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The ILO's Human Resources Strategy for 2026–29

Purpose of the document

At its 355th Session (November 2025) following the discussion on “The ILO in a changing multilateral environment: Towards better effectiveness and efficiency” (GB.355/INS/7), the Governing Body requested the Director-General to submit to the Governing Body for decision at its 356th Session (March–April 2026) the reprioritization framework and the ILO's development cooperation and human resources strategies. This document presents the ILO Human Resources Strategy for 2026–29 which builds on the progress made in the HR Strategy 2022–25 and takes into account the current context of the ILO review and reform. The Human Resources Strategy for 2026–29 sets out the measures through which the Office will support the effective implementation of the ILO Reform by aligning workforce planning, talent development, leadership expectations and workplace culture with the new operating model. It outlines the actions required to ensure that the Organization has the skills, capabilities and enabling environment needed to deliver its mandate efficiently and coherently, while upholding duty of care and social dialogue, and reinforcing technical capacity in the field. The Strategy provides a structured framework for managing people-related dimensions of the reform and for building a resilient, diverse and future-ready workforce capable of supporting the Office in meeting its strategic objectives. The Governing Body is invited to comment on and endorse this Human Resources Strategy for 2026–29 (see the draft decision in paragraph 91).

Relevant strategic objective: None.

Main relevant outcome: Enabling outcome C: Effective, efficient, results-oriented and transparent management.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: None.

Author unit: Human Resources Development Department (HRD).

Related documents: [GB.356/INS/7](#), [GB/356/PFA/INF/6](#), [GB.355/INS/7](#), [GB/355/PFA/INF/4](#).

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► A Human Resources Strategy for a time of transformation

Background

1. The ILO's Human Resources Strategy for 2026–29 (HR Strategy) has been developed in the context of a period of profound institutional transformation, informed by the ILO Review ¹ and the evolving multilateral context shaped by the United Nations' UN80 Initiative. The Organization faces financial pressures, significant shifts in the world of work and increasing expectations of international organizations to deliver coherent, efficient and high-impact results. These dynamics require the Office to rethink how it is structured and how its workforce is deployed to deliver on the ILO's mandate.
2. In line with the Governing Body's decision at its 355th Session (November 2025), the Office is implementing an ambitious reform over the period of 2026–29 that includes a reprioritization of areas of work, the consolidation of functions and the reinforcement of technical capacity in the regions. These elements are considered by the Governing Body at its 356th Session (March–April 2026), along with this HR Strategy and the Development Cooperation Strategy, both of which have been developed considering the reform process, ensuring coherence and consistency.
3. Extensive consultations with constituents, management and staff representatives emphasized the importance of safeguarding staff well-being, ensuring meaningful and constructive social dialogue with the Staff Union, protecting institutional knowledge during transitions, and maintaining fairness, equity and transparency throughout the reform. These principles form the foundation of the HR Strategy and guide its focus on duty of care, support for mental health, clear communication and strong change-management practices.
4. Consultations also underscored the need to develop and maintain the Organization's skills and capabilities, and to continue efforts towards gender parity, disability-inclusion and programmes for youth, while advancing geographical diversity and experience relevant to the three constituent groups. These elements remain essential to the ILO's identity and credibility.
5. By integrating the HR dimensions of the ILO Reform into a coherent strategic framework, this HR Strategy ensures that the Office is equipped – with the right people, in the right positions, in the right locations – to deliver on its mandate in an era of accelerated change. The Strategy reaffirms that staff remain the Organization's greatest asset and that successful reform will depend on strong leadership, sound social dialogue and a sustained commitment to supporting people through transition.

► Human Resources Strategy vision for 2026–29

Enable the successful implementation of the ILO Reform by aligning the Organization to the new operating model, reinforcing technical capacity in the field; retaining and developing critical talent; upholding social dialogue and duty of care; fostering an inclusive and respectful culture; and building future-ready digital and artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities – so the ILO can deliver its mandate with agility, coherence and trust.

¹ GB.356/INS/7.

Structure

6. The HR Strategy for 2026–29 is structured around three pillars designed to deliver on the vision outlined above. Together, the pillars translate the vision into a coherent set of actions that support the successful implementation of the ILO Reform and uphold a human-centred approach to managing change and supporting staff.
7. **The first pillar: Transforming the ILO for the future** focuses on the HR activities required to enable and sustain the ILO Reform. It encompasses the restructuring of organizational arrangements, alignment of the workforce to the new operating model, reinforcement of technical capacity in the field, and the integration of duty of care and social dialogue throughout the reform process. These actions constitute the core HR priorities for 2026–27 and will continue, as needed, throughout the reform implementation period.
8. **The second pillar: Empowering people, leadership and culture** provides the foundation for a strong, diverse, inclusive and high-performing workforce capable of delivering on the ILO's mandate during and beyond the reform. It focuses on talent attraction and development, people-centric leadership, staff mental health and well-being, and a respectful and enabling organizational culture. This work is ongoing across the four years of the Strategy and supports both the reform and long-term organizational resilience.
9. **The third pillar: Shaping the future workforce through skills and innovation** looks ahead to ensure that the ILO workforce is equipped for the future of work and for the next phase of the Organization's evolution. It strengthens digital and AI capabilities, anticipates the impact of technological change on job roles, and introduces reskilling and upskilling pathways. Major activities under this pillar will be undertaken in 2028–29, enabling the Office to prepare for sustained agility and capability beyond the current reform cycle.
10. Each pillar is further organized into specific focus areas that define the key actions required to achieve its objectives, and key deliverables are outlined for each pillar. Measures of success across all pillars are detailed in the appendix. These ensure accountability, enable progress monitoring and support transparent reporting to constituents and staff.

