



Governing Body

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Institutional Section

INS

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The process of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance

Purpose of the document

This document provides an overview of the process of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance to enable the Governing Body to take an informed decision on whether to undertake a new determination in accordance with the ILO Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Governing Body (see the draft decision in paragraph 31).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome: Enabling outcome B: Improved governance and oversight.

Policy implications: None at this stage.

Legal implications: None at this stage.

Financial implications: Yes, depending on the decision of the Governing Body.

Follow-up action required: Depending on the decision of the Governing Body.

Author unit: Office of the Legal Adviser in consultation with STATISTICS.

Related documents: [GB.353/INS/6](#); [GB.353/PV](#), para. 218(b).

► I. Introduction

1. At its 353rd Session (March 2025), in the context of the discussion on democratization in the ILO's governance and update on the status of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO,¹ the Governing Body decided to include on the agenda of its 356th Session (March–April 2026) an item on the process of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance.²
2. This document provides an overview of the process, with proposed options as regards its possible implementation, to enable the Governing Body to take an informed decision on whether to undertake a new determination in accordance with the Constitution and the Standing Orders of the Governing Body.
3. To facilitate the Governing Body's consideration, this document presents the legal framework for the process, an overview of historical developments, and the process to be followed as set out in the current rules. Finally, it outlines a possible timeline, should the Governing Body decide to initiate the process to determine the Members of chief industrial importance.

► II. Legal framework

4. The process of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance is governed by the Constitution of the ILO and the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. The existence of Members of chief industrial importance in the Governing Body and the number of such Members are specified in article 7(2) of the Constitution:

Of the twenty-eight persons representing governments, ten shall be appointed by the Members of chief industrial importance, and eighteen shall be appointed by the Members selected for that purpose by the Government delegates to the Conference, excluding the delegates of the ten Members mentioned above.
5. Article 7(3) of the Constitution indicates the process by which they are determined:

The Governing Body shall as occasion requires determine which are the Members of the Organization of chief industrial importance and shall make rules to ensure that all questions relating to the selection of the Members of chief industrial importance are considered by an impartial committee before being decided by the Governing Body. Any appeal made by a Member from the declaration of the Governing Body as to which are the Members of chief industrial importance shall be decided by the Conference, but an appeal to the Conference shall not suspend the application of the declaration until such time as the Conference decides the appeal.
6. The rules referred to in article 7(3) of the Constitution are set out in article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body:

1.3.1. The Governing Body shall not decide any question relating to the selection of the Members of chief industrial importance unless the question of modification of the list of such

¹ For an update on the status of ratification of the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the ILO, see GB.356/INS/INF/5.

² GB.353/PV, para. 218(b).

Members has been included in the agenda of the session as a specific item and the Governing Body has before it a report by its Officers on the question to be decided.

1.3.2. The Officers of the Governing Body shall, before recommending to the Governing Body any modification of the list of Members of chief industrial importance, take the advice of a committee appointed by the Governing Body and including experts qualified to advise on the most appropriate criteria of industrial importance and on the relative industrial importance of States assessed on the basis of such criteria.

► III. Historical overview

Meaning of the concept of Members of chief industrial importance

7. The concept of “Members of chief industrial importance” was introduced in Article 393 of the Treaty of Versailles to avoid explicitly naming the countries which had won the First World War.³ The number of seats reserved for such Members was set at eight.⁴ Questions as to which countries qualified as the Members of chief industrial importance were to be resolved by the Council of the League of Nations. Apart from an understanding that Western countries in which a large proportion of the wage-earning population was employed in agriculture would not be excluded, the drafters made no attempt to define the concept either in the text of the Constitution or in any rules.⁵
8. The meaning of the concept was first considered in 1921 when, in responding to a formal complaint submitted by India in 1919 concerning the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance, the Council of the League of Nations set up a mixed committee composed of four members of the Governing Body and two experts nominated by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. The mixed committee was tasked with defining the meaning to be given to the expression “industrial importance” and setting the criteria, including their relative value, for the selection of the eight States. It took the view, considering the constitutional objectives of the ILO, that the Members of chief industrial importance were “those which are of chief importance with regard to the regulation of the relations between capital and labour”.⁶ In 1922, the Permanent Court of International Justice considered, in its advisory opinion on the competence of the ILO in respect of international regulation of the conditions of labour of persons employed in agriculture, that the expression “industrial”, as used in the Treaty of Versailles, should be interpreted in the wide sense, pertaining to the various fields of productive labour, including agriculture.⁷ In 1935, when the process of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance was initiated, following the admission to the ILO of the United States of America and of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the withdrawal of Germany, it was noted that, “in practice the industrial importance of States is to a very large extent identical with their importance in general, since

³ Paris Peace Conference (1919–1920), *Commission on International Labour Legislation*, 1919, pp. 82, 84–85.

