

► Informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards (13 April 2026)

1. Informal tripartite consultations on the working methods of the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards ("the Committee") took place on 13 April 2026, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
2. The meeting was facilitated by Ms Corinne Vargha (Director of the International Labour Standards Department). The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, Mrs Ann Vermorgen, spoke on behalf of the Workers' group and Mr Kaizer Moyane, the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, spoke on behalf of the Employers' group. The Government representative of Algeria spoke on behalf of the Africa region, and the Government representative of Canada spoke on behalf of her country. A number of observers from all regions also participated in the meeting.
3. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** welcomed participants and introduced the new Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mrs Vermorgen. She proposed that the discussion be structured around the topics set out in the background note. She invited general comments on the Committee's functioning during the previous year, as well as any introductory remarks.
4. **The Employer spokesperson** welcomed the new Worker spokesperson. He noted that a number of initiatives introduced over the years to fine-tune the work of the Committee had proved useful, in particular the introduction of speaking time limits, including according to the number of speakers, and that these elements should be retained. He added that a good balance had been struck between maintaining strict timing and avoiding undue formalism, so as to preserve the substance of contributions while allowing flexibility where warranted. Overall, he considered the functioning of the Committee to have been positive thus far and expressed the view that this should continue.
5. **The Worker spokesperson** said that she looked forward to her role as spokesperson of the Workers' group for the centenary session of the Committee and to good collaboration with the Employers' group in support of the Committee's effective functioning. She noted the value of the informal tripartite discussions in reviewing the Committee's working methods and strengthening their effectiveness. While major changes to the working methods might not be necessary, given the need for as much stability as possible in light of the nature of the Committee, she observed that minor adjustments to improve the functioning and impact of the Committee remained welcome. She further noted that, in 2025, the Committee had functioned smoothly and effectively, in a generally constructive atmosphere, that the Office had maintained a steady and fair hand in guiding the Committee, and that the Officers had collaborated well. She stressed the importance of preserving this spirit in order to fulfil the Committee's mandate. She also stressed that the issue of governments on the final list of individual cases not appearing before the Committee still needed to be addressed and suggested that it would be important to remind governments that, once included on the preliminary list of individual cases, their cases could be discussed by the Committee. When the government concerned did not appear, the case should nevertheless be discussed, and the conclusions should feed naturally into the supervisory system.

6. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** welcomed the spirit of collaboration and cooperation that characterized the work of the Committee, allowing it to achieve good results within the stipulated time frame. Reaffirming his group's commitment to holding tripartite consultations, he highlighted the significant progress made in the context of the discussions and encouraged the participants to pursue that approach.
7. **The Government representative of Canada, speaking in her national capacity,** emphasized the importance that Canada attaches to the effective functioning of the Committee, which it considers to be at the heart of the supervisory system. She noted that the recommendations from the tripartite consultations had led to significant improvements to the working methods of the Committee since 2006.

Preliminary list of cases, submission of written information and adoption of the final list of individual cases

8. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled that, in accordance with the agreed practice, the preliminary list was to be published 30 days before the start of the Conference, namely on Thursday, 30 April 2026. The governments appearing on this list could, on a voluntary basis, submit written updates on developments that had occurred since the publication of the report of the Committee of Experts, before Monday, 18 May. She further indicated that a word limit applied to these written submissions and, while allowing for some flexibility, encouraged the governments concerned to respect that limit in order to make the information more easily accessible to all. She added that it was also proposed that the final list of cases be adopted during the first sitting of the Committee, namely on Monday, 1 June.
9. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed that the publication of the preliminary list 30 days before the start of the Conference was the earliest feasible date. She recalled that the social partners required time to analyse the report of the Committee of Experts, published in February, and to negotiate with the Employers. She indicated that, as long as the extension of the deadline remained an issue of concern for some governments, reflection should continue on how the Office and the governments concerned could make the best use of the time available within that deadline. She thanked those governments that had taken the opportunity to submit written comments the previous year, noting that such comments could provide useful details on how the governments concerned intended to follow up on the comments of the Committee of Experts. She added that this information was useful in determining the final list of cases and therefore urged all governments to take advantage of this opportunity. It might also be useful to reflect on how engagement with the governments concerned could be strengthened in order to encourage the submission of written comments by the deadline.
10. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed with the Worker spokesperson regarding the deadline for the preliminary list of cases and requested that the Office circulate the revised D.1 document on the same day. He expressed the view of his group that it was important to encourage governments on the preliminary list to provide written information, as this assisted the social partners in determining the final list of cases, particularly when the information was provided in a timely manner. He also agreed with the deadline of 18 May for the submission of written comments by governments, as well as with the adoption of the final list of cases on the first day of the Conference.
11. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** the Government representative of Algeria recalled that having the date of publication of the preliminary list 30 days before the start of the

Conference had not changed since 2011. The Africa group attached importance to the possibility for the Governments concerned to provide written information on new developments not examined by the Committee of Experts. He emphasized the need for flexibility regarding the 2,000 word limit and the fact that the information provided by Governments must be taken into account by the social partners during discussions of cases. He also welcomed the practice of adopting the final list during the first session of the Committee, considering that to be a significant improvement achieved through tripartite consultations. Finally, noting that in 2024 two of the five countries that had been the subject of a double footnote by the Committee of Experts were in Africa, he asked how the Committee of Experts took geographical balance into account. He also raised the issue of taking into account the balance between developed and developing countries.

12. **The Government representative of Canada**, speaking in her national capacity, supported the proposals concerning the date of publication of the preliminary list, as well as the provision of updated written information by governments. She recalled that this would enable the Committee to have the most up-to-date information available.
13. **The Employer spokesperson** agreed that a geographical balanced selection of cases must be ensured. He indicated that the question of how the Committee of Experts identifies double-footnoted cases should continue to be raised consistently, so that the methodology remains clear to all concerned. While there is no rule requiring such cases to be discussed by the Committee, it had been the usual practice to retain them on the short list. He therefore considered that the Committee of Experts should be asked to ensure transparency and apply clear criteria in this regard.
14. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed with the general views expressed regarding the need for balance in relation to double-footnoted cases, while emphasizing that the independence of the Committee of Experts must be respected. She recalled that the determination of double-footnoted cases fell within the responsibility of the Committee of Experts.
15. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** said that geographical balance was one of the factors taken into account by the Committee of Experts when selecting double-footnoted cases. While the Committee of Experts had selected two cases concerning African countries the previous year, the balance had been respected more globally in the final list of individual cases discussed by the Committee on the Application of Standards. She added that the Committee of Experts paid particular attention to comments from the tripartite constituents and that in response to those observations it had introduced an explanatory paragraph in all double-footnoted cases.

General discussion, cases of serious failure to respect reporting obligations and discussion of the General Survey

16. **The Employer spokesperson** emphasized the importance of discussing cases involving serious failures by governments to meet their reporting obligations, as the proper functioning of the supervisory system depended on those reports. He considered that the measures introduced to allow the governments concerned to submit general information and comments in writing in advance of the sitting, as well as to take the floor to provide updates on any new developments, had proved useful and should be retained. He welcomed the fact that an increasing number of governments had made use of this opportunity and expressed the hope that this trend would continue that year, including through the submission of written information by the deadline of 26 May. Lastly, he agreed with the proposal to retain the modalities on speaking times for the discussion of the General Survey.

17. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed agreement with retaining the modalities for the general discussion. With regard to cases of serious failure, she welcomed the number of governments that had submitted written information in advance of the discussion the previous year and encouraged the governments concerned to continue engaging in this manner and to submit their information by the deadline of 26 May. Concerning the General Survey, she noted that this discussion formed an important part of the Committee's work and indicated that the groups were making considerable efforts to manage speaking slots in a way that reduced repetition and encouraged joint statements, with a view to improving the efficiency and quality of the discussions. She also observed that the subject of peace and resilience addressed in the General Survey was topical and timely and might therefore require more time than in previous sessions.
18. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** said that he had no particular observations to make regarding speaking times for the general discussion or the General Survey, provided that the total duration of the discussion remained less than four hours. With regard to the examination of serious failures, he noted with satisfaction the increase in the number of countries that had provided written information on those failures, demonstrating the importance of that practice, which should be maintained. Similarly, he supported the measures taken by the International Labour Standards Department and the technical assistance provided by standards specialists to the States concerned to help them prepare their observations. Despite the budgetary constraints facing the Organization, that practice should also be maintained.
19. **The Government representative of Canada**, speaking in her national capacity, supported the proposal concerning cases of serious failure to report, noting that such failures could undermine the integrity of the supervisory system, and strongly encouraged the governments concerned to submit written information. She also supported the proposal relating to the discussion of the General Survey, emphasizing the importance of effective time management and strict adherence to speaking time limits.

Centenary of the Committee

20. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled that the centenary of the Committee and of the Committee of Experts would be celebrated that year. This would provide an opportunity for those speaking during the General Discussion, in particular Member States, to express their appreciation of the work carried out by the Committee over its 100 years of existence, to share their vision for its future, and to reflect on their own experience of engaging with it.
21. **The Worker spokesperson** proposed that the General Discussion be divided into two segments: a first segment of 60 minutes dedicated to the statements on the centenary of the Committee, followed by a second segment to continue the usual General Discussion.
22. **The Employer spokesperson** acknowledged that this would be a significant year for both the Committee and the Committee of Experts, while emphasizing the importance of maintaining a clear focus on the commemoration of the Committee itself. He further recalled that, although marking the centenary during the General Discussion was important, it was equally important to ensure that the work of the Committee proceeded as smoothly as possible. In that connection, he raised a number of questions regarding the practical arrangements for the celebration of the centenary, including how it was intended to be integrated into the General Discussion; how the format proposed in paragraph 25 of the background document, including the screening of a video with interviews with Committee officers and members of the

Committee of Experts, would operate in practice, including the sequence of interventions, the identification of speakers and the means of ensuring balanced participation of the three groups; whether guidance would be provided on the nature and focus of statements so as to ensure a balanced, institutional and forward-looking approach; how the Office envisaged keeping this segment clearly distinct from the broader General Discussion; and how these events would relate to other activities planned throughout the year so that the commemoration would not appear to be a standalone event.

23. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** said that the Centenary of the Committee would be a highlight of its next session and he encouraged the Office to celebrate the event. He stressed that his group would be flexible regarding the arrangements and speaking times to allow Governments to express themselves on that occasion.
24. **The Government representative of Canada**, speaking in her national capacity, supported the Office proposal concerning the centenary and emphasized its importance in light of the central role of the Committee in the supervisory system. She requested that consideration be given to holding the celebration during the time when ministers will be in Geneva, so that they could participate and deliver statements on behalf of Member States.
25. In response to the various interventions, the **Director of the International Labour Standards Department** emphasized that the proposal was for the Committee, in the context of the General Discussion, to take a moment to reflect on its history in an institutional, balanced and forward-looking manner. The inclusion of a 60-minute segment during the General Discussion dedicated to the centenary would be feasible if there was support for that proposal. She further indicated that two Member States, Ireland and South Africa, had volunteered to commemorate with a side event to celebrate the Committee, and that consultations were ongoing to develop a programme outside the Committee's working schedule. In that context, the suggestion of holding the commemoration during the second week of the Committee, when ministers would be available, would be taken into consideration. She also specified that the commemoration would be distinct from the Committee's General Discussion. This centenary segment of the general discussion would provide an opportunity to express renewed commitment to the Committee's work and to reflect on the benefits it had generated for Member States. Given that both Committees – the Conference Committee and the Committee of Experts- were marking their centenary, she added that care would be taken to ensure an overall coherent set of commemorative activities. For the Conference Committee, this would include an institutional commemoration in the context of its General Discussion and a side event. While The Committee of Experts, for its part, would hold an institutional commemoration during its annual session along with an additional event to be determined by them at a later stage. Lastly, she confirmed that the necessary consultations would be carried out to ensure an appropriate balance and representation of all constituents across the various centenary-related interventions.