► Core pillars of the HR Strategy

Pillar 1. Transforming the ILO for the future

11. Pillar 1 focuses on supporting the ILO's transformation by ensuring that all people-related changes are implemented in a fair, transparent and human-centred manner, and by providing sustained guidance to staff and managers throughout the reform process. It integrates the full set of HR considerations arising from the ILO Reform and the UN80 Initiative, to ensure that organizational restructuring, workforce decisions and new operating modalities are fully aligned with the strategic direction endorsed by the Governing Body. This pillar places particular emphasis on **duty of care**, meaningful **social dialogue**, workforce alignment, comprehensive change management and the modernization of HR frameworks and processes.
12. The actions under this pillar are organized around three focus areas: **workforce alignment**, **managing change**, and **policies and processes**. Each of these focus areas is expanded below to reflect the HR implications of the reform and the support required to implement organizational transformation successfully.

1.1. Focus area: Workforce alignment

13. The reform will bring substantial changes to job roles, skills requirements and the overall distribution of work across the Organization. These adjustments stem from structural reforms such as the reprioritization of areas of work, the Office restructuring, the reinforcement of technical capacity in the regions, the relocation of regional offices, and the establishment of one or more global service centres (GSCs). They are also influenced by the Organization's engagement in the UN80 Initiative process, which calls for strengthened regional architectures, more integrated regional delivery models enhancing proximity to constituents and improved access to system-wide expertise. Together, these shifts require a carefully coordinated and evidence-based approach to ensure that the workforce is effectively aligned with the new operating model and that the work is prioritized and adjusted in line with available resources.
14. **Workforce alignment** during the reform will involve managing position reductions and transitions through agreed terminations, natural attrition and, only as a last resort, involuntary separations. It will also require the decentralization of technical specialist positions and development cooperation staff to duty stations in the regions, ensuring that strengthened field capacity is supported by the right expertise in the right locations. Throughout this process, the Office will strive to uphold gender balance and geographic diversity, and ensure that redeployment and staffing decisions do not create excessive workloads for certain groups of staff and reflect the Organization's commitment to fairness, representativeness and social dialogue.
15. Further analysis of existing skills-mapping data will play a central role in informing workforce planning and capability alignment. These insights will help ensure that the Organization retains essential expertise while adapting effectively to new operational demands, including those emerging from how expertise is shared, mobilized and deployed across the UN system.
16. Robust, transparent and constructive engagement with the Staff Union will continue throughout the process, including information-sharing, consultation and negotiation on modalities for implementing staff-related changes. All matters that impact the terms and conditions of employment of staff are subject to negotiation with the Staff Union and these will be addressed in the context of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC). As outlined in GB.356/INS/7, the Office and the Staff Union are currently clarifying the applicable framework for social dialogue for the various reform work packages and have scheduled biweekly JNC meetings to ensure regular, effective and meaningful engagement.
17. Duty of care will underpin every stage of this transition through enhanced support for mental health, psychological safety and staff well-being throughout periods of change. Staff will be offered career counselling, coaching and job-application support to help them navigate transitions and prepare for future opportunities within or beyond the Organization.

1.2. Focus area: Managing change

18. **Effective management of change** is essential to ensuring that staff remain engaged, informed and supported throughout the reform. To guide this process, a dedicated Change Management Team will oversee communication, engagement, monitoring and transition support, working in close collaboration with clusters, departments and regional offices to ensure coherence and continuity across the Organization.

19. The change-management approach will include clear and predictable communication delivered by the Department of Communication and Public Information (DCOMM).² Staff will receive timely updates on decisions, timelines, expectations and implications, enabling them to understand the direction of change and how it affects their roles and work environment.
20. A dedicated reform intranet hub will provide real-time access to information, guidance materials, frequently asked questions and relevant tools, serving as a reliable and continuously updated source of truth for all staff.
21. Engagement with staff will be an integral component of the approach. In addition to negotiation, consultation and information sharing in the context of social dialogue with staff representatives as described above, the Office will further promote dialogue and exchange with staff through town halls, listening sessions, surveys and structured feedback mechanisms to ensure staff perspectives are heard and meaningfully considered in shaping implementation modalities. These mechanisms will help identify concerns, anticipate challenges and foster trust, transparency and inclusion throughout the reform.
22. In parallel, the Office will enhance support to staff and managers during this period of significant change. Measures will include proactive communication on mental health and well-being, training on new processes or ways of working, and coaching for managers on leading through change. These efforts aim to ensure that staff stay engaged, confident, and able to adapt.