⁴ *Article 393* of the Treaty of Versailles.

⁵ *Commission on International Labour Legislation*, 1919, pp. 82, 84–85.

⁶ League of Nations, *Report of the Committee appointed to consider the criteria to be adopted in the selection of the eight States of chief industrial importance*, C.410.1922.V, 31 May 1922, Annex I, p. 12.

⁷ Permanent Court of International Justice, *Advisory Opinion No. 2*, Series B, File F.a.II, 12 August 1922. The pronouncement of the 1922 Advisory Opinion has been consistently referred to in the context of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance by the committees of experts as a guide to clarify their competence and to define the scope of their task.

if it is agreed that the word 'industrial' was intended to be used in its widest sense, it covers the whole field of production, which is the basis of the whole national wealth".⁸ Consequently, the committees of experts appointed by the Governing Body to determine the Members of chief industrial importance have, so far, construed their task as being to examine the economic importance of Member States.⁹

Reviews of the Members of chief industrial importance

9. The Members of chief industrial importance were determined for the first time in 1919 out of necessity to enable the Governing Body to be convened.¹⁰ Since then, the Governing Body has undertaken the process to determine the Members of chief industrial importance an additional eleven times, nine of which resulted in a modification of the list (in 1922, 1935, 1940, 1944, 1948, 1954, 1978, 1980 and 1983) and two of which resulted in no changes to the list (1963 and 1968). In 1954, when the membership of the Governing Body increased, so too did the number of seats reserved for the Members of chief industrial importance, from eight to the current ten.¹¹ Since 1983, the ten Members of chief industrial importance have remained Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, the Russian Federation,¹² the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The prior determinations of the Members of chief industrial importance are set out in Appendix I.

Roles of the Governing Body and its Officers and the committees of experts

10. In 1935, the Officers of the Governing Body confirmed that the Governing Body – rather than the Council of the League of Nations – was the competent authority to revise the list of Members of chief industrial importance whenever a new development of sufficient importance occurred or at the request of a State claiming entitlement to a place on the list. It was clarified that in the event of a dispute concerning the revised list, the final decision would rest with the Council of the League of Nations, in accordance with Article 393 of the Treaty of Versailles. The Officers also decided to consult experts on the application and weighting of the criteria before submitting a further report to the Governing Body.¹³
11. The roles of the Governing Body and its Officers and the practice of consulting experts were subsequently codified in the 1946 amendment to the ILO Constitution, which resulted in the current article 7(3) of the Constitution. In 1948, pursuant to that article, the Governing Body adopted rules for the process in its Standing Orders. It was decided to avoid adopting detailed rules for all possible questions relating to the process, to allow the committees of experts flexibility in reviewing such matters independently.¹⁴ Since then, the process has involved the

⁸ 69th Session of the Governing Body, *Minutes of the Fourth Sitting (Private)*, January–February 1935, Appendix I, Report on the question of the eight States of chief industrial importance, Annex C, pp. 45–47.

⁹ GB.222/3/9, appendix, [Report of the Committee of Experts on the Determination of the Ten States of Chief Industrial Importance](#), 1983, para. 5.

¹⁰ It was acknowledged that the compilation of the list was "very difficult"; see record of proceedings of the [first annual meeting of the International Labour Conference](#), 25 November 1919, pp. 13, 131–132.

¹¹ International Labour Conference, 36th Session, 1953, [Record of Proceedings](#), pp. 423, 442.

¹² In 1992, the Russian Federation succeeded to the membership of the USSR.

¹³ Report on the question of the eight States of chief industrial importance, January–February 1935, p. 34.

¹⁴ Explanation by the Legal Adviser to the Standing Orders Committee of the Governing Body, 104th Session (1948), *Draft minutes of the second sitting* (confidential), second paragraph.

appointment by the Governing Body of a committee of independent experts to advise the Officers of the Governing Body, who in turn make recommendations to the Governing Body for decision. In practice, the Officers have always followed the advice of committees of experts on the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance.

Criteria on which the Members of chief industrial importance have been determined

12. Various criteria have been used to determine the Members of chief industrial importance, as can be seen in Appendix I. Past criteria have included Members' contribution to the ILO budget, national revenue, external trade and economically active population, all of which have always been considered to relate to the economic activity of the Member States. Relative weights for the criteria have been assigned. In 1983, the criteria of national revenue and economically active population that had been used in 1980 were replaced by a single criterion: gross domestic product (GDP) (or gross national product (GNP)) at fixed international prices. Noting that economic importance was not the same as economic welfare, the committee of experts at that time considered that this single criterion measured the total value of goods and services within a country during a year, and that comparable statistics of GDP or GNP by themselves were sufficient to identify the Members of chief industrial importance.¹⁵ The Officers of the Governing Body noted that the data available gave adequate consideration to the size of a country's labour force as reflected in the GDP, so that it was no longer necessary to consider labour force statistics separately, as had been the case previously.¹⁶

► IV. Process of the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance

13. In accordance with article 7(3) of the Constitution and article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, the process involves the four main steps set out below.

