Office to fully involve the social partners in it.

132. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of the Sudan thanked Qatar for hosting the Summit and welcomed the Declaration, emphasizing that implementing the commitments would require international support and a renewed tripartite cooperation. The group welcomed the proposed strategic approach which placed people at the heart of development while stressing the need to consider different national contexts. The group welcomed the biennial reporting. It reiterated its call for the multilateral system based on inclusiveness, social justice, equal participation and equitable benefits for all Member States. It welcomed the development of partnerships, including the Global Coalition, in support of the implementation of the Summit's outcome.

133. **Speaking on behalf of a group of countries**,[3] a Government representative of Brazil welcomed the Declaration adopted by consensus which was critical in reaffirming solidarity as a key component to social development. The Declaration reflected the ILO's tripartite contribution and included several priorities of his region, such as social protection, migration, transition to formality, non-discrimination, support to indigenous peoples and peoples of African descent and other marginalized groups. The group stressed the importance of rethinking the international financial architecture to ensure fair and sustainable financing for

[3] Barbados, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Dominican Republic, Uruguay, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

development. It supported the proposed follow-up strategic approach, which would strengthen the ILO's unique role in the multilateral system.

134. **Speaking on behalf of Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Türkiye and Australia (the MIKTA countries)**, a Government representative of the Republic of Korea underscored the central role of the ILO in contributing to, and following up on, the Summit. The ILO's tripartite structure would be essential in translating the commitments of the Declaration into concrete actions. The group stressed the unique role of international labour standards within the multilateral system, which were essential to promoting social justice and decent work in a globalized economy. The group valued the ILO's leadership in advancing the work of the Global Coalition and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection. The MIKTA countries would continue to play a bridge-building role in promoting multilateral cooperation to advance social justice.

135. **A Government representative of the Philippines** commended the Office for its constructive leadership and extensive tripartite engagement at the Summit. The Philippines supported the proposed follow-up strategy, noting that its national labour and employment plan fully aligned with the commitments of the Declaration. The country further supported the proposal for biennial reporting and underscored the importance of regional collaboration and exchanges of best practice among countries. The Philippines was committed to working with the ILO to ensure that the commitments be translated into concrete, inclusive and lasting progress.

136. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom** thanked Qatar for hosting the Summit and the ILO for its important role in it. The United Kingdom was pleased to see the Global Coalition recognized in the Declaration. The Declaration was ambitious and set a new global vision for collaboration on social development in all its dimensions. The United Kingdom's engagement in the Summit had been shaped by three core priorities: (i) working towards inclusive and sustainable growth, it had launched the high-level panel report on social protection in fragile and conflict-affected settings; (ii) gender equality; and (iii) renewed international cooperation grounded in strong partnerships and supported by a reformed global development architecture.

137. **A Government representative of India** reaffirmed India's support to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the multilateral system, international law and global cooperation. India remained committed to honouring its commitments under both the Copenhagen and the Doha Declarations. In India 250 million people had been lifted out of poverty and social protection coverage had been extended from 19 to 64 per cent of the population. Between 2017 and 2023, 170 million jobs had been created. India supported gender equality and stood ready to share its models of inclusive technology-driven governance to advance social justice globally.

138. **Another Government representative of China** expressed appreciation for the ILO's contribution to the success of the Summit. China supported the proposed follow-up actions. The ILO should strengthen cooperation with other multilateral institutions, enhance institutional capacity, assist Member States in achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and promote social justice. China pursued a new development vision, fostering a new development pattern and promoting high-quality economic growth. China continued to advance social development and improve people's well-being including with the creation of more than 12 million new urban jobs annually. China has established the world's largest education, healthcare and social security systems with a 95 per cent completion rate of a nine-year compulsory education, as well as enrolment in basic pension and medical insurance. China was willing to share its knowledge in the implementation of the Summit's outcome.

139. **A Government representative of Colombia** welcomed the consensual adoption of the Doha Declaration against the backdrop of multidimensional crises. The Declaration reflected statements on workers' rights adopted by the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body. Social justice and human rights were essential to achieve peace and security within and between nations, particularly in Latin America and the Caribbean which were facing threats and aggressions. The ILO should coordinate the Summit's follow-up on work-related issues. Social justice would only be achieved if democracy, the rule of law, good governance and access to justice was defended, and the fight against all forms of corruption continued. All of that require national actions as well as cooperation between numerous stakeholders. The protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be upheld without discrimination.

140. **A Government representative of Cuba** reaffirmed her country's commitments to social development, justice and equity. The Declaration sets out the priority for international cooperation and solidarity. The international resources required to achieve the development goals had been falling short, while military expenditure had been growing. There could not be development when countries in the South were obliged to service the debt rather than building health, education and employment. There was an urgent need for fair financial mechanisms that enable equitable access to essential resources. Without progress towards full and decent employment, it would not be possible to eradicate poverty.

141. **A Government representative of Malawi** stated that Malawi had taken part in the Summit and shared its experience as one of the pathfinder countries of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection. Malawi reaffirmed its commitment to both the Copenhagen and Doha Declarations on Social Development. It acknowledged the important role played by the Director-General and the social partners during the Summit and further called upon the Director-General to continue playing an active role in the implementation of the Summit's outcome.

142. **A Government representative of Oman** thanked the Office for the three-pronged strategic approach which was commensurate with Oman's aspirations on social justice and sustainable development. Oman underscored the importance of the transition from the informal to the formal economy, skills development and the protection of social gains. Oman supported a strengthened multilateral system that would help countries keep up with the pace of ongoing changes and was committed to working with the ILO and all Member States to bring the commitments into fruition.

143. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) thanked the constituents for their teamwork in preparing the ILO's contribution to the Summit which was well reflected in the Doha Political Declaration. The ILO would work with the social partners at both the country and the global levels to implement the Declaration. At the country level, the ILO will work with the UN country teams in line with the UN80 Initiative. The ILO would identify the best indicators of progress for their inclusion in the biennial report to the Governing Body. The Global Coalition would complement and not substitute the work of the ILO in the follow-up to the Summit.

Decision

144. **The Governing Body:**

(a) **took note of the report on the Second World Summit for Social Development (Doha, 4–6 November 2025) and the Doha Political Declaration of the "World Social Summit" under the title "the Second World Summit for Social Development";**

(b) endorsed the three-pronged strategic approach to the follow-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, while requesting the Director-General to take account of the views expressed by the Governing Body;

(c) requested the Director-General to report on a biennial basis to the Governing Body on the implementation of the strategic approach to the follow-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development.

(GB.355/INS/4(Rev.1), paragraph 31)

5. Update on the Global Coalition for Social Justice (GB.355/INS/5)

145. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the Coalition's broad engagement of more than 400 partners – including 116 workers' organizations – and expressed appreciation for the annual Forum and the Coalition's strong presence at the Second World Social Development Summit. He emphasized the Coalition's value as an important platform for promoting social justice and advancing themes such as living wages, social protection, social dialogue and the human rights economy, while strengthening collaboration and policy coherence at the multilateral level.

146. He recognized the secretariat's coordination efforts and, while appreciating the international-level activities presented, requested greater clarity on how these translated into concrete national outcomes and on resource mobilization. He stressed the importance of clearly distinguishing the respective roles of the coordination group and the Governing Body in guiding the Coalition.

147. He noted that the key interventions combined new and existing ILO and partners' initiatives and reiterated the Workers' view that the Coalition should remain a platform for engagement rather than an implementation mechanism and should not draw resources from the ILO's programme and budget or be perceived as an executive body. He commended progress on key interventions, highlighting the important work on new initiatives such as the human rights economy and living wage, while noting that some new initiatives remained in an advocacy phase with limited national-level results and that attribution within established initiatives such as the Global Accelerator was not always clear.

148. Finally, he requested further information on funding, particularly given the current financial constraints, and on how the Coalition's role as a platform – especially in relation to informality and broader institutional cooperation – would be delineated going forward.

149. **The Employer spokesperson** commended the significant coordination efforts undertaken so far by the Coalition secretariat, under the leadership of the Director-General and the Assistant Director-General for External and Corporate Relations and noted that the ongoing ILO reform made this a timely moment to reflect on the Coalition's future direction. She reaffirmed the Employers' support and stressed the need to prioritize key interventions, given limited resources and uneven progress, focusing on those most relevant to tripartite constituents such as social dialogue, and considering the ILO's financial constraints and the need to streamline activities under the broader ILO reform. The Coordinating Group at its next meeting could take stock and determine which interventions should be amplified or discontinued. She also called for full engagement with the IOE to finalize the Human Rights Economy concept note, ensure coherence with related initiatives, and uphold appropriate governance with the involvement of co-leading employers and workers.

150. She stressed that governance remained central, recalling that the Coalition was established to amplify the ILO's mandate and that processes such as the global road map on informality and other follow-ups to International Labour Conference resolutions must continue to be led by the ILO's tripartite constituents. Welcoming the Coalition's reference in the Doha Political Declaration, she underlined that implementation of its decent work commitments must likewise remain an ILO-led process. The Coalition may support dialogue and visibility, but it should not replace the ILO's central implementation role, which rests with the relevant policy departments, field offices and social partners, in cooperation with the UN.

151. Finally, she noted the need to streamline the modalities of the Annual Forum and the World of Work Forum in line with the ILO reform, while preserving the latter's role in addressing key labour issues. The Employers' group supported the draft decision.

152. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of Tunisia expressed satisfaction with the growing global recognition of the Coalition, highlighted by regional and global events and the visibility gained during the special event during the World Summit for Sustainable Development. She welcomed its reference in the Doha Political statement, emphasizing its role in supporting implementation by providing guidance and translating commitments into action. She commended the secretariat for mobilizing a geographically diverse set of partners and encouraged deeper engagement with the private sector.

153. She reiterated the Africa group's support for holding the annual Forum during the International Labour Conference and for partners' involvement through parallel events or stands. The group questioned the proposed merge of the Coalition secretariat with the Partnerships Department, which could undermine its specificity and did not seem to be justified by efficiency.

154. Finally, she sought additional information on the key interventions – including partners, activities, results and challenges – and underscored the importance of the alignment with the ILO mandate, particularly on informality, and enhanced cooperation with UN agencies and funding partners to reinforce the Coalition's visibility and impact.

155. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Japan welcomed the Coalition's full operationalization and broad partner engagement. He noted that the inclusive annual Forum and the Coalition's visibility at the Second World Social Summit and its reference in the Doha Political Declaration demonstrated its growing influence. Furthermore, he highlighted the value of sustained advocacy and communication efforts and expressed his expectation that knowledge-sharing and dissemination would be further strengthened. While welcoming the progress across the Coalition's key interventions – particularly those addressing inequalities, living wages, social protection, just transition, responsible business conduct and youth empowerment – ASPAG requested enhanced support for developing countries and small island developing States. He also highlighted the active engagement of ASPAG members in the Coalition's activities and pointed out that informality remained a major challenge to achieving decent work.

156. ASPAG also welcomed progress on the key interventions, emphasizing the relevance of work on inequalities, living wages, social protection, just transitions, responsible business conduct and youth empowerment, and encouraged greater coherence, measurable results and enhanced support for developing countries and small island developing States. They highlighted active regional participation, underscored the persistent challenge of informality and the importance of continued knowledge exchange, and reaffirmed their readiness to contribute to the Coalition's work.

157. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Colombia acknowledged the work of the Coordinating Group in reviewing progress, guiding priorities and harmonizing the various initiatives supporting the Coalition. He welcomed strong regional engagement, encouraged additional countries to join, and called on international financial institutions and development partners to mobilize resources and technical assistance for national and subregional strategies aligned with the Coalition's principles. GRULAC expressed support for the Global Accelerator and valued the Coalition's contribution to advancing full employment and decent work. They further highlighted the importance of research, training and digital skills for vulnerable groups, and the need for coordination between the ILO and regional development banks to integrate social justice criteria into development financing.

158. GRULAC welcomed the Centre of Excellence on Inequalities and the diagnostic studies undertaken in Colombia, new memberships in the Equal Pay International Coalition and efforts on equitable food systems to address rural poverty and food insecurity. They emphasized priorities such as women's empowerment, inclusive governance and strengthened coordination with the Global Alliance against Hunger and Poverty and relevant ILO and food-related programmes, especially on informality. They welcomed the regional ministerial declaration on social justice promoted by Peru which gained traction during the regional meeting.

159. The group questioned the proposed merger of the Coalition secretariat and the Partnerships Department, emphasizing that despite their complementarity, their distinct roles in advancing the ILO's mandate and mobilizing institutional partnerships should remain clearly differentiated.

160. Finally, GRULAC encouraged associated countries to join a regional initiative on strengthening social dialogue in global governance and promoting innovative approaches to tackle informality and support the transition to the formal economy. He supported the draft decision.

161. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Denmark said that Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Switzerland and Armenia aligned themselves with her statement. She welcomed the Coalition's continued expansion, including strong engagement from EU Member States and the European Commission.

162. The group highlighted the success of the Annual Forum held during the International Labour Conference. She further noted the concrete progress across the 14 key interventions, emphasizing that their flexibility and evolution through dialogue allowed them to respond effectively to new developments, including ILO instruments and resolutions. In this context, she expressed support for exploring informality as a stand-alone intervention following the recent Conference resolution, as this would enhance the visibility of Recommendation No. 204, and strengthen efforts toward decent work and social justice.

163. She recalled the Conference's call for Member States to support implementation of the World Social Summit outcomes through multistakeholder initiatives such as the Coalition and highlighted its inclusion in the Doha Political Declaration – achieved with EU support – as evidence of the platform's growing relevance. She also noted the success of the Coalition Forum held during the Summit, attended by the President of the UN General Assembly, and strongly encouraged ILO constituents to back the Coalition in advancing the Declaration's commitments. She reaffirmed the EU's continued engagement.

164. **A Government representative of Qatar** highlighted the growing participation as a sign of the Coalition's rising relevance. He announced Qatar's decision to join the Coalition, noting that this aligned with the country's national vision centred on people, social justice, decent work and inclusive development, including support for vulnerable groups, youth and women, and the transition to a green economy. He affirmed Qatar's commitment to strengthened international cooperation and expressed readiness to work with partners to advance sustainable development for the benefit of tripartite constituents.

165. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** said that his country aligned itself with the ASPAG statement and welcomed the steady progress of the Coalition. He reaffirmed his Government's commitment to social justice, outlining recent reforms – including amendments to the Labour Act to ease union formation and strengthen protections, as well as the ratification of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) – which completed its ratification of all ILO fundamental Conventions – and the withdrawal of cases against workers and trade unionists. He informed the meeting that Bangladesh would host the Asia–Pacific Social Justice Forum in Dhaka in March 2026 and looked forward to continued support from the secretariat and ILO constituents.

166. **A Government representative of Barbados** welcomed the update on the Coalition and commended the ILO and partners for advancing an initiative whose principles aligned closely with Caribbean realities. He underscored the region's vulnerabilities – climate shocks, fiscal constraints and persistent inequalities – and highlighted the need for a just transition that strengthened climate resilience, decent work and social protection, supported by global climate and financial reforms grounded in social justice. Citing national efforts such as the Roofs to Reefs Programme and social partnership protocols, he welcomed the Coalition's growing momentum, including at the Second World Summit for Social Development, and reaffirmed Barbados's commitment to working with the ILO and its partners toward a more equitable and resilient future.

167. **A Government representative of India** welcomed the Coalition as a forward-looking initiative centred on equity and inclusion. He highlighted that social justice was integral to India's human-centred development, citing the country's digital infrastructure that enabled transparent welfare delivery and social protection for 940 million people, alongside progress in food security, health coverage and support for informal workers. He welcomed the Coalition's practical emphasis, particularly on responsible business conduct, referenced India's hosting of the first regional dialogue in February 2025, and reaffirmed India's commitment to advancing resilient, inclusive societies grounded in dignity for all.

168. **A Government representative of Malawi**, aligning with the Africa group statement, emphasized the importance of showcasing achievements, challenges and opportunities, noting ongoing regional discussions in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. She highlighted Malawi's commitment to implement the Global Accelerator as part of the Malawi 2063 Development Strategy, with a focus on green jobs, digital futures and resilient livelihoods. She further underscored the value of peer learning, South–South cooperation and communities of practice, encouraged continued knowledge-sharing and monitoring mechanisms. She supported the draft decision.

169. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that her country aligned itself with the GRULAC statement and reaffirmed Brazil's strong commitment to the Coalition, recalling the engagement of President Lula and senior ministers since its inception. She highlighted Brazil's role as co-chair of the Coordinating Group and its participation in the Just Transition advisory board, as well as progress in the Equal Pay International Coalition, now comprising 72 members, with Brazil actively encouraging wider regional involvement. She concluded by reiterating Brazil’s full support for achieving concrete results through the Coalition’s multistakeholder model.

170. **A Government representative of the United States** supported strengthening coherence across the UN system and amplifying the ILO’s core work through the Coalition. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that all ILO initiatives remain closely aligned with the Organization’s mandate. Acknowledging the Coalition’s bold and innovative vision for coordination, he noted that some activities appeared to be evolving in ways that risked diluting their connection to ILO principles and encouraged the Office to explore options for refining the Coalition’s structure and engagement, including its secretariat and the 2026 annual Forum.

171. **A Government representative of the Philippines** affirmed strong support for the Coalition, as a platform for collective action toward a fairer and more inclusive world of work. She highlighted the relevance of the Coalition’s 14 key interventions – including living wages, social protection, just transitions and youth empowerment – to the Philippine Labor and Employment Plan 2023–2028, noting the country’s active role as a member of the Coordinating Group and the Just Transition advisory board, and its contribution to the World Social Summit special event. She emphasized continued advocacy for decent and green jobs, workers’ rights and inclusive transitions, reaffirming the country’s readiness to share regional experience particularly in the lead-up to its 2026 ASEAN chairship.

172. **A Government representative of Colombia** reaffirmed strong support for the Coalition as a platform for multilateral action on decent work and equity. He commended Brazil’s role as co-chair of the Coordinating Group and welcomed the contribution of academia through the Thinking Ahead Network. He noted progress across the 14 key interventions, and the Coalition’s contribution to the Second World Summit on Social Development. He underscored Colombia’s commitment to contribute as a pilot country of the Centre of Excellence on Inequalities including through the ongoing diagnostic study. Finally, he emphasized the need for linguistic diversity in the secretariat, highlighting the advances made in the Spanish speaking world recently. Finally, he cautioned against merging the secretariat with the Partnerships Department given their distinct roles and the Coalition’s mandate-focused, cooperation-building function which should remain separate from project design and resource mobilization functions, especially given the Coalition’s growing momentum.

173. **A Government representative of Nepal** said that his country aligned itself with the ASPAG statement and welcomed the Coalition’s progress and broad partnership base, emphasizing that social justice is fundamental to universal and sustainable peace, and commended Brazil’s leadership as co-chair of the Coordinating Group. He emphasized the importance of social justice for sustainable peace, highlighted the successful 2025 annual Forum and the 14 thematic interventions, and reaffirmed Nepal’s readiness to engage constructively with all stakeholders. He supported the draft decision.

174. **A Government representative of Peru,** said that her country aligned itself with the GRULAC statement and highlighted Peru’s active engagement since joining the Coalition, including hosting the April 2025 International Forum in Lima and the signing of the Ministerial Lima Declaration, which seeks to strengthen labour standards, fundamental rights and social dialogue. She called for continued secretariat support and wider country participation. She emphasized that the Coalition and the Partnerships Department should remain institutionally separate to preserve their distinct functions.

175. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster), recalled that the Coalition functioned as a platform for action, advocacy and knowledge-sharing, with the 14 key interventions contributing at different levels.

She acknowledged requests for more detailed reporting on their impact – particularly on how interventions had evolved following guidance and what results had been achieved at country and regional levels – and noted that, as the Coalition was still relatively new, the maturity of interventions varied. She confirmed the need to better reflect the level of detail expected by constituents and indicated that the Office would explore additional ways to provide more comprehensive information, as the Governing Body document should remain concise. She also recalled that the 14 interventions had been developed through extensive consultations and emphasized the need for ongoing dialogue to assess progress, make adjustments and determine where consolidation or closure might be appropriate, highlighting flexibility as a defining strength of the platform.

176. Turning to the relationship with the ILO reform, she noted comments on links between the interventions and the programme and budget, confirming that clear connections existed and that technical departments and field offices had been involved in their development. She indicated that a mapping of interventions corresponding to programme and budget outcomes would be made public. She concluded by noting that organizational priorities emerging from the reform would have implications for the ILO's contributions to the Coalition, underlining the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between the Coalition's activities and the ILO's institutional responsibilities, and expressed her readiness to engage further with constituents as needed.

177. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Global Coalition for Social Justice Secretariat) confirmed that the Coalition's programme of activities was fully aligned with the current and upcoming programme and budget, explaining that any future adjustments to it would require corresponding changes to the ILO's contribution and partners' activities. She emphasized that this adaptability was one of the platform's key strengths and highlighted ongoing efforts to expand partnerships, including with the private sector, focused on specific intervention areas.

178. She indicated that collaboration with international financial institutions would continue, with focal points designated in the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and further bilateral engagement planned. She noted the importance of South–South and triangular cooperation and announced a new section on the Coalition website to share partner experiences and knowledge. She highlighted the momentum generated by the Doha Political Declaration and the concrete contributions announced during the Summit, recalling that the Coalition itself does not implement activities but mobilizes partners to support its follow-up. She closed by thanking all ILO units involved and emphasized that the work reflected a unified "One ILO" approach.

179. **The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the Governing Body's calls to prioritize the most impactful key interventions while strengthening cooperation with international partners to support multilateral dialogue and peer learning. He took note of the United States' suggestion to improve policy coherence and to review the modalities of the annual Forum in relation to existing committee work and the World of Work Summit. He also welcomed the focus on informality and supported the EU proposal to consider it as a stand-alone intervention, noting that this would build on the recent Conference resolution and help position the Coalition as a platform for showcasing good practices rather than negotiating policy. He affirmed the Employers' support for efforts to enhance the Coalition's impact and visibility and indicated support for the draft decision.

Decision

180. The Governing Body took note of the update on the Global Coalition for Social Justice provided in document GB.355/INS/5 and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in the further development of the Coalition.

(GB.355/INS/5, paragraph 40)

6. Outcome of the Tripartite Meeting on the Review of the Functioning of the Governing Body (Geneva, 5–8 May 2025) (GB.355/INS/6)

181. **The Employer spokesperson** reaffirmed that the ongoing review and improvement of its functioning was a fundamental responsibility of the Governing Body, not an exercise that could be completed in a single meeting. Her group welcomed the recommendations concerning streamlining standing items such as the reports of the Director-General, improving time management and reviewing certain procedural aspects, which could be considered as the initial steps in the right direction of a long-term process. Several critical institutional matters required a review which should be undertaken as part of regular work of the Governing Body.

182. In the context of the ambitious reform process that was under way with a view to strengthening the ILO's efficiency and delivery, the Governing Body should lead by example in terms of the efficiency and discipline expected from the Office. This could be done by reducing the repetitive items on the agenda, making better use of time by avoiding long statements, ensuring that documents are published on time, consolidating decisions when appropriate and avoiding unnecessary discussions.

183. The follow-up to the meeting's recommendations should be included in future sessions in a structured manner to ensure continuity and allow the Governing Body to substantively address pending issues. Further areas to review included exploring ways of shortening sessions and considering the use of expedited or simplified decision-making procedures, such as adopting decisions by correspondence for items enjoying consensus. The institutional matters pending review included the composition and functioning of the Screening Group and the delegation of authority to the Officers of the Governing Body and of the International Labour Conference with a view to ensuring legal certainty and alignment between the practices of the two governance organs, which are fundamental for good governance.

184. The Employers' group supported the draft decision and, in particular, the request that the Office prepare for the 356th Session (March 2026) a document on the delegation of authority to the Officers of the Governing Body. Its expectations could be summarized in five points: (i) the review process would continue to be active and forward-looking and address all institutional and procedural matters that required attention; (ii) the agenda-setting process should be more efficient, including by reducing the frequency of items concerning country cases and others that did not require discussion; (iii) solid improvements in time management with more disciplined speakers and clear guidance for the Chairperson; (iv) timely publication of concise documents to facilitate preparation of the discussions; and (v) a full alignment of the Governing Body's functioning with the broader ILO reform to ensure coherence in governance.

185. **The Worker spokesperson** said that despite its conviction that the Governing Body was functioning properly, the Workers' group had participated constructively in the meeting held in May and welcomed its consensual recommendations that could lead to practical improvements. The Compendium of rules applicable to the Governing Body was generally fit for purpose and there was no urgent need to revise it. Her group endorsed the changes to streamline standing items and welcomed particularly consolidating the reporting of all ILO official meetings under the Social Dialogue Segment, which would improve visibility. Regarding the merger of the item concerning analysis of Conference sessions with that on arrangements for future sessions, the group supported the pragmatic approach proposed by the Office to refer to the Screening Group the decision to include the item on the agenda of the March sessions, as appropriate. Moving the review of annual reports on the application of fundamental Conventions to the November sessions should allow for better preparation and hopefully increase governments' reporting rates.

186. While supporting the effective implementation of the recommendations for improving time management, she stressed that for certain items, consensus-building required time and, while evening sittings were not ideal, occasionally they could be necessary. Having a maximum of three evening sittings would be sufficient provided that all groups engaged constructively; for future sessions, however, the arrangements would depend on the agenda. She reiterated that extending the March and November sessions by one day could ease time pressure and reduce costs.

187. The Workers' group supported: (i) the creation of a Strategic Dialogue Section in a Committee of the Whole format for discussing global issues and maintaining policy discussions; (ii) improving document production and Office support to the Government group; (iii) amending paragraph 4.3.1 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body to allow Member States that are not members of the Governing Body to speak in the Committee of the Whole; and (iv) placing on the agenda of the March 2026 session an item providing legal clarity on the delegation of authority to the Officers.

188. The group supported the draft decision and agreed that there was no need for a second tripartite meeting in 2026, stating that the Governing Body could always identify the need for reviewing other areas of its functioning and determine how to address such issues at a future session. In response to the Employers' group, she emphasized that in the context of the current political and geopolitical reform process in the multilateral system, the Governing Body needed to give priority to more important matters other than reviewing its functioning. Speakers' discipline had already improved, and the consideration of alternative decision-making methods would need to be done with extreme care, as doing it by correspondence during the pandemic was not necessarily a good example. The purpose of including country cases on the agenda was to monitor their progress, which was an essential part of the supervisory system. Concerned governments reported on developments, and once sufficient progress had been achieved, the Governing Body could decide to either discontinue further consideration of those cases or review them less frequently.

189. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Senegal said that his group endorsed the recommendations that had been adopted with broad consensus. The proposals to simplify and restructure the agenda by merging certain standing items, such as the reports of the Director-General, and grouping all the proposals concerning official meetings constituted a step forward in terms of efficiency. When programming ILO official meetings, the Office should ensure regional balance and full participation of all Member States, especially those with limited resources. The Africa group welcomed measures aimed at improving time management, such as enforcing strict time limits, including through the use of electronic devices, limiting the number of evening sittings and developing a good practice guide for speakers. The group also supported: (i) the replacement of the High-Level Section with the Strategic Dialogue Section allowing participation by non-members of the Governing Body in the discussion of global strategic issues; (ii) the amendment of paragraph 4.3.1 of the Standing Orders to extend speaking rights to all Member States in the Committee of the Whole; (iii) the creation of an online portal for the Government group, stressing that it would be essential to ensure equal access and provide technical assistance for governments with limited resources; and (iv) the recommendation to uphold publication deadlines and limit excessive length of documents, emphasizing the importance of clear and concise documents.

190. The speaker noted the need to clarify the delegation of authority to the Officers of the Governing Body to ensure transparency, supported the draft decision and requested that the document for the March 2026 session on that matter promote tripartite cooperation and include a review of the 1949 delegation of authority, taking into account the considerable evolution in ILO membership since then. The review of the functioning of the Governing Body should become a standing item on the agenda of future sessions and be carried out preferably in a Committee of the Whole format. Finally, the Africa group would greatly appreciate that the issue of the Screening Group's composition be included in future Governing Body discussions as it had not been resolved in the Government group.

191. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that the review of the functioning of the Governing Body should be a continuous process requiring regular discussions and the meeting held in May had provided an important occasion for consultations on seven areas requiring improvement. His group supported the changes regarding the handling of standing items and limiting the number of reports that did not require a decision. Consolidating the outcomes of technical and sectoral meetings under the Social Dialogue Segment would help streamline the agenda. On time management, holding early consultations with regional groups was necessary to shorten the discussions during Governing Body sessions, but compressing debates should not compromise consensus. Deferring incomplete discussions to a later sitting of the same session was the preferred solution for building consensus.

192. ASPAG stressed the importance of ensuring adequate scope for discussing global strategic matters that could influence the world of work and the ILO's work to avoid weakening the role of the ILO in the multilateral system. The group supported the creation of a secure online portal to serve as the permanent repository for all matters relating to the Government group. Bearing in mind the ongoing discussions on expenditure management, it would be important to understand how that situation would affect the implementation of follow-up actions. The group welcomed the proposal to continue reviewing the functioning of the Governing Body at regular sessions, acknowledging that the review would be affected by the ongoing discussions on the democratization of the ILO's governance; supported the draft decision and requested that the Office carry out adequate consultations when preparing the documents on legal clarity regarding delegation of authority for the March 2026 session, and on other areas for review for the November 2026 session.

193. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru commended the recommendations on reorganizing the agenda, which would help ensure efficiency by avoiding duplication and improving consistency of the matters for discussion. Improving time management by starting sittings on time and limiting evening sittings was crucial to optimize the use of resources and was dependent on the punctuality and adherence to speaking times by constituents. His group welcomed transforming the High-Level Section into a Strategic Dialogue Section and broadening the speaking rights of all Member States in a Committee of the Whole format, which were significant steps towards ensuring greater representativeness in the ILO's governance organs in line with GRULAC's vision. The creation of an online platform for governmental members would contribute to a better articulation of positions within the regional groups and smoother decision-making processes by improving information and knowledge management in the Government group and facilitating the work of regional coordinators, especially when onboarding new government representatives.

194. GRULAC supported measures to improve document production and timely publication and reiterated the importance of making available documents for discussion in the three official languages in a timely manner. The group agreed on the need for legal clarity concerning the delegation of authority to the Officers of the Governing Body and looked forward to reviewing the document that the Office would prepare on that matter for discussion at the March 2026 session. Considering that significant agreements had been reached during the tripartite meeting on the areas identified for review, there was no need for a second meeting, especially in view of the ILO's financial situation, and any additional issues could be addressed as part of regular Governing Body work.

195. **Speaking on behalf of the group of IMEC**, a Government representative of Canada, stated that while for her group the Compendium of rules was fit for purpose and the pillars put in place by the 2011 reform remained relevant, it was open to evaluating practices with a view to strengthening them. In that connection, IMEC supported the recommendations that, without additional funding, were intended to organize the agenda more effectively and transparently and increase coherence across sections and segments; avoid extended discussions through enhanced time management; facilitate the preparation and timely publication of documents; and ensure clarity and certainty concerning other procedural aspects. Appreciating the improvements already made in terms of timely document publication, the group encouraged the Office to ensure that complete documents on country cases were published on time, to adhere to publication and word limit guidelines and to make further efforts with regard to document clarity and conciseness.

196. IMEC supported including in the November session of the Governing Body a substantive discussion on the analysis of the functioning of the Conference and the arrangements for next year's session and, addressing in March if needed, any final arrangements requiring decision. The group agreed to maintain a high-level space for discussion of global issues of strategic importance in a Committee of the Whole format under the new Strategic Dialogue Section, provided that it would be convened on an exceptional basis, and endorsed deleting the restrictions on speaking rights for non-Governing Body members in the Committee of the Whole to allow broader participation. IMEC also supported: (i) consolidating the programme of ILO official meetings in one item with a document providing clear criteria for accepting of refusing proposals; (ii) submitting to the Governing Body for decision the list of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations to be invited as observers to the Conference and to official meetings as approved by the Officers; (iii) reinforcing the support to the Government group through an online platform to be developed using existing resources; and (iv) clarifying the delegation of authority to the Officers of the Governing Body.

197. Considering that the in-depth tripartite discussion on the functioning of the Governing Body held in May had yielded comprehensive recommendations enjoying consensus and the financial situation of the Organization, a second meeting was not necessary and any further review of the functioning of the Governing Body should be considered during its regular sessions. Finally, IMEC reaffirmed its commitment to improving efficiency and effectiveness in the governance and oversight functions of the Governing Body and looked forward to implementing the recommendations adopted by the meeting.

198. **A Government representative of Malawi** said that her Government agreed with the recommendations for streamlining the agenda and for introducing effective time management measures and limiting extended sittings. Consultations between sessions could help reduce time spent on agenda items. She supported amending paragraph 4.3.1 of the Standing Orders and looked forward to the creation of an online platform to serve as a repository for Government group matters and to achieving legal clarity on the delegation of authority to the Officers, including by reviewing the 1949 delegation of authority. The discussion on the functioning of the Governing Body should be continuous and conducted preferably through a standing item on the agenda and in a Committee of the Whole format. She stressed that a fully democratized ILO in line with the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution should remain a priority.

199. **A Government representative of Nepal** noted that the recommendations adopted in the seven areas reviewed aimed at improving effectiveness and efficiency and emphasized that streamlining the agenda and improving time management were crucial for smooth functioning. The online permanent repository for the Government group would significantly contribute to building accessible institutional memory and facilitate information exchange among government officials. The technical assistance provided to governments by the Office remained vital. He expressed his Government's willingness to continue reviewing the functioning of the Governing Body in a constructive tripartite manner.

200. **A Government representative of Barbados** highlighted that the meeting's recommendations stressed the need for a more agile, inclusive and effective Governing Body to ensure that the ILO's tripartite governance remained fit for purpose. He underscored the issues of particular importance for the Small Island Developing States. First, given their unique labour market dynamics and reliance on tourism, informality and migration flows, they must be assured of fair and meaningful representation in the Governing Body and its agenda-setting mechanism. Second, any reform agenda should include their priorities, such as decent work in tourism, informality, climate change impact, youth unemployment and labour migration. Third, considering the resource constraints faced by Caribbean countries, any decision to hold meetings online or in hybrid mode must be accompanied by capacity-building, assurance of reliable connectivity and related support to ensure equal participation. He asked the Office: (i) to be transparent in what would be the impact of the changes recommended by the meeting on the Governing Body's membership, procedures and agenda-setting mechanism; and (ii) to provide capacity-building and technical assistance to ensure the full engagement of smaller States in the review of the Governing Body, including by enhancing regional collaboration through subregional bodies. The review was a welcome opportunity for smaller States to embed their interests and realities in governance structures and they remained committed to working with partners to build an inclusive, agile and effective Governing Body that would be responsive to challenges.

201. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, External and Corporate Relations Cluster) thanked the participants of the meeting held in May for the very constructive discussion which helped address issues of concern and led to the adoption of a number of recommendations by consensus. She noted broad support within the Governing Body for the recommended changes and the draft decision, as well as full agreement to prepare for the 356th Session (March 2026) a document on the delegation of authority to the Officers and on the continuing review of the functioning of the Governing Body as part of its regular work, rather than at another tripartite meeting. The review of the Office's processes that had started after the meeting in May, could lead to other proposals for improving certain aspects of the Governing Body's functioning, in particular concerning document production, which could be considered at a later stage.

202. Concerning the next steps, at its March 2026 session, the Governing Body would consider the delegation of authority to its Officers and provide guidance to the Office concerning other issues to be considered at later sessions, bearing in mind that the aim was to reduce the number of items on the agenda and avoid adding new standing items.

203. **The Worker spokesperson** clarified that, according to the draft decision, the only related item on the agenda of the 356th Session would be the delegation of authority and stressed that other issues for review that could be identified in the future would require specific Governing Body decisions to be considered.

204. **The Employer spokesperson** reiterated that for her group the ongoing improvement of the Governing Body was an urgent matter in view of the ILO's reform process. She noted that most Government representatives agreed on the importance of an ongoing review of the Governing Body's functioning and stated that her group agreed with reviewing the issues raised by the Africa group. She clarified that for her group the decision to be adopted could not be understood as restricting the scope of future discussions on governance improvements.

Decision

205. **The Governing Body:**

(a) **endorsed the recommendations of the Tripartite Meeting on the Review of the Functioning of the Governing Body that was held from 5 to 8 May 2025, and requested the Office to undertake the actions outlined in paragraph 25 of document GB.355/INS/6 to implement the recommended changes, taking into account the guidance provided during the discussion;**

(b) **adopted the amendment to paragraph 4.3.1 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body presented in paragraph 18 of document GB.355/INS/6;**

(c) **requested the Office to prepare a document on the question of the delegation of authority to the Officers of the Governing Body, including proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the Governing Body and its Introductory note, for consideration at its 356th Session (March 2026);**

(d) **decided not to hold a second tripartite meeting to review its functioning in 2026 and that any pending matters identified during the discussion would be considered by the Governing Body at future sessions.**

(GB.355/INS/6, paragraph 29)

7. The ILO in a changing multilateral environment: Towards better effectiveness and efficiency (GB.355/INS/7)

Committee of the Whole (Tuesday, 18 November 2025)

206. **The Director-General** said that the Office document had a dual objective. First, it set out proposals to enhance the ILO's effectiveness by safeguarding and strengthening the Organization's normative mandate and supervisory system, while increasing technical support to Member States and the social partners at the field level for activities aligned with the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. Second, it sought to increase efficiency, taking into account the emerging issues in the world of work. The Office would welcome guidance on the proposals. Regrettably, given the current circumstances, scenario 2 – anticipating a revenue shortfall of up to 20 per cent in 2026–27 – appeared to be the only viable option.

207. The Office had already started implementing several reform measures. Those included: freeing up office space at headquarters with a view to renting out at least two floors; reducing the number of Assistant Director-General positions from 11 to 4; and agreeing to a substantial number of agreed terminations to minimize involuntary job losses. In addition, work was under way to consolidate the seven existing policy departments into four.

208. He had established a task force that had already produced a preliminary report on the reprioritization of activities based on the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. The final report was expected by the end of the year, enabling implementation from the start of 2026. He recalled that external recruitment had been frozen since early 2025 and mission travel reduced to a strict minimum. As for the potential relocation of staff, he confirmed that the offers received were currently under review.

209. It was important to distinguish between the short-term challenge of cash flow management and the more structural issue of revenue shortfall. The situation concerning the receipt of contributions remained tense but was expected to ease by early 2026. He categorically rejected rumours that salaries would not be paid in January. As for the revenue shortfall, the Office had already drawn on the Working Capital Fund and other reserves to compensate for gaps in the biennium 2024–25. It was a matter of prudential fiscal management to assume a shortfall of up to 20 per cent in 2026–27, with further difficulties anticipated in 2028–29.

210. Although not fully reflected in the document, given that the reform processes were advancing in parallel, the Office had been engaging with colleagues in New York on the UN80 Initiative, including on plans to establish joint knowledge hubs to leverage the expertise of the specialized agencies and efforts to reform the resident coordinator system. Work was under way to ensure that the social partners could tap into those resources.

211. Scenario 2 should be viewed as a starting point rather than a definitive plan and other reform measures should also be considered. He was closely following the UN discussions on salaries and benefits, including home leave and education grants. He gave his assurances that the Office would continue to engage with the staff and the Staff Union throughout the reform's implementation, especially in relation to job cuts and relocations. Every effort would be made to ensure that the process was conducted with transparency and fairness.

212. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group stood ready to address constructively the challenges facing the ILO and to support the Director-General and the Office in their efforts to safeguard the ILO's relevance and ensure its effective functioning amid serious budgetary constraints. Decisions on the reform must be guided by the ILO's mandate as defined in the ILO Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia and ultimately be in the best interests of the ILO. In times of looming crisis, it was essential to have a clear and robust mid- and long-term vision that was supported by both the constituents and the staff. Given the persistent uncertainties, the most prudent approach was to reduce spending in the short term where possible, without compromising the ILO's core mandate or functioning, avoiding any decisions that could have long-term consequences, and to focus on setting priorities and preparing for a possible worst-case scenario, as outlined in scenario 2. However, the proposals lacked clarity and failed to present alternative options for reducing staff costs. Under no circumstances should cost-cutting measures result in a freeze of activities. Ensuring business continuity remained paramount.

213. She reiterated her group's opposition to the proposed organizational chart, warning that a major overhaul of senior management would create an unbalanced hierarchy and place excessive power over key portfolios in the hands of an incoming Deputy Director-General, without adequate checks and balances. Moreover, the rationale for restructuring the Office midway through the Director-General's term remained unclear, particularly in terms of how it would enhance efficiency or effectiveness. Introducing a new position of "Assistant Director-General for the Regions and Director of the Office of the Director-General" would not allow for the necessary balance and countervailing power. Such changes would significantly affect the Organization's functioning and required the Governing Body's approval.

214. Moreover, the long-standing practice of allowing the largest single contributing country to nominate a Deputy Director-General should be considered as a privilege rather than a right. As a country with arrears dating back to 2024 – and unlikely to settle them in the foreseeable future – could not reasonably put forward a nominee, and given that the usual tripartite procedures for such nominations had not been followed in that country, it would be prudent to retain the current structure of policy portfolios and to defer the appointment of a new Deputy Director-General at least until the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body, when the financial situation should be clearer.

215. She questioned the rationale behind the proposals to consolidate seven policy departments into four and to merge or downgrade other departments, noting that the potential savings were negligeable. The proposals disproportionately targeted policy departments, while other, more staff-heavy, departments remained unaffected. Some departments – especially those heavily reliant on development aid – were already severely understaffed. The Office should provide clearer information on those matters and explore options such as upskilling or reskilling staff to redeploy them to areas where their expertise was most needed.

216. She cautioned against the use of the review process to redefine or qualify the ILO's mandate. In particular, she stressed the need to preserve the ILO's important work on the social and solidarity economy, given that cooperatives were key drivers of employment, social protection and innovation.

217. Recognizing that a sectoral approach remained one of the foundational pillars of the ILO, she urged the Director-General to preserve the status of the Sectoral Policies Department, which reflected the large number of sectoral standards and also its impact as a pole for social dialogue between different industries and employers' and workers' organizations, and which played an important role in fostering cross-sectoral collaboration. The Office could explore options to transform the department into an industrial policies hub or an independent bureau reporting directly to the Director-General. It should convene an extraordinary meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies in January 2026 to conduct a comprehensive review of the department's role and mandate, with a view to presenting a strategic vision to the Governing Body at its March 2026 session.

218. The Workers' group had serious doubts about the validity of the proposals to relocate specific teams or groups of staff to locations purported to offer financial and strategic advantages. Such moves risked fragmenting work and undermining access to and communication with the constituents. A more thorough assessment was needed to determine which relocations, if any, could be implemented without detrimental effects. Decisions on the relocation or upgrading of offices should never be based solely on financial incentives offered by potential host countries. The tripartite constituents in the affected regions must be consulted and a thorough analysis of the advantages and disadvantages should be conducted before any decisions were taken. Particular attention should be paid to the country's record and commitments regarding the fundamental principles and rights at work. In that regard, she voiced strong concerns about the proposal to move the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States to Doha.

219. Full transparency was needed on the financial data underpinning decision-making, particularly in relation to potential savings. Any adjustments to the programme must be accompanied by clear explanations of how the revised approach deviated from the agreed programme, with the Governing Body having the final say. The Workers' group had serious concerns about proposals that entailed major overhauls but yielded minimal real savings, especially when many of those measures required significant upfront investments.

220. Expressing concern about the potential impacts of staffing changes on the gender, age and regional balance of the staff, she recalled that the Office must ensure an inclusive approach with a gender perspective. It must also lead by example by ensuring that any fundamental changes were developed and implemented through genuine social dialogue. Excluding staff from the process could undermine support for the proposed measures. She therefore urged the Director-General and the Office to engage with staff and the Staff Union in a more inclusive and constructive manner, and to give serious consideration to the Staff Union's proposal to negotiate a workforce adjustment agreement.

221. Her group acknowledged that the discussions should focus on the measures proposed under scenario 2 and agreed on the need for a dedicated team to refine and oversee the process. She requested further information on the task team and change management team mentioned in paragraph 83 of the document, in particular their composition, strongly recommending the establishment of a solid team with institutional knowledge drawn from across the Organization to develop a plan setting out a long-term vision and strategy. That plan should fully respect social dialogue obligations and be presented to the Governing Body for discussion and decision, as appropriate, in March 2026. She reaffirmed her group's readiness to contribute to that process.

222. **The Employer spokesperson** said that not only was the reform necessary to address the financial crisis; it represented an opportunity to make the ILO a more balanced, impartial, effective and relevant organization that served all its constituents on equal footing. It had to deliver real results, regardless of the financial scenario.

223. He reiterated his group's concern that the Office did not sufficiently take into account the needs and realities of enterprises, thereby limiting the Organization's impact, and called for an ambitious reform that ensured genuine balance and impartiality across all areas of the ILO's work. Such a reform would require a cultural shift and strengthened recruitment and promotion procedures to guarantee that professionals with business organization expertise were represented at senior levels and in policymaking roles, taking into account the need for gender and regional diversity. He urged the Office to embed a culture of tripartism throughout all departments and field offices and to introduce regular training and orientation programmes to promote objectivity and evidence-based policymaking.

224. Noting that one of the ILO's strengths was institutional capacity-building, he said that reform efforts, funding and development cooperation should be focused on helping countries to build strong national institutions capable of implementing the fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards. Setting and supervising standards was meaningless if countries lacked the institutional capacity or resources to put them into practice. In that context, he underscored the need to ensure the effective implementation of recommendations issued by the supervisory mechanisms, including Commissions of Inquiry. The recent decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry on the ongoing complaint against Nicaragua highlighted the importance of ensuring that the Office had the financial means, capacity and political space to support, monitor and promote compliance. His group called for dedicated financing for that Commission of Inquiry.

225. Strengthening the capacity of independent and representative employers' and workers' organizations was essential for sustaining tripartism and effective social dialogue, especially at a time when the autonomy of those organizations was increasingly under attack in many countries. To meet growing demands for support, both ACT/EMP) and ACTRAV required adequate staffing and resources. ACT/EMP, which was currently operating with only half the staff and budget of ACTRAV, could not sustain additional cuts. One third of its field positions were already vacant or soon to be so and the Office should urgently fill those positions to ensure continued support for employers' organizations across numerous countries.

226. He emphasized the need to reposition the ILO from being perceived solely as a supervisory entity to becoming a trusted partner for progress, providing technical support on employment and social issues. A proactive communication strategy could help to reinforce that role. In that regard, the Office should focus on better understanding the realities faced by Members, on directing technical support to where it was most needed, and on supporting national efforts to address the root causes of problems, particularly weak institutional capacity. Development cooperation should strengthen Decent Work Country Programmes and build the institutional capacity of national institutions, including employers' and workers' organizations.

227. The ILO should concentrate its limited resources on its core mandate of decent work and on high-impact priorities: positioning the ILO as a global leader on employability and skills in the digital era; implementing Recommendation No. 204, and the related Conference resolutions on that subject; promoting productivity growth and an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises; and advancing wage policies, including living wages, through the 2024 tripartite agreement on that subject and the 2025 ILO Programme on Living Wages. The upcoming wage data hub would reinforce the ILO's role as an authoritative global leader on wages. Those flagship priorities should guide resource allocation, be integrated into the results framework and be tracked through clear, outcome-based indicators at the national and enterprise levels.

228. The International Labour Conference and the Governing Body should be streamlined to ensure that they remained fit for purpose. Key measures included: limiting standard-setting to one item per year; reducing the number of technical committees to three – one on standards, one on the application of standards and one for general or recurrent discussions; improving the working methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards to avoid politicization and an excessive number of country cases; and adopting virtual or hybrid formats for non-urgent Governing Body items to cut costs and increase participation. Those measures would make ILO meetings leaner, more cost-effective and more strategically aligned, while preserving tripartism.

229. The Employers had concerns about the proposals to relocate significant numbers of policymaking staff away from headquarters, warning that such a move could fragment institutional memory, weaken policy dialogue and dilute expertise, ultimately undermining the ILO's role as a global policy leader. Policy development functions must remain at headquarters, to ensure coherence and strategic alignment, while functions focused on implementation – such as development cooperation and capacity-building – should be strengthened in the field to improve delivery and impact.

230. His group called for a drastic reduction in the number of technical and sectoral meetings, many of which had become costly, repetitive and disconnected from constituents' needs, without delivering any sustainable impact. The resources saved through such rationalization could then be redirected to strengthening field operations.

231. Emphasizing the need to eliminate duplication both within the UN system and within the Office, he said that his group supported the proposed merger of departments – specifically the Sectoral Policies Department and the Sustainable Enterprises, Productivity and Just Transition Department – and endorsed the proposed organizational chart. As it was unclear whether the current action programmes had effectively reduced duplication, his group called for an urgent evaluation of those programmes.

232. The ILO was undergoing the most far-reaching reforms in decades, which demanded a proper change management strategy. Further details should be provided by the Office in that regard. Any such strategy should define roles and responsibilities and should have a strong leadership.

233. The ILO was at a critical juncture, which called for deep and transformative change. The Governing Body should demonstrate leadership and vision in driving the transition, rather than try to preserve outdated structures and work streams that put the future of the Organization in jeopardy.

234. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Australia said that the serious financial challenges currently facing the ILO were a clarion call for action by the constituents to consider how the Organization could continue to deliver on its mandate in a changing multilateral environment. She expressed her group's appreciation to the Office for its preparatory work, for having organized consultations ahead of the session and for having facilitated the discussion of the item in a Committee of the Whole format. The Government group recognized the contributions of the Staff Union to the discussion and encouraged the Office to prioritize substantive consultations with the staff to ensure their well-being and engagement in the process.

235. She acknowledged the two scenarios proposed in the document and emphasized that the way forward had to be evidence-based, supported by rigorous and transparent analysis, and underpinned by strong governance and tripartite consultation. While scenario 2 included options for the abolition of posts, no details were provided regarding timing, affected positions and the impact on the ILO's programme of work. The group would welcome additional information on the composition of the task team for the reform and requested regular updates and robust proposals for the Governing Body's consideration in March 2026. The Government group stood ready to engage constructively in the process and to support reforms that genuinely strengthened the Organization's capacity to deliver on its vital mandate.

236. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger expressed her group's support to the Director-General for his leadership and inclusive approach in managing the reform process and reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism and to upholding the ILO's mandate. The Africa group remained open to a frank and constructive dialogue with all stakeholders on a reform that should safeguard the ILO's objectives and reflect Africa's priorities, as outlined in the Abidjan Declaration, while balancing limited resources and ambitious goals.

237. The Africa group welcomed the proposals to strengthen the ILO's effectiveness and efficiency, especially the proposal to deploy technical experts to the regions, which aligned with the group's long-standing request to increase staff in the field for greater impact. Field offices were key to the delivery of technical assistance. However, it seemed that, under scenario 2, the recruitment of additional specialists would not be possible. Africa had expressed a need for 20 specialists in areas such as skills development, digitalization, social dialogue, safety and health at work and social protection. She asked how the Director-General planned to meet that need and urged him to work closely with the ILO Regional Office for Africa when deciding which experts to deploy. She noted the importance of coordination between the field offices and headquarters. Capacity-building, training and technical assistance and advice were crucial for the implementation of international labour standards and policies and should reflect the constituents' needs and be provided in agreement with governments. Reiterating the importance of maintaining technical assistance, capacity-building and support for employment policies, she said that the task team should adopt a balanced approach when prioritizing activities for the next biennium and take into account both the ILO's normative mandate and its operational role.

238. The Africa group welcomed the proposed review of the functions of the regional offices, country offices and Decent Work Technical Support Teams. While it welcomed the proposal to appoint national coordinators where there was significant demand for ILO services, consideration should also be given to appointing them in countries with low demand, as doing so might increase interest in the ILO's work. The group also supported the proposal to free up office space at headquarters by moving functions and departments to the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre) and to other cities. However, it was concerned about the potential impact of that measure on strategic dialogue between the permanent missions in Geneva and the political departments that were affected, even if the leadership teams would stay in Geneva.

239. Referring to the proposals to streamline sectoral meetings, she said that holding meetings outside of Geneva could hinder participation and holding them in a fully virtual format could pose technical challenges and reduce the quality of the discussions. The group was not in favour of interpretation provided entirely by AI because it would not ensure high-quality discussions.

240. She urged all Member States to pay their contributions in full and on time to enable the Organization to continue its work. Member States that were able to do so were encouraged to make additional contributions. Absolute priority should be given to maintaining the ILO's activities, particularly technical assistance, while ensuring the availability of qualified staff. She expressed her group's solidarity with the staff affected by the reforms and welcomed the Office's ongoing dialogue with staff and with the Staff Union. She encouraged the Director-General to continue that approach. The Director-General should ensure geographical balance among the staff, in particular by ensuring adequate representation of Africans in senior and mid-level positions. Regarding the proposed organizational chart, the group was of the view that creating a new Assistant Director-General for the regions position would add an unnecessary administrative layer. It would prefer to maintain the current system where the regional directors reported directly to the Director-General. The group called for credible and sustainable reforms that addressed current and future needs.

241. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh noted that the Director-General's proposals in both scenario 1 and 2 focused on cost-cutting; however, sustainable finance mechanisms needed to be established both for regular budget contributions and development cooperation, and the Office must intensify its efforts to secure the necessary funds. The review offered an opportunity to ensure the future resilience of the ILO but should not in any way undermine the four pillars of decent work. The group supported reforms that were evidence-based, transparent, guided by a cost–benefit analysis and subject to full consultations.

242. Country offices should be better aligned with national realities and priorities. In developing countries, employment creation, skills development and support for enterprises should be prioritized. Climate-induced vulnerabilities in relation to employment should be addressed in relevant countries, as should the unique employment landscape of small island developing States. Streamlining the ILO's mandate should not mean withdrawing from areas particularly relevant to Asia and the Pacific, such as ensuring fair migration for migrant workers, skills development, support for MSMEs, social protection schemes and continued efforts for global social justice.

243. The group supported decentralizing development cooperation facilities. Missions from headquarters should be replaced by the recruitment of more national experts and collaboration with governments and national social partners, with a small headquarters quality assurance unit to ensure consistency and cross-project learning and to collaborate on resource mobilization under clear protocols. The group particularly supported the proposal to delegate micro-level service delivery to local institutions, as that would develop national capacities and avoid duplication of ILO and government initiatives.

244. She urged the Office to ensure that any staff reductions did not disproportionately affect any regions, particularly those distant from headquarters. As previously discussed by the Governing Body, there should be flexibility on strict language requirements, wider circulation of vacancies and skills mapping exercises to ensure representation of less-represented nationalities. The Office's commitment to ensuring that any staffing reductions did not disproportionately affect women or younger staff was encouraging.

245. A fair and transparent decision-making framework for the reprioritization exercise would be critical to guide the Governing Body's discussions and assist implementation. She requested information on what principles would be used to determine the areas to be consolidated, adjusted or discontinued; how constituents and ILO staff would be consulted; and what mechanisms would be in place to review decisions and inform the Governing Body of the outcomes. She asked how a sharp decline in income under scenario 2 would be handled without hampering ILO interventions under its core mandate, and sought more innovative ideas on financing beyond merely cutting costs. ASPAG would welcome constructive proposals from other regional groups, the social partners and the Office.

246. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Paraguay noted the need for the Governing Body to have as much information as possible to make informed decisions that reflected regional priorities and were fully aligned with the ILO's mandate. She asked whether there was a contingency plan for the first quarter of 2026 pending payment of contributions, and a risk mitigation plan in case the proposed measures did not achieve the expected savings. She requested more information on how the restructuring, in particular the concentration of responsibility for coordinating strategic areas, would improve efficiency, effectiveness and results. She proposed a thorough examination of the direct and indirect costs involved in relocating staff from Geneva to Turin to determine whether that was the most efficient option. The proposed measures for reduction of non-staff costs and operational streamlining seemed reasonable, but she asked whether there was scope to renegotiate contracts with major suppliers or similar measures.

247. On the decentralization of development cooperation projects, a detailed timeline was needed to ensure that it did not coincide with critical phases in projects, and contingency measures should be provided for in the event of delays or logistical problems.

248. The global service centre might be beneficial but would have both an operational and a human impact. She asked how human resources processes such as conflict resolution would be managed. Transitions due to agreed terminations must be managed appropriately, with handovers before staff separated from the Office. Administrative costs in replacing or training staff must be contemplated.

249. She requested more information on the reprioritization exercise required under scenario 2 – which must be undertaken in consultation with all Member States – and on how the objectives could be achieved if it was not possible to relocate staff or allocate additional resources for technical specialists. She also asked how development cooperation projects would be affected under scenario 2 and how the Office intended to mitigate the potential impact on programme implementation and results. Any reductions in staffing should be subject to a decent, transparent process, with staff fully informed in good time. Lastly, the preparatory phase for the reform must adhere to the principles of transparency, accountability and long-term vision, and have a well-defined plan of work.

250. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Spain expressed his group's firm support for the ILO to implement ambitious structural reforms and programme realignments, while upholding the Organization's core mandate and comparative advantage. IMEC supported the prompt launch of the reform process, which must be evidence-based, transparent, meaningful and inclusive of constituents' and staff's views. He welcomed the establishment of a task team for the reprioritization of work and asked about its composition and methodology. He also welcomed the intention to reinforce results-based management, and asked how monitoring and evaluation systems would be adjusted to assess the implementation of reforms.

251. He welcomed the proposed streamlining of the management structure and consolidation of functions, and urged the Director-General to ensure that core staff with the necessary policy capacity, expertise and institutional memory were retained, and to provide information on which fields would be strengthened and how decisions on priorities were taken. Any decisions regarding the relocation of functions, departments or offices must be transparent, meaningful, consistent with the ILO's core mandate and based on sufficiently detailed and comprehensive cost–benefit analyses, considering financial and non-financial factors and the overall impact on the Office's ability to deliver for its constituents. The Office should prioritize reducing non-staff costs and optimizing administrative processes, including through the establishment of an effective global service centre, as that offered opportunities for more substantial cost reductions.

252. He requested more details on the timeline that would activate scenario 2, on the role of the Governing Body in approving it and its implementation, and on which measures required approval from the Governing Body. To meet the zero-nominal-growth objective for 2026–27, key cost-cutting decisions must be finalized at the current session of the Governing Body. The Organization should always be prepared to adjust to fluctuations in payment of contributions. His group supported pursuing the reforms in a phased and flexible approach. However, IMEC would not support any proposals for increased assessed contributions or exceptional voluntary contributions from Member States to offset arrears. Options for enhanced resource mobilization from non-traditional funding sources for development cooperation were welcomed, but the Office should allocate sufficient resources from the regular budget to ensure the delivery of its core mandate.

253. Staff well-being and engagement in the process were critical, and he reiterated the importance of continued, meaningful consultations with the Staff Union before any decisions affecting staff were taken. The group supported a constructive, transparent dialogue throughout the review, and urged the Office to continue providing regular updates to ensure full transparency.

254. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with his statement. He emphasized that the reform process had to be transparent, inclusive and meaningful and be faithful to the ILO's values, taking a human-centred approach. He encouraged the Director-General to continue consulting the Staff Union. He strongly supported measures that made the ILO more effective and efficient, would lead to greater impact in the field, and were fully aligned with the UN80 work streams to seek efficiencies across UN agencies.

255. He welcomed the establishment of a task team on reprioritization, which should proceed swiftly, consult with other UN agencies and present concrete proposals for consultation and decision as early as possible. He requested information on the task team's composition, mandate and timeline of work, the approach to reprioritization and how it would be aligned with the UN80 reform.

256. Standard-setting and a strong and effective supervisory system were an essential pillar for the delivery of the core ILO mandate. It was deeply concerning that aspects of the supervisory work were effectively being deprioritized without consultations with constituents, such as the Commission of Inquiry for Nicaragua, which had not yet started its work due to cost containment measures. He called for that situation to be rectified promptly.

257. Due to the serious financial situation, the Governing Body needed to agree on measures that the Office could implement as soon as possible while the reprioritization exercise was being conducted. They might include non-staff savings, relocation of teams and functions and, where necessary, targeted staff adjustments while retaining valuable expertise; the group supported the Director-General in implementing the agreed measures he considered appropriate. Reducing the disproportionate share of administration costs should be prioritized. If savings were required in policy areas, they should primarily target topics lacking relevance to normative and field work. Programming should be optimized, with outcomes more strongly influenced by needs in the field.

258. He supported relocations of teams or functions where they reinforced the core mandate and generated lasting savings, with due consideration to host countries' track record on the fundamental principles and rights at work. He encouraged savings on staff benefits and non-staff costs, including reducing travel expenses, and welcomed the proposed reduction of management posts. It was important to ensure that portfolios were balanced, with adequate checks, and that the ILO's core mandate could be effectively and consistently upheld at every management level. In light of the autonomy of the International Training Centre and its status under its Statute, he sought clarification on its placement under the Corporate Services Cluster in the proposed organizational chart.

259. He called on all Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, and noted that, in addition, the EU and its Member States consistently provided around half of all voluntary contributions, and would provide more than two thirds in 2025. He encouraged enhanced resource mobilization from non-traditional sources and stronger results-based management across the ILO, and thanked Switzerland for all the support it was providing to the ILO in the exceptional circumstances.

260. **Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam stated that the Governing Body must ensure that the reform measures would not compromise the ILO's delivery of its core mandate. However, standard-setting must be accompanied by an enabling environment allowing the standards to be effectively implemented by all constituents. Therefore, Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), along with other forms of ILO technical assistance, should be prioritized in the ILO's financial contingency planning. DWCPs were the primary tripartite-agreed framework for achieving tangible results in the region and were vital for advancing labour standards, productive employment, social protection and social dialogue in a rapidly evolving economic and geopolitical landscape. He therefore called on the Office to ensure that measures under both scenarios would protect and prioritize the financial and technical resources allocated to DWCPs, including by ring-fencing resources for core technical assistance and capacity-building activities in the region, and aligning resource allocation with the strategic outcomes and outputs of the DWCPs, ensuring that resources were driven by mandated priorities rather than purely by organizational restructuring.

261. The ILO's strength lay in its people, its tripartism and its normative authority. The reform must be undertaken wisely, ensuring that the Organization emerged genuinely more effective, not diminished. The group supported measures that would improve efficiency and financial health, provided that they were part of a human-centred and socially just implementation process, with fair and supportive transition pathways for staff affected by proposed retrenchments and relocations.

262. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Tunisia welcomed the proposal to establish a task team to identify areas of work that should be reprioritized and a change management team. While the ILO's normative role was fundamental to laying the foundations for decent work, the Organization also played a critical role in capacity-building, technical assistance, training programmes and the promotion of economic and social development, where it supported governments, employers and workers in implementing standards and promoting comprehensive and sustainable policies. That practical work was a key lever for achieving social justice, in translating ILO principles into concrete action. While not a humanitarian organization, the ILO also made an essential contribution to rebuilding livelihoods, creating decent work and implementing sustainable development policies in crisis-affected areas.

263. He welcomed the initiative to strengthen the ILO's teams in regional and country offices by transferring experts and appointing national coordinators in order to bring services closer to beneficiaries, and stressed the importance of ensuring geographical balance and more equitable representation. He also emphasized the importance of multilingualism and expressed reservations about relying exclusively on AI for translation, as accuracy was a key consideration.

264. The group supported the initial response to the current situation, while emphasizing the need to ensure that the proposed reforms did not adversely affect work in the field and technical assistance to the tripartite constituents, and to make every effort to mitigate the impact of the measures.

265. **Speaking on behalf of the countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC)**, a Government representative of Oman agreed with the general strategic approach to make the Organization more streamlined and responsive. However, the group could not support scenario 2, as job cuts should be a last resort, and preferred to focus on scenario 1. He supported streamlining management, but sought details on the precise roles of the new structure, in particular how it would ensure that none of the four pillars of decent work or important areas such as labour migration and sectoral policies were marginalized, and how the new functions, particularly in the proposed global service centre or in the External and Corporate Relations Cluster, would avoid duplication or overlap with the mandates of other UN agencies in the context of the UN80 reform.

266. He supported strengthening the ILO's field presence by transferring 72 technical specialists, but cautioned that that must not lead to fragmentation within headquarters. Reforms must not affect the standard-setting activity or the supervisory mandate of the Organization. There must also be effective interaction between headquarters and the regions so that tasks, results and outputs were integrated. With regard to technology, he supported the use of AI to enhance productivity, but emphasized that it should be a tool to enhance staff members' efficiency and not to replace them.

267. The reforms, while necessary, addressed the symptoms rather than the root cause of the liquidity crisis. He urged all Member States to meet their financial obligations in full and without delay. Furthermore, the restructuring must also be sustainable and not rely excessively on volatile extrabudgetary resources. The group supported a balanced reform to achieve financial equilibrium, protect the Organization's mandate and promote social dialogue.

268. **Speaking on behalf of a group of Central Asian countries** [4] **and Azerbaijan**, a Government representative of Uzbekistan agreed that stronger coordination across the UN system was needed, and expressed full support for the proposed measures to reform the ILO, in particular those aimed at improving governance and accountability, streamlining procedures, strengthening the field presence and enhancing results-based management and efficiency. Reforms must also preserve the ILO's unique tripartite structure and normative mandate.

269. The ILO's field presence and technical cooperation were vital for advancing decent work, social dialogue and just transitions. Efficiency gains achieved through reforms should therefore be reinvested into strengthening field capacities and expanding technical expertise closer to constituents. The ILO should emerge even stronger, more responsive to constituents' needs and increasingly demand-driven and impactful in its actions. He supported maintaining the ILO's headquarters in Geneva, which was a crucial hub for effective coordination, close dialogue among Member States and social partners, and strong engagement within the broader multilateral system.

270. **Speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries**, [5] a Government representative of Sweden expressed support for a reform that strengthened the ILO's ability to deliver on its core mandate while safeguarding its values, and for the efforts to maximize delivery of results and to reduce administrative burden and costs. Such processes were difficult for both staff and management, and staff adjustments were sometimes necessary as a last resort. The ILO must lead by example and maintain meaningful consultations with the Staff Union, ensure that all measures complied with established agreements, and act transparently and with the well-being of the staff in mind.

271. The Office should consider reducing excessive reporting and cumbersome internal procedures and reallocate the relevant resources to core activities, taking into account best practices across the UN system when considering administrative processes, relocations and long-term efficiency gains. It was crucial for the reform to continue to be conducted with active engagement with ILO constituents. Reform initiatives must focus on reducing administrative burden and costs while safeguarding normative work and technical programme support. The ILO must be able to uphold its core mandate with impartiality and neutrality at every management level.

272. The ILO should consider all possible solutions to achieve savings, including measures proposed within the UN secretariat and the wider UN family, which may involve a reduction of staff benefits. He urged the Director-General to immediately begin the necessary process of reducing costs by 20 per cent. ILO management should be proactive on the streamlining of the Organization and present concrete proposals, including on reprioritization.

273. **Speaking on behalf of a group of Pacific Island countries**, [6] a Government representative of Kiribati applauded the Director-General's efforts to reform the ILO to avoid the worst-case

[4] Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

[5] Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

[6] Australia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, the Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu.

scenario, and urged him to ensure that the process was fully transparent and inclusive of all Member States. The ILO's good work in the Pacific Islands must not be left behind in favour of other regions offering better economies of scale. Resource prioritization and restructuring must maintain fair geographical representation in ILO regional and country offices. Any reform of the ILO must reinforce the inclusion and empowerment of governments and social partners from the Pacific, from small island developing States and from least developed countries. Pacific leaders continued to emphasize the importance of labour, including sustainable labour mobility, for socio-economic well-being and they wanted to be part of the solution.

274. She requested details on what the cost–benefit analysis would entail for the Pacific region. She welcomed the proposed creation of national coordinators under scenario 1, which would be a pivotal opportunity for Pacific Islands, but asked whether and how that would impact the existing national coordinators. If scenario 2 was applied and appointments of national coordinators and regional technical specialists in the regions were cancelled, it would be crucial to ensure stronger technical capacity in the regions and strategic alignment with headquarters; such positions would help establish an integrated ILO approach linking Geneva, Bangkok and Suva. She encouraged the Director-General to consider including a focus on Pacific Islands in the first cohort of national coordinators, as the Pacific country office in Suva currently served a large number of Member States in the region.

275. **A Government representative of Pakistan** reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the Director-General's mandate to steer the reform process. He trusted that the institutional restructuring would be conducted with full transparency and in dialogue with constituents and the Staff Union. The overriding objective of the reform must be to enhance the ILO's ability to support Member States and not to reduce its presence or capacity where it was needed. He emphasized the critical importance of equitable geographical representation. The reform provided the opportunity to address long-standing imbalances in staffing, particularly at managerial and Professional levels, and to strengthen legitimacy and enhance institutional expertise. Staff constituted the backbone of the ILO and any transitions must be managed with fairness, empathy and transparency, and must not impose undue hardship. Pakistan would engage constructively in the reform, which would lead to a stronger, more efficient and more representative ILO.

276. **A Government representative of Switzerland** expressed concern regarding the financial difficulties and lack of liquidity affecting the ILO. She reiterated support for a functional, efficient, effective and sustainable ILO. Efficiency measures should be based on a rigorous cost–benefit analysis, including financial and non-financial impacts. The fragmentation of headquarters and the relocation of policy departments were contrary to the objectives of efficiency and risked generating additional costs; potential savings were limited while operational and strategic risks were considerable. As host State, Switzerland was in contact with ILO management regarding possible support under urgent measures adopted by the Government, for which strict conditions included keeping ILO headquarters and associated functions, in particular core posts and standards-related and policy departments, in Geneva. If the ILO did not meet those conditions Switzerland would be unable to suspend loan repayments for 2025 and 2026, which represented CHF2.35 million, almost US$3 million, per year. It could not support a potential move without a rigorous cost–benefit analysis. The lack of confirmed tenants for the two vacated floors constituted a loss of resources, particularly in view of Member States' contributions to building renovations. Switzerland would make the Geneva International Conference Centre available free of charge for the International Labour Conference in 2026 and was available to discuss further financial support. Synergies were encouraged with other UN agencies in Geneva, particularly in the areas of IT and finance. She called for full transparency regarding potential relocation offers received; Switzerland would prefer the Global Coalition for Social Justice to remain directly under the Assistant Director-General for External and Corporate Relations. She requested a clear timeline for decision-making and said that all staff-related decisions should be formally negotiated with the Staff Union.

277. **A Government representative of Zimbabwe** said that a balance must be struck between strategic decisions to reform the Organization, preserving its mandate and ensuring that it remained fit for purpose, and ensuring the cost-effective maximization of available resources. The ILO continued to inspire Member States through its normative and policy development mandate and its survival was of the utmost importance. A hybrid of the two proposed scenarios would be ideal for the ILO, which should reconfigure itself to have a lean configuration at headquarters supported by a well-capacitated and fully resource-filled structure. That would enable more efficiency and realignment of ILO specialist services in the regions. The ILO had been cautioned about a top-heavy structure with disproportionate impact on the ground and Zimbabwe consequently supported elements presented by the Office that would result in strengthened field capacities. Zimbabwe stood in solidarity with the Organization and urged the Director-General to take decisive action in line with the guidance of the tripartite constituents.

278. **A Government representative of Türkiye** said that the UN80 Initiative provided a critical opportunity to address inefficiencies, eliminate duplications and review the structure of the Organization as necessary. She welcomed the fact that within the UN system-wide reform efforts, the ILO had initiated its own reform process and engaged in tripartite consultations at various levels. Regarding the proposals, she said that while enhancing efficiency was a shared objective, it should not come at the cost of the ILO's normative mandate. The right balance must be struck between efficiency and capability. Prioritization efforts should be discussed thoroughly in order not to hinder any ILO core activities. Processes must be carried out in a transparent and collective manner at every stage, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. She expressed the hope that the concrete steps to be taken would pave the way to revitalizing the ILO in line with the needs of the twenty-first century. Türkiye stood ready to contribute to the process.

279. **A Government representative of Egypt** thanked the Director-General for the intensive consultations held and expressed Egypt's full support for the ILO, sharing the goal of an effective and robust Organization continuing to fulfil its mandate and pivotal role with efficiency and flexibility. It was important to remain resilient in the face of challenges. Measures to be taken must be clearly defined in terms of objectives and priorities and the reform must maintain flexibility to ensure the Organization could return to its regular activities when conditions improved. Measures should not be adopted that would hinder the ILO's work or weaken it in future. Balance must be maintained between all pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. He welcomed efforts to strengthen ILO presence in the field and noted the importance of geographical balance. As reforms progressed, fair representation must be ensured in leadership and management positions. Diversity enhanced legitimacy and the global nature of the ILO. The ILO had its own unique characteristics and its reform should be guided by its own history, structure and mandate. Reform was necessary for increased productivity and effectiveness, but should be undertaken with wisdom, balance and foresight.

280. **A Government representative of Chile** said that the ILO's foundational principle that social justice was indispensable for peace and stability remained as relevant as ever. In the face of severe financial pressures and global uncertainty, the ILO had to adapt in a responsible way without compromising its mandate, its fundamental values or its role in the multilateral system. A distinction should be made between urgent measures and long-term structural reforms and decisions should not be rushed. Financial challenges should not weaken the ILO's role in defending the fundamental principles and rights at work, promoting decent work, strengthening social dialogue and providing technical assistance and reliable data for evidence-based decisions. All decisions on the reform should be transparent, grounded in genuine social dialogue involving both the staff and the constituents, and promote institutional cohesion to preserve trust and ensure continuity. The crisis should be seen as an opportunity to reaffirm the ILO's relevance, not as a sign of weakness. The real risk lay not in budget cuts, but in the erosion of the Organization's historical role. Therefore, the priority should be to safeguard the ILO's capacity for action, its standard-setting role and its political legitimacy.