Discussion of individual cases and provisional working schedule

26. **The Employer Spokesperson** took note of the speaking time limits that had been introduced, which had proved helpful to the work of the Committee, while reiterating that some flexibility should be allowed on an exceptional basis where warranted. He also reiterated that remote participation in the discussion of individual cases should be permitted only in exceptional circumstances. He expressed agreement with maintaining the arrangements proposed in the document for the discussion of individual cases.

27. **The Worker spokesperson** recalled that the discussion of individual cases lay at the core of the Committee's mandate and stressed that every effort should be made to ensure that all 25 cases were dealt with in a timely and optimal manner. She also noted that, together with the Employers, they had succeeded in ensuring that there were no night sittings the previous year, while recognizing that arrangements should still be made in case these became necessary. The experience of recent years had shown that the modalities adopted in 2024 and 2025 were functioning well, with a strong role for the Chair, in consultation with the two Vice-Chairs, in deciding exceptional cases. As regards the provisional working schedule, she expressed a preference for option 2 in Appendix II of the background document (23 individual cases and two special sittings). With regard to the distribution of cases, she proposed that consideration be given to moving one of the cases scheduled for Monday, 8 June, to Saturday, 6 June, or Thursday, 4 June, taking into account the complexity cases discussed. Lastly, she agreed with the information submitted concerning arrangements on speaking times and the conditions under which speaking times could be reduced.
28. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** stressed that the discussion of individual cases was the most sensitive aspect of the Committee's work and that it was important for the tripartite consultations to allow the various parties to express their views. He supported the practice of reducing speaking times when there were more than 17 speakers on the list of speakers, as that had proved effective; the arrangements put in place to discuss an individual case on the same day; remote participation in exceptional circumstances; the possibility for Governments to distribute the 30 minutes of speaking time allotted to them flexibly; and the transmission of the conclusions to a person designated by the Government two hours in advance. Regarding the last point, the Africa group repeated its request for more time to prepare its statement after reading the conclusions.
29. **The Government representative of Canada**, speaking in her national capacity, supported the Office proposal and established arrangements.
30. **The Employer spokesperson** indicated that, with regard to the provisional working schedule, their preference was to work as effectively as possible throughout the day while minimizing evening sittings, in order to ensure the quality of the outcomes. Evening sittings should remain exceptional, particularly that year in the context of the centenary. As regards the number of cases, the Employers could agree, for that year, to 25 cases instead of the usual 24, namely the two special sittings and 23 individual cases proposed under option 2, in light of the consensus reached between the social partners. He stressed, however, the exceptional nature of this decision and underlined that it should remain an exception rather than become the norm.
31. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Government representative of Algeria recalled that his group had twice agreed, on an exceptional basis, to deviate from the 2015 agreement by allowing the discussion of 24 individual cases as well as a special sitting. He noted that the exception was becoming the rule and said that consequently the Africa group was in favour of option 1 (22 individual cases plus two special sittings).
32. **The Government representative of Canada**, speaking in her national capacity, supported option 2 in light of the consensus reached by the social partners. She also expressed agreement that both special sittings should be held on the same day.
33. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** took note the consensus reached on option 2 following an exchange of views. She also took note of the confirmation of the arrangements for the special sittings in respect of Belarus and Myanmar and recalled that both had been requested by the Conference under article 33 of the ILO Constitution. She noted

that these special sittings were temporary in nature and would remain in place only until the countries concerned engaged satisfactorily in addressing the problems identified. She also took due note of the Worker spokesperson's request to move one case from the Monday 8 June to another day on the first week (June 4 or June 5) and confirmed that all efforts would be made in this regard once the final list of cases was adopted.