1. Decision to initiate the process

14. Article 7(3) of the Constitution provides that the Governing Body shall determine the Members of chief industrial importance "as occasion requires". Accordingly, the Governing Body will address the question of the determination of Members of chief industrial importance at the request of a State which considers itself entitled to join the list of such Members or whenever a new development of sufficient importance occurs. Such developments would include the withdrawal of a State of chief industrial importance from the ILO,¹⁷ but given the broad wording of the Constitution, other factors could be considered by the Governing Body.
15. Past practice indicates that a proposal to initiate such a review has been presented to the Governing Body, normally by its Officers, for discussion and further action.¹⁸ In taking the

¹⁵ GB.222/3/9, appendix, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Determination of the Ten States of Chief Industrial Importance, paras 6–7.

¹⁶ GB.222/3/9, Report of the Officers of the Governing Body, para. 4.

¹⁷ Report on the question of the eight States of chief industrial importance, 69th Session of the Governing Body, January–February 1935, pp. 34, 35.

¹⁸ See, for example, GB.212/21/18; GB.221/3/5.

decision to initiate the review process, the Governing Body has requested the Director-General to propose to it a list of potential experts for a committee of experts. Given that the Officers' role in initiating the review process is not addressed under the current rules, the decision could be taken by the Governing Body directly.

2. Appointment of a committee of experts and related financial implications

16. Once the Governing Body has decided to initiate the process to determine the Members of chief industrial importance, it appoints an "impartial committee" (article 7(3) of the Constitution). This will include "experts qualified to advise on the most appropriate criteria of industrial importance and on the relative industrial importance of States assessed on the basis of such criteria" (paragraph 1.3.2 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body). In practice, the Director-General's proposal on the composition of the committee of experts has always been endorsed by the Governing Body.
17. The aim in respect of the composition of each committee of experts has always been, in addition to impartiality, "to secure the highest level of statistical authority while not including in the Committee anyone from a State which may prove to be either just above or just below the line of demarcation between a State of chief industrial importance and the other countries".¹⁹ All seven of the committees established since the Second World War comprised between five and six statistical experts who were economically, geographically and politically representative of the ILO membership, including at least one expert from a Member of chief industrial importance and one expert from each ILO region.²⁰ In 1983, the last time that such a committee was established, three substitutes were also appointed to replace any of the titular members who might be unable to attend the meetings.²¹ In general, in order to ensure the highest level of statistical authority and expertise, the Director-General has proposed experts who held leadership positions with national statistical institutions.
18. Should the Governing Body wish to establish such a committee, the impartiality and technical expertise of the proposed experts will be paramount in its determination of the committee's composition. It is proposed that, in terms of technical expertise, all experts should preferably be statisticians with strong macroeconomic credentials, demonstrated technical knowledge of the updated System of National Accounts (2025) and familiarity with the latest standards adopted by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, particularly the latest statistical standards on statistics of work and work relationships, in which a refined definition of the labour force and its components was developed. In addition, it would be desirable for experts to have practical experience in the application of the System of National Accounts at the national or international level and experience in comparative macroeconomic data (for example, production, trade and income). Ideally, they should possess a strong statistical and economic background and have experience in applying relevant criteria at the national or international level. Candidates may be drawn from current or former chief statisticians or economists of national statistical offices, central banks or international organizations. Experts from academic institutions could also be considered. As it may be difficult to identify individuals with in-depth knowledge of both macroeconomics and labour statistics, the final composition of the committee should ensure that all necessary areas of expertise are represented. Potential

¹⁹ *Minutes of the 172nd Session of the Governing Body*, May–June 1968, Appendix V, para. 6.

²⁰ See Appendix II.

²¹ GB.221/3/42, para. 3.

candidates could be identified in consultation with relevant international organizations, including the United Nations Regional Economic Commissions.