281. **A Government representative of El Salvador** thanked the Office for having taken previous guidance into account and welcomed the broad consultations aimed at ensuring that the ILO could deliver on its core mandate in a challenging multilateral context. The ILO needed to adapt without compromising its tripartite nature and its unique role in promoting decent work. In that regard, El Salvador supported measures to strengthen coherence between the ILO's normative mandate, strategic plan and programme of work, and to ensure integrated planning and results-based management. It also supported the proposal to strengthen technical capacity in the regions and expand field-based assistance, recognizing that proximity to the constituents was essential for tangible results. It also welcomed efforts to streamline administrative processes and improve efficiency.

282. Any restructuring or relocation should fully take into account the rights and well-being of the staff, including through dialogue with the Staff Union. Furthermore, resource-allocation decisions should not undermine cross-cutting issues that were critical to the ILO's mandate. All decisions should be based on transparency and accountability and reflect a long-term vision. A clear plan and careful implementation would build trust among the constituents and foster constructive dialogue.

283. El Salvador supported multilingualism as essential for effective communication and reaffirmed its commitment to engage constructively in the process. The proposed measures provided a solid basis for a more agile and modern ILO and their implementation must balance efficiency, inclusion and normative coherence.

284. **A Government representative of Namibia** emphasized the need to safeguard the ILO's core mandate and to focus on initiatives that fell within that mandate. Expressing concern about the significant shortfall of the budget, he urged the Office to ensure that all Members paid their financial contributions. He strongly supported the priority placed on enhancing technical capacity in the field, which would significantly strengthen the ILO's responsiveness and support for the constituents. Furthermore, he endorsed the proposal to introduce national coordinators as a cost-effective model for countries where a reduced ILO presence might be appropriate. He recommended the inclusion of that measure in both proposed scenarios and a review of the appointment criteria to ensure inclusivity. He acknowledged the potential job losses and stressed the importance of maintaining a balanced geographical representation in staffing. He considered that scenario 2, with a few modifications, was the most viable option and called for swift action during the current session of the Governing Body to prevent any negative impact on the Organization's ability to fulfil its core mandate. The focus should be on reforms that strengthened the ILO's impact and financial stability and enhanced its agility, responsiveness and resilience, while avoiding duplication.

285. **A Government representative of Portugal** said that social justice and decent work must remain a guiding light for ILO action. In a rapidly changing world, the ILO needed to become stronger, more agile and more relevant, directing its actions towards a fair, more inclusive and more sustainable world of work. The reform was a historic opportunity to position the ILO as the moral and normative reference for the world of work and to reaffirm that social justice was not an abstract concept but an essential condition for peace, prosperity and human dignity. He emphasized the need to preserve tripartism, to ensure transparent and efficient governance supported by robust social dialogue, and to strengthen the Organization's technical and standard-setting capacity. Portugal had demonstrated its commitment to the ILO and to the success of the reform by advancing the payment of its financial contribution for 2026 to late 2025. He would welcome further information on the reprioritization process and on how it would be aligned with the broader UN80 reform process.

286. **A Government representative of Algeria** said that, in view of the current financial challenges, comprehensive reforms were needed to strengthen the ILO's capacity to fulfil its mandate and meet its Members' needs. He reaffirmed Algeria's support for the efforts to improve efficiency, governance and institutional sustainability, its commitment to multilateralism and its firm belief that the ILO was the most effective organization for addressing international labour issues. He welcomed the Office's comprehensive approach, which responded to immediate needs and sought to enhance the effectiveness and resilience of the Organization in the long term, while safeguarding its core mandate. He stressed the need to prioritize the ILO's core activities and to ensure that qualified human resources were available to carry out those activities, while ensuring the fair geographical distribution of expertise and the well-being of staff. He also stressed the importance of promoting decent work and the ILO's role in providing capacity-building, technical cooperation and training to promote the implementation of international labour standards, particularly in developing countries. He welcomed the proposal to deploy additional technical expertise in the field, emphasizing the need to consider the priorities of African countries, and called for the adoption of realistic, credible and sustainable reforms that addressed current challenges and anticipated future needs.

287. **A Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** acknowledged the Organization's financial difficulties, recalling that her country had faced unlawful and unilateral coercive measures and a blockade for over a decade, which had restricted its economic capacity and hindered the timely fulfilment of certain international commitments. She stressed the need for clear and detailed information on the action plan and reprioritization process set out under scenario 2, in particular on revisions to the programme of work, and reiterated the importance of broad consultation with all Member States. Reforms must safeguard the mandate and fundamental principles of the ILO, as well as its independence and tripartite structure, and should be based on an objective impact assessment. Any reforms carried out in the context of the UN80 Initiative should not undermine the ILO's normative and policy mandates. The proposed organizational restructuring should be based on a sound technical rationale and impact assessment to avoid the excessive concentration of responsibilities. All decisions must be transparent, objective and fair, and consultations must be authentic, constructive and in good faith, to uphold the fundamental values of the ILO.

288. **A Government representative of Jordan** reaffirmed her country's commitment to safeguarding the ILO's mandate, strengthening multilateral action and engaging in frank and transparent dialogue on ways to balance limited financial resources with future requirements. The proposed reforms should not undermine the ILO's programmes and activities, especially in the area of capacity-building and technical support. She emphasized the importance of maintaining an ILO presence at the country level to facilitate direct communication and efficient programme implementation and highlighted the need to preserve multilingualism and to take a balanced approach to using modern technology. Any decisions on the reform should guarantee the continued effective implementation of work programmes and respond to the needs of Member States. She expressed her country's readiness to work with the Office to review priority areas and ensure that the Organization remained focused on serving its constituents.

289. **A Government representative of Indonesia** underscored the importance of maintaining strong checks and balances within the ILO's organizational structure and of ensuring accountability, transparency and inclusivity in decision-making. The ILO played a vital role in building institutional and national capacities. Any institutional or operational adjustments should minimize disruption to ongoing programmes, particularly at the country level, as efficiency should never come at the expense of social justice. Particular attention should be given to promoting decent work in crisis situations, including the occupied Arab territories. Without adequate technical assistance and development cooperation, international labour standards risked remaining abstract commitments rather than instruments to achieve genuine social progress. Indonesia reaffirmed its commitment to working constructively with the Office and all the constituents to ensure that institutional reforms remained Member-driven, fair and transparent, and that the process was aligned with the ILO's mandate to advance social justice and decent work for all.

290. **A Government representative of the Holy See** said that it was imperative in such turbulent times to reaffirm that all human beings had the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity and that lasting peace could be established only if it was based on social justice. Anchoring the ILO reform in those principles was vital for three reasons. First, to maintain the integrity and credibility of the wider multilateral system, given that the ILO was the only tripartite organization mandated to promote social justice and decent work. Second, to safeguard the ILO's vitality and operational effectiveness, by ensuring that the reform was driven by a shared sense of responsibility, rather than solely by financial constraints. Quoting Pope Leo XIV, he recalled that what mattered most was not the problems or their eventual solutions, but the way in which they were approached, guided by criteria of discernment and sound ethical principles. Third, the ultimate purpose of strengthening the ILO was to better serve workers, employers and communities through its guidance and programmes.

291. **A Government representative of Barbados** said that Barbados – like the other countries of the Caribbean – remained committed to constructive participation in the Organization and in the Governing Body and to safeguarding and strengthening the UN and the multilateral system. Multilateralism was essential for ensuring that the voices and priorities of all countries, including small island developing States, were heard. Barbados opposed any executive-level restructuring that would concentrate authority and reduce inclusive decision-making. Policy development must draw on the expertise and collaboration of a wide range of senior officers.

292. The ILO and the broader UN system were facing considerable challenges as a result of reduced funding, in a time of geopolitical tensions, armed conflicts, climate crises, economic fragmentation and rising nationalism. Those challenges were threatening the ILO's effectiveness and the world of work more broadly. The situation called for decisive leadership and urgent action. Scenario 2 provided a good starting point. The Office should develop and share a clear, realistic strategy, budget and structure that focused on impactful delivery. It was essential to identify priority areas and make tough decisions promptly. Delaying adjustments would only make them harder.

293. The Global Coalition for Social Justice was a timely and essential mechanism for advancing the ILO's mandate without having to expend significant resources. He commended the

Director-General's foresight in initiating that concept prior to the current fiscal challenges and noted the positive momentum achieved at the recent Second World Summit for Social Development in Doha. He encouraged the ILO to maintain a dedicated secretariat for the Coalition and stressed that all reform efforts must remain grounded in the pursuit of decent work and social justice and uphold the ILO's normative work and supervisory functions. Any budgetary or structural reforms that could affect mandate delivery or the distribution of resources must involve full and transparent engagement with the membership of the Organization and with the Governing Body. Decision-making should continue to be based on social dialogue involving governments, the social partners and staff.

294. **A Government representative of the United States** said that reform was imperative. His Government supported scenario 1 and trusted the Director-General to ensure careful sequencing, prudent flexibility, transparency and continuous engagement with constituents. He welcomed the proposed reduction in top-level management positions. The consolidation of policy departments under unified Deputy Director-General leadership was essential. Regarding the 2026 review of the priority action programmes, the Office should assess whether the priorities reflected core work and had enhanced the Organization's coherence. He welcomed the proactive incorporation of savings in anticipation of inflationary pressures, the proposed global service centre, many proposed non-staff cost-saving measures, the leveraging of new technologies, and measures to enhance impact by improving services to constituents. He supported enhancing coherence across the Organization. He sought further information regarding how the merging of flagship reports might affect available data and how technical staff needs in the regions were estimated. He suggested applying some additional cost-saving measures under scenario 2 to scenario 1. There were too few labour standards specialists in the proposed increase in field-based technical staff. Structural changes to technical assistance were needed, it should prioritize helping countries meet their normative obligations. DWCPs should focus on fundamental principles and rights at work and support compliance with ratified standards. Regular budget funding should be set aside each biennium for core work and all ILO staff should be trained in normative work. He cautioned against pursuing funding that drew the Organization away from its core mandate and was ready to lend full support in the implementation of the Director-General's proposals.

295. **A Government representative of France** associated herself with the statements made by the Government group, IMEC and the European Union, thanked the Director-General who had presented a serious situation in the shape of an unprecedented financial crisis which affected the ILO's ability to respond to the needs of its constituents, and urged those constituents not to shy away from making the difficult decisions needed to ensure that the ILO could continue to fulfil its mandate of promoting social justice without losing its core purpose and to choose courage over hesitation. Henceforth, it was for constituents to take responsibility given the severity of a situation that went beyond the ILO and was forcing many other international organizations to adopt drastic measures. The Director-General had said that scenario 2 was the only viable scenario. Consequently, France fully supported the rapid implementation of scenario 2, which equated to the restructuring of the ILO. It welcomed the necessary prioritization and deprioritization exercise under way, which must continue, and wished to discuss it as soon as possible, as the outcome of that exercise would provide a clear strategic vision of the path forward. The conclusions of the exercise would help to determine the best way to organize the ILO's work, both regarding structure and staffing and regarding the division of functions between headquarters and the field. The ILO must align its approach with the UN80 Initiative to achieve greater synergies among UN agencies in the field. The ILO was at a crossroads. The reform was difficult, painful but essential. Success depended on four requirements being satisfied: strategic vision, fairness, transparency and consultation with all stakeholders. France would fully support the Director-General's actions in this undertaking.

296. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that, owing to the sharp reduction in revenues, it must reiterate its call for the timely payment of assessed contributions by all Member States, in particular those with the largest outstanding arrears. While those payments remained pending, the Governing Body must focus on providing guidance to the Director-General regarding measures to address the impending liquidity crisis, scenario 2, which might become necessary prior to the following Governing Body session. Transitional measures should be prioritized, as current constraints might prove temporary. The implementation of the revised Office structure, expected to generate savings of approximately US$4 million in two years, should be postponed until a clearer picture of the Organizations' financial situation emerged. Priority areas should be defined ahead of the restructuring exercise. The reduction in allocations for technical cooperation should not follow a linear approach but rather seek to minimize the impact on South–South and triangular cooperation, vital to addressing the needs of developing countries. Strengthening technical capacity in the regions and advancing the decentralization of cooperation projects must remain central objectives. Brazil expressed its interest in hosting a reinforced ILO presence and stood ready to discuss concrete forms of support. Concerning non-staff cost reductions, he noted that ILO publications and data served as key references for national legislation and public policies; their accuracy and credibility must not be compromised by automation. He expressed regret that it might be necessary to eliminate a significant number of core positions and sought clarification regarding whether alternative temporary arrangements, such as revision of the benefits package, had been considered. Any relocation or separation of staff must be conducted in accordance with regulations and through constructive dialogue with the Staff Union. Regarding adjustments to the programme of work, none of the five fundamental principles could be regarded as less important. Administrative and support functions should not prevail over core normative and policy areas. Brazil was committed to supporting the Director-General's efforts to preserve the Organization's capacity to deliver on its historic mandate.

297. **A Government representative of Hungary** said that it appreciated the various opportunities through informal consultations to follow closely the process by which the ILO was striving to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency despite challenging circumstances. She encouraged the ILO to remain actively engaged in the broader UN80 Initiative. It was essential to ensure synergies across specialized agencies. To help mitigate the current difficulties, Hungary deemed it important to begin implementing the proposed reforms without unnecessary delay while ensuring that ILO priorities remained firmly rooted in its core mandate. She welcomed the establishment of the task team, which would guide the prioritization exercise in a focused and coherent manner in parallel with the reform. She also welcomed the cost-efficiency measures outlined, particularly the planned relocation of regional offices, including the ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia, and the establishment of a global service centre. Those steps would strengthen long-term effectiveness. Budapest had already demonstrated a strong and reliable track record as host city of other specialized agencies and she encouraged the ILO to build on those strengths. Hungary reiterated its trust in the Director-General and his leadership to guide the implementation of the proposed reforms and remained fully committed to supporting the ILO throughout the process.

298. **A Government representative of India** said that India aligned itself with the overarching objective of the review. A streamlined, agile and resilient ILO was crucial for advancing social justice through decent work. She particularly welcomed the emphasis on emerging developments. Integrating the transformative issues into the ILO's core work was not an option but a necessity to maintain the Organization's relevance and to ensure that it was fit for purpose to guide a human-centred future of work. Regarding the organizational model at headquarters and in the field, she expressed support for the rationalization of top management to reduce duplication and enhance strategic coherence. The process must be conducted with absolute transparency and be equitable across regions. She reaffirmed support for the ILO's unique role in the promotion and realization of fundamental principles and rights at work, which were the bedrock of social justice. The ILO should remain active in post-crisis recovery efforts. On the critical issue of financial sustainability, she noted the serious risk regarding the assessed contributions of the regular budget. A predictable and adequate budget was the lifeblood of ILO normative and technical work. Regarding the proposed significant reduction in top-level management positions, any fundamental restructuring must involve the meaningful engagement of constituents. The final structure must serve the needs of the regions and ensure that the ILO could deliver on its core mandate. Transparency throughout the process was non-negotiable. The success of the review would be measured by its ability to reinforce a more effective, representative and financially secure ILO.

299. **A Government representative of Ethiopia** welcomed the direct engagement of the Director-General with Member States and his inclusive approach. The ILO was facing a temporary but serious financial challenge. While securing financial resources was essential, the constraints should not be seen solely as a motive for cost-cutting but rather an opportunity to assess how to deliver the ILO mandate more effectively and to strengthen its financial base. The reform must continue to reaffirm and protect the ILO's core mandate, ensuring that financial pressures did not overshadow the Organization's essential mission. He welcomed the emphasis on decentralization and strengthening field capacity. Stronger ILO presence in the regions, supported by adequate technical expertise, would ensure more responsive and impactful support to national priorities. The proposed increase in regional specialists should be implemented equitably across all regions. He noted the proposed organizational restructuring and the rationale for improving efficiency. The reform process should promote geographic balance and fair representation of all regions, particularly at senior and mid-management levels. The inclusion of African professionals in leadership positions was essential to reflect the universality of ILO membership. The reform measures should not compromise the ILO's ability to fulfil its mandate or diminish its capacity to address the needs of its Member States, particularly developing countries. The Abidjan Declaration remained an essential framework for shaping regional priorities and should continue to inform the direction of the reform process. It was important to conduct evaluations of the reform's impact to ensure that efforts to enhance efficiency were not at the expense of the ILO core mandate. He expressed solidarity with ILO staff affected by the process and reaffirmed his commitment to a transparent, inclusive and balanced reform process that strengthened the ILO's mandate.

300. **A Government representative of Spain** said that she welcomed the tripartite consultations held and supported the essential role played by the ILO in the international system of peace, security, human rights and development. The ILO was facing a critical situation requiring reforms to ensure that mandates were fulfilled more effectively and efficiently in the framework of the UN80 Initiative. Constituents must work together to prevent the resource crisis from weakening the ILO's core mandate. The Office should continue acting promptly and proactively, taking necessary measures based on a credible cost–benefit assessment and reducing expenses to match the expected decline in income. She expressed trust that the Office would distribute the burden fairly so as not to compromise valuable human capital; dialogue with staff must be part of the solution. Prioritization and structure must go hand in hand; the organizational structure should reflect operational and financial priorities, not the other way round. She welcomed the establishment of a prioritization working group and encouraged it to work inclusively and with agility. Spain supported maintaining an ILO presence in regions and countries most in need. Units not essential to the ILO mandate should be relocated through a transparent decision-making process. Functions relating to the ILO's core mandate must remain centralized together to preserve policy coherence. The decision taken by the Governing Body, based on the scenario presented, which she supported, and the exercise under way, must not compromise the mandate or the fundamental principles enshrined in the ILO Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia. The response must not undermine the fight for decent work and social justice. The Director-General, the ILO and the Governing Body could count on Spain's full support.

301. **A Government representative of Nepal** said that he appreciated the ongoing efforts to promote effective labour governance and thanked the Director-General for his initiative to consult constituents. Multilateralism was facing challenges and transitioning through a difficult phase marked by reduced funding and a liquidity crisis. The moment called for stronger collaboration and partnership among stakeholders to ensure that the ILO could deliver on its core mandate. As co-lead of the UN80 specialized agencies cluster, the ILO must remain committed to governance reform, promoting transparency, enhancing accountability and ensuring a better world of work for all. He expressed appreciation for the measures already taken by the ILO, including the adoption of digital technology, zero growth budgeting, reprioritization and the optimization of resource utilization. Scenario 2 was the viable option. He would welcome further updates on the review process and said that Nepal stood ready to work together with all stakeholders in the ILO review process.

302. **A Government representative of Mexico** stressed that any reform must undergo a transparent and inclusive consultation process, be guided by constituents' needs and preserve the Office's technical capacity and essential services. To increase the ILO's effectiveness and visibility, technical capacity must be strengthened, particularly in the regions and on the ground. She asked how regular and extrabudgetary resources would be used to achieve the outcomes in the strategic framework and called on the Office to prioritize accountability and implementation mechanisms for development cooperation projects, as well as a more flexible and predictable funding model.

303. Restructuring or relocations must be human-centred, protect regional and gender diversity, and be subject to prior, genuine dialogue with the Staff Union to ensure fairness and respect for labour rights. Normative coherence, technical oversight, gender equality and appropriate geographical representation must be safeguarded in any decentralization. Both scenario 1 and scenario 2 could continue to be considered and adjusted where necessary, but further information and a clear road map were needed to examine the feasibility of scenario 2. She supported the use of tools such as AI, provided they did not replace human judgement, and reaffirmed the importance of multilingualism. Before reducing sectoral, technical and expert meetings, the Office should conduct an evaluation taking into account the respective subject matters, geographical representation and full inclusion of tripartite constituents. She expressed concern over the criteria for the leadership position in which key functions were concentrated and reiterated that reforms must strengthen efficiency and institutional effectiveness while remaining faithful to the ILO's mandate and commitment to workers worldwide.

304. **A Government representative of Italy** expressed support for the Director-General's leadership and a transparent, effective, meaningful, bold and timely reform of the ILO. Consultations with all stakeholders, including staff, were needed to inform the process, but it was also crucial for decisions be taken swiftly. It was essential to safeguard the ILO's core mandate, with a focus on its normative function, and its well-balanced structure, in which experienced leaders could continue to make a valuable substantive contribution. Relocation of certain teams or functions outside Geneva was a valid and necessary cost-saving option and was consistent with steps taken or contemplated by several other UN agencies. Such a decision would be difficult, but could help avoid more drastic measures in the future and strengthen the Organization in the long term. Italy would provide its full support to safeguarding the Organization's mandate and its founding principles and values.

305. **A Government representative of Germany** expressed full trust in the Director-General and his team and strong support for the bold, forward-looking reform proposals. The clear goal was to make the ILO more effective in a challenging environment by creating a leaner, more agile Organization that could carry out its core mandate with renewed vigour. She supported the proposals to strengthen the ILO's normative mandate and field presence. Trust, transparency and inclusion of all tripartite constituents would be essential; reforms must therefore be subject to the regular decision-making processes. She reaffirmed Germany's commitment, as the fourth-largest contributor and a major donor of voluntary contributions, to supporting the ILO financially as well as ideologically to achieve a strong and effective Organization that served everyone. Good solutions might be painful but required courage, cooperation and a positive outlook. The first step was to decide jointly on measures to implement the zero-nominal-growth budget by setting priorities and managing transitions; the Office should then take immediate action. It should also propose, and consult the Governing Body on, measures to implement savings under scenario 2 to protect core functions from financial risk and ensure long-term effectiveness. The ILO was everyone's collective legacy and must be strengthened collectively.

306. **A Government representative of Malawi** reiterated the call for the ILO to strengthen its presence and technical activities in the field. The Organization needed to make hard decisions in order to survive and remain fit for purpose. A hybrid approach combining elements of scenario 1 and scenario 2 would be ideal, and he requested further proposals from the Office in that regard. He supported equitable geographical representation of all regions in decision-making positions in the Organization. He expressed solidarity with all members of staff who might be affected by the reforms, and asked the Director-General to continue to engage with the Staff Union and field staff, the social partners and Member States on the reform process.

307. **A Government representative of Canada** said that it was important for the reform to make the relevant linkages with the UN80 Initiative, particularly given the ILO's role as co-chair of the specialized agencies cluster. Reform decisions should be guided by safeguarding and enhancing delivery on the ILO's core mandate for the benefit of all constituents. Core programmes, including those related to the fundamental principles and rights at work, should be strengthened. Initiatives, programmes and activities related to the ILO's unique normative, policy and institution-building role should also be prioritized, with tripartism continuing to underpin all decision-making.

308. He supported the proposal to simplify the ILO's management structure, but it must remain balanced and representative of all constituents. Senior management must be supported by a team with strong expertise and institutional memory and that offered the necessary checks and balances. In pursuing cost-saving options, the high quality of services to ILO constituents must be upheld. The reform should adopt a human-centred approach that fully considered the impact of measures on ILO staff – who were the ILO's most important resource – and the Director-General and Senior Management Team should engage with the Staff Union fully and meaningfully.

309. He called on the Office to provide a full cost–benefit analysis of reform proposals, to ensure full transparency through regular updates and to continuously assess results achieved and highlight good practices following the implementation of the reform. It should also consider what short- and medium-term actions were most practical while preserving the core work and working within existing available resources. As to scenario 2, it would be important to consider the recommendations of the task team before key decisions were made.

310. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom** emphasized that the reform must be clear and accountable and fully uphold the ILO’s core mandate. She supported efforts to consolidate and streamline structures, which should reinforce the Organization’s standard-setting and supervisory mechanisms. Reform must also be conducted in full consultation with the Governing Body and supported by rigorous, transparent cost–benefit analyses based on accurate financial data. She welcomed the Office’s commitment to a zero-nominal-growth budget and the fact that it would not seek additional voluntary contributions from Member States. She requested that the Office provide a timeline for the activation of each proposed scenario; a decision map identifying which changes required the Governing Body’s approval; and a comprehensive business case for each major initiative, including itemized one-off and recurrent savings, break-even points and risk-adjusted scenarios, all of which underpinned by comprehensive data to enable the Governing Body to make informed decisions.

311. **A Government representative of Japan** expressed support for the Director-General’s efforts to produce a comprehensive reform plan, despite constituents’ differing priorities and views. He supported the reprioritization of programmes and activities based on the ILO’s core mandate and the streamlining of strategic planning, budgeting and reporting processes. Under scenario 1, he supported the reduction of senior management positions and the consolidation of departments at headquarters. It was important that the newly established Assistant Director-General for the regions would fully support regional directors so that they could enhance assistance to Member States. He agreed in principle with the relocation of specific teams to other locations, which should be based on a cost–benefit analysis and a concrete plan shared with constituents. He endorsed the proposed increase in specialist positions in the regions and the appointment of up to ten national coordinators, as well as a reduction in non-staff costs and streamlining of business processes. In the worst-case scenario of a significant budget reduction, the measures listed under scenario 2 would be necessary. The Office should therefore begin specific preparations based on the Governing Body’s discussion and the financial situation at the start of 2026. He looked forward to additional proposals from the Office and further consultations.

312. **A Government representative of the Republic of Korea** said that, in pursuing comprehensive reforms, it was essential to ensure that the ILO’s core functions were preserved and not compromised, including with regard to international labour standards, employment and social protection, and the promotion of a solidarity-based economy. He supported the strengthening of the ILO’s field presence, which should result in a balanced structure under which the diverse needs and circumstances of all regions were reflected in the implementation of the ILO’s mandate. The reform process must be fair and transparent, supported by consultations with all stakeholders, active information-sharing and thorough coordination. It was hoped that the restructuring would further enhance the ILO’s vital role and lead to more practical and effective protection and promotion of labour rights. Its success would depend on achieving balanced and inclusive outcomes underpinned by mutual trust among Member States, respect for the principle of tripartism and robust communication among all stakeholders.

313. **A Government representative of China** emphasized that the fundamental objective of the reform should not merely be budget cuts or organizational streamlining, but a refocusing on the ILO's core mission, and it must ensure the balanced development of all the Organization's functions. He urged the Director-General to adopt a pragmatic and human-centred approach. He supported efforts to enhance resource mobilization by improving the quality, impact and transparency of development cooperation projects. Regarding human resources, a recruitment freeze might exacerbate imbalances in geographical representation, and he urged the Director-General to permit recruitment for critical positions under exceptional circumstances, prioritizing outstanding candidates from under-represented Member States, particularly developing countries.

314. Regarding the financial arrangements, he asked whether funds were available to cover the one-time expenditure of US$34.8 million anticipated under scenario 1, and whether the basis for the expected income from leasing office space was sufficiently robust. In the event of a severe budget shortfall and the triggering of special measures under scenario 2, the Director-General should consider the latest developments under the UN80 reform, particularly the relevant General Assembly decisions, to review the measures. The definition of the core mandate must be discussed by the Governing Body to achieve the broadest possible consensus. The reform must fully consider urgent needs of developing countries in areas such as employment, skills and social security, ensuring the integrity of the ILO's functions and preventing imbalances in resource allocation. As substantial cuts to non-staff costs would directly impact the Office's capacity to deliver services to Member States, he requested a detailed assessment of the impact of all reduction measures under scenario 2 on the operations of regional and country offices and on technical support for tripartite constituents. Lastly, he urged the Office to develop more ambitious and innovative income-generating initiatives, including exploring partnerships with emerging development partners and the private sector, enhancing the efficiency of existing development cooperation funds, and ensuring genuine alignment with recipients' priorities.

315. **A Government representative of Colombia** emphasized the need for a long-term strategic vision in taking measures to ensure the proper functioning of the Organization, particularly in safeguarding its independence and normative work. He supported scenario 1, as it proposed gradual, less drastic adjustments while enabling the Organization to continue to fulfil its core mandate. It was essential that the senior management be aligned with the founding principles of the ILO; as such appointments affected constituents, they should be subject to consultations with the Officers of the Governing Body. He expressed doubts on the proposed restructuring, particularly the concentration of responsibility for the strategic policy departments under one Deputy Director-General. He welcomed the proposal to strengthen the ILO's field presence to work more closely with constituents and increase the effectiveness of technical cooperation; a detailed strategy taking account of the different realities and needs was required. The Governing Body was called on to make decisions that would support the legitimacy of, and trust in, the Organization and its efforts to achieve social justice and decent work, and ultimately result in strengthened multilateralism.

316. **A Government representative of the Congo** welcomed the proposals in the document, particularly in relation to decentralizing some posts, increasing the number of specialists in the field and strengthening technical capacity based on needs. On the basis of open dialogue and a joint commitment to the values of the ILO, essential results could be achieved to make progress towards shared human-centred objectives. It was important to have a clear, sustainable medium- and long-term vision of the top priorities to ensure the viability of the ILO in the current challenging environment and to prevent future crises. He expressed his country's profound faith in the Organization and called for solidarity among all stakeholders in reaching consensus on the proposals of the Office to ensure that the ILO could continue to fully carry out its mandate.

317. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** emphasized that, in a context of declining resources, the ILO should focus on areas of work that had universal support. The Office should closely monitor similar reform processes in other entities in the UN system with a view to achieving economies of scale in support functions; however, any proposals arising from the UN80 reform should be considered in detail by the Governing Body and not automatically implemented.

318. **Another Government representative of the Russian Federation** called on the Office to strengthen oversight and accountability mechanisms, particularly in field offices, and to take into account operational risks. In the review of Office staffing, fair geographical representation must be ensured. An independent, results-oriented ex-post evaluation of the ILO reform should be conducted to allow lessons to be learned for the future.

319. **A Government representative of Cuba** emphasized that the reform process must be inclusive, transparent and faithful to the ILO's founding principles, and warned against reducing effectiveness to mere administrative or financial metrics. The ILO's true effectiveness was in defending workers' rights, promoting social justice and ensuring no one was left behind. The reform must preserve the Organization's tripartite character and the participation of Member States, particularly from the global South. Any reorganization must maintain institutional balance between the governance organs and the Office, and avoid excessive concentration of authority. The Governing Body must be strengthened to ensure its decisions reflected the realities of the world of work and social justice. It was concerning that budget constraints could lead to staff cuts, restructuring and programme reductions, particularly in regions where the ILO played a critical role, and that austerity measures, which had historically undermined social protection in developing countries, were being introduced under the pretext of efficiency. The ILO's budget should be a tool to expand rights, not restrict them. The Organization had to be defended against any attempts to turn it into a technocracy or to undermine its participatory structure. The reform process must be underpinned by broad dialogue with the tripartite constituents and ILO staff to build a stronger, fairer and more representative Organization.

320. **A Government representative of the Philippines** expressed strong support for the Director-General's goal of making the ILO more effective, agile and financially stable while preserving its core mandate and tripartism and continuing to deliver quality services to constituents. She echoed the calls for transparent, inclusive, evidence-based reforms backed by robust consultations and for regular updates on proposed measures, including the impacts on the programme of work and staff. Reforms must not compromise staff welfare or the ILO's core mandate. She encouraged the Office to deepen and broaden consultations with all stakeholders, as genuine social dialogue was indispensable in ensuring that the reforms were transparent, properly justified and shaped with the support of those most affected. It was crucial for Member States to meet their financial responsibilities on time to enable the Organization to perform its vital work. She supported initiatives to reduce costs while advancing sustainability, and endorsed the digital-only publication of reports and meeting documents.

321. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the discussion in the Committee of the Whole had demonstrated a strong commitment to ensuring that the reform process not only addressed the current financial challenges, but also enhanced the ILO's effectiveness and responsiveness to the needs of its Members. Emphasis had been placed on the importance of the ILO's role in strengthening institutional capacity so that Member States could implement ratified international labour standards more effectively. There had also been calls for a more balanced and credible ILO and for measures to advance the skills agenda.

322. **The Worker spokesperson** noted with satisfaction that the Committee of the Whole format had allowed for a rich and inclusive debate. She cautioned against any attempt to use the review exercise to challenge the ILO's historical and constitutional mandate, or to redefine or qualify that mandate, and reaffirmed that the Programme and Budget for 2026–27, together with the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–27, must continue to guide the discussions on prioritization. At what was a critical juncture for the ILO, safeguarding the relevance of its core mandate and its role and function within the multilateral system was essential.

323. She drew attention to the unfinished business in respect of the constitutional obligations under the Declaration of Philadelphia, which asserted that labour was not a commodity and emphasized the need for full employment, adequate living wages, and economic and social policy coherence in the multilateral system. Achieving policy coherence on living wages and collective bargaining required further work and would inevitably involve difficult resource-allocation decisions. Future priorities should include: strengthening standard-setting and addressing the erosion of existing standards; developing a strategic approach to ILO policy development; safeguarding and strengthening the supervisory system, which included following up on decisions to establish a Commission of Inquiry; promoting tripartism and social dialogue; and strengthening the ILO's role in the UN system. In that regard, she stressed the need for a robust action plan to ensure that the commitments made at the Second World Summit for Social Development were fully implemented. In addition, she stressed the importance of appointing leaders with the institutional memory and expertise needed to maintain internal policy coherence. She questioned whether the Director-General's proposed organizational restructuring could achieve that objective, particularly given the current focus on addressing the ILO's financial challenges.

324. Elaborating on the priorities, she said that the ILO must continue to invest in standard-setting for the future. While it should ensure the ratification and application of existing standards, it could not stop there. The world of work was rapidly changing and required new ILO standards adapted to new needs, to ensure minimum protection to all workers and a level playing field for business. While important work was under way in the area of OSH and platform work, her group was still waiting for normative work on supply chains. It was important to continue to address challenges such as informality and precarity, which were leaving increasing numbers of workers without any protection in law or in practice, eroding the application of existing standards. Furthermore, there was a need to develop a strategic approach to ILO policy development in important areas such as non-discrimination on any ground, industrial policies, employment, just transition, a gender-transformative agenda, social protection, peace and resilience, and labour migration. The rights of indigenous peoples also had to be taken into account. She welcomed the recognition of the importance of safeguarding and strengthening the ILO's unique supervisory system, which underscored the need to ensure that the supervisory bodies were able to continue to function unhindered, including in times of financial constraint.

Oral report by the Chairperson on the discussion of the Committee of the Whole

325. **The Chairperson** noted the strong support for the Director-General's proposals aimed at strengthening effectiveness and improving efficiency in response to the serious financial situation. Speakers had emphasized the need for swift action to strengthen the Organization's resilience to disruptions; for the Governing Body to provide the Director-General with a clear mandate on the next steps; for the Office to provide a detailed, evidence-based analysis to ensure transparency and enable the Governing Body to monitor progress; for inclusive consultations with constituents to enable them to participate fully; and for the involvement of the Staff Union throughout. The process must simultaneously address both the current liquidity crisis and long-term structural reform and be aligned with the UN80 Initiative to ensure agility and results orientation.

326. There was broad support for streamlining structures, reducing senior management posts, strengthening field capacity and reducing non-staff costs. Concerns had been expressed about the relocation of functions, which might yield limited savings and impact strategic dialogue, participation in meetings and institutional coherence. Many delegations had highlighted the need to preserve technical assistance and capacity-building in the field, retain technical expertise and institutional memory, and respect multilingualism, fair geographical representation and social dialogue. The next step would be for the Governing Body to reach consensus on priorities, balancing financial sustainability with delivery on the ILO's core mandate.

327. She drew the Governing Body's attention to the supplementary information that the Office had published and circulated that morning in response to the comments and questions raised during the discussion by the Committee of the Whole. [7]

Office response to the discussion of the Committee of the Whole

328. **The Director-General** clarified that, even if all arrears were paid, the Organization would still have to prepare for scenario 2 and a 20 per cent reduction in the budget. The ILO was expected to look at ways to increase efficiency and operate at a lower budgetary level as part of the overall UN reform. A new medium- to long-term direction was required, which was not linked to the current financial situation. In response to the issue of accountability raised by several delegations, he confirmed that the Office would indeed evaluate the implementation of reform measures and report back to the Governing Body.

329. The Office had noted the consensus on the need to protect the ILO's normative mandate, the supervisory machinery and the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. Appendix II to the supplementary information contained the tentative implementation plan, which was subject to the guidance to be provided by the Governing Body. The majority of actions would be necessary under both scenario 1 and scenario 2. The change management team would be established in the first week of December and the Staff Union would be invited to join it. The task team on the programme of work was already active under the leadership of the Assistant Director-General for Corporate Services and was composed of nine further colleagues, including the Assistant Directors-General of the policy clusters, other managers and representatives from field offices. Decisions on the priority action programmes would be made after the rigorous review to be conducted in 2026.

330. In terms of synergies with the UN system, the implementation plan for UN80 was being finalized, following a meeting of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination the previous month, while document GB.355/INS/7 was being drafted. Synergies between UN80 and the ILO review would become clearer during implementation. Furthermore, the Assistant Director-General for External and Corporate Relations was acting

[7] GB.355/INS/7 – Supplementary information.

as a bridge with the UN80 process. It would be crucial to retain the ILO's tripartite nature with the reorganization of the resident coordinator system, as the ILO did not have a presence in all countries.

331. As to the senior management structure, he expressed the firm belief that a reduction in the number of Assistant Directors-General from 11 to 4 would not negatively affect the efficient and effective running of the Office and that the whole policy portfolio needed to be together. The organizational structure was his prerogative as Director-General and he did not foresee any changes to the proposed new organizational chart, unless adjustments were needed based on the nature of the work.

332. While the Office was proposing to reduce sectoral meetings from six to four, that did not mean an overall reduction in sectoral activities, which were important in strengthening the ILO's work on the ground. The Office had noted the comments and proposals made by the Workers' and Employers' groups, which were aligned with its own proposals.

333. Noting that the Office of the Legal Adviser had provided clarification on the autonomy and legal personality of the Turin Centre in Appendix I to the supplementary information document, he provided assurances that the proposed structural change would not affect the Centre's independence or effectiveness.

334. Three types of relocation had been proposed: (1) some 100 Geneva colleagues working on development cooperation projects would move to be closer to where activities were taking place; (2) around 70 technical experts would be relocated to the regions to be closer to constituents in the field; and (3) additional relocations were proposed in order to reduce operating costs; the scale of the latter relocations could be reduced if voluntary contributions were received to offset costs. If scenario 1 was implemented, around 30 new experts could be recruited for the field, but that might not be achievable under scenario 2. He reiterated his thanks to the Government of Switzerland, with whom the Office was continuing to negotiate to seek the best possible arrangements for the Organization.

335. The plan for the headquarters building was to vacate two floors to achieve about CHF5.4 million in rental income per biennium. The Office was in ongoing discussions with the United Nations Environment Programme, the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the International Telecommunications Union, and was due to finalize an agreement with the World Food Programme by the end of the year.

336. He had heard the clear call for the Office to increase from ten the number of proposed new national coordinator positions to act as a bridge between governments and regional offices or Decent Work Technical Support Teams, which would be more efficient than sending international professional staff to a country.

337. The governance committee that would be established would comprise colleagues from different areas of the Office to form the superstructure that, alongside the review team, would coordinate the reform measures and report back to the Director-General and the Governing Body.

338. At its next session, the Governing Body would decide on the areas to be prioritized; the Office would organize informal consultations seeking constituents' input in advance. It would also decide on whether the appropriations and total planned expenditure should be capped at 80 per cent of the budget for 2026–27 that had been approved by the International Labour Conference – which the Governing Body did not have the authority to change – and, if so, how the outcomes and outputs for the biennium should be adjusted.

339. **A representative of the Director-General** (Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) explained that in Appendix III to the document containing supplementary information: section 1 referred to the cash flow and the position through to the end of 2025, with tables and graphs showing the accrued receivables over the previous ten years and a forecast for November and December 2025; section 2 detailed the measures taken since September 2025, identifying where budget allocations had been withdrawn and then reinstated to produce cost efficiencies; and section 3 provided a forecast for the first quarter of 2026 based on how contributions had been received over the previous ten years, and information on how the payment of arrears would be handled. He noted that, while there was always an element of doubt in forecasts, some Member States always paid their contributions at certain times of the year. The situation was currently being assessed weekly and would continue to be assessed regularly in the future. The Office would be sure to take the appropriate actions towards the end of the year and as of the new biennium.

Continuation of the discussion by the Governing Body

340. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated that the Workers' group stood ready to address the challenges constructively and supported the Director-General and the Office in safeguarding the ILO's mandate and functioning in the context of serious challenges. The key priorities must be tested against the obligations undertaken in the Constitution and in subsequent declarations. The review must not attempt to redefine or qualify the ILO's constitutional mandate, and any reprioritization must be guided by the programme and budget and strategic plan adopted earlier in 2025.

341. The Workers' group had four thematic priorities. First, the ILO should invest in standard-setting for the future, strengthening of the supervisory system and promoting ratification and implementation of international labour standards across the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. Second, it should reinforce the fundamental principles and rights at work through: more strategic and better targeted work on freedom of association, collective bargaining and social dialogue, including at the sectoral level; greater focus on eliminating institutional and intersectional discrimination to ensure equality of treatment and opportunities for all; and leveraging of trade agreements, human rights due diligence and supply-chain standards and activities. Third, the ILO should scale up work on wage policies, including living wages, expanding social protection coverage and investing in preventive workplace measures to counter poverty and inequalities. Fourth, the Organization should increase engagement with international financial institutions for greater economic and social policy coherence to support the creation of more and better jobs.

342. The Workers' group considered that the reform should be subject to four guiding principles. First, the Office must consider the substantive policy work and then establish the structure needed to deliver on it, not the other way around. Second, cuts could not be made everywhere equally; policy work and ensuring policy coherence internally must be prioritized. Third, any decentralization and relocation must be implemented thoughtfully so as not to jeopardize the ILO's policy coherence and regular dialogue with constituents. Fourth, it was crucial to hold transparent, evidence-based consultations with constituents and staff throughout the process.

343. The Workers' group welcomed the recognition of sectoral work as a pillar of the ILO and maintained that the amount of sectoral meetings should not be reduced. The Sectoral Policies Department had an important role in discussions and agreements with other UN specialized agencies, with its unique in-house expertise on labour matters and capability to convene the key actors of the economy. She repeated the group's request for the Office to convene an extraordinary session of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies in January 2026 for an in-depth tripartite discussion on ensuring a strategic vision for ILO sectoral work before the March session of the Governing Body.

344. She noted that there had been unanimous support for the ongoing work on combating discrimination on any grounds in the world of work, which would continue to require strong and dedicated experts.

345. The ILO needed to lead by example in social dialogue, but it remained unclear how the tripartite constituents and the Staff Union would be involved in the process. There was a task team, a governance team, a change team and a review team, and it was not entirely clear who was reporting to whom, who was taking which decisions and whether external consultants had been hired. The Staff Union must be involved in developing the process, not just in implementing it. Negotiating a workplace adjustment agreement with the Staff Union would be a forward-looking way of dealing with challenges.

346. Lastly, she sought further clarity on the arguments for changing the organizational chart. The Workers' group did not object in principle to bringing all policy departments together, but it would be more logical for the individual leading them to have the necessary in-house knowledge and experience. The Governing Body had agreed to take scenario 2 as a starting point, as reform measures were needed to tackle both the short- and longer-term situation. However, it had requested a prudent, step-by-step approach and had not agreed to give the Director-General a broader mandate for structural reform.

347. **Another Worker spokesperson** asked whether his understanding was correct that, by the end of the biennium, the Organization was projected to have spent US$806 million, withdrawn US$20 million from the Working Capital Fund and received US$120 million less in assessed contributions than the approved budget for 2024–25. He also sought information on the US$40 million that had been put on hold for the last quarter of 2025, which could not be carried over to the first quarter of 2026. He asked whether the Organization would have to operate on a budget of US$700 million for 2026–27 – compared with the US$930 million approved by the International Labour Conference – and thus have a shortfall of over US$200 million for the biennium. Lastly, he asked about the figure of US$200 million in income for the first quarter of 2026, which appeared healthy at first glance; however, with a budget of US$700 million for the whole biennium, that would mean that only US$150 million could be expected for the remaining nine months of 2026, followed by another US$350 million for 2027. The Workers' group was seeking clarity on the cash flow to gauge the urgency of the situation, as the Director-General was planning to start the staff relocations, the merger of the policy departments and the senior management restructuring immediately after the Governing Body session.

348. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the discussion of the Committee of the Whole had been particularly constructive and informative. There had been a general acknowledgement that the Organization would need to proceed with scenario 2 and that the priority was to ensure that the ILO not only continued to deliver but also became even more impactful and relevant. The proposed reduction in sectoral meetings from six to four lacked ambition in terms of saving costs; money should instead be invested in sectoral activities that would have greater and more sustainable impact. The other measures, particularly the prioritization of ILO action and possible relocations, would require a second in-depth discussion at the March 2026 session, based on detailed information on the what, how, who and when. Resources could not be reduced in a linear manner throughout the Organization or in departments that were already understaffed. Instead, areas where the Office had the biggest impact and comparative advantage had to be prioritized, based on the cost–benefit analysis and timeline called for by many delegations.

349. There was broad agreement on institutional capacity-building as a key pillar of the renewed ILO, as international labour standards must be translated into meaningful action at the national level. However, the supplementary information document omitted the importance of such capacity-building for tripartite constituents. ACT/EMP and ACTRAV had an important role to play in strengthening the delivery of services to employers' and workers' organizations, yet ACT/EMP had only half the budget and staff of ACTRAV and it could not fill a third of field positions due to the hiring freeze.

350. The Employers' group agreed with the speakers who had stressed that skills development, tackling informality, advancing digital transformation, strengthening occupational safety and health, and promoting social dialogue should be prioritized in the allocation of resources. It was critical for the ILO to strengthen its engagement in areas that contributed to decent jobs, sustainable development and economic growth, including creating an enabling environment for businesses, particularly MSMEs, and focusing on productivity. Sufficient resources should also be allocated to implementing the tripartite agreement on wage policies, including living wages, and to support the wage programme.

351. Delegations had emphasized the need to avoid duplication, both internally and within the broader UN system. The ILO was not a humanitarian organization and to the extent possible should leave related activities to other specialized agencies. The reorganization should also address the duplication arising from the priority action programmes. The merging of policy departments under one Deputy Director-General would support better coordination and facilitate collaboration among teams. Furthermore, the activities of the Global Coalition for Social Justice needed to be streamlined in line with the reform and to avoid duplication.

352. The Office needed to become future-ready and increase its impact by strengthening tripartism and ensuring impartiality in its institutional culture, going beyond the Human Resources Strategy and recruitment policies to mainstreaming a more holistic approach reflecting the importance of business for decent work, growth and employment, and of the role of the Employers' group. Moreover, a substantive discussion was needed on how to optimize the work of the Conference and the Governing Body, including ideas for reducing the number of committees, addressing the heavy load of country cases and resolving long-standing challenges such as late-night sittings.

353. As noted by various delegations, the relocation of a majority of policy staff would negatively impact policy coherence and collaboration within the Office, with constituents and with other UN agencies in Geneva. The Director-General must ensure that structural changes reinforced rather than diluted the Organization's effectiveness. Furthermore, a profound transformation under scenario 2 required a robust change management strategy with clear roles and responsibilities, driven by human resource, finance and business operation needs, rather than a review task force whose role and composition was unclear.

354. The reform must ensure and promote tripartite cooperation, social dialogue, including communication with the Staff Union, prioritization, efficiency, effectiveness and relevance. The Employers' group stood ready to provide input, as the Director-General's success with the reform would mean success for everyone.

355. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger, referring to the supplementary information document, requested that the priorities for the Africa region be based on the Abidjan Declaration.

356. He asked whether the document containing adjustments to the Programme and Budget for 2026–27 would need to be approved by the Conference as well as the Governing Body, and what the justification was for the anticipated 15–20 per cent reduction in the regular budget for 2028–29.

357. He requested that the Office provide a table comparing the current organizational chart with the proposed new structure, and sought more details on the composition of the task team for reprioritization. The establishment of a review team and a governance committee in addition to the task team was concerning, as the aim of the reform was to increase efficiency and efficacy to avoid duplication and overlap. As they would all be composed of ILO officials only, he asked how constituents would be involved in the process itself and not just oversight of the outcome. In addition, he requested consultations on the determination of experts to be redeployed in regions. The proposed Assistant Director-General for regions would also create an additional layer, so the group preferred the current system. He requested more information on: the national coordinators; the tables in Appendix III; the savings expected from the proposed alternatives to the reduction of positions; and the funds withdrawn from departments and field offices and the impact on their operations.

358. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark recalled that the EU and its Member States consistently provided a large share of ILO voluntary contributions, providing long-standing, predictable support to the Organization and to partners worldwide. She expressed confidence in the Director-General and the task team in developing reprioritization proposals, which must be aligned with the UN80 Initiative. It was important for the task team to engage with other UN agencies with complementary mandates and make concrete proposals on how to achieve synergies and complementarities based on comparative advantages across the UN system while preserving the ILO's unique tripartite structure. It was also essential for the reprioritization exercise to consider the Sustainable Development Goals and cross-cutting priorities – including gender equality, climate change, and the environmental, digital and demographic transitions and their implications for workers and enterprises – to ensure a future-oriented ILO. She acknowledged the measures already undertaken to maintain operations during the reprioritization exercise and encouraged the Office to continue with necessary, targeted cost-saving measures that would not have a detrimental long-term impact.

359. **Speaking on behalf of the countries of the GCC**, a Government representative of Oman reaffirmed his group's full support for the Director-General's strategic vision and efforts to make the ILO more flexible, effective and efficient. After recalling the comments made on behalf of his group in the Committee of the Whole, he said that, while his group acknowledged Lebanon's long-standing role in hosting the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, it supported the proposal to relocate the office to Doha, in view of the evolving operational, security and strategic realities in the region. He highlighted the growing emphasis on development cooperation and policy dialogue in the Gulf and commended Qatar's active engagement in that regard, its stable operating environment and its advanced infrastructure. It would be important nevertheless to maintain an ILO presence in Beirut to ensure continued support for Lebanon.

360. **A Government representative of Barbados** reaffirmed his confidence in the Director-General's leadership and emphasized the need to reform the ILO while preserving institutional knowledge, rather than create a new organization. He highlighted the importance of protecting systems that were significant to all Member States, especially small ones, and noted that the Global Coalition for Social Justice was a cost-effective way to advance the ILO's mandate. He called for continued work to promote the social and solidarity economy by supporting cooperatives and non-governmental organizations, on which small States depended. He recalled that the Caribbean region, which was highly vulnerable to extreme climate events and external economic shocks, had no individual country offices or national coordinators and relied on the support of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for the Caribbean Countries in Port-of-Spain, including in developing and implementing ten DWCPs in the region. Providing that office with additional expertise and technical support, especially in such areas as labour migration, just transition, occupational safety and health, and labour statistics, would benefit the region's development. Other small island developing States would also need ILO resources to develop labour administration systems and strengthen their labour markets. Lastly, he stressed that the reforms must not weaken the Governing Body's authority.

361. **A Government representative of China**, reiterating China's support for the reform initiatives, said that it was imperative to secure future resource allocations for the ILO and to ensure balanced and adequate funding across its core activities, including for employment promotion, skills development and social protection, which should be accorded equal importance to standard-setting and the work of the supervisory mechanisms. He emphasized the need to ensure geographical balance in the composition of the task team, so that the reprioritization process would fully reflect regional priorities. The task force should ensure that the process was impartial and transparent and based on broad consultations.

362. China agreed that, in order to safeguard technical assistance to Member States, especially developing countries, more experts should be deployed to the regions, while coordination mechanisms between headquarters and field operations should be strengthened. The Office should take into account the needs of the relevant regions and countries when relocating staff, as well as practical requirements. It was crucial to retain key departments and specialists at headquarters to provide Member States with timely and effective services and to allow for policy coordination. When relocating staff from headquarters staff to other cities, the Office should conduct careful assessments to ensure that the quality of services to Member States would not be compromised.

363. He encouraged the Office to continue to consider the feasibility of establishing a global service centre, including cost–benefit analyses. It should continue to reduce non-staff costs, for example by streamlining meetings and reports, improving workflows and using digital technologies and AI, while ensuring that funding for technical cooperation, which was vital for sustaining technical assistance to developing countries, remained unaffected.

364. The Office should monitor cash flow developments closely and propose appropriate measures based on actual requirements for discussion by the Governing Body in March 2026. It should also provide a more detailed explanation of the potential implications of the measures set out in scenario 2 for the programme and budget for 2028–29. China was committed to engaging constructively in the discussions on the new development cooperation strategy that would be held in March 2026 and was in favour of expanding the ILO's funding channels and promoting South–South and triangular cooperation.

365. He recalled that a well-coordinated and balanced Senior Management Team was crucial for advancing the reform and ensuring the ILO's long-term development and called on the Office to adopt a human-centred approach throughout the process. It should prioritize communication with affected departments, staff members and the Staff Union to ensure that the rights and interests of staff were protected. He highlighted the urgency of the reforms amid global turbulence and reaffirmed China's commitment to multilateralism and constructive tripartite engagement to guide the reforms towards a more just and equitable international labour system.

366. **A Government representative of Colombia** noted that there had been insufficient time to fully analyse the supplementary information provided by the Office and he looked forward to discussing the item further the following week. He noted in particular the Office's replies concerning the Organization's core mandate and the prioritization exercise. He reiterated that individuals appointed to management positions must be highly qualified and committed to the ILO's mandate and founding principles. The reform process must be transparent and based on social dialogue, including with the Staff Union, and it must safeguard the ILO's autonomy and independence. Details should be provided on the individuals who had been approached to fill senior positions, to give some indication of the direction the Organization might take.

367. **A Government representative of South Africa** acknowledged that the proposed reforms were a coherent response to the ILO's financial constraints and evolving operational context. In view of the fact that there was likely to be a significant budget shortfall in 2026–27, he welcomed the immediate adoption of temporary cost-saving measures, as well as the commitment to conduct an assessment in late 2025 before taking further action. He supported the proposals to streamline decision-making and reduce duplication by consolidating policy departments. Reducing senior management should generate savings and safeguard resources for technical work. Creating new technical specialist positions in the regions and deploying national coordinators would ensure that the Organization remained relevant and responsive to the constituents' needs at the country level. However, he cautioned that framing the reform as an austerity measure risked projecting a smaller, rather than a more focused and effective, organization. To succeed, the narrative must emphasize a positive vision and maintain staff morale.

368. He noted that deferring critical decisions to a small internal task team lacked transparency and called for an evidence-based framework to reflect the priorities of all Member States. Major gaps in the Office's reform plans included insufficient details on the rationale for relocations and on safeguards for mobilizing extrabudgetary resources. The plans also failed to address operational risks, such as the loss of institutional knowledge, overly ambitious implementation plans and potential new silos. He called for the creation of a formal risk register in that regard, which should include specific mitigation strategies. He also called for a robust development cooperation strategy and comprehensive cost–benefit analysis of relocation proposals. While the reform was necessary, the current proposals were overly technical. To be successful, the ILO must pivot from crisis management to strategic evolution.

369. **A Government representative of Brazil** acknowledged the temporary measures being taken by the Office in response to the current cash flow problems and sought clarification on the rationale behind the plans for a significantly reduced budget for 2028–29, which could lead to an even more significant drop of revenue if assessed contributions continued not to be paid. Noting that the ILO's normative role and its support to Member States for the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda remained essential, he requested clarification on how areas of work would be deprioritized. No fundamental principle and right at work should be considered less important than another. He recalled that gender equality and non-discrimination were cross-cutting objectives and must remain a priority. He reiterated the need to minimize the impact of budget reductions on technical cooperation, including triangular and South–South cooperation, and reaffirmed Brazil's support for the Global Coalition for Social Justice.

370. The implementation of the revised organizational structure should be postponed until March 2026, when there should be a clearer picture of the financial situation and when priority areas had been clearly defined. He asked whether the ILO's policy work could really be placed fully under the responsibility of one senior officer, most likely an Assistant Director-General. He reiterated his Government's support for strengthening technical capacity in the regions and its interest in reinforcing the ILO's presence in Brazil; encouraged the Office to continue exploring alternatives to reducing regular budget posts, stressing the importance of dialogue with the staff and the Staff Union; and highlighted the importance of ensuring balance among the regions. He suggested that the draft decision should be amended to explicitly reaffirm that the reform process should fully respect the ILO's core mandate and objectives, and the decisions adopted by the Governing Body.

371. **A Government representative of Tunisia** expressed support for the Director-General's reform agenda, viewing it as an opportunity to enhance the ILO's efficiency and financial stability and to ensure that resources were used where they had the greatest impact. While the ILO's normative function was central to its mandate, it was equally important to safeguard its operational activities, which translated standards into tangible results on the ground. The review of priorities must therefore reflect both aspects of the ILO's work. That review, and the strategic refocusing of the ILO's activities, must not come at the expense of its work in crisis situations. While not a humanitarian agency, the ILO must be able to maintain its role as a bridge between humanitarian and development work. To that end, the task team must be guided by a balanced, transparent and realistic approach. The reform process itself should ensure programme continuity, address country needs and consider implications for staff. She requested clarification of whether the review of the priority action programmes mentioned in paragraph 11 of the supplementary information document was the same as the work to be carried out by the task force, as referred to in paragraph 13. While it supported the proposals to strengthen teams in the field, Tunisia encouraged a gradual implementation of non-urgent measures, to allow for consultations with staff and to preserve the Organization's ability to fulfil its mandate.

372. **A Government representative of the United States**, recalling that his Government had initially favoured the proposals under scenario 1, said that, in the light of the explanations provided by the Office, it could also support elements of scenario 2. He stressed the need for consultations with the Staff Union on all reforms relating to personnel issues and reaffirmed the need to take into account in the current discussions the long-standing practice in the ILO of defining the programme of work before considering the corresponding budget levels. He requested clarity on which activities would continue, in order to assess proposed expenditure adjustments, and expressed confidence in the Director-General to make the necessary decisions in the light of the cash flow situation. His Government supported the proposed structural reforms aimed at creating a more efficient and effective ILO that delivered on its core mandate.

373. **A representative of the Director-General** (Treasurer and Financial Comptroller), responding to the questions raised about the management of the budget and cash liquidity, said that the Office had consistently ensured sound financial governance by aligning activities with the available funds and avoiding overspending. The measures taken in 2025 mirrored those implemented after the 2008 financial crisis, which demonstrated that the current situation was not unprecedented but part of a prudent approach to managing the budget.

374. Responding to a question by the Worker spokesperson about cumulative projected expenditure for December 2025, he said that the figure of US$806.2 million was his best estimate, based on current data from the ILO's enterprise resource planning system, and that a variance within 5 per cent of that figure would be acceptable. That expenditure would indicate an underspend on the approved budget and leave approximately US$24 million in the

Working Capital Fund. He cautioned that those figures were based on income and expenditure assumptions and could change. Responding to a question about the US$40 million of allocations that had been withheld in the last quarter of 2025, he recalled that, as of 1 September 2025, the Office had halted spending from allocated budgets, leaving approximately US$50 million from the regular budget unallocated across the Office. That amount, currently at US$40 million and which included funds for staff costs and external contracts, had not been lost but remained unused. A process had been introduced requiring regional offices and headquarters departments to request and justify a reinstatement of the budget for critical programmatic or operational activities, helping to reduce cash outflow.

375. Regarding appropriations going forward, he recalled that the ILO operated on a two-year financial cycle, starting in even years. In June 2025, the International Labour Conference had approved the appropriation level for 2026–27, establishing the amount required from Member States. The Director-General was responsible for managing those funds and consulted the Governing Body on any changes affecting the programme of work, without needing further approval by the Conference. The Working Capital Fund, which currently contained CHF35 million – equivalent to about one and a half months of normal expenditure – was currently being used to cover cash needs. Without additional contributions, the Fund would be insufficient to meet the Office’s upcoming requirements. Responding to a suggestion by the Government representative of South Africa, he confirmed that a risk register would be established in respect of the operational risks presented by the reform.

376. He recalled that, in March 2025, the Governing Body had discussed at length the implications of adopting a zero-nominal-growth budget for 2026–27, which included the freezing of positions. As scenario 1 was consistent with that budget, the changes under that scenario would be applied regardless of the financial situation. If the financial situation improved, the budget could be adapted accordingly. Historically, as in 1977, appropriations had been approved but partially withheld when funds were unavailable, and a similar approach could be applied. By March 2026, once the initial review work had been completed, the Director-General would indicate which activities would not be carried out in such circumstances. If the financial situation had not improved by mid-2026, the outlook would be bleak and managing the ILO’s operations would be extremely challenging.

377. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director of the Office of the Director-General), commenting on the emphasis placed in the discussions on the need for consultations, underscored that the Office had always attached great importance to internal social dialogue and had very good relations with – and was very proud of – the Staff Union, which represented almost 70 per cent of staff, including senior management. He recalled that a number of the members of the Review Sounding Board had been nominated by, and were active members of, the Staff Union. In addition, the Office had held consultations with all Member States prior to the discussion of the item and had actively engaged in dialogue with the Review Group. The Office would continue to engage with the relevant parties throughout the process, including the Staff Union in accordance with the applicable rules. Recalling that the Office had opened an internal platform and held a number of town hall meetings, he reaffirmed that all staff – whether members of the Staff Union or not – would continue to have an opportunity to share their ideas on the reform. Furthermore, the Office would continue to share advance information with the Staff Union and would make every effort to ensure that the information was timely and adequate so that the Staff Union could provide meaningful input.

378. The task team was composed of staff members who were qualified to identify priorities across all departments and regions. It was expected to deliver a report by January 2026, enabling the preparation of a document that would then be submitted to the Governing Body for discussion in March 2026. Once it had fulfilled its mandate, the task team would be dissolved. In addition to the task team, a governance committee would be established to oversee the whole reform process, which would report directly to the Director-General and be responsible for reporting to the Governing Body. When selecting the members of such committees or teams, it was important to bear in mind the overall objective of the committee or team concerned.

379. **The Director-General** said that all the points raised during the discussion would be taken into account when preparing a strategy for consideration by the Governing Body in March. That said, the implementation phase would begin immediately after the current session, with a meeting between management and the Staff Union already scheduled. He clarified that different teams with different areas of expertise would be needed to work on different matters. Therefore, in addition to the task team on prioritization, there would need to be a team on office space management and another on the establishment of a global service centre, for example. Each team would be time-bound and report to a governance structure that answered directly to the Director-General. While the Review Team would remain involved in the process, in order to ensure continuity and alignment with the reform agenda, it would be less active going forward.

380. While acknowledging the differing views among Governing Body members on the subject, he was open to convening an extraordinary meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies in January 2026, subject to the decision to be taken on the item.

381. Regarding the organizational chart, he stood by his proposal to consolidate policy functions, noting that the main challenge lay in determining which specific individuals would be appointed. While he had to respect the democratic choices of Member States and was not opposed to the long-standing practice of appointing a Deputy Director-General from the United States, he was prepared to follow the Governing Body's guidance on that matter. In that respect, he noted that, in line with past practice, the Government of the United States had sent a letter informing him of President Trump's proposed candidate.

382. Responding to other points raised during the discussion, he acknowledged the ongoing global uncertainty affecting the multilateral system and agreed with the Employers on the importance of capacity-building for both Member States and the social partners. The suggestion to mainstream a more holistic approach into the next Human Resources Strategy had been duly noted. He acknowledged that a significant amount of work remained to be done on avoiding duplication. While committed to transparency, he emphasized that decisions on the specific composition of teams should remain the responsibility of the Office and not the Governing Body. He therefore did not see the need to provide the names of the nine members of the task team. He gave his assurances that the task team would ensure the alignment of the ILO's priorities with those of the UN80 Initiative and other agencies. He noted the comments in support of the appointment of national coordinators, which would enable the ILO to be more impactful on the ground and had lower cost implications than sending international staff.

383. Noting the attention drawn to the strategic importance of small island developing States, he reaffirmed that the services provided to certain groups of Member States and the social partners should not deteriorate as a result of the reform. He agreed that senior managers should respect the founding principles of the ILO in their work. He also agreed on the need to ensure that the ILO became a more focused and effective organization, rather than a smaller one, and on the importance of ensuring regional balance. In that regard, he noted that the Review Group was completing cost–benefit analyses of relocation proposals submitted by several Member States. Once the analysis was finalized, the results would be made available.

In response to a question by the Government representative of Tunisia, he said that the review of priorities by the task team was distinct from the planned review of the priority action programmes, which would be carried out in the first half of 2026 in follow-up to a decision by the Governing Body. The outcome of the review would be presented to the Governing Body, as appropriate.

384. **The Worker spokesperson** explained that, in relation to sectoral activities, she had drawn attention to the importance and long history of sectoral activity in the ILO, but her group and the global union federations had never shown unwillingness to consider necessary adaptations. The group had indeed advocated looking into changes to the format of sectoral meetings to make them more cost-effective without necessarily reducing the number of meetings.

385. As to the Director-General's statement that he would not change the organizational chart, she now understood that to refer to the structure proposed in Appendix III to GB.355/INS/7. She noted that there had been an excellent opportunity to bring all policy departments together when the Assistant Director-General for Jobs and Social Protection had left the Office earlier in 2025, when the portfolio could have been merged with that of the Assistant Director-General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue.

386. She acknowledged that there had been a long history of nominations by the United States for the position of Deputy Director-General. However, it had always been preceded by a tripartite process, unlike in the current case. The Director-General had cautioned against changing procedures that were ongoing and emphasized that it was his prerogative to appoint the Deputy Director-General. Nevertheless, it was concerning that there were no clear due diligence or good governance procedures on appointments to senior management positions, nor any procedure to check such candidates' qualifications and expertise in areas relevant to the ILO. Furthermore, the United States had been the subject of a complaint before the Credentials Committee because the country's most representative trade union organization had not been part of its delegation to the 2025 session of the International Labour Conference. That was problematic in the house of tripartism, social dialogue and freedom of association. There was clearly a need for a further discussion on the appointment of the Deputy Director-General.

387. **The Director-General** clarified that he had benefited from rich, constructive discussions with the global union federations, which had informed the latest version of the proposals, and he had never considered that they were unwilling to embrace change.

388. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of the Niger reiterated his request to the Office to prepare a comparative table highlighting the differences between the current and proposed organizational charts and noted that it was reasonable to request more details on the composition of the task team, given the scale of the reform and the high level of interest it had generated. Transparency was critical to informed decision-making. Lastly, he asked whether the Office had already identified the countries where national coordinators would be appointed.

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

Amendments proposed by the Workers' group and by Brazil

389. The Governing Body had before it an amended version of the draft decision, proposed by the Workers' group, which had been circulated by the Office. It read:

> 90. The Governing Body:

(a) expressed its concerns about the evolving financial and budgetary challenges facing the Organization, and requested the Director-General to address them proactively based on a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of costs and benefits of any measures and proposals, including expected timelines;

(b) requested the Director-General to ensure that any measures taken will preserve and safeguard the capacity of the Organization to deliver on its mandate;

(~~a~~c) ~~endorsed~~considered the ~~overall strategic~~ direction of the ILO review and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance, ensuring tripartite constituents are fully informed and involved going forward, including through tripartite consultations, ~~in the follow-up process described in document GB.355/INS/7 and~~ during the development, as well as the implementation of the proposed reform measures;

(~~b~~d) requested the Director-General to submit to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026) ~~further~~more detailed proposals to enable it to:

(i) take any necessary decisions, including concerning the financial implications of the evolving situation;

(ii) provide guidance on the reprioritization of areas of work and other related matters, ensuring they are fully in line with the ILO's constitutional obligations and mandate, taking into account decisions taken, including on the programme and budget and the strategic plan;

(e) requested the Director-General to ensure throughout the reform process and its implementation, proper consultations and negotiations with the Staff Union in line with article 10.1 of the ILO Staff Regulations, and its involvement in any relevant review or task team, as appropriate;

(f) considering current uncertainties, requested the Director-General to postpone implementation of the proposed restructuring of the senior management, notably regarding the policy portfolios, until the next session of the Governing Body (March 2026);

(~~e~~g) requested the Director-General to take into account the guidance provided during the discussion of GB.355/INS/7 in the implementation of the UN80 process and in the elaboration of the ILO's development cooperation and human resources strategies to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 356th Session.

390. It also had before it an amendment proposed by Brazil and seconded by Colombia, to add a new subparagraph (d), which read:

(d) reaffirmed that the ILO's reform and all subsequent measures shall be guided by, and fully respect, the Organization's constitutional mandate, its fundamental principles, and its tripartite governance structure; and further reaffirmed that the implementation of the reform shall safeguard the ILO's autonomy and ensure that its standards policy, social dialogue, and decisions taken by its governing bodies are honoured and protected.

391. **The Worker spokesperson**, recalling that the Director-General was responsible for the efficient conduct of the Office subject to the instructions of the Governing Body, said that the Governing Body was assuming its responsibilities under article 2(1)(c) of the Constitution by ensuring that the Director-General's decisions during a period of financial uncertainty and in a changing geopolitical and multilateral landscape were taken in a context of clear strategic direction and reprioritization. It was essential to deliver outcomes that reflected the ILO's institutional purpose and realized its constitutional mandate and objectives.

392. Referring to her group's proposal, she said that the new subparagraph (a) reflected the concerns expressed during the discussion about the evolving financial and budgetary challenges facing the Organization. In that regard, she welcomed the information that had been provided by the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller and looked forward to receiving further such information in the future, including on expected timelines. The new subparagraph (b) reflected the support expressed for measures to preserve and safeguard the capacity of the ILO to deliver on its mandate. Her group proposed amending subparagraph (c) – subparagraph (a) of the original draft decision – because it could not endorse the overall strategic direction of the ILO review without more clarity on what that entailed. It also proposed including in that subparagraph a reference to ensuring that the tripartite constituents were fully involved and informed during the development and implementation of the proposed reform. The group was flexible about the specific language to be used in that respect. The proposed amendments to subparagraph (d) – subparagraph (b) of the original draft – reflected that more detailed proposals were needed on scenario 2 and that reprioritization might create programmatic challenges. The new subparagraph (e) reflected the need to ensure proper consultations and negotiations with the Staff Union throughout the process and the importance of Staff Union involvement in any relevant review or task team, as appropriate. The new subparagraph (f) reflected the views expressed that the proposed restructuring of the senior management should be postponed until March 2026 when there would be further clarity on the financial situation and the review of priorities had been carried out. She could consider subamending the text to replace the words “to postpone” by “to consider postponing”. Subparagraph (g) – subparagraph (c) of the original draft – remained unchanged.

393. The new subparagraph (d) proposed by Brazil was aligned with some of the aspects of her group’s proposal, in particular with regard to the importance of preserving the ILO’s mandate. She supported the clear recognition in the proposed text that all reform measures should safeguard the ILO’s autonomy and ensure that its standards policy, social dialogue and decisions taken by its governing bodies were honoured and protected, and was open to considering ways to integrate those notions into the decision. She was also open to suggestions on ways to improve her group’s proposed text.

394. **The Employer spokesperson** said that, in view of the broad agreement on the need for urgent action to address the financial situation and to create a more relevant and impactful organization, his group supported the draft decision as originally drafted by the Office, on the understanding that certain elements of scenario 2, such as downsizing, relocations and reprioritization, would be discussed in detail by the Governing Body at its March 2026 session. He reiterated his group’s concerns that relocations could lead to fragmentation and the creation of new silos in terms of engagement between the Office and the constituents and urged the Office to consider the offer made by the Government of Switzerland to suspend loan repayments for 2025 and 2026 on the condition that the ILO headquarters and key functions remained in Geneva, which would represent important savings.

395. He did not support the Workers’ amended version of the draft decision. In particular, he opposed the proposal to replace the words “endorsed the overall strategic direction of the ILO review” by “considered the direction of the ILO review”. Following extensive discussions at the current session, the Governing Body should be in a position to endorse the strategic direction and grant the Director-General the mandate to take action. Doing so would ensure proper governance without veering into micromanagement. Decisions on internal organization, including with regard to engagement with staff, remained the prerogative of the Director-General. His group was open to discussing Brazil’s proposal but wished first to hear the rationale behind it.

396. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that the proposed amendment was a reaffirmation of the ILO’s fundamental identity during the reform process. Given the financial constraints and difficult choices ahead, the amendment sought to anchor the reform process to the ILO’s constitutional mandate, its fundamental principles and its tripartite governance. It also aimed to safeguard the ILO's autonomy by protecting its standards policy, social dialogue and the decisions of its governance organs from external political influences. In the current complicated context, that reaffirmation was not a merely procedural but a vital commitment to preserving the ILO's integrity and credibility while pursuing efficiency and effectiveness. Explicitly incorporating that message in the decision would strengthen the reform's legitimacy and ensure that it remained true to the ILO's historic purpose. While Brazil's proposal aligned broadly with the Workers' amendment, its specific focus was on guaranteeing the autonomy and authority of the ILO governance organs.

397. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa reiterated the need for equitable geographical representation in the ILO's staff, particularly in mid-level and senior management positions, and his group's strong support for the deployment of technical specialists from headquarters to the field, which should be done with the full involvement of the regional offices and tripartite constituents. He reaffirmed his group's firm commitment to the Abidjan Declaration, which embodied the continent's tripartite priorities, and underscored the need to involve the constituents when redefining priorities. He also reaffirmed the importance of the ILO's dual normative and operational roles and called for the preservation of technical assistance activities underpinned by qualified staff and the careful selection of national coordinators, for maximum impact. While welcoming the Director-General's phased approach and commitment to transparency and dialogue, he stressed that the reforms must take place within the framework of the strategic guidance and instructions of the Governing Body. He recalled that the Governing Body retained the constitutional authority and competence to pronounce on all proposed measures, including those pertaining to the organizational structure.

398. His group supported the implementation road map, but sought further clarification about timelines. Furthermore, it was concerned that the proposed measures remained insufficiently substantiated. The absence of quantifiable actions, benchmarks, impact assessments and clear operational criteria would prevent the Governing Body from discharging its oversight functions in an informed manner. The Director-General should report back to the Governing Body with comprehensive and evidence-based plans outlining the precise implications of each proposed reform and demonstrate that a transparent and inclusive consultation process had been integral to their elaboration.

399. His group supported the Workers' amended version in principle, but opposed delaying substantive decisions until March, as proposed in subparagraph (f). The Governing Body should enable the Director-General to continue implementing the emergency measures required to stabilize the situation, while requiring a clear contingency plan for the interim period. He did not understand the Employers' objection to the Workers' proposal, which did not prevent progress on reforms. It was clear that the Director-General would have the leeway to continue with the reform on the understanding that the Governing Body would receive comprehensive progress reports in due course.

400. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Uruguay recalled that her group had actively participated in the consultations on the reform process and recognized the importance of the item for the ILO's future. The process must remain transparent; involve fully tripartite consultations; be conducted in a flexible and constructive spirit; and remain aligned with the ILO's constitutional mandate. Her group recognized the value of all contributions and welcomed the diversity of views, which enriched the debate. It remained committed to continuing the discussions in a constructive spirit, with a view to reaching the best possible decision by consensus.

401. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Spain acknowledged the general consensus that the ILO's normative work, alongside its policy work and technical assistance, remained central to its mandate and should be prioritized. IMEC firmly supported ambitious structural reforms and programme realignments to ensure synergies with the UN80 Initiative, provided that they upheld the ILO's core mandate and comparative advantage within the UN system. It called for evidence-based reforms that were transparent, inclusive and respectful of the ILO Constitution, and requested clarity on milestones. The reform provided an opportunity to streamline structures, strengthen regional technical capacity and maintain coherence by retaining staff with policy expertise and institutional memory at headquarters. IMEC welcomed the creation of a task team to propose reprioritization measures for endorsement by the Governing Body in March 2026 and requested details on its composition, suggesting the inclusion of an ex officio member from the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight or the Evaluation Office in the team to enhance results-based management. The document to be presented to the Governing Body in March should contain an analysis of areas of work planned for the biennium.

402. IMEC urged the Office to prioritize reducing non-staff costs and optimizing administrative processes, including by preparing for an effective global service centre. It welcomed the efforts to streamline the ILO's management structure, in particular the reduction of top-level management positions and the consolidation of functions. It would welcome further details on those measures, to ensure greater transparency and Governing Body oversight. In the light of the institutional autonomy and legal personality of the Turin Centre, further reflection on the proposals concerning the status of the Centre might be appropriate. Any relocation decisions must be transparent, consistent with the ILO's core mandate, based on detailed cost–benefit analyses and preserve the ILO's ability to deliver for its constituents. IMEC appreciated the reassurance that any staff relocations would ensure synergies with headquarters.

403. IMEC supported a phased and flexible approach to the reform process. She requested a clear decision map distinguishing measures requiring the Governing Body's approval from those under the Director-General's authority. She also requested that the measures in the tentative implementation plan be listed in chronological order. IMEC commended the efforts to mobilize resources from non-traditional funding sources and underscored the importance of social dialogue and Staff Union involvement in all decisions affecting staff. Lastly, she reiterated IMEC's commitment to constructive and transparent engagement throughout the review process and urged the Office to provide regular updates to ensure full transparency.

404. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Bangladesh commended the work to establish synergies between the ILO review process and the UN80 Initiative and welcomed the proposal to seek additional extrabudgetary resources for development cooperation, including from non-traditional partners. He requested detailed data and analyses on new sources of funding for development cooperation and expressed ASPAG's intention to engage constructively in discussions on the new Development Cooperation Strategy and on the ILO review in March 2026.

405. The ILO's core mandate, rooted in the ILO Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia, extended beyond normative work to include all four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda, which must be given equal importance in any reprioritization exercise. Options under the two scenarios needed to be based on the availability of funds, as the financial situation evolved. If certain major contributors settled their arrears, it might be possible to avoid scenario 2. He requested a detailed budget breakdown for 2025 and projections for 2026–27 for ASPAG countries under both scenarios, analysis of the impact of a cut in technical cooperation and assurance that ASPAG's need for additional technical specialists would be addressed. In that regard, he requested the Office to ensure the provision of effective and efficient technical assistance and capacity-building to ASPAG countries; to maintain sufficient senior leadership capacity; and to avoid bottlenecks in decision-making or field responsiveness.

406. ASPAG supported the relocation of development cooperation staff with relevant expertise from headquarters to the regions, with clear guidelines on headquarters support and transparent information on alignment with national priorities and costs. It also supported the appointment of national coordinators as a cost-effective model and requested clarity on whether centralizing administrative functions in a global service centre would affect technical service delivery. The phased approach should include pilot testing and feedback mechanisms before roll-out and a full expenditure analysis.

407. The task team's draft plan of action on reprioritization should be shared for consultation among groups before its submission to the Governing Body in March 2026. The team should ensure geographical balance and the Office should consult with the tripartite constituents throughout the reprioritization process. Regarding relocations, ASPAG recommended keeping department directors, the minimum necessary staff and the secretariat of the Global Coalition for Social Justice at headquarters to facilitate collaboration with other UN agencies.

408. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that the Director-General should be empowered to steer the ILO through its financial difficulties and the reform process. She thanked the Office for the explanations and supplementary information provided, which contributed meaningfully to transparency, and called on it to continue sharing information with the constituents throughout the process. Furthermore, she encouraged the Office to continue implementing targeted cost-saving measures that did not pre-empt the reprioritization exercise and welcomed the confirmation that consultations on that exercise would take place ahead of the March 2026 session. She reiterated that reprioritization must be aligned with the UN80 Initiative and said that the task team must engage closely with other UN agencies, with a view to presenting a proposal on achieving synergies based on comparative advantages across the UN system, while preserving the ILO's unique tripartite structure.

409. She endorsed a two-phased approach to structural adjustments, with high-level adjustments, including the appointment of a new Deputy Director-General, in the coming weeks, followed by other restructuring decisions, including on the merging and restructuring of policy departments, after the Governing Body's decisions on reprioritization at its March 2026 session. She acknowledged that the high-level structure might need to be re-examined after that session.

410. She reaffirmed her group's commitment to a strong and resilient ILO grounded in its normative mandate and supported by effective development cooperation. The EU and its Member States supported the Global Coalition for Social Justice, noting its potential to enhance synergies within the UN system and to contribute to the spirit of the UN80 Initiative.

Subamendment of the EU Member States to the Workers' group's amendment

411. The EU Member States proposed subamending the Workers' amended version of the draft decision to read:

> 90. The Governing Body:
>
> ~~(a) **expressed its concerns about the evolving financial and budgetary challenges facing the Organization, and requested the Director-General to address them proactively based on a comprehensive and evidence-based analysis of costs and benefits of any measures and proposals, including expected timelines;**~~

(b) requested the Director-General to ensure that any measures taken will preserve and safeguard the capacity of the Organization to deliver on its mandate;

(~~a~~c) ~~endorsed~~ ~~**considered**~~ **endorsed the Director-General to continue the reform process** ~~**the overall strategic direction of the ILO review and requested the Director-General to**~~ **take**ing into account its guidance, ensuring tripartite constituents are fully informed and involved ~~**going forward, including through tripartite consultations,**~~ ~~in the follow-up process described in document GB.355/INS/7 and~~ during the ~~**development, as well as the**~~ implementation of the proposed reform measures;

(c *bis*) requested a reprioritization proposal and a subsequent involvement of constituents, including through tripartite consultations, ahead of its 356th Session (March 2026);

(c *ter*) encouraged the Director-General to continue implementing targeted cost-saving measures that do not pre-empt the reprioritization exercise;

(~~b~~d) requested the Director-General to submit to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026) ~~further~~more detailed proposals to enable it to:

(i) take any necessary decisions, including concerning the financial implications of the evolving situation;

(ii) ~~**provide**~~ **take a decision to guid**e~~**ance**~~ ~~**on**~~ the reprioritization of areas of work and other related matters, ensuring they are fully in line with the ILO's constitutional obligations and mandate~~**, taking into account decisions taken, including on the programme and budget and the strategic plan**~~;

(e) requested the Director-General to ensure throughout the reform process and its implementation, proper consultations and negotiations with the Staff Union in line with article 10.1 of the ILO Staff Regulations~~**, and its involvement in any relevant review or task team, as appropriate**~~;

~~**(f) considering current uncertainties, requested the Director-General to postpone implementation of the proposed restructuring of the senior management, notably regarding the policy portfolios, until the next session of the Governing Body (March 2026);**~~

(~~c~~g) requested the Director-General to take into account the guidance provided during the discussion of GB.355/INS/7 in the implementation of the UN80 process**, in alignment with the reprioritization exercise,** and in the elaboration of the ILO's development cooperation and human resources strategies to be submitted to the Governing Body at its 356th Session.

412. The aim of the subamendments was to reconcile differing views and maintain the ILO's tripartite spirit while giving the Office flexibility. The adjustments to subparagraphs (c), (d)(ii), (e) and (g) were aimed at streamlining the decision. Subparagraph (c *bis*) reflected the call from the constituents to be consulted on the reprioritization exercise and subparagraph (c *ter*) acknowledged that measures were already being taken by the Office and to encourage it to continue that work. Subparagraphs (a) and (f) should be deleted as those points – especially subparagraph (f) – should not be included in the decision.

413. **A Government representative of Barbados** said that the Governing Body must effectively discharge its responsibility to provide guidance and oversight that ensured that the ILO remained faithful to its mandate. It should understand the rationale behind staff cuts and be comfortable that decisions taken in that regard maintained regional and gender balance, provided for adequate mentoring and retained expertise. It should also be comfortable that resources would be allocated to priority areas, including to small island developing States and the least developed countries. He was of the view that the organizational chart of the ILO fell within the Governing Body's purview and cautioned against the excessive consolidation of responsibilities, which undermined democratization. He stressed the importance of setting the

ILO's priorities before deciding on the organizational structure. It was clear that not all current activities could continue unchanged; more country-to-country technical assistance might be needed. He suggested that a mechanism could be developed to share suggestions and that the draft decision should reflect the fact that the Governing Body was unsure that its guidance would be properly considered.

414. **A Government representative of Mozambique** commended the Office's efforts to respond to the concerns raised by the constituents regarding the proposed reforms and encouraged the Director-General to continue with the reforms on the understanding that the proposed measures would not compromise the ILO's capacity to provide assistance to its constituents. The measures should balance the diverse interests of the tripartite constituents and of the ILO staff.

415. **A Government representative of Spain** stressed the urgency of moving forward with a reform that would ensure that the ILO fulfilled its mandate effectively and efficiently in the framework of the UN80 process. Spain was not in favour of adopting the proposed organizational chart. It did not seem appropriate to reduce the number of departments as proposed. Effective social dialogue with the Staff Union should allow for solutions to be found that safeguarded valuable expertise. The proposed structure concentrated power without checks and balances and would not lead to effectiveness and efficiency, as it created imbalance. The task team should be guided by the ILO's founding principles, the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019), and the messages that had inspired the resolution concerning the Second World Summit for Social Development adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 113th Session (2025), with particular attention being given to gender equality, the multiple and interrelated forms of discrimination, universal social protection, the fight against informality, wage policies, actions on the care economy, the social and solidarity economy, platform economy, global supply chains, youth employment and labour migration. He urged the Office to uphold its mandate and policies, including the fundamental principles and rights at work. Spain supported both the amendment proposed by Brazil and the amended version proposed by the Workers' group. The subamended version proposed by the EU Member States could be used as a basis on which to reach agreement.

416. **A Government representative of Canada** reiterated that the ILO must remain focused on its core mandate, namely its normative and supervisory systems, the Decent Work Agenda, the fundamental principles and rights at work, and the provision of technical assistance. He called for an integrated approach across all departments and the preservation of the supervisory mechanisms. While he supported the simplification of the ILO's management structure, he stressed that senior management must be balanced, representative and supported by a team with strong expertise and institutional memory. He highlighted the need to ensure the proper sequencing of reform efforts, to avoid rushed decisions, and to complete analyses before taking decisions on the prioritization of activities and the relocation, reduction or appointment of staff. In that regard, the task team should consult with the tripartite constituents in a timely manner, well before March 2026. He called for an inclusive, transparent, prudent and human-centred reform process aligned with the UN80 Initiative. Canada remained committed to achieving a resilient and sustainable ILO that effectively delivered for all its constituents.

417. **A Government representative of France** associated herself with the statements made by IMEC and the European Union. She commended the collective sense of responsibility demonstrated during the discussions and noted that, despite having differing views, all parties shared a commitment to safeguarding the ILO's unique role in advancing social justice. She stressed the need to provide clear guidance to the Director-General so that he could take action, according to the relevant timetable. Immediate measures were needed to address the liquidity crisis, while longer-term measures should deliver structural reforms that enhanced the ILO's effectiveness in a context of limited resources. She called for an accelerated reprioritization exercise so that decisions be finalized by March 2026. In the interim, the Director-General should implement targeted cost-saving measures that required no upfront investment and did not pre-empt the reprioritization process. Work should also begin on a substantial adjustment of the 2026–27 budget to reduce dependency and improve efficiency. In this regard, the proposals under scenario 2 should be fine-tuned and complemented by short-term cost-neutral measures under scenario 1. The tripartite constituents must be fully involved and kept informed throughout the reform process and must be able to provide guidance to the Office. France supported the Workers' amended version of the draft decision, as subamended by the EU Member States.

418. **A Government representative of China**, emphasizing the need to uphold multilateralism and strengthen solidarity and cooperation at what was a critical juncture for the ILO, called for a reform that was rooted in the ILO's core mandate of promoting decent work and advancing social justice. The reform should be human-centred and reflect the aspirations of the tripartite constituents for better employment and stronger social protection systems. The reform should not be focused merely on resolving the Office's cash flow issues. Its aim should also be to increase efficiency and effectiveness, including by strengthening the role of the ILO in the global governance system. It must also maintain balance, by ensuring the advancement of core functions in a coordinated and holistic manner. Decisions on organizational restructuring and relocations should take into account cost savings while also ensuring that key policymaking and core departments would remain in Geneva. High priority must be accorded to ensuring that the reform did not exacerbate geographical imbalances in staff representation. In addition, the reform should enhance tripartite stakeholder engagement, with informal consultations being held to gather tripartite input on future priorities. He trusted that the proposed changes would not compromise the institutional autonomy and legal personality of the Turin Centre. Placing the Centre in the Corporate Services cluster seemed reasonable. China took note of the proposed amendments and was willing to engage constructively in the discussions.

419. **A Government representative of Colombia** expressed concern about the speed of the restructuring process, calling on the Director-General to postpone the decision on that measure until March 2026, to give the Governing Body more time to reflect on it. In the meantime, other cost-saving measures could be implemented to move forwards with the reform. While he supported the Director-General's overall efforts, making decisions that did not fully satisfy all stakeholders could undermine the trust that should be placed in the Organization. He supported the amendment proposed by Brazil, which could be incorporated into the amended version proposed by the Workers, which he also supported. He called on all members of the Governing Body to participate constructively in the debate, with a view to reaching a decision that was satisfactory to all, and, above all, that protected the ILO.

420. **A Government representative of Mexico** appreciated the Office's transparency and commitment to keeping the tripartite constituents informed at every stage of the process. Any adjustments must preserve the core mandate of the ILO, in particular its normative function and its institutional capacity-building role. Mexico agreed that the redefinition of priorities should be guided by clear criteria: consistency with the strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda; proximity to the constituents; and measurable results. Mexico also supported the proposals to strengthen field offices and to create synergies with the United Nations, provided that policy coherence and continuous communication with the tripartite constituents were guaranteed. He highlighted the importance of the provisional implementation plan and the need for a transparent, fair and inclusive change management process, including consultations with staff and the Staff Union, to maintain trust and ensure that the measures met the constituents' needs. The decision must reflect the guidance shared during previous discussions, and balance the need for effectiveness and efficiency, financial sustainability and respect for the ILO's constitutional mandate. Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to a more modern and effective organization that was closer to its constituents without losing its essence or its normative leadership. Mexico could support the amendment proposed by Brazil and was open to the amended version proposed by the Workers' group, subject to the evolution of the discussion. The proposals complemented each other.

421. **A Government representative of Uruguay** expressed support for the amendment proposed by Brazil, noting that the reform should respect the ILO's constitutional mandate. That meant referring to three fundamental principles set out in the Preamble to the Constitution and in the Declaration of Philadelphia: that lasting peace could be achieved only if it was based on social justice; that labour was not a commodity; and that the war against want had to be carried on by continuous international effort in which the representatives of workers and employers, enjoying equal status with those of governments, joined with them in free discussion and democratic decision with a view to the promotion of the common welfare. Safeguarding the objectives of the ILO, its tripartite governance and its autonomy, as proposed in the amendment presented by Brazil, was a historic duty that the members of the Governing Body had to fulfil.

422. **The Director-General** noted that common themes as well as opposing views had emerged across groups, which was normal during reform processes. Emphasizing the importance of pragmatism and optimism, he called on the Governing Body to find a balanced path forward and not to expect a perfect solution. He did not see the need to wait before implementing the proposed organizational chart; the chart could always be adjusted again, if the direction of the reform changed in the future. The current direction was to refocus on the ILO's normative agenda, to strengthen the supervisory mechanisms and to prioritize the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. He appreciated that the proposed amendments emphasized the need to use the ILO's constitutional principles as a compass.

423. The Office should be given a degree of flexibility in implementing the reform, while ensuring accountability and regular reporting to the Governing Body. He confirmed that the task team on reprioritization was geographically and gender balanced and took note of the suggestion to include a member from the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight or the Evaluation Office in the team. All measures linked to the 2026–27 budget would require Governing Body approval in March 2026 before implementation. It was his hope that the other proposed measures could start being implemented right away.

424. In response to calls for a phased approach to relocations, he observed that there was a need to move forwards without rushing. He recalled that there were three types of relocation under consideration: the relocation of development cooperation staff currently based in Geneva; relocations to strengthen capacity-building and technical assistance in the field; and relocations for cost-saving purposes. He had heard no objections to the first two types of relocation, which could proceed relatively easily. The third required more time for fine-tuning and consultation with directors and decisions on those relocations could be revisited by the Governing Body in March if necessary.

425. Reaffirming that addressing the financial situation was a top priority, he gave his assurances that the Office would follow up and report on the situation. Informal consultations on reprioritization could be held in January 2026, as requested by some members, before finalizing proposals for the Governing Body session in March.

426. Emphasizing the urgency and importance of the reform, he said that a clear sense of direction and formal endorsement from the Governing Body was essential and reiterated the need to proceed despite imperfections. The feedback received would help guide the work during the implementation phase. He recalled that the new development cooperation and human resources strategies would be discussed at the March 2026 session and noted that the concerns raised during informal consultations were being taken into account in their preparation.

427. He expressed appreciation for the constructive exchange and recalled that the Office had already begun implementing certain measures, such as the measure to free up two floors for rental. Those measures, which involved minimal or one-time investments, were unrelated to the 2026–27 budget. He stressed the importance of expediting measures that could be implemented immediately, while allowing additional time for those requiring further consideration. While some reforms could follow a phased approach, the global financial situation called for timely action on others.

428. **The Worker spokesperson** urged the Employers' group to reconsider its position, clarifying that the aim of the new subparagraph (a) was not to postpone action, but to reflect the concerns expressed and requests made over the previous weeks and months. Referring to subparagraph (c), she reiterated that her group found it difficult to "endorse the overall strategic direction of the ILO review" without a clear definition of what that entailed. The amended version emphasized the need for proactive measures by the Director-General, based on comprehensive and evidence-based analysis and inclusive consultations. She thanked the Africa group for supporting the thrust of the amended version, with the exception of subparagraph (f), and the EU Member States for their efforts to reconcile differing views. She further recognized that other groups were still considering their positions and stressed the need for additional time to reach consensus.

429. Subparagraph (f) had been proposed to reflect the broad agreement on the need to protect the ILO's core mandate and autonomy during the reform process and the concerns expressed about the Director-General's plan to implement the proposed new organizational structure immediately, specifically his plan to entrust departments central to the ILO's core mandate to a Deputy Director-General. She emphasized the importance of institutional memory and the need for the necessary skills to deliver on the review and reiterated that the Director-General should make his decision in that regard after the reprioritization exercise had been carried out. Other aspects of the proposed restructuring could, however, be implemented immediately.

430. **The Employer spokesperson** reiterated that the reform should focus on making the ILO more efficient and relevant, and not just on cost savings. It was essential to endorse the proposed strategy rather than delay decisions, as postponement would hinder progress during a time of crisis. Noting the broad agreement not to limit the Director-General's prerogative and recalling that there was nothing new about the proposed organizational chart, he rejected the Workers' proposal to postpone restructuring. Current structures created silos and duplication, and decisive action was needed to endorse the strategy and to empower the Director-General to proceed.

431. Requesting further clarity on the issue of relocations, he said that while the Director-General should proceed with relocations related to technical cooperation, other relocations should be deferred until the reprioritization exercise had been carried out. Responding to a comment made on behalf of the Africa group, he said that subparagraph (b)(i) of the original version of the draft decision already stated that actions with financial implications – which included relocations – should be referred to the Governing Body for approval. He therefore considered that no amendment was necessary. He reiterated that his group did not support the Workers' proposal and supported the original draft decision.

432. When resuming the discussion after a break for consultations, **the Employer spokesperson** recalled that his group had supported the original draft decision, but proposed, in the interest of compromise, further subamendments to the version subamended by the EU Member States. In subparagraph (b), he proposed replacing "requested the Director-General to ensure that any measures taken will preserve and safeguard the capacity of the Organization to deliver on its mandate" with "requested the Director-General to focus the reform process on delivering on the Organization's core mandate", as preserving and safeguarding delivery on the ILO's mandate might be inconsistent with certain cost-cutting measures. In subparagraph (c), he proposed replacing "endorsed the Director-General to continue the reform process" with "endorsed the continuation of the reform process" to improve the grammar and because the Governing Body would endorse the process rather than the Director-General. In the same subparagraph, he proposed replacing "ensuring tripartite constituents are fully informed and involved during the implementation of the proposed reform measures" with "ensuring tripartite constituents are fully informed going forward", as the involvement of constituents was also mentioned in other subparagraphs.

433. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the Employers' group's willingness to work on the basis of the subamendment of the EU Member States, but noted that views differed on the definition of the Organization's core mandate. She would express a position on the latest proposals after listening to the room.

434. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa said that his group had reflected on the latest proposed text, which constituted a series of discrete elements rather than a comprehensive strategic vision. The group considered the reform to be a two-pronged endeavour: firstly, implementing immediate financial efficiency measures to address short-term constraints and, secondly, undertaking a thoughtful structural reform of the Organization to secure its medium- to long-term efficacy and impact. Consequently, the Africa group endorsed the directive to the Director-General to proceed, with the explicit understanding that this mandate was: (1) to take all necessary decisions, including those pertaining to financial implications, based on a transparent and evidence-based analysis of costs, benefits and risks; (2) to develop a robust reprioritization framework, ensuring the subsequent and meaningful involvement of tripartite constituents in its finalization and application; and (3) to ensure that any and all measures taken would preserve and safeguard the operational autonomy of the Organization, its capacity to deliver on its fundamental mandate, and the imperative of equitable geographical representation at all levels. The group was not proposing formal amendments to the draft decision, but was submitting those three points with a view to facilitating the Governing Body's discussion.

435. **The Worker spokesperson** indicated flexibility in integrating the Africa group's proposals into existing amendments. Her own group's amendment also aimed to distinguish between immediate challenges and longer-term issues, and referred in subparagraph (a) to the need for clear data and timelines. However, the decision needed to state clearly what it was that the Governing Body was endorsing. Point 3 of the Africa group's proposal reflected the concern expressed in the amendment submitted by Brazil regarding preserving the Organization's autonomy. However, more time was needed to integrate the various proposals into one text.

436. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark expressed flexibility in incorporating the proposal of the Africa group and the Employers' group's subamendments into one text.

437. **The Worker spokesperson,** referring to the Employers' group's further subamendment to the subamendment of the EU Member States, said that endorsing the continuation of the reform process did not make it clear what the Governing Body was endorsing. She did not support the deletion of the concept of involving tripartite constituents in subparagraph (c), as the references to constituents' involvement elsewhere in the text meant their involvement in the reprioritization and not in the rest of the discussion.

438. On the subamendment of the EU Member States to her own group's amendment, she expressed appreciation for the attempt to secure wider support, but asked why subparagraph (a) had been deleted and what exactly was meant by "going forward" in (c). She could support subparagraph (c *bis*) requesting the involvement of constituents in the reprioritization, including through tripartite consultations, and (c *ter*) on implementing targeted cost-saving measures that did not pre-empt the prioritization exercise. She questioned why the reference to decisions already taken on the programme and budget and the strategic plan had been deleted, as they would be an important basis for the prioritization exercise. She also queried why the reference to involvement of the Staff Union in any relevant review or task team had been removed, as that was important to ILO staff. She could support the inclusion of the reprioritization exercise in subparagraph (g). It was disappointing that subparagraph (f) of her group's amendment had been deleted, as the group had strong concerns on the restructuring of senior management; however, it could perhaps be reworded at a later stage and integrated with the notion of the importance of preserving the Organization's autonomy. On subparagraph (g), she sought clarification on the intention behind the addition of "in alignment with the reprioritization exercise" after "the implementation of the UN80 process", especially as the reprioritization exercise would take place after the Governing Body's discussion in March 2026.

439. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark explained that the proposed deletion of subparagraph (a) of the Workers' amendment was intended to streamline the text, but the group was open to retaining it and working further on it. On subparagraph (c), the group had in fact proposed deleting "going forward", as it understood that the process had already begun, but could support retaining it. On subparagraph (d)(ii), the proposed deletion of the reference to previous decisions was to allow the Office more leeway. On subparagraph (e), the group supported the involvement of the Staff Union, but considered that it should be for the Office to decide on the composition of the task team. The group had deleted subparagraph (f) because it did not support it. The proposal to insert "in alignment with the reprioritization exercise" was to reflect the fact that it was linked to the UN80 process; she proposed rewording it as "ensure that the reprioritization exercise is aligned with this process".

440. **The Worker spokesperson** suggested that it would be better to address alignment with the UN80 process during the reprioritization discussion in March 2026.

441. **The Employer spokesperson** did not support reinstating subparagraph (a) of the Workers' group's amendment, as it would weaken the decision. It was also unclear, as the reform was intended to make the Organization more impactful in addition to addressing the financial constraints. He noted that constituents' involvement was already included in (c *bis*) and (g). Furthermore, it was superfluous to state in subparagraph (d)(ii) that the Governing Body would take a decision in line with the ILO's constitutional obligations.

442. **The Chairperson** proposed that the Governing Body could identify points of consensus in the draft decision to facilitate an examination of the remaining text. She suggested that subparagraphs (c *ter*), (d), (d)(i), (e) and (g) could be considered to be agreed text.

443. **A Government representative of the United States** noted that her Government had not yet expressed a position and was still considering all the proposals that had been made. Therefore, it could not yet consider any text to have been agreed on.

444. **The Worker spokesperson** observed that the Governing Body was attempting to discuss many different elements simultaneously and had not yet properly considered the suggestions of the Africa group. Her group was currently unable to concede certain points as they had not been discussed sufficiently.

445. **The Employer spokesperson** could support the wording "that do not pre-empt the reprioritization exercise" in subparagraph (c *ter*) on the understanding that it would not unintentionally block reform measures, as not implementing any cost-saving measures would also have an impact on the ILO's work.

446. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark explained, in response to a question from the Africa group, that (c *ter*) referred to the measures needed immediately to address the financial situation, whereas (d)(i) referred to the measures to be taken after the March 2026 session.

447. **The Worker spokesperson** explained that the intention of subparagraph (a) of her group's amendment was to give the Director-General some flexibility to proceed proactively, provided that decisions were based on sound financial data; the group agreed that additional action would be required sooner or later. Subparagraph (c *ter*) introduced some ambiguity, as all measures would ultimately have an impact; it could be deleted if (a) was retained. The Governing Body must give a clear message on what it was requesting the Director-General to do. She noted that the Governing Body had not agreed on changing "considered" to "endorsed" and suggested that the EU Member States might have meant to convey support for the Director-General, which would itself have value. The Workers' group could not support endorsing either the reform process or the overall strategic direction because it was unclear what it would be endorsing. Furthermore, the group strongly objected to deleting the reference to the involvement of tripartite constituents, who should be involved during both the development and the implementation of the proposed reform measures.

448. **A Government representative of Brazil** asked how the Governing Body could endorse the reform process when the reprioritization exercise was due to be conducted in March 2026. Although the reference to the overall strategic direction in the original draft decision was not entirely clear, it would be preferable for the Governing Body to endorse that.

449. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed that endorsing the overall strategy was preferable, but noted that the Governing Body could also endorse a reform process on the understanding that the prioritization would be discussed in March 2026. He could not agree to replacing "endorsed" with "supported" the Director-General, as it changed the meaning. The Director-General needed a mandate and thus "endorsed" was the correct term.

450. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark explained that the group had suggested endorsing the reform process, rather than the overall strategic direction, as it was clearer. It was flexible on whether to refer to endorsing the Director-General or the continuation of the process.

451. **Speaking on behalf of the United States, the United Kingdom, Türkiye and Switzerland**, a Government representative of the United States said that they could have supported the Workers' group's proposal, "considered the direction of the ILO review and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance".

452. **The Chairperson** proposed that a small group should meet separately to identify areas of convergence and divergence on the draft decision so as to facilitate further discussion by the Governing Body.

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

Government group's proposed amendment

453. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Australia said that, having listened carefully to the points raised in the rich tripartite discussion, and in the interests of providing clear guidance to the Director-General on the way forward, the Government group had prepared the following amended text bringing together key points raised by all Governing Body members:

The Governing Body:

(i) expressed its concerns about the evolving financial and budgetary challenges;

(ii) supported and reiterated the need for a comprehensive strategic vision for the ILO's review, anchored on a two-pronged endeavour of implementing immediate financial efficiency measures and undertaking a thoughtful structural reform of the Organization to secure its medium to long-term efficacy and impact;

(iii) reaffirmed that the ILO's reform and all subsequent measures shall be guided by, and fully respect, the Organization's constitutional mandate, its fundamental principles, and its tripartite governance structure; and further reaffirmed that the implementation of the reform shall safeguard the ILO's operational autonomy and ensure that its standards policy, social dialogue and decisions taken by its governing bodies are respected and implemented;

(iv) requested the Director-General to proceed with the reform process guided by the following priorities:

(a) focus on delivering the Organization's core mandate;

(b) develop a robust reprioritization framework, ensuring the subsequent and meaningful consultation of tripartite constituents in its finalization in the lead-up to a decision at the 356th Session of the Governing Body (March 2026);

(c) take all necessary decisions, including those pertaining to financial implications, based on a transparent and evidence-based analysis of costs, savings, benefits, and risks while not pre-empting the reprioritization exercise;

(d) reinforce the ILO's capacity in the field to deliver on the ground and respond to constituents' needs and preserve technical and capacity-building programmes being implemented in developing countries, in particular small island developing states and least developed countries, including necessary assistance for any reporting reform;

(e) take all necessary measures to ensure that throughout the reform process and its implementation, consultations and negotiations are held with the Staff Union in line with Article 10.1 of the ILO Staff Regulations;

(f) ensure that any and all measures taken will preserve and safeguard the operational capacity of the Organization to deliver on its fundamental mandate, and the imperative of equitable geographical representation in staffing at all levels;

(g) take into account the guidance provided by the 355th Meeting of the Governing Body in the ILO's participation in the UN80 process.

(v) requested the Director-General to submit to the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body the reprioritization framework and the ILO's development cooperation and human resources strategies for decision, taking into account guidance provided by the Governing Body.

454. The proposed text demonstrated the critical importance of the discussion for the future of the ILO and the value that Governments placed on reaching consensus. The group withdrew all amendments and subamendments previously put forward by Governments and requested that the Employers' and Workers' groups consider the proposed text as a basis for achieving consensus.

455. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa explained that the amended text, submitted by Government representatives from all 187 Member States, aimed to balance the urgency of fiscal sustainability with the imperative of preserving the ILO's unique role and impact. It provided a mandate for action framed by clear strategic principles and robust safeguards to ensure that reforms would strengthen rather than diminish the ILO's ability to fulfil its constitutional mandate.

456. **Subparagraph (i)** formally acknowledged the severity of the financial situation and the untenability of the status quo, thereby justifying the subsequent directives for reform. **Subparagraph (ii)** sought to elevate the reform from a series of ad hoc cuts focused on immediate savings to a coherent, forward-looking strategy and a holistic review. **Subparagraph (iii)** was foundational in that it anchored the entire reform process and established non-negotiable boundaries for all changes.

457. **Subparagraph (iv)** transformed the strategic vision into a conditional mandate authorizing the Director-General to proceed, but only within a framework designed by the Governing Body to ensure legitimacy, transparency and effectiveness. **Clause (a)** ensured that the reform was purpose-driven, as all changes must be evaluated against their contribution to delivering the ILO's essential work. **Clause (b)** provided for a robust reprioritization framework, with meaningful consultations, to create a transparent, logical system to enable informed decisions on which programmes to scale back or discontinue. **Clause (c)** required an analysis of costs, savings, benefits and risks to protect against arbitrary or politically motivated decisions, and the caveat to not pre-empt the reprioritization exercise would prevent the Office from making irreversible cuts that would undermine the broader strategic review. **Clause (d)** ensured that the ILO remained relevant and responsive at the country level, particularly in the regions and countries most dependent on its technical cooperation, as a counterweight to decentralization or retrenchments. **Clause (e)** mandated consultation with the Staff Union to manage morale, preserve institutional knowledge and ensure that changes were operationally sound. **Clause (f)** prohibited measures that would compromise the Organization's ability to function effectively, and linked the reform to the long-standing goal of equitable geographical representation. **Clause (g)** required the ILO's internal reforms to be strategically aligned with the broader UN system, enhancing the ILO's influence and avoiding contradictory initiatives.

458. **Subparagraph (v)** established a critical oversight mechanism by ensuring that the strategic frameworks and key decisions on reprioritization, development cooperation and human resources were submitted to the Governing Body for approval, preserving its ultimate authority over the strategic direction of the Organization and preventing the implementation of major changes without endorsement.

459. The intention of the proposal was for the Governing Body to provide the Director-General with a mandate for necessary change while retaining strategic oversight, ensuring that the reform process would be transparent, grounded in evidence, guided by the ILO's constitutional principles and shaped by meaningful social dialogue. The ultimate objective was not simply a smaller ILO, but a more focused, resilient and effective ILO that would be fully equipped to advance social justice in a changing world.

460. The Africa group sought clarity from the Legal Adviser on whether the word "imperative" could be used in relation to equitable geographical representation in clause (f). The group considered the matter to be imperative, as only 2 out of 19 D2-level positions were held by Africans, but did not want to use the term if the Office would not be able to take appropriate action.

461. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh requested the Legal Adviser also to clarify what the prerogatives of the Director-General were in the reform process.

462. **The Employer and Worker spokespersons** expressed their appreciation to the Government group for its proposal on a possible way to achieve consensus and requested time to consider it within their respective groups.

Workers' and Employers' groups' proposed subamendments

463. When the discussion resumed, **the Chairperson** invited the Worker and Employer spokespersons to express their positions on each subparagraph.

(There were no subamendments to subparagraph (i).)

464. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed to delete "structural" before "reform" in subparagraph (ii), because "structural reform" had a specific meaning in the multilateral system and beyond.

465. **The Employer spokesperson** preferred to retain "structural reform". He proposed to delete "and reiterated the need for a comprehensive" before "strategic vision", as the strategic vision had already been developed over the previous six months.

466. **The Worker spokesperson** did not support the Employers' group's proposal, as it remained unclear what the strategic vision was.

467. **The Employer spokesperson** explained that page 7 of document GB.355/INS/7 had a section entitled "The ILO review: vision and focus". The vision had been developed with all constituents through various consultative processes, and the Office document for the August consultations had stated that the aim was to develop a strategic vision, which the Office had done on the basis of those consultations.

468. **A Government representative of South Africa** did not agree that a strategic vision already existed. Paragraph 10 of document GB.355/INS/7 referred to a strategic plan, but that was different from a strategic vision. He could support the deletion of "structural" to leave "thoughtful reform".

(There were no subamendments to subparagraph (iii).)

469. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed to replace the word "guided by" with "based on" in the chapeau of subparagraph (iv) to strengthen the wording.

470. **The Employer spokesperson** had no subamendments to the chapeau.

471. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed to delete the word "core" before "mandate" in clause (a), as the text contained various references to the "core", "fundamental" or "constitutional" mandate and the term "core mandate" was understood differently by various members.

472. **The Employer spokesperson** had no subamendments to clause (a).

473. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed in clause (b): to replace “framework” with “proposals for reprioritization”; to delete “subsequent and”; and to replace “in its finalization in the lead up to a decision” with “in the preparation of decision-making”. The aim was to make it clear what the Office was expected to do.

474. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed replacing clauses (b) and (c) and subparagraph (v) with the following new clause and subclauses:

> requested the Director-General to submit to the Governing Body, at its 356th Session (March 2026), further proposals to enable it to:
>
> (i) take any necessary decisions, including concerning the financial implications of the evolving situation and relocation of staff;
>
> (ii) provide guidance on the reprioritization of areas of work, ILO development cooperation and human resource strategies and other related matters.

The reasoning was to consolidate the points where the Director-General was to submit proposals to the Governing Body. Furthermore, the former clause (c) read as if the Director-General would have carte blanche to make decisions with substantial financial implications.

475. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group had understood clause (c) differently, as the chapeau of subparagraph (iv) requested the Director-General to proceed with the reform process based on the priorities listed, and clause (c) required all necessary decisions to be based on a transparent and evidence-based analysis of costs, savings, benefits and risks. If the Government group could confirm that understanding, her group could support the clause without subamendments. The Workers’ group had no subamendments to clause (d).

476. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed in clause (d) to replace “reinforce” with “optimize”, as it would not be possible to reinforce all capacity-building and technical cooperation with a 20 per cent budget reduction. Likewise, he proposed to replace “and preserve” with “through” before “technical and capacity-building programmes”, as “preserve” indicated the status quo and was the opposite of reform. At the end of the clause, he proposed to delete “including necessary assistance for any reporting reform”, as the Governing Body had already discussed reporting reform under agenda item LILS/1 and it was too narrow to be included in the clause.

477. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed to insert a new clause after (d): “preserve the necessary normative and policy expertise at headquarters in Geneva”. The group recognized the importance of strengthening the field to the extent possible, but that should not be at the expense of retaining the necessary expertise at headquarters.

478. She recognized that clause (e) was the first part of an amendment from her group, but noted that it did not include the reference to the Staff Union’s involvement in the internal teams on the reform activity, which was important to the Workers’ group.

479. **The Employer spokesperson** had no subamendments to clause (e).

480. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed to make clause (f) more precise by replacing the word “imperative” with “importance”, by adding “gender and” before “geographical representation” and by adding, after “staffing at all levels” the words “of the Organization”. That was on the understanding that General Service staff were bound to a specific location.

481. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed to delete the word “equitable” and add “tripartite and” before “geographical representation”, to reflect the fact that he had emphasized throughout the discussion the importance his group placed on having more staff members with a business background.

(There were no subamendments to clause (g).)

482. In subparagraph (v), **the Worker spokesperson** proposed to replace the words “the reprioritization framework” with “proposals regarding the reprioritization and restructuring of the Organization”.

483. **The Employer spokesperson** recalled that his group was proposing to delete subparagraph (v) and incorporate the content in a new clause of subparagraph (iv).

484. **The Chairperson** noted that all of the Employers’ and Workers’ groups’ subamendments had been presented, and invited the representative of the Government group, the Legal Adviser and the Director-General to respond to the questions put to them.

485. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Australia explained that the intention of clause (c) was indeed to require an evidence-based and transparent process and not to give the Director-General carte blanche. The wording “while not pre-empting the reprioritization exercise” was intended to provide an important caveat, in that the decisions in relation to the reprioritization exercise, which would affect the allocations under the programme and budget, must be put to the Governing Body.

486. **A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) responded to the question from the Africa group on the use of the word “imperative” in clause (f) by citing article 9(2) of the ILO Constitution, which read: “So far as is possible with due regard to the efficiency of the work of the Office, the Director-General shall select persons of different nationalities”, and article 4.2(a)(i) of the Staff Regulations, which read: “The paramount consideration in the filling of any vacancy shall be the necessity to obtain a staff of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of maintaining a staff selected on a wide geographical basis, recognizing also the need to take into account considerations of gender and age.” She noted that the reference to the goal of “equitable geographical representation” in the draft decision reflected the applicable legal framework. However, the use of the word “imperative” might be construed as limiting the Director-General’s discretion to appoint staff, in a manner that was not fully aligned with the Constitution and the Staff Regulations. The fact that article 9(2) of the Constitution provided that staff of different nationalities should be selected insofar as possible with regard to the efficiency of the work of the Office suggested that the efficiency of the work of the Office might be the overriding factor in the selection of staff. That was also reflected in the Staff Regulations, under which the paramount consideration was “a staff of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity”. As the word “imperative” was understood to signal something that must be done and was unavoidable, the Governing Body might wish to consider using a different word.

487. In response to the question from ASPAG on the Director-General’s prerogatives in relation to the reform, she noted that the ILO Constitution provided the legal framework, but did not codify the precise scope of the Director-General’s mandate and the interface with the Governing Body. Nonetheless, there were several provisions of the Constitution which, read jointly, outlined the distribution of functions. Article 2 established the three organs of the ILO, which included “a Governing Body” and “an International Labour Office controlled by the Governing Body”. Article 8 provided that the Director-General “shall be appointed by the

Governing Body, and, subject to the instructions of the Governing Body, shall be responsible for the efficient conduct of the International Labour Office and for such other duties as may be assigned to him”. Article 9 related to the staff of the Office, who “shall be appointed by the Director-General under regulations approved by the Governing Body”. Article 10 set out the functions of the Office, paragraph 2 of which provided that, in carrying out the listed functions, the Office was “subject to such directions as the Governing Body may give”. Lastly, article 13(5) provided that the Director-General “shall be responsible to the Governing Body for the proper expenditure of the funds” of the Organization. Hence there was a balance between the roles, which was applied in practice by the Governing Body laying down general rules providing the framework within which the Director-General exercised his or her functions. For example, the Governing Body adopted the Staff Regulations within the framework of which the Director-General appointed staff and supervised their work. The Governing Body was expected to give instructions enabling the Director-General to exercise his or her authority for the “efficient conduct of the Office”. The term “efficient” limited the instructions that the Governing Body could give. Accordingly, the expectation under the Constitution was that, in carrying out his or her functions, the Director-General would exercise judgement as to whether to seek instructions from the Governing Body and, if so, to what extent. Likewise, in exercising its control over the Office, the Governing Body was expected to respect the Director-General’s discretion to manage the Office and its functions efficiently.

488. **The Director-General** sought clarity on the intent behind the Workers’ group’s proposed new clause, “Preserve the necessary normative and policy expertise at headquarters” and suggested that the group might consider rephrasing it to make it clearer what it expected the Office to implement. He clarified that ILO headquarters would remain in Geneva. He was proposing that a proportion – perhaps 10 to 20 per cent – of staff in departments, including policy departments, could be relocated outside Geneva. However, the proportion of staff to be relocated would not be the same in every department. For example, due to the work carried out by the International Labour Standards Department, it would be unlikely that those staff members could be located outside Geneva.

489. He also sought clarity on the Workers’ group’s proposal to add, after “reprioritization”, the words “and restructuring of the Organization” in subparagraph (v), as that assumed that the Governing Body saw a need to restructure the Organization, whereas it was for the Office to consider whether restructuring was needed and, if so, present proposals.

490. In relation to the Employers’ group’s proposal to add “tripartite” before “geographical representation”, he noted that the Office must ensure that the Governing Body’s decision was not incompatible with article 9(4) of the ILO Constitution, which provided that the staff shall be exclusively international in character.

491. **The Worker spokesperson** clarified that the intention of the proposed new clause was to recognize the different roles of experts at headquarters and in the field. She therefore proposed adding “recognizing the different and mutually reinforcing roles of experts at headquarters and experts in the field” at the end and adding “technical” between “normative” and “policy expertise”.

492. The proposal to add a reference to “restructuring” in subparagraph (v) was to reflect the fact that document GB.355/INS/7 contained many paragraphs on the organizational model and how to restructure it, which was different from a reprioritization of activities. The word “reorganization” could be used instead.

493. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed that, instead of tripartite representation, subparagraph (iv)(f) could refer to “experience relevant to all three constituent groups”, which was wording that had been used in past decisions.

(The discussion was adjourned to allow the Governing Body members to discuss the proposed subamendments within their groups.)

Agreed text

494. When the discussion resumed, **the Chairperson** proposed that the Governing Body identify provisions on which all three groups agreed, to allow it to focus on unresolved issues, and invited the Employer and Worker spokespersons to indicate where their groups could be flexible on their proposed subamendments.

495. In the discussion that ensued, subparagraphs (i) and (iii), and clauses (e) and (g) of subparagraph (iv) were identified as agreed text. The Workers’ group withdrew its subamendment to the chapeau of subparagraph (iv), which was then also considered to be agreed text. The Employers’ group withdrew its subamendment proposing the consolidation of clauses (b) and (c) of subparagraph (iv) and of subparagraph (v).

496. The provisions pending further discussion were identified as: subparagraph (ii); clauses (a)–(d) and (f) of subparagraph (iv); the Workers’ group’s proposed new clause under subparagraph (iv); and subparagraph (v).

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

Discussion of the proposed subamendments

Subparagraph (ii)

497. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that, while her group had reached a unified position on many of the proposed subamendments, it had divergent views on those proposed by the Employers’ and Workers’ groups to subparagraph (ii). She therefore requested that the original wording be retained.

498. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa supported the retention of the original wording, reiterating that the Office document did not contain the elements of a strategic vision.

499. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Bangladesh said that the wording originally proposed by the Government group captured both the need for a strategic vision and the need to allow the Director-General some flexibility, subject to the guidance of the Governing Body. It should therefore be retained.

500. **A Government representative of the United States** noted that the Office document offered valuable insights on the planned reforms amid uncertain and evolving circumstances. She acknowledged the Government group’s position but recalled the need for consensus rather than a simple majority. She would prefer to review the entire text before taking a position on the proposed subamendments.

501. **The Employer spokesperson** said that a strategic vision for the ILO review was clearly outlined in the Office document, which reflected the extensive input provided by multiple stakeholders over the past months through a robust and unprecedented consultation process. Although the aim was to reach consensus, his group’s position, including on the importance of retaining the word “endorsed” in reference to the strategic vision, had not been reflected in the Government group's proposal. The proposed wording represented a significantly diluted version of the original draft decision presented by the Office. Nevertheless, for the sake of compromise, his group could accept the text, as subamended by his group, as a bare minimum to give the Director-General and senior management a clear mandate to proceed with the review. He urged the Government group to reconsider its position in that regard.

502. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the text proposed by the Government group had received general support, with some exceptions. In order to facilitate consensus, she withdrew her proposed subamendment and could support the text as proposed by the Government group.

503. **The Director-General** emphasized the need to consider the wording carefully, to ensure clarity on whether the Governing Body was supporting the need for a strategic vision, or the vision itself. He recalled that, at its 352nd Session (October–November 2024), the Governing Body had adopted the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29, which articulated a comprehensive strategic vision for the ILO's work. While adjustments to that plan might be needed based on recent discussions and reprioritization, it would be inaccurate to suggest that a strategic vision was lacking.

504. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed on the need for clarity. The discussions should build on the Government group's solid proposal – which related to a strategic vision specifically for the ILO review – and called for the constructive engagement of all participants.

505. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa said that although his group believed that the review of the strategic vision had not been finalized, in the interest of consensus it would withdraw the subamendment to insert "reiterated the need for a comprehensive" before "strategic vision".

506. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed the wording "supported the further development of the strategic vision" to indicate that it was not yet final.

507. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed "supported the vision for the ILO's review and reiterated the need for further development" to encompass both ideas.

508. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed "supported the strategic vision for the ILO's review to be further developed".

509. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed placing commas around "to be further developed".

510. **A Government representative of the United States** supported the Employers' group's latest proposal.

511. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa proposed "supported the strategic vision for the ILO's reform, to be further developed and reviewed".

512. **The Worker spokesperson** considered that the Africa group's proposal deviated too much from the previous one. The two options under discussion should be either "supported the further development of the strategic vision" or "supported the strategic vision for the ILO's review to be further developed".

513. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Bangladesh proposed the wording "supported the strategic vision for the ILO's review, with the understanding that it will be further developed".

514. **The Employer and Worker spokespersons, and a Government representative of South Africa** supported the proposal by ASPAG, which was therefore adopted.

Subparagraph (iv)(a)

515. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that her group wished to retain the word "core" before "mandate" in subparagraph (iv)(a), noting that the Office document contained multiple references to the ILO's core mandate.

516. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the ILO should be guided by the mandate set out in its Constitution and in the Declaration of Philadelphia. She questioned whether there was full agreement on the meaning of the term "core mandate" and warned that using different ways to refer to the ILO's mandate in the decision could create confusion in the future. However, she would defer to the Government group on the matter.

517. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that her group saw no need to change the other references to the ILO's mandate; in each instance the term was used, the context provided sufficient clarity as to the intended meaning.

518. **The Employer spokesperson** recalled that there had been broad agreement during the discussions on the need to focus on the ILO's core mandate. As it seemed illogical to shift to referring simply to the "Organization's mandate", he fully supported the Government's proposal to retain the reference to "core mandate".

Subparagraph (iv)(b)

519. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia and the Employer spokesperson both said that their groups could support the subamendments proposed by the Workers' group to subparagraph (iv)(b).

520. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that her group's understanding of subparagraph (iv)(b) was that the Office would develop robust proposals for reprioritization, after which the tripartite constituents would be meaningfully consulted in preparation for decision-making at the 356th Session of the Governing Body (March 2026).

Subparagraph (iv)(c)

521. **The Employer spokesperson** said that he would welcome clarification as to how subparagraph (iv)(c) should be read from a legal perspective. Specifically, he asked whether the Governing Body's approval would be needed for any decisions taken by the Director-General that had financial implications.

522. **A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) said that the Governing Body and the Director-General had clearly defined roles regarding financial matters based on the ILO Constitution and the Financial Regulations, as described in the Introductory note to the *Compendium of rules applicable to the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*. Under article 13(5) of the Constitution, the Governing Body was responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the Office. Furthermore, the Conference had assigned a number of functions to the Governing Body, as set forth in the Financial Regulations, such as authorizing expenditure from the Working Capital Fund to finance contingencies and emergencies. Any decision taken by the Governing Body must be construed as being aligned with those rules. She deferred to the Governing Body as to whether it wished to consider redrafting the subparagraph in question, to reflect the definition of roles for the sake of full clarity.

523. **The Worker spokesperson** sought clarification of whether the intent of subparagraph (iv)(c) was to authorize the Director-General to take all necessary decisions or to ensure that any necessary decisions were based on transparent and evidence-based analysis. While acknowledging constitutional constraints on decisions with financial implications, she warned that the current wording, when read in conjunction with the chapeau, could be perceived as granting the Director-General a blank cheque. The intended meaning should be clarified to ensure a shared understanding among all parties before adoption.

524. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed on the need for clarity. He proposed that the text could be simplified to read: "take all necessary decisions based on transparent and evidence-based analysis …". He also proposed removing the reference to "including those pertaining to financial implications", to avoid confusion. The intent was to emphasize that decisions should be transparent and grounded in evidence-based analysis.

525. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa reiterated that the Director-General should be granted a clear mandate from the Governing Body to take all necessary decisions to manage the crisis, including those with financial implications, provided that those decisions were taken under conditions of transparency and evidence-based analysis of costs, savings and benefits. He stressed that those actions should not pre-empt the upcoming reprioritization exercise and that the Director-General would need to report back to the Governing Body in March with a detailed explanation of decisions taken, their financial impact and resulting benefits.

526. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed that the wording could be further subamended so that the first part of the subparagraph would read "ensure that all necessary decisions, including those pertaining to financial implications, are based on a transparent and evidence-based analysis".

527. **The Employer spokesperson** said that he could support that proposal.

Subparagraph (iv)(d)

528. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that her group could accept the Employers' proposal to replace the word "reinforce" by "optimize" in subparagraph (iv)(d). However, it did not agree with the proposal to replace "and preserve" by "through". To reflect the discussions, she proposed adding the words "to the extent possible" after "preserve". Her group did not agree with the proposal to delete the words "including necessary assistance for any reporting reform" from the end of the subparagraph.

529. **The Employer spokesperson** supported the proposal made by the Government group to add the words "to the extent possible". He withdrew his proposed subamendment to delete the end of the subparagraph.

530. **The Worker spokesperson** said that she could support the text as subamended.

New subparagraph (iv)(e)

531. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that there were divergent views within her group on the new subparagraph (iv)(e) proposed by the Workers' group.

532. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa said that the question of staffing arrangements should be discussed with the Governing Body in March 2026, following the reprioritization process. However, in the interests of moving forward, he could accept the new subparagraph.

533. **The Employer spokesperson** supported the new subparagraph.

534. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that she could not accept the new subparagraph as it stood. In the acknowledgement that the issue of staffing would be discussed further in March 2026, she proposed subamending it to read “preserve all the necessary functions in Geneva, recognizing the mutually reinforcing roles of experts at different headquarters and offices as well as in the field”.

535. **The Worker spokesperson**, referring to the subamendment proposed by the EU Member States, said that the meaning of “necessary functions” was unclear and recalled that the Office document stated that any redeployment to the field must be weighed carefully against the need to preserve critical headquarters functions, including global normative leadership, policy innovation, governance support, thematic expertise and knowledge management. Similar wording could be incorporated into the subparagraph in question, to ensure clarity. She recalled that the ILO had only one headquarters, which was in Geneva, and that changing headquarters required approval by the Conference, as required by the ILO Constitution.

536. **The Employer spokesperson**, emphasizing the need for precision about the expertise to preserve at headquarters, said that he could not support the subamendment proposed by the EU Member States.

537. **A Government representative of the United States** expressed an interest in continuing the discussions on the original proposal in relation to the overall text. She noted that the original wording was more specific than the proposed subamendment.

538. **Speaking on behalf of the EU Member States,** a Government representative of Denmark withdrew the proposed subamendment, which had not received support.

Subparagraph (iv)(f)

539. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that there were divergent views within her group on the subamendments to subparagraph (iv)(f) proposed by the Workers’ group.

540. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa said that the lack of geographical representation, especially in senior management, had reached crisis levels. Such a situation required deliberate corrective action to ensure employment equity, as supported by the Constitution. He was in favour of retaining the word “imperative” and proposed that the text should read “imperative, equitable geographical representation and gender balance”.

541. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Bangladesh said that the term “imperative” should be understood as a matter of absolute and critical necessity, not as a constitutional or legal obligation. He highlighted the severe under-representation of many countries in the ILO’s staff. While he would prefer not to dilute the focus with additional parameters, he could agree to include gender balance alongside geographical diversity as an essential priority.

542. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized the need to clarify the intention behind the subparagraph and to consider the matter from a tripartite perspective. She recalled that the Legal Adviser had explained that the word “imperative” in the context in question was a legal term to describe an obligation to ensure a staff of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity, with due regard being paid to the importance of gender and geographical diversity. She suggested shifting the focus from a legal framing to a political one, proposing instead using the words “critical importance” instead of “imperative”. Furthermore, she emphasized the need to address under-representation across the three constituent

groups and called for wording to that effect that was in line with that used in the ILO's Human Resources Strategy. She proposed subamending the second part of the subparagraph further, to read: "… and address the critical importance of equitable geographical representation and gender balance in staffing at all levels, including reflecting experience relevant to all constituent groups".

543. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Worker spokesperson's proposal was reasonable and consistent with the Human Resources Strategy. It reflected a key message reiterated throughout the discussions and aligned with his group's priorities. He therefore supported the wording proposed by the Workers and urged the Government group to review its position in that regard.

544. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa proposed that, to reflect the concerns raised during the discussion, the text could be subamended further to read: "ensure that any and all measures taken will preserve and safeguard the tripartite operational capacity of the Organization to deliver on its fundamental mandate, critical to equitable geographical representation and gender balance in staffing at all levels of the Organization".

545. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the draft text contained two distinct messages and required a clearer structure to separate the ideas. The first message was to preserve and safeguard operational capacity; in that regard, she did not agree with the Africa group's proposal to insert the word "tripartite" before "operational capacity". The second message was to address the importance of gender and geographical representation.

546. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Bangladesh said that his group could not accept the insertion of the word "tripartite" before "operational capacity". However, he agreed on the need to focus on geographical representation, gender balance and experience relevant to all the constituent groups. He suggested that the Office could propose some wording to reflect that in the Human Resources Strategy.

547. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa withdrew his proposed subamendment and expressed support for the subamendment proposed by the Workers' group.

548. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Human Resources Development Department) noted that the ILO's Human Resources Strategy already mentioned the objective of diversity in terms of gender, geographical representation and experience relevant to all constituent groups. She proposed that clause (f) could read: "Ensure that any and all measures taken will preserve and safeguard the operational capacity of the Organization to deliver on its fundamental mandate, which is essential to maintain the diversity of the ILO workforce in terms of gender and geographical balance and reflect experience relevant to all constituent groups as well".

549. **The Worker spokesperson** observed that the Office proposal would mean that the aim of the mandate was to maintain diversity; the two messages should remain separate, without replacing the content of the existing Human Resources Strategy.

550. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Employer spokesperson and a Government representative of South Africa, preferred the previous wording, "including reflecting experience relevant to all constituent groups".

551. **A Government representative of the United States** welcomed the efforts made to incorporate the ideas expressed during the discussion and said that enhanced geographical representation in the staffing of the ILO was also a long-standing priority for her Government. Having considered the use of the term “gender” and understood that its inclusion related to the provisions of article 9 of the Constitution, her delegation could support the wording.

Subparagraph (v)

552. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group,** a Government representative of Australia said that her group accepted the first part of the Workers’ proposed subamendment in substance, but proposed a further subamendment, for reasons of clarity, to replace the words “proposals regarding the reprioritization” by “reprioritization proposals”. She did not support the second part of the proposal, which was to replace “the reprioritization framework” by “reprioritization and restructuring of the Organization”. Her group preferred the original text.

553. **The Worker spokesperson** requested clarification regarding the scope of the discussions at the March session of the Governing Body, recalling that subparagraph (iv)(b) referred to proposals for reprioritization. She expressed concern that the Director-General had already announced restructuring measures and sought confirmation as to whether subsequent phases of reorganization, including potential relocations, would be subject to consultation by the Governing Body. She suggested that alternative wording, such as “further restructuring”, could be used to reflect the ongoing process and emphasized the need for clarity on whether a framework for restructuring would be presented for consideration at the March 2026 session.

554. **The Employer spokesperson** recalled that in-depth discussions had already been held on the subject, which had been covered in subparagraph (c) in the original draft decision and as subparagraph (f) in the Worker’s proposed amended version. His group remained opposed to subparagraph (v).

555. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the proposed wording of subparagraph (v) was fundamentally different from the texts discussed previously and should not be viewed as an attempt to reopen earlier debates on restructuring. There had been no support for the proposal to defer the restructuring of senior management until after the discussion on priorities in March 2026.

556. She proposed subamending her group’s proposal by adding “further” before “restructuring”. The aim was to clarify that the proposals currently under discussion already related to restructuring.

557. **The Employer spokesperson** did not support the proposal, as it implied that no measures could be taken before March, whereas the process needed to begin immediately.

558. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the restructuring was related to financial challenges as well as reprioritization, and the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller had said that the financial situation would become clearer in early 2026.

559. **The Employer spokesperson** proposed, as a compromise, inserting after “further restructuring” the wording “without pre-empting the Director-General from taking necessary measures on Office reorganization and exercising his constitutional mandate”. The aim was to give a broad direction for the Director-General to implement.

560. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that that would create a circular argument, as subparagraph (iv)(c) stated that all necessary decisions should not pre-empt the reprioritization exercise.

561. **The Employer spokesperson** emphasized that his group was seeking consensus but could not support the text without the wording beginning “without pre-empting”. The Workers’ group’s latest proposal could be read as if the Director-General could not proceed with measures that were his prerogative.

562. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of South Africa proposed the wording “requested the Director-General, in exercising his constitutional mandate …”.

563. **The Chairperson** expressed surprise that the Governing Body would have to emphasize that the Director-General should exercise his constitutional mandate.

564. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Africa group’s latest proposal did not address his group’s concerns. It needed to be clear that the Director-General had the mandate to proceed after the current session of the Governing Body. He preferred the text originally proposed by the Government group.

565. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that the general direction of the further restructuring needed to be addressed by the Governing Body at the next session, as it might be unnecessary if the financial situation improved, or might need to be adapted in line with new challenges. She proposed “the further review of the Organization” instead of “further restructuring”.

566. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Governing Body agreed that the Director-General had the prerogative to reorganize the Office and he therefore saw no reason not to state that in the decision.

567. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of Australia said that her group could support the wording “reprioritization proposals” but not the addition of “and further restructuring of the Organization”.

568. **The Worker spokesperson** asked whether the Government group wanted to have only proposals on reprioritization on the agenda of the next session and whether that was the Director-General’s understanding. If so, her group preferred the Employers’ group’s proposal. She noted that the original draft decision of the Office referred to “the reprioritization of areas of work and other related matters”.

569. **The Employer spokesperson** clarified that his group had supported the Government group’s proposal from the outset and had only suggested alternative wording in the interest of compromise.

570. **The Director-General** said that the Office would need to present to the Governing Body in March a progress report on the status and way forward for the whole reform, which would go beyond prioritization. For example, based on the Governing Body’s discussion, the Office would finalize the requested analysis of possible destinations for relocations. It could proceed faster on some relocations of development cooperation projects, but would have to revert to the Governing Body on relocations of policy and other departments. One of the major elements of the reform was the reduction of expenditure, which would necessitate a reduction in posts. The Office would identify the criteria and procedure in consultation with the Staff Union and present a concrete proposal in March. For other measures, such as the reallocation of office space, the Office was ready to proceed immediately.

571. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated the need to state that the Governing Body would discuss matters other than reprioritization at its next session. Furthermore, after listening to the Treasurer and Financial Comptroller, members of the Workers’ group had expressed concerns that certain measures were moving too fast. The financial situation might have improved by

January, in which case certain proposals might need to be revised and the timetable adapted. In such a case, the Governing Body would want to provide guidance to the Director-General. Staff members were extremely concerned that they might be dismissed and then find out two months later that it had been unnecessary. A large number of staff members, many of whom senior officials who would be sorely missed, had applied for a voluntary separation, which might ultimately prove to be unnecessary. The Workers' group trusted that the Director-General would execute his responsibilities according to his constitutional mandate, but the Governing Body also had a responsibility to execute due diligence in its role of overseeing the governance of the ILO. That was the rationale for her group's proposal to add a reference to "further restructuring" or "further review" in subparagraph (f). She observed that the Governing Body had not achieved consensus on the proposal, however.

572. **A Government representative of Barbados** supported the simpler construction proposed by the Government group. His Government had initially had concerns about significant restructuring and the role of the Governing Body, but understood the Government group's proposed wording to mean that any significant restructuring of the ILO would be contained in its Human Resources Strategy and that the strategy would be submitted to the Governing Body for decision in March 2026.

Decision

573. **The Governing Body:**

(i) expressed its concerns about the evolving financial and budgetary challenges;

(ii) supported the strategic vision for the ILO's review, with the understanding that it would be further developed, anchored on a two-pronged endeavour of implementing immediate financial efficiency measures and undertaking a thoughtful structural reform of the Organization to secure its medium- to long-term efficacy and impact;

(iii) reaffirmed that the ILO's reform and all subsequent measures shall be guided by, and fully respect, the Organization's constitutional mandate, its fundamental principles, and its tripartite governance structure, and further reaffirmed that the implementation of the reform shall safeguard the ILO's operational autonomy and ensure that its standards policy, social dialogue and the decisions taken by its governance organs are respected and implemented;

(iv) requested the Director-General to proceed with the reform process guided by the following priorities:

(a) focus on delivering the Organization's core mandate;

(b) develop robust proposals for reprioritization, ensuring the meaningful consultation of tripartite constituents, in the preparation of decision-making at the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body;

(c) base all necessary decisions, including those pertaining to financial implications, on a transparent and evidence-based analysis of costs, savings, benefits and risks, while not pre-empting the reprioritization exercise;

(d) optimize the ILO's capacity in the field to deliver on the ground and respond to constituents' needs and preserve, to the extent possible, technical and capacity-building programmes being implemented in developing countries, in particular

small island developing States and least developed countries, including necessary assistance for any reporting reform;

(e) preserve the necessary normative, technical and policy expertise at headquarters in Geneva, recognizing the different and mutually reinforcing roles of experts at headquarters and in the field;

(f) take all necessary measures to ensure that, throughout the reform process and its implementation, consultations and negotiations are held with the Staff Union in line with article 10.1 of the ILO Staff Regulations;

(g) ensure that any and all measures taken will preserve and safeguard the operational capacity of the Organization to deliver on its fundamental mandate and address the critical importance of equitable geographical representation and gender balance in staffing at all levels, including reflecting experience relevant to all constituent groups;

(h) take into account the guidance provided by the Governing Body at its 355th Session (November 2025) regarding the ILO's participation in the UN80 process.

(v) requested the Director-General to submit to the Governing Body for decision at its 356th Session (March 2026) the reprioritization framework and the ILO's development cooperation and human resources strategies, taking into account the guidance provided by the Governing Body.

(GB.355/INS/7, paragraph 90, as amended by the Governing Body)

8. Follow-up to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus (GB.355/INS/8(Rev.1))

574. **The ILO Special Envoy to Belarus** (Special Envoy) thanked the Governing Body members for their confidence. The Government of Belarus had not engaged with his mandate for the reasons outlined in the Governing Body's document. Nevertheless, he remained hopeful that Belarus would see his mandate as a path towards constructive dialogue with the ILO supervisory bodies and a means to break what many called a "deadlock".

575. The Special Envoy thanked the representatives of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), the IOE, the Association of Belarusian Business Abroad, the ITUC and the IndustriALL Global Union for their availability and their willingness to contribute to addressing the challenges in the Belarusian case, which, in the words of an IOE representative, was a freedom of association case, not merely a trade union one. The Special Envoy had constructively exchanged with the Group of Independent Experts on the human rights situation in Belarus and the following UN Special Rapporteurs and/or officers supporting their mandates: the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism, whose insights had enriched his understanding of the broader human rights context in Belarus. Those exchanges had been facilitated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) officers, including Members of the ILO/UN Working Group.

576. The 2023 International Labour Conference's resolution on Belarus called on Member States to ensure that the principle of non-refoulement was respected. The Governing Body and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) further called on the ILO constituents to assist Belarusian citizens residing in their countries without valid travel documents due to the inability to receive consular services as well as to facilitate the issuance of visas to Belarusian citizens persecuted for their trade union activities and their relatives. The Special Envoy had met with and thanked the President of the Federal State of Bremen, where a number of the BKDP leaders resided in exile, for ensuring that those trade unionists could live there in safety together with their families; he called on Member States to continue assisting Belarusian trade unionists and their relatives in exile. Meanwhile, the situation on the ground remained deeply concerning: 21 Belarusian trade unionists were imprisoned, and he had heard allegations of harsh prison conditions in penal colonies that could amount to forced labour. As the Government of Belarus was yet to accept an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation in the country, including a visit to trade unionists in prison or detention, those allegations remained unrefuted. While forced labour was outside the Special Envoy's mandate, the issue would be examined by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) at its upcoming session.

577. While welcoming the release of Mr Aliaksandr Yarashuk, the Chairperson of the BKDP and the Governing Body member, and of Mr Hennadz Fiadynich, former Chairperson of the Radio and Electronics Industry Workers' Union, the Special Envoy noted with concern the situation where they had been stripped of their national passports and pension and thus deprived of their livelihood, access to health services and separated once again from their families. He called on Belarus to remedy the situation as a matter of urgency by returning their passports and reestablishing their pension payments without delay. The Special Envoy had met with Messrs Yarashuk and Fiadynich in Vilnius and expressed his hope that Mr Yarashuk would be able to attend the Governing Body session in March 2026 in person. The Special Envoy called on all relevant authorities to assist Mr Yarashuk in this respect.

578. If his mandate was extended, the Special Envoy's priority would be to establish dialogue with the Belarusian authorities towards the release and exoneration of persecuted trade unionists; exploring avenues for the re-recognition of the BKDP; and implementation of the outstanding recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. In doing so, he intended to maintain close engagement with the relevant international entities and experts. The Special Envoy thanked the members of the European Economic and Social Committee for their availability to meet him and looked forward to engaging with them in the future. He reaffirmed that his mandate was apolitical, grounded in objectivity and impartiality; he followed a conciliatory approach, seeking dialogue, not confrontation. While the release of imprisoned trade unionists was his foremost goal, he also aimed to foster a climate where freedom of association could thrive for the benefit of the Belarusian society.

579. **A Government representative of Belarus** (Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Protection), authorized to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders on a matter concerning his Government, said that there were no grounds for applying article 33 of the ILO Constitution to Belarus and that his Government had repeatedly indicated that the long-standing accusations against Belarus did not stand up to scrutiny and were the product of disinformation and manipulation. Belarus had undertaken significant work since the adoption of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and the absolute majority of them, 10 out of 12, had been implemented. Recommendations 9 and 10, which included allowing foreign funding of political work and easing liability for violating the procedure for holding mass events, did not stem from the ILO Conventions, and their implementation would enable external influence on the situation in the country. His Government therefore would not take steps to undermine a stable and peaceful development of the country.

580. The sanctions imposed on Belarus pursued the objective of weakening the country and its economic potential under the guise of human rights. The attack on Belarus was necessary for those involved in preparing a coup d'etat during the 2020 presidential elections. Since the latest presidential elections had proceeded peacefully, some western countries and structures sought to avenge their failure to seize power by discrediting and isolating the country. The same actors had lobbied for the adoption of the 2023 Conference's resolution, choosing human rights as an instrument for speculation. The situation with trade union rights in Belarus had been turned upside down: the genuine trade unions representing the interests of workers were declared to be state-controlled. In particular, the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus (FPB) was being subjected to groundless attacks: the Workers' group was blocking the FPB's participation in the ILO events without justification and attempted to deprive it of the right to represent Belarusian workers at the International Labour Conference. At the same time, small structures that had never been particularly involved in real trade union work, focusing instead on criticizing the country and calling for sanctions with the aim of organizing an illegal change of power, notably the BKDP, were declared genuine and independent trade unions. In 2020, the BKDP engaged in extremist activities unrelated to a lawful exercise of trade union rights; therefore, the citizens allegedly persecuted for trade union activities had in fact been held accountable for specific crimes, and calls for their release and rehabilitation interfered with the country's internal affairs.

581. The illegal structure known as the BKDP was not a trade union association nor had any connection to Belarus, considering that its office and leadership were based abroad and that it was financed by entities pursuing policies unfriendly to Belarus, which did not meet the criteria for independence. It was concerning that the criticism of Belarus was based on information from a structure serving the interests of other countries while the information about the real situation in Belarus was not considered. He said that such situation did not facilitate a healthy dialogue and finding a way out of the deadlock situation. His Government and its social partners stood ready for constructive interaction with the ILO on condition that the realities and sovereign interests of the country were acknowledged. Thus, the draft decision was neither objective nor balanced. The Governing Body should not approve it, and the issue should be put to a vote.

582. **A Worker from Belarus** thanked the Governing Body members for their support in securing his release, although he had no document to confirm the decision by the Belarusian authorities to pardon him and his release had turned into a further punishment. He had been stripped of means of subsistence since he had lost the right to pension. The release happened a month and a half before he would have been released at the end of his prison term. He expected to go home to his family but ended up in Lithuania as a stateless person. The Belarusian authorities had rejected the mandate of the Special Envoy, which was an act of defiance of the ILO. He called on the Governing Body members to take a stand against the depreciation of the ILO values and its supervisory mechanisms, voicing his belief that the Government of Belarus should be compelled to fulfil its obligations under article 33 of the ILO Constitution either through dialogue or by using leverage of pressure. It was essential to extend the mandate of the Special Envoy.

583. **The Worker spokesperson** stated that Belarus kept showing contempt for the ILO supervisory system and the Governing Body. Although her group welcomed the release of Messrs Yarashuk and Fiadynich, they were not released into freedom but into a new form of punishment, having been moved from prison to exile. It would have been a misconception to consider their release an act of goodwill or a move towards accepting and implementing the recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies, it was only another tool for persecution.

584. The situation in the country had not improved. Those imprisoned or detained were being kept in degrading and inhumane conditions. At workplaces, routine surveillance, interrogations and unprovoked arrests continued. Confessions of those who were detained without clear charges were broadcast on national media. The children of those convicted of extremism activities were being forcibly removed from their families. Those in exile feared for the safety of their family members; the apartment of the mother and sister of Mr Maksim Pazniakou, acting chair of the BKDP, had been searched and his sister and his wife's parents had been summoned for questioning after Mr Pazniakou was filmed when speaking at the special sitting of the CAS in June 2025. The Belarusian Government continued to promote the FPB, asserting that it was a legitimate trade union. In that regard, the International Labour Conference's Credentials Committee had requested Belarus to provide supporting information, so as to ensure that delegates and advisers were nominated by free and independent organizations of workers.

585. Her group welcomed the information on the statements and reports of the Special Rapporteurs as well as the information from Member States and the expressions of solidarity from constituents and urged governments to continue to hold national tripartite meetings to review their relations with Belarus. Her group appreciated the steps taken by the Special Envoy to engage with the Belarusian Government and social partners, as well as the UN agencies and all relevant stakeholders. The Special Envoy's mandate must be extended.

586. The Belarusian Government had accepted neither a humanitarian mission to visit detained or imprisoned trade unionists nor a tripartite ILO mission to assess the situation in the country, for which her group renewed their calls. Her group further urged the Office to consider holding an event during the Governing Body's session in March 2026 to bring interested governments and constituents together to discuss how the work of the Special Envoy could be facilitated, and to consider ways in which constituents could be involved in meetings of the ILO/UN Working Group and other institutions with a view to ensuring coordinated and joint action towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the ILO supervisory bodies. Her group agreed to the draft decision.

587. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that, while Belarus was a serious and long-standing case that had been discussed on many occasions by ILO supervisory bodies, including the Committee on Freedom of Association and the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards, it was important that those procedures focused on the mandate of the ILO and the work on the ground. His group noted the conclusions of the CAS at its special sitting on the application by Belarus of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), during the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference, and expressed regret at the lack of progress made. The Government of Belarus not allowing the Special Envoy to implement his mandate and refusing to meet with him was concerning. His group urged Belarus to take measures to address the alleged human rights violations, considering the conclusions of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Belarus, and immediately release imprisoned trade unionists. His group noted and expressed support for the efforts of the UN Human Rights Council to address the human rights issues in Belarus at its 59th and 60th Sessions but highlighted that the ILO's efforts must remain within its mandate. His group noted the actions taken by the Governments with regard to Belarus and supported facilitating genuine social dialogue through a series of bilateral and multilateral meetings.

588. His group took note that the mandate of the Special Envoy would terminate at the end of 2025, expressed recognition of his work, particularly his engagement with the stakeholders, and noted that his mandate included, among other things, seeking the re-recognition of the BKDP so that they could reengage with the National Council on Labour and Social Issues and the tripartite Council for Improvement of Social and Labour Law.

589. Regarding the special sitting of the CAS, his group recommended avoiding automatic inclusion of special sittings in the action plan regarding Belarus, since they should only be used where necessary and impactful. The Government of Belarus should take urgent measures to comply with the recommendation of the Commission of Inquiry and ILO supervisory bodies. His group supported the draft decision.

590. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that the following countries aligned themselves with the statement: the EU Member States, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom. He welcomed the presence of the Special Envoy, whose mandate was essential considering the grave and persistent violations by Belarus of fundamental labour rights. He urged that the budgetary constraints did not undermine the financing of the Special Envoy's work and welcomed the engagement of the UN mechanisms addressing labour and employment issues in Belarus.

591. Given the gravity of the situation, the EU had imposed several rounds of sanctions targeting key individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses. He condemned the ongoing systematic and widespread human rights violations, including violations of labour rights, and deplored the disregard by Belarus of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, the continuing deterioration of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, the erosion of the rule of law, and the repressions against independent trade unionists, civil society organizations, democratic opposition forces and all other segments of the Belarusian society, which included forced labour, torture, arbitrary detention, and release of political prisoners without exoneration or rehabilitation. The situation had worsened since Belarus became involved in the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine.

592. He denounced the harassment of trade unionists solely for their engagement with the ILO. While acknowledging the release of Messrs Yarashuk and Fiadynich, acts of repression against them were unacceptable. The conditions of imprisonment of trade union leaders and activists, particularly those in need of medical attention, were of concern. He urged the Belarusian authorities to cooperate with the Special Envoy, accept the humanitarian tripartite mission without further delay immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all political prisoners – including imprisoned trade unionists – and restore the functioning of independent trade unions. His group supported the draft decision.

593. **Speaking on behalf of the Nordic–Baltic countries (Estonia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden) and Poland,** a Government representative of Lithuania said that his group aligned themselves with the statement of the EU and its Member States and that, despite repeated calls to Belarus for compliance with the international labour standards, the situation had further deteriorated. The Belarusian authorities continued to refuse to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the ILO supervisory bodies, neglecting their obligations under Conventions Nos 87 and 98. The liquidation and designation of independent trade unions as extremist organizations was concerning. His group expressed their regret at the repression of independent trade unionists, condemned the forced exile of individuals without passports, and called on Belarus to immediately and unconditionally release and rehabilitate all political prisoners, including trade unionists, and to end its support for the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine. His group welcomed the coordinated action by the ILO, the UN agencies and other international stakeholders with respect to Belarus and commended the appointment of the Special Envoy. His group supported the draft decision.

594. **Speaking on behalf of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the United Kingdom**, a Government representative of Canada urged the Belarusian authorities to comply with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. While his group welcomed the release of Messrs Yarashuk and Fiadynich, their immediate deportation to the Lithuanian border upon release without any identification papers or medication was troubling. He expressed concern about the attacks on human and labour rights of Belarusian workers and trade unionists for exercising their fundamental rights at work and urged Belarus to: accept an international humanitarian mission to allow independent doctors to visit imprisoned trade unionists; accept an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation; immediately and unconditionally release all trade unionists imprisoned for exercising their labour rights; stop widespread attacks against workers and their leaders, including mass detention and arbitrary dismissals. His group welcomed the appointment of the Special Envoy and urged the Belarusian authorities to engage constructively with him. His group supported the draft decision.

595. **A Government representative of France** said that her Government associated itself with the statement of the EU and its Member States. She urged the Belarusian authorities to engage with the Special Envoy and noted his commitment to dialogue necessary for the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. There was no improvement in the situation faced by independent Belarusian trade unionists. While her Government was relieved at the release of Messrs Yarashuk and Fiadynich, she expressed regret at the conditions of their release and their non-exoneration. She called on Belarus to take steps necessary to enable functioning of independent trade unions as well as to ensure the exercise of the right to strike, conduct consultations with Employers' and Workers' groups, and introduce a workplace dispute settlement system based on independent decision-making. Her Government supported the draft decision.

596. **A Government representative of Lithuania** said that his Government aligned itself with the statement of the EU and its Member States and the statement of the Nordic–Baltic countries and Poland. No progress had been made in implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry or the subsequent recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies. The disregard for labour rights by the Belarusian authorities undermined the principles of social justice and perpetuated a cycle of exploitation and inequality. His Government could not ignore the recent incidents in which Lithuanian and other truck drivers had been prevented from leaving Belarus, facing food shortages and inadequate rest conditions, which had been coupled with cargo spoilage and significant financial losses for their employers, in contradiction with the ILO principles concerning the protection of workers, the prohibition of forced labour, and the safe and unhindered movement of employees engaged in international transport. He called on Belarus to immediately and unconditionally cease its aid to the Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine, which had severely impacted Ukrainian workers, employers and their families. His Government supported the draft decision.

597. **A Government representative of the United States** thanked the Special Envoy for his efforts and reassured that her Government was committed to using all available diplomatic and economic means to promote accountability of the perpetrators of the violations of labour rights of Belarusian workers and business community members. She welcomed the release of 72 Belarusian individuals owing to the direct engagement of her Government's Special Envoy under the leadership of the President. She urged Belarus to fully cooperate with the ILO to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. She reserved the position of her Government on the draft decision and requested to consider returning to the item later to allow for additional time for the full consideration of the draft decision.

598. **A Government representative of Brazil** stated that her Government maintained its commitment to promoting and defending fundamental rights at work, including freedom of association and collective bargaining, and that it was through dialogue, technical cooperation, and constructive engagement that it was possible to best assist Member States in overcoming challenges and fully implementing their commitments. She supported the extension of the mandate of the Special Envoy and reiterated her Government's trust in the Special Envoy as a distinguished Brazilian civil servant whose lifelong dedication to labour justice grounded in the principles of fairness and neutrality.

599. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** stated that the action plan concerning measures with respect to Belarus under article 33 of the ILO Constitution continued the anti-Belarusian campaign that had taken place in the international arena. His Government continued to observe the politicization of ILO supervisory bodies and was categorically against putting pressure on a country within the framework of the ILO. The action plan aimed at isolating Belarus and undermining its international position as it intended to use international organizations and the UN Special Rapporteurs for the realization of anti-Belarusian decisions. The appointment of special missions and special representatives without considering Belarus' position was of concern, fell outside the mandate of the ILO, and led to interference in internal affairs of Member States. His Government was against the extension of the mandate of the Special Envoy as it aimed at discrediting the country and its authorities. The policy of ultimatums used by the ILO did not facilitate establishing a constructive dialogue with Belarus. A non-politicized cooperation with Belarus and its tripartite partners to find a solution was essential. The presented report relied on the information from illegitimate structures having no legal status in Belarus – the BKDP had been dissolved by a decision of the Supreme Court of Belarus in 2022 – and failed to consider the views of the FPB. He requested putting the draft decision to a vote as his Government could not agree to it.

600. **A Government representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic** commended Belarus for its continued efforts and progress made in the social and labour sphere. She urged to refrain from using the ILO mechanisms to escalate political pressure on sovereign states and to resume constructive engagement and cooperation with social partners in Belarus.

601. **A Government representative of Colombia** encouraged the Government of Belarus to cooperate constructively with the ILO and its supervisory mechanisms as well as with the Special Envoy towards the protection of the rights of all workers. He urged Belarus to take the necessary steps to guarantee a full and effective exercise of freedom of association pursuant to the fundamental principles of the ILO and Conventions Nos 87 and 98. His Government welcomed the decision to extend the mandate of the Special Envoy and acknowledged the Special Envoy's contribution to enhancing dialogue and cooperation for the protection of trade unionists in prisons and the recognition of the BKDP.

602. **A Government representative of Cuba** acknowledged the efforts undertaken by Belarus to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, attesting to its willingness to engage in dialogue with the ILO. Sovereignty and self-determination of Belarus and of all Member States must always be respected. The ILO supervisory bodies should work in an impartial manner, analysing the information provided by governments on an equal footing with the allegations of social partners. Selectivity, politicization and double standards tarnished the prestige and credibility of the ILO. The application of action plans outside of the ILO's mandate was unacceptable. The Governing Body could not become an instrument of coercion against Member States. The proposal to extend the mandate of the Special Envoy with unnecessary financial implications was regrettable. Her Government rejected interventionist and politicized recommendations and resolutions undermining the technical nature of the ILO and its tripartism. The focus should be on tripartite dialogue, assistance and cooperation, rather than on unilateral coercive measures worsening poverty and unemployment.

603. **A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** noted with concern that the decisions on the situation in Belarus had been made through voting and not by consensus. At the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference, although 301 delegates supported the resolution, 89 out of 170 governments did not; the absence of a broad consensus among Member States warranted a careful reflection. Departing from consensus posed a risk of weakening the very foundation of the ILO's effectiveness; the calls for reporting on unilateral coercive measures against Belarus were particularly concerning since such measures negatively impacted the workers they purported to protect. He called on the ILO and its Member States to reestablish genuine tripartite dialogue with Belarus, ensure equitable consideration of all perspectives, and work toward consensus-based solutions genuinely serving the interests of workers. He expressed appreciation of those Member States that upheld the principles of fairness, non-politicization and respect for national sovereignty.

604. **A Government representative of China** said that Belarus' efforts to fulfil its obligations under the ILO Conventions, incorporate the relevant provisions into the domestic laws and policies, and implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry reflected the commitment of the Belarusian authorities to protecting workers' and employers' rights. While the ILO should uphold objectivity and impartiality, some countries had politicized labour issues and used ILO mechanisms to infringe on the sovereignty of others, undermining multilateralism. The decision on Belarus lacked broad consensus and should not have involved the appointment of the Special Envoy without the consent of Belarusian authorities. Unilateral coercive measures imposed by some countries had worsened the situation of the Belarusian workers. She urged those countries to lift the unjustified sanctions. Her Government did not support the draft decision and endorsed the Russian Federation's request for a vote.

605. **A Government representative of the Sudan** reconfirmed the position of his Government on the need to ensure non-politicization of the ILO and expressed concern about the new mechanisms relying on political considerations directed towards Belarus, which did not serve the principles of the ILO nor promoted workers' rights. The bilateral and regional dialogue were essential to avoid putting any political burdens on the ILO. He reiterated his Government's support to the position of Belarus, urged all parties to refrain from endorsing non-objective decisions, and requested the ILO to abstain from using politics as a tool to exert pressure on Member States.

606. **The Special Envoy** reaffirmed his determination to fulfil his mandate in an impartial and objective manner, in line with the core principles of the ILO.

607. **A Government representative of Belarus** thanked the members of the Governing Body who had expressed support for Belarus and said that he had not heard anything new from those countries wishing to discredit Belarus. While Belarus was being accused of neglecting Conventions Nos 87 and 98, the issues under discussion were beyond the scope of those Conventions. Belarus had created conditions for the activities of trade unions without interference or discrimination. The prosecution of trade unionists was not carried out for their trade union work; those involved in terrorist and extremist activities merely used their status of trade unionists as a shield. Belarus shared the goals and principles of the ILO and strived to build a well-functioning system of social partnership. Belarus acknowledged the benefits of cooperating with the ILO, which was being impeded by the ILO's discriminatory decisions and its cooperation with illegitimate structures. He called on the ILO to retract the false accusations against Belarus and took the view that the Special Envoy's engagement with the BKDP precluded the objectivity of the work. His Government did not agree to the draft decision and requested that it be put to a vote.

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

608. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to subparagraph (c) of the draft decision proposed by the United States and seconded by Hungary that had been circulated by the Office and read:

> (c) ~~while~~ noted~~ing~~ the release of Mr Yarashuk and Mr Fiadynich~~, observed with utmost concern their forced deportation, confiscation of their passports and discontinuation of payment of their pensions~~ and urged the Government, without further delay, to:

609. **A Government representative of the United States** stated that her Government had engaged pragmatically with Belarus in the previous months to secure the release of political prisoners and intended to continue doing so. Considering those efforts, her Government proposed edits to subparagraph (c) aimed at focusing on urging the Belarusian authorities to return to Messrs Yarashuk and Fiadynich their passports and restore the payment of their pensions.

610. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group accepted the amendment and that they supported the efforts of the Unites States in securing the release of trade unionists.

611. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark reaffirmed her group's support to the application of article 33 of the ILO Constitution to Belarus in order to secure compliance by the Belarusian authorities with the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. While acknowledging the release of Mr Yarashuk and Mr Fiadynich two months before their expected official release, she stated that the acts of repression against them, such as forced deportation and seizure of personal belongings, including essential medication and personal correspondence, were unacceptable.

612. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that, although the amendment proposed by the United States slightly improved the text, it did not resolve the fundamental problems therein and reiterated the request that the draft decision be put to a vote.

613. **A Government representative of China** said the proposed amendment did not change the politicized nature of the draft decision and supported the Russian Federation's request for voting.

614. **A Government representative of Belarus** thanked those delegations that had voted against or not supported the draft decision and said that the ongoing problems in the situation in Belarus could be resolved through cooperation with the relevant services of different countries within the framework of bilateral agreements with Belarus. The real hindrances to improving social security in Belarus were the sanctions imposed by the EU, to the detriment of workers' rights in Belarus.

615. **A Government representative of Brazil** reiterated his Government's strong support for the principles and values of the Organization, as well as for its supervisory mechanisms and for the extension of the mandate of the Special Envoy.

(The decision was adopted with 40 votes in favour, 2 votes against and 9 abstentions.)

Decision

616. The Governing Body:

(a) noted with growing concern the information provided in document GB.355/INS/8(Rev.1) and that the Government of Belarus once again provided no new information on the measures taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and subsequent recommendations of the supervisory bodies;

(b) called on the Government to review its position and to fully collaborate with the Special Envoy;

(c) noted the release of Mr Yarashuk and Mr Fiadynich and urged the Government, without further delay, to:

(i) return to Mr Yarashuk and to Mr Fiadynich their passports;

(ii) restore the payment of their pensions;

(d) once again requested the Government of Belarus with the utmost urgency to accept:

(i) an international humanitarian mission to ensure that independent doctors could visit all imprisoned trade unionists to assess their health and offer medical assistance, as necessary;

(ii) an ILO tripartite mission to assess the situation and visit trade unionists that are in prison or detention;

(e) urged the Government of Belarus to submit to the Director-General all information on concrete steps taken in that regard following the 355th Session of the Governing Body by 31 January 2026 for transmission to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);

(f) drew the attention of the Credentials Committee at the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference (2026) to the information set out in document GB.355/INS/8(Rev.1);

(g) supported the Director-General's renewal of the appointment of the Special Envoy to Belarus for the year 2026 with the mandate outlined in document GB.355/INS/8(Rev.1) and approved the corresponding financial arrangements (Appendix III of the document), and in that regard invited the Director-General to consider all possible ways, including calling on constituents, to facilitate the implementation of the mandate of the Special Envoy;

(h) requested the Special Envoy to report back to the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body and further provide all relevant information at the third special sitting of the Committee on the Application of Standards on the application by Belarus of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98);

(i) invited the Organization's constituents – governments, employers and workers – to continue to take steps to ensure an effective follow-up to the Conference resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Belarus, including by holding national high-level tripartite meetings to assess and intensify efforts, and ensuring that the

principle of non-refoulement is respected (paragraph 2(b) of the resolution) and to report back thereon to the Director-General for transmission to the Governing Body;

(j) requested the Director-General to prepare an updated report for the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body.

(GB.355/INS/8(Rev.1), paragraph 41, as amended by the Governing Body)

9. Developments in the full implementation by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of the agreed plan of action to give effect to the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in respect of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144 (GB.355/INS/9(Rev.1))

617. **A Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) was authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak (via Zoom) in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and countries throughout Latin America currently faced exceptional circumstances as a result of the deployment by the United States of military resources in the Caribbean Sea. These actions constituted a clear violation of international law, and a serious threat to peace and security, with direct negative repercussions for the world of work. That was combined with mass political deportations and the imposition of unilateral coercive measures as a manifestation of force over reason. Notwithstanding, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela continued to work on structural transformations as part of the Homeland Plan for the Seven Major Transformations 2025–31, which would enable the country to develop its sovereignty, democracy and peace.

618. It was hoped that the current discussions would be objective and impartial, and would serve to develop the productive forces and aid wealth creation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. As stated previously, the country did not accept the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry as their implementation would violate the fundamental principles of national laws, as recognized in the ILO's founding instruments. It nevertheless maintained its unshakeable commitment to broad and inclusive social dialogue, and to enhancing the Minimum Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26), the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), which it had ratified.

619. During the past few years, the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had been the subject of overexposure during Governing Body sessions. Although it recognized the ILO's commitment to social dialogue and to the observance of international labour standards, it considered that the current highly politicized circumstances merited raising the question as to whether the case should be retained as a recurrent agenda item. Despite the current context, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had made progress with social dialogue involving workers' and employers' organizations, be it the Workers' Production Councils, occupational safety and health delegates or entrepreneurs. Workers stood at the forefront of that new system, in the face of constant external threats which sought to undermine the stability and security of the Venezuelan people.

620. In line with the ILO's governing principles of objectivity and impartiality, the Governing Body's consideration of the case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should guarantee balanced treatment in line with the efforts made by the country. It reiterated its recognition of the ILO's technical efforts and its willingness to continue cooperating to promote international principles based on non-interference and institutional stability so as to develop labour policies and respect fully the principles enshrined in the ILO Constitution. As per its previous position, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela could not support the draft decision as it did not contribute to the strengthening of the national social dialogue forums which it had promoted. In the exercise of its legitimate right to defend its position, it would speak again on the basis of the comments made by other participants, which it hoped would be respectful and genuinely constructive.

621. **The Employer spokesperson**, recognizing the efforts made by the Office to keep channels of communication open with the social partners in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in spite of increasing difficulties, expressed profound concern at the absence of substantive progress in the implementation of the plan of action agreed in the Social Dialogue Forum and at the repeated failure to enforce the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry regarding Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. Since March 2025, the situation relating to freedom of association had deteriorated and the Venezuelan Government had failed to take measures to guarantee the presence of the ILO social dialogue specialist at technical or tripartite meetings. Such attendance was essential to guarantee appropriate follow-up on the plan of action.

622. In similar vein, the Government had failed to provide, by the deadline of 26 September 2025, the detailed information requested on specific measures adopted in relation to previous commitments. The Director-General’s report stated clearly that the Social Dialogue Forum had not met since February 2024, contrary to the agreement reached by the Forum to hold quarterly meetings and for the fifth session of the Forum to be held in 2025. Such a failing substantially weakened the unique institutional tripartite body that had allowed progress to be made previously. Although the Federation of Chambers and Associations of Commerce and Production of Venezuela (FEDECAMARAS) had received invitations to meetings, those meetings lay outside the framework of the Social Dialogue Forum and had not benefited from technical assistance from the ILO.

623. On a positive note, a minimum wage-fixing method had been approved in line with Convention No. 26, although that agreed method had not been applied yet despite the fact that the consultative group’s report had been submitted to the Government. The current income consisted of a minimum-wage portion and increasing non-wage bonuses, which distorted the purpose of the Convention. In relation to Conventions Nos 87 and 144, two particularly serious issues remained. Firstly, in certain cases the existing Workers’ Production Councils, 4,500 in number, overshadowed trade union bodies, as the Councils were directly linked to the Government. That gave rise to confusion and caused interference.

624. As for freedom of association, the organizations concerned had denounced possible violations of Convention No. 87 and the Committee on Freedom of Association had documented allegations of arbitrary detentions and the failure to provide guarantees for judicial proceedings. Contrary also to the agreed plan of action, no progress had been made in the return of confiscated land, despite the contacts that had been established between the head of FEDECAMARAS and the National Land Institute. Additionally, the absence of genuine tripartite consultations on labour laws, as required by Convention No. 144, gave cause for concern. The development of high-impact labour standards without prior consultation contradicted the letter and spirit of the Convention.

625. The systematic and persistent failings identified were not simply isolated incidents but constituted a worrying pattern. In line with its responsibilities, the Employers’ group reiterated its call to the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to guarantee immediately the permanent presence of the ILO social dialogue specialist. Further, the fifth session of the

Social Dialogue Forum should be held without delay. Verifiable and detailed information must be provided on the measures adopted to comply with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The discussions on the minimum wage should be held with the ILO's technical assistance, as agreed. The land confiscated from employers should be returned and practices incompatible with freedom of association corrected.

626. The measures adopted by the Venezuelan Government in the coming weeks would be decisive in evaluating its real willingness to make progress and the Governing Body would be called upon to assess the additional steps taken.

627. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that national sovereignty and the self-determination of peoples were inalienable rights enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Peace was an essential condition for social development as was respect for workers' rights. In that regard, the recent declarations and military deployments were a serious threat to stability in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. The challenges faced by the peoples in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime should be dealt with through international cooperation and never as a pretext for military operations.

628. The Workers' group was convinced that tripartite social dialogue was the only genuine means to find lasting solutions to the problems of the world of work. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should accept and implement all the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry in 2019. In relation to Convention No. 87, it should free the 17 trade union leaders detained on accusations of terrorism and treason, including Mr Eduardo Torres, the Executive Secretary of the Association of University Professionals in Administrative and Technical Functions (APUFAT). Similarly, the almost 300 workers of the National Assembly, dismissed three years previously, had not been reinstated. The report provided also indicated that the National Electoral Council continued its policy of interference and that the process for establishing workers' organizations had been adopted without workers' organizations being consulted. Those measures were clearly incompatible with Convention No. 87 and article 95 of the Venezuelan Constitution. Trade union autonomy was a fundamental principle that must be fully respected to allow all voices to be heard in consultations and meetings.

629. The Committee on Freedom of Association was currently considering five cases relating to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, of which three were serious and urgent. As to Convention No. 26, the minimum wage had been frozen since March 2022 at 130 bolivars per month, less than US$1. Employers' organizations recognized that the salary portion represented barely 5 per cent of that amount, although a method had been agreed in the Social Dialogue Forum to fix the minimum wage. Workers depended on non-salary bonuses. The Workers' group would like to know whether the global programme on minimum wages could be used to provide specialized technical assistance to establish a system that complied with international standards.

630. Concerning Convention No. 144, the Social Dialogue Forum had not met since February 2024. The Workers' group urged the Government to allow the ILO's special adviser to attend all meetings. The plan of action adopted in February 2024 had not been implemented and laws such as the Organic Law on the Homeland Plan for 2025–31 had been enacted without appropriate tripartite consultation. The Government should demonstrate the will for genuine dialogue to allow a virtual meeting to be held with the social partners, as requested by the Director-General. Tripartite social dialogue with the ILO's technical assistance was the way forward to achieve tangible progress, peace and social justice.

631. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that the following countries aligned themselves with her statement: North

Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Georgia, Norway and Switzerland. The EU and its Member States were committed to respecting protection and fulfilment of labour rights, and the universal ratification and effective implementation of the fundamental ILO Conventions.

632. The Venezuelan authorities' continuing disagreement with the Governing Body decisions taken in November 2024 and March 2025 was to be regretted. The shrinking civic space and the human and labour rights situation in the country was a cause of deep concern, in particular regarding freedom of association and the right to organize. All acts of repression must stop and all individuals arbitrarily detained, including dual and foreign citizens, should be immediately and unconditionally released. The continued threat of violence faced by parties including opposition members, human rights defenders, trade unions and employers' organizations was to be condemned. It was necessary to guarantee their freedom, autonomy and protection. An independent judiciary was crucial. Similarly, action should be taken on pending allegations of violations of civil liberties and trade union rights to ensure fair trials, reparations and the reinstatement of those proven innocent.

633. While the meeting held on the minimum wage in the first quarter of 2025 was to be welcomed, no follow-up action had been taken by the authorities to fix the minimum wage. The Venezuelan authorities had referred to a national meeting with the social partners planned for 2025, to which the ILO Office should be invited. Although such dialogue initiatives were positive, they could not replace the Social Dialogue Forum. In that regard, concern was expressed at the lack of follow-up to the plan of action and the fact that the Forum had not been convened since February 2024. Regrettably, the Venezuelan authorities had not facilitated the ILO special adviser's presence in the country. The EU and its Member States urged the authorities to restore full collaboration with the ILO Office and to organize the fifth Social Dialogue Forum without delay, as called for by the social partners. The expression of willingness should be translated into tangible action and the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry fully accepted and implemented. She supported the draft decision.

634. **A Government representative of Canada**, speaking on behalf of the United Kingdom and Canada, expressed deep concern that the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela had not accepted the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, almost six years after their publication. It had rejected the Governing Body's decisions of November 2024 and March 2025, and had shown blatant disrespect for the ILO supervisory system at the expense of the social partners.

635. No meaningful progress had been made on issues including the minimum wage, Workers' Production Councils and the functioning of the national register of trade union organizations. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should engage in genuine tripartite consultations to achieve tangible and measurable results, and to allay the concerns expressed regarding anti-union persecution, arbitrary detentions and criminal prosecutions for terrorism, incitation of hatred and treason without due process. The assistance of the ILO special adviser, which had been consistently rejected, should be accepted in organizing the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum. She welcomed the Director-General's continued efforts to engage on the issues raised and supported the draft decision.

636. **A Government representative of the United States** expressed deep concern at the continuing failure of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to accept the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and at its rejection of related Governing Body decisions. There had been no meaningful progress on serious and long-standing issues, such as those under consideration by the Committee on Freedom of Association concerning violations of trade unionists' rights, including criminalization, arbitrary detention and imprisonment, and allegations of persecution, intimidation and harassment. Despite the Governing Body's repeated calls, no arrangements had been made with the ILO social dialogue specialist to support the implementation of the plan of action. Similarly, minimum wages remained stagnant contrary to the recommendations made. She called for immediate acceptance and implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations, reiterated the importance of ILO support, and was open to considering all appropriate measures to resolve the long-standing issues. She expressed support for the draft decision.

637. **A Government representative of Colombia** reaffirmed the importance of social dialogue as the most efficient way to reach agreement and settle the differences between the tripartite representatives in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The measures that the country claimed to have adopted should be enhanced to apply international labour Conventions more effectively with ILO technical assistance. The recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry should be implemented and communication between the Office and local and national actors in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela maintained to provide guarantees for all parties. While noting the efforts made, he said that the Venezuelan Government should share specific information to allow the scope of the actions undertaken to be assessed. Transparency and inclusion were the key principles guiding the use of the ILO's supervisory mechanisms in consultations for improving working conditions.

638. He urged the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to continue implementing the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations and related Governing Body decisions to ensure effective application of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144. The presence of the ILO special adviser was essential in the search for solutions. He rejected any possibility of military intervention in Latin America, which was a region of peace.

639. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** noted with satisfaction the attachment of the Venezuelan Government to maintaining social dialogue and strengthening labour standards, including on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and in close coordination with the ILO's supervisory mechanisms. In that regard, the Homeland Plan for the Seven Major Transformations 2025–31 was important in improving the situation of workers in the country. Despite its official lack of agreement with the recommendations made, the Venezuelan Government had nevertheless continued its constructive dialogue with the ILO.

640. He supported the position adopted by the Government such that the ILO and other UN specialized agencies should act objectively and not give into external political pressure and interests which lay beyond the Organization's technical mandate. The continuing inclusion of the item on the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the Governing Body agenda was one of the elements of political pressure. That was hardly a way to improve the labour situation in the country and could only lead to a worsening in relations with the ILO. On that basis, the item should be removed from the agenda and purely technical cooperation carried out with the Government through the ILO's supervisory mechanisms.

641. **A Government representative of Cuba** said that the unquestionable progress achieved by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in implementing the plan of action was the result of the Government's will to meet its commitments within the ILO and strengthen national social dialogue. The efforts made and the technical assistance provided by the ILO had led to the Social Dialogue Forum meeting its objectives and generating a permanent space for dialogue between the relevant actors. The Governing Body should give governments sufficient time to implement measures, in accordance with their national laws and social and economic situation. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was the victim of unilateral coercive measures that directly affected its fundamental rights. Furthermore, it faced greater challenges owing to the current deployments by the largest military power on the planet. Any decisions taken by the Governing Body should not be imposed and the ILO must not be used for political purposes. The sovereignty of Member States should remain unviolated. She called for the subject of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela no longer to be a recurrent agenda item. Cuba was always in favour of dialogue, cooperation and negotiated solutions.

642. **A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** acknowledged the progress made by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in implementing Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144, and commended its ongoing commitment to social dialogue. As evidenced by the plan of action adopted at the fourth session of the Social Dialogue Forum in February 2024, the country was genuinely determined to improve conditions for workers. The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterated its full confidence in the ILO's professionalism, impartiality and objectivity. The case of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela should be addressed through a balanced approach and should no longer be a recurrent agenda item, but rather discussed with fairness and in a constructive spirit. A reasonable time frame of at least one year should be allowed to assess developments properly, particularly in view of the current exceptional circumstances facing the country. Sustainable solutions could be reached only through sincere dialogue, constructive technical cooperation and mutual respect to advance workers' rights and uphold the sovereignty and dignity of nations.

643. **A Government representative of China** said that the materials submitted by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela showed that it had maintained communication with the ILO, supported social dialogue and labour rights, and planned to hold a national conference on labour issues by the end of 2025. As a UN specialized agency, the ILO should provide support to Member States in the field of labour and social development and expand technical cooperation, while respecting the different national conditions and realities of each country. The ILO should continue to strengthen communication and manage the relevant differences appropriately, while certain countries must cease their illegal unilateral coercive measures against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and do more to promote and protect the rights of Venezuelan workers.

644. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department), responding to a question raised by the Worker spokesperson, said that time had not allowed contacts to be made with the colleagues responsible for making available the details of the minimum wages programme. The request was, however, noted and would be followed up on.

645. **A Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** (Minister for Labour Rights and Relations, Ministry of People's Power for the Social Process of Labour) was authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak again, in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders. He reiterated his country's commitment to improving the application of Conventions Nos 26, 87 and 144, by means of social dialogue and the building of stability and peace in the labour sphere.

646. Despite the threats made by the Government of the United States, all the countries in the Latin American region would continue to try to preserve peace based on sovereignty. The current state of affairs made the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela even more determined to continue building its socialist state model. In contrast to the statements made by certain delegations, other countries had persisted in taking the discussion out of context and discrediting his Government, on the basis of obvious political interests. His country's priority was to focus on substantive issues and not on arguments with no constructive value. Contrary to the statements made by certain governments and the social partners, who insisted on referring to matters which bore no relation to the rights and guarantees provided in Convention No. 87, his Government would, in accordance with due process and its national laws, continue to fight against the imposition of thousands of illegal unilateral coercive measures, the devastating effects of which had negatively impacted the enjoyment of labour rights in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

647. Despite the obvious difficulties, the Venezuelan Government continued to devise social and labour strategies and mechanisms to allow its population to benefit from greater social security and happiness. The Government had clearly stated its position regarding technical assistance and the Social Dialogue Forum at the 352nd and 353rd Governing Body Sessions. In all cases, as informed in September 2025, the Government planned to hold, in the first quarter of 2026, a national meeting with the social partners to discuss labour issues and other matters emanating from the ILO debates.

648. The Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela called on Governing Body members to revise the decisions adopted without its consent and requested them to promote conditions to strengthen international peace, cooperation, non-interference and stability throughout the region of Latin America and the Caribbean. He reiterated his request to the ILO to study the negative repercussions of the application of the illegal unilateral coercive measures referred to for the enjoyment of human rights and in the world of work, taking into account the 2021 report prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur, Alena Douhan.

649. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated his request for the Director-General to organize a meeting at the earliest possible date with the Government and social partners of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to decide on the way ahead to producing the road map required. The outstanding issues should be resolved for the sake of the millions of Venezuelan workers. He noted with appreciation the Government's willingness to work with the ILO to achieve social justice for all.

650. **The Employer spokesperson** said that he had understood from the Government representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela that efforts were being made to change its position of continuous rejection of technical assistance, implementation of the plan of action and the holding of the Social Dialogue Forum. A tripartite meeting would apparently be held in the near future. Such a meeting should take place quickly as there was an unjustified delay in fulfilling a series of commitments and obligations. It was impossible to ignore the fact that individuals had been detained and that acts of persecution had taken place. Subparagraph (g) of the draft decision invited the Government to submit the requested information by 31 January 2026. It was to be hoped that by that date the presence of the ILO special adviser at the fifth session of the Social Dialogue Forum had been confirmed. Verifiable and detailed information on the recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry and the Committee on Freedom of Association should be made available, just as the subject of the minimum wage should be discussed, as per the agreement reached. The Worker spokesperson had insisted on two separate occasions that the Director-General should organize a tripartite meeting without delay. Any form of social dialogue leading to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela fulfilling its obligations would be positive. It was important for the Government to show willingness in that regard, not simply to say that it did not agree because the requested measures were not in line with its national law. Such a change in attitude should be reflected in the report it would submit by 31 January 2026 with a view to the following Governing Body meeting in March 2026.

Decision

651. **The Governing Body:**

(a) deplored the lack of progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry adopted in 2019 and the measures requested by the Governing Body at its 352nd (November 2024) and 353rd (March 2025) Sessions;

(b) recognizing that the Social Dialogue Forum serves as a unique and invaluable platform for inclusive national social dialogue, urged the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to convene the fifth session of the Forum as soon as possible, in order to continue fostering trust, advancing social dialogue, and promoting national reconciliation and social justice, as foundations for lasting peace and prosperity in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela;

(c) while welcoming the outcome of consultations with the social partners, under the Social Dialogue Forum, which led to the identification of a method for setting minimum wages, urged the Government to proceed with its implementation with the participation of all the concerned organizations;

(d) noted with deep concern that the lack of follow-up on the commitments made in the action plan agreed upon at the Social Dialogue Forum had led not only to a lack of progress, but even to setbacks, particularly in light of serious allegations of violations of trade union rights, matters which are being examined by the Committee on Freedom of Association and to whose recommendations it referred;

(e) deeply regretted that, despite its repeated calls, the Government had not made the necessary arrangements for an ILO special adviser on social dialogue to support the implementation of the action plan and the preparation of the sessions of the Social Dialogue Forum;

(f) requested the Director-General to organize before the next session of the Governing Body a virtual meeting with the Government and the social partners, in order to discuss areas and modalities of cooperation, as a preparatory step to the holding of the fifth Social Dialogue Forum and to report thereon at its 356th Session (March 2026);

(g) invited the Government to submit to the Director-General, by 31 January 2026, information on any further concrete measures taken in relation to subparagraphs (b), (c), (d) and (e) above, with a view to transmitting the information to the Governing Body at its 356th Session.

(GB.355/INS/9(Rev.1), paragraph 39)

10. Complaint alleging non-observance by Guatemala of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 (GB.355/INS/10(Rev.1))

652. **A Government representative of Guatemala** (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare), reaffirming the commitment of its Government to defending fundamental labour rights, in particular freedom of association and collective bargaining as the essential pillars for developing a democratic and fair society, indicated that it continued its efforts to comply with Conventions Nos 87 and 98. The Government welcomed the mission of the ILO, the IOE and the ITUC that had visited the country in August 2025 to monitor the implementation of the road map. The mission report underscored ongoing structural difficulties that continued to

affect the full enjoyment of freedom of association and collective bargaining and recognized the Government's determination to make progress in the implementation of the road map.

653. The Ministry of the Interior had met with the National Tripartite Committee on Labour Relations and Freedom of Association (CNTRLLS), the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Public Prosecutor's Office to address matters related to the protection and safety of threatened trade unionists. Significant progress had been made in September 2025 by adopting a new Protocol for the Implementation of Immediate and Preventive Security Measures for Labour and Trade Union Rights Activists, which was aligned with the highest international standards in the protection of human rights activists and trade unionists and established a coordination mechanism with the Public Prosecutor through the Special Prosecutor for Crimes against Judicial Officials and Trade Unionists.

654. The judiciary was firmly committed to examining offences of non-compliance with reinstatement orders. By 20 August 2025, a specialized labour court created in 2023 had resolved more than 63 per cent of the cases received. There had been an increase of 23 per cent in the number of cases being considered and 45 per cent increase in the number of reinstatements, particularly in cases involving local authorities. The coverage of services provided by the judiciary had been enhanced through the creation of three courts of first instance of labour and social welfare and four labour and social welfare chambers in various regions of the country. Those efforts were accompanied by the introduction of new technological tools in labour tribunals that provided up-to-date data in real time.

655. With regard to trade union registration, the following actions had been taken: (i) reinforcing the capacity of the General Directorate of Labour through the recruitment of additional staff and provision of new equipment to facilitate working processes and improve the services provided to workers' and employers' representatives; (ii) carrying out media campaigns on freedom of association to raise awareness on the need to register executive committees and trade unions, thereby reducing the obstacles encountered by trade unions in the registration process; and (iii) organizing in September and November 2025 workshops on the registration of trade unions' legal personality, which addressed issues relating to registration procedures and requirements, as well as solutions in cases where rules were not complied with. The most significant progress had been the provisional registration of trade unions within 24 hours after the requests were received.

656. With regard to the promotion of collective bargaining, a dialogue forum for the approval of collective agreements had been established in August with the participation of trade union leaders and the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, to analyse and resolve matters related to the approval process of collective agreements. The Government was grateful for the technical assistance provided by the ILO through a study of collective bargaining in Guatemala and was looking forward to receiving the visit of Mr Pablo Topet to seek consensus on the regulations concerning the approval of collective agreements in the public sector. The ILO had also organized, in the context of the "Global deal" project, a workshop aimed at building social partners' capacity in social dialogue, collective bargaining and conflict resolution.

657. Recognizing the importance of the ILO and its supervisory mechanisms to drive lasting transformation, she reaffirmed Guatemala's full commitment to consolidate the recent achievements and to implement the priority actions identified by the mission.

658. **The Worker spokesperson** took note of the steps taken by the Government to implement the 2013 road map and priority actions identified by the 2022 joint ILO, IOE and ITUC mission, but noted that significant work remained to be done. Persistent issues included anti-union discrimination, particularly in the maquila and agricultural sectors, as shown by the

217 complaints filed in 2024–25, resulting in penalties of around US$18,000. He requested details concerning the number of employers involved and whether fines had been collected and discrimination ceased. While acknowledging initiatives such as bipartite round tables and promotional campaigns, the enforcement of reinstatement orders was still problematic, with workers often waiting for years after court rulings to be reinstated. He noted that 13 reinstatement orders had been issued between January and August 2025 and that until August 2025, the collegial peace court on criminal matters had settled 714 of the 1,130 cases received, registered 182 reinstatements and issued convictions for non-compliance with court decisions in 178 cases. He invited the Government to continue working with the CNTRLLS to identify additional ways to allow for the rapid reinstatement of workers dismissed due to their trade union activity.

659. While there seemed to be some improvements in speed and transparency of the trade union registration process, including provisional registration within 24 hours, only five of 31 applications had been approved between January and August. The Workers' group requested more information on pending cases.

660. Noting with disappointment that: (i) the bill aimed at giving a more permanent character to the CNTRLLS had not passed despite long-standing support; and (ii) only three of the seven legislative reforms that had been agreed in 2017 in the CNTRLLS to comply with the observations of the CEACR had been approved by the Congress, the Workers' group urged the Government to adopt the required reforms promptly.

661. The information provided by the government on anti-union violence and impunity, was largely similar to that provided in the two most recent reports, except for a few new convictions and acquittals. Unfortunately, more cases had been shelved under section 327 of the criminal code, with 53 cases lacking evidence, as a result of poor investigation by previous governments under which the crimes had been committed. The group regretted the recent murder of the president of the municipal union of Pueblo Nuevo and noted the information provided by the Government about the extended measures to show its reiterated commitment to protecting the lives and safety of trade union officials and members.

662. In conclusion, the Workers' group appreciated the efforts reported by the Government to address the long-standing and complex issues and the fact that it would take time to overcome the damage caused by decades of inaction and neglect and urged the Government to continue making progress on the pending issues identified.

663. **The Employer spokesperson** appreciated that the Government of Guatemala had responded to the Governing Body's request by providing detailed information which had been shared with the CNTRLLS, which was a positive sign of commitment to social dialogue. The Employers' group noted the progress made in the investigation, prosecution and resolution of cases of anti-union violence, which was historically one of the most serious concerns in the country, with 41 verdicts issued in 28 homicide cases and trials ongoing at various stages. It remained essential and urgent to continue the efforts to implement the recommendations from the Committee on Freedom of Association concerning serious and long-standing cases by ensuring faster investigations and better coordination among the competent bodies. Regarding protection for trade unionists at risk, the group acknowledged the new security measures, the establishment of a hotline and the revised prevention and protection protocol. Those mechanisms needed to produce tangible results to build confidence among social partners and prevent violence effectively. The information provided by the Government illustrated progress in the enforcement of reinstatements and sanctions concerning anti-union dismissals, which strengthened the rule of labour law.

664. The Employers' group welcomed improvements in trade union registration, including 24-hour provisional registration and individual follow-up workshops, which contributed to improve transparency and efficiency and were consistent with the recommendations of the supervisory bodies. The group also welcomed the progress made in collective bargaining as reflected in the approval of collective agreements in both public and private sectors and the creation of a specific dialogue forum. It was a positive sign to have requested technical assistance from the ILO to reach consensus on the regulation for the approval of collective agreements in the public sector. Concerning the legislative reform, the group was concerned over the failure to approve bills 5508 and 6162, given their importance for consolidating the institutional framework for freedom of association and urged the authorities to take stronger actions to achieve consensus and strengthen social dialogue through comprehensive legislative measures.

665. The spokesperson emphasized the significance of the joint ILO, IOE and ITUC mission conducted at the Government's invitation to support the implementation of the road map, which had reaffirmed the importance of international cooperation. Its major outcome was the identification of the areas for priority action, which provided a well-grounded and balanced guide concerning assistance required by Guatemala in the future. He underscored the technical assistance programme coordinated by the ILO and acknowledged the efforts made by the national partners. Recognizing the budgetary limitations that hindered work to prevent anti-union violence and promote social dialogue, he called on the international community to contribute to the financial sustainability of ongoing projects, particularly the second phase of the EU-funded project.

666. Strengthening national institutions and the rule of law was, alongside legislative reforms, the most effective way to ensure respect for Conventions Nos 87 and 98. The Employers' group supported the balanced and constructive draft decision to invite the Government to intensify efforts, the Office to extend technical assistance and the international community to maintain support, while postponing consideration of additional measures to the 358th Session (November 2026).

667. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark stated that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. The EU and its Member States remained committed to respecting, protecting, and fulfilling labour rights and considered that universal ratification and effective implementation of fundamental ILO Conventions and the work of the ILO's supervisory bodies were essential to that endeavour. She thanked the Office for the continuous support provided to Guatemala in the implementation of the road map on freedom of association and welcomed the joint mission that had provided a detailed assessment of the situation and identified priority areas with clear timelines. She praised initiatives such as tripartite workshops and training sessions on freedom of association and technical assistance to judicial authorities. While acknowledging the Government's efforts to protect trade union members, including through the finalization of the revised protection protocol, she shared the concern expressed by the Committee on Freedom of Association and the CEACR regarding acts of violence and murders and urged the Government to prevent further loss of life and strengthen judicial proceedings to ensure that all cases of violence were prosecuted in a timely and fair manner and led to accountability for instigators and perpetrators. Labour inspection on trade union matters also needed to be strengthened. She noted that some progress had been made with regard to trade unions registration, but obstacles persisted, and regretted the failure to approve bills 5508 and 6162, urging renewed efforts to complete the legislative reform.

668. The EU remained a principal partner in supporting the implementation of the road map through the agreement with Central America to effectively implement fundamental ILO Conventions in law and practice. Through the second phase of the promotion of decent work project, it was financing initiatives to strengthen tripartite social dialogue and build capacities among trade unions and employers in the country. The EU was also supporting projects aimed at strengthening the labour movement and civil society and promoting responsible business conduct in key agricultural supply chains. She supported the draft decision.

669. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom,** speaking also on behalf of Canada, welcomed the report from the Government of Guatemala, which demonstrated its commitment to protecting and guaranteeing the rights enshrined in Conventions Nos 87 and 98, but shared the CEACR's concerns about ongoing labour rights violations, mass dismissals, and violence against trade union leaders. She urged the Guatemalan Government to continue to work constructively with the ILO and take full advantage of the Office's technical assistance in order to fully implement the road map, as well as to continue the efforts to complete the legislative reform through bills 5508 and 6162. She supported the draft decision.

670. **A Government representative of the United States** welcomed Guatemala's commitment to addressing issues raised in the complaint, including the finalization of a protocol to implement security measures to protect human rights defenders and trade unionists; increased efforts to sanction employers who violated the law in the garment sector; and ramping up coordination efforts across relevant agencies. It would be interesting to have more details concerning the expected finalization time of the coordination mechanism. She urged for stronger measures to prevent violence, prosecute perpetrators and allocate more resources to enforce labour laws in export sectors that had a long history of anti-union practices. She called for implementation of mission recommendations within the proposed timelines. She supported the draft decision.

671. **A Government representative of Colombia** welcomed the progress made by the Guatemalan Government in the implementation of the road map and the important activities undertaken to strengthen national mechanisms to address anti-union violence, promote social dialogue, and consolidate institutional capacity in relation to international labour standards. In particular, Colombia recognized the efforts made in the fight against anti-union violence and the measures taken to ensure the protection and security of trade union leaders, including the actions aimed at strengthening institutional mechanisms for the investigation and prosecution of acts of violence. He encouraged Guatemala to continue along that path with support and technical assistance from the ILO and expressed Colombia's full support for further work to be undertaken in close cooperation with the national authorities and social partners to ensure a safer, more participatory, and more rights-friendly environment at work.

672. **A Government representative of Guatemala** (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare) said that she had taken note of the Workers' group's remarks and would provide the information requested by the Employers' group. She reiterated her Government's commitment to implementing Conventions Nos 87 and 98 and the road map on freedom of association. She highlighted the adoption of a security protocol for trade unionists and ongoing efforts to address recommendations from the Committee on Freedom of Association and expressed gratitude for international support. While acknowledging remaining challenges, she was confident that cooperation would enable further progress in advancing collective bargaining in full respect of the Conventions.

Decision

673. The Governing Body:

(a) requested the Government of Guatemala to continue intensifying its efforts to implement the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98);

(b) requested the Office to continue expanding its technical assistance programme to ensure further progress in the implementation of the referred Conventions;

(c) strongly encouraged the international community to contribute to the above-mentioned technical assistance programme by providing the necessary resources;

(d) decided to defer to its 358th Session (November 2026) the decision to consider further action in respect of the article 26 complaint.

(GB.355/INS/10(Rev.1), paragraph 20)

11. Follow-up to the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 113th Session (2025) (GB.355/INS/11(Rev.1))

674. The Employer spokesperson expressed his group's full solidarity with the people of Myanmar. The military authorities appeared to have made no tangible progress towards the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the situation appeared to have further deteriorated. His group deplored the persistent serious violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, including forced recruitment, forced labour, torture and other forms of violence. He was deeply concerned by the continued interference in trade union activities and business freedom to open and close establishments, seriously infringing on labour rights and liberties. Regarding the incarceration of trade union leaders, the Employers welcomed the release of the General Secretary of the Myanmar Industry, Crafts and Services Trade Union Federation (MICs-TUsF) and the Director of the Solidarity Trade Union of Myanmar (STUM). He expressed the hope that they represented genuine engagement by the military junta to end all forms of violence against trade unions for the legitimate exercise of rights and that everyone faced with charges would be entitled to a fair trial.

675. His group welcomed the engagement by the military authorities with the ILO Liaison Office and their provision of information in response to the background document. It was disappointing that the background document provided little information on the impact that the crisis was having on businesses and employers, who had to navigate very complex and fragile political and economic landscapes striving to ensure essential business continuity. Noting the multiple actions taken by ILO constituents under the article 33 resolution, including advising businesses on enhancing due diligence, he reiterated that measures that might negatively impact livelihoods and business activities in no way associated with the military authority should be avoided, including blanket economic sanctions and business disengagement. History showed that such remedies led to negative impacts on the people of Myanmar. Article 33 was not a sanction mechanism. Measures should be designed to improve Myanmar's adherence to the fundamental Conventions and ensure that key stakeholders in the country could access the necessary resources and expertise to safeguard labour rights and promote sound industrial relations.

676. His group welcomed the initiative by the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry to develop guidance on forced labour with the support of the ILO. The Federation had embarked on a campaign to educate employers and promote compliance. The accusation of supplying conscription records should not be confused with the requirement for companies to provide workers' records for statistical and administrative purposes. Taking the accusation out of the broader context limited clarity. Regarding clause (b)(iii) of the draft decision, concerning an update on the monitoring mechanism for documentation of ongoing violations, his group expressed its continued support for the establishment of that mechanism by the Office. However, it was concerned about the lack of constituent involvement in the identification, definition and development of the mechanism. He stressed that involvement by the social partners was crucial and requested the Office to engage fully with the social partners in the development of the mechanism. Regarding the ILO country visit, he noted that following its acceptance by the military authorities, concrete steps had been taken to facilitate it. He urged the military authorities to avoid any further delay and to provide the Office with full guarantees and high-level assurances that the visit would proceed. He reiterated that his group remained deeply concerned about the deterioration of the situation in Myanmar. As a peaceful resolution continued to be sought to the current crisis and the restoration of an environment where fundamental rights and freedoms were respected, his group supported the draft decision.

677. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the meeting was being held in the context of an unprecedented humanitarian disaster in Myanmar. Civilians were facing extreme danger, acute food insecurity and the near collapse of essential public services. The economy was in ruins, making life untenable for most. Two powerful earthquakes in March 2025 had killed at least 3,800 people, worsening conditions. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar had expressed concern over the escalating conflict and unabated violence. Civilians were being targeted in schools, hospitals and places of worship, and infrastructure was being bombed. The previous week the military had bombed a school that the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM) had been using as an office after fleeing from its headquarters. No tangible progress had been made towards restoring democratic order and civilian rule or towards respecting the will of the people. In July a caretaker administration had been established, the State Security and Peace Commission, chaired by the coup leader, and the regime had recently called general elections in the context of martial law. There were widespread violations of civil liberties, including restrictions on freedom of expression and arrests of individuals criticizing planned elections. The OHCHR had raised concerns that the military's plan to hold general elections would not allow people to exercise their political rights freely and peacefully. The Workers' group was concerned that the elections would not be free and fair and would instead lead to another military government in civilian clothing.

678. Regarding the background document, his group had read with frustration that the military authorities had made no progress in implementing the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry. The information provided did not demonstrate specific action on the 11 recommendations, besides the recent conditional release of three unionists, but rather constituted general information. Violations of freedom of association were numerous and severe. In February 2025, the military had organized a so-called CTUM Congress and falsely claimed it had resulted in new leadership for the union; instead, it was the creation of a compliant parallel union and a new office bearing the CTUM name and logo under military protection. The same had happened to the Industrial Workers Federation of Myanmar, which was confronting a new parallel organization supported by state agencies. Workers and employers were coerced into recognizing those military-dominated organizations, and independent, democratic unions faced surveillance, threats and pressure to disband. The parallel sham unions were being accredited for attendance at regional meetings. The military had arrested several members of the STUM since July, confiscating property and shutting down the Yangon office.

679. The military authorities continued to criminalize the exercise of civil liberties and freedom of association. He referred to the case of Naing Lin Aung, a youth activist who had been arrested, along with his driver, for organizing demonstrations advocating for the adoption of the article 33 resolution and who remained incommunicado. The military was conducting searches for youth activists organizing awareness campaigns and demonstrations. Regarding forced labour, reports indicated that the military regime and associated enterprises continued to coerce civilians into labour in workplaces under exploitative conditions. His group was particularly concerned that the so-called People's Military Service Law and Reserve Forces Law had led to children and civilians being recruited for combat and non-combat forced labour; at least 1,800 verified cases involved children as young as 12. He expressed concern about scam centres along the Thailand–Myanmar border, which had been used to detain recruited workers, who were forced into running online fraud and virtual investment scams. Victims were forced to work 12 to 18 hours per day and failure to meet quotas resulted in brutal punishments.

680. Regarding the measures taken pursuant to the article 33 resolution, his group appreciated the measures reported by Australia, the United Kingdom, the EU and individual Member States, Albania and Mauritius, and urged them to take such additional measures deemed wise to secure compliance with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and Convention No. 87. Current measures were not enough. He urged Member States that had not already done so to take measures, exercising leverage where they had it, and strongly urged those Governments providing support to the military government to cease immediately. All constituents were urged to perform due diligence and cut financial ties with Myanmar financial institutions that provided capital or services to the military and affiliates. State actors and companies must cease to supply fuel used in military operations, forced labour logistics and attacks against civilians. Such relationships risked undermining the implementation of the resolution. The Workers' group looked forward to receiving the full-fledged proposal concerning the monitoring mechanism described in paragraph 51 as soon as possible. He urged the ILO and ASEAN Governments to refrain from inviting sham CTUM representatives established by the military to appear at upcoming ASEAN labour meetings.

681. His group feared that the workers of Myanmar were being failed. It was clear from the military's actions that it had no intention of complying with the Commission's recommendations and that the combined measures to date were not changing the government's behaviour. An implementation plan and monitoring mechanism must be adopted that were robust and creative in responding to any hurdles thrown to derail from meeting the article 33 objectives.

682. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. Since the adoption of the article 33 resolution, the situation in Myanmar had further deteriorated, with the military continuing to suppress democratic freedoms, while violence and the humanitarian crisis escalated and fundamental rights and civil liberties were systematically violated. UN bodies had reported widespread forced labour being imposed by the military authorities, in particular forced recruitment, and continued attacks on trade unionists. She condemned those acts in the strongest possible terms and reiterated her group's profound concern at the continued and deliberate non-compliance by the military with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry on Conventions Nos 87 and 29. The EU and its Member States had taken sustained measures since the 2021 coup that had contributed to the implementation of the article 33 resolution, including targeted restrictive measures against those responsible, and humanitarian and development programmes carried out through partners, in order to avoid channelling EU assistance through the military authorities.

683. Her group remained committed to coordinated international action in pursuit of accountability and respect for fundamental rights and encouraged all ILO Member States, constituents and observers to follow up on the article 33 resolution. She acknowledged the recent release of three trade unionists and labour rights defenders, including the MICs-TUsF General Secretary, as a notable step, and stressed that all trade unionists and human and labour rights defenders imprisoned for exercising legitimate civil liberties must be freed immediately and without conditions. Arrests, intimidation and the establishment of parallel military-backed trade unions underlined the absence of genuine progress. Her group welcomed and supported the Office's work to develop a new monitoring mechanism that would confidentially and credibly document violations of fundamental rights. It was essential for the full implementation of the article 33 resolution and for ensuring accountability and protection of rights. The EU and its Member States would continue to work with the ILO and all relevant actors to secure meaningful compliance by the Myanmar military with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and to support the people of Myanmar in their pursuit of dignity, justice and decent work. She supported the draft decision.

684. **Speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom**, a Government representative of Australia expressed gratitude to the ILO Liaison Officer and Office in Myanmar, and to the human rights defenders, trade unions, journalists and other civil society actors who continued to document the deeply concerning political security and humanitarian circumstances in Myanmar. Her group appreciated the efforts of the ILO Office since the adoption of the resolution, and those of the UN. It supported international efforts to pursue accountability and urged the Myanmar regime to cease violence, release those unjustly detained and allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access. It was deeply alarming that since the adoption of the article 33 resolution, the situation in Myanmar had deteriorated even further. Humanitarian needs were at unprecedented levels and there were persistent reports of labour rights violations and brutal forced labour practices. Myanmar trade unions and democracy organizations continued to report that trade unionists and human rights defenders in conflict zones were especially targeted by the military regime. Attacks on trade union premises and property were consistently reported. Noting the conditional release of the General Secretary of the MICs-TUsF, she emphasized that all those imprisoned for exercising their legitimate civil liberties should be released without conditions or delay.

685. Elections could be neither free nor fair in the current circumstances. Elections held without the regime engaging in genuine and inclusive political dialogue risked greater instability. Her group urged a peaceful transition of power in Myanmar to an inclusive civilian democratic government that reflected the will of the people.

686. Expressing deep concern regarding the military regime's ongoing disregard for its commitments under Conventions Nos 87 and 29, her group was committed to supporting the article 33 resolution measures and would work with the ILO and its constituents to secure compliance with the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. Her group supported the draft decision.

687. **Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Malaysia said that ASEAN noted the article 33 resolution and the ongoing challenges in Myanmar. It acknowledged Myanmar's efforts to address the challenges and underlined the importance of it taking concrete and measurable steps to meet its obligations under Conventions Nos 29 and 87, encouraging it to intensify those efforts, particularly by strengthening labour protection. He underscored the recommendation for the Director-General to engage with regional bodies to explore possible coordinated frameworks that supported full implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations. The continued engagement of the ASEAN Chairperson through its Special Envoy with all stakeholders in Myanmar was essential to build trust and create conditions conducive to an inclusive Myanmar-led national dialogue aimed at restoring decent work. He encouraged the accelerated implementation of ASEAN-led mechanisms, including consultations among past, present and incoming chairpersons, to ensure sustained follow through on the ASEAN five-point consensus. All efforts must support the restoration of safe and decent working conditions and promote the well-being of all affected workers; measures that might inadvertently harm livelihoods and employment opportunities should be avoided.

688. **A Government representative of the United States** said that the United States condemned the ongoing deterioration of political, economic and humanitarian conditions in Myanmar under the military regime's repressive rule. It commended the ILO Liaison Office and its dedicated staff for continuing its mission in extremely challenging conditions. It was alarmed by reports of military and labour ministry officials undermining independent workers' organizations by supporting fake parallel unions and disheartened by the failure of the military authorities to protect garment workers' freedom of association, exposing buyers to supply-chain risks and workers abroad to unfair competition. He deplored ongoing reports of widespread forced labour. The regime's own submissions revealed its failure to protect against numerous abuses of rights protected under Conventions Nos 87 and 29 and his Government remained deeply concerned by the military authorities' failure to accept and address the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in that regard. He expressed full support for the establishment of a monitoring mechanism for the confidential and credible documentation of rights abuses. The United States had implemented a variety of targeted sanctions, export controls and visa restrictions and would continue to consider all available tools. It remained committed to working with the ILO, other Member States and social partners to give full effect to the article 33 resolution. He supported the draft decision.

689. **A Government representative of Japan** expressed thanks to the Office for providing detailed information and commended its continuous efforts to advance its work under the challenging circumstances in Myanmar. She expressed serious concern about the situation, where many lives were still significantly affected, four and a half years after the coup d'état. She strongly urged the Myanmar military to stop the violence immediately, release those detained and swiftly restore Myanmar's democratic political system. She expressed the hope that following the lifting of the state of emergency by the current Myanmar regime on 31 July 2025, the Myanmar military would act sincerely to improve the situation. Japan called for concrete actions to be taken by Myanmar to implement the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry in its 2023 report. When implementing the article 33 measures, consideration must be given to the impact on the people of Myanmar, who faced difficulties as a result of the economic instability affecting the businesses employing them. Japan continued to provide humanitarian assistance and support to improve lives in Myanmar, including through the ILO's project for Myanmar migrant workers.

690. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** said that it had consistently maintained that positive changes in the situation in Myanmar were only possible on the basis of mutual respect, equality and constructive dialogue with all tripartite partners in the country. At the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference events had unfortunately unfolded differently, and an unprecedented decision had been taken to apply article 33 sanctions. That decision had been based on blatantly politicized and biased assessments presented by western non-governmental organizations (NGOs), various exiled trade unions and illegitimate international entities, such as the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar. Moreover, as before, the country's government had not been able to defend its interests by participating in the Conference. Highly dubious and unacceptable sources had been used in the preparation of the background document and the draft decision, and the government's position had not been considered; sadly, representatives of Naypyidaw had not been admitted to the current discussion. Consequently, the illegitimate and absurd situation continued, where the government was burdened with obligations but was not entitled to defend itself against accusations of non-compliance. The draft decision aimed at continuing the sanctions pressure on Myanmar. The measures had already had, and would continue to have, significant negative consequences for ordinary workers and entrepreneurs, including small and medium-sized businesses, already since long under tremendous pressure. He urged Governing Body members not to support the draft decision. The Russian Federation firmly disassociated itself from any decisions providing for the application against Myanmar of article 33 of the ILO Constitution.

691. **A Government representative of China** expressed thanks for the extensive work done by the ILO Liaison Office. It was regrettable that due to the issue of representation it was not possible to hear directly from the government of Myanmar, which had taken active measures to ensure occupational safety and health, with domestic legislation safeguarding trade union freedom. It protected workers' rights and prevented forced labour through practical actions, such as inspection and complaint mechanisms. As an ILO Member State, Myanmar had actively engaged in international labour affairs, supported the work of the Liaison Office and earnestly fulfilled its obligations under ratified Conventions, achieving tangible progress. That should be acknowledged by the Governing Body.

692. The establishment of a monitoring mechanism was not the best option in the current circumstances. Myanmar's economic and social development required a peaceful and stable environment, and understanding and support from the international community, including the ILO. Regarding labour issues in Myanmar, Governing Body measures should foster dialogue and cooperation, and no mechanism should be established without consent. China supported Myanmar in continuing to fulfil its obligations as an ILO Member. It called on all parties to strengthen cooperation in a balanced manner, respecting national sovereignty, and to take concrete actions to safeguard the labour rights of the Myanmar people. China did not support the draft decision.

693. **A Government representative of the United States** said that he wished to clarify some aspects of language. As only States had obligations under international labour law, references to violations in the draft decision should not be read to mean recognition of the military regime as the government of Myanmar. Similarly, article 33 of the ILO Constitution contemplated Member States carrying out the Commission's recommendations. Given the circumstances, the United States strongly encouraged the regime to carry out the Commission's recommendations as reflected in the draft decision. It read the reference to civil liberties in subparagraph (b) of the draft decision to mean liberties granted to Myanmar citizens under Myanmar law.

Decision

694. **Recalling the resolution for a return to democracy and respect for fundamental rights in Myanmar adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021) and**

the resolution concerning the measures recommended by the Governing Body under article 33 of the ILO Constitution on the subject of Myanmar, adopted by the Conference at its 113th Session (2025), and noting with utmost concern the continued absence of any concrete action towards the implementation of the recommendations formulated by the Commission of Inquiry in its 2023 report, which emphasized the urgency of the national situation, the Governing Body:

(a) as regards the 2021 resolution:

(i) deplored once again the continued absence of progress towards respecting the will of the people and restoring democratic institutions and processes over four years since the military coup, and expressed deep concern over the announcement of military-organized general elections;

(ii) called on the military authorities to end immediately all acts of violence, and the arbitrary arrest, detention and torture of trade unionists, labour activists and others, including the Rohingya, in the exercise of their human rights and ensure the immediate and unconditional release of those detained without resorting to section 401 of the Code of Criminal Procedure;

(b) as regards the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and the 2025 resolution:

(i) called on the military authorities to:

- **immediately cease all violations identified by the Commission of Inquiry and ensure that employers' and workers' organizations be able to exercise their rights in a climate of freedom and security, free from violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, and revoke without delay any military orders, legislative or other measures, decreed since February 2021 and identified as restricting freedom of association and the basic civil liberties of trade unionists;**
- **take immediate action to put an end, in law and in practice, to any forced recruitment into the military contrary to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), including the forced recruitment of children;**
- **provide the necessary guarantees and assurances at the highest level which would allow an ILO mission to visit the country and to carry out its mandate in full independence and security, with no retaliation, sanction or prejudice to any person being in contact with it;**
- **submit to the Director-General by 15 January 2026 any relevant information for transmission to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);**

(ii) invited the Organization's constituents to continue taking steps to ensure an effective follow-up to the 2025 resolution, including a review of their relations with the military authorities to ensure that they do not enable, facilitate or prolong, the violations of workers' rights in respect of freedom of association and forced labour, and respect for the principle of non-refoulement, and provide information to the Director-General on any measures taken and other developments;

(iii) called on the Director-General to:

- **continue taking steps to implement the 2025 resolution, including through direct support to Myanmar workers, employers and their organizations in line with the United Nations Country Team programmatic engagement guidelines, and through increased collaboration within the United Nations system to ensure coordinated action on the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry;**
- **continue to closely monitor the situation in Myanmar with regard to the exercise of freedom of association and the prohibition of forced or compulsory labour, including through the development of a monitoring mechanism for the confidential and credible documentation of ongoing violations and a plan of action for the implementation of the 2025 resolution;**
- **submit to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026) a document providing an update on relevant developments in the country and progress made by Myanmar regarding compliance with the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, including an update on the monitoring mechanism for documentation of ongoing violations and a plan of action for the implementation of the 2025 resolution;**

(c) called once again on the military authorities to continue to ensure, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies of 21 November 1947, that no restrictions be placed on the operation of the ILO's bank account, to approve all international staff visa extensions requested and to facilitate the ILO's continued operations to bring benefit to the people of Myanmar despite the expiry of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Decent Work Country Programme in September 2022.

(GB.355/INS/11(Rev.1), paragraph 80)

12. 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.355/INS/12(Rev.1))

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

(b) reiterated its most profound concern at ~~the continuing aggression by the Russian Federation, aided by the Belarusian Government, against~~ the 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 cease armed activities~~and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine~~;

(d) urged all parties to the conflict ~~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 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 full protection provided by applicable ILO instruments;

(g) requested the Director-General to continue to monitor the impact on the world of work of the situation in~~Russian Federation's aggression against~~ Ukraine and to report to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026) 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 workers particularly affected by the armed conflict.

696. **The Worker spokesperson** said that in Ukraine the ILO worked under extremely difficult and often dangerous conditions. The OHCHR reported that between December 2024 and May 2025, 968 civilians had been killed and 4,807 injured, mainly owing to missile and drone strikes in areas controlled by the Ukrainian Government. The reports of the OHCHR regarding the arrest, torture, deportation and killing of Ukrainian citizens in territories occupied by the Russian Federation were alarming. The negative effects on the world of work were staggering and the peace and social justice sought under the ILO mandate seemed to be further away than ever.

697. According to the Report of the UN Secretary-General of May 2025 (A/HRC/59/67), the Russian Federation continued to pressure residents to join its armed forces and had even introduced a mandatory school course "Fundamentals of the security and defence of the homeland" for 13 and 14-year olds. The European Court of Human Rights had found the Russian Federation to be responsible for systematic forced labour, a clear breach of the most basic ILO principles. The use of children in the conflict was another horrific development. That was a violation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Attacks continued on workers and workplaces, including on hospitals, ambulances and first responders, as well as energy workers – 115 on energy infrastructure with 91 in Ukrainian controlled areas. She welcomed the new Netherlands-funded ILO project that would provide support to Ukrainian emergency energy workers and called on other ILO donors to step up their support for such critical projects.

698. The OHCHR had further documented repeated double-tap attacks, where ambulances and humanitarian personnel were targeted after an initial broader attack. The violation of workers' freedom of association also continued. Ukrainian trade union colleagues had reported ongoing obstruction of their activities, and the destruction and confiscation of union premises and harassment of their members, in direct violation of Convention No. 87. Fifteen workers from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, 37 journalists and several public officials remained in prolonged detention by the occupying forces. Health and safety conditions were worsening and investigations of accidents in the workplace showed that almost half of such accidents were related to Russian airstrikes against industrial facilities.

699. The economic and social costs of the aggression by the Russian Federation were staggering. MSMEs had suffered losses estimated at over US$17 billion. Almost 1 million veterans were struggling to reintegrate into the labour market. Even among the destruction, Ukrainian workers and their unions continued to rebuild and organize and to protect their members. The Workers' group commended the ILO for its continued cooperation with the tripartite constituents in Ukraine and indeed there were some positive signs of the revival of social dialogue. A tripartite memorandum on labour law reform had been signed at the Ukraine Recovery Conference held in Rome in July 2025, brokered by the EU as part of Ukraine's accession process. That memorandum highlighted the need for joint tripartite efforts towards full alignment with ILO standards. ILO technical assistance and capacity-building for the social partners was vital to ensure that commitments were fully and genuinely implemented. The new trade union hubs in Kharkiv and Dnipro, and the legal aid centre in Odesa were lifelines for workers seeking protection, justice and dignity.

700. The Office was encouraged to expand that work and to continue monitoring and documenting labour rights violations across all affected sectors. It should provide an update on the violations that had occurred at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, together with new briefs on the situation of transport workers and public sector employees. Future Governing Body documents should include a section dedicated to the violation of workers' rights in the occupied territories, and the Kyiv country office must continue to support the capacity-building of Ukrainian unions via development cooperation projects in close cooperation with ACTRAV.

701. The ILO had been founded in the aftermath of a war on the conviction that lasting peace must rest on social justice. The ongoing aggression against Ukraine was the very negation of that principle. The Workers' group stood in full solidarity with the people and workers of Ukraine to defend democracy, freedom and decent work, often at enormous personal risk. It supported the adoption of the draft decision without the proposed amendment.

702. **The Employer spokesperson** reaffirmed the Employers' group's support for the people and businesses of Ukraine. The aggression against Ukraine had continued to intensify significantly and to have a severe impact on the world of work. Ukraine's economic outlook remained very fragile. The destruction of mines and industrial facilities continued to threaten thousands of jobs, and gains made in construction and manufacturing were offset by energy infrastructure attacks and export constraints. Small and medium-sized enterprises, which accounted for over 80 per cent of jobs and around two thirds of gross domestic product (GDP) operated under conditions of prolonged uncertainty. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development had reported that, if the war continued, only 61 per cent of entrepreneurs planned to maintain their current operations.

703. Ukraine's private sector nevertheless demonstrated resilience and the ILO's efforts to support employers' organizations in developing new services to respond to wartime challenges were to be commended. Entrepreneurship development continued to be promoted in the context of occupational safety and health legislation reform. It was worth noting that ILO development cooperation addressed a broad range of priorities including strengthening labour standards and enhancing social protection systems, and that social dialogue remained central to the ILO's engagement in the region. The Employers' group trusted that the host country agreement would be concluded so as to enhance further the Office's capacity. The ILO country office staff showed great dedication to delivering results under extraordinary circumstances. He expressed support for the draft decision but not for the proposed amendment.

704. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** emphasized that once again the report presented contained unjust accusations against his country. The report attempted to link the external political activity of the Russian Federation, determined by its national interests and security issues, with the insufficient number of workers and economic uncertainty in other countries. By contrast, the Russian Federation was actually working to preserve economic cooperation. Furthermore, it satisfied all the obligations stemming from its ratification of the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115) and Convention No. 155. Nuclear safety was the responsibility of the entire world community and that idea should also be respected by Ukraine.

705. The repeated use of the term "aggression" in the report went beyond the limits of the ILO's mandate and introduced political aspects into the Governing Body's work, which had nothing to do with the protection of workers' rights and interests. The report was based entirely on the false statements made by Ukrainian sources and the unverified information provided by western NGOs, which ignored the Russian Federation's official position. Such a stance called into question the report's objectivity. The ILO should strictly observe the principle of neutrality.

706. The politicization of the ILO had negative consequences for the international labour community. For the past three years, the anti-Russian decisions approved had deprived the Russian Federation of access to expert cooperation. Such support would have assisted the country in studying best international practices for increasing labour productivity and exchanging experiences on the adaptation of national classification systems to changing market conditions, including the digitalization of workplaces and AI. The restrictions on the participation of Russian experts in ILO events damaged the Organization itself and the international community, as it deprived other countries of access to the highly effective work done by the country's social partners and its superiority over analogue systems in other countries. The Russian Federation did not agree with the draft decision, as proposed, and had put forward a number of amendments to reduce the level of politicization. Should the proposed amendments not be accepted, the Russian Federation would be obliged to call for a vote on the matter.

707. **Speaking on behalf of a group of 41 countries**, [8] a Government representative of Poland strongly condemned the Russian Federation's illegal, unprovoked and unjustifiable aggression against Ukraine. Since July 2025, deliberate strikes against civilians and workers had intensified, affecting teachers, journalists, miners and emergency responders. Energy workers attempting to restore power supplies had been repeatedly targeted. In the temporarily occupied territories, Ukrainian citizens faced widespread repression by the Russian authorities, including intimidation, arbitrary detentions, coercion and forced labour.

708. The credible allegations made confirmed the Russian Federation's ongoing and systematic violations of international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, and its disregard for ILO principles. The situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant posed a grave threat to public safety and regional stability, creating risks with global consequences. Despite those challenges, Ukraine's tripartite constituents continued to demonstrate extraordinary resilience, as they advanced labour law reform and strengthened social dialogue with the ILO's steadfast support. All Governing Body members were urged to step up the mobilization of resources to support Ukraine's recovery. The ILO's cooperation with the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission to enhance the coordination of international labour standards and humanitarian law was appreciated. While the ILO's efforts to safeguard its technical assistance in the region were positive, deep concern was expressed regarding the suitability of keeping the subregional office in Moscow. In the current context of severe financial constraints and given the high operational costs of the office, its continued presence in the Russian Federation was difficult to justify. The office should be relocated so as better to serve constituents in the region. The group of 41 countries reiterated its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Russian Federation should immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces and cease its violations of workers' rights and human dignity. He expressed support for the draft decision and rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.