1.3. Focus area: Policies and processes

23. This focus area ensures that **HR policies and processes** remain fit for purpose and fully aligned with the new operating model emerging from the reform. As changes are implemented, HR processes will be strengthened to support more coherent, efficient and standardized ways of working, with particular emphasis on simplification, digitalization and operational consistency across the Office. This work also supports the UN80 Initiative's call for more interoperable, streamlined, agile and harmonized administrative and support functions across the UN system.
24. The Office will continue its ongoing efforts to modernize key HR policies and processes, including job descriptions, recruitment, performance management, mobility and career development. These improvement initiatives build on the findings of the Task Team in charge of the streamlining of business processes and are essential for ensuring that HR procedures remain agile, transparent and responsive to the needs of staff during a period of significant organizational transformation.
25. Recruitment processes will be strengthened through improved planning tools, the use of AI tools to support decision-making and clearer workflows, thereby increasing efficiency. The establishment of the GSC will require revisions to HR workflows, job profiles and accountability structures, promoting standardization and more efficient delivery of support services. The Office will also advance automation, digitization and the simplification of HR processes to reduce administrative burden and improve user experience. New models for cross-functional collaboration and modern meeting practices will support more integrated ways of working across headquarters, regions and field offices.
26. As highlighted in the Development Cooperation Strategy for 2026–29, the Office will reinforce and standardize procedures to expedite the selection and recruitment of development

² All department names referenced in this strategy are subject to change as part of the Office's reorganization.

cooperation staff, including the use of appointment eligibility lists where appropriate. While the current recruitment timelines for development cooperation projects are relatively fast,³ this does not always translate into timely onboarding.

27. To address this issue, the Office will promote the preparation of job descriptions and publishing of vacancy announcements during the project design phase, supported by improved planning tools and performance indicators that help maintain progress and avoid delays. Discussions with the JNC have highlighted the need to minimize to the extent possible the impact of breaks in project funding cycles on staff, and the need to redeploy staff in a more structured and uninterrupted manner when projects come to an end.
28. The Office will explore these measures further and promote greater awareness and uptake of available tools. In addition, the use of the “matrix manager” role introduced in 2025 will be encouraged for multi-country projects to ensure clear accountability and more effective project delivery, and the Office will explore funding arrangements to bridge project gaps and reduce precarity for staff whose positions are tied to project cycles.
29. As reform measures are implemented, the need to revise and adjust HR policies and processes will continue to evolve. The potential relocation of technical specialist positions from headquarters to the regions, for example, will require changes to job descriptions, reporting lines, performance expectations and ways of working. The modalities for implementing workforce alignment may also necessitate temporary adjustments to mobility and recruitment procedures. A broader, longer-term review of these policies will take place as part of the GSC work packages and the Office-wide efforts to streamline and modernize business processes.
30. To support more integrated and collaborative ways of working, the Office will introduce initiatives that strengthen cross-functional collaboration, enable team structures that span departments and duty stations, and promote clear role definitions and shared accountability frameworks. These measures will be supported by digital collaboration tools and modern communication practices that enhance teamwork between headquarters and the field. Additional efforts will focus on strengthening the effectiveness of meetings across the Office through clearer decision-making processes, standardized meeting structures, well-defined agendas and documented outcomes that promote transparency and alignment.

Key deliverables

31. Under Pillar 1, the Office will deliver a comprehensive set of HR actions that directly support the implementation of the ILO Reform as outlined in GB.356/INS/7.
 - These deliverables include the **coordinated implementation of workforce-alignment measures**, such as Office restructuring, redeployment and reinforcement of regional technical expertise in regional and country settings and **targeted support for staff** affected by transitions.
 - A full **change-management plan** will be developed and executed, ensuring clear communication, structured engagement and consistent guidance throughout the reform process.
 - The Office will update and expand **skills-mapping exercises** to inform evidence-based workforce planning, including technical capacity reinforcement in the regions.

³ Between 1 January and 31 August 2025, the average time from the close of the vacancy announcement to the selection decision was **58 days**.

- **Robust mechanisms for social dialogue** will be maintained. Deliverables will include negotiation with the Staff Union in the context of the JNC on measures impacting staff, and the implementation of agreed outcomes.
- **HR policies and procedures will be updated** to reflect the requirements of the new operating model, including those related to the GSC, revised working modalities and strengthened business processes.
- Finally, **tools and practices that enable effective cross-functional collaboration** and hybrid ways of working will be introduced to support integrated, efficient and modern organizational delivery.

Pillar 2. Empowering people, leadership and culture

32. Pillar 2 focuses on strengthening the ILO's ability to attract, develop and retain a diverse, capable, and committed staff by investing in talent, nurturing career growth and fostering an inclusive and respectful work environment. As the Organization navigates a period of significant transformation, assuring the commitment, performance and well-being of staff will be critical to delivering on its mandate. This pillar therefore places emphasis on enhancing the ILO's value proposition as an employer, safeguarding institutional knowledge, and providing meaningful opportunities for all staff to grow, develop and thrive throughout their careers. In parallel, pillar 2 advances the leadership behaviours and organizational culture needed to support staff through the change and beyond. People-centric leadership, shared values and a safe, healthy and respectful workplace are essential to build and maintain trust, engagement and operational effectiveness.
33. An **Organizational Health Index (OHI) survey** was conducted in September 2024, providing an opportunity for the Office to hear the views of staff regarding organizational outcomes, management practices and employee experience. Three main areas for improvement were identified from the results and this pillar specifically addresses two of these, namely: **people-centric leadership** and **sustainable workload, well-being and mental health**.
34. Activities under this pillar are structured around four focus areas: **talent and career development** and **inclusion and diversity** strengthen the Organization's ability to recruit, develop and retain the diverse talent and expertise it needs; **leadership expectations** clarifies people-management responsibilities, builds leadership capability, reinforces accountability, and strengthens the mechanisms that support effective collaboration, feedback and decision-making; **respectful work environment** promotes dignity, respect, psychological safety, health and well-being, and zero tolerance for all forms of violence and harassment.
35. Together, these efforts reinforce a culture that aligns with ILO values, where staff are supported to develop their competencies, empowered to pursue clear career pathways, and valued for the diverse perspectives and experiences they bring to the Organization.