Other matters

34. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** drew attention to the issue of countries included on the short list of individual cases that do not appear before the Committee. She indicated that footnote 27 of Document D.1 clearly set out the applicable rule in such situations: where a country had not been accredited to the Conference, the Committee would not discuss the substance of the case but would draw attention in its report to the importance of the questions raised; where a country had been accredited to the Conference but its delegates did not appear before the Committee, the case could proceed and be discussed.
35. **The Employer spokesperson** raised the issue of the submission of amendments to the verbatim draft minutes, in a spirit of facilitating cooperation and collaboration between the Workers and Employers and of reaching conclusions as quickly as possible. He indicated that it was important to allow group secretariats to submit amendments to the minutes on behalf of their delegates, and that it was for the secretariats to ensure that the delegate concerned was made aware of such changes. He pointed out that some delegates who made interventions might not be available to propose amendments by the time the minutes were published. Rather than allowing inaccurate records to remain, he considered that this difficulty could be readily addressed by permitting group secretariats to submit such amendments.
36. **The Worker spokesperson** agreed with the Employer spokesperson that, in certain cases, such as where non-parliamentary language had been used and could not be corrected during the sitting, it should be possible for the group secretariat to propose amendments with the consent of the delegate concerned. She emphasized that there should be a way to expunge non-parliamentary language without affecting the substance of the intervention.
37. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group, the Government representative of Algeria** recalled that the Chairperson, with the help of the Secretariat, could at any time interrupt a speaker who was not using parliamentary language and inform them that the offending language would not be included in the minutes. Furthermore, points of order also served to clarify certain situations where delegates felt aggrieved.
38. **The Director of the International Labour Standards Department** recalled the rules governing the Committee and the Conference as a whole, noting that a decision had been taken for the provisional records to consist of verbatim transcripts reproducing each intervention in full. While factual mistakes could be corrected within the established period for submitting such corrections, statements that had been made could not subsequently be altered so as to convey something different. She underlined that it was the responsibility of the Office Secretariat to ensure the rigorous application of this rule. She also thanked the representative of Africa for recalling the role of the Chair with regard to non-parliamentary language and stressed the importance of remaining vigilant in order to identify any departure from parliamentary language during the sitting. In such cases, it was the duty of the Chair to intervene and indicate that such language would not be reproduced in the transcript. She observed that changing such language after the event, where it had not been identified in the room, was problematic. On the issue of who could submit amendments, she recalled that that

only the speaker had the possibility to amend the transcript of their own statement. In view of the demands of the groups, she suggested that speakers could be offered the possibility to indicate, if they so wish, that they authorize their group secretariat to amend the minutes where necessary in their absence, on the understanding that only factual mistakes can be checked and corrected. She emphasized that such authorization had to emanate from the speaker concerned, so that the Office, was aware of who was authorized to submit amendments. This could be done at the time the delegate registers to speak.

39. While indicating that, in their view, the issue extended beyond cases of non-parliamentary language alone, the **Employer spokesperson** agreed that the objective was to ensure that the record accurately reflected what had been said during the Committee and welcomed the clarification that delegates could authorize their group secretariat to submit amendments on their behalf. He underlined the importance of conveying this information clearly to all those registering to take the floor.
40. **The Worker spokesperson** pointed out that it was also the responsibility of the spokespersons to follow up with the delegates concerned on this issue.
41. Following a tribute paid to Marc Leemans by the participants to the consultations for his contribution to the Committee's work as Worker Vice-Chairperson over many years, the **Director of the International Labour Standards Department** closed the discussion.