Committee on the Application of Standards

Date: 31 May 2026

Governments concerned are invited to submit written information on serious failure to report by 26 May 2026.

▶ Information on cases of serious failure to respect reporting and other standards-related obligations supplied by governments

Uganda

Failure to supply information in reply to comments made by the Committee of Experts

The Government has provided the following written information.

The Government submits the present information in a spirit of full cooperation with the ILO supervisory system. The information below highlights new legislative, policy and institutional developments which had not yet been examined by the Committee and which directly respond to pending comments under the relevant Conventions. In addition, Uganda has submitted detailed reports to the International Labour Standards Department covering the 2025 and 2026 reporting cycles, including the report concerning the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205).

I. Legislative reforms and new legal instruments

The Employment (Amendment) Act, 2026 was assented to by the President in April 2026. This is a significant post-examination development with direct relevance to several ratified Conventions. The Act enhances protection for workers against unjust dismissal and strengthens the power of labour officers to adjudicate labour disputes. It further repeals provisions of the Labour Disputes Arbitration and Settlement Act, Cap. 227, which were contradictory with the provisions of the Employment Act, Cap. 226

The Labour Unions Bill 2024, which revises the Labour Unions Act Cap. 228, was presented to Cabinet in November 2024. The Cabinet deferred the Bill and requested further consultations with social partners, including employers' and workers' organizations. Consultations have since been concluded and the Bill is being prepared for resubmission to the Cabinet. This reform is directly relevant to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Consultation workshops on the Workers Compensation Amendment Bill 2024 were conducted with social partners in 2024. The Bill is part of a broader effort to update Uganda's social security and occupational safety legislative framework.

II. New policy frameworks and strategies

Uganda launched its Third Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP III) for 2025–30, signed jointly with the ILO. The Programme aligns employment strategies with ILO priorities, focusing on job creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue. It specifically designates promoting safe, dignified and violence-free workplaces as a core outcome and includes strengthening labour administration and tripartite institutions. DWCP III replaces the previous programme and constitutes a new framework not yet reviewed by the Committee.

A revised National Employment Policy (NEP 2024) is in its final stages of adoption, awaiting Cabinet approval. The new Policy addresses structural challenges including high informality, insufficient job creation, and persistent youth unemployment. Key features include:

(i) strengthening labour administration and enforcement, including improved labour inspection capacity and inter-agency coordination;

(ii) mainstreaming vulnerable groups (youth, women, persons with disabilities) through targeted interventions including the Jua Kali programme, the SENTE programme, and the National Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme;

(iii) promoting transition from informal to formal employment through legal reforms, expanded social protection, and sector-specific formalization strategies;

(iv) an inter-ministerial coordination framework for implementation with clear accountability mechanisms and performance indicators.

Uganda has adopted its Fourth National Development Plan (NDP IV) for 2025/2026–2029/2030, which integrates employment promotion as a central macroeconomic objective. NDP IV prioritizes labour-intensive growth, agro-industrialization, information and communication technology (ICT), and infrastructure development, with specific sectoral job creation targets. This supersedes NDP III (2020–25) and introduces a new planning framework not previously examined by the Committee.

A new National Equal Opportunities Policy was finalized in financial year 2024/25. It provides a consolidated framework for mainstreaming equality across all employment sectors and is relevant to the implementation of the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

The National Gender-Based Violence Action Plan was finalized in financial year 2025/26. It addresses workplace gender-based violence alongside broader societal interventions, complemented by the annual 16 Days of Activism campaign. In financial year 2024/25, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) inspected 13 gender-based violence shelters for compliance with national standards.

III. New institutional mechanisms and operational developments

The National Labour Market Information System (LMIS) was formally launched by the President on 1 May 2025. The LMIS is managed by the MGLSD in partnership with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). It provides disaggregated data by sex, age, region and economic sector, and is specifically designed to guide evidence-based policy-making on employment trends, unemployment, underemployment, and skills gaps. This addresses a long-standing request by the Committee of Experts.