19. The Governing Body may wish to give guidance to the Office on the number of titular and substitute members to be proposed. For example, the Governing Body may wish to decide that the committee should be composed of five to nine experts. This could include one to two experts selected from each of the four regions as well as one international expert with demonstrated experience in leading successful international harmonization or comparison exercises in intergovernmental organizations. In line with established practice, at least one of the experts should come from a current Member of chief industrial importance but none from a State which may prove to be either just above or just below the line of demarcation between a State of chief industrial importance and the other countries. An additional one to two experts from each of the four regions could be selected to act as substitutes.
20. It is anticipated that the establishment of a committee of experts would have the following financial implications, amounting to an estimated provisioning of US\$156,000:
 - Average cost per expert, on the assumption of four online meetings and a one-day in-person meeting in Geneva: US\$10,000, corresponding to travel costs and honorarium.
 - One G-4 staff member providing secretarial support at 50 per cent for four months: US\$26,000.
 - The cost of interpretation and translation would depend on whether the experts would be able to work in English. It is anticipated that the four proposed online meetings would each last two hours and that the one-day in-person meeting would consist of two three-hour sittings. The maximum cost of interpretation and translation is estimated at US\$40,000.

3. Review of criteria and issuance of recommendations by the committee of experts

21. As provided in paragraph 1.3.2 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, the mandate of the committee of experts is to identify the most appropriate criteria for determining industrial importance and the relative weight to be assigned to each, if applicable, and to advise on the relative industrial importance of Member States by applying the identified criteria.
22. Once appointed, the committee of experts meets, with the support of the Office. In accordance with paragraph 1.3.2 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, the committee provides a report with its advice to the Officers of the Governing Body. In the past, committees have carried out their work between two sessions of the Governing Body and their reports have been submitted to the Officers of the Governing Body prior to the opening of the session which includes the item on its agenda, so that the Officers may include recommendations in their report to the Governing Body.
23. Each time the list of Members of chief industrial importance is reviewed, the committee entrusted with the task identifies the relevant criteria anew. It is expected that any committee of experts established by the Governing Body at this point would review and decide on the criteria to be applied to determine industrial importance, taking into account global developments in the field of statistical methods and data relating to economic importance since the last determination over 42 years ago. Notably, the nature of the possible criteria for determining industrial importance has evolved considerably in recent decades. The economic importance of a Member State can now be assessed more accurately through the use of multiple metrics, reflecting advances in how countries measure both the economic and the

social dimensions of development. The experts could incorporate these developments into their advice on the relative industrial importance of Member States.

24. The Governing Body may wish to invite the committee, in assessing economic activity, to follow the internationally agreed System of National Accounts (2025) as an overarching guide, within which they could construct their approach and methodological refinements. In addition, the latest advances in the use of indicators adjusted for purchasing power parity – such as GDP, cost of living and trade volumes – allow for more reliable cross-country comparisons because they eliminate differences in price levels and equalize the purchasing power of currencies. This approach minimizes the impact of exchange-rate fluctuations and provides a more accurate basis for measuring economic activity, balance of trade and well-being. When determining the criteria to be used, the committee of experts would need to take account of these considerations, alongside ongoing international discussions on possible variables that would complement GDP, including labour-related aspects such as the size and characteristics of the labour force, demographic trends and selected distributional dimensions.

4. Recommendation of the Officers and decision of the Governing Body

25. As required under paragraph 1.3.1 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body, a specific item on the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance would be placed on the agenda of the session of the Governing Body at which a decision would be taken.
26. At that session, the Officers of the Governing Body would submit their report to the Governing Body, with a recommendation made on the basis of the report of the committee of experts. The report of the committee would be appended to the recommendation of the Officers.
27. Based on a review of the report of its Officers, the Governing Body would decide on the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance. Any change to the list would normally take effect either immediately or at the subsequent session of the Governing Body.²²
28. While article 7(3) of the ILO Constitution states that any Member may appeal the decision of the Governing Body to the Conference without suspending the application of the decision, no such appeal has been made to date.

► V. Possible timeline of next steps

29. Should the Governing Body decide to undertake a determination of the Members of chief industrial importance, a corresponding item could be placed on the agenda of a session prior to the next elections to the Governing Body, which will take place at the 115th Session (June 2027) of the Conference. Including the item for discussion at the 358th Session (November 2026) of the Governing Body, on the understanding that the committee of experts will have finalized its work in time for consideration by the Governing Body, would allow any changes to

²² When required, a change has been accompanied by interim arrangements for smooth transition. At its 223rd Session (May–June 1983) the Governing Body adopted a resolution which read:

If, as a result of the modification of the list of members of chief industrial importance, a State ceases, during an interval between elections to the Governing Body, to occupy one of the seats reserved for the ten States of chief industrial importance, the Governing Body will, at the request of the Government of the State concerned, authorise a representative of that State to take part in its discussions, without the right to vote, until the next elections to the Governing Body.

(GB.223/10/12, p. 2. See also GB.223/SC/1/1 and *Minutes of the 223rd Session*).

the current list to become effective in time for the elections. That would mean that the Government of any Member that is removed from the list of Members of chief industrial importance would become eligible for an elective seat on the Governing Body and could participate in the electoral college, and that the Government of any new Member of chief industrial importance would be excluded from the electoral process.