2.1. Focus area: Talent and career development

36. At times of change and uncertainty, the Organization risks losing its strongest talent, who have the most options open to them in the job marketplace. To mitigate this, the Office will strengthen the ILO's value proposition to staff by investing in robust talent-management practices – strengthening onboarding, providing clear and structured career pathways, ensuring targeted development opportunities, and proactively managing succession to retain critical expertise.

37. The Office is currently only recruiting for critical regular budget positions in the professional and general service category and is limiting the access vacancies to serving staff. The recruitment for development cooperation projects is continuing. It is possible that during the four years of the strategy, recruitment of regular budget positions could open up again.
38. Despite these recruitment constraints, it remains essential to ensure that all newly appointed staff – regardless of contract type or funding source – are effectively integrated into the Organization. In 2024–25, the orientation programme was moved online and expanded with a “One-ILO” vision to enable all new officials to participate, regardless of their funding source or duty station. The Office will continue to strengthen the onboarding process, to embed all staff in the ILO’s values and introduce central themes such as social dialogue, collective bargaining, tripartism, fundamental principles of rights at work and international labour standards, recognizing that this is particularly important for development cooperation project staff who may be working away from their country office and have less exposure to ILO culture.
39. The negotiations in the JNC on the alignment of work conditions for staff funded from regular budget and development cooperation funds embody the spirit of “One-ILO”. These will continue under the HR Strategy for 2026–29, together with a review of recruitment practices globally.
40. Clarity around future career options emerged as a key area for action in the recent OHI survey. In response, the Office will develop career pathways that align with the new organizational structure, the reprioritization of areas of work, and the appropriate balance between specialist and generalist roles. Insights from the skills-mapping exercise – covering both current and desired skills levels – together with mobility data, will inform workforce and succession planning, and contribute to the design of career pathways and targeted development interventions.
41. Building on staff feedback, there is also a clear need for stronger support for professional growth. Coaching and mentoring programmes will focus on developing the behaviours, knowledge and skills required to progress along these pathways.
42. Staff will be supported in developing individual learning plans that reflect both the competencies required by the Organization and their career aspirations. Guidance will be provided to help them identify priority skills, select suitable learning and development opportunities – such as formal training, mentoring, coaching, on-the-job learning and cross-functional assignments – and map out concrete steps for building the capabilities needed for future roles.
43. Particular attention will be given to the career trajectories of younger staff, including measures to address experience gaps and strengthen early-career development, ensuring a solid pipeline of talent for the future.
44. The importance of succession planning and the risk of losing institutional knowledge is highlighted in the current context, with a large number of long serving staff leaving the Organization under the agreed termination exercise and natural attrition. Short and longer-term plans for succession will be developed, together with initiatives related to knowledge transfer and effective offboarding.

2.2. Focus area: Diversity and inclusion

45. Targeted outreach and brand visibility in recruitment are important levers for attracting applicants from diverse groups. Efforts in these areas will continue, while taking into account the current constraints with regard to external recruitment on regular budget positions.

Geographical diversity and experience relevant to the three constituent groups will be primary targets.

46. Recruitment for development cooperation projects, the programme for junior professional officers and secondments remain ongoing, and the internship programme will be relaunched as soon as funding allows. If the importance of the above primary target groups are kept in focus, these activities have the potential to build a strong pipeline of diverse talent for regular budget positions in the future. National Programme Officers from under-represented countries, hired initially on development cooperation projects but having the potential to move to international positions, are a prime example.
47. Language requirements have been identified in the past as a barrier to the recruitment of staff from certain nationalities and the Office has taken steps to address this concern with changes in the staff regulations. Currently, if a job description requires knowledge of two working languages, **candidates whose mother tongue is not English, French or Spanish may be appointed with knowledge of just one language.**⁴ Feedback from constituents indicates that this is not well understood by potential applicants and so the Office will take steps to raise awareness on this point and ensure that it is more clearly highlighted in the vacancy notices.
48. The Office will continue its efforts to improve gender parity and to position the ILO as an employer of choice for persons with disabilities. The Office maintains its commitment to achieve the targets outlined in the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality (and UNSWAP 3.0) and the ILO Strategy and Action Plan on Disability and Inclusion (and UNDIS 2.0).
49. The Human Resources Development Department (HRD) will partner with specialists in the policy area with oversight for these ILO and UN-wide action plans for the activities in this focus area.