Regarding labour inspection capacity, as of May 2026, Uganda has 190 labour officers and inspectors deployed across 135 districts, 10 cities, and 39 municipalities, up from prior periods. New operational developments include:

(i) In 2024, a nationwide training programme was conducted for over 170 labour officers, covering workers' compensation assessment, child labour identification and elimination, forced labour, trafficking in persons, and National Social Security Fund (NSSF) compliance enforcement.

(ii) In 2025, a further training workshop for 190 labour officers focused on conducting social security inspections.

(iii) In 2025, 20 labour officers participated in a benchmarking visit to Rwanda to strengthen cross-border learning and improve inspection methodology.

(iv) In financial year 2024/25, 1,018 workplace meetings on safety and health standards were registered; 884 workplaces were inspected for OSH compliance; 1,495 workplaces were registered for OSH compliance; and 1,113 statutory equipment inspections were conducted.

(v) The Department of Labour, Industrial Relations and Productivity (DLIRP) inspected 167 external recruitment agencies and 66 pre-departure training institutions in financial year 2024/25 for compliance with safe migration standards.

A pilot online gig work programme was launched in January 2024 by the ILO in partnership with the MGLSD. The programme equips youth with digital work skills and job linkages to help them enter the growing gig economy. This is a new pathway to self-reliance for young people not previously reported upon.

IV. New developments in labour migration and refugee employment

The new Guidelines for External Recruitment Agencies were issued in 2024, together with a draft Pre-Departure Training Curriculum for Migrant Workers. These instruments address coercive labour practices including debt bondage and restriction of movement. They are implemented alongside bilateral labour agreements (BLAs) and are directly relevant to the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), and the forced labour Conventions.

Uganda is concluding new BLAs with Kazakhstan and Germany, scheduled for finalization in financial year 2026/27. A labour attaché has been deployed in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to monitor conditions and support Ugandan migrant workers in dispute resolution. These represent new arrangements not yet before the Committee.

The Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project, funded by the World Bank and implemented by the MGLSD and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, has been extended to all districts, municipalities and cities including refugee-hosting districts. The project now includes a dedicated component for refugee women ("Growth Opportunities for Refugee Women"), providing skills development, access to microfinance and mentorship.

Uganda is implementing the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) targeting the creation of 200,000 sustainable jobs for refugees and host community members by 2025. The Plan supports vocational training, apprenticeship schemes, enterprise development, agricultural value chains and the recognition of prior learning (RPL) for informal skills certification.

V. Updated Labour Market Statistics

According to the UBOS Labour Market Survey (LMS) 2025, disseminated on 16 April 2026, Uganda's working-age population (aged 14–64 years) stands at 57.6 per cent of the total population, translating to approximately 26.4 million people, of whom only 11.8 million are employed. The national unemployment rate is 12.2 per cent, with women more affected (13.9 per cent) than men (10.8 per cent), and youth aged 15–24 recording the highest rate at 17.9 per cent. Beyond unemployment, a broader measure of labour underutilization – encompassing the unemployed, the underemployed, and those available but not actively seeking work – reveals that approximately 7.7 million Ugandans are in labour distress, pushing the overall underutilization rate to 41.6 per cent. The services sector has emerged as Uganda's largest employer, absorbing 50.5 per cent of the workforce, followed by agriculture at 37.1 per cent and industry at 12.4 per cent. Women are particularly prominent in the services sector, accounting for 56.4 per cent of its workforce. Informality remains a defining challenge, with 89.2 per cent of employed persons working outside the formal economy, rising to 91.9 per cent in rural areas and as high as 95.1 per cent among youth aged 15–24. The formal sector employs approximately 2.37 million people with 155,240 reported vacancies, while the informal sector employs 7.35 million with 305,364 vacancies. The UBOS has committed to producing quarterly labour market updates going forward to support more timely, evidence-based policy planning.