30. In this context, should the Governing Body decide at the present session to undertake a new determination of the Members of chief industrial importance, it may wish to consider the following possible timeline for the next steps:

- **356th Session (March–April 2026):** The Governing Body may decide to:
 - place an item on the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance on the agenda of its 358th Session (November 2026) for decision;
 - invite the Director-General to submit to its Officers a proposal for the appointment of a committee of experts with a view to appointing the committee at its 357th Session (June 2026), reflecting any guidance on the selection of experts that the Governing Body may wish to give;
 - invite the Director-General to submit at its 357th Session (June 2026) a proposal on the related financial arrangements.
- **357th Session (June 2026):** The Governing Body may decide to appoint the committee of experts with the proposed composition and to take the necessary decisions regarding financial arrangements.
- **July–October 2026:** The committee of experts would meet, in closed sittings, to determine the criteria to be used and their weighting, if applicable, and to apply those criteria to the ILO's membership, resulting in advice on a list of Members of chief industrial importance to be submitted to the Officers of the Governing Body.
- **358th Session (November 2026):** The Governing Body would take a decision on the list of Members of chief industrial importance:
 - the report of the Officers, with the report of the committee of experts appended, would be submitted to the Governing Body for decision under the specific agenda item on the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance;
 - the Governing Body would decide on the Members of chief industrial importance and take any additional decisions required.

► Draft decision

31. The Governing Body:

- (a) **decided to undertake a determination of the Members of chief industrial importance and to place a corresponding item on the agenda of its 358th Session (November 2026) for decision;**
- (b) **invited the Director-General to submit a proposal concerning the appointment of a committee of experts and the related financial arrangements to its Officers, so that the Governing Body could take the corresponding decisions at its 357th Session (June 2026).**

[OR]

The Governing Body took note of the information provided in document GB.356/INS/5 and decided not to undertake a determination of the Members of chief industrial importance at this time.

► Appendix I

History of determinations of the Members of chief industrial importance ¹

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
1919	To enable the International Labour Conference at its First Session (1919) to constitute the Governing Body.	The International Organising Committee determined the eight States of chief industrial importance using seven criteria.	Seven criteria: 1. Total industrial population in the restricted sense of the term (manufacturing, mining and transport) 2. Proportion of the total industrial population to the whole population 3. Total horsepower (steam and water, excluding locomotives and vessels) 4. Horsepower per head of population 5. Total length of railways 6. Length of railways per square kilometre of area 7. Development of the mercantile marine	Eight States: United States of America, * Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Japan, Switzerland * As the United States had not reached a decision on the subject of its entry to the League of Nations, Denmark was provisionally added to the list in its place.
1922	In 1919, India presented a formal complaint to the Council of the League of Nations. In 1920, the Council decided that any ruling it might make could not be brought into force until the term of office of the Governing Body ended (in 1922).	A mixed committee was set up, consisting of four members of the Governing Body and two experts nominated by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations. The committee proposed that the criteria of 1919 be retained as a provisional measure, with a small modification made to the first two criteria. In 1922, taking into consideration the report of the committee , the Council of the League of Nations decided that, as its function was to settle disputes, the Council should name the eight States of chief industrial importance.	Seven criteria: 1. Total wage-earning industrial population in the restricted sense of the term (manufacturing, mining and transport) 2. Proportion of the total wage-earning industrial population to the whole population 3. Total horsepower (steam and water, excluding locomotives and vessels) 4. Horsepower per head of population 5. Total length of railways 6. Length of railways per square kilometre of area 7. Development of the mercantile marine	Eight States: United Kingdom, Germany, France, Canada, Italy, Belgium, Japan, India