2.3. Focus area: Respectful work environment

50. The Office will strengthen its commitment to a respectful, safe and healthy work environment by embedding mental health, psychological safety and dignity at work into its core people-management practices.
51. A psychosocial risk assessment will be introduced across all duty stations to support the identification of risks and the implementation of appropriate prevention and mitigation measures. Regular reassessment, integration of risk controls into HR policies and ongoing monitoring will ensure that mental health considerations are systematically incorporated into organizational processes.
52. Building a workplace culture that is free from stigma and supportive of open dialogue around mental health will be a central focus. Mental-health literacy will be integrated into staff and managerial learning, complemented by ongoing communication and awareness-raising efforts that promote psychological safety. Staff will continue to have access to counselling services, reasonable accommodation measures and clear return-to-work pathways to support recovery and reintegration following mental-health challenges. A new mental health and well-being strategy, aligned with UN system-wide efforts and informed by the findings of the psychosocial risk assessment, will guide this work.

⁴ They will then be expected to learn a second language in the years following their appointment. The exception to having a second language is not applicable for translator or other similar positions.

- 53. The Office will also reinforce its framework for preventing and addressing violence and harassment in the workplace. The anti-harassment policy will be updated to better reflect the principles of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), building on UN system-wide policies and best practice in the field of workplace policies.
- 54. Following the 2025 training-of-trainers programme for HR partners and Staff Union representatives as well as the Mediator, Ethics Officer and Staff Welfare Officer, the Office will continue delivering jointly facilitated workshops on promoting a respectful work environment. These workshops will be complimented with follow up impact surveys and dialogue sessions.
- 55. Preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) will remain a priority and activities will be guided by the commitments outlined in the annual ILO Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. An online training related to PSEA is already implemented and mandatory for all staff and a mandatory refresher training will be introduced.
- 56. HRD will partner with the Staff Union, Ethics Officer, Mediator and PSEA Officer as well as ILO Medical Services and the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health to deliver on this focus area with the aim of ensuring that all staff experience a respectful workplace grounded in dignity, safety and trust.

2.4. Focus area: Leadership expectations

- 57. As a follow-up to the OHI results, the Office is undertaking three initiatives in the area of People-Centric Leadership. A leadership framework is being developed to clearly articulate the Organization's expectations for how managers lead, support and engage their teams. This framework will set out core leadership behaviours, accountability standards and principles for inclusive, respectful and values-driven management. It will be complemented by updated leadership training, practical tools and guidance designed to help managers apply these expectations consistently across duty stations and functional areas.
- 58. Expanded executive coaching and mentoring programmes will be made available to help managers build essential leadership capabilities earlier in their careers. These initiatives will be complemented by structured leadership dialogues enabling a mutual exchange of information, experience and dialogue. Furthermore, tools such as pulse surveys, structured check-ins and team-level feedback mechanisms will be made available for managers to use in their everyday practice.
- 59. **Targeted training will be provided on critical leadership responsibilities.** Managers will receive dedicated training on change management, health and well-being, and the prevention of and response to violence and harassment. These learning activities will equip managers with the practical skills they need to support their teams through organizational transitions, foster a safe and healthy work environment, and respond effectively to risks and incidents.
- 60. **Managers will be held accountable for delivering on their people-leadership responsibilities.** Clear expectations will be set for managers to lead change effectively, support the development and growth of their staff, and manage performance in a fair and constructive manner. The managerial output will be adapted to reflect these expectations and the upward feedback questionnaire will be used to measure the impact of the training and tools.

Key deliverables

61. The following key deliverables set out the concrete actions through which pillar 2 will strengthen talent development, inclusion, well-being and people-centred leadership across the Organization:
- Onboarding, offboarding and knowledge-transfer mechanisms will be strengthened.
 - **Career pathways** will be developed and supported by career development activities including career coaching, mentoring and targeted learning opportunities.
 - **Targeted action plans**, aligned with ILO and UN system-wide frameworks, will be implemented to advance geographical diversity and experience relevant to the three constituent groups, gender balance, disability-inclusion and opportunities for youth. These will include targeted outreach, strengthening internal pipelines and increasing awareness of flexible language requirements.
 - A **psychosocial risk assessment** will be conducted across the Office to establish a baseline and inform prevention and mitigation measures, with a follow-up assessment in 2028 to review progress and impact.
 - The **ILO Mental Health and Well-being Strategy (2027–29)** will be developed and launched supported by counselling services, reasonable accommodation measures, return-to-work pathways and updates to training to integrate mental-health literacy.
 - A respectful workplace culture will be reinforced through an **updated anti-harassment policy**, regular **respectful workplace workshops** and implementation of **planned PSEA actions**.
 - **People-centric leadership** will be strengthened through the rollout of a new **leadership framework, updated training, and tools**, resulting in more effective and consistent management practices across the Office.

