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## Developments in the application of the resolution concerning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization

### ► Introduction

1. At its 344th Session (March 2022), the Governing Body adopted a resolution concerning the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization (ILO). <sup>1</sup> In the resolution, the Governing Body requested the Office to provide all possible assistance to the tripartite constituents in Ukraine. Furthermore, it decided to temporarily suspend technical cooperation or assistance from the ILO to the Russian Federation, except for humanitarian assistance, and to suspend invitations to the Russian Federation to attend all discretionary meetings, such as technical meetings and meetings of experts, conferences and seminars whose composition is set by the Governing Body, while safeguarding the ILO's technical cooperation or assistance to all other countries within the purview of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (DWT/CO-Moscow).
2. At its 348th Session (June 2023), after considering the last report to it on developments relating to the resolution, the Governing Body requested the Director-General to continue to respond

<sup>1</sup> GB.344/Resolution.

to the constituents' needs in Ukraine and to expand the ILO's resource mobilization efforts for Ukraine, to continue to enhance the ILO's resource mobilization efforts for other affected countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and to continue to monitor the impact on the world of work of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> The present document responds to the Governing Body's request for a report on developments in that regard.<sup>3</sup>

## ► General developments

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3. The Russian military aggression has now persisted for over 20 months and is continuing to cause devastation both in the Ukrainian territories occupied by the Russian Federation and in the rest of the country, with continued aerial strikes causing loss of life and substantive damage. The number of refugee returns has increased, but displacement remains widespread, with 6.2 million refugees from Ukraine spread across Europe and an estimated 5.1 million internally displaced persons.<sup>4</sup> Beyond the humanitarian costs of the aggression against Ukraine, its impact on economic and labour market conditions has been severe. The ILO's latest projections on the effects of the war on employment in Ukraine remain similar to those it has made previously, as economic growth has been minimal.<sup>5</sup> The integration of Ukrainian refugees into host labour markets continues to improve.<sup>6</sup> The extension by the European Council of the Temporary Protection Directive until 4 March 2024 was a welcome development to continue to ensure access to employment and essential social services to people who have fled Ukraine. Information compiled by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in multiple host countries indicates that the provision of employment-focused services, including professional and skills training programmes, has expanded and that refugees have been offered counselling and support to access employment opportunities in these countries.<sup>7</sup>
4. Meanwhile, economic developments in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia subregion have been better than expected, diminishing fears of broader negative socio-economic spillover effects. The countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia recorded higher-than-expected economic growth rates in 2022, at 4.8 per cent, despite dismal economic forecasts at the onset of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. Projections for the next year also look favourable: growth is projected to decelerate to 4.2 per cent by the end of 2023, before a slight rebound to 4.5 per cent in 2024.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, job growth in the region in 2022 was above the multi-year trend level.

<sup>2</sup> GB.348/PV, para. 99.

<sup>3</sup> Data in this report reflects the situation up to 18 September 2023. If necessary, the Office will provide the Governing Body with an oral report on developments since that date.

<sup>4</sup> See UNHCR, "Operational data portal – Ukraine refugee situation" and IOM, "Global Data Institute Displacement Tracking Matrix", accessed 24 August 2023.

<sup>5</sup> See document GB.348/INS/5/2, para. 11. The Office has recently confirmed the projections in that document, based on additional administrative data sources.

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR, *Lives on Hold: Intentions and Perspectives of Refugees and IDPs from Ukraine #4*, 6 July 2023.

<sup>7</sup> UNHCR, *Ukraine Situation: Regional Refugee Response Plan - 2023 Mid-Year Report*, 18 August 2023.

<sup>8</sup> IMF, *Regional economic outlook– Middle East and Central Asia: Safeguarding Macroeconomic Stability amid Continued Uncertainty*, 2023.

5. The favourable economic and labour market performance of the subregion is owed, in part, to the fact that countries are benefiting from a sudden increase in transit trade as a result of measures to circumvent the economic sanctions imposed against the Russian Federation.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the war has caused an influx of skilled workers, firms and capital from the Russian Federation to the subregion, which has stimulated consumption and services.<sup>10</sup> For instance, exports to the Russian Federation more than doubled in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan in 2022 compared with the previous year.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the demand in the Russian Federation for migrant workers from neighbouring countries is high, as the Russian Federation is experiencing labour shortages, not least due to the outflux of Russian workers. A relatively strong recovery of the Russian rouble after a sharp fall at the beginning of the war has been a strong factor in maintaining the purchasing power of remittances in the countries of origin of migrant workers throughout 2022 and early 2023, although recent currency fluctuations may forebode worsening conditions ahead.