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
1935	In 1934, with the admission of the United States and the USSR, and the notice of withdrawal of one of the eight Members of chief industrial importance (Germany), the Governing Body instructed its Officers to study the question with the assistance of the Office.	In 1934, the Officers of the Governing Body met as a committee to consider the question of determining the States of chief industrial importance. They considered this matter on the basis of a note prepared by the Office, which gave an account of the constitutional, historical and statistical aspects of the issue. ³ The Committee of Statistical Experts was established with the function of advising the Officers on the choice of data used for the criterion of “total occupied population” and on the best methods of combining the four criteria recommended by the Officers of the Governing Body for the purposes of determining States of chief industrial importance. The report of the Officers of the Governing Body was adopted by the Governing Body at its 69th Session (January–February 1935).	Four new criteria: 1. The scale of contributions to the League of Nations budget established by the Assembly on the basis of national wealth (30%) 2. Table of industrial importance on the basis of industrial population, industrial horsepower and the value of industrial production (created by the Institut für Konjunkturforschung, Berlin, 1933) (30%) 3. Value of foreign trade (import and export) (30%) 4. Total occupied population (10%) In 1935, the Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the Committee of Statistical Experts and agreed with its recommendations on the application of the criteria.	Eight States: United States, Great Britain, Germany, * France, India, USSR, Italy, Japan * Following Germany's withdrawal from the ILO, the Governing Body decided in October 1935 that the non-elected seat left vacant should be filled by the next-ranking State on the 1934 list prepared by the Committee, namely Canada.
1940	Withdrawal in 1939 of Italy and the USSR from the ILO	The Officers of the Governing Body were requested by the Governing Body to submit a report on the question. No committee of experts was established. The Officers decided to use the list drawn up in 1935 as a starting point.	Same four criteria as in 1935: 1. Scale of contributions to the League of Nations established by the Assembly on the basis of national wealth (30%) 2. Table of industrial importance on the basis of industrial population, industrial horsepower and the value of industrial production (30%) 3. Value of foreign trade (import and export) (30%) 4. Total occupied population (10%) The Officers recommended retaining the four criteria established in 1935 without any fundamental changes,	Eight States: Belgium, Canada, France, India, Japan, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
			emphasizing that any alterations should only be considered after extensive and careful study, a process requiring significant time. The only adjustment they proposed was to update the statistical data used in creating the 1935 list, ensuring that the decision would be based on the most recent and accurate information available.	
1944	At its 92nd Session (April 1944), the Chairman of the Governing Body reported that since November 1940 there had been a vacancy among the States of chief industrial importance (created by the withdrawal of Japan), and that it would seem inappropriate to allow such a vacancy to continue to exist.	Because of the Second World War, the Governing Body decided to allocate the vacant place to China without the usual statistical calculations, it being understood that it would be necessary to review the list of eight States based on appropriate criteria as soon as circumstances allowed.	No criteria used.	Eight States: Belgium, Canada, China, France, India, Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States
1948	With regard to the Governing Body's decision in 1944 to review the list as soon as circumstances allowed, the Governing Body decided, at its 101st Session (March 1947), to undertake a review of both the list of eight States and the criteria to be applied.	The Governing Body decided to set up a committee of its Officers consisting of the Chairman of the Governing Body and the two Vice-Chairmen. The Governing Body further decided to set up a Committee of Statistical Experts to assist the Officers in their work. Based on the conclusions provided by the Committee, the Officers recommended, at the 107th Session (December 1948) of the Governing Body, that the Governing Body designate Italy as the eighth State of chief industrial importance.	Four criteria: 1. Contribution to ILO budget ⁴ (47%) 2. National revenue (23.5%) 3. External trade (23.5%) 4. Active population (6%) The Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations on the application of the criteria.	Eight States: Brazil, Canada, China, France, India, Italy, United Kingdom, United States

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
1954	Accession of the Federal Republic of Germany and readmission of Japan and the USSR. In 1953, at its 36th Session, the Conference adopted the Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation, increasing the number of States of chief industrial importance from eight to ten.	At its 122nd Session (May–June 1953), the Governing Body considered whether to review the list of Members of chief industrial importance. This subject was placed as a specific item on the agenda of the 124th Session (March 1954). At its 123rd Session (November 1953) the Governing Body appointed the members of the committee of experts, which was convened in January 1954. The Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed on the proposed list of States, with one exception concerning the designation of one country. The Committee had initially proposed Brazil as the tenth country of chief industrial importance. However, considering the USSR's ongoing discussions about joining the ILO, the Committee observed that, based on the established criteria for determining the ten seats of chief industrial importance, the USSR would rank in the first eight upon becoming a Member. Consequently, the Officers recommended prioritizing the USSR, a proposal that was subsequently adopted by the Governing Body.	Four criteria: 1. National revenue (37.5%) 2. Contribution to ILO budget (37.5%) 3. Active population (12.5%) 4. External trade (12.5%) The Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations on the application of the criteria.	Ten States: United States, United Kingdom, France, India, China, Federal Republic of Germany, Canada, Italy, Japan, Brazil
1963	Significant increase in the number of ILO Member States since the last review of the list.	At its 145th Session (May 1960) the Governing Body invited the Director-General to take in due course the necessary steps to enable a review	Three criteria: 1. National income (60%) 2. Contributions to the ILO (30%) 3. Economically active population (10%)	Ten States: Canada, China, France, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Italy,