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

709. **Speaking on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries**, [9] a Government representative of Denmark said that the report presented clearly demonstrated that the Russian Federation's brutal, illegal and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine continued to cause immense human suffering and economic devastation. It confirmed the persistent and systematic violations of international law and its disregard for ILO principles.

710. The group of countries condemned the large-scale attacks with severe consequences for civilians and critical infrastructure. A significant need for humanitarian aid persisted while Ukraine continued to face major labour shortages. The group denounced the fact that Ukrainian workers in the temporarily occupied territories were forced to acquire Russian passports in order to access employment, social services and other basic rights, in violation of international law. It condemned the violation of the fundamental rights of Ukrainian staff at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, in the form of arbitrary detention, deportation, torture or execution. In such circumstances, the group commended the continuing operations of MSMEs and the Ukrainian people for showing resilience in keeping enterprises functioning. It also expressed gratitude to the Office for its sustained support for Ukraine and welcomed its collaboration with the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in integrating labour standards into the monitoring of human rights and humanitarian law.

711. In the context of the Russian Federation's ongoing violation of the ILO Constitution and its commitments as a Member State, the group questioned the suitability of keeping the subregional office in Moscow. Considering the reform process and the necessary cost-saving exercise, it sought clarification on the hiring of new, and the re-engagement of existing, staff. To better serve its constituents, the office should be relocated outside the Russian Federation to allow the ILO to enhance its technical assistance in the region. The group reiterated its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. It supported the draft decision and rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.

712. **A Government representative of France** associated herself with the statements made by Denmark on behalf of a cross-regional group of countries and Poland on behalf of a group of like-minded countries. She said that the ILO had been set up after the First World War to promote social justice as the foundation of universal and sustainable peace. For that reason, France reiterated its condemnation in the strongest possible terms of the Russian Federation's continuing war of aggression launched against Ukraine in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. Despite the efforts being made by the President of the United States, the Russian Federation continued its indiscriminate attacks against civilian targets in violation of international humanitarian law. It should withdraw immediately and unconditionally from all occupied Ukrainian territories, with respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders.

713. In the face of the impact of the aggression on the labour market, France applauded the ILO's commitment and that of its staff in the Kyiv office who, despite the trying conditions, worked daily to implement the Organization's cooperation strategy, and it supported the Ukrainian Government in its efforts to advance labour law reform, with the full involvement of the social partners. France supported the draft decision and rejected the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.

[9] Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Kingdom of the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom.

714. **A Government representative of China** said that China had always maintained an objective and impartial stance on the Ukrainian crisis. The sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries should be respected, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations should be observed and all efforts for the peaceful resolution of the crisis supported, including those of the ILO. China opposed the draft decision and supported the amendments proposed by the Russian Federation.

715. **A Government representative of the Niger** reaffirmed the Niger's attachment to multilateralism and the principle of equal treatment for all ILO Member States. It reiterated its support for the ILO's mandate and the universal technical support it provided. The Niger considered that the report presented contained unbalanced information in favour of one Member State and against another Member State as well as views which had no connection with the Organization's work. The current item had been unjustifiably included in the Governing Body agenda since 2022. The Organization should guarantee its neutrality and impartiality in the production of reports. The Niger supported the draft decision, as amended by the Russian Federation.

716. **A Government representative of Ukraine**, speaking as a non-Governing Body member in accordance with article 1.8.3 of the Compendium of Rules applicable to the Governing Body, said that the systematic violations by the Russian Federation of workers' rights in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine remained a grave concern. Such actions constituted a blatant violation of international labour standards, the ILO Constitution and fundamental human rights. Of particular concern was the situation of Ukrainian workers at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant. The Russian Federation should meet all its obligations under ILO instruments and as the Occupying Power under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, to include all workers operating under the occupation. Since March 2022, the Russian Federation had not complied with any of the ten Governing Body decisions. That persistent pattern of denial and non-compliance represented a clear breach of the ILO Constitution and outright defiance of the Organization's principles of social justice and the rule of law.

717. In the light of the current severe budgetary constraints, the ILO should make a decision regarding the maintenance of the subregional office in Moscow. Ukraine commended the ILO Office in Kyiv and its staff for their courageous work under extraordinary conditions. It welcomed the assistance provided in labour law reform, including the approximation of national legislation to the EU *acquis*. Governing Body members should take decisive actions in response to the Russian Federation's ongoing disregard for the Charter of the United Nations and the ILO Constitution. As a matter of principle for those who truly valued the ILO and what it stood for, the Russian Federation must face consequences for its illegal and ruinous actions.

718. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia) said that the fact that new partners were joining in the work done by the ILO Kyiv office was a sign that such work mattered not only for the constituents in Ukraine but also for the development cooperation partners. In response to the question from the Worker spokesperson, she confirmed that work had begun on the sector-related policy briefs. The request made regarding the situation of workers' rights in the occupied territories would also be passed on to the OHCHR. Concerning the question raised by the Government representative of Denmark, she confirmed that staffing levels were being maintained to carry out back-office functions in the subregion.

719. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated the very serious nature of the issue of trade union rights in the temporarily occupied territories.

720. **The Employer spokesperson** commended the Office for delivering a report that was truly non-political and focused on the ILO's core mandate.

721. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** expressed regret that the amendments he had proposed to the draft decision, which were designed to make the decision more balanced and unbiased, had not been accepted. He requested that the amendments be put to a vote.

722. **The Chairperson** noted that the Government representative of the Russian Federation requested to put the amendment to a vote. Having consulted the Vice-Chairpersons of the Governing Body, she said that the proposed amendment would be put to a vote by a show of hands.

(The amendment proposed by the Russian Federation was rejected with 5 votes in favour, 40 votes against and 6 abstentions.)

723. **A Government representative of Brazil** explained that the Governing Body's decisions should remain focused on the conflict's impact on the world of work. The adoption of a draft decision urging parties to cease armed activities went beyond the ILO's mandate. Such requests fell within the purview of the UN Security Council and General Assembly. Thus, his Government had abstained from the vote on the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation and would have voted against the provisions in the draft decision, had a vote on the draft decision been called.

724. **A Government representative of the United States** said that the United States would continue to work to achieve an immediate ceasefire and a just and lasting peace. In line with that approach, it judged that the language of the draft decision was not conducive to creating an environment for agreement on immediate or successful negotiations towards a durable peace agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Decision

725. **In the light of the developments in Ukraine outlined in document GB.355/INS/12(Rev.1) 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 355th 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 full protection provided by applicable ILO instruments;

(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 356th Session (March 2026) 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 workers particularly affected by the armed conflict.

(GB.355/INS/12(Rev.1), paragraph 24)

13. Report on the 20th American Regional Meeting (Punta Cana, 1–3 October 2025) (GB.355/INS/13)

726. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, proposed by the Workers' group and circulated by the Office, which proposed to add a subparagraph that read:

> (c) devise, in consultation with the constituents, a regional implementation plan with clear targets, based on the priorities defined in the Declaration, which allows the Organization's work in the Americas to be monitored, for submission to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);

727. The Worker spokesperson stressed the importance of the tripartite preparatory process that had preceded the meeting and which had led to the adoption of the Declaration by consensus. More systematic technical assistance from the Office would have enriched the process still further. The 50 per cent reduction in costs had shown that efficiency was possible without sacrificing tripartism. Regional meetings were fundamental to the Organization's overall mandate and provided contextualized solutions for social justice.

728. Paragraph 18 of the document recognized operational challenges in the organization of the meeting. Those challenges should be evaluated and the results of the survey referred to in paragraph 20 of the document shared. The document prepared for the Governing Body should have provided a more substantive analysis so as to record the breadth of the tripartite positions and challenges identified during the thematic sessions.

729. The Punta Cana Declaration established 15 priorities for a regional agenda for decent work and social justice, including fundamental principles and rights at work, formalization through strategies such as the *Strategy for the Promotion of Formalization in Latin America and the Caribbean (FORLAC 2.0) 2024-2030*, skills and vocational training, decent work in the platform economy and gender equality. The priorities were specific responses to the urgent needs of millions of workers in the Americas.

730. Paragraph 22 of the Declaration called on the Office to develop a regional implementation plan with clear targets to be presented to the Governing Body at its 356th Session in March 2026, which was not mentioned in the draft decision submitted to the Governing Body. The purpose of the amendment proposed by the Workers' group was to harmonize the draft decision with the mandate provided by the Declaration to ensure that the regional consensus led to tangible results.

731. Workers in the Americas encountered informality, violations of rights, inequalities, and political and climate crises. Consequently, they had a legitimate right to effective action to provide tangible improvements in their working and living conditions. The time was right to demonstrate that regional multilateralism was not a bureaucratic exercise but an effective instrument for social justice.

732. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the meeting had been held at a time marked by institutional fragility and the weakening of multilateralism and freedom of association, which had seriously affected employers' organizations in certain countries in the Americas. Such developments reinforced the urgent need to defend tripartism and effective social dialogue as pillars of social justice and peace.

733. On balance, the Regional Meeting had been positive although there were aspects which needed to be reviewed for the purposes of future meetings. Firstly, the large number of preparatory meetings required by the new format should be considered in terms of the time and financial and human resources involved. Second, the online registration system, while useful for data management and security of access, required improvements to make it more user-friendly. Also, some of the plenary sittings devoted to consideration of the Director-General's report had deviated from the focus and led to inefficient use of time and resources. Thematic sittings could be strengthened with more dynamic interaction between panellists and participants. An ambitious agenda and reduced format had led to an insufficient attendance in parallel sessions. Also of importance was the fact that the issue of migration had not been included in the agenda, a subject currently of great importance for the region.

734. The Member States participating in regional meetings were required to be fully represented and to cover the expenses of at least one Employers' delegate and one Workers' delegate. Unfortunately, in Punta Cana 12 States did not have accredited delegations, while others were incomplete, a fact which weakened tripartism and limited the scope of regional dialogue. It was therefore essential for all governments and tripartite constituents to be represented at future American regional meetings so as to demonstrate the real diversity of societies in the region.

735. In conclusion, the Punta Cana Declaration was a balanced document that reaffirmed the centrality of tripartism, social dialogue and decent work as the basis for sustainable development in the Americas. The Employers' group supported the original draft decision. The mandate given was already contained in the Declaration as well as in subparagraph (b) of the draft decision. The ILO Regional Office would provide the necessary follow-up on the Declaration even though it was not mentioned in the decision. In all cases, it would be too ambitious to hold any consultations by the March 2026 session.

736. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of the Dominican Republic said that the meeting had been the first to be held under the new format approved by the Governing Body for the period 2025–28. The Meeting had served as a renewed space for strengthening tripartite social dialogue in the Americas and reaffirming the collective commitment to democracy, peace, decent work and social justice. The four main thematic spheres that had guided the discussions had allowed the tripartite constituents to address the structural challenges of the world of work in the Americas and highlighted the need for evidence-based policies, social dialogue and international cooperation.

737. The Punta Cana Declaration was a policy and programmatic tool, consistent with the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29, that reaffirmed the need to strengthen democratic institutions and labour governance. The Declaration renewed the commitment of tripartite constituents to the protection of fundamental principles and rights at work, universal social protection, gender equality, a fair transition to sustainable economies and quality vocational education. The Declaration provided a fundamental road map to address the green and digital transitions, ensuring that the costs of economic transformation were equally distributed. GRULAC highlighted the implementation of safe and orderly labour migration policies, the eradication of child labour, and the consolidation of a labour culture based on equality, inclusion and diversity. It further valued the call to strengthen democratic multilateralism and the links established between the ILO, the UN and regional development banks with the aim of generating greater opportunities for decent work in the Americas. Equally important was the promotion of vocational education and digital skills, and the need to reduce structural gaps to promote the inclusion of the most vulnerable groups. The implementation of tools such as ILO Live had led to increased participation and more transparent regional processes.

738. During the organization of the meeting, operating costs had been reduced, a development which should continue so as to ensure future regional meetings maintained the quality of tripartite dialogue and the full participation of constituents. Sufficient human and financial resources should be devoted to the goals of the regional implementation plan. GRULAC reiterated its firm commitment to the effective implementation of the Declaration in order to contribute to the achievement of decent work and social justice throughout the Americas. The Group endorsed the draft decision and could support the amendment proposed by the Workers' group provided that the new subparagraph included a reference to consultation with constituents "in the region".

739. **A Government representative of the Dominican Republic** (Minister of Labour) said that the meeting had taken place at a time of profound transformation for the world of work in view of the acceleration of technology, the climate crisis and the persistent nature of inequalities. However, the spirit of the ILO had shone brighter than ever. The process of reaching consensus on the final Punta Cana Declaration had involved intensive negotiations of every word and every priority, but tripartism and social dialogue had prevailed. The many intelligent proposals made had led to a Declaration that promised a harvest for the world of work beyond the Americas. The combination of democracy, peace, decent work and social dialogue uniting the Americas would lead to a future of sustainable development and social justice. The Declaration represented a commitment to strengthen the rule of law, guarantee respect for fundamental principles and rights at work, promote the strategy for a transition from informal to formal employment, as well as just transitions covering climate change and digitization generating green jobs and universal social protection. In sum, the Declaration was a future-oriented road map that reaffirmed the commitment of the Americas to multilateralism, the ILO's Strategic Plan and the Global Coalition for Social Justice. The Office should develop a regional implementation plan.

740. **A Government representative of Barbados** said that the Punta Cana Declaration had been agreed after significant discussion and the recognition that there could be a meeting of minds without losing sight of those principles that were important to each Member State and each social partner. The Dutch Caribbean and British overseas territories had attended, as per article 1(3) of the ILO Rules for Regional Meetings, only in the capacity of observers. They had not therefore been able to speak in formal sittings. Barbados believed that such territories should be able to participate in meetings where decisions were made that affected their social partners. The ILO should recognize that the world of work extended to those territories and clear rules should be drawn up on the matter at the earliest opportunity, including through the preparation of a document for consideration by the Governing Body, if necessary.

741. **A Government representative of Brazil** said that the work of the tripartite Drafting Committee at the Regional Meeting had been instrumental in synthesizing the rich discussions into the Punta Cana Declaration which promoted democracy, peace, decent work and social dialogue. The Declaration was a road map for uniting the Americas towards a future of sustainable development and social justice. Brazil held dear the four thematic areas discussed which served as interconnected pillars that were essential for addressing the structural challenges in the world of work across the Americas. It was committed to working with the Office and the tripartite constituents in the region to ensure the effective implementation of the Declaration, translating its principles into concrete actions of benefit to all.

742. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom** said that he was pleased to see that the Punta Cana Declaration reinforced a tripartite commitment in the region to social justice, decent work and inclusive growth. The Declaration renewed the regional focus on guaranteeing the protection of the fundamental principles and rights at work, integrating gender equality across labour policies, and strengthening regional and national legislation to prevent and eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work. Expressing support for the ILO's plan to promote coordination across the UN system, through mechanisms such as the Global Coalition for Social Justice, he said that the proposed implementation plan should address the impacts of poverty, informality and inequality faced by countries in the region, and should be developed in line with the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2026–29.

743. **A Government representative of the United States**, noting that the United States had been unable to participate in the meeting and the negotiation of the Punta Cana Declaration, said that it could not endorse the Declaration. The overall reduction in the costs of approximately 50 per cent was welcome and it was to be hoped that the lessons learned would inform the discussion by the Governing Body in 2029 of whether to continue with the new format for regional meetings.

744. **A Government representative of Peru** expressed appreciation to the Government of the Dominican Republic and the ILO for having facilitated during the regional meeting an opportunity for the Governments of Barbados, Brazil, Guatemala, Panama and the Dominican Republic to subscribe to the Ministerial Declaration on Social Justice that had been drawn up in Lima in April 2025. He invited other countries to subscribe to that declaration, which was designed to institutionalize social dialogue as a governance tool and to promote the multilateral exchange of experiences in the region, and thus constituted an opportunity to identify innovative ways of tackling informality and promoting the transition to formality in favour of decent work.

745. **A Government representative of Canada** reiterated her support for the landmark Punta Cana Declaration, which reaffirmed that stronger labour governance institutions and policies to address structural gaps and reduce inequalities could only be achieved through robust democratic institutions, effective social dialogue, protection of fundamental principles and rights at work, and gender equality. The Declaration was a pivotal step towards a more equitable and sustainable future of work in the Americas. Canada was ready to collaborate with regional partners and ensure that economic growth was inclusive and labour rights universally respected.

746. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean) explained that the report on the meeting submitted to the Governing Body did not usually describe the preparatory work, which could differ from one region to the other.

However, the Regional Office was planning to prepare a report on the preparatory work done for the meeting, highlighting the fundamental role played by the tripartite Steering Committee, and publish it as part of the regional initiative on social dialogue. The Regional Office was also committed to developing an implementation plan with clear goals based on the priorities defined in the Punta Cana Declaration that would be integrated in the tools used to monitor the Office's work for inclusion in the ILO programme implementation report to be presented to the Governing Body in March 2026.

747. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Official Relations, Meetings and Language Services Department) said that the suggestions made by the Employers' group would be taken into consideration when preparing future regional meetings. In response to the comments made by the Government representative of Barbados on the participation of observers, there was no need to amend the Rules for regional meetings. Improvements could be made by providing a better briefing for the observers. An important aspect to consider for future regional meetings was the fact that the new format gave very little time for discussion. That issue could be addressed when designing the programme in consultation with the tripartite constituents.

748. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group could support the proposed amendment to the draft decision if the last phrase "for submission to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026)" were deleted, as there would not be enough time for the necessary consultations before that session.

749. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed agreement with the subamendment proposed by GRULAC to replace in the new subparagraph (c) the phrase "with the constituents, a regional implementation plan" with "with the constituents in the region, an implementation plan". However, the Workers' group did not support deleting the phrase "for submission to the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026)", as proposed by the Employers' group because that text was in line with paragraph 22(a) of the Declaration, which had been adopted with tripartite consensus, as well as with paragraph 48 of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27 (GB.353/PFA/1). In the interest of reaching consensus, the Workers' group could agree that for March 2026 a report on the status of consultations could be provided for information.

750. **The Employer spokesperson** asked whether it was necessary to mention such a report in the decision. Furthermore, it would be important to know the number of consultations needed for budgetary purposes.

751. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean) said that as there would be a further discussion of the ILO review in March 2026, one possibility would be to amend the end of the draft decision to refer to the November 2026 session to ensure consistency with the decision to be taken in March 2026 concerning the programme and budget.

752. **The Worker spokesperson** said that if a report on the progress made in consultations were presented in March 2026 for information, it would become clear whether a further report would need to be given in November 2026, depending on the other subjects to be discussed by the Governing Body.

753. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed full agreement with the proposal made by the Director of the Regional Office for the implementation plan to be presented to the Governing Body in November 2026. A progress report could still be given in March 2026, for information.

754. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of the Dominican Republic also expressed agreement with that proposal.

Decision

755. **The Governing Body requested the Director-General to:**

(a) **draw the attention of the ILO constituents, in particular those of the Americas region, to the Punta Cana Declaration by making the text available to:**

(i) **the governments of all Member States, requesting them to communicate the text to national employers' and workers' organizations;**

(ii) **the international organizations and non-governmental international organizations concerned;**

(b) **take the Punta Cana Declaration into consideration when implementing current programmes and ensure its effective implementation in the context of future programme and budget proposals;**

(c) **submit to the Governing Body a document for information at its 356th Session (March 2026) and develop, in consultation with the constituents from the region, an implementation plan with clear targets based on the priorities defined in the Declaration to monitor the Organization's work in the Americas, for submission to the Governing Body at its 358th Session (November 2026);**

(d) **incorporate, in the biennial programme implementation report submitted to the Governing Body, information on the implementation of the Punta Cana Declaration.**

(GB.355/INS/13, paragraph 21, as amended by the Governing Body)

14. 412th Report of the Committee on Freedom of Association (GB.355/INS/14)

756. **The Chairperson of the Committee on Freedom of Association** said that the Committee had examined 19 cases on the merits, 4 of which had been closed. He highlighted that 2 cases were of serious and urgent nature. Case No. 3395 concerned a murder of a trade union leader in El Salvador in 2020. The Committee had reiterated the need for the criminal proceedings under way to confirm, without delay, the identification and punishment of both the instigators and the perpetrators of the murder of the trade union leader. It had also once again urged the Government to ensure that all competent state authorities take the necessary actions to provide members of the union in question with adequate protection. Case No. 3451 concerned allegations of arbitrary arrests and detention of several trade union leaders without due process and the criminalization and prosecution of trade union activities in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The Committee had strongly urged the Government to ensure that the persons detained, on trial or convicted as a result of their trade union activities would be released and that the charges brought against them would be dropped. The Committee had urged the Government to adopt, without delay, the measures necessary to engage in dialogue on the matters raised in the case.

757. The Committee had examined six cases in which governments had kept it informed of the measures taken to give effect to its recommendations and closed four of those cases (concerning Paraguay, Argentina, Kyrgyzstan and Uruguay). In the latter case, the Committee had noted with satisfaction the creation of a bipartite forum for dialogue and negotiations with the aim of reaching a resolution taking into account the recommendations previously made by

the Committee. The Committee had also taken note of the complainant organization's indication that the sanctions had been revoked and the administrative investigations against the leaders had been concluded.

758. The efforts made by governments to provide their observations on time enabled the Committee to carry out its examination in full knowledge of facts. He made a special appeal to all governments whose cases were pending before the Committee to transmit or complete their observations as soon as possible and before the deadline of 23 January 2026. Communications received after the deadline might not be taken into account when the case would be examined. He drew the attention of the Governments of Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Haiti, Guinea, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the urgent appeal issued by the Committee to receive their replies in time for the examination of their respective cases in March 2026.

759. The Chairperson praised the unwavering efforts of the members of the Committee to find solutions to challenges of the day. He expressed his gratitude and conveyed the appreciation of the Committee's members for the work of the Office. He welcomed the new Chief of the branch, Mr Tim Demeyer, a seasoned ILO official with a distinguished experience on international labour standards and thanked him for continuing the excellent service that had always be provided to the Committee. He bade farewell to Mr Zahua Awan who was retiring and praised his experience as a trade unionist and his commitment to international labour standards and labour rights.

760. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** indicated that the Committee had reached conclusions in 19 cases, including two which had been designated as serious and urgent: Case No. 3395 (El Salvador), which involved the murder of a trade unionist and Case No. 3451 (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), relating to criminalization and prosecution of trade union action through arbitrary arrest and detention without due process.

761. She highlighted that the objective of the Committee was not to blame or punish anyone but rather to promote respect for trade union rights in law and practice through constructive tripartite dialogue. She stressed that the mandate of the Committee stemmed directly from the fundamental aims and purposes of the ILO Constitution and consisted in determining whether any given legislation or practice complied with the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining laid down in the relevant Conventions. Complaints could therefore be submitted whether or not the country concerned had ratified freedom of association Conventions, including Conventions Nos 87 and 98.

762. She regretted that three complaints had to be considered in the absence of observations from governments. In Case No. 3425 (Eswatini), the Committee had urged the Government to provide the requested update on progress in implementing the time-bound road map established after voluntary conciliation. The case involved many extremely serious issues, including harassment, arrest and detention of trade union leaders, assaults by security forces at union gatherings leading to acts of torture and killing, a general ban on public gatherings affecting unions and anti-union measures against union leaders by state-owned enterprises and public institutions. Case No. 3448 (Guinea-Bissau), concerned allegations of a series of violations by the authorities, including wrongful detention, death threats against union leaders, other acts of violence and intimidation, including disruption of union activity, such as participation in the International Labour Conference. She firmly expected that the Government would ensure a climate free of anti-union interference, violence, pressure and threats of any kind. Case No. 3472 (El Salvador), involved allegations of coercion, suspensions and dismissals arising from union activities, including bargaining and participation in public demonstrations.

The Committee had called on the Government to ensure that allegations of anti-union discrimination be immediately the subject of an independent investigation.

763. The Committee had examined other cases relating to repression of trade unions. Case No. 3452 (Argentina) brought by three national confederations, related to a repressive framework to control trade union rights, including a legislative protocol which extended the powers of the security forces to intervene in protests without a court order. The Committee had noted with concern that the protocol sought to classify the exercise of the right of social protest as a type of criminal offense and recalled its expectations that workers must enjoy the right to peaceful demonstration to defend their occupational interests. Case No. 3476 (Burkina Faso), included allegations of public threats and attempted abductions of union leaders with repressive administrative measures against union officials, arbitrary bans on trade union demonstrations and a climate of impunity. Recognizing a grave security situation in the country, the Committee recalled that it had previously requested the Government to ensure that any emergency measures aimed at national security did not prevent exercise of trade union rights and activities, including strikes. The Committee had issued detailed recommendations and welcomed the resumption of dialogue with the trade unions in recent months which it hoped would result in concrete steps to respect, promote and realize freedom of association in the country.

764. She then referred to several complaints relating to the right to collective bargaining and its principles. In Case No. 3495 (Ecuador), legislation allowed only manual workers in public services to have access to collective bargaining. The Committee had recalled that all public service workers other than those engaged in the administration of the state should be able to bargain collectively and that should be the priority route for resolutions of any disputes relating to terms and conditions of employment. In Case No. 3477 (Peru), emergency decrees had restricted collective bargaining by setting a ceiling for wage increases while unions had been systematically denied access to sufficient information about the budgetary situation to enable them to bargain. When an agreement was reached on a wage rise, the authorities failed to comply. The Committee had recalled the principle that parties to collective bargaining should be able to freely conclude an agreement and recommended that workers' organizations should have access to all relevant financial and wider information. In Case No. 3457 (Republic of Korea), the Committee had observed that there were restrictions in domestic law on the matters that could be bargained in the public sector, including on matters affecting working conditions. The Committee had recalled that the importance of principles of non-interference and party autonomy and expected the Government to take the necessary measures to avoid all interference in the future.

765. She thanked the Government and the Employer spokespersons of the Committee and their groups for the constructive discussions as well as the Chairperson for his contribution to bring the Committee to conclusions. She also thanked the Office for its hard work and support and her colleagues of the Workers' bench. She paid a particular tribute to Mr Zahor Awan, who would be leaving the Governing Body and thanked him for his hard work as a member of the Committee.

766. **The Employer spokesperson of the Committee**, expressed thanks to the Chairperson of the Committee for guiding the discussions and to the Office and the Chief of the Freedom Association Branch for the background papers and for the inputs during the meetings. He also expressed gratitude to the Government and Workers' groups of the Committee and to the Employer members led by Mr Thomas McCall, as well as to the IOE for the exceptional support provided.

767. He expressed the overall satisfaction of the Employers' group with the Committee's work, but identified some areas on which the effectiveness and coherence of the Committee's functioning could be enhanced. Many working papers had been substantially longer than in previous sessions and contained extensive references to the Committee's compilation of decisions. The compilation was meant to provide guidance but by no means entailed jurisprudence, the validity of the opinions contained therein being limited to the specific situations in which each opinion had been formulated and should therefore, not be indistinctly applied to following cases referring to different situations. He requested that future working papers remain concise, balanced and coherent, focused strictly on the relevant allegations. The Office should maintain strict impartiality in drafting the working papers and supporting the Committee to avoid influencing its deliberations as much as possible. The papers should not include subjective or unnecessary elements that went beyond the Committee's mandate as that risked undermining the clarity, independence and efficiency of the Committee's deliberations.

768. He noted with concern that in several cases, despite urgent appeal, Governments had not provided their replies to the Committee (Cases Nos 3425 (Eswatini), 3448 (Guinea-Bissau) and 3472 (El Salvador)). Persistent lack of reply raised serious procedural issues and should be addressed during the discussion on the Committee's working methods in March 2026 with a view to adopting a more workable approach.

769. As similar matters were submitted simultaneously before different supervisory bodies, it was essential to avoid duplication to ensure the effective functioning of the supervisory system as a whole and to avoid wasting resources. The representations submitted under article 24 of the ILO Constitution that were referred to the Committee needed to be clearly identified so as to avoid any confusion between the nature of the two procedures and the mandate of committees established under article 24 cases on the one hand, and the Committee on Freedom of Association on the other. The tripartite committees established by the Committee on Freedom of Association to examine article 24 representations applied the Standing Orders concerning the procedure for such representations and examined the allegations in respect of the relevant Conventions, while for the complaints submitted to the Committee on Freedom of Association, the Committee applied its rules and examined them in light of the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining and not in light of the respective Conventions. He concluded by expressing appreciation for the work of the Committee and stressing that the points raised were aimed at enhancing the clarity, coherence and effectiveness of the Committee and of the supervisory system as a whole.

770. **The Government Vice-Chairperson of the Committee** thanked the Chairperson for his efforts in bringing the respective groups together and expressed appreciation to Mr Zahur Awan's contribution to the Committee. The Committee examined serious and urgent cases involving attacks and threats to human life and it was sad that some governments had not responded to the allegations received. He extended a call to governments in that respect, requesting them to accept technical assistance from the Office in order to be able to manage the allegations coming before the Committee.

771. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru acknowledged the work of the experts that formed part of the Committee, in particular those that belonged to his region. He reiterated his gratitude for the productive dialogues that the regional group had held with the Committee Chairperson and all his team, since they made the Committee's work easier to understand and enabled governments' concerns to be expressed. He noted with satisfaction that of the six ongoing cases examined, three relating to the region had been closed.

772. Freedom of association and the right to organize were broadly recognized in the region and work was being done to promote those rights. Governments' efforts to communicate their observations on time should be highlighted, together with their promotion of voluntary conciliation authorities. Noting that there was still a high number of cases relating to countries in Latin America – more than 75 per cent of the cases mentioned in paragraph 10 of the Committee's report – he requested the Office to provide technical assistance to the constituents who requested it. Governments continued to assess options to resolve this situation and, inter alia, GRULAC, together with the ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, was working on the regional initiative to strengthen social dialogue and labour relations in the region. Finally, he encouraged the Committee to continue applying the working methods rigorously and fulfilling its mandate, which would help to improve the admissibility process for complaints.

Decision

773. The Governing Body took note of the introduction to the Report of the Committee, contained in paragraphs 1–79, and adopted the recommendations made in paragraphs: 98 (Case No. 3325: Argentina); 145 (Case No. 3452: Argentina); 182 (Case No. 3463: Argentina); 206 (Case No. 3474: Plurinational State of Bolivia); 236 (Case No. 3476: Burkina Faso); 247 (Case No. 3395: El Salvador); 275 (Case No. 3472: El Salvador); 312 (Case No. 3495: Ecuador); 324 (Case No. 3425: Eswatini); 335 (Case No. 3448: Guinea-Bissau); 420 (Case No. 3479: Malaysia); 478 (Case No. 3487: Uzbekistan); 514 (Case No. 3477: Peru); 620 (Case No. 3457: Republic of Korea); 645 (Case No. 3483: Republic of Moldova); 665 (Case No. 3478: Türkiye); 709 (Case No. 3490: Türkiye); 740 (Case No. 3451: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela); 765 (Case No. 3473: Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) and adopted the 412th Report of its Committee on Freedom of Association as a whole.

(GB.355/INS/14)

15. Report of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO (GB.355/INS/15)

774. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the comprehensive report presented after the 89th Session of the Board of the Centre, noting that it reflected professionalism and stability at a time of tightening financial conditions across the ILO and the wider multilateral system. Discussions in Turin had reaffirmed the relevance of the Centre's mission, with results demonstrating resilience, focus, and continuity. Training remained central to the Centre's mandate, supported by advisory services, innovation initiatives and the expansion of digital learning. She also welcomed progress in the campus renovation project, supported by the Government of Italy, which continues to be crucial for the Centre's operational effectiveness.

775. Regarding anticipated results for the year, she recognized that financial management had been prudent and disciplined. The Centre's diversified funding base was increasingly important as financial pressures mounted throughout the UN system, and continuing to strengthen financial resilience would be essential. Constituent participation had been a major theme during the Turin discussions, and although overall outreach was expanding, the relative participation of employers, workers and governments had been declining. That seemed to be linked to the broad appeal of technical programmes and the cost-recovery model, which attracted a wider audience. She stressed that constituents should retain affordable and meaningful access to learning most relevant to them. Maintaining that balance was fundamental to the Centre's mandate to serve tripartite constituents. She reiterated earlier proposals to enhance constituent access, including maintaining accessible pricing, expanding the use of the Fellowship Fund, and clarifying participation objectives across programmes.

776. The Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and the Programme and Budget proposals for 2026–27 had also been considered, and she noted their alignment with the ILO's policy outcomes and their emphasis on modernized learning, digital inclusion, advisory services and strengthened partnerships. Given the dynamic financial context, realistic targets, prioritization and flexibility would be critical for managing cost pressures and shifts in demand.

777. Innovation remained a strong feature of the Centre's work, particularly in digital learning and delivery methods. She underscored that innovation should remain practical and aligned with the needs of employers' and workers' organizations. Progress in governance, internal processes, ethics safeguards and campus modernization was also acknowledged, along with improvements driven by audit recommendations.

778. Governments' interest in reconsidering the Board's annual meeting schedule was noted, and the Employers' group emphasized careful assessment of implications and the need for balanced participation.

779. **The Worker spokesperson** highlighted the important role of the Turin Centre not merely as a technical institution, but rather as a fundamental pillar of multilateralism, a guardian of the ILO's tripartite identity, and a bridge between commitment and concrete action. Its role in strengthening knowledge, solidarity and dialogue among ILO constituents was essential to fulfilling the Organization's mandate, especially in a period marked by financial and political challenges that made this mission even more crucial.

780. The Workers' group acknowledged the Centre's technical achievements, financial stability and continued innovation, and expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Director and staff. However, it stressed a major concern: the insufficient representation of ILO constituents – especially workers – in the Centre's activities. Less than 20 per cent of all participants came from the ILO's tripartite base, and, more strikingly, outside the courses delivered by the Centre's Programme for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV-Turin), less than 1 per cent were workers. This disparity was viewed as unacceptable and contrary to the Centre's constitutional mandate to support workers, employers and governments. The group warned that the Centre risked becoming a market-oriented training provider, diverging from the purpose of both the Centre and the ILO.

781. The speaker valued ACTRAV-Turin's role and recognized its worker-focused pedagogical model as a global reference for trade union education. However, she insisted that ACTRAV could not be the sole channel for worker participation. To preserve institutional coherence and the ILO's tripartite character, the workers' and employers' programmes should play a core structural role in the design of training activities, partnerships and resource allocation across the Centre.

782. Financial surpluses should not be used merely to increase reserves but reinvested into fellowships and support for workers' education. The Centre should also assume full responsibility for its personnel costs so that resources could be channelled more effectively into training for workers. The existing Fellowship Fund was described as essential – often the only means for low-income workers to access training. Strengthening the fund was considered a necessary element of the Centre's tripartite mandate, and it should be expanded, safeguarded from cuts, and never used to subsidize overly expensive programmes. The group therefore called for course fees to be halved or made free to ensure real affordability for workers.

783. The Workers' group supported diversification of partnerships but insisted that all collaborations should remain anchored in international labour standards, social dialogue and full participation of workers' and employers' organizations. Partnerships that generate income without strengthening constituents risked undermining the Centre's normative mission.

784. While recognizing significant progress in digital innovation, technology should promote inclusion and not exacerbate inequalities; in-person and blended formats should remain protected. Ultimately, the Workers' group reaffirmed its commitment to cooperation, emphasizing that genuine social dialogue required strong workers' organizations.

785. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of France expressed gratitude for the report and for the excellent organization of the 89th Session of the Board. She also thanked the Italian Government, the Piedmont Region and the City of Turin for their crucial political support and financial contributions. That Board session had been significant for the adoption of the Centre's next Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and programme and budget for the upcoming biennium.

786. Regarding the Strategic Plan, the Government group welcomed its two main pillars: a strategic vision reinforcing the Centre's role as a global provider of training and capacity-building for social justice, and a strong alignment with the ILO's broader objective of advancing social justice through decent work. The group expressed satisfaction with the emphasis on innovation throughout the plan, including digital transformation, expanded strategic partnerships and modern learning methods. Given the Centre's unique business model, those priorities were seen as essential. At the same time, the group stressed the importance of maintaining equitable access for learners in remote and under-represented regions and continuing in-person training alongside digital modalities.

787. Concerning the programme and budget, the group endorsed the focus on the four main outcomes and the accompanying cross-cutting drivers. Those outcomes stroke a balance between the Centre's specific impact and its operational model. The group especially welcomed the first outcome, which aimed at expanding the Centre's outreach, and highlighted the need for an appropriate balance between online and in-person training to ensure full benefit for diverse ILO constituents. It stressed that all training delivered by ILO departments should be planned in collaboration with the Centre. The second outcome – strengthening the impact of capacity-development activities – was also commended for its contribution to the ILO's mandate. The group further supported outcomes related to the operational and commercial model, noting efforts to promote a culture of zero tolerance for misconduct, diversify partnerships in a context of shrinking resources, improve risk management and enhance due-diligence processes. Renovation plans for the biennium and upgrades in cybersecurity and data management were also appreciated.

788. The introduction of three cross-cutting drivers – focusing on international labour standards, social dialogue, innovation and diversity – was welcomed as fully anchoring the Centre in the ILO's mandate and recognizing its pioneering role in digital transformation. Reviewing the 2024 implementation report, the group praised the Centre's achievements, strategic growth, budget surplus and strengthened governance. It also welcomed the external evaluation of the Social Protection, Governance and Tripartism Programme, noting its confirmed strategic relevance and the Centre's commitment to implementing the recommendations, especially by developing a forward-looking approach to automation, digitization, performance tracking, and continuing to allocate funds for fellowship support for tripartite constituents from developing countries.

789. The group welcomed the auditors' reports. It paid particular attention to their recommendations on procurement, urging faster implementation and publication of the Procurement manual. Discussions on human resources and administration had led the constituents to discuss the Centre's capacity to move forward in an uncertain future by strengthening human capital and infrastructure. The speaker concluded by expressing the Government group's thanks for the constructive tripartite dialogue in Turin, reaffirming strong support for the Centre's role as the ILO's training arm, and endorsing its forward-looking vision as a key agent in learning innovation while serving the tripartite constituents.

790. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa thanked the Office, the Centre's Director and team, and the Italian authorities for their support. He welcomed the Strategic Plan for 2026–29 and the Programme and Budget for 2026–27, particularly the emphasis on innovation, digital transformation and alignment with the ILO's mandate for social justice and decent work. However, he stressed that, for Africa – home to most least developed countries – capacity-building is essential, not optional. In a global context of austerity and UN reforms, any reduction in support would worsen inequality and contradict the ILO's human-centred approach. The Africa group called for strengthened capacity-building, investment in skills development and robust social protection systems. It supported maintaining a balance between online and in-person training due to the digital divide and highlighted restrictive Schengen visa policies as a major barrier to equitable access. It urged urgent solutions and collaboration with regional bodies like the African Regional Labour Administration Centre (ARLAC). The group reaffirmed full support for the Centre's strategic direction, insisting that Africa should not be left behind.

791. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Training Centre of the ILO) thanked the various delegates for their interventions and responded to several issues raised. On the participation of ILO constituents in the Centre's activities, he noted that absolute numbers of employers' and workers' participants had increased significantly over the past decade by three to four times for targeted activities and fourfold for general activities. However, their proportion within the total participant base, which included large volumes of online training, remained lower. The Centre would continue efforts to strengthen tripartite participation, including implementing the Board's decision to fix, as an objective of the 2026–27 Programme and Budget, a 5 per cent increase in the number of participants from the core constituents. This work would be undertaken with ACTRAV-Turin, the Programme for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP-Turin) and all technical programmes to ensure more systematic inclusion of social partners.

792. The Centre, as a non-profit institution, had recorded a reasonable surplus in 2024, smaller than during the COVID period when activities had been largely online. With the return to in-person training – an essential part of the Centre's identity as repeatedly reminded by constituents – surpluses had decreased but continued to be reinvested. Four institutional funds benefited from these resources: the Campus Improvement Fund, the information technology (IT) Fund, the Innovation Fund, and the Fellowship Fund. The latter, which directly supported social-partner participation, was the only one receiving a substantial increase of about 30 per cent in the upcoming budget cycle.

793. Responding to the comments on collaboration with national and regional institutions, he highlighted strong progress: joint activities with bodies such as ARLAC had increased from 16 per cent in 2023 to 23 per cent in 2024, with a target of 25 per cent for 2025.

794. He outlined the Centre's operational model, emphasizing its structural difference from the ILO, as it did not receive assessed contributions, and ILO and Italian funding covered only about 30 per cent of its costs. The remaining resources should be generated through its own activities. Despite challenges in the multilateral system and a recent slowdown across the UN, the Centre remained financially solid, though still vulnerable to external developments. He was closely following the developments at the ILO as well as within the UN system and stated that the Officers of the Board would be consulted on possible adjustments of the programme and budget, should this become necessary.

795. The Centre would analyse potential changes to the date of the 90th Session of the Board, assessing implications for participation and related activities. Any proposed adjustments would be discussed with the Director-General as Chairperson of the Board and with the Officers of the Board before a final decision would be made.

(The Governing Body took note of the report of the 89th Session of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO.)

16. Regular Report of the Director-General (GB.355/INS/16(Rev.1))

796. **The Employer spokesperson** acknowledged the update on progress in international labour legislation and internal administration and took note of the developments with regard to the follow-up on the request for an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice on Convention No. 87. It was appropriate to keep the Governing Body informed of the process. The Employers' group congratulated the newly appointed and promoted senior officials wishing them every success in their respective functions, and were confident that their expertise and leadership would contribute positively to the work of the Organization.

797. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the report on progress made in the procedure before the International Court of Justice and hoped that an advisory opinion would be issued during the first half of 2026. The Workers' group congratulated the Member States that had advanced in the ratification of Conventions and Protocols since March 2025, stressing that progress in the number of ratifications was essential in highlighting the value of the ILO's normative mandate and the importance of the international labour standards and supervisory system. The group continued to express deep disappointment about the lack of progress regarding the number of ratifications and acceptances of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution since March 2025 and urged the members of chief industrial importance to ratify it. The group congratulated all the newly appointed senior officials, including Mr Patrick Belser, Mr Tim De Meyer and Ms Lisa Tortell, and wished them well in their new positions. The group welcomed in particular the appointment of Mr Oliver Rapke as Director of the Bureau for Worker's Activities (ACTRAV) and assured him that he could count on the support of the Workers' group.

798. **A Government representative of Colombia** welcomed with high interest the information provided on progress made in the procedure before the International Court of Justice, highlighting the public audiences held on 6, 7 and 8 October 2025, with the participation of 18 Member States, including his country. The process reflected the broad interest and legitimacy of the debate concerning the scope of right to strike as an essential component of the international labour standards system. Colombia also appreciated the new ratifications of Conventions and Protocols as a confirmation of the continuous commitment by Member States of the fundamental principles and rights at work. He respectfully encouraged all Member States, particularly those of chief industrial importance, to consider ratifying the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution to attain the number required for its entry into force, which would contribute to strengthening the institutional framework of the Organization and the effectiveness of the international labour standards system. Colombia reiterated its commitment to multilateralism, social dialogue and the promotion of decent work as fundamental pillars of lasting peace, equity and social justice.

Decision

799. The Governing Body took note of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/16(Rev.1) regarding the membership of the Organization, the follow-up to the decision of the Governing Body to request an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, progress in international labour legislation and internal administration.

(GB.355/INS/16(Rev.1), paragraph 13)

16.1. First Supplementary Report: Report of the Tripartite Technical Meeting on Access to Labour Justice for All: Prevention and resolution of labour disputes (Geneva, 17–21 February 2025) (GB.355/INS/16/1)

800. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the consensual recommendations adopted by the Meeting and thanked the Office for the guidance it provided to ensure that the deliberations and conclusions were coherent. He addressed his thanks to Mr Jordan (Barbados), Chairperson of the Meeting; Ms Kamalova, Government spokesperson; and Mr Moyane, Employer spokesperson, for their vital contributions – as well as to his Worker colleagues, ITUC and ACTRAV staff for their excellent support and collaboration. He underscored that access to labour justice was not merely a procedural right that could be satisfied by the establishment of courts or tribunals to adjudicate disputes. The ILO Constitution protected a robust and substantive concept of labour justice when it stated that social justice could not exist in the context of "conditions of labour … involving … injustice, hardship and privation". Access to justice must also be understood in a broader sense to deal with larger issues of injustice that might not be addressed through individualized remedies offered for a given set of abuses but would require more fundamental changes in social, political or economic structures. Without access to labour justice, the provisions of ILO Conventions were simply dead letters. The discussion on access to labour justice had come at a critical time, considering that, according to paragraph 3 of the background report submitted to the Meeting, "it is estimated that 5.1 billion people – or two thirds of the world's population – lack meaningful access to justice". The Workers' group supported the adopted conclusions outlining the challenges, opportunities and developments related to advancing access to labour justice for all and providing recommendations for future actions by governments and the ILO. The following points were of particular importance for the Workers' group.

801. First, paragraph 10(b) of the conclusions called on States to respect, promote and realize all fundamental principles and rights at work, in particular freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. For the Workers' group that was key. Sound industrial relations based on those rights led to fewer serious disputes as collective agreements provided agreed-upon mechanisms to resolve disputes. Effective dispute settlement at the workplace through collectively bargained mechanisms was critical to workers as it also reduced the monetary, physical, social and psychosocial cost of labour disputes. A refusal to bargain in good faith denied both parties a cost-effective way to resolve labour disputes, and that similarly, laws which denied any group of workers the right to freedom of association would only cause more conflict. In that connection, the conclusions called on the ILO to promote the ratification and effective implementation of international labour standards relevant to access to labour justice.

802. Second, the obstacles to access justice were compounded for "vulnerable groups and workers in situations of vulnerability". That term used throughout the conclusions should be understood to include migrant workers, minority groups (whether as a result of race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sex, sexual orientation and gender identity, among others), as well as those who were not in a standard employment relationship – in insecure or precarious non-standard forms of work, the informal economy and who otherwise fell outside the legislated boundaries of the employment relationship. Over 2 billion workers were excluded from labour justice as a result of informality or working arrangements that effectively denied their rights and/or access to dispute mechanisms. That was compounded by emerging business models such as digital labour platforms, and specific action from governments and the ILO was needed to ensure equality and non-discrimination in access to justice for "vulnerable groups and workers in situations of vulnerability". Some groups of workers faced barriers because of the sector in which they were employed, from civil servants to professional athletes.

803. Third, as stated in paragraph 4 of the conclusions, labour dispute prevention and resolution systems must be effective and accessible. Accessibility in that context also meant affordability, as such systems were so often out of reach for workers, and that no-cost and fee-free labour dispute prevention and resolution mechanisms were particularly important for workers, especially for those most at risk of violation of their rights.

804. Fourth, the Workers' group welcomed the reference in the conclusions to the fact that in the context of globalization and international trade, access to labour justice was not only a national issue but also a transnational one. As multinational enterprises operated across multiple legal jurisdictions, it was often the case that they might cause or contribute to labour violations but were outside the legal jurisdiction where work was performed, leaving workers with little or no access to a complete legal remedy. The group strongly supported the references to global supply chains and the action points in paragraph 11, expecting the Office to propose specific research on the linkages between transnational mechanisms and national labour justice systems, with a focus on ensuring access to labour justice for all workers. He would support technical assistance to workers and enterprises to build resilient supply chains based on decent work and access to justice.

805. Fifth, in the conclusions it had been agreed that governments should strengthen procedures, institutions and mechanisms for effective multinational enterprises. Such mechanisms should include strengthened representation of workers by trade unions in labour dispute prevention and resolution proceedings, protection from retaliation, and other solutions that had proved effective, such as reversal of the burden of proof.

806. Sixth, the Workers' group welcomed references in the conclusions to the desired complementarity between judicial and non-judicial labour dispute prevention and resolution systems and company-level grievance mechanisms. Such complementarity clearly meant that non-judicial systems, as well as company-level alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, should not restrict workers' access to labour courts and remedy. Company-level alternative dispute resolution systems should consistently meet the effectiveness criteria established by the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. The Workers' group appreciated that the conclusions instructed the Office to provide support to ILO constituents towards advancing access to labour justice for all "in an integrated approach". That would require the development of a comprehensive and integrated policy approach for access to labour justice to support the governance of effective labour dispute prevention and resolution systems, in an effort to more effectively guide constituents and be a leading voice at the international level in this regard. The growing problem of access to justice for workers in conflict zones, territories under occupation and conflict-affected regions should also be taken up in the follow-up to the conclusions on access to justice.

807. In conclusion, access to labour justice must be universal, without exclusions or restrictions. In that sense it was crucial to make visible the situation of groups of workers who faced serious barriers to exercising the right. The Workers' group looked forward to working with the Office, Governments and Employers on the follow-up to the conclusions, as part of such an integrated strategy to deliver human-centered and rights-compatible justice to all workers.

808. **The Employer spokesperson** stated that the Meeting had highlighted the complexity and importance of ensuring access to labour justice for all, including both employers and workers. The Employers' group fully recognized the significance of access to labour justice, which was an integral component of the rule of law and of sustainable development.

809. She identified three key takeaways from the discussions. First, investing in dispute prevention was essential to upholding the rights and responsibilities of both workers and employers and that prevention strengthened the overall business and labour environment and contributed to economic stability. Second, strengthening dialogue between social partners, as open and constructive communication, fostered mutual understanding and cooperation and enabled disputes to be identified and addressed early. Third, ensuring access to comparable data on labour disputes to guide effective policies was critical for developing evidence-based policies and solutions.

810. The Employers' group also recognized and respected the diversity of national and regional contexts, which required flexible, adaptable and context-sensitive approaches to labour justice. Her group supported the conclusions adopted during the Meeting, which called on the Office to provide support to tripartite constituents and their judicial and non-judicial bodies towards advancing access to labour justice for all.

811. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Denmark indicated that Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Norway aligned themselves with the statement. She thanked all participants of the Meeting for their valuable contributions and the comprehensive conclusions presented to the Governing Body; the Officers for their thoughtful leadership throughout the Meeting and the Office for its thorough preparation and the support provided to tripartite constituents, which had enabled meaningful and inclusive discussions. She declared that the EU and its Member States fully supported the conclusions, which were underpinned by the active involvement of the social partners. Advancing access to labour justice was crucial for realizing labour rights and the effective implementation of international labour standards as mandated by the ILO Constitution. The conclusions offered clear guidance on strengthening labour dispute prevention and resolution systems; promoting fairness, accessibility and access to labour justice globally; and respect for fundamental rights in the world of work. She welcomed the recognition that there was no one-size-fits-all approach to labour justice. National systems varied and the conclusions rightly emphasized the importance of tailoring solutions to local contexts while upholding shared principles. She recognized the important role of governments in creating, enforcing and putting into action national laws and regulations.

812. She appreciated the emphasis on protecting vulnerable workers, including those in the informal economy, and promoting gender equality and non-discrimination. Furthermore, and in accordance with the recent Recommendation of the Council of the EU on strengthening social dialogue in the EU, she welcomed the attention paid to freedom of association, social dialogue, collective bargaining and workplace cooperation, as means for preventing disputes from escalating. She underlined that promoting mechanisms to resolve labour disputes and foster trust in and between social partners was a priority for the EU. She fully endorsed the recommendation for continued ILO support through capacity-building, technical assistance, and evidence-based research and welcomed the promotion of best practices and regional cooperation. A recent mutual learning event organized by the European Commission with the participation of representatives of public authorities involved in conciliation and mediation, to which the ILO had directly contributed, attested to those efforts. The conclusions were a necessary step toward inclusive and effective labour justice systems. She welcomed the proposed follow-up actions and encouraged their dissemination across the ILO, its constituents, and through broader partnerships, including the Global Coalition for Social Justice. The EU and its Member States looked forward to the Office's guidance on future activities in that area.

813. **A Government representative of Barbados** stated that Barbados had had the honour to serve as Chairperson of the Meeting and emphasized that, for his country, the matter of access to labour justice with a view to preventing and resolving disputes remained an important matter. He recalled that it was against the background of excellent technical support received from the ILO in 2022 that Barbados had asserted at the 346th Session (October–November 2022) of the Governing Body that weak systems in the provision of labour justice could cause social and economic instability and that the ILO had an important role in assisting Member States to deliver on the provision of justice in the world of work. Small island developing States like Barbados, which were already vulnerable to climate and external economic shocks, could not afford additional instability caused by the lack of access to justice. Barbados still believed that achieving social justice was central to the work of the ILO; that there would be no social justice without labour justice; and that there was no decent work without the presence of and access to strong labour justice institutions. The discussions at the Meeting had been very rich, though sometimes challenging. All parties had shown commitment to achieving an outcome and had been able to reach consensus. He expressed confidence that the outcome, along with the summary of the discussion in the record of proceedings, provided enough guidance to continue the important work in that key area.

Decision

814. **The Governing Body:**

(a) **took note of the conclusions of the Tripartite Technical Meeting on Access to Labour Justice for All: Prevention and resolution of labour disputes, as set out in the appendix to document GB.355/INS/16/1, and authorized the Director-General to publish and disseminate them;**

(b) **requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance regarding future ILO activities in this area.**

(GB.355/INS/16/1, paragraph 6)

16.2. Second Supplementary Report: Follow-up to Governing Body decisions (GB.355/INS/16/2)

Decision

815. **The Governing Body took note of the action taken by the Office to follow-up to the decisions adopted between November 2023 and June 2025 and invited the Director-**

General to continue taking into account its guidance when preparing the report for the 358th Session (November 2026). Follow-up to Governing Body decisions.

(GB.355/INS/16/2, paragraph 5)

16.3. Third Supplementary Report: Maintenance of the Philippines on the list of Members which fully meet the minimum requirements concerning processes and procedures for the issue of seafarers' identity documents (GB.355/INS/16/3)

816. **The Chairperson** thanked the members of the tripartite review group, Mr Amos Kuje (Nigeria), Chairperson, Mr Matthieu Piron (France), Mr Tjitso Westra (Shipowners) and Mr Fabrizio Barcellona (Seafarers), for their work on an issue of great technical complexity.

817. **The Employer spokesperson** congratulated the Government of the Philippines for having complied with the five-year time frame established under Article 5(4) of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185), and for having provided the required documentation to allow the Governing Body to maintain the Philippines on the list of members that fully meet the minimum requirements concerning processes and procedures for the issue of seafarers' identity documents. Such continued compliance reflected a tangible commitment to ensuring and facilitating shore leave, transfer and transit for seafarers while at the same time securing ports and borders. The Convention, as amended, played a critical role in enabling a secure international system, which ensured seafarer protection, continuing of business operations, mobility of maritime labour and efficient administration of migration procedures at ports. Seafarers' mobility was a precondition for vessel operations, fleet rotations and timely crew changes. Ensuring robust issuance, verification and recognition standards under the Convention was therefore directly linked to reducing operational risk and uncertainty for companies. She requested that the list containing the names of those members which fully meet the minimum requirements for issuance of seafarers' identity documents could be included in the background document either as an annex or as a hyperlink to the up-to-date list, ensuring full visibility of the status of compliance with the Convention. Her group supported the draft decision.

818. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Office for preparing the straightforward document regarding the maintenance of the Philippines on the list of Members which fully meet the minimum requirements concerning the processes and procedures for the issue of seafarers' identity documents. The discussion followed the one held in 2020 in which after reviewing the relevant documentation by the Review Group in accordance with the arrangements, the Governing Body had approved the inclusion of the Philippines on such list. The Philippines had meanwhile carried out a second independent evaluation and provided the Office with the documentation required in order to have its name maintained on the list. The Office concluded that the consultant chosen by the Government to carry out the evaluation possessed the necessary competence and independence. The evaluation report and other documents showed that the processes and procedures of the Philippines fully satisfied the minimum requirements and the Review Group recommended that the Philippines be maintained on the list. The Workers' group supported the draft decision.

819. **A Government representative of the Philippines** expressed appreciation to the Office and to the Review Group for recognizing the country's continued compliance with Convention No. 185, as amended. The Philippines remained fully committed to maintaining the integrity, security and credibility of the seafarers' identity document (SID) system, which facilitated the mobility and welfare of seafarers while enhancing global maritime security. At the same time, through the maritime industry authority, it continued to ensure that the national processes and procedures for SID issuance were strictly conformed to the provisions of the Convention. Following the initial evaluation and inclusion in the list of fully compliant countries in 2020, the Philippines conducted its second independent evaluation in May 2025, which confirmed that the country fully satisfied the minimum requirements of the Convention and that its SID was in line with the 2016 amendments and the International Civil Aviation Organization requirements, incorporating modern biometric and data security features. The Review Group composed of representatives of the Governments of Nigeria and France, as well as Shipowner and Seafarer representatives, endorsed the Philippines' continued compliance with the Convention and recommended its maintenance on the list of Members that fully meet the Convention's requirements, underscoring that it was the first and only country recognized as fully meeting such requirements. This affirmation underscored the Philippines' unwavering dedication to upholding international maritime labour standards and protecting the rights and welfare of more than half a million Filipino seafarers serving on vessels worldwide. Their professionalism and resilience remained a source of pride and a vital contribution to the global maritime industry. The Philippines reiterated its commitment to strengthening cooperation with the ILO and its partners to ensure that its SID system remained responsive, secure and globally recognized, reflecting the country's firm commitment to decent work and maritime excellence.

820. **A Government representative of Brazil** praised the Government of the Philippines and indicated that Brazil wished to learn its experience on the matter. At the same time, many governments, including Brazil, continued to meet challenges in relation to the implementation of Convention No. 185. In March 2025, Brazil had created an inter-ministerial working group to prepare a proposal for the implementation of the new SID model, that had identified the following three main problems: (i) the interpretation of the term "shore leave", considering the relevant international Conventions ratified by Brazil (the IMO Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965, and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended); (ii) the designation of the competent authority for the issuance and distribution of SIDs; and (iii) the definition of the contact addresses on new documents. In this regard, it would be important to hear about experiences from other Member States. Furthermore, the Office's advice was sought on two issues: first, whether the introduction of digital SIDs was under consideration, as this would help reduce the implementation costs of new SIDs; and second, whether, in light of the difficulties to implement the Convention and of the fact that only one country was currently listed as fully compliant, it was envisaged to amend the Convention.

821. **A Government representative of Colombia** reasserted the importance of regular evaluations of systems of the issuance of SIDs for strengthening confidence between Member States and guaranteeing the integrity of the international system for the maritime implementation. Colombia expressed appreciation for the positive conclusions by the independent evaluation process and endorsed the decision to maintain Philippines in the list of Members which comply fully with the minimum requirements of the Convention No. 185. Efforts made by the Philippines in terms of good practices and international cooperation which contribute to the achievement of the ILO objectives with regard to decent work, were duly acknowledged.

822. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) replied that a hyperlink to the list of Members which fully meet the minimum requirements concerning processes and procedures for the issue of SIDs had been inserted in the background document and that the Office would consider the comments to make the list more visible. Concerning Brazil's intervention, she indicated that the Office remained available to provide support as the inter-ministerial working group considered the challenges ahead.

She confirmed that the Office was exploring the option of digital SIDs and preliminary contacts with the International Civil Aviation Organization suggested that this would be compatible with the Convention. Like the Philippines, other countries were very committed to make progress in implementing the Convention. However, several challenges remained. In that context, a meeting of experts to address the obstacles for the ratification and implementation of the Convention was scheduled for 13–15 October 2026, subject to availability of funding.

Decision

823. **Noting the positive conclusions of the second independent evaluation report submitted by the Philippines in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 4, of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185), the Office's assessment and the report of the Review Group established in accordance with Article 5, paragraph 6, of the Convention, the Governing Body approved the maintenance of the Philippines on the list of Members which fully meet the minimum requirements referred to in Article 5, paragraph 1, of the Convention, as amended in 2016.**

(GB.355/INS/16/3, paragraph 8)

16.4. Fourth Supplementary Report: Documents submitted for information only (GB.355/INS/16/4)

Decision

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

- **Approved symposia, seminars, workshops and similar meetings (GB.355/INS/INF/1);**
- **Report on the status of pending representations submitted under article 24 of the ILO Constitution (GB.355/INS/INF/2);**
- **Update on the preparations for the Sixth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour (GB.355/POL/INF/1);**
- **Voluntary contributions and gifts (GB.355/PFA/INF/1);**
- **Update on the headquarters building renovation project (GB.355/PFA/INF/2);**
- **Update on the premises for the ILO Regional Office for Africa and Country Office for Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Togo in Abidjan and for the ILO Country Office for Pakistan in Islamabad (GB.355/PFA/INF/3);**
- **Progress report on the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 (GB.355/PFA/INF/4).**

(GB.355/INS/16/4, paragraph 3)

16.5. Fifth supplementary Report: Report of the tripartite Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) (GB.355/INS/16/5)

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

Decision

825. **In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.355/INS/16/5, the Governing Body:**

(a) approved the report of the Committee and, in particular, the conclusions formulated in paragraphs 50 and 55;

(b) requested the Government to provide to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations information on the subjects raised in the report and the Committee's conclusions;

(c) decided to make the report publicly available and to close the representation procedure.

(GB.355/INS/16/5, paragraph 8)

16.6. Sixth Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Brazil of the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) (GB.355/INS/16/6)

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

Decision

826. **In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.355/INS/16/6, the Governing Body:**

(a) approved the report of the Committee;

(b) requested the Government of Brazil to take into account, in the context of the application of the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), the observations made in the Committee's conclusions;

(c) invited the Government to provide information in that respect for examination and further monitoring by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations;

(d) decided to make the report publicly available and declared closed the procedure initiated by the representation.

(GB.355/INS/16/6, paragraph 8)

16.7. Seventh Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Saudi Arabia of Convention No. 29 and its Protocol of 2014, and Conventions Nos 81, 95 and 111 (GB.355/INS/16/7)

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

Decision

827. **In the light of the conclusions contained in the report of the Committee in document GB.355/INS/16/7, the Governing Body:**

(a) approved the report of the Committee;

(b) requested the Government of Saudi Arabia to provide to the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, no later than 1 September 2026, reports on the application of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and its Protocol, the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), including information on the follow-up given to the Committee's conclusions and recommendations, for examination at its 2026 session;

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

(GB.355/INS/16/7, paragraph 7)

16.8. Eighth Supplementary Report: Report of the Committee set up to examine the representation alleging non-observance by Argentina of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 (GB.355/INS/16/8)

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

Decision

828. **In the light of the conclusions and recommendations set out in the report of the Committee contained in document GB.355/INS/16/8, the Governing Body:**

(a) approved the report of the Committee;

(b) requested the Government of Argentina to take into account, in the context of the application of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), the observations made in paragraphs 24 and 27;

(c) requested the Government to provide information in that regard 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.355/INS/16/8, paragraph 8)

17. Reports of the Officers of the Governing Body

17.1. First report: Complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution alleging non-observance by Saudi Arabia of Conventions Nos 29, 95, 111, 143 and 155 (GB.355/INS/17/1)

829. **The Worker spokesperson** recalled that the Governing Body had to limit its discussion to the receivability of the article 26 complaint – which had been filed by several Workers' delegates at the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference – and could not address its

merits at the current session. She further recalled that the Officers of the Governing Body had considered the complaint to be receivable regarding Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111, and had agreed, without entering into the substance of the complaint, to refer the matter to the Governing Body. However, they had considered that the complaint was not receivable with respect to the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and Convention No. 155, as Saudi Arabia had not ratified those instruments. While she supported the Officers' decision, she stressed that serious concerns had been raised not only in relation to Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111, but also in relation to Conventions Nos 143 and 155. She expected those concerns to be addressed under other ILO supervisory mechanisms.

830. She underscored the importance of dialogue among all parties and acknowledged the Government's efforts to engage constructively with the international trade union movement to explore ways to address the issues raised. She reaffirmed her group's commitment to participate actively in any processes supported by the Director-General and welcomed the efforts already undertaken by the Office. Dialogue must be substantive, inclusive and firmly anchored in the objective of safeguarding fundamental rights for all workers, especially the most vulnerable. Noting that the merits of the case would be examined at the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body, she confirmed that her group would follow developments closely and contribute to the next stage of the process, with the expectation that meaningful progress would be pursued on the matters raised in the complaint.

831. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed disappointment that no agreement had been reached between the Government of Saudi Arabia and the workers' organizations concerned, despite the Government's genuine efforts to build trust. He further regretted that the process had not included all the social partners, even though any negotiated outcome would significantly affect employers. Noting the minimal and purely formal criteria for determining the receivability of an article 26 complaint, he recalled that, in the absence of substantive criteria, the long-standing practice of the ILO had been to consider the article 26 procedure as an exceptional and last-resort mechanism reserved for cases of persistent refusal to address serious issues. In his view, the procedure should not apply to the present case, as Saudi Arabia had acted in good faith and had demonstrated a clear willingness to improve the situation, including through its recent engagement in the context of an article 24 representation, as reflected in document GB.355/INS/16/7, and its ongoing development cooperation with the ILO. He cautioned that invoking article 26 without clear justification risked undermining its exceptional nature and could turn extraordinary measures into routine remedies.

832. Furthermore, duplicating supervisory procedures could create legal uncertainty, lead to conflicting outcomes and compromise the independence of the supervisory bodies. To preserve coherence and effectiveness within the system, he called for the adoption of clearer and more substantive criteria for filing article 26 complaints. He expressed the hope that Saudi Arabia and the workers' organizations would reach a mutually acceptable agreement before March 2026 and reaffirmed his support for the draft decision.

833. **A Government representative of Saudi Arabia** (Deputy Minister of International Affairs), authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders on a matter concerning his Government, reaffirmed his Government's respect for the ILO's supervisory mechanisms and reported that the Government had held intensive discussions in recent weeks with the trade unions concerned, with a view to reaching agreement on the way forward. The Government had engaged in those discussions in good faith and had made every effort to find a balanced solution that would serve the interests of all parties. Regrettably, no agreement had been reached.

834. He recalled that Saudi Arabia was implementing, in close cooperation with the ILO, an ambitious labour market reform programme as part of the Saudi Vision 2030 initiative, directly addressing the issues raised in the complaint. He also recalled that the ILO development cooperation programme, initially launched in 2018, had recently entered its third phase, which included the establishment of an ILO project office in Riyadh, funded by the Government. The reform programme addressed seven priority areas: promoting inclusive social dialogue; ensuring fair recruitment and job mobility; protecting the rights of domestic workers; ensuring access to fair judicial processes; improving social protection systems; strengthening occupational safety and health; and ensuring the payment of wages.

835. Despite its commitment to cooperating with the ILO and to promoting decent work, Saudi Arabia was currently engaged in three parallel ILO supervisory procedures: a case before the Committee on Freedom of Association; an article 24 representation; and the present article 26 complaint. He cautioned that overlapping procedures on the same issues undermined the consistency and effectiveness of the supervisory system.

836. The article 26 complaint was based on speculation and not on substantive evidence. It did not demonstrate any failure by the Government to meet its obligations under ratified Conventions. Taking decisions on the receivability of a complaint without considering the context or the substance of the allegations could lead to the acceptance of complaints that lacked an objective foundation, thereby damaging the reputation of Member States, regardless of the validity of the claims. Such an approach undermined the balanced and evidence-based principles that were essential to the integrity of the ILO's supervisory system.

837. Article 26 should remain an exceptional mechanism reserved for cases involving serious and repeated violations coupled with persistent refusal to act. That did not apply to Saudi Arabia, given its ongoing and comprehensive labour market reforms and full cooperation with the ILO. Accepting the complaint would risk undermining the credibility of the supervisory system, duplicate procedures already in progress and foster confrontation rather than constructive partnership. The allegations concerning Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111 were already being addressed under an article 24 procedure, while those related to Conventions Nos 143 and 155 were not receivable, as Saudi Arabia had not ratified those instruments. There were therefore no grounds for initiating proceedings under article 26. He called on the Governing Body to reject the complaint and to confirm its support for the ongoing reform programme and the constructive partnership between the Saudi Arabia and the ILO.

838. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Tunisia reaffirmed her group's full support for Saudi Arabia. The complaint did not reflect the constructive and ongoing cooperation between the Government and the ILO and failed to meet the legal and procedural requirements for the initiating an article 26 procedure. Specifically, Conventions Nos 143 and 155, both cited in the complaint, had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia; the issues concerning the other Conventions were already under review through an article 24 procedure; and there was no evidence of serious or repeated violations, as Saudi Arabia had consistently demonstrated its willingness to cooperate with the ILO and had responded effectively to its recommendations.

839. In close collaboration with the ILO, Saudi Arabia was implementing one of the most comprehensive labour market reform programmes in the world and had recently entered the third phase of its development cooperation programme. The pioneering reforms – which included enabling migrant workers to transfer to other jobs, criminalizing the confiscation of passports and promoting an electronic wage protection system – reflected the Government's genuine commitment to improving working conditions and safeguarding the rights of all workers, without exception.

840. She urged the Governing Body to reject the complaint, strengthen development cooperation and dialogue as the most effective means of supporting the ongoing reforms, and uphold the principles of procedural justice. The supervisory mechanisms should not be used in ways that undermined constructive cooperation between Member States and the ILO. She reaffirmed her group's solidarity with Saudi Arabia and commended its efforts to bring working conditions in the country into line with international labour standards.

841. **Speaking on behalf of the countries of the GCC**, a Government representative of Oman also expressed his group's full support for Saudi Arabia and urged the Governing Body to reject the complaint, which failed to meet the legal and procedural requirements for initiating an article 26 procedure. Saudi Arabia had chosen the path of comprehensive reform, constructive cooperation and effective partnership with the ILO. It was currently implementing an ambitious labour market reform programme and had entered the third phase of its development cooperation programme with the ILO. Under that programme, steps were being taken to reform the kafala sponsorship system, promote freedom of movement for migrant workers, criminalize the confiscation of passports, develop comprehensive electronic systems to ensure the timely payment of wages, and extend the scope of labour law to domestic workers. Those and other pioneering measures reflected the Government's genuine political will to improve working conditions.

842. He noted that Saudi Arabia had ratified Convention No. 29 and its 2014 Protocol, and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and had adopted a national policy to eliminate forced labour in line with its obligations under those instruments. Those actions demonstrated a firm commitment to prohibiting forced labour in all its forms and strengthening legal protection for migrant and other workers.

843. Saudi Arabia was clearly moving in the right direction. The ILO should support its constructive approach and avoid using its supervisory mechanisms in ways that could hinder cooperation. He called on the Governing Body to reject the complaint and reaffirm its support for ongoing reforms through development cooperation and dialogue, as the most effective means of promoting labour rights and aligning working conditions with international standards.

844. **A Government representative of the Sudan** also reaffirmed his country's full support for Saudi Arabia, emphasizing that the complaint failed to meet the legal and procedural requirements for invoking the exceptional article 26 procedure and did not reflect the Government's constructive cooperation with the ILO. He highlighted the Government's genuine commitment to improving working conditions through an extensive reform process and stressed that development cooperation and dialogue remained the most effective means of supporting the ongoing reforms. He urged the Governing Body to reject the complaint, support the ongoing cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the ILO, and ensure a balanced and credible supervisory system that encouraged countries such as Saudi Arabia to continue the reform process. He commended the pioneering reforms being carried out by Saudi Arabia to improve working conditions and bring them into line with international standards.

845. **A Government representative of Oman** emphasized the importance of preserving the technical and objective nature of the ILO's supervisory mechanisms. He highlighted the significant labour reforms undertaken by Saudi Arabia to align national legislation and practices with international labour standards, stressing that the Governing Body should acknowledge the tangible progress being made and avoid measures that could undermine constructive dialogue or the ongoing efforts. He reaffirmed that Saudi Arabia had cooperated with the ILO and had demonstrated its willingness to engage in dialogue, underscoring that such engagement remained the most effective way to resolve the outstanding issues. He therefore called on the Governing Body to reject the complaint and to prioritize development cooperation and dialogue. He reiterated Oman's full support for Saudi Arabia and emphasized the need for the discussions to remain professional and objective.

846. **A Government representative of Malawi** emphasized the importance of preserving the integrity of the ILO's supervisory system to promote progress, constructive cooperation and the genuine improvement of international labour standards. She noted the information presented by Saudi Arabia concerning the receivability of the complaint and acknowledged the comprehensive labour market reform programme being undertaken by Saudi Arabia in recent years in collaboration with the ILO. Stressing that development cooperation and constructive engagement were key to advancing decent work, strengthening labour governance and supporting sustainable reforms, she commended Saudi Arabia's reform efforts and encouraged continued collaboration with the ILO to address any gaps in compliance with ILO standards. She reaffirmed Malawi's commitment to multilateral cooperation and the principles of decent work and fairness.

847. **A Government representative of Qatar** expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Saudi Arabia and noted the Government's commitment to cooperate with the ILO through the development cooperation programme and the supervisory mechanisms. He also noted that the complaint cited Conventions that were already being addressed under an article 24 procedure, creating duplication and inconsistency within the ILO's supervisory system. Saudi Arabia's significant efforts and extensive reforms to develop the labour market in cooperation with the ILO and the fact that it had entered the third phase of the development cooperation programme, which included the establishment of an ILO project office in Riyadh, confirmed the Government's genuine commitment to progress. He urged the Governing Body to reject the complaint and to support the existing partnership between the ILO and the Government and the ongoing reform efforts.

848. **A Government representative of Senegal** reaffirmed his country's strong commitment to the ILO's core values of tripartite dialogue, constructive cooperation and balanced solutions. Saudi Arabia's recent reform efforts to strengthen legal and institutional frameworks to protect workers demonstrated Saudi Arabia's genuine willingness to make progress. He emphasized that Saudi Arabia's consistent engagement with the ILO's supervisory mechanisms and its commitment to implement technical recommendations should be duly recognized. Recalling that the ILO's primary role was to support Member States in their reform efforts, he called for a constructive approach based on dialogue and cooperation as the most effective means to ensure lasting compliance with international labour standards. He expressed full support for Saudi Arabia and urged the Office to prioritize measures to build trust, continue the reform efforts and ensure further progress.