Pillar 3. Shaping the future workforce through skills and innovation

62. This pillar focuses on ensuring the ILO workforce is equipped with the skills, agility and future readiness required to operate effectively in a rapidly evolving environment. New technologies, including AI, are reshaping the way the Organization works, and we must respond by **strengthening staff capabilities** and fostering a **culture of continuous learning**. Pillar 3 emphasizes the importance of understanding emerging skills needs, preparing staff for new ways of working and **supporting adaptation across roles and functions**. The need to review roles and reskill or upskill staff is equally relevant to staff who are working on development cooperation projects, as it is to those funded by the regular budget. Appropriate mechanisms, supported by donors, need to be elaborated to ensure that staff funded by development cooperation projects are afforded the necessary time and resources to engage in training activities.
63. Actions under this pillar are structured around two focus areas: **digital and AI literacy**, builds foundational capacity for responsible and effective technology use; and **reskilling pathways**, opens up to the future of ILO jobs, redesigning roles and developing future-focused strategic learning plans to reskill staff.

3.1. Focus area: Digital and AI literacy

64. Strengthening foundational digital capabilities across the workforce will be essential to ensure that all staff can perform effectively in the face of rapid changes in technology and the use of AI in the workplace. Further development activities will be made available to build confidence in using modern digital tools, applications and systems, ensuring that staff can carry out their work efficiently, collaborate more effectively between headquarters and the regions, and across departments and duty stations and adapt to new technological expectations as they evolve.
65. Organization-wide training on AI ethics, responsible use of AI, data protection and related risks will be implemented to guide staff in navigating the opportunities and challenges posed by emerging technologies. This training will build on guidance provided by the Information and Technology Management Department (INFOTEC) to clarify what constitutes safe and appropriate use of AI, highlight the boundaries of human oversight, and reinforce the importance of protecting personal data and maintaining compliance with institutional and UN-system requirements. Particular attention will be given to preserving the role of human judgement, ensuring that staff remain in command of decisions with organizational, ethical or reputational implications.
66. Managers and staff will be equipped with guidance to support the effective integration of AI and digital solutions into daily work. This will include the development of job-relevant examples, and decision aids that help staff assess when and how to use AI tools responsibly.
67. INFOTEC and the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) will be key partners for the activities under this focus area, ensuring that training materials and governance frameworks are technically sound, relevant and aligned with best practice across the UN system. Their support will enable coherent implementation of digital-skills training, facilitate access to cutting-edge learning resources, and ensure that staff and managers are equipped with the knowledge and support they need to apply digital and AI tools safely and effectively.

3.2. Focus area: Reskilling pathways

68. As the reform activities to reinforce technical capacity in the field progresses and the future business model for the GSC is determined, a comprehensive study will be undertaken to assess how AI and automation will reshape core functions across the Office. The study will examine policy, technical, administrative and support roles and will be informed by work already undertaken in other UN organizations for comparable functions. The analysis will identify which tasks are likely to be augmented, transformed or phased out, enabling the Office to anticipate shifts in job content and plan proactively for the capabilities required as the workplace evolves. The findings will inform a forward-looking view of skills needs, ensuring that the ILO remains equipped to fulfil its mandate as technologies continue to evolve.
69. Building on the outcomes of this study, evidence-based recommendations will be formulated to guide job redesign and reskilling priorities. Where needed, updated job profiles will be developed in dialogue with the Staff Union and the relevant subject matter experts to articulate the integration of AI-enabled tasks while maintaining clarity of responsibilities, decision-making authority and ethical oversight. This approach will support transparency, accountability and a human-centred application of technology across all areas of work.
70. A strategic learning plan will be developed to provide targeted reskilling and upskilling pathways aligned with redesigned job profiles. This plan will focus on building the technical, analytical and behavioural competencies needed for future roles, ensuring staff can acquire

the skills necessary to adapt to evolving job requirements. Learning modalities will include formal coursework, applied learning, cross-functional assignments and structured pathways that allow staff to build proficiency progressively over time. The plan will also incorporate mechanisms to ensure access for staff funded by development cooperation projects, recognizing their role in delivering the ILO's mandate.

71. HRD will partner with Research, Skills and information technology (IT) specialists in the ILO and will leverage the experience of other UN Organizations for the study and its recommendations. Engagement with the ITCILO will also be key for the development of future-focused learning initiatives. These partnerships will bring together specialized expertise on future-of-work trends, skills forecasting and technology governance, and help to ensure that learning programmes remain evidence-based, responsive and aligned with the Organization's strategic priorities.

Key deliverables

- **Organization-wide digital and AI learning programmes will be implemented**, including foundational digital-skills training for all staff and mandatory modules on AI ethics, responsible use and data protection.
- **A future-of-work impact assessment will be completed** to analyse how AI and automation will reshape tasks across policy, technical, administrative and support roles, and to identify priority areas for job redesign and reskilling.
- **Job profiles will be updated** to incorporate AI-augmented tasks and the competencies required for redesigned roles.
- **A strategic learning plan will be designed and launched**, providing targeted reskilling and upskilling pathways aligned with redesigned job profiles and future skills needs, and ensuring access for staff funded by development cooperation projects.

► Delivering on the HR Strategy

72. The HR Strategy for 2026–29, as set out in this document, reflects an Organization-wide commitment to work together to realize the future we envision for the ILO. Its successful delivery will rely on key enabling factors and strong internal and external partnerships. It also rests on several underlying assumptions and faces residual risks that must be acknowledged and monitored.