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
	A communication was submitted by the Brazilian Government representative on the Governing Body, proposing a revision of the list of States of chief industrial importance.	of the list of States Members of chief industrial importance. At its 154th Session (March 1963), the Governing Body discussed and adopted the report of its Officers on the determination of the Members of the Organisation of chief industrial importance.	In March 1963, the Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations. There was no change to the list.	Japan, USSR, United Kingdom, United States
1968	At its 163rd Session (November 1965), the Governing Body decided that it would not be expedient to review the list of States of chief industrial importance prior to the Governing Body elections in 1966. There was, however, a general understanding that the next review would be conducted before the 1969 elections.	At its 172nd Session (May-June 1968), the Governing Body decided to undertake the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance and, for that purpose, approved the appointment of experts to the committee of experts , as provided for in article 7 of the Constitution and article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. At its 174th Session (March 1969), the Governing Body discussed and adopted the report of its Officers on the determination of the Members of chief industrial importance.	Three criteria: 1. National income (60%) 2. Contributions to the ILO (30%) 3. Economically active population (10%) In March 1969, the Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations. There was no change to the list.	Ten States: Canada, China, France, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Italy, Japan, USSR, United Kingdom, United States
1978	Withdrawal of the United States from the ILO	At its 206th Session (May-June 1978), the Governing Body authorized its Officers to approve on its behalf proposals for the appointment of a committee of experts, as provided for in article 7 of the Constitution and article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body.	Two criteria: 1. National revenue (75%) 2. Active population (25%) In November 1978, the Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations on the application of the criteria.	Ten States: Brazil, Canada, China, France, Federal Republic of Germany, India, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, USSR

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
		At its 208th Session (November 1978), the Governing Body discussed and adopted the report of its Officers on the determination of the Members of the Organisation of chief industrial importance.		
1980	Re-admission of the United States to the ILO	At its 212th Session (February–March 1980), the Governing Body decided to undertake the determination of the Members of the Organisation of chief industrial importance and, for that purpose, approved the appointment of a committee of experts, as provided for in article 7 of the Constitution and article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. At its 213th Session (May–June 1980), the Governing Body discussed and adopted the report of its Officers on the determination of the Members of the Organisation of chief industrial importance.	Two criteria: 1. National revenue (80%) 2. Active population (20%) In May–June 1980, the Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations on the application of the criteria.	Ten States: * Canada, China, Federal Republic of Germany, France, United Kingdom, India, Italy, Japan, United States, USSR * China was regarded as a non-active member because it did not send any representatives to the Governing Body until 1983. For this reason, China was replaced by the eleventh-ranked State, Brazil.
1983	At its 184th Session (November 1971), the Governing Body had decided to recognize the Government of the People's Republic of China as the representative Government of China. However, China was considered a non-active member, as the People's Republic of China did not send any representatives to the Governing Body until 1983, when	At its 221st Session (November 1982), the Governing Body decided to undertake the selection of the Members of the Organisation of chief industrial importance and appointed the committee of experts, as provided for in article 7 of the Constitution and article 1.3 of the Standing Orders of the Governing Body. At its 222nd Session (March 1983), the Governing Body discussed and	One criterion: 1. Gross domestic product (100%) In March 1983, the Officers of the Governing Body reviewed the report of the committee of experts and agreed with its recommendations on the application of the criteria. A single criterion was used: GDP. When presenting the experts' report to the Governing Body, its Officers noted that the report was based essentially on the work of the International Comparison Project ⁵ published in 1982 and that the data available took adequate account of the size	Ten States: Brazil, China, Federal Republic of Germany (later Germany), France, India, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States, USSR * * In 1992, the Russian Federation succeeded to the membership of the USSR

Year	Occasion	Procedure	Criteria	Members of chief industrial importance ²
	it decided to resume its active participation, thus prompting the Governing Body to determine the Members of chief industrial importance.	adopted the report of its Officers on the selection of the Members of the Organisation of chief industrial importance.	of a country's labour force as reflected in the GDP, so that it was no longer necessary to consider labour force statistics separately, as had been done by previous committees.	
¹ Documents from the period 1919–48 that do not have associated links are classified as confidential and are not available electronically; however, the Office can make them available upon request. ² The Members of chief industrial importance are listed in the order in which they appear in the relevant reports of the committees of experts. ³ The Office prepared a report on the review of the criteria used to determine the eight States of chief industrial importance, which made the following main points: (a) all the criteria adopted in 1922, with the exception of the one relating to the wage-earning industrial population, should be discarded; (b) the scope of “wage-earning industrial population” should be enlarged to include agricultural and commercial workers on the grounds that the term “industry” in the Organization’s Constitution is interpreted in a wider sense and is meant to cover agriculture as well as commerce; (c) in view of the diverse practices of the various countries as regards the treatment of wives and families of cultivators who help in the work on the farm, women workers in agriculture should not be taken into account in the total of the gainfully occupied population; (d) absolute criteria are of greater importance than relative criteria; (e) the method of combination of ranks which was also applied in 1922, as an alternative method of combining criteria, was unsatisfactory. ⁴ The committee of experts, while underlining the value of national income figures, pointed out in many cases that the national income statistics were very unreliable and went on to indicate that a possible alternative would be to use the current scale of contributions of States to the ILO budget, explaining that these contributions normally took into account the various elements contained in estimates of national wealth and, therefore, covered much the same ground as estimates of national income, where the latter were reliable. The Officers of the Governing Body therefore considered that it would be desirable to use as criteria both the national income and the contributions to the ILO budget and that this course involved no departure from the principles by the experts. ⁵ The International Comparison Project was a collaborative effort of the United Nations Statistics Division, the World Bank and a research unit at the University of Pennsylvania. It had established a world-wide system of international comparisons of real products and of the purchasing power of currencies.				