849. **A Government representative of Gabon** commended the Government's ongoing commitment to closing gaps in its labour market policies and practices and its efforts to implement an ambitious and comprehensive labour market reform programme. She welcomed the Government's decision to finance the different phases of the reform, including comparative analyses with international best practices and the harmonization of national policies with international labour standards. Highlighting tangible progress already achieved in areas such as freedom of association and collective bargaining, the recruitment of migrant workers, and domestic work, she encouraged Saudi Arabia to continue to engage in dialogue with workers' representatives and to complete the ongoing reform activities with ILO technical assistance.

850. **Speaking on behalf of a group of countries**, [10] a Government representative of Libya reaffirmed his group's solidarity with Saudi Arabia and commended the country's extensive labour reforms. The initiation of an article 26 procedure did not reflect the fact that the Government had demonstrated its willingness to engage in constructive cooperation with the ILO. As some of the Conventions cited in the complaint had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia, the procedure was not in line with the Constitution. He called on the Governing Body to reject the complaint, to promote cooperation between the Government and the ILO and to ensure that the ILO's supervisory mechanisms continued to be balanced and were used to encourage countries that were committed to reform.

851. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** considered that the complaint made against Saudi Arabia under article 26 of the ILO Constitution was not acceptable for legal, procedural and practical reasons. Legally speaking, violations had been alleged of Conventions Nos 143 and 155, which had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia. In procedural terms, under article 24 the Tripartite Committee had reported with concrete recommendations on allegations under Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111. Bringing an article 26 complaint without allowing sufficient time to fulfil the recommendations under article 24 was not procedurally sound.

852. In Saudi Arabia, migrant workers were allowed to change employer, leave the country and re-enter without legal and procedural challenges. Employers could not avoid the timely and full payment of wages. There was no scope for forced labour and Saudi law prohibited all forms of discrimination at work. Saudi Arabia was engaged in capacity-building and development cooperation with the ILO. Bearing that in mind, the complaint under consideration should be rejected without delay.

853. **A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** expressed opposition to the receivability of the complaint submitted against Saudi Arabia under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. Two of the five Conventions cited, Nos 143 and 155, had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia. The three Conventions that had been ratified were already under review within the framework of an article 24 representation. The Islamic Republic of Iran supported the integrity of the ILO's procedures, according to which each mechanism should be allowed to proceed to its natural conclusion. Also, article 26 was intended for exceptional situations characterized by persistent refusal to cooperate. By contrast, Saudi Arabia had committed itself to labour reform through sustained engagement with the ILO, including in relation to changes to the sponsorship systems, enhanced worker mobility, strengthened protections for domestic workers and the development of worker representation mechanisms recognized by the ILO. The Governing Body should therefore find the complaint in question non-receivable.

854. **A Government representative of Brunei Darussalam** noted that, in relation to the complaint submitted, two of the Conventions cited, Nos 143 and 155, had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia. A complaint could not therefore be made under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. With respect to the remaining Conventions, an article 24 representation was under review. The efforts being made by Saudi Arabia should be recognized as a commitment to the principles of the ILO, including improving social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining. In procedural terms, dialogue and development cooperation were the most effective means for advancing decent work. The complaint submitted under article 26 should therefore be declared non-receivable.

[10] Cameroon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Niger, Qatar, the Sudan and Tunisia.

855. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** expressed agreement with the view put forward that article 26 of the ILO Constitution was intended for cases of serious violations, whereby Member States systematically failed to meet their obligations. A series of reforms of labour laws and enforcement practices was currently being implemented, including strengthening social dialogue, access to justice and support for the rights of migrant workers. The kafala system of sponsorship for migrant workers had been criticized on many occasions and had been abolished by Saudi Arabia. Such steps had been taken in coordination with the ILO as part of the three stages of technical cooperation. Consequently, the threshold for triggering an article 26 complaint had not been reached, as Saudi Arabia had demonstrated its commitment to international standards. As requested by Saudi Arabia, such a serious measure could not therefore be enacted in the current case.

856. **A Government representative of China** said that Saudi Arabia was actively promoting labour reforms to bring its legislation into line with international standards. It was conducting development cooperation in the areas of freedom of association and collective bargaining, fair recruitment, protection of domestic workers' rights, legal assistance and social security. Taking into account those facts, the complaint submitted did not meet the threshold required to apply article 26 of the ILO Constitution. The ILO should uphold the principles of objectivity and impartiality. It should further strengthen its cooperation with the Saudi Government through its standards supervisory mechanisms.

857. **A Government representative of the Niger** reaffirmed his country's attachment to social dialogue, which was the DNA of the ILO, and to international cooperation and assistance. It welcomed Saudi Arabia's ratification of the fundamental ILO Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111, as evidence of its commitment to protecting and promoting human rights at work. The Niger considered that the complaint submitted was not receivable, as the three Conventions in question were already being considered under an article 24 procedure. Article 26 of the ILO Constitution was reserved for allegations of persistent and serious violations to which the Government concerned did not respond. By contrast, Saudi Arabia had undertaken comprehensive reforms of the labour sector and engaged in constructive dialogue with workers' representatives, a process which should continue. Only 34 such representatives had signed the complaint.

858. **A Government representative of Jordan** said that there was no legal basis for the complaint under article 26 of the ILO Constitution. Jordan commended the efforts made by Saudi Arabia to reform its labour market comprehensively, in partnership with the ILO. The development cooperation that had started in 2018 included promoting social dialogue, facilitating access to labour justice, developing inspection and occupational safety and health systems, and strengthening wage and compliance systems to enhance transparency. On that basis, the complaint submitted should not be accepted.

859. **A Government representative of Bahrain** expressed his full support for the view that the complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution was inadmissible, as it lacked legal substance and failed to take into account the reforms made to the labour market by Saudi Arabia. Those reforms included the strengthening of social dialogue, protecting domestic workers' rights, ensuring easy access to labour justice and developing the occupational safety and health systems. The Governing Body should therefore reject the complaint and reaffirm its support for reform through technical cooperation with Saudi Arabia.

860. **A Government representative of the Syrian Arab Republic** said that the complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution was lacking in terms of form and substance, and did not reflect the constructive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the ILO. Some of the Conventions concerned had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia and others were subject to review procedures under article 24 of the Constitution. Within the framework of a development cooperation agreement, Saudi Arabia had introduced reforms in relation to social dialogue, freedom of association, collective bargaining, domestic work, access to social justice and social protection. The best way to promote workers' rights was through continued partnership. As article 26 related to cases of serious failure to cooperate, the complaint submitted should be rejected by the Governing Body.

861. **A Government representative of Somalia** said that when a Member State demonstrated clear political will and sustained commitment to labour reform, the most constructive path forward was to encourage that effort through continued dialogue and technical support. That would set an example for others to follow, thereby strengthening the Organization's universality and credibility. In the current complex landscape of eroding trust in international institutions, the ILO's role as a beacon of dialogue and cooperation was more vital than ever. For those reasons, the Governing Body should reject the complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution.

862. **A Government representative of Yemen** called for the complaint submitted under article 26 to be examined in accordance with the necessary legal and procedural requirements, in a manner that strengthened the confidence of Member States. Saudi Arabia was to be commended for the qualitative reforms it had introduced in recent years to develop the labour market and promote the social and economic development of the Arab region. It hosted millions of migrant workers to whom it provided employment opportunities and a decent standard of living. The complaint submitted should be considered in a way that served the interests of those workers and the stability of the labour market in Saudi Arabia and the region.

863. **A Government representative of Algeria** noted that some of the Conventions cited in the complaint submitted had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia and a number of the other issues raised were being considered under article 24 of the ILO Constitution. Implementation of article 26 should be based on clear criteria relating to the proven existence of serious and repeated violations. In the context of the development cooperation programmes launched since 2018 between Saudi Arabia and the ILO, which covered areas such as social dialogue, employment reforms, job mobility and occupational safety and health, the Governing Body should give priority to due process when considering the complaint submitted. Legal admissibility was a key factor. The support for development cooperation and dialogue should be maintained as they were effective tools for promoting the reforms under way.

864. **A Government representative of Egypt** commented that the complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution included Conventions that had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia and that some of the observations made repeated issues that were already being considered by the Organization's supervisory bodies under article 24. Saudi Arabia continued to implement a programme of labour market reforms in cooperation with the ILO, as evidenced in many areas including employment, job mobility and the protection of domestic workers' rights. The best way forward to address the observations made was therefore through continued dialogue and direct technical cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the ILO. The complaint submitted should be rejected.

865. **A Government representative of Pakistan** said that his country had more than two million workers in Saudi Arabia, a fact which contributed significantly to the development of the economies of both countries. The Governing Body Officers' report had rightly concluded that the complaint submitted under article 26 was not receivable for Conventions Nos 143 and 155, as Saudi Arabia had not ratified those Conventions. As for Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111, Saudi Arabia had already provided a response to an ongoing article 24 representation. Article 26 was a mechanism of last resort intended for situations involving persistent and serious violations where a Member State had demonstrated a clear refusal to take action. By contrast, Saudi Arabia was engaged in a broad labour reform programme in cooperation with the ILO, a mechanism that could be used to promote dialogue and partnership. Without prejudging the substance of any of the concerns raised in the complaint, Pakistan urged the Governing Body to consider the complaint not receivable at the current stage.

866. **A Government representative of Kyrgyzstan** said that the complaint submitted risked undermining the ongoing collaboration between the ILO and Saudi Arabia which had demonstrated a commitment to comprehensive labour reform since 2018. The matters raised in the complaint relating to Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111 were already being addressed through an ongoing article 24 representation. The more serious article 26 procedure was reserved for cases of persistent and serious violations where a Member State refused to act. Conversely, Saudia Arabia had abolished the kafala sponsorship system, migrant workers could change employers and exit the country without permission, and the confiscation of passports had been made illegal. Kyrgyzstan therefore urged the Governing Body to reject the receivability of the complaint and to reaffirm its support for the collaborative process.

867. **A Government representative of Mauritania** said that in addition to ratifying the relevant Conventions, Saudi Arabia was implementing a courageous policy for the promotion of human rights. The efforts made by the ILO to encourage the ratification of international labour standards together with Saudi Arabia's willingness to continue the reforms being implemented demonstrated that the complaint submitted was not receivable under article 26 of the ILO Constitution.

868. **A Government representative of the State of Palestine** noted the extensive reforms implemented by Saudi Arabia since 2018 relating to the protection of domestic workers' rights, the development of occupational safety and health systems, and guarantees for workers' access to justice. The reforms relating to the criminalization of the withholding of passports and electronic monitoring of contracts and wages reflected Saudi Arabia's strong commitment. The State of Palestine considered that the complaint submitted lacked the necessary legal and procedural foundations and did not reflect the reality of the constructive cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the ILO. Certain Conventions cited had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia and other issues had already been raised as part of a procedure under article 24 of the ILO Constitution. In addition, the condition of serious and repeated violations under article 26 was not met. For the reasons outlined, the complaint should be rejected as inadmissible.

869. **The Chairperson** emphasized that the Officers of the Governing Body considered that the complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution was receivable in procedural terms in relation to Conventions Nos 29, 95 and 111, as the receivability criteria had been scrupulously respected. The complaint was not, however, receivable for Conventions Nos 143 and 155 which had not been ratified by Saudi Arabia. No consideration had as yet been given to the substance of the complaint.

870. **A Government representative of Saudi Arabia** reaffirmed his country's firm commitment to continuing its labour market reform programme, including its constructive cooperation with the ILO and its close partnership with the national social partners. The Government rejected the allegations made in the complaint submitted.

871. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed disappointment that no agreement had been reached and at how low the threshold was for article 26 of the Constitution. The Employers' group commended the efforts made by Saudi Arabia and hoped that agreement could be achieved to close the case in March 2026.

872. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that although much had been said about the efforts being made by the Government of Saudi Arabia, the concerns of the workers who had submitted the complaint under article 26 of the ILO Constitution had not been heard, as the current consideration of the case had been purely procedural. Those concerns would be expressed in March 2026. She called for confidence building between all the parties involved and absolute respect for the procedures of the ILO supervisory system.

Decision

873. **Taking into account the conditions established in article 26 of the ILO Constitution, the Governing Body:**

(a) decided that the complaint was receivable in relation to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Protection of Wages Convention, 1949 (No. 95), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), and not receivable in relation to the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), and the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155);

(b) requested the Director-General to transmit the complaint to the Government of Saudi Arabia, inviting it to communicate its observations on the complaint by 30 January 2026;

(c) acknowledging the importance of dialogue between the parties, encouraged them to maintain their constructive engagement and requested the Director-General to provide any support needed to facilitate that process and to report to the Governing Body at its next session in March 2026;

(d) decided to place the item on the agenda of the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body.

(GB.355/INS/17/1, paragraph 11)

17.2. Second report: Complaint submitted under article 26 of the ILO Constitution alleging non-observance by Chile of Conventions Nos 87, 98, 135 and 151 (GB.355/INS/17/2)

874. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed her group's support for considering the complaint receivable.

875. **The Employer spokesperson** recalled that the Governing Body had already considered complaints against Chile alleging non-observance of the same Conventions in 2017 and 2020 and, in both cases, had decided that a Commission of Inquiry was not warranted and that the matters should be addressed by the regular supervisory system. Furthermore, there were currently nine article 24 representations against the country, many of which related to the same Conventions. While the issues might be legitimate, the Governing Body had repeatedly stated that article 26 complaints should be reserved for cases of serious and persistent shortcomings in which it had not been possible to obtain results through the regular supervisory system.

876. She reiterated her group's concern over the large number of complaints and representations that did not appear to meet the necessary criteria, and called on the Governing Body to consider strengthening the procedural requirements for article 26 complaints to ensure that the allegations were sufficiently serious, specific and verifiable. The present case against Chile was based on a document that made general allegations without demonstrating a persistent pattern of non-observation of the relevant Conventions. Chile had robust democratic institutions, democratically developed labour legislation and a recognized history of compliance. There was no justification for bypassing the ordinary supervisory mechanisms and implementing a procedure intended as a last resort. Admitting cases without the necessary rigour sent the message that the supervisory system could be used for political or ideological purposes, undermined trust in the system itself, and consumed time and resources that could be used for genuinely serious and urgent cases. The Employers' group would continue working to preserve the integrity of the supervisory mechanism, which was an institutional responsibility.

877. The Employers' group considered that the receivability criteria had been met in this case, but expressed the hope that the Governing Body would close the case at its next session and refer the matters to the supervisory mechanisms for follow-up.

878. **A Government representative of Chile** reaffirmed his Government's commitment to multilateralism, decent work and the fundamental principles of the ILO. It had ratified all fundamental Conventions and had made great progress in the application of standards through social dialogue and by strengthening national tripartite institutions. As the country had a long-standing commitment to social justice and decent work, it was surprising that it was facing an article 26 complaint based on allegations not sufficiently serious to justify triggering an exceptional mechanism intended as a last resort. Moreover, Chile currently had a fully functioning national conciliation body, which had been established in connection with an article 24 representation concerning the same substantive matters as those alleged in the current complaint. Triggering two parallel proceedings on the same substance was not an appropriate use of the supervisory system or due process. Furthermore, as a result of dialogue within the aforementioned national body, the parties had recently proposed solutions that could end the proceedings under the article 24 representation. Reopening the discussion would be a step backwards in view of the progress made and the actions that could be taken as a result.

879. Accordingly, Chile called on the Governing Body to consider that the complaint was not receivable and to refer the relevant matters to the Committee on Freedom of Association so that it could incorporate them in its ongoing proceedings.

880. As Chile faced a disproportionate number of proceedings – due in part to the high number of Conventions it had ratified and in part to the triggering of ILO mechanisms before channels for national dialogue had been exhausted – the Government called for a comprehensive review of the procedure with a view to safeguarding the credibility, efficacy and balance of the ILO supervisory system.

881. **The Worker spokesperson** observed that a distinction must be made between a consideration of the receivability of a complaint and a discussion on the merits. The concerns raised by the Employers' group and the Government of Chile would be open for discussion at the March session. In the past, the Governing Body had considered cases that had initially been considered receivable but had been closed after a discussion on the merits.

882. **The Employer spokesperson** explained that her group was not attempting to discuss the merits of the case, but was calling for a rethink of the receivability criteria. The intention was not to impede access to the supervisory system, but to ensure that complaints and representations were triggered only on an exceptional basis to provide a rapid response to the most serious cases, which was how the system had been conceived.

Decision

883. **As the conditions established in article 26 of the ILO Constitution appeared to be fulfilled, the Governing Body, on the recommendation of its Officers, considered that the complaint was receivable and:**

   (a) requested the Director-General to transmit the complaint to the Government of Chile, inviting it to communicate its observations on the complaint by 15 January 2026 and to appoint a representative to take part in the proceedings of the Governing Body concerning that matter at its future sessions, as well as informing the Government that the Governing Body would examine the matter at its 356th Session (March 2026);

   (b) decided to place the item on the agenda of the 356th Session (March 2026) of the Governing Body.

(GB.355/INS/17/2, paragraph 12)

17.3. Third report: Representation alleging non-observance by Brazil of the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122) (GB.355/INS/17/3)

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

Decision

884. **In the light of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/17/3 and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and to set up a tripartite committee to examine it.**

(GB.355/INS/17/3, paragraph 5)

17.4. Fourth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the Old-Age Insurance (Industry, etc.) Convention, 1933 (No. 35), and the Invalidity Insurance (Industry, etc.) Convention, 1933 (No. 37) (GB.355/INS/17/4)

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

Decision

885. **In the light of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/17/4, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that, while the representation was receivable, the establishment of a tripartite committee to examine it was not necessary and to close the representation procedure.**

(GB.355/INS/17/4, paragraph 5)

17.5. Fifth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) (GB.355/INS/17/5)

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

Decision

886. **In the light of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/17/5, 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.355/INS/17/5, paragraph 5)

17.6. Sixth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Colombia of Conventions Nos 87 and 98 (GB.355/INS/17/6)

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

Decision

887. **In light of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/17/6, and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was receivable and, as it relates to Conventions dealing with trade union rights, to transmit the representation to the Committee on Freedom of Association for examination as per the procedures set out in the Standing Orders on articles 24 and 25 of the Constitution of the ILO.**

(GB.355/INS/17/6, paragraph 5)

17.7. Seventh report: Representation alleging non-observance by Lebanon of Conventions Nos 95, 111 and 131 (GB.355/INS/17/7)

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

Decision

888. **In the light of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/17/7, 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.355/INS/17/7, paragraph 5)

17.8. Eighth report: Representation alleging non-observance by Chile of the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) (GB.355/INS/17/8)

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

Decision

889. In the light of the information contained in document GB.355/INS/17/8 and taking into consideration the recommendation of its Officers, the Governing Body decided that the representation was not receivable.

(GB.355/INS/17/8, paragraph 5)

18. Composition, agenda and programme of standing bodies and meetings (GB.355/INS/18)

890. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group had taken note of the need to defer the official meetings listed in paragraph 1 of document GB.355/INS/18 owing to the lack of resources and of the two possible scenarios prepared by the Office for rescheduling those meetings depending on the availability of resources in January 2026. The Employers' group also noted with appreciation the offer by the Government of Namibia to host the 15th African Regional Meeting in the last quarter of 2026 subject to the availability of funds and looked forward to considering the proposed arrangements for the meeting at the 356th Session (March 2026). The Employer's group supported the draft decision.

891. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the consultations among the Officers that had led to the proposed approach for the rescheduling of meetings, which would allow the Office to continue preparatory work for a number of meetings with the understanding that the financial situation would be reviewed in January. Her group supported the draft decision.

892. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Japan said that her group had had some difficulty in differentiating the sectoral meetings that had been previously approved and deferred from those that were new proposals as there were two documents on the subject – GB.355/INS/18 and GB.355/POL/3. IMEC was pleased that, as a result of the review of the functioning of the Governing Body, that the double-track issue would be resolved. She requested that, once a decision had been made regarding which of the two scenarios would be pursued, the Office inform the constituents as soon as possible and in a clear manner. IMEC supported the draft decision.

Decision

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

(a) took note of the deferral of the official meetings identified in paragraph 1 of document GB.355/INS/18;

(b) took note of the programme of meetings contained in Part II of document GB.355/INS/18, and of the approach proposed by the Office concerning the rescheduling of deferred meetings, subject to further decision-making of the Governing Body;

(c) endorsed the proposals made in relation to the invitation of intergovernmental and international non-governmental organizations to official meetings, as listed in the appendix to document GB.355/INS/18;

(d) **noted with appreciation the offer by the Government of Namibia to host the 15th African Regional Meeting in the last quarter of 2026 and deferred the approval of its arrangements to its 356th Session (March 2026), subject to the availability of funds.**

(GB.355/INS/18, paragraph 16)

Closing remarks

894. **The Chairperson** thanked the Office staff for the excellent organization and for the support provided during the session and all Governing Body members for their constructive contributions to the particularly intense work accomplished over the two weeks. It had been an honour to chair the Governing Body during such a decisive moment for the Organization.

895. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** congratulated the Chairperson for having led the work of the Governing Body with Swiss precision in such a challenging session. She thanked the Employers' group and the Chairperson of the Government group for their commitment to making every effort to reach consensus during a session that had had some challenging moments. As a trade unionist, she expressed solidarity with all the staff members of the Office, who were concerned about the ongoing reform, and encouraged the Governing Body to take a human-centred approach in the review of the Organization.

896. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** thanked the Chairperson for having led the Governing Body elegantly through extremely challenging discussions to a successful outcome; his Worker counterpart; the Government group for having spoken with one voice to help find consensus; and the Office staff for the support provided.

▶ Policy Development Section

Employment and Social Protection Segment

1. Report on the implementation of the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages (GB.355/POL/1)

897. **The Worker spokesperson** said that wages lay at the heart of the ILO's constitutional mandate and the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on wage policies, including living wages (hereafter "the conclusions") adopted in 2024 represented a historic opportunity to revitalize the wage agenda at the national level. The progress achieved was welcomed, including ratifications that reinforced wage-setting frameworks, the provision of technical assistance, and the updating of guidance documents and methodologies for wage determination. The Office had produced two important tools: an updated methodology to assess the needs of workers and their families for wage-setting purposes and a compendium of economic factors for wage setting. These technical tools were essential for supporting negotiations and for incremental progression from minimum wages to living wages.

898. The positive impact of the training course conducted in partnership with the Turin Centre was noted, as it had strengthened knowledge and supported the role of collective bargaining through evidence-based information. The hope was expressed that similar training would be repeated in the coming years. Reference was made to the Asia–Pacific Regional Course on Effective Evidence-Based Wage Policies, including Living Wages, held in Colombo in September 2025, which demonstrated the importance of disseminating the conclusions.

Similar workshops were encouraged in other regions, targeting both statutory-level actors and those engaged at sectoral or enterprise level. The Global Wage Report was welcomed as the worldwide reference on wage analysis; however, concern was expressed that the proposed consolidation of the Global Wage Report with other thematic reports could affect its quality and scope. The ILO must remain the global "scorekeeper" on wages, which required an updated web repository. Further, the Office's capacity to act as the global reference on wages was being critically undermined by persistent understaffing of the Wages team.

899. The ILO Decent Work in Supply Chains Evidence Hub was noted for providing access to evidence on supply chains, trade, investment, and wages, and for identifying potential areas for future research. The importance of developing an international labour standard to address normative gaps in global supply chains, as discussed under GB.355/INS/2, was emphasized. Appreciation was expressed for promoting the uptake of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, as amended in 2022 (MNE Declaration) and its guidance on wages and benefits. The importance of activities related to living wages was noted, as they showcased the conclusions and tools that the Office must support in wage negotiations. These activities were expected to increase demand for Office support, including from workers' organizations, with targeted dissemination activities, such as fact sheets explaining the implications of the conclusions for workers and mapping of negotiating methods based on positive experiences, including clauses on inflation adjustment and annual wage increases.

900. The Office was urged to ensure that work on wage-setting mechanisms and living wages was adequately funded through the regular budget, in addition to further mobilization of development cooperation funds to support national-level work across all regions. Commitment to the ILO Programme on Living Wages was reaffirmed, with appreciation to the Office and donors supporting it. Living wages is the most effective strategy to accelerate social development and the Sustainable Development Goals, as recognized in the Doha Political Declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development. Support for the draft decision was expressed.

901. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that the conclusions reaffirmed the ILO's leadership on wage policies and the need for a balanced and sustainable approach to living wages. The conclusions underscored three key elements: the two pillars of the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131), namely the needs of workers and their families and economic factors; the importance of a sustainable approach that considered broader drivers such as economic growth, structural transformation and productivity; and the recognition of the central role of social partners at national level to ensure ownership and legitimacy. The Office's support for strengthening wage-setting institutions, improving technical tools and supporting national dialogue processes that integrated both social and economic considerations was welcomed. Appreciation was expressed for the rigorous work behind the Global Wage Report 2024–25, which highlighted progress in reducing wage inequalities despite challenging economic conditions.

902. The development of the ILO Programme on Living Wages, including the Wage Data Hub and country-level technical support to strengthen wage-setting institutions, was recognized as an inclusive and balanced approach to advancing wage policies consistent with ILO principles. The programme should serve as a platform for disseminating evidence-based information rather than establishing global benchmarks. The revision of the methodology to assess the needs of workers and their families and the elaboration of a compendium of economic factors were acknowledged, with the need for systematic integration of capacity-building on their application when developing living wage estimates emphasized. Additional practical guidance material was suggested to facilitate understanding and implementation of these methodologies.

903. Work on living wage estimates should be undertaken at the request of Member States and in consultation with social partners. Estimates could be an important starting point, but meaningful social dialogue must remain at the heart of wage-setting processes, which should be anchored in national tripartite systems and take account of productivity dynamics. The Office's engagement with living wage initiatives and private benchmarks to promote alignment with ILO principles through the Global Coalition for Social Justice was welcomed. Caution was expressed regarding references to "guaranteeing living wages" in political declaration of the Second World Summit for Social Development, as these were not in line with the conclusions. Misconceptions surrounding living wages persisted, and the Office was urged to strengthen efforts to promote correct alignment with the conclusions, both externally and internally, particularly in country offices.

904. Activities linking wage policies to skills development, productivity improvement and the creation of enabling environments for sustainable enterprises remained limited, with technical assistance on wages encouraged to be systematically accompanied by such activities. Greater synergies with the Productivity Ecosystems for Decent Work initiative were encouraged, and the reach of these efforts was recommended to be expanded to more beneficiary countries. Sustainable wage growth depended on productivity growth, and future ILO work on wages, including living wages, should place productivity and skills development at the core to support incremental and sustainable progress toward higher wages. Support was expressed for the continuation of a balanced programme of work, with adequate funding for capacity-building of constituents highlighted as a priority in the context of ILO reform. The Employer's group endorsed the draft decision.

905. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Mozambique welcomed progress in implementing the conclusions and increased number of ratifications of wage-related ILO Conventions across the continent, including the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), by Angola, the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), by Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), by Egypt and Guinea-Bissau. Ratification of Convention No. 131 remained limited in Africa, with fewer than one fifth of countries having ratified it to date and strengthened efforts to support Member States in this regard were encouraged. The value of technical support provided by the Office for minimum wage reforms was highlighted, with examples including Namibia's new minimum wage that entered into force on 1 January 2025, the evaluation of wage systems in South Africa, and the revision of wage adjustment formulas in Nigeria. Efforts to reinforce collective bargaining were noted, with concrete results achieved in sectors such as fishing in Namibia, the public service in Zimbabwe, and mining in Guinea. Support was encouraged to be extended to additional African countries, especially in contexts of high inflation and the need for wage adjustments that preserve purchasing power.

906. On pay equity, studies on gender wage gaps in African countries were encouraged, similar to the work conducted in other regions. The publication of the updated methodology for determining the needs of workers and their families was acknowledged, as well as the compendium of economic factors for wage setting, highlighting their importance in the development of adequate and sustainable minimum wage systems, as foreseen under Convention No. 131. The wage-setting training offered through the International Training Centre was recognized as a useful tool, with a dedicated edition for Portuguese-speaking African countries, in collaboration with the ILO's Regional Office in Luanda, suggested. The creation of the thematic web page on living wages was welcomed, and this resource should be promoted by the ILO Office in Angola, reinforcing the ILO's leadership on the topic. A regional breakdown of data in the Global Wage Report 2024–25 was considered necessary to improve understanding of wage inequality trends across Africa. The proposed approach for advancing living wages, linking it to sustainable growth, productivity enhancement, and alignment with the Abidjan Declaration, was endorsed. Strong support was given to the ILO Programme on Living Wages and continued resource mobilization to sustain and expand activities requested by Member States. The Africa group supported the draft decision.

907. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. She welcomed the comprehensive report and reaffirmed full support for the conclusions. The conclusions provided clear and practical guidance for defining a living wage, developing robust methodologies for estimating it, and operationalizing it through wage-setting institutions. The actions taken by the Office and constituents to advance these conclusions were both extensive and impactful. The conclusions had reinvigorated global action on living wages, encouraging countries to strengthen minimum wage systems and ratify relevant Conventions. The launch of the ILO Programme on Living Wages was welcomed and close alignment with the Global Coalition for Social Justice was needed to ensure coherence and impact. The Office should reaffirm its leadership in refining methodologies for estimating living wages, noting the ILO's unique expertise and its position as the authoritative source of guidance.

908. Social dialogue remained central in wage-setting processes, with continued focus on strengthening institutional capacity to support evidence-based and inclusive wage setting acknowledged. The value of the Office's technical assistance on collective bargaining and capacity-building for employers' and workers' organizations was also emphasized, and engagement with other UN bodies and living wage initiatives, including private-sector actors, was encouraged to accelerate progress. Development of tools such as the Wage Hub should be continued, and increased synergies with other ILO initiatives, including supply-chain-related work, should be pursued. The EU supported the proposed decision.

909. **A Government representative of India** thanked the Office and took note of the progress reported. India's recent economic growth had been accompanied by major labour reforms aimed at strengthening worker protections. The country introduced four new labour codes, including the Code on Wages, guaranteeing a statutory right to minimum wages for all workers, ensuring timely wage payments, and establishing a national floor wage to promote a decent standard of living. Additional safeguards include overtime remuneration at double rate and periodic wage revisions linked to the Consumer Price Index. These wage policies were complemented by a broad social protection system and targeted welfare schemes, which have contributed to a significant reduction in multidimensional poverty. The ILO Programme on Living Wages and the Office's commitment to tailoring its support to national contexts through tripartite dialogue were acknowledged. He reaffirmed commitment to advancing wages and living standards through evidence-based approaches aligned with national priorities.

910. **A Government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania** aligned himself with the statement of the Africa group and welcomed the comprehensive report, as well as the significance of the ratifications and the technical assistance provided by the Office in supporting minimum wage reforms and reducing gender pay gaps. The new training initiatives aimed at reinforcing wage-setting capacity across regions were acknowledged. Strong support for the ILO Programme on Living Wages was noted, with active engagement in its implementation anticipated. He highlighted the United Republic of Tanzania's continued implementation of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Minimum

Wage-Fixing Machinery Convention, 1928 (No. 26), and reaffirmed commitment to reinforcing wage-setting institutions to ensure wages reflect the needs of workers and their families as well as economic realities. Developing countries faced challenges in operationalizing living wage policies and adequate resources were needed to address Africa's specific needs. He supported the draft decision.

911. **A Government representative of the Philippines** welcomed the comprehensive report and emphasized that fair and decent remuneration were fundamental to decent work and social justice. The country's tripartite, evidence-based wage-setting architecture and ongoing work with the ILO to update living-wage methodologies and estimates were outlined, including efforts to develop a progressive wage model in the construction sector under the Global Accelerator. The importance of strengthening technical capacity among tripartite members, improving enforcement, and expanding data availability through a centralized Wage Hub was noted. Challenges remained in balancing wage adequacy with enterprise sustainability, and complementary policies linking wages to productivity, skills development, price stability, and improved access to social services were deemed necessary. The launch of the ILO Programme on Living Wages was supported, with progress to be monitored and peer learning promoted. Commitment to wage policies that enhance decent living standards, inclusive growth, and social justice was reaffirmed.

912. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom** emphasized the importance of robust data, tripartite engagement, and social dialogue in wage-setting processes. In the United Kingdom, the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage were set independently, with recent increases reflecting recommendations from the Low Pay Commission. The Government's Plan to Make Work Pay placed living standards at the centre of strategies to increase economic growth and improve job quality. The ILO Programme on Living Wages and the Office's support to private-sector efforts were welcomed. Ensuring that responsible employers were not disadvantaged by low-compliance competitors was considered crucial. Commitment to wage-setting processes aligned with ILO principles was restated, and support for the decision points was noted.

913. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Conditions of Work and Equality Department) noted the strong support for the Office's work on wage policies, including living wages, which formed part of the core mandate of the Organization. Strengthening wage-setting institutions, including minimum wages and collective bargaining, remained a priority for the Office. In relation to living wages, two technical tools had been produced: a methodology to estimate the needs of workers and their families for wage-setting purposes, including living wages; and a compendium of economic factors for wage setting. The main objective of the living wage initiative under the Global Coalition for Social Justice was to disseminate the conclusions. In this context, the global event held in April in Geneva served specifically to strengthen the dissemination of these conclusions. The meeting organized in Colombo in September combined dissemination with capacity-building. She welcomed the proposal to replicate similar activities in other regions, including Africa, subject to the availability of funds.

914. The ILO Programme on Living Wages had been launched in April together with the IOE and the ITUC. The Office planned to make the global Wage Hub operational in the first quarter of 2026; it would contain data on wages, living wage estimates and economic indicators. A wage repository for Asia had already been developed as a reference model, and further consultation with constituents would be undertaken to shape the global hub. Ensuring coherence between the ILO Programme on Living Wages and the initiatives under the Global Coalition for Social Justice was essential: the former focused on supporting constituents in wage setting in line with ILO principles, while the latter aimed primarily at disseminating the adopted conclusions and aligning global players with the ILO-adopted principles. The next update of the Global Wage Report would be available in 2026. She confirmed that the Office's capacity on wages remained limited owing to the freeze of three out of the five regular budget positions, and drew attention to the support provided through development cooperation projects funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Germany, and France as well as by national coordinators in Costa Rica, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, and Viet Nam, and by some positions in Geneva. The Office was also working on a new loan agreement with Germany and had recently finalized a loan agreement with Japan.

915. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed on the need for support at national level for wage-setting institutions and the importance of training ILO staff on the ground to strengthen capacity-building on the conclusions. He also supported the point made by the Government representative of Denmark, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, on the importance of living wages in supply chains. Productivity was important in operationalizing living wages, and total factor productivity should be considered among other economic factors, as indicated in paragraph 13(g) of the conclusions. At the same time, the estimation of the needs of workers and their families should follow the ILO methodology. Given the consensus that wages, including living wages, were a key priority of the Office and within its core mandate, the Director-General was urged to take this into account when discussing document GB.355/INS/7. Three frozen vacancies would limit the Office's capacity to provide further support.

916. **The Director-General** confirmed the importance of wages, including living wages, and noted the consensus on this. He called for bilateral discussion on how to improve efficiency in the context of streamlining flagship reports.

Decision

917. **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).

(GB.355/POL/1, paragraph 27)

2. Identifying challenges and possible policy responses regarding the application of the principle of non-discrimination in the world of work (GB.355/POL/2)

918. **The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the Office paper and stated that equality of opportunity in employment and occupation was a constant of the ILO mandate and an essential element for inclusive, resilient, and productive labour markets. Discrimination undermined social justice, created barriers to employment, weakened enterprise performance and stifled economic growth. The principle of non-discrimination was non-negotiable and any discrimination on grounds unrelated to work performance, merit or skills was unacceptable and illegitimate, as it undermined productivity, innovation and competitiveness. Challenges and solutions depended on national, social, cultural and economic contexts. ILO action should not be imposed on countries, especially regarding vulnerable groups not defined or agreed domestically. Employers acknowledged that while sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) was recognized as a ground of discrimination in the legislation of some countries, others held different views, which was to be respected.

919. Compelling evidence from the ILO and other sources showed that diversity strengthens workplace outcomes. The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) should guide ILO action. Discrimination was a complex phenomenon, which was precisely why the Convention embedded flexibility allowing Members to determine additional grounds of discrimination, if appropriate, after consultations with employers' and workers' organizations. This framework enabled adaptation to evolving realities while affirming the universality of the principle of non-discrimination. The ILO should support Members in strengthening equality frameworks upon request. Social dialogue and tripartism were critical for moving forward. Evidence-based, pragmatic, enterprise-focused solutions were needed. Employers were ready to work with governments and workers to promote decent work for all, and supported continued ILO efforts to prevent and eliminate discrimination while recognizing national differences.

920. **The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the timely discussion on the principle of non-discrimination, a fundamental ILO objective since its creation. Discrimination was a lived reality for millions of workers – women, migrants, LGBTQ+ workers, indigenous peoples, racialized workers, persons with disabilities, and those facing age-based discrimination. Undocumented migrant workers faced exclusion and exploitation. Discriminatory practices and structural inequalities shaped labour markets, depriving people of dignity and opportunity and undermining peace and social justice. Discrimination destroyed lives and wasted human potential. Constituents should make use of the option available under Article 1(1)(b) of Convention No. 111 to ensure that at the national level, the protections extend to all forms of discrimination.

921. The right to non-discrimination and equality was inseparable from collective bargaining and freedom of association. The commitment to non-discrimination must be upheld for all workers without exception. Members adopted legislation, but legal protection was often incomplete and enforcement weak. Discrimination was structural, perpetuated by occupational segregation, unpaid care, exclusion from training, and lack of social protection. Discrimination was often embedded in systems producing unequal outcomes and occurred in overlapping, intersectional ways, requiring strategies that recognize these complexities. Disaggregated data assisted in uncovering invisible barriers. Proactive measures were needed, such as equality plans, pay gap reporting, positive duty policies or quota systems for workers with disabilities. Lessons learned should be documented and shared. Enforcement and access to justice should be prioritized, including through reversing the burden of proof, along with tackling structural causes through integrated policies and further research into the social and economic impacts of discrimination. The ILO review should prioritize the elimination of discrimination by strengthening ILO technical assistance, expertise, data collection and monitoring, including preserving work on gender-based discrimination, equality and labour migration.

922. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Malawi reaffirmed that discrimination in all its forms was unacceptable. All African Members had ratified Convention No. 111, thus expressing their commitment to equality, dignity and justice, while acknowledging progress and remaining challenges. The Africa group therefore was committed to the continuing role of the supervisory mechanisms in promoting compliance. While the analysis provided was appreciated, the Office document had missed an opportunity to bridge divergent views. The group's understanding had been that the document was specifically meant to examine the application of the principle of non-discrimination as it relates to the scope of application of grounds such as SOGI, and not generally.

923. The group did not oppose equality but called for maintenance of legal precision. Legal obligations should not be conflated with policy choices. Convention No. 111 balanced universality with national sovereignty. Its Article 1(1)(a) listed seven grounds of discrimination, while Article 1(1)(b) gave discretion to recognize additional grounds. A Member's choice not to add new grounds did not breach the Convention. Insinuating non-compliance distorted both the letter and the spirit of the Convention. Any interpretations extending the Convention's scope beyond the seven agreed grounds in Article 1(1)(a) were legally unsound. The group cautioned against imposing values under the guise of universality and urged future work to distinguish legal obligations from voluntary policy discussions, respect diversity and channel normative development through tripartite standard-setting. The Africa group hoped that the guidance provided would be taken into account and pledged constructive engagement based on equality and mutual respect.

924. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh noted that Convention No. 111 listed seven grounds of discrimination while allowing Members to determine others. Article 2 of the instrument referred to the pursuance of national policy through "methods appropriate to national conditions and practice". The group strongly supported the principle of non-discrimination, in line with international labour standards. Discriminatory treatment seriously undermined human potential. Evidence-based local solutions were needed to address structural barriers, with disaggregated data playing an important role. Research and pilot testing policy responses may help national efforts. The group would consider joining global initiatives to combat discrimination, welcomed information on national good practices, urged enhanced tripartite participation in national efforts. While legal instruments were diverse across countries, indirect discrimination needed to be identified and addressed. The group acknowledged the Office's constitutional obligation to combat discrimination and asked it to take into account related Governing Body guidance.

925. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Uruguay stated that discrimination was a violation of human rights and a root cause of inequality, bringing social and economic costs by limiting development, reducing productivity and distorting labour markets. Discrimination was complex and evolving, often fed by prejudice and stereotypes with deep roots, manifesting intersectionally. The group reaffirmed the importance of implementing non-discrimination as a core value of the ILO and cornerstone of its mandate and welcomed the tripartite consensus to fight all forms of discrimination and exclusion.

926. Convention No. 111 was an essential reference, with its seven grounds and the option for Members to add others. Discrimination on the grounds of sex, which remained persistent and disproportionately affects women who constitute more than half of humanity, was structural and required priority attention. Technical assistance should be provided to those countries requesting it, and it should be borne in mind that each country has its own national situation and circumstances. The Office's work on improving data and statistics and comparative analysis was crucial for addressing structural aspects.

927. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark stated that the following countries aligned themselves with the statement: North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Iceland and Norway. The ILO had a broad constitutional obligation to address all forms of discrimination in the world of work. That inherently included any grounds of discrimination. This mandate allowed the ILO to support constituents in eliminating discrimination based on SOGI through technical assistance provided upon request and with regard to national circumstances. The list of grounds in Convention No. 111 was not exhaustive, as it enabled Members to determine additional grounds. Countries had a sovereign right to add grounds to their laws and practice, and many had done so. They should also be entitled to ask the Office to implement activities aimed at fighting against discrimination on any additional grounds.

928. The EU's framework of legislation and enforcement mechanisms addressed both direct and indirect discrimination. A report on the application of the EU equal treatment directives would be published in spring 2026. The 2023 pay transparency directive further strengthened the principle of equal pay for women and men. Measures supporting better work–life balance assisted in reducing structural barriers. The ILO needed to further strengthen its action to address non-discrimination.

929. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Iraq recalled the group's commitment to social justice in line with the ILO Constitution, Conventions Nos 111 and 100, which had been ratified by most Arab States. Non-discrimination was a cornerstone of social justice and sustainable development; its interpretation and implementation must respect each country's religious, cultural and societal values, as guaranteed by international instruments such as the Vienna Convention of 1961 and relevant ILO resolutions emphasizing state sovereignty and cultural context in applying national instruments. New grounds of discrimination, such as SOGI, lacked international consensus and were not reflected in adopted instruments. There were more pressing regional labour market challenges, including job creation for youth and women, unemployment and social protection.

930. The Office should focus on supporting national capacities through technical assistance, capacity-building and legislative development on equal opportunities and treatment, including with regard to pay, and reinforce tripartite social dialogue to address forms of discrimination in the world of work, while stressing the importance of ensuring that policies align with national societal and religious values. The Arab group reaffirmed its support for the ILO's efforts to promote social justice and dignity for all workers and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work.

931. A Government representative of Malaysia, also **speaking on behalf of Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia**, reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to promoting equality and combating all forms of discrimination in employment and occupation, consistent with ILO principles and international law. They noted that Convention No. 111 provides a comprehensive framework while allowing Members to determine additional grounds through national consultations. The ILO should use inclusive, universally accepted terminology, and emerging grounds must be addressed with consensus-based language. Any grounds of discrimination not covered by Convention No. 111 should be addressed within the Decent Work Country Programme, ensuring both its continued relevance and its alignment with the national priorities of the Member State concerned. Terminologies such as SOGI, which did not enjoy consensus among Member States, should be avoided in ILO documents, particularly those of a technical, programmatic or budgetary nature. The sovereign right of Member States to determine how issues of discrimination are defined and addressed in line with their national laws, values and social context must be respected by the Office. Otherwise, the deadlocks of previous sessions impeding the important work of the ILO risked repeating themselves.

932. A Government representative of Pakistan, **speaking on behalf of the Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**, reaffirmed their commitment to equality of opportunity and treatment for all workers, as enshrined in the ILO Constitution and Conventions Nos 100 and 111. However, the Office document did not adequately reflect the diversity of views among ILO Members. Discussions needed to remain grounded in the agreed legal framework of the ILO, guided by consensus, respect for cultural diversity and national sovereignty. Convention No. 111 recognized specific grounds of discrimination and allowed Members' discretion to identify additional grounds in line with national circumstances.

933. The tendency to introduce references to SOGI was of concern, as these concepts were not universally recognized under international law and did not form part of the consensus underpinning Conventions Nos 100 and 111. Their inclusion risked undermining unity and politicizing the ILO's technical mandate. The Office should acknowledge the divergence in views and the need to focus resources on areas of broad consensus. The OIC Member States reaffirmed their readiness to engage constructively within the framework of international labour law.

934. **A Government representative of the United States** reaffirmed his country's commitment to eliminating discrimination based on factors other than merit in employment and occupation. The 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work constituted a core consensus among constituents and was central to the ILO's mandate. The United States supported efforts to promote equality of opportunity between men and women. Technical assistance should be delivered in line with international labour standards, while ratification remained the sovereign prerogative of Member States. United States policy recognized two sexes, male and female, and did not promote gender ideology. His delegation cautioned against prolonged, politicized debates on divergent views on gender, highlighted the need for mutual respect for different national conditions and circumstances and urged a return to common commitments to non-discrimination in the world of work.

935. **A Government representative of Brazil** stated that the principle of non-discrimination lay at the heart of the ILO's mandate and has guided the organization for over a century. The ILO should focus attention on anyone seeking equality, refusing invisibility and confronting vulnerability daily. Discrimination, including on the basis of SOGI, remained a barrier to justice and decent work. Structural inequalities restricted access to jobs, wages, training and protection. The ILO's work had impact, for example regarding equal remuneration, maternity protection, inclusion of persons with disabilities, combating forced labour, improving data collection and strengthening national frameworks.

936. **A government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania** recalled that Convention No. 111, ratified by all African Member States, demonstrated Africa's strong commitment to addressing discrimination. Under the Convention, each country retained the sovereign authority to identify and adopt additional grounds of discrimination. Such additions were optional, context-specific and determined at the national level. Discrimination was complex and multifaceted, requiring policy responses firmly aligned with the Convention.

937. **A Government representative of Mexico** noted that discrimination constituted a structural barrier to development and productivity. Mexico reaffirmed its commitment to non-discrimination as a fundamental principle and right at work. Mexico's legislation prohibited discrimination on multiple grounds, including gender, social status, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity. Persistent gaps were affecting women, indigenous peoples, persons with disabilities, LGBT individuals and migrant workers who often had low pay and were present in the informal economy. Strong legal protections, elimination of structural barriers and the promotion of social dialogue were critical. All forms of discrimination at the workplace should be eliminated, including those based on SOGI. States' obligation to adapt their systems to promote and protect human rights in line with the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action were recognized.

938. **A government representative of Spain** stated that the inclusion of the item under discussion reflected a commitment made at the International Labour Conference to combat all forms of discrimination and exclusion on any grounds whatsoever. The efforts to combat discrimination were of an evolving nature, and this evolution could be only addressed by acting according to Convention No. 111. The intersectional approach outlined in the Office document was welcome. Efforts to combat all forms of discrimination should be understood broadly, including also discrimination based on SOGI. The compromise reached at the 2025 Conference should facilitate moving forward in the elimination of discrimination in the world of work on any grounds. Ratification of Conventions and the policy recommendations from the Conference had aided Spain in making progress on equality.

939. **A Government representative of Oman** acknowledged the divergent views on the use of terminology such as SOGI. Convention No. 111 included seven grounds of discrimination and allowed Members to determine additional grounds according to national circumstances. The Convention was flexible enough to allow each country to adopt its own national legislation and policies. There was no consensus at the international level to add further grounds such as SOGI. The Office should continue adopting internationally agreed impartial and objective language. Oman was committed to fighting all forms of discrimination in the world of work and ready to work with the ILO to provide equal opportunities for all.

940. **A Government representative of Nepal** noted that despite global efforts, inequalities and discrimination persisted in the world of work. Social justice remained a distant reality without addressing the root causes of inequalities and discrimination. Nepal's constitution, prohibiting discrimination on any grounds and guaranteeing equality, had integrated gender equality and social inclusion into its laws and policies and ratified Conventions Nos 100 and 111. Nepal was ready to advance though constructive engagement and tripartite consultations.

941. **A Government representative of China** reaffirmed his country's support for the ILO's mission to promote social justice and stressed the importance of eliminating discrimination. Chinese laws prohibited employment discrimination on multiple grounds. Progress had been made in promoting employment equity, gender equality and the protection of migrant workers. Pathways to eliminating discrimination must reflect national practices and conditions and there was no one-size-fits-all standard. When advancing the non-discrimination agenda, the ILO should uphold inclusiveness and flexibility, focusing on common goals such as employment and social protection, while avoiding imposition of concepts not universally agreed. The Office should continue to leverage its expertise. China stood ready to strengthen cooperation with the Office and tripartite constituents from all countries.

942. **A government representative of the Russian Federation** noted that the Office document did not reflect a common approach of all Members since it referred to SOGI as prohibited grounds of discrimination. This risked increasing divergencies. While Convention No. 111 was of universal nature, it did not refer to any specific groups. The determination of additional grounds should be made according to national or regional contexts. The desired results of the discussion could only be achieved through the use of universally agreed terminology in ILO documents.

943. **A Government representative of Colombia** emphasized the centrality of the principle of non-discrimination to the ILO's mandate and reiterated Colombia's constitutional and international commitments to eliminating all forms of discrimination. There was a need to advance substantive equality, inclusion and the recognition of all forms of diversity, preserving wording that reflected the protection of all vulnerable groups. Strengthening legal protection against discrimination and collecting and analysing disaggregated data to support evidence-based policymaking were critical. The ILO's role in providing technical assistance and in generating knowledge was valued.

944. **A Government representative of Tunisia** stressed that non-discrimination was fundamental to the enjoyment of rights and freedoms. The discussion demonstrated the unifying nature of this principle, with all delegations reiterating their commitment to the ILO's mandate in this area. Discrimination remained a complex and evolving phenomenon. Convention No. 111 established globally accepted grounds of discrimination while permitting Members to extend the scope according to national circumstances. Any attempt to highlight or prioritize particular additional grounds risked marginalizing others. The ILO should focus its resources on strengthening national capacities in line with constituents' expressed needs. Universally accepted terms and concepts should be used.

945. **A Government representative of Ethiopia** stated that equality of opportunity and treatment was embedded in the national constitution, labour legislation and development policies, in alignment with Convention No. 111, and guided national development efforts. The ILO's work in this area should remain within the framework of Convention No. 111. Its provisions reflected Members' diverse legal systems, cultures and contexts. The Office should distinguish clearly between compliance with legal obligations and broader policy dialogue. Ethiopia was committed to promoting equality and decent work through practical measures guided by dialogue, cooperation and respect for diversity.

946. **A Government representative of Mozambique** emphasized that non-discrimination was both a legal obligation and a moral imperative, given its profound social and economic consequences. Equality of opportunity formed the cornerstone of inclusive development in Mozambique, with the constitution and labour laws mandating affirmative measures for vulnerable groups. However, challenges persisted, including gender stereotypes, indirect discrimination and insufficient statistical data. Addressing these realities required integrated responses and strong institutions, while respecting national contexts. Distinguishing between binding legal obligations and voluntary national policy choices was important. Technical assistance should respect the parameters of Convention No. 111.

947. **Speaking on behalf of a group of countries**,[11] a Government representative of Spain reaffirmed these countries' commitment to combating all forms of discrimination in the world of work, including discrimination based on SOGI. They believed that the ILO must combat all forms of discrimination in the world of work, including those based on SOGI. Such discrimination affected not only employment but also other dimensions of life. Discrimination distorted labour markets, reduced productivity and hampered innovation. Research demonstrated significant productivity losses attributable to discriminatory practices. Convention No. 111 had identified key grounds of discrimination, while the phenomenon continued to evolve. An increasing number of countries had adopted measures to prevent SOGI-based discrimination. These trends illustrated the emergence of new grounds of discrimination and the need for continued action.

948. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) identified several areas of convergence. There was unanimous and

[11] Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of), Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Uruguay.

unwavering commitment to eliminating discrimination in all its forms and on all its grounds, recognizing that discrimination undermined inclusive, productive and resilient workplaces and societies. Conventions Nos 100 and 111 continued to provide a solid normative framework. Convention No. 111 listed seven grounds of discrimination and allowed Members to determine additional grounds at the national level following consultations with employers' and workers' organizations. Once determined, such additional grounds were subject to ILO supervision. The Office provided technical assistance to constituents only upon request and tailored to their specific challenges. There was broad support for a strengthened focus on the structural dimensions of discrimination and for ensuring effective legal protection in law and in practice, including through strengthened institutions and policies. Delegates had also encouraged further Office work on documenting and disseminating good practices, monitoring trends and collecting relevant data.

949. **The Worker spokesperson** observed that holding this exchange had been the right decision, enabling deeper understanding and clearer identification of areas of convergence and divergence. The Workers' group called for continued work of the ILO to end discrimination for all, including a stronger focus on structural discrimination, and expected the Office to provide technical assistance on all grounds for which constituents request support.

950. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for a well-balanced paper, and all constituents for their contributions, noting the importance of the subject and the diversity of views expressed. Convention No. 111 provided a solid legal foundation from which all constituents could draw inspiration in advancing equality of opportunity and treatment.

Decision

951. **The Governing Body took note of the information provided in document GB.355/POL/2 and requested the Director-General to ensure that the guidance provided during the discussion is taken into account in the work of the Office on the principle of non-discrimination in the world of work.**

(GB.355/POL/2, paragraph 44)

3. Sectoral meetings held in 2025 and proposals for sectoral work in 2026–27 (GB.355/POL/3)

952. **The Employer spokesperson** took note of the discussions during the Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills and Lifelong Learning in the Food and Beverage Industry and the Meeting of Experts to discuss and adopt policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling. Both meetings reaffirmed that achieving decent work and advancing a just transition require an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises, particularly for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, which remain the backbone of most value chains across sectors. He emphasized the importance of policies promoting skills development, innovation and competitiveness amid digital and climate transformations.

953. He took note of the proposed dates, purposes and composition of upcoming sectoral meetings presented in Appendix I of GB.355/POL/3 and recognized that adjustments to the meeting schedule might be required depending on the decisions taken under other agenda items of the Governing Body. He acknowledged the efforts regarding the proposed joint procedural framework for the revision and adoption of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and requested in future Governing Body updates on the progress of the procedure, and requested to ensure the active involvement of the social partners. He expressed support for the proposed amendments to Part B of the FAO/ILO/IMO Code of safety for fishermen and fishing vessels, 2005, noting that it aligned with ongoing efforts to ensure coherence and safety standards across related instruments.

954. Turning to overarching comments, he thanked the Office for the detailed document, particularly the information on follow-up to the conclusions of previous meetings. This underlined that the follow-up demonstrated the ongoing work required long after sectoral meetings are held and the importance of allocating adequate time and resources to implement the outcomes of such conclusions, especially in a context where the ILO sought to improve efficiencies. The Governing Body should be presented with not only a list of activities but also with an assessment of the follow-up of the recommendations, the results achieved, and the synergies created, along with their contributions to institutional capacity-building. He cautioned that selectively implementing tripartite conclusions without embedding them into an integrated strategy could result in an inefficient use of resources.

955. He reiterated concerns regarding the scheduling of meetings as adopted by the Sectoral Advisory Bodies in January 2025 and presented in Appendix II of GB.355/POL/3. He recalled that before the cash flow crisis, the Employers' group had questioned the relevance of planning eight sectoral meetings per biennium, citing the strain such a schedule places on the Organization's time, resources and workload. The scheduling of meetings would need to be re-evaluated in March 2026 in light of other Governing Body discussions and while there were no proposed changes to the draft decision at this stage, he emphasized the need to prioritize sectoral meetings and activities that added tangible value. He concluded by expressing support for the draft decision as presented in GB.355/POL/3.

956. **The Worker spokesperson** reaffirmed that the sectoral approach was one of the strongest pillars of the ILO's mandate, enabling the universal principles of decent work to be translated into concrete responses to the specific realities of each economic sector. Sectoral meetings, guidelines, regional activities and tripartite processes had been essential in fulfilling the ILO's constitutional mandate in sectors that had their own particular characteristics. It was precisely this specificity that justified and made sectoral work indispensable.

957. He welcomed the adoption of the policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling. These were a historic step towards formalizing and dignifying a neglected sector and would be important to promote these guidelines with global and regional technical support. The ILO should work more closely with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Habitat and other agencies to ensure that the concept of decent work was fully integrated in their work. The speaker further welcomed the conclusions adopted by the Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills and Lifelong Learning in the Food and Beverage Industry, as well as those adopted by the Technical Meeting on Decent Work in the Railways Sector. Moreover, he recognized the work of the Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Maritime Commission.

958. The Workers' group fully supported the revision of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and the related proposed joint procedural framework. It was important to ensure that teachers' perspectives were represented at all stages of the review process, fully reflecting the tripartite structure of the ILO, and welcomed the inclusion of four representatives of the Workers' group in the international expert group, noting the need for a substantive delegation with the right to speak at the special intergovernmental conference. The review of the 1966 ILO/UNESCO Recommendation should be accompanied by a strengthening of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the

Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel. It was essential to establish visible and effective monitoring mechanisms to ensure real impact for teachers.

959. The speaker recognized the information provided on follow-up activities and expressed appreciation for the promotion of the code of practice on safety and health in construction and the regional workshop on Africa's Cultural and Creative Economy.

960. He supported the proposed upcoming meetings but regretted that the Meeting of experts to adopt a code of practice on occupational safety and health in aquaculture and the Meeting of experts on the application of the fundamental principles and rights at work in the professional sports sector, as well as on violence and harassment in the world of sport, were on hold. These meetings were of the utmost importance and had been approved by the Governing Body and he hoped they could be held in the first half of 2026.

961. His group was flexible and willing to discuss ways to make sectoral meetings more efficient and financially viable, provided that this did not compromise their technical quality or content.

962. The Workers' group reaffirmed its commitment to the ILO's sectoral programme, particularly in the context of the ILO review. They urged the Office to strengthen sectoral capacity and maintain its current status as a Department. In this respect they requested that the Office convene an extraordinary meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies in January 2026 to discuss the role of the sectoral programme in depth, with a view to providing a strategic vision agreed by the three parties for the Governing Body in March 2026.

963. Sectoral meetings represented an unparalleled opportunity for workers to have direct contact with the ILO through their sectoral trade union organizations. These meetings actively integrated millions of sectoral workers facing unique challenges and risks into the tripartite system, making them part of the ILO's mandate. The sectoral approach represented this Organization's promise of inclusion – that no worker, no matter how remote their sector, would be left outside the reach of social justice. This could not be sacrificed. The speaker supported the point for decision.

964. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Peru thanked the Office for the detailed document. GRULAC valued the outcomes of the Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills and Lifelong Learning in the Food and Beverage Industry, a key sector for the region. The conclusions, particularly those concerning skills development and climate change, were considered valuable for informing public policy. He emphasized the relevance of the policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling, noting the importance of a comprehensive approach to formalization, social protection and just transition, especially in the context of the informal sector's role in recycling across the region. GRULAC acknowledged the work of the Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Maritime Commission, particularly the update of the basic wage, as essential for ensuring fair labour conditions in a strategic sector. He welcomed the sub-regional workshop held in Santiago de Chile on transport and other areas, which would bring tangible benefits to the region. GRULAC also supported the recommendations related to rationalizing activities that enhance connectivity and regional development.

965. Regarding the revision of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966), he expressed support for the proposed framework and emphasized the need for an update to address the current challenges faced by education personnel, including those arising from digitalization, artificial intelligence, and widening social gaps. He took note of the amendments to Part B of the FAO/ILO/IMO Code of safety for fishermen and fishing vessels, 2005, and recommended its adoption as part of broader efforts to ensure occupational safety and health.

966. As for the sectoral programme for 2026–27, GRULAC supported the proposed schedule, particularly its inclusion of sectors relevant to the region, such as manufacturing, retail, the hotel and restaurant sector, private security, water and sanitation services, as well as expert meetings on occupational safety and health in aquaculture, and on decent work in professional sports. Given the financial constraints, the scheduling of meetings would be dependent on decisions by the Governing Body during its session. With these considerations, GRULAC supported the draft decision.

967. **Speaking on behalf of the group of IMEC**, a Government representative of Germany acknowledged the numerous sectoral and technical initiatives undertaken throughout 2025. He notably welcomed the detailed highlights on the follow-up to previous meetings which clearly demonstrated how sectoral dialogue generated tangible progress on decent work across industries.

968. He acknowledged the current financial and institutional constraints and encouraged the Office to pursue innovative and practical approaches to improve the efficiency and impact of sectoral meetings while safeguarding their tripartite character. Concrete measures, to be discussed during the sectoral advisory bodies meeting, would need to be developed to reduce meeting costs, including enhanced pre-meeting virtual consultations to minimize in-person duration, as well as shorter but more impactful documents, and other more flexible meeting formats.

969. He welcomed the successful organization of the Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills and Lifelong Learning, in the Food and Beverage Industry and the Meeting of experts to discuss and adopt policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling, and encouraged the dissemination of the newly adopted policy guidelines. Regarding the Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Maritime Commission, he supported the agreed updates to the ILO minimum wage for able seafarers through 2028.

970. Looking ahead, he supported the planned sectoral meetings for 2026, notably those on artificial intelligence in manufacturing and on occupational safety and health in retail and requested confirmation from the Office regarding meetings currently on hold. Should financial resources remain insufficient, the Office should consult closely with constituents to prioritize meetings for the 2026–27 biennia.

971. He further highlighted the importance of balanced tripartite participation in the joint procedural framework for the revision of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) and supported the proposed amendments to Part B of the FAO/ILO/IMO Code of safety for fishermen and fishing vessels. He welcomed the Office's efforts on data development and the launch of the updated sectoral web pages. IMEC supported the decision point and reaffirmed its commitment to constructive tripartite engagement in shaping the ILO's future sectoral agenda.

972. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** emphasized the importance his country attached to sectoral approaches as a means of advancing decent work. Sectoral meetings offer a valuable platform for in-depth discussion of both normative and non-normative instruments, as well as sector-specific practices, guidelines, policies and strategies. He welcomed the Office's efforts to strengthen sector-specific labour market data, noting that better data would enhance the quality of ILO studies, background reports and future sectoral discussions. He also highlighted the practical value of knowledge products generated through sectoral meetings, including codes of practice, in shaping capacity-building, technical assistance and development cooperation programmes worldwide. In this regard, he encouraged the Office to continue such initiatives when preparing proposals for future work. At the same time, he expressed concern about the feasibility of implementing the proposed work plan and the sectoral and expert meetings listed in Appendix II of GB.355/POL/3, particularly considering continued financial uncertainty.

973. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Sectoral Policies Department) thanked the constituents for their important suggestions and comments and for their constructive engagement with the ILO's sectoral policies work. The feedback that was provided on the reporting of selected highlights from the work of the Office in follow-up to the outcomes of sectoral meetings was invaluable. The highlights were presented and explained; this was done in response to requests by the constituents for information on the implementation of conclusions of sectoral meetings without creating new reporting mechanisms. Through this, the Governing Body would be able to gain insights into sectoral activities beyond the meetings, particularly in the areas of research, advocacy and capacity-building. He was also pleased that constituents found the new ILO web-based sectoral data portal helpful.

974. The ILO's sectoral policies work was cross-cutting and brought together all aspects of the Decent Work Agenda with global, regional and country-level perspectives. It was rooted in more than 70 sectoral Conventions which were currently in force. It allowed the Office to work closely with the constituents on employment, rights and protection in an integrated manner that was rooted in social dialogue.

975. Sectoral meetings involved both ministries of labour and other relevant ministries such as those for transport, fisheries, industries, forestry, which helped enhance synergies and coherence in advancing decent work. He thanked the permanent missions in Geneva, as well as the representatives of ministries of labour, for coordinating and assisting their peers from other line ministries navigate these sectoral meetings. The sectoral work carried out by the ILO with other agencies in the UN system, including the FAO, the IMO, the WHO and UNESCO, was important not only for ensuring policy coherence across the UN system but also for leveraging the capacities of other agencies for cost-efficiency purposes.

976. Referring to the request to make global sectoral meetings more effective and more efficient, the Office had been working on revised meeting modalities that would reduce meeting costs, as well as to make them shorter, sharper and more impactful. The Office would be able to share different options in an ad hoc session of the sectoral advisory bodies, should it be organized in the beginning of 2026. He emphasized that all sectoral meetings had been determined and prioritized through a constituent-led and demand-driven process of the sectoral advisory bodies and had subsequently then been approved by the Governing Body. Due to the financial situation of the Office, some of these meetings had temporarily been put on hold or deferred and GB.355/INS/18 provided further details and proposals for the rescheduling of these meetings, should the availability of resources allow for it.

977. As to the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel and the concerns voiced about its processes, the Office would review these matters once the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) had been revised. He noted that the speed of processes in the Committee was also a function of resources allocated to it.

978. **The Worker spokesperson** looked forward to receiving a proposal to reduce the costs of sectoral meetings as this would help the constituents to not have to reduce the number of meetings that had already been scheduled. He reiterated the importance of retaining a

Department for Sectoral Policies that would continue to carry out its work as it has done for so many years.

979. **The Employer spokesperson** also looked forward to receiving concrete proposals and ideas as to the efficiency and effectiveness of sectoral meetings. The Employers' group would review whether a special meeting of the sectoral advisory bodies would be more convenient at the beginning of 2026 or after the Governing Body session in March 2026 and requested consultations with all concerned to find the right date.

Decision

980. **The Governing Body:**

(a) approved the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the Technical Meeting on the Promotion of Decent Work and a Just Transition, Including Skills and Lifelong Learning in the Food and Beverage Industry, and authorized the Director-General to publish them and the related note on the proceedings;

(b) requested the Director-General to bear in mind the above conclusions and recommendations when drawing up proposals for future work;

(c) approved the policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in recycling and authorized the Director-General to publish them and the related record of the proceedings of the Meeting of Experts;

(d) endorsed the proposal relating to the dates, duration, official title, purpose and composition of the meetings as presented in Appendix I of document GB.355/POL/3;

(e) authorized the Director-General to notify, in accordance with Guideline B2.2.4 of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), the revised amount of the minimum monthly basic pay or wage figure for able seafarers to the Members of the ILO;

(f) approved the convening of the Subcommittee on Wages of Seafarers of the Joint Maritime Commission in the first half of 2028;

(g) endorsed the appointments referred to in section II of document GB.355/POL/3 which will be notified to the Office one month prior to the meeting;

(h) approved the proposed joint procedural framework for the revision and adoption of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers (1966) as set out in paragraphs 34 to 43 of document GB.355/POL/3;

(i) approved the amendments to Part B of the FAO/ILO/IMO Code of safety for fishermen and fishing vessels, 2005, as set out in Appendix IV, with effect from 1 January 2028.

(GB.355/POL/3, paragraph 46)

Development Cooperation Segment

4. Follow-up to the discussion on the enhanced programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories (GB.355/POL/4)

981. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision that had been proposed by the Arab group and circulated by the Office, which read:

> The Governing Body:
>
> (a) noted the information in document GB.355/POL/4 on the progress of the Office's emergency response plan and recovery programme to meet the urgent needs of Palestinian workers and employers and commended the Office's efforts in this respect~~line with the Decent Work Agenda and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus~~;
>
> (b) acknowledged the financial contributions already provided by Member States to the ILO's emergency response plan and recovery programme and called upon other Member States to contribute to ensure the full implementation of the ~~emergency response and recovery~~ programme, in close coordination with ILO constituents, to advance decent work and social justice for all Palestinians;
>
> (c) encouraged all parties, in partnership with the ILO, to prioritize sustainable funding for the Palestinian employment programmes, including the Palestinian Employment Fund as the principal national umbrella for implementing decent work, labour-intensive employment initiatives, and entrepreneurship programmes;
>
> (d~~c~~) welcomed the plan to convene a resource mobilization meeting on the sidelines of the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026);
>
> (e~~d~~) welcomed the ceasefire agreement and requested all parties to work towards peace and stability for an inclusive and sustainable recovery and reconstruction;
>
> (f~~e~~) requested the Director-General to continue providing his good offices to support the rights of Palestinian workers and employers and their access to workplaces, as well as to continue to address long-term priorities as highlighted in several of his annual reports to the International Labour Conference, such as the issue of social security funds and permit system reform;
>
> (g) requested the Office to provide to the Governing Body at its 356th Session an update on the implementation of the ILO's emergency response plan and recovery programme.

982. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States) updated the Governing Body on recent developments related to Palestine. The UN Security Council recently approved a resolution sponsored by the United States to establish a transitional government and an international stabilization force for Gaza, which is expected to support reconstruction and recovery efforts. The UN country team for Palestine held a retreat in Jordan to confirm key elements of the UN plan ahead of the Cairo Conference on 27 November.

983. The Organization was leading a gender-responsive labour market assessment for the West Bank and Gaza to generate real-time data for recovery planning and is preparing a chapter on employment and livelihoods for the rapid damage and needs assessment for Gaza. Additionally, the office of the ILO Representative in Jerusalem was developing a six-month action plan focusing on employment, business recovery, and strengthening the Gaza chambers of commerce and trade unions.

984. She emphasized the urgent need for increased funding to implement these plans and thanked members for their ongoing guidance and support.

985. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Director-General and all members of the Office on behalf of the workers group. He welcomed the fragile ceasefire in Gaza after two years of destruction, noting that while it brings some hope, it remains unstable and insufficient to ensure justice. He emphasized that true recovery must be built on dignified peace, decent work and social justice. Referring to the 2025 UN resolution on a peace plan and international force for Gaza's reconstruction, he expressed support for any initiatives that guarantee peace and protect the rights and working conditions of Palestinian workers.

986. He highlighted the severe economic and labour crisis, including a 30 per cent drop in real GDP, massive job losses in Gaza, widespread unemployment among women, and a sharp reduction in Palestinian employment in Israel with only 35,000 now working, alongside falling wages, reduced working hours, and growing informality.

987. The Workers' group condemned the repression of trade unions, including raids on union offices and the denial of services and salaries to over 200,000 workers, describing these acts as violations of fundamental labour rights. While recognizing the vital role of humanitarian aid, he stressed that it cannot replace social justice or sustainable employment. He called for the restoration of social protection systems, payment of owed wages, freedom of movement for workers, legal and health protections, and full respect for freedom of association. He also urged an end to occupation and colonization, support for international reconstruction efforts including the Cairo meeting, and stronger tripartite cooperation to ensure a just Palestinian labour market.

988. He concluded by reaffirming his group's commitment to a sustainable and just peace based on freedom, equality and workers' rights, urging the ILO to keep Palestinian workers at the centre of its agenda until peace was achieved. His group supported the amendment to the draft decision.

989. **The Employer spokesperson** described the situation in Palestine as exceptionally dire following the conflict that erupted after 7 October 2023, marked by widespread loss, displacement and the collapse of livelihoods. He stressed that the crisis is not only about technical cooperation, but fundamentally about respect for labour rights, human rights and international humanitarian law, without which stability and recovery are impossible. While welcoming the ceasefire, he called for conditions that would allow reconstruction in Gaza to truly begin, noting the importance of the recent UN Security Council resolution aimed at ending the conflict. He thanked the office for its comprehensive report and acknowledged the ILO's emergency and recovery efforts launched since late 2023, emphasizing the indispensable role of ILO, especially for workers and the private sector amid ongoing instability.

990. He highlighted severe economic restrictions, including unprecedented limits on movement, employment, finance and resources, with the prolonged closure of the King Hussein Bridge severely damaging Palestinian trade and the banking sector facing major risks due to disrupted correspondent banking relationships. The West Bank's GDP was reported to have contracted sharply in 2024, erasing decades of economic progress, while long-term structural damage continues through infrastructure destruction, isolation from markets, liquidity shortages and the erosion of human capital.

991. The Employers' group welcomed ILO contributions to the UN Early Recovery Action Plan for 2026–27 and emphasized the need for active involvement of employers' and workers' organizations in its implementation, with the private sector placed at the centre of recovery efforts. He acknowledged the vital role played by Gaza's chambers of commerce in supporting businesses and coordinating recovery, commended the ILO, including ACT/EMP, for its support to the Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture's enterprise support and advocacy unit and its unified information system, and encouraged the ILO to further strengthen its support for these institutions. While recognizing the value of short-term employment programmes that have provided income to over 1,200 workers, he stressed that lasting recovery requires transforming temporary jobs into sustainable employment through enterprise recovery, skills development, financial support, market access and stronger business management capacity. He concluded by supporting the draft decision and the Arab group's amendment, and by affirming the need to continue emergency and recovery programmes, strengthen resource mobilization, and deepen coordination with UN and development partners.

992. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Oman expressed grave concern over the humanitarian and economic impact of the aggression on the West Bank and the Palestinian economy as a whole. The destruction of infrastructure, rising unemployment and declining national output were highlighted as major consequences of the crisis. The Arab group reaffirmed its support for all efforts to strengthen development programmes, partnerships, and emergency response coordination to ensure recovery across affected sectors and improve living standards for Palestinian workers and communities. He welcomed the ceasefire in Gaza and emphasized the need for its full and sustained implementation as a foundation for stability, reconstruction and the restoration of investor confidence, stressing that full recovery requires strong cooperation between the international and local communities. He presented the proposed amendment and called on all partners and Member States to demonstrate solidarity by supporting the Palestinian people under these exceptional circumstances, including through the endorsement of the amendment, to ensure decent work and social protection in the occupied territories.

993. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a government representative of Libya reaffirmed the group's unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people, stressing that support for Palestine is a moral, ethical and legal obligation rooted in the principles of social justice, human dignity and the right to work. She commended the ILO report for clearly documenting the structural collapse of the Palestinian labour market, particularly in Gaza, where unprecedented unemployment and the destruction of educational and vocational infrastructure now threaten an entire generation's skills and future prospects. The Africa group expressed full support for the ILO's emergency response and recovery programme, as well as for Palestine's National Employment Strategy for 2025–27 and the UN Early Recovery Action Plan for 2026–27.

994. She called for expanded international financing, safe access for ILO staff to the occupied territory, strengthened coordination among UN agencies, active participation by Member States in upcoming resource mobilization efforts, and greater prioritization of Palestine within international cooperation frameworks. Emphasizing that the ILO represents not only a technical body but also a moral platform for social justice, she urged the adoption of the amendment without reservation and called for its recommendations to be translated into concrete actions that would tangibly improve the lives of Palestinian workers. Her group supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.

995. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh commended the ILO for its continued support to workers and employers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under extremely difficult conditions. The group expressed deep concern over the severe economic and social impact of the crisis, citing a sharp contraction in real GDP and extremely high unemployment rates in both Gaza and the West Bank, which underline the urgent need to restore livelihoods, education and public services. ASPAG welcomed the ILO's emergency response and recovery programme, which has provided tangible assistance through job creation, community services, support to small businesses and progress on social protection reform through strengthened tripartite dialogue.

996. The group also welcomed the National Employment Strategy for 2025–27 and the ILO's role in the Early Recovery Action Plan for 2026–27, noting their importance for sustainable recovery, employment creation, and institutional capacity-building. He stressed that predictable, multi-year funding will be essential to sustain and expand these efforts. ASPAG supported convening a resource mobilization meeting during the 356th Session of the Governing Body in March 2026 and encouraged Member States, development partners, non-traditional donors and the private sector to contribute actively. He reaffirmed solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for international cooperation to rebuild decent work and social justice. ASPAG supported the draft decision.

997. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Denmark said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Iceland, Norway and Switzerland aligned themselves with her statement. She acknowledged the devastating economic and labour market impacts of the conflict, particularly in Gaza, with spillover effects on the West Bank. She commended the ILO for delivering emergency jobs and strengthening livelihoods and social protection under extremely difficult conditions, and welcomed the evaluation of the Palestine Decent Work Emergency Response and Recovery Programme. She stressed the importance of strong coordination with other UN agencies to avoid duplication and emphasized the need to balance urgent humanitarian action with longer-term recovery, resilience, and decent work strategies.

998. She welcomed the ILO's contribution to the broader UN transition from a humanitarian-led to a Palestinian-led employment and social policy system, and encouraged further integration of gender equality and youth empowerment into recovery efforts. She welcomed the agreement on the first phase of the plan to end the Gaza conflict and called on all parties to fully implement all phases and ensure unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Gaza. The EU reaffirmed its continued support to the Palestinian Authority, including toward its reform efforts and return to Gaza, and highlighted that the EU and its Member States have mobilized €1.7 billion in humanitarian aid since 2023. She urged Israel to release withheld clearance revenues to ensure the functioning of the Palestinian Authority and delivery of essential services.

999. The EU also supported the ILO's role in promoting social protection, employment-intensive investment, skills development and youth employment based on the Gaza rapid damage and needs assessment, and reiterated its readiness to contribute to Gaza's stabilization, recovery and reconstruction. She concluded by reaffirming the EU's commitment to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on the two-State solution in line with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

1000. **Speaking on behalf of the GCC**, a government representative of Qatar reaffirmed the group's unwavering support for the Palestinian people and deplored destructions across the Palestinian territories. She described the ILO report not merely as a technical document but as a painful testimony to the collapse of the Palestinian labour market, citing extremely high unemployment in Gaza and the near-total destruction of schools and universities, which threatens the future of an entire generation. She stressed that severe movement restrictions and checkpoints in the West Bank have made access to work nearly impossible, deepening the crisis. She emphasized that it is not only a humanitarian catastrophe but fundamentally a political crisis rooted in the continued occupation, which makes decent work and sustainable economic recovery unattainable.

1001. The GCC praised the efforts of the ILO and expressed strong support for the recovery plan, stressing that the catastrophic situation requires large-scale and effective intervention. She called for increased support to the Palestinian Authority, particularly to strengthen the social protection system, and urged intensified assistance through relevant funds, including the Kuwait Fund. She also called for enhanced qualitative support to Palestinian social partners, especially trade unions and chambers of commerce, in recognition of their role in supporting economic recovery. She supported the amendment to the draft decision.

1002. A Government representative of Malaysia, **speaking also on behalf of the Governments of Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia**, expressed strong support for the ILO's enhanced programme of development cooperation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and commended the ILO's continued efforts under the third Decent Work Programme for the Occupied Palestinian Territory for the period 2023–25 (DWP), particularly its work to protect livelihoods and promote decent work under extremely difficult conditions. He highlighted the devastating humanitarian and economic consequences of the destruction in Gaza, including widespread job losses, the collapse of essential services and mass displacement.

1003. He welcomed the ILO's emergency response and recovery initiatives, including short-term employment creation, support to small businesses and women-led enterprises, and efforts to strengthen the social protection system, stressing that these measures are vital to restoring dignity and hope for Palestinian workers and their families. He emphasized that the ILO's engagement is not only a humanitarian duty but central to its mandate of promoting social dialogue and protecting workers' rights. He urged the ILO to sustain and, where possible, expand these efforts in close coordination with other UN agencies, donors and development partners. He reaffirmed unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people, support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State based on pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and support for the proposed amendment.

1004. **Speaking on behalf of the countries of the OIC**, a Government representative of Pakistan commended the ILO's continued commitment to promoting decent work, social justice, and recovery for the Palestinian people under exceptionally tragic circumstances. The OIC expressed grave concern over the devastating humanitarian and economic consequences of the prolonged conflict and blockade, particularly in Gaza, citing massive job losses, a sharp decline in GDP, widespread displacement and the destruction of most schools, leaving an entire generation deprived of education and work opportunities. The group stressed that these figures reflect not only a humanitarian catastrophe but a denial of fundamental labour rights.

1005. The OIC reaffirmed that the occupation remains the root cause of the crisis and called for an end to collective punishment, restrictions on movement and the withholding of Palestinian tax revenues, which undermine governance and social protection. While welcoming the ILO's emergency response and recovery achievements, including short-term job creation, wage subsidies and support to women- and youth-led cooperatives, the group emphasized three key priorities going forward: safeguarding and expanding ILO programmes and budgets for Palestine without any reduction, significantly scaling up predictable and flexible funding through international contributions – including at the 2026 resource mobilization meeting – and ensuring that reconstruction is guided by justice, equality and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and dignified work. The OIC fully supported the proposed amendment and a strong call for sustained international solidarity.

1006. **Another Government representative of Bangladesh** expressed deep concern over the massive displacement of the Palestinian population, noting that nearly the entire youth population is now without employment, education or training, placing an entire generation at risk. He highlighted the urgent need to address restrictions on movement caused by gates, checkpoints and settler attacks, and called on the ILO to support Palestinian workers in regaining access to their workplaces inside Israel.

1007. He voiced support for enhanced ILO action to expand decent job creation, business recovery initiatives, women's economic participation, financial inclusion and support for start-ups and cooperatives. He welcomed the ILO's focus on employment-led recovery and the development of a comprehensive labour market information system. He welcomed the planned resource mobilization meeting at the 356th Session of the Governing Body and urged international partners to address critical funding gaps in social protection, employment promotion, business recovery and labour governance. Bangladesh supported a visit by the Director-General to Palestine and endorsed the proposed amendment.

1008. **A Government representative of Iraq** stated that document was a stark depiction of the immense crisis facing the Palestinian people as a result of continued occupation and ongoing violence in Gaza and the West Bank. He highlighted the paralysis of the labour market, with youth unemployment reaching around 80 per cent and severe contraction in economic activity restricting the movement and livelihoods of Palestinian workers. He expressed deep concern that current assistance remains far below the scale of the urgent needs, amid continued destruction of infrastructure, drone strikes, hunger, malnutrition and the near collapse of food services.

1009. He called for the immediate cessation of all hostilities and for urgent humanitarian, medical and nutritional assistance to the Palestinian people, alongside political support to enable the Palestinian government to function effectively. He welcomed the ILO's DWP for providing support to Palestinian workers and called for stronger partnership between the ILO and the State of Palestine to promote human rights, economic progress and social justice. He concluded with a call for a comprehensive recovery plan to address the devastating impacts of the past two years of war and for this to be reflected in upcoming ILO reporting.

1010. **A Government representative of France** reaffirmed the gravity of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, calling for urgent international mobilization. She urged all parties to respect the ceasefire, called for the return of all the remains of the Israeli hostages, and demanded unrestricted humanitarian access to meet the urgent needs of civilians. France noted that the ILO report depicted a dramatic situation in which Palestinian workers and employers in both Gaza and the West Bank are bearing the heavy cost of the crisis, with severe job losses and extremely high rates of youth not in education, employment or training.

1011. France welcomed and encouraged the ILO's continued engagement, in particular the concrete support provided to vulnerable workers, including through decent job creation, capacity-building for Palestinian labour authorities, support for social dialogue and labour law reform in preparation for the "day after". France expressed its support for the draft decision as amended by the Arab group and reaffirmed its full commitment, alongside international partners and its partners in the region, to a just and sustainable peace, based on international law. She concluded by recalling France's formal recognition of the State of Palestine in September, reaffirming its commitment to a two-State solution, living side by side, in peace and security.

1012. **A Government representative of Brazil** expressed deep concern over the extremely dire social and working conditions facing the Palestinian people. He highlighted the near-total collapse of the labour market in Gaza, with unemployment exceeding 80 per cent and youth unemployment approaching 100 per cent, alongside the massive destruction of schools and universities that has denied hundreds of thousands of children access to education. Brazil noted that the narrowing of the gender employment gap reflects not progress but the collapse of job opportunities for men, without corresponding gains for women. While emphasizing the urgent humanitarian needs, Brazil also drew attention to the enormous costs of future recovery and reconstruction in Gaza.

1013. He reaffirmed Brazil's strong commitment to the ILO's third DWP and its emergency response and recovery efforts, underlining the importance of continued technical assistance to the Palestinian government and social partners, with particular attention to reducing gender inequalities and discrimination. He called on all ILO constituents to continue supporting and expanding the Organization's work in response to this humanitarian tragedy. Brazil indicated its readiness to support the draft decision as amended by the Arab group, while requesting clarification on the removal of references to the Decent Work Agenda and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

1014. **A Government representative of Mexico** noted the progress achieved through the third DWP, the emergency response launched in November 2023, and the 2024 recovery programme. Mexico welcomed the ILO's contributions to early recovery within the UN system, including its role in drafting the Early Recovery Action Plan for 2026–27. Mexico highlighted the importance of emergency job creation, support to small and medium-sized enterprises, strengthening cooperatives, and advancing toward a rights-based social protection system, particularly in light of the severe collapse of employment, income loss and mass displacement in Gaza, which disproportionately affect women, youth and vulnerable workers.

1015. Mexico emphasized that decent work, social dialogue and strong tripartite institutions must remain central to recovery and reconstruction and issued a strong call for a permanent ceasefire as a necessary condition for unrestricted humanitarian access, sustainable reconstruction and the protection of human rights. Mexico expressed concern over obstacles facing the operations of United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), reaffirmed its commitment to peace, sustainable development and social justice, and stressed the need for adequate resources to fully implement the ILO recovery programme. Mexico concluded by welcoming the upcoming resource mobilization meeting.

1016. **A Government representative of Spain** highlighted Spain's financial contributions to the ILO's efforts to rebuild the social and economic fabric of Palestine, noting the vast needs in employment, gender equality and related areas. Spain welcomed the release of hostages, the ceasefire and ongoing peace efforts, and reaffirmed its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting peace based on the two-State solution and international law. He called on all parties to respect peace agreements, adhere to international humanitarian law and ensure immediate humanitarian access through the UN system. Spain stressed that emergency assistance to Palestine must remain a priority despite global financial constraints and urged all States to support the emergency response and the Palestinian Authority, including efforts to recover withheld funds. She reaffirmed support for ILO programmes, welcomed the upcoming resource mobilization meeting, and supported the proposed amendment.

1017. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom** expressed support for the proposed way forward, including the amendment introduced by the Arab group, noting that future funding would remain voluntary. She described the situation of the Palestinian labour market as devastating, warning of the risk of a lost generation without jobs, training or economic opportunity, and stressed that a collapsed Palestinian economy is in no one's interest. She called on Israel to release withheld clearance revenues, maintain banking relationships, increase shekel transfers, lift movement restrictions, stop settler violence and renew work permits for West Bank Palestinians.

1018. The United Kingdom reaffirmed its continued technical and financial support to the Palestinian Authority, including £7 million in technical assistance announced in July to strengthen governance, accountability, and civic space, alongside support for institutional reforms. It emphasized the desperate humanitarian situation in Gaza and called for the immediate opening of crossings and unrestricted delivery of aid. The United Kingdom reiterated its commitment to a just and lasting peace based on a two-State solution, called for the release of all hostages, welcomed international support for the Gaza ceasefire agreement, and stressed that Palestinians must be fully involved in reconstruction and economic recovery planning.

1019. **A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** expressed deep concern over the severe humanitarian, economic and labour market crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. He highlighted the sharp drop in GDP, the collapse of employment in Gaza, the displacement of nearly 2 million people, and the near-total destruction of educational institutions as evidence of devastated livelihoods and a generation deprived of education and decent work. The Islamic Republic of Iran condemned the continuation of violence, noting that insecurity is obstructing humanitarian aid delivery and ILO operations, and called for a permanent end to the aggression, the occupation, and movement and access restrictions that are crippling the Palestinian economy.

1020. He reaffirmed the Islamic Republic of Iran's strong support for a Palestinian-led recovery in Gaza under full sovereignty, stressing that despite the enormous costs of reconstruction, inaction would be even more costly. The Islamic Republic of Iran commended the ILO's emergency response and recovery efforts, including short-term job creation and business support, and welcomed the National Employment Strategy for 2025–27, cooperation with the Palestinian Employment Fund and social partners, and initiatives supporting social protection, cooperatives, women entrepreneurs and youth employment. The Islamic Republic of Iran urged the international community to ensure sustained and unhindered humanitarian access, significantly increase financial support through the upcoming resource mobilization process, address severe funding gaps in social assistance programmes, uphold international labour standards, and ensure safe access to workplaces for Palestinian workers and ILO personnel. He reaffirmed solidarity with the Palestinian people and support for proposed amendment.

1021. **A Government representative of Cuba** reaffirmed its strong support for the inclusion of the situation in Gaza and the occupied Arab territories on the Governing Body's agenda, stressing the extreme gravity of the crisis and its devastating impact on civilians and the world of work. Cuba expressed deep concern over the large loss of life and the widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, homes and workplaces, which it described as serious violations of international law, international humanitarian law and the UN Charter. Cuba emphasized that the collapse of the Palestinian labour market, marked by high unemployment, mass dismissals, unpaid wages and severe movement restrictions, constitutes a major obstacle to the fundamental right to work and to economic and social development, with broader implications for regional stability.

1022. Cuba called for guaranteed safe access and protection for ILO staff in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and urged the ILO, in line with its constitutional mandate, to strengthen support to Palestinian tripartite constituents in promoting decent work as a tool for resilience and social justice. Cuba reaffirmed its support for the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, peace and decent work, and urged Member States to support the proposed amendment to the draft decision as an expression of solidarity and commitment to the Organization's fundamental principles.

1023. **A Government representative of the United States** reaffirmed her government's strong commitment to peace and prosperity in the Middle East and welcomed the recent UN Security Council resolution as a concrete path forward for international action. She emphasized the need to end business as usual and embrace the fresh thinking and bold action through which President Trump ended the war in Gaza. She argued that the recurring agenda item at the ILO has become overly politicized and detracted from the Organization's technical mandate. The United States expressed could support the original draft decision, but not the proposed amendment or the continuation of a politicized agenda item at the next session. The United States emphasized that President Trump's peace plan offered a historic opportunity for Gaza and the wider region and called for a new approach to advancing peace and prosperity, including within the ILO.

1024. **A Government representative of China** expressed deep concern over the heavy loss of civilian lives, mass displacement, and the near collapse of economic development and the labour market in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, especially in Gaza. China stressed that achieving a ceasefire and ending hostilities is the most urgent priority, alongside the immediate scaling up of humanitarian assistance and international support for Gaza's reconstruction. China welcomed the ILO's progress report and commended its efforts to strengthen the decent work programme, emergency initiatives, enterprise recovery and social protection for vulnerable groups. China encouraged closer coordination with tripartite partners, UN agencies and regional organizations, innovative financing and long-term measures to strengthen labour market resilience, livelihoods and the fairness and effectiveness of humanitarian action.

1025. **A Government representative of Tunisia** said that the Office document clearly reflected the near-total destruction in Gaza and the devastating impact on infrastructure, livelihoods and life itself. She highlighted that youth unemployment is almost total, with education and training systems effectively destroyed, threatening both current and future generations. While a ceasefire has been reached, Tunisia stressed that insecurity persists and that decent living and working conditions remain unattainable without accountability and social justice. Tunisia called for intensified financial and social support, welcomed the ILO's cooperation with other UN agencies in supporting the Palestinian government, and emphasized the need to move from humanitarian aid toward social justice, self-determination and sustainable recovery. She expressed Tunisia's support to the National Employment Strategy, called for rapid intervention and capacity-building plans, underscored the importance of damage assessment for realistic reconstruction planning, and endorsed the draft decision as amended.

1026. **A Government representative of Colombia** recognized the ILO's efforts to promote recovery, stability and decent work in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Colombia expressed deep concern over the severe socio-economic impact of the occupation, citing a sharp contraction in GDP and dramatic employment losses in both Gaza and the West Bank, which reflect a profound deterioration in living conditions and well-being. Colombia called for renewed negotiations leading to a definitive ceasefire in Gaza, with full respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, particularly for the protection of women and children. He welcomed the diplomatic efforts of the United States, Egypt, Qatar, and Türkiye in mediating a ceasefire agreement, highlighting its importance for the release of hostages and the advancement of peace in the region.

1027. Colombia welcomed the planned resource mobilization meeting in March 2026 as an opportunity to strengthen international cooperation and secure the financial support needed for reconstruction and decent work promotion. He reaffirmed its commitment to multilateral efforts for a peaceful and lasting solution in line with UN principles, reiterated its support for

ILO action in the region, and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people, voicing hope for a permanent ceasefire and meaningful reconstruction that would restore employment and livelihoods.

1028. **A Government representative of Israel**, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with paragraph 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, welcomed the Gaza peace plan put forward by the United States and endorsed by UN Security Council resolution 2803, describing it as a framework aimed at ending the war, securing the release of all hostages, dismantling Hamas's military and governing capacity, and fully demilitarizing and deradicalizing Gaza. Israel stated that only such measures would allow for genuine peace and long-term security for both Israelis and Palestinians and called on regional actors to normalize relations with Israel and join efforts to remove Hamas from the region.

1029. Israel criticized the ILO report and the agenda item as politicized and biased, arguing that it failed to present what a full and balanced picture of the situation on the ground and improperly turned the ILO into a platform for political attacks. Israel accused the Palestinian Authority of bearing responsibility for poor living and working conditions by continuing payments to individuals convicted of attacks and their families, which he said incentivizes violence and undermines prospects for peace. Israel also stated that it has continued to transfer social benefit funds to Palestinian workers and the Palestinian Authority in accordance with bilateral agreements but argued that these resources have not been used to support unemployed Palestinian workers. He concluded by reaffirming Israel's intention to continue acting against any system it views as encouraging attacks against its citizens.

1030. **A Government representative of Jordan** said that the Office document was a clear reflection of the grave realities on the ground, including the sharp contraction of GDP, the collapse of employment in Gaza, the displacement of the Palestinian people and the denial of education to Gaza's children. He emphasized that these are not just statistics but real human tragedies involving children whose rights and futures must be protected through a serious and responsible international response. Jordan acknowledged the significant efforts made by the ILO through its international programmes and emergency response, including support to small and medium-sized enterprises, and stressed that these efforts require sustained financial backing. He underlined the importance of strengthening tripartite capacities, social dialogue, social protection and child protection as part of the rapid response and long-term recovery. He affirmed that rebuilding the economy and labour market was an obligation, not a choice, and fully supported the draft decision, while thanking the Director-General and ILO staff for their work.

1031. **A Government representative of Egypt** thanked the ILO and its Beirut office for the emergency intervention plan and development programmes in the occupied Arab territories, as well as for the DWP. Egypt expressed deep concern over the devastating labour market conditions described in the report, including unemployment in Gaza reaching 80 per cent in 2025, youth unemployment exceeding 60 per cent and the near-total exclusion of young people from employment, education and training due to the collapse of the education system. He stressed that the complete breakdown of economic infrastructure requires large-scale support to the Palestinian economy, particularly for youth and women.

1032. Egypt underscored the importance of maintaining the ceasefire and ensuring comprehensive humanitarian efforts to support reconstruction and improve living conditions in Gaza. He reaffirmed its continued regional and international efforts to support the Palestinian Authority in delivering services and strengthening institutional capacity, and called for the implementation of a reconstruction plan to ensure both humanitarian assistance and sustainable development. Egypt stated that lasting peace, security and stability can only be achieved through the establishment of a Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with Jerusalem as its capital. He concluded by thanking the ILO for its support to essential services, skills development, small and medium-sized enterprises and social protection, and expressed its support for the amended draft decision.

1033. A Government representative of Türkiye expressed appreciation to the ILO and partners for their continued efforts to address the humanitarian and economic crisis in Palestine. She highlighted the near-total collapse of the labour market in Gaza, with unemployment around 80 per cent, widespread displacement and the destruction of schools and universities that has deprived hundreds of thousands of children of education. Türkiye noted that these impacts have also severely disrupted the West Bank economy, leaving Palestine with a dire overall economic outlook after two years of conflict.

1034. Türkiye stressed that Gaza’s reconstruction and financial needs are of utmost urgency and called for immediate reconstruction efforts to restore lives and basic infrastructure. Türkiye reaffirmed its commitment to continue providing humanitarian assistance and to actively participate in recovery and reconstruction. She emphasized the importance of job creation, rebuilding a viable labour market, prioritizing education to avoid a lost generation and strengthening social protection for vulnerable groups. Türkiye strongly endorsed the full implementation of the ILO’s emergency response and recovery programme and supported the proposed amendment.

1035. A Government representative of Saudi Arabia thanked the Office for its continued efforts through the development cooperation programme to support workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, particularly in the West Bank and Gaza. She expressed deep concern over the deterioration of conditions in the occupied Arab territories, noting the collapse of jobs, rising poverty and soaring unemployment. Saudi Arabia urged the ILO to sustain and strengthen its efforts to support Palestinian workers and improve their future prospects. She emphasized the importance of maintaining the ceasefire as a foundation for peace, security, improved working conditions, and better living standards. The Kingdom reaffirmed its steadfast support for the Palestinian people and for the establishment of a Palestinian State on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

1036. A representative of the State of Palestine, authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in keeping with past practice, stated that, after the many interventions already made, the severity of the situation and the facts contained in the report no longer required repetition. He expressed strong appreciation for the statements delivered by workers, employers, regional groups and supporting countries, while firmly rejecting the statement made by Israel. He emphasized that the ILO, the Director-General and the Office, particularly through long-standing cooperation with Palestinian institutions, have consistently sought consensus and avoided politicization, stressing that the report and the Arab group’s statement simply reflect the grave realities and challenges facing Palestinian workers.

1037. He underlined that the situation in Gaza and Palestine remains catastrophic despite the recent ceasefire and UN Security Council action, with massive loss of life, injuries and continued suffering. He called on the ILO and the international community to continue supporting efforts to rebuild the world of work in Palestine, pointing to the severe restrictions on movement, checkpoints and abuses faced daily by Palestinian workers. He concluded by thanking the Director-General and the Office for their continued support and urging them to persist in their efforts to assist Palestinian workers and institutions.

1038. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States) thanked the Governing Body for its strong support and guidance and reaffirmed that the ILO's work in Palestine continues to be guided by the DWP, including the new programme currently being designed for the period 2026–28. She noted that this framework will integrate recovery and early recovery support and is being developed in close coordination with the UN country team. She emphasized that the ILO remains fully committed to supporting its tripartite constituents with all available resources and access, but stressed that significantly increased funding is urgently needed, particularly in light of the broader financial challenges facing the multilateral system and the severe conditions confronting Palestinian workers and employers.

1039. She observed that the messages from Governing Body members were clear and consistent, focusing on rights, access, protection, decent jobs, the central role of the private sector in recovery, institutional strengthening and close coordination with the UN system. She assured members that this guidance will continue to shape the ILO's work and concluded by reaffirming the Office's commitment to delivering dignity, decent work and social justice for Palestinian workers and employers in both the West Bank and Gaza.

1040. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Bangladesh said that ASPAG withdrew its support for the draft decision, noting that some members of the group supported amendments to the draft decision proposed by the Arab group.

1041. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed strong appreciation to the Director-General and Office's teams in Geneva, Beirut and Jerusalem for their continued support in promoting decent work, social protection and social justice in Palestine. The Workers' group welcomed the statements made by other delegations, noting that they had reinforced and encouraged their collaboration with the ILO. He expressed hope for continued close coordination following the upcoming donors' meeting in Cairo and the next session of the Governing Body in Geneva. He reaffirmed full support for the UN Security Council resolution and his group's expectation that the ILO would introduce further modifications to strengthen support for reconstruction and full recovery in Gaza. Such efforts should build on the ILO's past and current recommendations. The Workers' group reaffirmed full support for the Arab group's statement and called on all members to support the amendment to the draft decision.

1042. **A Government representative of the United States** welcomed the broad agreement in the room on the need for peace, reconstruction and the path forward provided by the recent UN Security Council resolution and reiterated that her Government could not support the amendment because it deviated from the agreed path towards peace.

1043. **The Director-General** urged all parties to make an additional effort to reach consensus on the draft decision, recalling that despite tensions since 7 October 2023, consensus had always been achieved in previous sessions, including in November 2023 and March 2024. He expressed concern that, at a moment when there appeared to be a movement towards peace and solutions, failing to reach consensus would be regrettable. He therefore appealed for further consultations among the Arab group, the United States and the social partners to achieve a mutually acceptable outcome.

1044. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized the critical importance of the ILO's work for Palestinian workers, stressing that while steps toward peace at the multilateral level were welcome, peace must also be realized on the ground through access to food, water, security, jobs and functioning enterprises. He highlighted the ILO's specialized mandate in promoting decent work, human rights and labour rights as an essential part of any peace process. His group supported the Director-General's appeal to pursue efforts to reach consensus and underscored the need to fully recognize and preserve the ILO's unique role and tripartite structure in contributing to lasting peace.

1045. **A Government representative of the United States** emphasized that the recent UN Security Council resolution provided a clear and widely supported path forward for peace, and argued that the proposed amendment would not help to make progress. Her government's position did not seek to undermine the ILO's work and suggested that the most practical and balanced way to achieve consensus would be to adopt the draft decision without amendment.

1046. **A Government representative of Hungary** stated that, given the atmosphere surrounding the implementation of the comprehensive peace plan mentioned by the representative of the United States, it did not seem advisable to place the item on the agenda of the next Governing Body session. As a result, Hungary was unable to support the proposed amendment and would prefer the draft decision as originally drafted.

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

1047. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Oman explained that having consulted the other groups and considering his group's concern to preserve the unity of the Organization on the matter, the group proposed to introduce the following subamendments in subparagraphs (d) and (g) of the draft decision:

(d) welcomed the plan to convene a resource mobilization meeting on the sidelines of the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026)<u>, involving development partners, Governing Body members and relevant constituents, with a view to maximizing support for the ILO programme of work in Palestine, and requested the Director-General to reflect the outcome of the meeting in the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General to the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference on "The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories"</u>;

…

(g) <u>requested the Office to provide to the Governing Body at its 356th Session an update **in a report for information** on the implementation of the ILO's emergency response plan and recovery programme</u>.

1048. **A Government representative of the United States** said that she could support subparagraph (d) as subamended, but could not support keeping subparagraph (g), even as subamended.

1049. **A Government representative of South Africa** asked what would be the implications of not requesting an update on progress made on that item at the March 2026 session, as proposed by the United States with the deletion of (g).

1050. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States) explained that in that case the next progress report would be submitted to the Governing Body in November 2026 under the standing item on the development cooperation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

1051. **A Government representative of Hungary** expressed support for the amendment as subamended by the Arab group and the United States and thanked them for their efforts in trying to reach consensus.

1052. **Speaking on behalf of the Arab group**, a Government representative of Oman stated that his group could accept the proposal made by the United States to delete subparagraph (g), to reflect the spirit prevailing in the Arab group and its wish to cooperate with all the other members.

1053. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG, a Government representative of Bangladesh supported the text as subamended and expressed appreciation for the flexibility of the other members, especially the Arab group.

1054. The Worker spokesperson underscored that there are very serious challenges in the region and Palestinian people waiting for support. He understood that the intention behind the revised amendments was to give more emphasis to the work that needed to be done in March with regard to the discussions on funding, rebuilding and reconstruction, which was extremely urgent. The Workers' group emphasized the importance of including the tripartite constituents in any rebuilding effort and called for ensuring that the women in the region, who had been suffering extremely for many years, would properly participate in all those discussions. Her group supported the draft decision as amended.

1055. The Employer spokesperson expressed his group's gratefulness for all the efforts made to reach consensus on such an important matter and supported the draft decision as amended.

Decision

1056. The Governing Body:

(a) noted the information in document GB.355/POL/4 on the progress of the Office's emergency response plan and recovery programme to meet the urgent needs of Palestinian workers and employers and commended the Office's efforts in this respect;

(b) acknowledged the financial contributions already provided by Member States to the ILO's emergency response plan and recovery programme and called upon other Member States to contribute to ensure the full implementation of the programme, in close coordination with ILO constituents, to advance decent work and social justice for all Palestinians;

(c) encouraged all parties, in partnership with the ILO, to prioritize sustainable funding for the Palestinian employment programmes, including the Palestinian Employment Fund as the principal national umbrella for implementing decent work, labour-intensive employment initiatives, and entrepreneurship programmes;

(d) welcomed the plan to convene a resource mobilization meeting on the sidelines of the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March 2026), involving development partners, Governing Body members and relevant constituents, with a view to maximizing support for the ILO programme of work in Palestine, and requested the Director-General to reflect the outcome of the meeting in the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General to the 114th Session of the International Labour Conference on "The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories";

(e) welcomed the ceasefire agreement and requested all parties to work towards peace and stability for an inclusive and sustainable recovery and reconstruction;

(f) requested the Director-General to continue providing his good offices to support the rights of Palestinian workers and employers and their access to workplaces, as well as to continue to address long-term priorities as highlighted in several of his annual reports to the International Labour Conference, such as the issue of social security funds and permit system reform.

(GB.355/POL/4, paragraph 33, as amended by the Governing Body)

▶ Legal Issues and International Labour Standards Section

Legal Issues Segment

1. Proposal for the streamlining of reporting on ratified Conventions under article 22 of the ILO Constitution through the progressive roll-out of thematic implementation reports (GB.355/LILS/1)

1057. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the streamlining of regular reporting under article 22 had been a major component of the Standards Initiative since its launch in 2013. His group supported the proposed modernization. A concern remained that streamlining and simplification could have a serious impact on the quality of reports and on the effective supervision of international labour standards. Regarding the thematic implementation reports (TIRs), he asked about the way social partners would submit their comments in the new system. A close review and further work were needed on the draft TIR templates to align them with the report forms. His group would provide their comments on those drafts. Resources would be needed for ILO technical assistance to support the proposed modernization. He asked whether prefilling of the TIRs would be an ongoing service. His group supported maintaining the current reporting cycle for groups that contain fundamental Conventions and adopting a unified reporting cycle of three years for the labour administration and labour inspection group. Regarding the transitional measures, his group supported option 2. Regarding the accessibility of information, his group supported option 2. Article 23 reports needed to remain confidential, as workers could be at risk in some cases. The use of AI for the supervision of international labour standards should be discouraged.

1058. **The Employer spokesperson** said that streamlining reporting by modernizing the system would facilitate ILO constituents' engagement with the supervisory bodies, ease the reporting burden on Member States, ensure effective and meaningful supervision of international labour standards and promote greater consistency and transparency across the ILO supervisory system. The proposed thematic grouping would allow governments to provide a holistic overview of how related instruments are applied in practice, enhancing the legibility and coherence of reports while promoting a more strategic understanding of implementation challenges and good practices in each thematic area. Regarding the preliminary draft of the 15 TIR templates, his group would provide practical comments and suggestions. His group agreed that the initial evaluation after the first year of implementation would provide a valuable opportunity to draw lessons from the first round of TIRs. He requested clarity on the scale of resources required, the envisaged funding source and the contingency measures in place if the necessary funds did not materialize. Targeted technical assistance would be essential to ensure an effective transition. The reference in paragraph 23 to support being provided upon the availability of sufficient resources was a concern. His group supported a five-year cycle for all the Conventions, including the labour inspection and labour administration group. With regard to accessibility of the information, his group supported option 1. The purpose of the system was to encourage transparency and peer learning. If there was any information to be regarded as confidential, that should be based on clear pre-established criteria.

1059. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group** a Government representative of Ethiopia said that his group recognized the importance of modernizing and improving the reporting system to ensure that the ILO supervisory mechanisms remained efficient and effective. Any change must reduce the reporting burden, encourage ratification, strengthen compliance and reinforce national reporting capacities particularly for countries with limited human and technical resources. His group supported subparagraphs (a) to (c) of the draft decision, as well as the proposed unified five-year cycle for groups containing fundamental Conventions and four-year cycle for labour inspection and labour administration. Regarding the transitional measures for 2026, his group supported option 1 to reduce the workload for both Member States and the Office and ensure adequate time for preparation and training for the new reporting system. Regarding accessibility of information, while confidentiality remained essential, there was value in promoting peer learning through the publication of the TIRs. His group supported option 2 where information would initially be accessible only to governments following examination by the Committee of Experts (CEACR). Continued reflection on how the ILO can progressively enhance openness while respecting confidentiality requirements, in line with practices applied by other UN agencies, was encouraged. He requested clarifications from the Office on how the outcomes of national tripartite consultations conducted in accordance with the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), would be reflected in the new online reporting system. He also requested clarifications on the format and accessibility of the planned training and technical assistance to Member States.

1060. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the progressive roll-out approach, balanced reporting schedule and transitional measures for 2026. His group supported the overall direction of the reform, with several critical implementation matters needing to be addressed. His group's support for subparagraph (a) of the draft decision was conditional on the Office's commitment to work with the CEACR to develop guidelines promoting clearer and more action-oriented observations to facilitate Government's responses. It was also conditional on the understanding that the Office would prefill the TIRs based on previously submitted reports, with priority to countries with limited administrative capacity. That technical assistance had to be adequately resourced through the regular budget. A specific resource-allocation plan should be presented as part of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2028–29. In relation to accessibility of information, his group supported option 2, as a more cautious first step, and requested the Office to develop, in consultation with the constituents for approval at the March 2027 session of the Governing Body, detailed guidelines covering criteria for determining what information may be designated as restricted. Any expansion to public access would require approval by the Governing Body following comprehensive evaluation. An alternative would be for the ILO to conduct research to draw lessons learned and produce anonymized analytical reports which could be published. The Office should explore the feasibility of this complementary approach for consideration as part of the 2028 evaluation. The reform's evaluation framework should include specific quantitative and quality indicators, such as measurable reduction in reporting burden, completeness and coherence of reports, user experience, technical performance, impact on the workload and outputs of the CEACR and peer leaning benefits. Funding for the platform development should be secured from Part I of the Programme and Budget for 2026–27. His group welcomed the opportunity to engage in the implementation phase, including in the platform development. His group supported maintaining the current reporting cycle and strongly supported limiting 2026 reports (option 1).

1061. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Paraguay said the proposed modernization was a positive step. The new system would ensure greater coherence and facilitate peer learning. The new web application would be a valuable tool to automate the compilation of information. It was important to promote greater transparency and accessibility of information and to disseminate good practices, bearing in mind national particularities and confidentiality requirements. She requested clarification on the cost of development of the IT tools and on the resources that would be necessary to provide technical assistance to governments. In relation to the draft decision, her group supported maintaining the current reporting cycle for the groups containing fundamental Conventions and adopting a four-year unified cycle for the labour inspection and labour administration group. Regarding subparagraph (f), her group supported option 1. Regarding subparagraph (g), her group supported the first option under which TIRs would become publicly accessible through the new online application, after examination by the CEACR, with the possibility that governments would have the option of designating specific information as restricted.

1062. Speaking on behalf of IMEC, a Government representative of Canada welcomed the ILO's continued efforts to streamline the reporting system under article 22. This was an essential course of action to boost the ratification of Conventions and ensure compliance with the resulting obligations. The reporting workload remained high and unevenly distributed across the years. It was therefore essential to identify solutions promptly, while ensuring that the reforms were implemented in an appropriate, structured and gradual manner. IMEC would like to be consulted in an inclusive process before the TIR templates would be finalized. The templates should be as simple and functional as possible, ensuring that the content is concise. While supporting the proposed progressive roll-out for 2027 to 2034 as set out in Appendix III, table 1, IMEC remained concerned about the high number of Conventions in the thematic group on occupational safety and health. It may be worth considering whether the technical Convention in this group could be divided. The title of the group with non-discrimination Conventions should be revised to elimination of discrimination and of violence and harassment. The Office should continue to prioritize simplicity, reliability and accessibility in the design of the online application and ensure inclusive consultations. Regarding the cost of developing that tool, IMEC remained concerned by the scale of the amount foreseen and requested clarification on whether expected efficiency gains had been estimated and whether the amount of US$700,000 was available. IMEC requested information on the form of the planned training activities and suggested that they include practical examples and best practices to support governments in completing the new forms. IMEC was particularly concerned about the scale of work for governments associated with the initial TIRs and that the Office would only provide prefilled reports upon request and subject to available resources. IMEC urged the Office to dedicate all available resources to help governments complete the initial TIR templates. IMEC preferred maintaining the current reporting cycle for the five groups containing fundamental Conventions, while being open to learning more about the potential benefits and drawbacks of a unified five-year cycle. The primary consideration was that the chosen approach should reduce the reporting burden on governments and facilitate a more balanced distribution of reporting obligations while ensuring effective and meaningful supervision. Concerning the labour inspection and labour administration group, IMEC would prefer to maintain the existing reporting cycle of three and six years. Concerning the transitional measures, IMEC strongly supported option 1 as it would ease the workload linked to completing the new TIRs while still ensuring the preparation of essential reports including first reports. Finally, regarding accessibility of information submitted in the reports, IMEC welcomed the opportunity to enhance peer learning and preferred option 2. IMEC requested clarification on whether comments made by the social partners as well as the government's responses would be published and whether governments may freely determine what information should be considered restricted.

1063. Speaking on behalf of ASEAN, a Government representative of Brunei Darussalam welcomed the introduction of TIRs and an online platform, while supporting the suggested gradual implementation and sensitivity to differing national capacities. His group supported the progressive roll-out of the new system beginning in 2027. The transition to thematic reporting represented a significant shift, calling for strong, timely, and practical technical assistance to accompany governments, including tailored training to constituents, updated guidance materials and prefilling of the first TIR based on previously submitted information. ASEAN supported maintaining the current reporting cycle to ensure continuity and safeguard the prominent status of fundamental and governance Conventions. ASEAN supported option 1 which limits reporting in 2026 to urgent mandatory and priority reports. ASEAN also recognized the concerns raised regarding the complexity and length of the CEACR observations. As the reporting system would become more streamlined, it would be equally important for supervisory feedback to be clear, focused and practical. This would support Member States in engaging meaningfully with the supervisory process and strengthening compliance.

1064. **Speaking on behalf of the GCC**, a Government representative of Qatar said his group agreed with the proposal to modernize and streamline the reporting system through the adoption of thematic reports. This would improve the quality of the reports and contribute to promoting decent work. Having an overall view of the situation would be more helpful than getting too focused on details. His group supported the proposed unified cycles under subparagraphs (d) and (e) of the draft decision, as well as option 2 under subparagraph (g). Technical assistance was essential to support governments in the implementation of the new system.

1065. **A Government representative of India** welcomed the proposal to reduce duplication and reporting fatigue, thereby strengthening engagement and effectiveness. The streamlined approach would enhance clarity, minimize duplication and provide a holistic view of national implementation. This would foster an integrated understanding of national policy frameworks and enable cross-cutting analysis of progress across related Conventions. India supported the progressive roll-out of the TIRs, allowing adequate time for preparation and adaptation to the modernized reporting mechanism. This phased approach would also facilitate experience sharing and encourage broader participation among Member States. While being flexible on that point, India preferred a unified five-year cycle for the thematic groups containing fundamental Conventions. The reform needed to be complemented by strong capacity-building, targeted technical assistance and sustained peer learning. Regarding accessibility of information, combining accountability with respect for national sensitivities would best address the shared goal of strengthening compliances and mutual trust.

1066. **A Government representative of Malaysia** welcomed the reform as a significant step towards reinforcing the supervisory system while modernizing the reporting framework to enhance Member State engagement, promote peer learning and improve access to information and compliant national laws, regulations and policies. Malaysia supported maintaining the current reporting cycle to ensure continuity and predictability for Member States. With regard to accessibility, Malaysia agreed that as an initial step, information submitted through the TIR should be accessible only to other governments after examination by the CEACR. That approach provided necessary safeguards for sensitive national information while allowing Member States adequate time to adapt to the new system with the option to designate specific information as restricted. While supporting the overall direction of the reform, Malaysia considered it timely for the ILO to re-examine the situation of countries that had inherited Conventions ratified during the colonial period or prior to independence. Some obligations arising from those instruments no longer reflected present-day realities. Although the TIR prototype was a positive development, it also created substantial administrative constraints and ILO technical assistance would be essential to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.

1067. **A Government representative of China** said his country had concerns regarding the accessibility of information provided by governments in the TIRs beyond the CEACR. That information is not intended for public disclosure. It is solely for the use of the ILO supervisory bodies. Making the TIRs public could lead to interference and potentially affect objective and impartial assessment of Member States' compliance. Information provided in the TIRs would be interconnected and form a logical whole. Processing parts of it separately could compromise integrity and coherence leading to ambiguities and misunderstandings. The proposal for the Office to summarize and publicly share the good practices identified in the TIRs of various Member States to facilitate mutual understanding was interesting. China proposed to postpone the decision on subparagraph (g) to March 2026.

1068. **A Government representative of Cuba** supported the proposed modernized system based on thematic reporting. Given the country's high number of ratifications, implementing the new system would mean there would have to be greater internal consultations and more detailed reports. At the same time, the number of reports would be reduced. Cuba supported maintaining the current reporting cycle for groups with fundamental Conventions and adopting a unified four-year cycle for the labour inspection and labour administration group. Accessibility of information in the TIRs should be based on an option that would guarantee responsible handling of information and strengthen the credibility of the ILO supervisory system.

1069. **A Government representative of Uruguay** supported the processes to make reporting under article 22 more flexible. Uruguay supported maintaining the current reporting cycle for groups with fundamental Conventions. Increasing the cycle on the fundamental principles and rights at work could lead to more complaints being raised in the intervals. Uruguay supported a four-year cycle for the labour inspection and labour administration group, as well as option 1 for the 2026 reporting obligations.

1070. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** supported gradual transformation of the reporting system with enhanced ILO technical assistance for countries in need. Prefilling the initial TIRs was essential. Simplification of reports should be accompanied by simplification of the CEACR comments. The confidentiality of the information and updates provided by the Member States was of great importance as such information could be misinterpreted when presented out of the context. Bangladesh remained flexible on the reporting cycle. The capacity constraints in some countries needed to be taken into account and technical assistance had to be available. Bangladesh supported very limited reporting in 2026 as a transition year.

1071. **A Government representative of Jordan** supported the general approach to increase effectiveness and move to thematic reports. There was need for technical assistance to attain the reform's objectives. Option 2 under subparagraph (g) reflects a balanced approach, making it easier to get access to information while guaranteeing confidentiality. An assessment should be done in 2028.

1072. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) welcomed the strong support for the proposed modernization at a time when the ILO is asked to be more efficient and impactful. Regarding the question on estimated efficiency gains, there were many to be expected, including administrative efficiency gains through simplified and streamlined reporting, notably for those Member States that have a high number of ratifications, or efficiency gained related to the improved quality of the dialogue between Member States and the supervisory system. A broader efficiency gain is to ensure that the supervisory system delivers impactful recommendations to Member States.

Regarding the ability of the social partners to submit their comments directly to the CEACR, there would be no changes. If information related to the outcome of the national social dialogue on the preparation of the reports is contained in the TIR, it would be fully taken into account by the Committee of Experts as was currently the case. Regarding the draft TIR templates which had been made available online, suggestions and comments should be provided to the Office by mid-January if possible. Regarding resources, the modernization would be receiving top priority within the Office. The budget to cover the new platform was a one-off investment, required to reach the efficiency gains expected. This was in line with the strong demand for increased efficiency of this normative organization. Regarding technical assistance, support for the implementation of the reform would be a cross-Office effort, both from headquarters and from the field. At the same time, the Office was not in position to commit to prefilling all TIRs for all governments. Beyond prefilling the TIRs, the technical assistance envisaged would include preparing relevant training material and guidelines on how to fill the TIRs and organizing regional, subregional or individual webinars for interested governments and the social partners where required, in cooperation with the International Training Centre of the ILO. Upon request, the Office would also help governments retrieve previous reports. The possibility of having regional/subregional focal points within governments who could provide peer-to-peer support to other governments with less experience or capacity had also been mentioned. It was also important to note that in many cases information was already readily available, such as that compiled during the baselines project over 2019–2023, regarding Conventions on occupational safety and health, wages and working time, and that contained in reports on the more recent Conventions which have a modern report form (for example, the MLC, 2006). Some governments will have the capacity and/or will prefer to prepare the TIR without support by the Office. The Office would also engage with the CEACR to convey comments made on the need to simplify their comments. Governments were also invited to join the annual information session with the CEACR to convey their views directly to the experts. On the development of detailed implementation guidance, the Office would ensure the necessary consultations, but did not consider that coming back to the Governing Body would be required. The Office would also engage with interested delegations in the development of the IT platform.

Decision

1073. The Governing Body:

(a) approved the implementation and progressive roll-out of the thematic reporting system as described in paragraphs 5–23 of document GB.355/LILS/1;

(b) approved the thematic implementation report prototype presented in Appendix II of document GB.355/LILS/1;

(c) decided that the corresponding IT costs, as presented in paragraph 19 of document GB.355/LILS/1, which are estimated at US$700,000, would be financed in the first instance from Part I of the Programme and Budget for 2026–27 or, failing that, through the use of the provision for unforeseen expenditure, in Part II;

(d) regarding the reporting cycle for the five groups containing fundamental Conventions (paragraph 25 of document GB.355/LILS/1), decided to maintain the current reporting cycle, with a system of partial reporting (every three years) alternating with full reporting (every six years);

(e) in relation to the labour inspection and labour administration group, decided to adopt a unified cycle of four years;

(f) regarding the transitional measures in 2026, decided to implement option 1, as detailed in paragraph 29 of document GB.355/LILS/1;

(g) regarding accessibility of information submitted in the TIR (paragraph 34 of document GB.355/LILS/1), decided that, as a first step, subject to future evaluation and review by the Governing Body, information submitted by governments in the TIR would only be accessible to other governments, after examination by the CEACR (via the new online application). Governments would have the possibility of designating specific information as "restricted", in which case it would not be made accessible to other governments.

(GB.355/LILS/1, paragraph 37)

2. Report of the fifth meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee established under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (Geneva, 7–11 April 2025) (GB.355/LILS/2)

1074. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to subparagraph (g) of the draft decision proposed by the Employers' group that had been circulated by the Office and read:

> (g) adopted the amendments related to the addition of a new Article 3 *bis*; Article 4, paragraph 4; Article 6, paragraphs 2 and 4, in the Standing Orders of the STC as proposed in the appendix to document GB.355/LILS/2, and referred the amendments proposed to paragraph 10 of the Introductory Note to the STC for further consideration;

1075. The Employer spokesperson took note of the report of the Chairperson of the fifth Meeting of the Special Tripartite Committee (STC) of the MLC, 2006, as well as the resolutions adopted. His group supported the resolution extending the mandate of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group (JTWG) and the amendment to paragraph 19 of its terms of reference. It also endorsed the convening of the JTWG meetings to address seafarers' issues, particularly hours of work, stressing they needed to fully take into account the organizations' financial constraints. In this regard, they supported that meeting costs in 2026 and 2027 be covered first through budgetary savings or, if necessary, alternative financial proposals. His group welcomed continued ILO/IMO cooperation and supported paragraph (f) of the draft decision, since communicating tripartite decisions to non-tripartite international organizations was essential to preserving the integrity of tripartism and balanced representation. His group also supported the reappointment of Mr Martin Marini as Chairperson of the STC, the convening of the sixth meeting of the STC in April 2028 and the corresponding budget provision. Such planning should remain aligned with the Governing Body's overall approach, taking into account current financial constraints and decisions affecting the scheduling and prioritization of meetings

1076. Concerning the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC, his group supported the amendments related to the addition of the new article 3 *bis*, article 4, paragraph 4, article 6, paragraphs 2 and 4 of the Standing Orders of the STC. Following constructive discussion with the Workers' group and having reached a common understanding of its scope and implications, his group had proposed to refer the proposed amendment of paragraph 10 of the introductory note back to the STC for further consideration. That related to the employers' and workers' secretariats and sought to avoid inconsistency with the Standing Orders of the Governing Body or any limitation on the autonomy of his group. As it concerned only social partner arrangements, he trusted that the proposed amendment to the draft decision would receive the support of the Government group.

1077. **The Worker spokesperson** took note of the report of the Chairperson of the STC and the decisions adopted. The STC had considered 16 amendment proposals to the Code of the MLC, 2006, and, after constructive discussion, had adopted seven amendments by majority. Such amendments addressed key issues for seafarers, such as repatriation, the right to shore leave and access to welfare facilities, the recognition of seafarers as key workers, medical care and protection against violence and harassment. Five issues had been withdrawn, and no consensus was achieved regarding the maximum period of service on board. The amendments had been adopted by broad majority at the International Labour Conference in June of the current year and were expected to enter into force on 23 December 2027. The STC had also appointed its officials for 2025–28 and confirmed the re-election of Mr Martin Marini as Chairperson. The sixth meeting of the STC was scheduled on 3–7 April 2028. Therefore, an appropriate provision should be included in the draft Programme and Budget for 2028–29.

1078. The STC had also adopted four resolutions that the workers fully supported. The first recommended the Governing Body to approve the extension of the duration of the JTWG, as well as to liaise with the IMO in order to convene meetings of the JTWG to conduct a final review of the report of the Task Force to review and update the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers. The second resolution recommends that the Governing Body support the request of the STC to convene a meeting on hours of work and rest in line with the terms of reference included in the resolution, and that the Director-General coordinate with the IMO Secretary-General to submit the resolution to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee. The third resolution relates to recognition of seafarers as key workers, and the fourth recommends that the Governing Body instructs the Director-General to coordinate with the Secretary-General of the IMO to submit the resolution to the IMO Facilitation Committee for consideration and action, as appropriate.

1079. The Workers' group supported the proposed amendment of the STC Standing Orders in relation to the addition of new article 3 *bis*, article 4, paragraph 4, article 6, paragraphs 2 and 4; they agreed that the proposed amendment to paragraph 10 of the introductory note required further examination by the STC. In conclusion, the group supported the decision point together with the amendment proposed by the employers in paragraph 35(g).

1080. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of South Africa expressed profound appreciation for the outstanding work of the STC at its fifth meeting, which was a powerful testament to the enduring strength and relevance of the MLC, 2006, as the cornerstone of seafarers' rights and an essential instrument for ensuring a level playing field in the global shipping industry. His group commended the constructive, high-level tripartite discussions that characterized the meeting which led to the adoption of seven significant and substantive amendments to the Code of the Convention, which addressed critical and timely issues. They welcomed the amendments that strengthened provisions on repatriation, ensuring it was free from discrimination and clearly defining the costs to be borne by shipowners. His group strongly supported the explicit formal recognition of seafarers as key workers, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was a crucial step to safeguard their mobility and access to medical care. Furthermore, they applauded the landmark amendments aimed at the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment, including sexual harassment and bullying on board ships. By mandating laws and measures in line with the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), the MLC, 2006, demonstrated its capacity to evolve and confront the most pressing challenges in the world of work, ensuring a safe and dignified environment for all seafarers. Beyond setting minimum working and living standards for all seafarers, the MLC, 2006, remained the most adaptable instrument within the Organization. In a changing ILO and an evolving world of work, it served as a dynamic model for the future and could help reconcile differences in the standards review process, ensuring that the ILO maintained a clear, robust and up-to-date body of international labour standards that both protected workers and supported sustainable enterprises. His group looked forward to the effective implementation of the new provisions and pledged its continued collaboration in that tripartite process.

1081. He further indicated that his group fully supported the extension of the mandate of the JTWG and the decision to convene a meeting on hours of work and rest. The continued collaboration between the ILO and the IMO was essential for a coherent and effective regulatory framework for the maritime sector. His group also took note of the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC. The establishment of a clear procedure for filling vacancies and most importantly, the mechanism to convene extraordinary meetings to address urgent matters were wise and necessary reforms to ensure the Convention remained responsive in times of global crisis. Finally, his group supported the reappointment of the Chairperson, Mr Martin Marini, and endorsed the draft decision without reservation.

1082. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, a Government representative of Peru commended the report presented by the STC and recognized the technical and rigorous tripartite work carried out during the fifth meeting held in April 2025, as well as the effective conduct of the discussions reaching significant consensus on international labour standards in the maritime sector. It was important to emphasize that the STC meeting had been attended by more than 400 delegates, of which 36 per cent were women, which demonstrated the inclusive and representative nature of this normative process. Seven amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006, had been approved by the International Labour Conference at its last session in June. Such amendments substantially strengthened seafarers' protection through provisions, inter alia, on non-discrimination, facilitation of repatriation and shore leave, welfare, medical care, and prevention of violence and harassment. There was support for the four resolutions adopted by the STC, which include: the extension of the mandate of the JTWG; the convening of a meeting of the JTWG to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element on hours of work and hours of rest; the recognition of seafarers as key workers; and the review of the amendments to the IMO Convention on the Facilitation of International Marine Traffic, 1965, as amended, to reflect amendments on shore leave to the MLC, 2006. Amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC were also acknowledged. Such changes modernized the functioning of the STC and reflected lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. GRULAC supported the reappointment of Mr Marini as Chairperson of the STC recognizing his technical leadership and his commitment to tripartism. Considering that the sixth meeting of the STC was scheduled in April 2028, adequate resources were required for that meeting. In this context, GRULAC reaffirmed its commitment to the effective implementation of the MLC, 2006, and to improved standards for maritime workers. It encouraged the STC and the Office to continue their work and reiterated its commitment to the well-being of seafarers, whose work is essential for world trade and economic stability.

1083. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, a Government representative of Denmark said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, aligned themselves with the statement. She commended the work of the STC, which had an ambitious agenda with 16 proposed amendments to consider in relation to the MLC, 2006, which remained the cornerstone of the protection of seafarers' rights. The meeting had once again demonstrated the quality of tripartite dialogue in the maritime sector. She welcomed that following the STC, the ILC had approved seven amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006, by an overwhelming majority. She welcomed in particular the seventh set of amendments, which aimed to ensure that seafarers were effectively protected against violence and harassment on board, including sexual harassment, bullying and sexual assault. Those amendments were of great importance for improving the living and working conditions of seafarers on board ships. She regretted that the amendment proposed by the EU and its Member States on the maximum period of service on board had not achieved sufficient support to be adopted. They continued to believe that the issue was of great importance and should be duly reflected in the text of the MLC, 2006. She also welcomed the adoption by the STC of four resolutions, in particular on the recognition of seafarers as key workers and their indispensable contribution to global commerce and on requesting that the issue of hours of work and hours of rest be considered by the JTWG. While supporting the decisions made by the STC, she expressed concern regarding the financial implications of the extension of the mandate and the convening of two meetings of the JTWG and requested clarifications from the Office on how the current financial situation would be taken into account in this regard. Concerning the proposals to amend the Standing Orders of the STC, while understanding the need for more flexibility to ensure the STC could carry on its work properly if Officers leave their positions between meetings, as well as in case extraordinary meetings had to be convened to address urgent matters, she recalled that any extraordinary meeting should be held in full respect of the principle of multilingualism, which underpinned multilateralism. With that, they supported the decision point as amended by the Employers' group.

1084. **A Government representative of the United States** considered that the work of the STC was important and noted the report of the Chairperson. More information on some of the amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC was needed, and he was concerned that the proposed process for organizing extraordinary meetings of the STC would not require Governing Body approval. He welcomed clarification from the Office on whether other ILO meetings could be organized through a similar process, on the financial implications of such extraordinary meetings and on the measures the Office could take to minimize those implications.

1085. **A Government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania** aligned himself with the statement delivered by South Africa on behalf of the Africa Group and commended the Office for the preparation of the comprehensive Document GB.355/LILS/2, containing the report of the fifth meeting of the STC. He welcomed the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC, recognizing that enabling the STC to fill vacancies between formal sessions was vital for ensuring continuity, operational efficiency and legal certainty in the Committee's mandate and functioning. His country was actively implementing the MLC, 2006, and underscored the importance of stable, predictable, and well-structured governance mechanisms within the STC. He acknowledged the merit of the proposal to empower the STC to convene extraordinary meetings in response to urgent global developments. Establishing a formal framework for such exceptional sessions aimed at providing timely guidance and coordinated responses, without amending the Code, would significantly strengthen the capacity of all tripartite constituents to safeguard the rights and welfare of seafarers. He indicated that his country's support for those amendments was grounded in their ongoing efforts to implement the Convention by strengthening national legislation and inspection systems to address the evolving needs of the maritime workforce and to improve the working and living conditions of seafarers through close collaboration with national tripartite stakeholders, including seafarers' and shipowners' associations. By endorsing the proposed amendments, his country reaffirmed their commitment to effective tripartite cooperation and to the promotion of high labour standards for seafarers, both domestically and within the wider global maritime community. In conclusion, he supported the draft decision contained in paragraph 35, and in particular paragraph 35(b). That decision was of strategic importance to the advancement of the Blue Economy agenda in his country, in line with his Government's ambition to position the ports of Dar es Salaam, Tanga, Bagamoyo and Zanzibar as competitive logistical hubs for the East and Central African region.

1086. **A Government representative of Colombia** indicated that, as a country with strategic infrastructure for foreign trade, the maritime sector for Colombia is fundamental for socio-economic development. The changes under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and the future ratification of the MLC, 2006, are very important steps to guarantee the rights of seafarers and promote decent work. In September, in the framework of the Standing Committee on Wage and Labour Policy Coordination, tripartite consultations had been carried out in relation to the possible ratification of the MLC, 2006, leading to a positive outcome. The next step includes the adoption of the law of ratification of the Convention by Congress (which bill is currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The ratification of the MLC, 2006, was of strategic importance for Colombia, as it would enable the country to increase competitiveness in the maritime sector and ensure decent, safe and healthy working conditions for seafarers. That represented important progress, which would allow the harmonization of national legislation with ILO standards, at the same time reinforcing Colombia's commitment to decent work, social protection, compliance with the human and labour rights of seafarers, and effective implementation of the relevant instruments. Colombia reaffirmed its motivation to continue strengthening cooperation with ILO multilateral bodies and to move towards consolidating policies that guarantee the protection, well-being and dignity of all seafarers. That process was the fruit of the close cooperation of the country with the ILO International Labour Standards department, which he thanked.

1087. **A Government representative of Oman** expressed appreciation to the Office for preparing the document related to the report of the fifth meeting of the STC. His Government valued the work carried out by the STC and its adoption of seven new amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006. In this context, Oman continued its efforts to strengthen legislative frameworks and maritime inspection mechanisms, in coordination with the relevant authorities, to protect seafarers, regulate hours of work and rest, and improve procedures for repatriation and medical care, in line with the provisions of the MLC, 2006. He welcomed the conclusions related to the ILO/IMO JTWG and supported the proposed amendments to the Standing Orders of the STC, while emphasizing the importance of strengthening technical support for countries and providing guidance materials in Arabic to facilitate the implementation of the new amendments. In conclusion, he reaffirmed his country's commitment to supporting efforts aimed at improving seafarers' working conditions and promoting social justice in the maritime transport sector and endorsed the draft decision.

1088. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department), referring to the questions that were put to the Office about how the current situation would be taken into account as regards the financing and organization of the two requested JTWG meetings, indicated that they would be financed from savings from the budget and, should this prove to be impossible, the Director-General would propose alternative funding methods at a later stage. She added that the first meeting would be hosted by the IMO in London, which would entail lower costs for the ILO. For that meeting, the budget estimated was around US$60,000 to pay for the participation of the shipowners and seafarers attending the meeting, the travel of the Secretariat staff supporting the meeting and the translation of the report.

1089. Replying to the Government representative of the United States, she indicated that the Standing Orders of the STC provided that the Governing Body was in charge of convening extraordinary meetings. It was only in exceptional circumstances where time was too short for the Governing Body to convene such meetings that it would delegate this power to the Officers of the STC, on a very exceptional basis and on the condition that the modalities of the meeting were adjusted to the financial resources available. This had been discussed at length during the fifth meeting of the STC, where the Office had brought to the attention of the delegates the financial constraints. The proposed language agreed by the STC took into account those concerns. She added that the proposed amendment resulted from the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, which took everyone by surprise and badly impacted the maritime industry. Seafarers were confined on board, their access to shore leave suspended and access to medical care was denied. This called for extraordinary support and guidance to the industry and required enhanced cooperation between Member States. The ILO had demonstrated its convening power in such extraordinary times, which helped connect the parties and find solutions to concrete real-life situations. The STC considered that it should have a mechanism whereby, in such extraordinary circumstances, and in order to be prepared, among others, for a possible next pandemic, such extraordinary meetings could be convened. She noted that if no budget was available, the industry was very used to holding meetings remotely and in English, so that costs could be kept to a minimum, provided there would be acceptance of exceptional circumstances impeding full multilingualism.

Decision

1090. **The Governing Body welcomed the work conducted by the Special Tripartite Committee (STC) established under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), and:**

(a) took note of the report of the Chairperson of the STC on the fifth meeting of the STC (7–11 April 2025) and of the resolutions adopted at that meeting;

(b) endorsed the request of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Legal Committee to convene a meeting of the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element (JTWG) to consider the final report of the Task Force to review and update (or redevelop) the ILO/IMO Joint Database on Abandonment of Seafarers and requested the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to that effect;

(c) endorsed the STC's request to convene a meeting of the JTWG on hours of work and hours of rest, with the terms of reference contained in the resolution mentioned in paragraph 24 of document GB.355/LILS/2, and requested the Director-General to liaise with the IMO Secretary-General to submit the request to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee;

(d) approved the amendment to paragraph 19 of the Terms of Reference of the JTWG;

(e) decided that the relevant cost of the three-day meetings of the JTWG, if held in 2026 and 2027, be financed in the first instance from savings in Part I of the budget or, failing that, through Part II, on the understanding that, should this subsequently prove impossible, the Director-General would propose alternative financing methods at a later stage in the 2026–27 biennium;

(f) requested the Director-General to forward to the IMO the resolution recommending that the IMO Facilitation Committee consider the amendment to the MLC, 2006, on shore leave adopted during the Fifth Meeting of the STC, and take action as appropriate;

(g) adopted the amendments related to the addition of a new Article 3 *bis*; Article 4, paragraph 4; Article 6, paragraphs 2 and 4, in the Standing Orders of the STC as

proposed in the appendix to document GB.355/LILS/2, and referred the amendments proposed to paragraph 10 of the Introductory Note to the STC for further consideration;

(h) reappointed Mr Martin Marini (Singapore) as Chairperson of the STC for the three-year period 2025–28;

(i) decided to convene the sixth meeting of the STC from 3 to 7 April 2028 and requested the Director-General to include a provision for that purpose in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2028–29.

(GB.355/LILS/2, paragraph 35, as amended by the Governing Body)

3. Choice of Conventions and Recommendations on which reports should be requested under article 19 of the ILO Constitution in 2027 (GB.355/LILS/3)

1091. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed surprise at the five options outlined in the paper and the order in which they were presented. He noted that option 5, which proposes pausing the preparation of a General Survey in 2027, was initially suggested by the Office during consultations and represents the most logical and appropriate way forward. He expressed disappointment that this option was placed last and given minimal explanation, as it should have been presented first due to its sound rationale and alignment with the increased workload during the transitional year prior to the launch of the streamlined reporting system in 2026.

1092. Regarding option 1 on prospects of ratification of selected up-to-date instruments, his group did not support this option for several reasons. First, the purpose of a General Survey is to examine national law and practice on certain instruments in order to have a comprehensive understanding on how they are implemented at the national level. Second, the Office already has dedicated activities to promote ratification of up-to-date and new instruments, such as the centenary campaign in 2019 and various global ratification campaigns. Ratification is a sovereign act that should only occur after the interested government has undertaken comprehensive pre-ratification reviews of national laws and practices. In this regard, the role of the Office is to assist governments to undertake such an assessment so that ratification, if it happens, does not turn into a mere declaration of intent. Further, a global General Survey would not add value to this process, as pre-ratification reviews must be country-specific, and would be a misuse of the opportunity to examine a specific thematic area. As discussed in the context of GB.355/INS/7, the focus of the Office should be to support Member States to effectively implement ratified Conventions. Third, this option overlaps with the work of the SRM, particularly because from the perspective of some constituents, the ratification of up-to-date instruments is directly linked to the abrogation of outdated instruments. Given that the Officers of the SRM already agreed to have a discussion next year on how to deal with outdated instruments, his group believes that a General Survey on this topic would be premature and may create confusion. If a study on ratification prospects is needed, it could be provided as an Office paper or information note to the SRM, which is the appropriate forum. His group therefore rejected option 1 entirely.

1093. Option 5, pausing the preparation of a General Survey in 2027, is the option preferred by his group. He said that this is a pragmatic and responsible approach that would allow the Office, the Committee of Experts, and constituents to focus on the successful launch of the streamlined reporting system under article 22. Pausing the General Survey for 2027 would ensure coherence and avoid unnecessary strain on resources, as producing a Survey requires significant efforts. This concern was repeatedly raised during consultations on the streamlining of the reporting system. His group considered that planning too far ahead could be counterproductive and that pausing the General Survey at least for 2027 is the most logical solution. His group therefore did not consider it necessary to review the other options, as option 5 is their preferred choice.

1094. **The Worker spokesperson** said that her group appreciated the Office's efforts to enhance synergies between the General Survey and other standard related processes, particularly the follow-up to the SRM Tripartite Working Group (TWG) recommendations which the Governing Body has consistently emphasized as an institutional priority. The group had considered concerns about the Office workload and the need to facilitate reporting obligations effectively while meeting constitutional requirements. She noted that longer-term planning could assist in achieving these objectives and underscored the importance of maintaining annual General Surveys mandated by the ILO Constitution. These Surveys provide a comprehensive overview of national law and practice and identify obstacles to ratification. For these reasons, her group could not support option 5 or any proposal that would suspend the General Survey in 2027 or render article 19 obligations ineffective. She noted that, as mentioned in Appendix III, General Surveys had never been suspended since 1949, not even during the pandemic.

1095. She said that her group supported option 1, which aligned with the follow-up to the SRM as an institutional priority and the Governing Body's endorsement of SRM TWG's work on ratification, targeted promotion and effective implementation of up-to-date instruments. This option would reinforce coherence in standards-related processes and enhance the impact of the Office's work. While acknowledging that this was a departure from normal practice, she noted that similar approaches had been taken in the past. Being mindful of the workload of the Office, she said that her group understood that this proposal would be compatible with the introduction of the streamlining of article 22 reporting. She said that surveys must align with article 19 requirements and that report forms should include questions on the extent to which effect was given to each instrument and any difficulties delaying or preventing ratification. She said that it might also be appropriate for the Office to provide a summary of the content of each instrument as well. Her group believed option 1.2 offered the best balance between limiting the reporting burden and reflecting the exceptional nature of this approach. She proposed adjustments to the list of instruments, including moving instruments on fishers and dock work to 2027 and removing the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) from the list of instruments for year two, with a view to planning a full General Survey on that Convention.

1096. She said that her group attached particular importance to Convention No. 169, noting that indigenous and tribal peoples continued to face serious violations of their rights worldwide. She described the Convention as a cornerstone instrument for protection of those rights and promoting equality, consultation and sustainable development. With only 24 ratifications to date, she said that a General Survey on this Convention would allow for a timely review of law and practice to identify challenges and promote ratification and implementation.

1097. Regarding option 3 on the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), she said that while the sector faced widespread decent work deficits, the Office should focus on promoting ratification at this stage, and inclusion of this instrument under option 1.2 was preferable to a comprehensive Survey.

1098. On option 4 concerning instruments on protection of workers' claims in cases of employers' insolvency, she welcomed a General Survey, noting its universal significance and the first ever opportunity to obtain an up-to-date picture of law and practice at a time of rising insolvencies. She said that such a Survey would provide invaluable information on gaps and measures needed to protect workers' entitlements. In conclusion, she reiterated that her group could not support option 5 and favoured a longer-term plan starting with option 1, particularly option 1.2, followed by option 4 and then options 2 and 3.

1099. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Sudan reaffirmed his group's commitment to reporting under article 19 of the ILO Constitution, which allows to track progress in ratification and implementation of up-to-date Conventions. He welcomed the introductory part of the report, which set out the linkages between the recurrent discussion and the standards-related work, and took note of the background provided in option 1 concerning the extensive work of the SRM TWG. The classification of outdated instruments and the need for the comprehensive information on national actions and ratification prospects underscored the importance of selecting an approach that strengthened the effectiveness and coherence of the ILO supervisory system.

1100. He said that his group supported option 1.1, which proposed an advanced three-year cycle for article 19 reporting. His group considered this option a balanced and realistic response to the reporting capacities of many developing and least developed countries. By distributing the workload over several years, option 1.1 would ease reporting pressure, ensure coherence with the strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda – including the recurrent discussions planned for 2027, 2028, 2029 – and provide a more structured and predictable framework for assessing ratification prospects and identifying obstacles to the implementation of up-to-date instruments. His group recognized the value of General Surveys focusing on prospects of ratification of up-to-date instruments, which would help address current information gaps, identify challenges faced by Member States – especially those still bound by outdated Conventions – and guide the Office in tailoring technical assistance. This was particularly important for many African countries undergoing labour reforms and facing institutional capacity limitation and resonated with ongoing national efforts in areas such as informality, social protection, labour inspection and employment creation.

1101. With regard to options 2, 3 and 4, his group considered them important and called on the Office to pursue them under the recommendations of the SRM TWG, which called for targeted and general promotional campaigns towards increased ratification. Regarding option 5, his group did not view it as a viable option, as it would affect and disrupt the existing sequence of recurrent discussions.

1102. He called for broad and inclusive consultations among constituents ahead of the 356th Session of the Governing Body to ensure that the final selection reflected balanced regional priorities and realistic reporting expectations. His group reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to the ILO supervisory system and to advancing social justice through decent work.

1103. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Brazil said that compliance with the fundamental obligation of Member States under the ILO Constitution to submit reports was of utmost importance for her group. She considered appropriate the proposals to promote ratification; encourage countries to examine their situation concerning the ratification and implementation of instruments; provide guidance for their application; evaluate the impact and relevance of standards; and select Conventions and Recommendations on which reports should be requested under article 19 of the Constitution. She welcomed the measures aimed at establishing effective links between the recurrent discussions and the results of standards-related initiatives, which would allow the exploration of options to make better use of article 19 without increasing the reporting obligations of

Member States. She noted that the decision to be adopted by the Governing Body under this item was closely related to the decision taken during the previous discussion on the proposal to streamline the submission of reports on ratified Conventions under article 22 of the Constitution through the progressive implementation of thematic reports on the application of Conventions. She noted that the proposals set out in the document envisaged a possible transitional period from 2027 to 2029, during which Member States would adapt to the new reporting modalities and the overall reporting workload would be monitored, including the workload associated with the preparation of reports requested under article 19 of the Constitution.

1104. With regard to the guidance to the Office for the further development of the report form, she said that GRULAC would appreciate receiving a proposal from the Secretariat using language adapted to the current realities and needs of the world of work and enabling the effective systematization of the information collected.

1105. She noted the importance of promoting information exchange and strengthening the capacity of constituents to effectively implement international labour standards. She welcomed the alternatives for instruments proposed for the General Survey to be prepared by the Committee of Experts in 2027 and considered relevant the guidance provided by the Office in formulating alternatives that would support studies aimed at identifying measures promoting the ratification and implementation of international labour standards. She welcomed the pertinence of the proposal and underlined the identification of instruments with a low and limited number of ratifications.

1106. She took note of the rationale behind the proposal made by some constituents during the informal consultations, who expressed support for a possible alternative involving a one-year suspension of the preparation of a General Survey in order to rationalize reporting, as set out in option 5. Bearing in mind the current budgetary situation, as well as the proposal to streamline reporting under article 22 of the Constitution and the definition of future institutional measures, she said that her group preferred this alternative.

1107. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Austria, said that her group considered that the General Surveys remained a key element of the ILO’s standards-related work. Her group acknowledged that option 1 on prospects of ratification of selected up-to-date instruments which comes out of the SRM. She appreciated that this option would provide insight into the various national circumstances influencing the ratification and effective implementation of up-to-date standards. However, she considered that this option would be burdensome for governments in terms of reporting, particularly in view of the increased workload expected under the new article 22 reporting system. Her group supported option 1.1, as outlined in Appendix I, which would divide the task into three General Surveys to be developed in 2027, 2028, and 2029. Only up-to-date Conventions related to outdated Conventions should be encompassed and Conventions not related to any outdated instrument, such as the Working Conditions (Hotels and Restaurants) Convention, 1991 (No. 172), should therefore be removed.