Cross-cutting enablers

Digitally enabled HR function

73. A modern, digitally enabled HR function is essential for delivering high-quality services to staff and managers. The continued enhancement of HR systems and tools will allow the Organization to streamline and automate processes, reduce administrative burden and improve data accuracy. This evolution will also improve user experience by providing more accessible and self-service solutions. Strengthening system integration will increase transparency.

HR analytics

74. Reliable, timely and accessible data underpin evidence-informed decision-making. Strengthening HR analytics will enable the Organization to identify trends, anticipate workforce needs and measure progress across all pillars of the HR Strategy.

Internal and external partnerships

75. Delivering the HR Strategy will require effective collaboration across the Office and sustained engagement with external partners.
76. The key partnership between HRD and the ILO Staff Union will remain essential, particularly in the context of implementing the ILO Reform initiatives but also beyond. This partnership helps ensure fairness and respect across all HR processes and initiatives.
77. HRD will continue working closely with the Strategic Programming and Management (PROGRAM) and Financial Management (FINANCE) departments on strategic planning for staffing. This collaboration is especially critical now, as the Office navigates current financial constraints, and will remain essential to ensure clarity, coherence and alignment throughout the reform.
78. DCOMM will play a central role in enabling change by coordinating communication, facilitating engagement and ensuring that staff and managers are informed, supported and equipped throughout the transition.
79. INFOTEC will be a key partner in guiding the safe and responsible integration of AI and digital tools into daily work practices. This includes developing governance frameworks, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring that technology solutions adhere to principles of data protection, fairness and accountability. INFOTEC will also support the development of learning programmes that strengthen staff proficiency in emerging technologies and foster innovation across the Office.
80. The Department of Research and Publications (RESEARCH) will contribute essential expertise on how technological, economic and social megatrends will be reshaping the ILO jobs and competencies. Insights from the future-of-work study will inform job redesign, reskilling pathways, workforce planning and strategic prioritization. This will ensure that reforms are grounded in robust evidence and aligned with the Organization's broader leadership on the future of work.
81. External partnerships, within the UN system, academic institutions and technical experts, will expand access to cutting-edge research, emerging practices and specialized knowledge that strengthen the Organization's capacity for transformation.
82. HRD maintains a strong partnership with ITCILO in Turin centred on development, capacity-building and learning activities for ILO staff.⁵ HRD also collaborates closely with the United Nations Office of Geneva and the United Nations System Staff College on language training and UN Country Team leadership development. These partnerships will continue to the extent possible in view of potential reductions and reprioritization of funding for staff development.⁶

⁵ Proposals outlined in GB.356/INS/7 to streamline or scale down ITCILO courses for constituents do not have any direct impact on training provided by ITCILO to ILO staff.

⁶ See proposals outlined in GB.356/INS/7 related to reduction in staff development funds and prioritization of staff development activities.

83. In addition to the key role played by the ITCILO in driving innovation, HRD partners with several other UN organizations within the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) HR Network and the University of Geneva in the Geneva Innovation.

Key assumptions and residual risks

84. The successful implementation of the HR Strategy assumes:
- Sufficient resources, including staffing, budget and staff development funds, to deliver the planned activities and support change-management needs.
 - Continued stability and clarity in organizational direction as the reform progresses.
85. Residual risks that may affect implementation include:
- Delays or changes in the reform process that may impact sequencing, scope or required capacities.
 - Extended freeze of recruitment that would further limit the ability to deliver on expectations linked to increased diversity.
 - Resource limitations, such as the proposed reduction and prioritization of staff development funds, that could affect delivery timelines, training roll-outs or staff support measures.
 - External shocks – financial, geopolitical or global health-related – that could shift organizational priorities or reduce operational flexibility.
86. Mitigation measures will include ongoing monitoring, adaptive planning, strengthened communication, and close coordination between HRD, the Office of the Director-General, PROGRAM, FINANCE, DCOMM and the Staff Union.

► Closing words

87. Achieving the vision of this HR Strategy is essential to ensuring that the ILO remains a resilient, effective and future-ready organization. The HR Strategy for 2026–29 provides a clear pathway for strengthening our workforce, enabling transformation and fostering an inclusive, respectful and enabling environment. Its success depends on collective effort – staff, managers, leaders and partners working together with shared commitment and purpose.
88. The HR Strategy is designed to align the workforce with the new operating model emerging from the reform, support staff through transitions and ensure the Organization maintains the expertise and institutional memory required to fulfil its mandate. The Strategy recognizes that the reform will have significant implications for job roles, skill requirements, working modalities and the geographic distribution of staff, including redeployments to the regions, adjustments to organizational structures and, where unavoidable, job reductions through agreed terminations, natural attrition and, as a last resort, involuntary separations.
89. The ILO's engagement in the UN80 Initiative process further underscores the need for an agile and future-ready workforce that can operate effectively within a more integrated multilateral environment. This includes strengthened field delivery models, streamlined access to specialized expertise, and new modalities of collaboration across the UN system.
90. As the Organization moves forward with the reform and adapts to rapid changes in the world of work, this Strategy reaffirms the central role of staff in delivering on the ILO's mandate. By

investing in our staff, nurturing talent, embracing innovation and upholding our core values, we ensure that the ILO continues to deliver meaningful impact for workers, employers and governments worldwide – today and in the future.