► Appendix II

Composition and geographical representation of committees of experts (1948–83)

► Composition of committees

1948

1. **Canada** – Dominion Statistician
2. **China** – Director of Statistics, Ministry of Social Affairs
3. **France** – Directeur, Statistique Générale de la France
4. **India** – Professor of Economics, University of Lucknow
5. **United Kingdom** – Director of Statistics, Ministry of Labour and National Service
6. **United States** – Tariff Commissioner

[GB.105/PV, Appendix IX](#)

1954

1. **Canada** – Dominion Statistician, Department of Trade and Commerce
2. **Chile** – Professor of Statistics, University of Chile
3. **France** – Chief, Statistical Division, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare
4. **India** – Joint Director, Central Statistical Organisation, Cabinet Secretariat
5. **United Kingdom** – Head, Central Statistical Office
6. **United States** – Director, Bureau of Census, Department of Commerce

[GB.125/PV, Appendix VIII](#)

1963

1. **Canada** – Dominion Statistician
2. **Chile** – Director, School of Economics, University of Chile
3. **France** – Chief, Statistical and Documentation Division, Ministry of Labour
4. **United Kingdom** – Director, Central Statistical Office
5. **United States** – President, Howard University
6. **USSR** – Assistant Chief, Central Statistical Administration

Note: In 1963, a seventh expert, representing the Asia and the Pacific region, was appointed by the Governing Body; however, this expert was unable to participate in the Committee's work.

[GB.154/6/17](#)

1969

1. **Canada** – Dominion Statistician, Dominion Bureau of Statistics
2. **France** – Inspector-General, National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies
3. **Ghana** – Government Statistician, Central Bureau of Statistics
4. **India** – Director, Labour Bureau, Government of India
5. **Panama** – Director, Statistics and Census
6. **United Kingdom** – Former Director, Central Statistical Office
7. **United States** – President, Howard University
8. **USSR** – First Deputy Chief, Central Statistical Board

GB.174/PV, Appendix IX

1978

1. **India** – Director, Central Statistical Organization, Ministry of Planning
2. **Kenya** – Director, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Finance and Planning
3. **Panama** – Director, Statistics and Census
4. **United Kingdom** – Director of Statistics, Departments of Industry and Trade
5. **USSR** – Chief, Central Statistical Board

GB.208/4/2

1980

1. **Colombia** – Head, National Administrative Department of Statistics
2. **Hungary** – President, Central Statistical Office
3. **India** – Director, Central Statistical Organisation, Ministry of Planning
4. **Japan** – Director, Bureau of Statistics, Office of the Prime Minister
5. **Kenya** – Director, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Planning and Development
6. **United Kingdom** – Director of Statistics, Department of Industry and Trade

GB.212/21/25

1983

1. **Costa Rica** – Director-General, National Directorate of Statistics and Census
 2. **Ethiopia** – Chief Statistician, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
 3. **Federal Republic of Germany** – Vice-President, Federal Statistical Office
 4. **Philippines** – Deputy Director-General, National Economic and Development Authority
 5. **Yugoslavia** – Deputy Director, Federal Statistical Office
- Substitutes:**
1. **Egypt** – President, Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics
 2. **Netherlands** – Director-General, Central Bureau of Statistics
 3. **Thailand** – Secretary-General, National Statistical Office

Note: The expert from Ethiopia, who was unavailable to attend the meeting, was replaced by one of the substitutes, the expert from Egypt.

GB.221/3/42

► Distribution of experts by region

	Africa	Americas	Asia and Pacific	Eastern Europe	Western Europe
1948	none	2 experts	2 experts	none	2 experts
1954	none	3 experts	1 expert	none	2 experts
1963	none	3 experts	1 expert *	1 expert	2 experts
1969	1 expert	3 experts	1 expert	1 expert	2 experts
1978	1 expert	1 expert	1 expert	1 expert	1 expert
1980	1 expert	1 expert	2 experts	1 expert	1 expert
1983	1 expert (1 substitute)	1 expert	1 expert (1 substitute)	1 expert	1 expert (1 substitute)

* In 1963, a seventh expert, representing the Asia and the Pacific region, was appointed by the Governing Body; however, this expert was unable to participate in the Committee's work.