1108. With regard to option 5, she noted that this proposal came originally from the Office in November 2024 in order to free resources for properly ensuring the transition to the new article 22 reporting system. She asked the Office to explain to the Governing Body how burdensome article 19 reports were in terms of resources and costs required by the Office, and whether adopting option 5 would help facilitate that transition. If that were the case, IMEC could be open to this option as an alternative.

1109. As regards options 2, 3, and 4, she thanked the Office for presenting options that were timely and relevant and for providing elaborated and valuable argumentation for each of them. While IMEC members held different preferences regarding these options, the group remained open to any consensus that might emerge.

1110. Regarding the respective questionnaire, she said that the Office should aim for simpler and less burdensome questionnaires that remained within the scope of the respective instruments.

1111. A representative of the Director-General (Director, International Labour Standards Department) responded to a question regarding how burdensome the preparation of General Surveys for consideration by the Committee of Experts was, and stated that their preparation required a substantial investment. Although the work normally required a team of two to three staff members, depending on the complexity of the subject matter, working over a period of six months, the Office was receiving extra support for only three months. She expressed that, despite receiving less resources than were needed, the Office had nevertheless managed to deliver as required.

1112. In relation to option 1, she recalled a similar General Survey that had been undertaken in 1968 and published in 1969, and noted that it had been much smaller than a traditional General Survey. She therefore explained that option 1 would require a reduced investment from the department. She noted that option 1.1 appeared to have received the greatest expression of support. In relation to option 5, she confirmed that it had been previously explored in the context of a proposal concerning regular reporting, and clarified that it had not been further developed because it would disrupt the normative input into the recurrent discussions established by the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization in 2008, as amended in 2022.

1113. The Worker spokesperson acknowledged the clarification provided by the Office, which indicated that, through the adoption of option 1.1, the cycle of recurrent discussions would continue undisrupted, and the burden associated with the normal process of General Surveys would be reduced. Despite the Workers' group's original preference for option 1.2, they could be flexible and support Option 1.1. Regarding the retention of options 2, 3 and 4 for future consideration, she requested that their order be changed to options 4, 2 and 3.

1114. The Employer spokesperson noted that, while there was a division of opinion, there were good reasons to adopt option 5, which would pause the General Survey. In the context of the transition phase, pausing the General Survey would provide governments and the Office the necessary space to adjust and prepare for the next cycle. He stated that the adoption of option 1 would further strain the Office's resources. The Employers' group also believed that the subject matter in option 1, concerning up-to-date standards, was already on the agenda of the SRM TWG, and was therefore not appropriate to be the subject of a General Survey at this time. He expressed concern that the SRM TWG had already planned to discuss this issue, and that a General Survey would amount to second-guessing the outcome of that discussion. He stated that, while discussions about up-to-date standards were not off the table, in the interest of efficiency and streamlining, they needed to be channelled appropriately to prevent duplication.

1115. The Worker spokesperson stated that, while there was no consensus, there was a majority opinion. She referenced the concern regarding duplication of the SRM TWG process and explained that option 1 related to matters that had already been concluded at the SRM and endorsed by the Governing Body. She explained that, as an institutional priority recognized by the Governing Body, efforts needed to be undertaken to promote up-to-date standards and to understand the difficulties Member States faced in moving from outdated to up-to-date standards. She recalled the work of the SRM, particularly the identification and promotion of up-to-date standards, and noted that option 1 established the route to achieving its mandate. She also recalled the Office's statement that the adoption of option 1 would not increase the workload burden and would be managed within the new article 22 process, and therefore reiterated the feasibility and benefit of choosing this option.

1116. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Brazil said that initially the group expressed preference for option 5 but it was ready to show flexibility with regard to option 1.1.

1117. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Austria reiterated her group's support for option 1.1, under the condition that the General Survey would cover only up-to-date Conventions related to outdated instruments. Her group remained flexible with regard to other options too.

1118. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Sudan reiterated his group's support for option 1.1.

1119. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, International Labour Standards Department) said that the draft decision in the document had been adjusted to reflect the instruments covered under option 1.1.

Decision

1120. The Governing Body requested the Office to prepare, for its consideration at its 356th Session (March 2026):

(a) the article 19 report form on the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), the Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152), the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), for the General Survey to be prepared by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in 2027 for discussion by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards in 2028;

(b) the article 19 report form on the Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176), the Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167), the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981, the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161) and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), for the General Survey to be prepared by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in 2028 for discussion by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards in 2029;

(c) the article 19 report form on the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), the Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160), the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102) (Part IV), the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), for the General Survey to be prepared by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations in 2029 for discussion by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards in 2030.

(GB.355/LILS/3, paragraph 71)

▶ Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

Programme, Financial and Administrative Segment

1. Proposed programme and budget of the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) for 2026–27 (GB.355/PFA/1)

1121. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the proposed Programme and Budget for 2026–27 for CINTERFOR constituted not only a technical proposal but a proactive response to the structural challenges facing the region, including a 47.6 per cent informality rate, 13.8 per cent youth employment rate and persistent gender gaps. Regional initiatives and other concrete progress were evidence that tripartism worked when there was investment in skills, dialogue and cooperation. The five strategic pillars of the work plan were solid and consistent. Governance and social dialogue were essential to ensure that vocational training policies responded to real needs and translated into robust regulatory frameworks. On inclusion and equality, the cross-cutting focus on gender, youth and migration was structural and the recognition of prior learning and regional certification mechanisms improved employability. For quality training and just transition, digital and green skills were essential preparation for future jobs, in line with the Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208).

1122. From a budgetary perspective, CINTERFOR demonstrated efficient and responsible management. The budget proposals were balanced and the projected income covered all expenditure. The diversification of funding sources and alliances with the UN system would consolidate CINTERFOR as an intelligent investment for the ILO. She sought clarification regarding whether the ILO contribution of US$2,847,917 might be amended under the ILO review and possible budget cuts. The programme responded to the technical challenges of vocational training and reaffirmed commitment to tripartism, inclusion and social justice. Its approval represented a significant step towards more democratic, equitable training systems prepared for the future of work. Her group supported the draft decision.

1123. **The Employer spokesperson** said that while the document provided a good basis for discussion, it did not provide the results of the current biennium or further points to be taken into account in the programme and budget for the forthcoming biennium. The Ibero-American Tripartite Social Dialogue Process on Vocational Training had resulted in the Declaration of the Ibero-American Tripartite Social Dialogue, submitted to the 47th Technical Committee Meeting of ILO/CINTERFOR. The Declaration provided a common tripartite framework to guide vocational training policies in view of technological, environmental, demographic, migratory and informality challenges. It reaffirmed that only with effective social dialogue, supported by solid democratic institutions and respect for fundamental freedoms, could sustainable training strategies be developed. The process had also highlighted the role of employers in training management and skills certification systems. The Talent on the Move event held in Lima in October 2024 had promoted the strengthening of skills certification and more orderly labour mobility in Latin America and the Caribbean, and had resulted in the conclusion of a regional road map. Effective social dialogue was contributing to the establishment of a regional mechanism for mutual skills recognition.

1124. He welcomed the ongoing cooperation between CINTERFOR management, the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). The leadership of the CINTERFOR Director had been decisive for its sustainability and relevance. Technological, environmental and demographic challenges were unavoidable, and informality and migration constituted pressing structural challenges that affected labour and production; youth unemployment was a further factor for consideration. Vocational training should be aligned with policies for productive and sustainable development, with a focus on strengthening microenterprises, small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurs. Training should be tailored to needs and entrepreneurship should be strengthened to promote productivity, formality and employment sustainability, in line with the 2024–25 programme. There would be no growth or employment without a productive, strong and skilled sector of production. Coordinated responses and social dialogue were imperative to build a more inclusive and dynamic economy. His group supported the draft decision.

1125. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Paraguay said that GRULAC recognized the importance of CINTERFOR's work in the area of vocational training and expressed appreciation that the work plan was based on current and emerging needs of Member States in the region. It supported the biennial work plan structured around five pillars and welcomed the fact that the allocated budget would permit the implementation of specialized programmes on digital technology, artificial intelligence, automation and the green economy, promoting essential technical and cross-cutting skills. It supported the allocation of resources to research and knowledge-sharing; it was essential to promote innovation and continuous improvement. GRULAC encouraged the strengthening of partnerships with strategic partners to maximize the impact of actions and respond to emerging challenges. Resources should be allocated to ensure gender equality in vocational training, the inclusion of vulnerable groups and to tackle low labour productivity as a central focus of interregional strategies. Equality of opportunity was a fundamental principle in efforts to ensure that no one was left behind in access to training and decent work. GRULAC supported the draft decision.

1126. **A Government representative of Uruguay** said that the Government of Uruguay, host country of CINTERFOR, expressed support for the programme and budget. The actions included in pillar 1 of the work plan were vital to the region due to both their relevance within vocational training systems and their broader effect on labour relations in the various countries. Actions arising from pillars 2 and 3 would strengthen the effectiveness of vocational training and contribute to decent work and sustainable development. The plan focused on key system operating processes, ensuring that issues and challenges were effectively addressed. Uruguay reaffirmed its commitment to continue contributing financially to the Centre.

1127. **A representative of the Director-General** (Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean) said that CINTERFOR was an example of the value and power of social dialogue. She welcomed the proposals and analysis and acknowledged the priorities expressed. The dialogue would continue in the next biennium and the ILO contribution to the functioning of CINTERFOR would be maintained.

Decision

1128. **The Governing Body approved the income and expenditure estimates of the Inter American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) extrabudgetary account for 2026–27, as set out in Appendix I of document GB.355/PFA/1.**

(GB.355/PFA/1, paragraph 21)

2. Programme and Budget for 2024–25: Regular budget and Working Capital Fund (GB.355/PFA/2 and GB.355/PFA/2/Update)

1129. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed appreciation for the fact that, as of 30 September 2025, total income for 2024–25 was US$727.2 million, with expenditure of US$714.9 million, resulting in a surplus of US$12.3 million. He noted that Member States had paid 60.5 per cent of their assessed contributions for 2025 compared to 64 per cent at the same stage in 2024, that 23 had paid partially and 62 had made no payments, and that 17 Member States had lost their voting rights due to arrears exceeding 2 years of contributions. With the understanding that the Working Capital Fund would remain at CHF35 million and that potential budgetary transfers would be finalized in early 2026 once final expenditure was known, the Employers' group supported the draft decision.

1130. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked all Member States that had paid their assessed contributions for the current biennium and the 21 Member States that had made payments against their contributions for 2026. Although payments received since the publication of document GB.355/PFA/2 had improved the situation, he expressed serious concern over the unpaid amount of around CHF250 million, which was impacting the implementation of the programme of work for 2024–25 and had made the cash flow situation critical. He asked what the Office was doing to encourage Member States to comply with their statutory obligations. As document GB.355/INS/7 stated that programme needs could no longer be fully funded and that reserves were sufficient to cover salaries only if spending was minimized, he asked whether the situation until the end of the year was manageable with the current funds. He sought details on how activities had been reprioritized while maintaining core services for constituents. The Workers' group believed that the follow-up to decisions of the Conference and the Governing Body should have priority, including the meetings of experts and technical meetings already scheduled, and would comment further during the discussion of agenda item INS/7. He called on all Member States to fulfil their constitutional obligation to pay their assessed contributions, which were financed by taxpayers and thus by the social partners.

1131. The Workers' group supported the draft decision allowing for transfers from one item to another in the same part of the expenditure budget; however, in the current circumstances, the Governing Body should be informed before decisions on any such transfers were taken by the Officers.

1132. **A representative of the Director-General** (Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) noted that since 1 October, CHF43 million in contributions had been received, which had greatly improved the cash flow situation. The Office had sent reminder letters to the Member States whose contributions were outstanding. Bilateral discussions were ongoing with some to facilitate payment and a number of Member States were attempting to settle their contributions before the end of the year. He expressed confidence that, with the funds received, the Working Capital Fund and the amounts that would soon be paid, the Office had sufficient funds to meet all needs for 2025.

1133. The Office had introduced cost efficiencies by reducing mission travel and the size of its delegations to meetings. All requests for additional funding were being reviewed by the Assistant Directors-General and Regional Directors to decide what activities were critical based on programme needs, and requests were approved by the Treasurer in accordance with the cash position. Should additional funds become available, activities would be expanded as necessary. As it was crucial to the work of the ILO, the Office had ensured that the CEACR would take place immediately after the Governing Body session.

Decision

1134. The Governing Body delegated its authority under article 16 of the Financial Regulations to the Chairperson, who may approve any transfers within the 2024–25 expenditure budget that the Director-General may propose, if needed, prior to the closing of the biennial accounts and subject to the endorsement of such approval by the Governing Body at its next session.

(GB.355/PFA/2, paragraph 11)

3. Other financial matters (GB.355/PFA/3)

(No other financial matters were submitted to the Governing Body at this session.)

Audit and Oversight Segment

4. Appointment of a replacement member to the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (GB.355/PFA/4)

Decision

1135. The Governing Body decided to appointment Mr Jayantilal M. Karia as a member of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee for a term of three years commencing on 1 January 2026.

(GB.355/PFA/4, paragraph 6)

5. Annual Evaluation Report 2024–25 (GB.355/PFA/5)

1136. The Chairperson opened the discussion on item PFA 5, entitled Annual Evaluation Report 2024–25, recalling that Part I of the report reviewed the work undertaken by the Evaluation Office in relation to the indicators and targets of the ILO Evaluation Strategy for 2023–25, culminating in a recommendation in paragraph 45. Part II assessed the overall effectiveness of the Organization based on evaluative evidence and also ended with a recommendation in paragraph 81. The Governing Body was invited to adopt the draft decision contained in paragraph 82.

1137. The Worker spokesperson thanked the Office for the comprehensive report and acknowledged ongoing efforts to strengthen the ILO's evaluation function. Turning to Part I of the document, he welcomed the progress made toward achievement of the 21 end targets for 2024–25, noting that 17 had been met, alongside 4 of the 5 enablers. He commented that although progress was encouraging, the Workers' group wished to draw attention to certain unachieved targets and requested further clarification regarding the rationale for the unachieved targets.

1138. Turning to indicator 1.2.1 on the institutionalization of evaluation roles, he underscored the importance of institutionalizing evaluation roles within the Organization, pointing to the establishment of a dedicated job family for evaluation staff at headquarters in 2024 and the near completion of a parallel job family for regional evaluation officers in 2025. He reiterated the Workers' long-standing recommendation to develop cost-recovery and cost-sharing mechanisms to compensate for evaluation managers' time, emphasizing that, particularly under current financial constraints, such mechanisms were critical to ensuring sufficient staffing and avoiding over-reliance on voluntary contributions of staff time.

1139. On the revised 2026 target for evaluation manager certification, he acknowledged the reduction from 30 to 20 staff and sought clarification regarding the operational functioning of the evaluation manager roster. In particular, he asked how many of the existing 208 certified managers were currently active, how their availability was monitored, and how many evaluations they were reasonably expected to manage annually.

1140. Turning to indicator 2.2.2 concerning the fifth edition of the policy guidelines, the Worker spokesperson asked whether the forthcoming edition would incorporate emerging priorities in the world of work and, if so, which themes were envisioned. Regarding indicator 2.4.2 – which had not been achieved – he sought clarification on the barriers preventing use of the quality assessment tool and the community of practice for impact evaluation.

1141. Concerning indicator 3.1.1, he welcomed the significant increase – 409 per cent – in the use of the ILO's *i*-eval Discovery dashboard under this indicator and requested precision on the types of use being recorded. He further noted that indicator 3.2.2 had not been met owing to insufficient validation by technical experts and requested additional information on the causes of such gaps. In relation to indicator 3.2.4, he expressed concern that certain managers had failed to respond to recommendations from independent evaluations and called for renewed efforts to ensure accountability.

1142. With respect to recommendation 1 of Part I – the rolling work plan for high-level evaluations in 2026 – the Workers' group reiterated its support for the evaluations on normative action and on skills and lifelong learning. He recalled document GB.352/PFA/8(Rev.1), in which strong support had been expressed for both topics. The Workers' group believed that placing normative action in 2026 would reinforce efforts aligned with the Organization's core mandate of standard-setting, supervision and promotion of international labour standards. He requested clarity from the Office on the link between the extension of the Evaluation Strategy to 2026 and the ongoing ILO review.

1143. Turning to Part II of the report, he commended the focus on impact and sustainability, describing it as aligned with increased demand for clear value for investment. He highlighted key findings demonstrating that policy impact had been achieved by embedding normative values into national systems, aligning with national priorities and fostering long-term ownership. He emphasized insight 1, which showed that interventions grounded in tripartism, social dialogue and international labour standards generated the most sustainable results. He noted with concern the low percentage of development cooperation projects demonstrating targeted responsiveness to vulnerable groups and encouraged further efforts in this area.

1144. The Workers' group fully supported recommendation 2 and expressed support for the draft decision in paragraph 82, on the understanding that resource requirements highlighted in paragraph 1 of the document would be duly considered.

1145. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for the clear and comprehensive report and described it as a strategic checkpoint at a time of institutional reform, financial uncertainty and increased expectations for accountability. He welcomed the strong progress toward the Evaluation Strategy's targets, noting that evaluation planning had shifted from quantity to strategic relevance. He commended improvements in evaluation quality, the expanded pool of evaluation managers and the effectiveness of clustered evaluations, which had reduced duplication without jeopardizing accountability.

1146. He welcomed the innovation shown in the digital transformation of the evaluation function including the *i*-eval Discovery platform, describing them as valuable tools enabling timely and accessible evaluation insights. He welcomed progress in capacity-building, including expanded training for staff and constituents. Under outcome 2, he noted strengthened methodologies, greater collaboration with the UN system and enhanced quality assurance mechanisms.

1147. Regarding outcome 3, he remarked that learning-oriented evaluations were yielding relevant strategic insights. He underlined that evaluation must remain a practical tool for decision-making, organizational performance and a culture of results. He expressed support for extending the Evaluation Strategy until the end of 2026 and endorsed the proposed high-level evaluations for that year. For 2027 and 2028, he highlighted priority topics, including sustainable enterprise development and normative action.

1148. The Employer spokesperson expressed appreciation for the thematic focus on impact and sustainability but noted that certain long-standing concerns remained, particularly regarding project efficiency, sustainability and constituent engagement. He noted that development cooperation activities remained, in many cases, overly donor-driven, which risked weakening national ownership and sustainability. He urged improved systems for developing, monitoring and supporting development cooperation projects, as recommended in previous evaluations, and encouraged the Office to make greater use of real-time data of project assessment against 29 key performance indicators and AI-based tools to strengthen accountability and evidence-driven performance.

1149. He expressed support for recommendation 2, noting that the continued development of real-time dashboards – particularly those integrating AI-based analytical tools – would constitute a meaningful step toward enhancing transparency and organizational accountability. He concluded by emphasizing that the Employers' group remained committed to supporting the evaluation function and that resources should not be cut to the evaluation function.

1150. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania commended the Office for the comprehensive and forward-looking report, which demonstrated significant progress in implementing the Evaluation Strategy. He underlined the importance of contextualizing evaluation findings to better reflect regional diversity and experience, particularly the realities of Africa, including pervasive informality, high youth unemployment, gender disparities and gaps in social protection, and therefore called for more nuanced evaluative attention.

1151. The Africa group requested the inclusion of a dedicated regional analysis in future reports, expansion of thematic evaluations that incorporate African priorities, strengthening of regional evaluation capacity – including through greater participation of African staff in the certification programme – and equitable access to digital evaluation innovations. He emphasized the need to preserve resources for evaluation work in Africa, expressing concern that efficiency measures might inadvertently restrict learning in regions where evidence was most needed.

1152. The Africa group supported recommendation 1 and endorsed the extension of the Evaluation Strategy to 2026. He called for Africa's priorities to be fully embedded in its implementation and concluded by reaffirming the group's support for the report's recommendations.

1153. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the report and noted the substantial progress achieved, including the completion of 17 of the 21 targets under the Evaluation Strategy. He highlighted the region's appreciation for improvements in evaluation capacity-building, including expanded training and the significant growth of certified evaluation managers. He emphasized, however, that clearer guidance was needed on how the 2026 evidence mapping pilot would be adapted to regional priorities and contexts, given the diversity of labour market challenges across Asia and the Pacific.

1154. While acknowledging strong progress, the representative expressed concern regarding the 25 evaluation waivers granted during the reporting period. He recommended the establishment of more robust standard operating procedures to guide and coordinate oversight functions across the Office. He welcomed the expansion of regional training efforts, which exceeded expectations by a wide margin, and encouraged the Office to integrate evaluation training modules within ITCILO's core offerings and to strengthen regional training hubs.

1155. He praised the 91 per cent satisfactory rating under the corporate quality assessment mechanism but noted that indicator 2.4.2 on impact evaluations had not been reached. He welcomed increased usage of the *i*-eval Discovery dashboard and the *i*-eval AI Assistant and encouraged broad multilingual public roll-out.

1156. The ASPAG spokesperson expressed concern about weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems, particularly declining standards in monitoring, with acceptable systems present in only 24 per cent of projects. He stressed the need for mandatory sustainability assessments at design stage and stronger results-based management.

1157. Highlighting specific regional achievements – including progress under the Safe and Fair Programme – he expressed concern regarding missing exit strategies and over-ambitious project design. He supported recommendation 1, especially proposed evaluations on skills and social protection, and urged prioritization of the delayed evaluation on normative action in 2027.

1158. The ASPAG spokesperson fully endorsed recommendation 2 and emphasized the importance of systematic use of evaluative evidence in decision-making processes. He described the report as demonstrating an evolution of evaluation from compliance to strategic learning.

1159. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, a Government representative of Paraguay thanked the Office for the report and highlighted the strategic importance of evaluation for the region. GRULAC would continue to systematize integrated approaches so that lessons from evaluations lead to better future activities.

1160. She stressed the preference for quality over quantity in evaluation work and the need to ensure sufficient resources. She encouraged the use of innovative tools, including AI, to enhance inclusiveness and transparency, and underlined the value of technical assistance and capacity-building for the region in the coming period.

1161. She welcomed the successful integration of South–South cooperation in the region and emphasized that evaluation should support policy transformation, helping to integrate evidence into policy development. GRULAC called for robust feedback mechanisms by 2025 in regional and national offices and for evaluation findings to be systematically translated into concrete, actionable follow-up. GRULAC agreed to the extension of the evaluation until the end of 2026 and supports the draft decision.

1162. Speaking on behalf of IMEC, a Government representative of Canada reaffirmed support for a strong evaluation function within the ILO, recognizing its critical role in promoting flexibility, learning, and evidence-based decision-making. IMEC endorsed the extension of the Evaluation Strategy to 2026 and the continued use of high-level evaluations to inform strategic planning. Strategic improvements in evaluation planning, including the criteria-based integrated evaluation system and the use of constant evaluations, were welcomed, as they reduce staff burden and provide clearer programmatic insights.

1163. IMEC highlighted the evaluation findings in Part II, that focusing on core ILO values, embedding projects within national systems and tripartite structures, and improving operational efficiency have strengthened sustainable impact and policy uptake. Concerns remain regarding persistent gaps in results-based management, monitoring, and inclusion of vulnerable groups, particularly persons with disabilities. IMEC requested a time-bound plan to address these issues, welcomed the upcoming AI-assisted evaluation tools, and noted progress in evaluation capacity-building, quality assurance, and certification of evaluation managers. IMEC endorsed the 2026 rolling work plan and encouraged continued strategic oversight and follow-up on evaluation recommendations.

1164. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** expressed alignment with the statement delivered by the Islamic Republic of Iran on this agenda item. He thanked the Office for the report detailing its work on the progress made on the Evaluation Strategy. He noted the 3.5 per cent increase of performance of development cooperation portfolio from 2022 to 2023 and encouraged the office to ensure higher performance especially in the context of declining financial resources for development cooperation programmes. He also appreciated the higher prevalence of cost-effectiveness of development cooperation interventions and noted the high success of development cooperation interventions in normative work and the promotion of international labour standards. Bangladesh supported the proposal for extension of the Evaluation Strategy until the end of 2026.

1165. **A Government representative of the Russian Federation** expressed gratitude for the very high-quality report. He noted efforts made by the office in implementing clustered evaluations and asked if it is possible to use them for joint initiatives with partner organizations and asked for clarity on how the criteria-based evaluation system works. He expressed support for extending the Evaluation Strategy to 2026 as it would allow time for the Office to prepare a new strategy taking into account the reforms proposed by the Director-General.

1166. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Evaluation Office) welcomed the feedback and stated for the record that all evaluation work presented was conducted independently and without interference, as required by principles of impartiality and independence.

1167. Responding to the questions and remarks, he appreciated the recognition of progress made in implementing the Evaluation Strategy 2023–25 and thanked the members for their support in extending the Strategy to 2026, a step essential for consolidating achieved results. He noted that the extension was independent of the ongoing ILO review, while emphasizing the importance of using evaluation results to inform that process. He clarified that waivers to evaluations under the criteria-based evaluation planning system were granted only when accountability remained uncompromised, and that evidence-based mapping was increasingly important to ensure the planning system effectively addressed existing evidence gaps. He affirmed that the new *i*-eval AI Assistant is among the first AI tools within evaluation offices across the United Nations. Currently, the *i*-eval AI Assistant is accessible exclusively to ILO staff, the tool could be made publicly available subject to resource availability. On the matter of data privacy, he clarified that the tool relies solely on publicly available evaluation reports, which are produced in accordance with established protocols to ensure data protection.

1168. Regarding management follow-up to evaluation recommendations, he explained that accountability systems are in place to strengthen management responses by reporting non-submissions through the Annual Evaluation Report, maintaining records via the Automated

Management Response System, informing management and the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO) as needed.

1169. With respect to the increased referencing to evaluations in key strategic documents, he acknowledged that even further improvements could be made through protocols and procedures in how evaluation findings are fed into Governing Body discussions, although this falls beyond the direct control of the Evaluation Office. He noted that the creation of evaluation job families was already final, with current application in headquarters and across four of the five regions. Evaluation managers continued to be trained, with a pool of 150 active staff members managing 60 to 70 evaluations in a given year, which exemplified a best practice of increased efficiency in leveraging internal resources. He agreed that cost-recovery should be considered by the Office to support the role of evaluation managers in the decentralized evaluation system of the ILO.

1170. Turning to unmet targets, he explained that the guidance on impact evaluations is not mandatory and that there is an uneven methodological understanding of what impact really means – real and measurable results affecting people's lives for the better. Concerning good practices, in the absence of online technical communities of practice for validation, the Evaluation Office has established a system of targeted technical publications based on evaluative evidence, to be validated by the relevant ILO technical departments. On monitoring, reporting and results-based management, in general, he noted that these are enablers for evaluation and not under the responsibility of the Evaluation Office for implementation.

1171. Regarding the rolling work plan, he clarified that the inclusion of the social protection topic responds to the need for evidence-based findings in preparation for the International Labour Conference recurrent discussion in 2026. Similarly, the high-level evaluation of skills and lifelong learning responded to the Governing Body request to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the relevant strategy on Skills in 2026. This would place the high-level evaluation of the ILO normative work in 2027.

1172. On Part II, in response to questions it was noted that the figures reflect thorough analysis of the available data. In terms of positive trends, more projects are delivering results, aligning with organizational priorities, influencing policies, and making efficient use of resources. On the downside, some projects are overly ambitious and tend to overpromise. Vulnerable groups are not always fully included, with disability, and in some cases gender, being particular areas of concern. Results are also not always fully sustainable. In simple terms, the ILO is achieving better results and improving performance, but there is still considerable room to enhance inclusiveness and ensure long-term, sustainable impact. He acknowledged that, as several of the speakers noted, impact is stronger when ILO core values are applied. This stood out as one of the positive outcomes of the analysis of the large set of evaluations.

1173. **The Worker spokesperson** followed up on the question on the connection between the extension of the Evaluation Strategy and the ongoing review process in the ILO.

1174. **The representative of the Director-General** (Director, Evaluation Office) responded that as mentioned earlier there was no immediate connection, but evaluations had been used to inform some elements of the review.

Decision

1175. **The Governing Body endorsed the recommendations of the Annual Evaluation Report 2024–25 (paragraphs 45 and 81) for implementation by the Office.**

(GB.355/PFA/5, paragraph 82)

6. High-level evaluations of strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes (GB.355/PFA/6)

1176. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for the evaluations and underlined their importance for accountability, learning and strategic direction.

1177. On the evaluation of the Youth Employment Action Plan, she acknowledged progress in the five areas of the Plan, including alignment with international policy frameworks and adaptive responses to global and national challenges. She noted, however, persistent shortcomings relating to coordination, fragmented funding cycles, the absence of costed planning and weak monitoring structures. Those weaknesses, in her view, limited the Office's ability to demonstrate results and ensure coherent delivery.

1178. She stressed that an imbalance remained between supply-side and demand-side interventions. While skills development, employability measures and labour market programmes had advanced, policies related to macroeconomic frameworks, sectoral strategies and job creation lagged behind. Without a stronger demand-side focus, she said, impact on youth employment would remain modest. Employers stood ready to support substantive work on job creation, enterprise development, labour market reforms and talent retention.

1179. She encouraged deeper research on demand-side policies, including documentation of good practices and analysis of enterprise-level constraints. She strongly supported recommendation 2 to mandate the Youth Employment Unit to coordinate youth employment activities across the Office, and she underlined the need for an operational and monitoring frameworks to track results. She also supported strengthening private sector engagement under recommendation 4.

1180. Turning to the Better Work Programme, she recognized its significant contributions to compliance, gender equality and productivity and its expanded use across sectors. She expressed concern that sustainability remained weak, owing to the programme's dependence on resource-intensive enterprise-level interventions and limited national institutional capacity. Shrinking donor funding had exacerbated those vulnerabilities, and some programmes faced uncertainty or abrupt closures. She called for accelerated transition strategies, time-bound country plans, a more viable financing model, a gradual shift from enterprise-level work to national-level capacity-building, greater access to Better Work tools and data for constituents, and strengthened national institutional ownership through accredited entities.

1181. She said that recommendations 2 and 5 were necessary but insufficient, noting that a deeper structural shift was required to ensure long-term sustainability. Without decisive action, she considered that earlier gains risked being reversed.

1182. On the evaluation of Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) strategies in Central America, she noted that ILO support aligned well with national priorities and multilateral strategies, although results remained uneven across countries. She acknowledged that constituent participation had strengthened legitimacy in some cases but remained inconsistent and often procedural. She encouraged more inclusive participation at subnational levels so that DWCPs reflected enterprise and worker realities.

1183. She said that variable national capacities, political instability and weak institutions constrained results across the subregion. The outcome related to sustainable enterprises remained underdeveloped despite its centrality to job creation. She noted that DWCPs continued to prioritize compliance-driven themes while under-addressing issues such as competitiveness, informality, enterprise growth and the investment climate. Strengthening partnerships with employers' and workers' associations aligned with employers' priorities. She supported calls for clearer exit strategies and workforce planning and encouraged focused efforts to strengthen the institutional foundations for social dialogue.

1184. **The Worker spokesperson** thanked the Office for the evaluations. On the Youth Employment Action Plan, he noted the evaluators' positive assessment of its strategic vision. Given the vulnerability of young workers to precarious work and unemployment, he stressed the importance of demand-side policies, labour rights and youth participation in social dialogue. He expressed concern that supply-side measures received greater emphasis than those areas. He endorsed recommendation 1 and welcomed the Office's commitment to implement it. He urged the Office to ensure that demand-side elements and youth rights were strengthened in the next phase of the Plan. He reiterated the importance of a dedicated output on youth employment in the programme and budget and supported recommendation 2.

1185. On the Better Work Programme, he recognized its contributions to improving working conditions and compliance. He remained concerned, however, about weaknesses in occupational safety and health, freedom of association and collective bargaining. He noted the low sustainability score, which reflected the absence of time-bound goals. Tripartite bodies were important, but sustainability required a strong foundation in freedom of association. He supported recommendation 3 and urged the Office to embed the programme's results more effectively across the Organization, in particular with the Sectoral Policies Department. He welcomed the Office's commitment to strengthen work on industrial relations and wages under the "One ILO" approach.

1186. On the DWCP strategies in Central America, he welcomed the evaluators' comprehensive assessment. While projects aligned with national priorities, he said that coordination gaps persisted among interventions, work plans and offices. He emphasized the need to strengthen trade union capacity for social dialogue. He cited structural barriers such as competition among agencies, weaknesses in internal coordination and limited understanding of the ILO mandate. He highlighted the need to prioritize work on persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, the just transition, non-discrimination, gender equality, international labour standards, labour migration and youth. He stressed the importance of recommendation 3 on sustainability, ownership and engagement of all constituents. He concluded that the Workers' group supported the draft decision.

1187. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania welcomed the findings and recommendations of the three evaluations and commended the Evaluation Office for its independent assessments. He highlighted the positive outcomes of the Better Work Programme and encouraged the Office to sustain and consider expanding implementation to other sectors, including small and medium-sized enterprises.

1188. He said that youth employment challenges in Africa stemmed from structural constraints such as informality, limited industrialization and underdeveloped rural economies. He called on the ILO to support Member States in designing cross-sectoral policies that foster job creation in labour-intensive sectors and to harness opportunities in the green and digital economies. The group supported the draft decision and reaffirmed its commitment to advancing decent work and inclusive growth.

1189. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Australia reaffirmed the importance of evidence-based learning and welcomed the recommendations. On the Youth Employment Action Plan, he encouraged the Office to address demand-side gaps, strengthen monitoring frameworks and ensure meaningful youth participation, including for young persons with disabilities. He emphasized context-sensitive approaches for small island developing States and least developed countries, and adequate regular budget allocations. He encouraged mechanisms to engage small enterprises and informal-sector employers.

1190. On the DWCP strategies in Central America, he noted parallels with challenges in the Asia and Pacific region and highlighted the usefulness of simplified administrative procedures, South–South cooperation, stronger national ownership, sustainability planning, improved coordination and enhanced resource mobilization.

1191. On the Better Work Programme, he welcomed ongoing reforms and encouraged transparent consultation with partners and donors. He stressed that transition strategies must consider national institutional capacity, especially in small island and least developed States. He supported diversified financing mechanisms with equitable cost sharing, without compromising programme neutrality, and emphasized capacity-building for labour inspectorates. He underscored the need to address disability inclusion, gender gaps and priorities such as the care economy, platform work, digital transitions, informal economy transitions and climate-resilient employment strategies. ASPAG endorsed the draft decision.

1192. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC,** a Government representative of Paraguay thanked the Office for the evaluations. On the Youth Employment Action Plan, she recognized the Office's work in policy design, skills enhancement and business initiatives and encouraged continued support for sustainable youth employment. She emphasized combating informality and strengthening social protection. She highlighted the need for additional financing, private sector cooperation, skills retention and decent work. She encouraged support for tripartite and integrated employment policies, particularly in the green and digital economies.

1193. On the Better Work Programme, she supported efforts to diversify financing, strengthen sustainability and expand training through the Better Work Academy. She stressed the importance of continued cooperation with brands to ensure compliance with international labour standards.

1194. On the DWCP strategies in Central America, she subscribed to the recommendation to undertake a specific project for country teams to enhance coherence and coordination. She welcomed the inclusion of risk management, needs assessment and participatory design and encouraged follow-up mechanisms and continuous feedback between the ILO and beneficiary countries. GRULAC supported the draft decision.

1195. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC,** a Government representative of the United Kingdom commended the Evaluation Office for its rigorous work and noted that the high-level evaluations are a cornerstone of the ILOs Evaluation Strategy in strengthening accountability. He noted that the evaluations were not only aligned with ongoing strategic initiatives but also served as an essential tool for evidence-based decision-making and organizational learning. He noted that IMEC appreciated the quality and depth of the evaluation reports, which contained a wealth of information and offered valuable insights into the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the ILO's programmes and strategies. He noted that all three evaluations found that the activities and initiatives were relevant and largely effective, but identified concerns regarding efficiency in the Youth Employment Action Plan and Better Work, largely owing to staffing shortages, fragmented programming and reliance on extrabudgetary funding. Strengthening institutional delivery models and planning frameworks was therefore important.

1196. He noted that sustainability was rated low across all three evaluations and emphasized the importance of embedding exit strategies and capacity development from the outset. IMEC welcomed the positive assessment of Better Work's contributions and encouraged the Office to strengthen integrated approaches in line with recommendation 3. IMEC supported accelerating phased withdrawal in long-standing Better Work countries, ensuring that national institutions could sustain progress. With those comments, he supported the draft decision.

1197. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** aligned himself with the ASPAG statement. He attached priority to effective implementation of the Youth Employment Action Plan and noted positive momentum on supply-side measures, though demand-side progress remained limited. He encouraged stronger private sector engagement and welcomed the inclusion of output 3.5 in the programme and budget. He valued Better Work's contributions and encouraged the ILO to engage emerging global brands to ensure adequate funding in the context of declining development cooperation budgets. He warned that withdrawal under Phase V could pose serious challenges for least developed and recently graduated least developed countries. He supported the draft decision.

1198. **A Government representative of Cuba** welcomed the evaluations, which he said highlighted both achievements and constraints. He stressed the importance of international cooperation and solidarity for inclusive development. While progress had been made on employment policy and social dialogue in Latin America and the Caribbean, challenges such as informality, limited implementation capacity and weak sustainability persisted. He emphasized the need for productive job creation, particularly in green sectors, health and education, and for sustainable financing not reliant on short-term external projects. He supported the call for renewed attention to the recommendations and for specific measures by the Director-General.

1199. **A Government representative of Colombia** welcomed the evaluations as an important learning tool. He highlighted Colombia's collaboration with the ILO, which had strengthened social dialogue, formalization, wage policies and labour law reform. He expressed concern that the evaluations did not sufficiently disaggregate results by country, limiting their usefulness for national decision-making. He encouraged greater analytical depth in future evaluations.

1200. He emphasized Colombia's plans for technical cooperation with the ILO, particularly regarding informality, social protection, local-level policy evaluation and digital and green transitions. He supported stronger youth participation in social dialogue, citing recent national experience. He reaffirmed Colombia's commitment to the ILO.

1201. **A Government representative of Malawi** aligned himself with the Africa group statement. He focused on the Youth Employment Action Plan and reiterated the need for continued ILO support to address youth unemployment in Africa. He highlighted Malawi's graduate internship programme, which had enabled skills acquisition and employment for young people. He called for greater investment in youth skills development, including digital skills and green jobs. He agreed with the recommendations in the evaluation and supported the draft decision.

1202. **A Government representative of Oman** welcomed the evaluations and endorsed the ASPAG statement. He said that youth employment should remain a priority and that DWCP implementation required continued technical assistance in many countries. On Better Work, he emphasized the need for full consultation with social partners and adequate financing. Access to training materials in local languages would be essential for effective national engagement.

1203. **The Chairperson** recalled that, to the best of her understanding, no specific questions had been directed to members of the Office. She noted that a number of comments and observations had been made, but that no requests for clarification had been identified.

1204. She expressed appreciation for the interventions and indicated that the responsible department directors would take due note of the views expressed under this agenda item. The Office would, as appropriate, reflect these considerations in the ongoing and forthcoming implementation of the relevant programmes.

Decision

1205. **The Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into consideration the recommendations of the three independent high-level evaluations presented in document GB.355/PFA/6 (paragraphs 22–25, 42–46 and 69–74), and to ensure their appropriate implementation aligned with the Office response.**

(GB.355/PFA/6, paragraph 81)

7. Matters relating to the Joint Inspection Unit (GB.355/PFA/7)

1206. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized the importance of the Joint Advisory Appeals Board as a key component of the internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanism in the ILO. He said that the Board's annual report should continue to be submitted for approval through the Joint Negotiation Committee. His group concurred with the Office's remarks on recommendations 4 and 5 in these regards. In relation to recommendation 4 on flexible working arrangements, he cautioned against any undue pressure for staff to telework because of reduced office occupancy. He reminded the administration to continue to consult the Staff Union on this matter. In relation to recommendation 5 on the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities, he said that a report on the use of external collaborators could be useful, given the budget constraints and in the context of the ongoing ILO review. In relation to recommendation 7 on health insurance schemes, he noted that it would be important to address after-service health insurance (ASHI) liabilities, considering the changing demographics of the workforce with increasing presence in the field, and through discussion with the Staff Union. On budgeting in organizations of the UN system, his group supported all three recommendations addressed to the Governing Body. In relation to recommendation 5 on the principle of mutual recognition within the UN system, his group would welcome reporting on efficiency gains from mutual recognition in the context of the ongoing UN reform initiative and ILO review.

1207. **The Employer spokesperson** noted the positive steps taken by the Office in terms of flexible working arrangements. He underlined the importance of maintaining strong performance management, accountability, and service delivery standards, regardless of work location. In relation to the review of the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities, he was of the view that each organization should retain the capacity to manage its workforce efficiently within its operational context. While sharing the concern about excessive reliance on non-staff contracts, he called for caution against overly rigid, UN system-wide definitions that could limit flexibility or increased costs. In relation to the review of consideration of and action taken on Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reports and recommendations by UN system organizations, he commended the Office's commitment to make improvements through oversight, noting that the ILO had accepted and implemented the majority of recommendations from this review. On budgeting, he urged the Office to continue ensuring that resource allocations clearly reflect organizational priorities and deliver measurable outcomes, while maintaining an appropriate level of detail in budget documentation for informed decision-making. His group considered that the JIU's programme of work for 2025 was addressing highly relevant themes and encouraged the Office to maintain a constructive approach to JIU findings.

1208. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC, a Government representative of Mexico said that her group supported recommendations 2 and 3 on budgeting in organizations of the UN system. In relation to recommendation 5 on the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities, her group would welcome future reports on human resources incorporating statistics on "non-affiliate personnel". In relation to the review on health insurance schemes, her group considered that it was necessary to recognize the ASHI liabilities and to review the current conditions in the light of the changing circumstances. Referring to the ILO's follow-up status on the JIU recommendations presented in the previous years, her group was concerned that some of the recommendations addressed to the executive heads could not be applied in the ILO in the absence of their UN system-wide application. She asked the JIU which recommendations could be addressed to Member States to expedite the decision-making with UN system-wide implications, or if executive heads could act individually for their implementation. She also asked for an update on formal policy and procedure for the investigation of complaints of misconduct by executive heads. Her group requested that the JIU would continue to be invited to participate in the Governing Body discussions.

1209. Speaking on behalf of IMEC, a Government representative of Japan conveyed her group's expectation that the ILO should lead reform discussions in inter-agency mechanisms, including in the specialized agencies cluster in the ongoing UN reform initiative. In relation to recommendations 3 and 7 on health insurance schemes, she urged the Office to provide detailed information on the ASHI liabilities in the ILO Human Resources Strategy 2026–29, considering their potential impact on the ILO's budget and any cost implications of the right of family members of staff to participate in ASHI. She further advised the Office to consider a long-term health insurance strategy, taking account of the ILO's financial situation. In relation to recommendation 5 on the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities, her group appreciated the Office's efforts to enhance transparency and expected further data and information on consultants. She pointed out that the Office's report only covered JIU reports issued over the past three years and that the status on recommendations more than three years ago were not shared with Member States due to the document compilation policy. Her group expected to receive further updates on the accountability framework in the next discussion in 2026. She also asked for updates concerning the independence of the Ethics Officer and the investigation function for complaints of misconduct by executive heads. She conveyed her group's proposal to maintain the JIU's participation in the next Governing Body discussion in 2026.

1210. A representative of the Joint Inspection Unit said that the ILO had accepted 63.9 per cent of the recommendations issued during the 2016–23 period, which was below the UN system-wide average. It had implemented 86.9 per cent of the accepted recommendations. In relation to recommendation 4 on budgeting in organizations of the UN system, she noted that the action addressed to the ILO concerned an information annex to the programme and budget, which presented the operational budget by item and object of expenditure. She said that the JIU maintained the applicability of this recommendation for the ILO.

1211. A representative of the Director-General (Director, Strategic Programming and Management Department) said that the Office took note of the comments and observations concerning internal pre-tribunal-stage appeal mechanisms, the use of non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities, and on health insurance schemes, for appropriate follow-up including through the development of the ILO Human Resources Development Strategy for 2026–29. He acknowledged the comments and some concerns in relation to the flexible working arrangements, and assured that the Office would follow due process, including in the review of office space distribution at headquarters. He emphasized that the independence of the Ethics Officer was assured with his direct reporting to the Director-General and indirect reporting to the Governing Body through the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee. Referring to an observation made by the JIU Chairperson in relation to recommendation 4 on budgeting, he reiterated that the Office had not removed the information on the operational budget or any other elements from the programme and budget documents over the past few biennia. He recalled that the Office had been advised by the Governing Body to strike a balance between the level of details to be ensured in the programme and budget for corporate governance purpose and the management discretion to be safeguarded in line with the results-based management principles.

1212. **A representative of the Director-General** (Treasurer and Financial Comptroller) reminded, in relation to recommendation 7 on health insurance schemes, that the full cost of the ASHI scheme had always been indicated in the financial statements, based on actuarial study and subject to annual audit. In response to the request for updates concerning the development and adoption of formal policy and procedure for the investigation of complaints of misconduct by executive heads, he said that an agenda item would be placed on the 356th Session of the Governing Body in March 2026 to that effect. Prior consultations were under way during the current session of the Governing Body, to inform the final document to be submitted for the said session.

Decision

1213. **The Governing Body took note of the information contained in document GB.355/PFA/7 and provided guidance on the follow-up by the ILO to the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations System.**

(GB.355/PFA/7, paragraph 38)

Personnel Segment

8. Statement by the Chairperson of the Staff Union

(The statement by the staff representative is reproduced in Appendix II.)

9. Amendments to the Staff Regulations (GB.355/PFA/9)

1214. The Governing Body had before it two proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations. The first proposed the deletion of article 4.2(c), which read: "The Director-General may designate a Deputy Director-General, in which event such designation shall be made after consultation with the Officers of the Governing Body and with the agreement of the Governing Body", and the deletion of footnote 1 of the salary scale for the Professional and higher categories under article 3.1. The second amendment proposed inserting, in article 12.2 on the Disciplinary Committee, the words "one representative of" before "the Legal Adviser" and before "the Director of the Human Resources Development Department".

1215. **The Worker spokesperson** rejected the assertion in document GB.355/PFA/9 that a mistake had been made in deleting only the word "Principal" in article 4.2(c) of the Staff Regulations and that the entire subparagraph (c) should have been deleted instead to enable the Director-General to appoint the Deputy Director-General after consulting the Governing Body but not obtaining its agreement. The matter had not been explained when the amendment had been adopted at the 350th Session (March 2024) of the Governing Body. If indeed an error had been made, it might have been in not deleting the reference to "Deputy Director-General" in subparagraph (b) of the same article, which would have made the deletion of "Principal" in subparagraph (c) even more logical. The proposed amendment was significant, as it concerned the appointment of the Deputy Director-General, a person second in command of the ILO who would assume the duties of the Director-General when required. The current wording was valid without further interpretation, and it would be inappropriate to change the applicable rules and procedures in the middle of the current process.

1216. Regarding article 12.2, because the Disciplinary Committee dealt with sensitive private data of staff members, he stressed the need for careful consideration of the representatives of the Legal Adviser and of the Director of the Human Resources Development Department. He asked how they would be selected and what training they would receive, and emphasized the need to ensure that the same representative could follow an entire procedure at each Committee meeting to ensure continuity and preserve institutional memory.

1217. As both proposed amendments required further discussion, the Workers' group proposed an amendment to the draft decision in order to defer decision-making to the subsequent session of the Governing Body.

1218. **The Employer spokesperson** expressed strong support for deleting article 4.2(c), as it was a pragmatic solution that would resolve the current inconsistency in the Staff Regulations. The amendment would align the text with the long-standing practice, remove obsolete references to the Principal Deputy Director-General, and improve legal coherence without altering the substance. The group understood that the amendment would not have any impact on the way in which the Deputy Director-General was appointed, and had been since 1964, and that the appointment was a constitutional prerogative of the Director-General. He asked the Legal Adviser what the implications of deferring the decision would be.

1219. The proposed amendment to article 12.2 was appropriate, as allowing for substitutes would support the continuity of disciplinary proceedings without compromising oversight or equality. It was critical to ensure that the members of the Disciplinary Committee were neutral, to avoid any conflicts of interest with the persons who were subject to disciplinary proceedings, and would maintain confidentiality at all times.

1220. He supported the proposed amendments, as they were consistent with the Organization's practice and would enhance clarity and efficiency. He also supported the draft decision.

1221. **Speaking on behalf of a group of countries from Latin America and the Caribbean**, [12] a Government representative of Brazil asserted that articles 4.2(b) and 4.2(c) were not contradictory and that there was currently no reason to delete the latter provision. The specific requirement that the Governing Body must approve the appointment of the Deputy Director-General was prudent in view of the importance of the role. While the proposed amendment to article 12.2 and the deletion of footnote 1 to article 3.1 were simpler and thus could be approved at the current session, the group could support deferring the discussion on article 4.2 and on possible adjustments to eliminate repetition in its two subparagraphs, especially as more urgent matters were on the agenda of the current session.

1222. **A Government representative of the United States** did not agree with the interpretation that article 4.2(c) of the Staff Regulations required the Governing Body's explicit approval for the appointment of the Deputy Director-General. He considered the issue to be a clerical error rather than a substantive matter and suggested that it could be resolved during the current

[12] Barbados, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

session of the Governing Body. He sought clarification from the Legal Adviser on whether the appointment of a Deputy Director-General fell under article 4.2(b) or 4.2(c) of the Staff Regulations.

1223. **A Government representative of Japan** expressed support for the original draft decision. He noted that article 4.2(b) referred to "appointment", while article 4.2(c) used the term "designation", which suggested that the latter was a different process that came after the appointment. He sought clarification from the Legal Adviser on whether, under the current Staff Regulations, the Director-General could appoint a Deputy Director-General without the Governing Body's agreement, and whether the appointment was governed solely by article 4.2(b) or also by 4.2(c).

1224. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Human Resources Development Department) confirmed that, should the amendment to article 12.2 be approved, the Office would ensure that representatives of the ex officio members of the Disciplinary Committee were trusted staff members who would have a full mandate and would safeguard the confidentiality of the proceedings.

1225. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) explained that the legal basis for appointing a Deputy Director-General was article 4.2(b) of the Staff Regulations. The term "appointment" under that provision reflected the term used in article 9(1) of the ILO Constitution to refer to the recruitment and selection of officials of the Office. Article 4.2(c), by contrast, used the term "designate", and until the 2024 amendment had read "designate a *Principal* Deputy Director-General". Article 4.2(c) had been introduced in 1964, when additional positions of Deputy Director-General were created. (Prior to 1964, there had been only one Deputy Director-General at any one time.) The rationale was to distinguish between their initial appointment (under article 4.2(b)) and the subsequent designation of one of them as the Principal Deputy Director-General. Unlike the initial appointment, that designation required the Governing Body's agreement, and it came with a salary supplement of US$600. However, the designation of a Principal Deputy Director-General had occurred only twice (in 1964 and 1967) and the amount of the salary supplement had never been revised. The intention behind the amendment adopted by the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024) was to remove the reference to the designation of a Principal Deputy Director-General, a practice that had become obsolete. The fact that only the word "Principal" had been removed from article 4.2(c) must be considered to be an error. The Office was proposing to remedy the error by deleting article 4.2(c) and the related footnote of the salary scale for the Professional and higher categories.

1226. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the Legal Adviser's explanation showed that the issue was an important constitutional matter, not merely an error, as stated without explanation in document GB.355/PFA/9. An in-depth discussion should have been held when the Staff Regulations were amended in 2024. The historical logic of requiring the Governing Body's agreement on the designation of a Principal Deputy Director-General indeed reflected the critical importance of the role in assuming the duties of the Director-General when required – a role comparable to that of a single Deputy-General. He stressed the need for constitutional clarity and a full understanding of the historical context of the provisions.

1227. **The Employer spokesperson** reiterated his group's support for the original draft decision.

1228. **A Government representative of the United States** noted the Legal Adviser's confirmation that article 4.2(b) was the sole basis for appointing a Deputy Director-General. In past situations where there had been a single Deputy Director-General, the appointment had been made without the Governing Body's approval. The current amendments were not an attempt to abandon that long-standing practice or dramatically rebalance the authority over the appointment of Deputy Directors-General, as major institutional decisions by the Governing Body were taken only after discussion in search of consensus. The 2024 amendment had been approved relatively recently, by some of the same Governing Body members participating in the current session, who would surely recall the intent of the amendment.

1229. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed that the discussion should be postponed until later in the session and requested the Legal Adviser to provide her advice in writing beforehand.

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

1230. When the discussion resumed, **the Chairperson** announced that the Office had published online and circulated among all groups a document that provided additional information and answered questions that the Workers' group had submitted to the Legal Adviser in writing. [13]

1231. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the additional information provided by the Office had clarified the doubts raised by constituents by detailing the origin and legal logic of the proposed amendments, as well as their consistency with past practice. His group still supported the original draft decision.

1232. **The Worker spokesperson** reiterated that the Governing Body ought to have had an in-depth discussion when it adopted the amendment in 2024 that had deleted the word "Principal", and noted that there had also been no explanation when the provision was introduced in 1964. The additional information provided by the Office confirmed his group's view that deleting article 4.2(c) would be a mistake, as it was logical to require the agreement of the Governing Body for the appointment of a person who would represent the Director-General and the Office in the Governing Body and other international organizations. Furthermore, clarity was needed in the rules on who would assume the responsibilities of a Director-General in the event of their resignation or their temporary or permanent incapacity to perform their duties. His group considered that the Governing Body must approve such a replacement, which would require either an amendment to article 4.2(c) or a new provision, and invited the Office to make a corresponding proposal. As the discussion was a matter of legal and constitutional concern, the group maintained its proposal to defer the decision to the March 2026 session.

1233. **A Government representative of Japan** confirmed his support for the original draft decision on the basis of the explanations of the Legal Adviser.

1234. **A Government representative of the United States** stated that the issue was straightforward, as an error made in 2024 should now be corrected in the interest of good governance. The concern raised by the Worker spokesperson about the lack of clear rules for replacing the Director-General in cases of resignation or incapacity was wholly separate from the current agenda item and it was not appropriate or feasible to address it in the current discussion or to defer the discussion. She reiterated her Government's support for the original draft decision.

1235. **The Employer spokesperson** observed that there was no support in the room for the Workers' group's proposal to postpone the discussion until March 2026. The proposed amendments merely aligned the Staff Regulations with the long-standing practice and no legal ambiguities remained. The latest concerns raised by the Workers' group with respect to the resignation or incapacity of the Director-General were a different issue. Moreover, the Staff Regulations could

[13] GB.355/PFA/9/Additional information.

not anticipate every possible scenario; in the past, the Governing Body had considered such extraordinary situations on a case-by-case basis.

1236. A Government representative of Colombia said that the information provided by the Office had not clarified the matter in depth and he did not see any urgency to take a decision immediately. Deferring the matter to March 2026 would allow Governing Body members more time to consider the additional information and the relevant provisions; he therefore supported the Workers' group's proposal.

1237. A Government representative of Germany fully supported the Office's analysis that article 4.2(c) had become obsolete and that retaining it would only cause confusion, without offering any legal or practical benefit. Deleting it was the only logical solution. He supported the original draft decision.

1238. A Government representative of Hungary expressed support for the amendments to the Staff Regulations and for the original draft decision.

1239. A Government representative of Brazil asked the Office to clarify why the discussion and decision-making had to take place at the current session.

1240. The Director-General explained that the current wording of article 4.2(c) had already caused confusion earlier in the year, which had led to the detection of the error. It was appropriate to correct the error as soon as possible to avoid further confusion. He considered that there could indeed be a gap in the rules concerning the procedure in the event the Director-General was incapacitated, but that was an entirely separate matter that would require a separate discussion, not a postponement of the current discussion.

1241. The Worker spokesperson asked the Legal Adviser whether retaining article 4.2(c) could be justified in order to provide for clarity in cases where there was more than one Deputy Director-General and the Director-General became incapacitated.

1242. A representative of the Director-General (Legal Adviser) explained that article 4.2(c) had originally been introduced to allow the Director-General to designate one of multiple Deputy Directors-General the special status of Principal Deputy Director-General. Historical documents stated that the Principal Deputy Director-General would replace the Director-General when the latter was absent, but did not mention cases of incapacity. They also stated that the Principal Deputy Director-General and the Director-General should never be absent at the same time so that one of them would always be able to manage the Office. There was no rule addressing the situation of the incapacity of a Director-General due to illness or death, but there were three precedents where the Governing Body had made ad hoc decisions following the resignation or death of a Director-General, pending the election of a new Director-General. She noted that the appointment of the Director-General was governed by Annex III to the Compendium of rules applicable to the Governing Body and thus the issue raised by the Workers' group might be addressed by a separate set of rules, not the Staff Regulations.

1243. The Worker spokesperson acknowledged that the issue of the Director-General's incapacity was separate from the current proposed amendments. He requested the Office to prepare a proposal to address the identified ambiguities and provide greater constitutional and legal clarity in the future. The Workers' group joined the consensus in the room and withdrew the proposal to defer the discussion.

1244. A Government representative of Brazil underlined that comprehensive information on complex subjects should always be made available together with the documents submitted to the Governing Body so that constituents could consult experts and consider matters thoroughly from the outset.

Decision

1245. **The Governing Body approved the amendments to the Staff Regulations set out in Appendices I and II to document GB.355/PFA/9, with effect from 1 December 2025.**

(GB.355/PFA/9, paragraph 7)

10. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO: Recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by other international organizations (GB.355/PFA/10)

1246. **The Employer spokesperson** said that, having noted that the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation and the International Rubber Study Group appeared to comply with the criteria set out in the Statute of the Tribunal, her group would support the draft decision, on the understanding that extending the Tribunal's jurisdiction to those organizations would not generate additional costs.

1247. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed support for the draft decision.

1248. **A representative of the Director-General** (Legal Adviser) confirmed that the recognition of the jurisdiction of the Tribunal by the two organizations did not imply additional financial resources.

Decision

1249. **The Governing Body approved the recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the International Organization for Marine Aids to Navigation (IALA) and the International Rubber Study Group (IRSG) with effect from 26 November 2025.**

(GB.355/PFA/10, paragraph 13)

11. Other personnel matters

(No other personnel matters were submitted to the Governing Body at this session.)

▶ Appendix I

Opening address of the Director-General of the ILO to the 355th Session of the Governing Body (Monday, 17 November 2025)

Madam Chairperson of the Governing Body,

Madam Worker Vice-Chairperson,

Mr Employer Vice-Chairperson,

Distinguished members of the Governing Body,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you to this 355th Session of the Governing Body.

We meet at a moment that is not simply challenging – it is truly defining. The uncertainty surrounding us is no longer temporary or peripheral; it has become the ground on which we must now operate. And yet, despite these turbulent times, I remain deeply convinced of our capacity – together – to steer the ILO with purpose, clarity and humanism.

Multilateralism as we once knew it is undergoing profound transformation. This should not lead us to lament the past, but to draw from our history the strength and lessons required to build the multilateralism of tomorrow – one that is more inclusive, more resilient and firmly grounded in social justice.

Our history shows that when the world acts together, extraordinary progress can be achieved. The universal ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the halving of child labour among 5- to 14-year-olds are for me an eloquent illustration of this. And yet, we know too well that for millions of people, the reality of decent work remains distant: a young person with no prospects; a childcare worker struggling to make ends meet; a migrant worker exposed to various risks – this is the daily lot of the ILO.

These human realities are the reason this Organization exists. They are why our mandate must remain firm, principled and uncompromised. Our normative authority, the independence of our supervisory mechanisms, our Decent Work Agenda and tripartite structure give the ILO a unique legitimacy – and an equally unique responsibility – in shaping a fairer global order.

Over the coming days, you will be called upon to navigate an agenda that fully reflects the scope of our mission – from the follow-up to the Second World Summit for Social Development, to our work on non-discrimination, to essential reforms that will strengthen the effectiveness and credibility of our standards system.

But while I have the opportunity, I must now speak frankly about our internal situation. The financial crisis we face is severe, unprecedented if we consider recent decades, and is already affecting our capacity to respond to our constituents' expectations. As of today, around CHF254 million in assessed contributions for the current biennium still remain unpaid – nearly one third of our regular budget.

The review before you sets out two scenarios; however, let me speak with complete honesty: **only Option 2 reflects the reality we must prepare for**. It foresees a shortfall of up to 20 per cent of the regular budget for 2026–27. This is not a theoretical option on paper; it is the trajectory dictated by the facts.

And because time is against us, we have already begun implementing the measures linked to these options.

We anticipate some improvement in the cash flow situation at the start of 2026, thanks to early payments made by several Member States. But this will not alter the essential challenge: **we must adjust our appropriations and reduce our expenditure baseline by at least 20 per cent, even if we receive the 250 million.**

This is not simply an accounting exercise. It is a profound institutional recalibration. And I am fully aware of the anxiety this generates – especially among our staff, for whose professionalism, resilience and sense of mission in these turbulent and very difficult times I am sincerely grateful.

To navigate this transition responsibly, we have set up a task force to identify priority areas and to deprioritize activities that do not directly help us deliver our mandate. Its conclusions, expected by year's end, will shape the revised budgetary contributions for 2026–27, which the Governing Body will examine in March 2026.

I would like to reaffirm my complete commitment to genuine constructive consultation based on good faith. And I would like to reiterate a pledge I consider fundamental: although redundancies are probably unavoidable let us be clear that they will always be a measure of last resort, implemented with fairness, transparency, and with our full duty of care and attention.

We must demonstrate – to ourselves and to the world – that even difficult reforms can be undertaken in a manner that respects the values that define our Organization.

The ILO has faced adversity many times over its 106-year history. Each time, we have emerged stronger because we have chosen unity over division, courage over hesitation, and principles over expediency. This moment requires us to follow the same path.

Yes, we must be firm. We must act with urgency. But we must also lead with compassion – because this is the only way to preserve not only the functioning of the Organization but also its very soul.

With your support, I am convinced that we will weather this storm – and that we will emerge more focused, better prepared, better organized and even more faithful to the mandate entrusted to us.

Thank you.

▶ Appendix II

Statement by the Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee

Madam Chairperson,

Madam Vice-Chairperson, representative of the Workers,

Mr Vice-Chairperson, representative of the Employers,

Director-General,

Members of the Governing Body,

Dear colleagues and all those of you who are present today, either in this room or online,

On the edge of the abyss ... this is the metaphor that I am going to unveil to you gradually in the next 15 minutes – a metaphor which comes from a drawing done by the members of the Staff Union Committee at the end of June 2025, following the Governing Body session. After hearing your statements during this special Governing Body session, we wanted to see where we stood, as staff representatives, on the strategy and proposals to be devised to deal with the situation and respond to the expectations of the staff. This discussion was justified by the commitment I had made to the ILO staff and to you, to face up to our responsibilities and to hold the necessary consultations and negotiations, on the basis of the guidelines that you had provided to the Office during the discussion of document GB.354/INS/5, *The ILO in a changing multilateral environment: Towards better effectiveness and efficiency*. I had raised a number of questions on the proposals submitted during this discussion and stated that they were not the result of a process of social dialogue with the Staff Union. I had also made the commitment to continue to support the administration concerning proposals for measures which provide us with the means to be more effective in our work and in terms of respect for the rights of staff and social dialogue. By contrast, however, I had warned that we would oppose, by all appropriate means, the measures affecting the employment and working conditions of our colleagues, if these measures were hasty and not justified by specific, objective and transparent criteria, and were lacking in clearly identified benefits for the staff, the Organization and its constituents.

In the drawing, on the edge of this abyss, a character in a state of flux: the ILO. This character appears to be imposing – to put it mildly, with the weight of a centenary, the weight of the wisdom of the years and its strong attachment to its roots; but imposing also with the weight of the slowness and ineffectiveness that have built up with time throughout its growth. This character seemed to us all to be strong and unshakeable: reassured by what we had heard from the members of the Governing Body at the June session, reassured to a certain extent by this commitment to a zero-nominal-growth budget, an unambiguous statement about what brings us together: the anchoring of the values of social justice and social dialogue, a commitment to multilateralism and the recognition that this Organization’s main asset is its human value, the women and men who work there in the four corners of the world with their expertise, their professionalism and their passion. This character has changing facets, depending on the specific nature and the interests of each of the members of this character, with more importance attached to certain bodies – normative or operational for example, but recalling the importance of maintaining a balance between its components, with the recipe for that being an authentic social dialogue. This strength, the Staff Union as part of the whole, derives from its legitimacy de jure and de facto. De jure as according to the ILO Constitution, the Staff Regulations, our collective recognition and procedural agreement, and the case law of the ILO Administrative Tribunal, our existence is essential to the Organization, since the Union is the sole representative of staff interests ; thus, any measure affecting the terms and conditions of employment must be the subject of real collective bargaining. De facto since the Staff Union has the trust of more than 2,500 colleagues today, whose presence and support were very strongly expressed in June 2025 – with the participation of 1,500 colleagues – and we see it again today through the solidarity expressed in all the photos received and the presence of my colleagues here in the room and online, whom I thank. Their presence today, their contributions and actions in the past few months are a powerful demonstration that they want to be part of the solution, that they wish not only to be able to express themselves but be listened to and really heard, that the die is not yet “cast” and that they – still – believe in social dialogue.

The heaviness caused by slowness, institutional and bureaucratic malfunctioning and inefficiencies is of course a reality. A reality of which the staff is well aware and which obstructs the proper performance of its work. This is the reason for which the staff wished to make an enthusiastic contribution to the process introduced with the review team, and which expressed itself inter alia by means of the platform of ideas online, during open exchanges with the Director-General, and recalled the proposals already expressed through previous processes such as the recommendations issued on the reform of the field structure ten years ago, the survey on the ILO’s organizational health, and so on. These contributions have focused above all on substantive proposals, targeting the Organization itself and not out of concern to protect individual privileges which are often wrongly mentioned. The staff has moreover expressed, through a survey conducted by the Staff Union in October, the sacrifices which it is prepared to accept to deal with the necessary immediate measures to reduce the budget and limit the cutting of posts.

This character therefore stands at the edge of the abyss and the abyss is a frightening prospect.

For several months, the character has moved dangerously towards this abyss: it has emerged at a time when we have had to face the consequences of the projects funded by the Government of the United States being stopped, consequences for which we are still paying the price, with a number of colleagues who have had to leave the Organization despite their expertise in key areas of the ILO, or other colleagues who have been temporarily affected on other missions - precarious missions which have not therefore been perennial solutions to conserve and preserve this unique know-how - and which are again on the point of leaving the Organization. This abyss has loomed closer and closer, when the echoes have come from other United Nations system agencies: what was to be a celebration of 80 years of the United Nations has been transformed into a mass, disorganized and terrifying process of redundancies, devoid of transparency and with no strategic direction. Moreover, the proposals made as part of the reform of the specialized agencies remain very opaque for the Staff Union. We have called for leadership of the ILO which sets the example as regards staff matters and social dialogue within the reform process; we hope that there is still time …

This abyss is just at our feet, with the liquidity crisis situation since September and the prospect of having to face up to a drastic reduction in the budget in the coming months.

Of course, the prospect of this abyss may seem different, depending on where the character is standing; on the way in which the character perceives the abyss, and this may be a source of divisions: the abyss may seem further away to those based in the field; it may seem not to be so deep for those preparing to leave the Organization for different reasons; but mostly it is frightening for a number of colleagues who have moved from asking questions to becoming anxious, and now seem unfortunately, to be resigned. … Recently, it was the subject of a resolution adopted by all members of the staff during the Union General Assembly of 9 October 2025, who called on the Staff Union to draw attention "to the serious concern raised among staff each time one or more Member States do not assume their financial obligations to the ILO, thus leading to measures for which the staff often has to pay the price and compromising the capacity of the ILO to deliver on its mandate" and instructed the Staff Union Committee "to continue urging the Governing Body members to: instruct the Office to respect the Office's social dialogue framework, engage in substantive discussions with the Director-General before any irreversible decisions are taken, and call on Management to take the actions outlined in the Staff Union's Position Paper on the Administration's draft GB paper (GB.355/INS/7)".

Perceiving this abyss requires us to be able to measure it, to assess it. We need to have access to the necessary, precise information and data to devise a strategy and options that can be envisaged. In the past few months, it has been destabilizing to perceive that it is impossible to have access to clear and precise data which sometimes quite simply does not exist: what financial data are available, what hypotheses should be taken into account to protect against liquidity emergencies, what is the amount of the possible savings and on what budget lines, which Member States are finally going to meet their budgetary obligations, for what amounts and when? Of course, the character has, in its past journey, in its centenary history, encountered pitfalls and other similar obstacles. That said, the abyss is the first of its kind and combines a number of elements, as a result of which it is very difficult to define it as it develops very quickly. This is one of the major constraints which has faced the Union in the past few months: we have not been able to obtain the necessary and sufficiently precise financial and human data to be able to make a constructive contribution with the administration, as we would have wanted, to the proposals put forward. So, we are focused on the key principles to be considered in such a context, developing these aspirational principles which we will subsequently use as a basis for future negotiations. We have also called on all staff, through our process of representative consultation, requesting the different constituencies at headquarters and on the ground to adopt a position. Finally, we have been able to consolidate this position common to all staff at the Union's global meeting held at the beginning of October, and which, and I quote the final declaration of the representatives of all duty stations: "Reaffirms its commitment to defending and protecting the rights and interests of all staff, ensuring that the ILO practices what it preaches through its mandate and maintaining the human being at the centre of its mission; calls for a fair reform process based on trust, justice, and solidarity; stresses that the true capital of the ILO lies in its people, whose commitment, skills and humanity form the strength and credibility of the Organization."

We have communicated in a transparent and public manner the information which we had, our positions and proposals, hoping to move forward together with the administration. This implies knowing which hypotheses can be validated or those which cannot be contemplated. As things stand today, the Staff Union has unfortunately not received a response, other than in the form of new versions of the proposed plan.

The drawing done in June shows ground on the other side, beyond the abyss … The artists drew a sun, lush vegetation, life, a promise of the future. The details of this "other side" are still, of course, to be defined. Nevertheless, we are now certainly less optimistic as regards this big sun, as in all cases we will need to eliminate a lot of doubts, come to terms with our disappointments and bitterness, which are now driving many of us, as we fail to understand the grounds for decisions taken recently. We hope not to have lost – too many – colleagues and friends who would have stayed behind – a human tragedy, not only in individual terms but also as regards the expertise and value provided by the Organization's staff. Certain elements are and will nevertheless be essential for this other side to prosper, and that is what brings us together here: they are our values of social justice, multilateralism, independence and social dialogue. This other side must not be too utopian, in case it becomes unreachable. It must be built taking into account the lessons on what has worked so far and what must of course be changed.

What possible options are there in the face of this abyss. Turn back? Stop at the edge? Move forward?

In the drawing illustrating this metaphor, the staff representatives traced a bridge in June 2025, a bridge supported by our joint efforts. This bridge is the bridge of true social dialogue. In order to be solid, it must be founded on a common understanding of what social dialogue and collective bargaining are. This common understanding has been tested in the past few months. It often seemed that we were not speaking the same language, that we didn't understand each other, when we spoke about consultations, when we called for negotiation on the measures to be implemented, on the proposals to be devised. We were surprised that we did not receive any immediate positive reactions to our request to negotiate an agreement in order to deal with the staff adjustments. The Staff Union remains convinced that we have no other choice than that we must understand each other and take the necessary action to identify these shared interests and move forward together on this bridge. You have no doubt had to face up, in your organizations, your respective countries and your administrations, to austerity plans, to drastic measures affecting the staff and to difficult choices to be made. We have to learn from you and, at least the Staff Union, wants to be accountable to you for implementing social dialogue and what it can bring in the face of crisis situations.

Members of the Governing Body, I have delivered to you something which might of course appear to be abstract. I would have liked moreover to project this drawing for you, because it also showed the extent to which the staff can have other talents – in this case, artistic!

I didn't wish to enter into the details of the different subjects on the agenda of this Governing Body, commenting as is customary on the different documents. I have not gone into the details of the Staff Union's proposals and positions – they are available to you on request. The Director-General often says “we do not have the time”. Indeed, the Staff Union and the staff that we represent are convinced that we do not have the luxury of waiting. We are concerned about time lost prevaricating, leading to unilateral decisions being implemented, which were not taken within a strategic framework and which no longer allow us to focus on what is essential. Decisions, which may be difficult, and which must be taken especially according to pre-established criteria and guided by negotiation, negotiation which must take place in the existing framework of the Joint Negotiating Committee, and must not be diluted in the different bodies and task forces, where staff, represented by the Staff Union, are not at the table according to the appropriate rules. The Staff Union calls for these negotiations with all its might so that the proposed solutions respond effectively to the combined needs of the Organization and the staff who work there.

I have one element of this metaphor left to share with you…The title which was given to the drawing: “The abyss of dangerous decisions”.

Members of the Governing Body, Director-General, colleagues, let us not fall into this abyss as a result of dangerous decisions for our Organization, decisions which would have a negative impact on the ILO's capacity to deliver in the long term, which would compromise our fundamental values, and which would cast human beings into the background. Our decisions must defend the institution and its mandate in the face of the current budgetary cuts and structural changes, and ensure that those who carry out the work are treated with dignity and respect so that they can they fulfil their mandate in the future. The non-observance of its own fundamental principles – towards its own staff in this process – will compromise the ILO's credibility whenever and wherever it tries to intervene. The ILO is the sum of all the parts which we represent. Each of us must be able to participate on the basis of our mandate, our statute and our responsibilities for this decision-making, in a spirit of mutual respect. Without this balance, the ILO will lose its own balance. If it were to fall, we would all fall with it. Its survival will be the proof of our joint leadership.

Thank you for listening.