► Draft decision

- 91. The Governing Body endorsed the ILO's Human Resources Strategy for 2026–29 and requested the Office to take into account the guidance provided when implementing the Strategy.**

► Appendix

Measures of success

Pillar 1 indicators

The success of pillar 1 will be assessed through clear, measurable indicators that reflect progress in implementing the HR dimensions of the ILO Reform. These indicators will be refined further as implementation advances but will initially focus on the following areas.

Positive change management

Indicator	Target (by end of 2027)
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Percentage of impacted staff across the Office who indicate that they are satisfied with the support received in the context of the reform	65 per cent
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Means of verification/source of data	Baseline (31 December 2025)
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Regular pulse check questions	New indicator
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Effective social dialogue in the context of the reform

Indicator	Target (in 2026)	Target (in 2027)
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Number of meetings held and agreements reached, between the Administration and the Staff Union, related to the reform		
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Meetings related to the reform	24	16
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Agreements related to the reform	2	2
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Means of verification/source of data	Baseline (31 December 2025)
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Minutes of JNC and other meetings	Meetings: 20
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Published agreements	New indicator
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Pillar 2 indicators

The success of pillar 2 will be assessed through indicators that reflect progress in terms of breadth of representation (gender, geographical, experience), reduction of psychosocial risk, respectful workplace behaviours and people-centric leadership.

Gender equality in Professional and senior positions

Indicator	Milestone (by end of 2027)	Target (by end of 2029)
(a) Percentage of ILO Professional positions (P1 to P4 regular staff) held by women	Gender equality within 3 per cent parity (47–53 per cent)	Gender equality within 3 per cent parity (47–53 per cent)
(b) Percentage of ILO senior positions (P5 and above regular staff) held by women	Gender equality within 3 per cent parity (47–53 per cent)	Gender equality within 3 per cent parity (47–53 per cent)
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
Composition and structure of staff report to the Governing Body	Status at 31 December 2025: P1–P4: 55 per cent P5 and above: 47 per cent	

Improved pipelines for geographical diversity

Indicator	Milestone (by end of 2027)	Target (by end of 2029)
Increased number of applicants for regular budget and development cooperation positions from under or non-represented countries	Increase of 10 per cent over baseline = 24.0 per cent	Increase of 20 per cent over baseline = 26.2 per cent
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
ILO People recruitment system	31 December 2025: per cent of applicants from under or non-represented countries in 2025: 21.8 per cent	

Improved pipelines for experience relevant to the three tripartite groups

Indicator	Milestone (by end of 2027)	Target (by end of 2029)
Increased number of applicants for regular budget and development cooperation positions whose profiles indicate that they have experience working in government, employers' and business membership organizations or trade unions, results disaggregated by type of experience	Increase of 10 per cent over baseline in 2026 and 2027	Further Increase of 10 per cent over 2027 figures in 2028 and 2029
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
ILO People recruitment system	In 2025: per cent of applicants indicating experience relevant to the three tripartite groups: Overall 19 per cent, governments 12 per cent, employers' organizations 4 per cent, workers' organizations 3 per cent	

Reduced psychosocial risks

Indicator	Milestone (n/a)	Target (by end of 2028)
Number of prevention actions implemented across the organization/regions/country offices to address findings		
Evidence of improvement – reduction in psychosocial risk index between 2026 and 2028		
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
Psychosocial risk assessment results and response	New indicator – targets to be set based on the results of the 2026 psychosocial risk assessment results:	

Respectful work environment within the ILO

Indicator	Milestone (in 2026–27)	Target (by end of 2029)
Number of workshops on respectful work environment deliver and impact in terms of reduction of harassment cases		
Workshops delivered	10	75 per cent
Percentage impact surveys reporting improvement		
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
Workshop tracking sheet	Number of workshops in 2024–25:	
Data from impact surveys		

Improved people-centric leadership behaviours

Indicator *	Milestone (by end of 2027)	Target (by end of 2029)
Number of managers (P4–D2) trained in people-centric leadership behaviours and impact felt by staff		
Managers trained	50 per cent	75 per cent
Percentage of staff who indicate in upward feedback that manager demonstrates people-centric leadership behaviours		65 per cent
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
The Training and Performance Management Modules of the ILO's Talent Management System (ILO People)	New indicator	

* This indicator is dependent on the availability of staff development funds and confirmation that these can be allocated to this activity.

Pillar 3 indicators

The success of pillar3 will be assessed through indicators that reflect the impact of targeted upskilling and reskilling activities and training to strengthen artificial intelligence (AI) governance.

Improved levels of AI governance

Indicator	Milestone (by end of 2027)	Target (by end of 2029)
Percentage of target group(s) of staff who complete training on AI governance and acquire knowledge (pass the certification test)	70 per cent	90 per cent
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
Training module of the ILO's Talent Management System	New indicator	

Impact of reskilling and skills-upgrading training

Indicator	Milestone (by end of 2027)	Target (by end of 2029)
Percentage of target group(s) of staff who indicate that they are implementing new skills	60 per cent	70 per cent
Percentage of managers who indicate that they see the impact of the skills training in the performance of their staff	50 per cent	70 per cent
Means of verification/source of data	Baseline	
Skills-mapping post-training and impact surveys	New indicator	