## ► Impact on jobs, livelihoods and enterprises

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6. Due to the scarcity of data, the effects of the aggression against Ukraine on the world of work can be estimated only imprecisely and are subject to high uncertainty. Nonetheless, ILO estimates continue to indicate that employment losses in Ukraine have been dire.
7. The tenth edition of the ILO Monitor on the world of work estimated that employment in Ukraine declined by 15.5 per cent in 2022, equivalent to 2.4 million jobs lost.<sup>12</sup> These estimates have been confirmed recently through the analysis of administrative data sources and remain stable, as the macroeconomic situation has not changed dramatically. The Office, at the request of the Ukrainian Government, has produced employment projections based on the gross domestic product (GDP) forecasts of the Ministry of Economy. The projections suggest a severe employment shortfall for Ukraine's ambitious growth target until 2032, indicating the need for major efforts to facilitate the reintegration of internally displaced persons and returnees, and more targeted interventions to enable women to increase their participation in the labour market. Sustained recovery and strong job growth are unlikely to materialize, however, unless the security situation substantially improves. A cessation of hostilities would almost certainly be associated with extraordinary rates of economic recovery, provided that a sufficient workforce is available. It is therefore important to lay the labour market foundations now.<sup>13</sup>
8. The impact on enterprises remains difficult to gauge. According to information from the Ministry of Economy, by September 2023, approximately 840 enterprises had relocated to safer areas within Ukraine, of which around 670 had resumed operations. Despite a positive drop in

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<sup>9</sup> UN Comtrade database.

<sup>10</sup> EBRD, *Regional Economic Prospects in the EBRD Regions – Getting by: High inflation weighs on purchasing power of households*, May 2023.

<sup>11</sup> According to the UN Comtrade database, the GDP share of Armenia's exports to the Russian Federation jumped from 5.7 per cent in 2021 to 13.4 per cent in 2022. Similarly, Kyrgyzstan charted an increase from 4.6 per cent in 2021 to 9.9 per cent in 2022.

<sup>12</sup> ILO, *ILO Monitor on the world of work. Tenth edition: Multiple crises threaten the global labour market recovery*, 31 October 2022. The prediction interval at the 95 per cent confidence level corresponds to a decline in employment of between 8.2 and 22.7 per cent.

<sup>13</sup> For details on the ILO's estimates, see document GB.347/INS/16, para. 7.

headline inflation to 8.6 per cent and a subsequent cut in the key policy interest rate by the National Bank of Ukraine to 20 per cent,<sup>14</sup> cost pressure on enterprises remains high, particularly due to elevated electricity and fuel prices. Business surveys conducted by the central bank do not show major improvements in business expectations. Logistical difficulties, high input prices, high security risks, the destruction of infrastructure and a slow recovery of the labour market are the main factors restraining economic activity. The only enterprises that intend to increase hiring levels are trading enterprises, while industrial and service sector enterprises are considering further cuts to their workforce.<sup>15</sup>

9. The Black Sea Grain Initiative, an important effort to stave off famine in countries in the global South that has facilitated more than half of Ukraine's grain exports (more than 30 million tons) since its introduction in July 2022,<sup>16</sup> was terminated by the Russian Federation on 17 July 2023, alleging that the parallel memorandum of understanding between the Russian Federation and the United Nations (UN) Secretariat on promoting the access of Russian food products and fertilizers to the world markets was not being sufficiently implemented.<sup>17</sup> According to the information provided by the Office of the United Nations Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, exports from Ukraine's Black Sea port have stopped, and no cargo ships have arrived since the termination of the Initiative. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) called the development "particularly problematic since harvest has started in Ukraine, and there is a need to guarantee proper income and incentives for Ukrainian farmers to prepare the next planting season during the fall."<sup>18</sup> The FAO's global food price index fell again in August 2023, and wheat futures are hitting three-year lows, despite the uncertainty in the Black Sea. While the FAO does not envisage any risk to the global availability of food due to the termination of the Initiative in the short term, food access and affordability remain a concern and the negative impact on the resilience of agrifood systems – already weakened by multiple crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, economic downturns, climate extremes and conflicts – should not be underestimated. Efforts by the United Nations and Türkiye to revive the Initiative are ongoing, to ensure stable food supplies for affected countries in the global South.
10. Some vessels that had been stranded in Ukrainian ports since the beginning of the war have managed to leave the country via a new maritime route unilaterally established by Ukraine. The Russian Federation has warned, however, that any vessel heading towards Ukraine may be suspected of carrying weapons and faces the risks associated with war. While there has been no major incident to date, it is to be noted that this situation puts the lives of seafarers at undue risk.
11. The destruction of the Kakhovka dam on 6 June 2023 is the single biggest disaster of the war so far. Based on ILO sectoral productivity estimates for Ukraine, the resulting (annualized) employment losses could total at least 26,000 jobs in the two most affected economic sectors (21,000 in agriculture and 5,000 in industry and commerce). Shortages of water for irrigation

<sup>14</sup> National Bank of Ukraine, "Speech by NBU Governor Andriy Pyshnyy at Press Briefing on Monetary Policy Decisions", 14 September 2023.

<sup>15</sup> National Bank of Ukraine, *Monthly Business Outlook Survey*, August 2023.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, "Black Sea Initiative exports top 30 million tonnes from Ukraine, as talks continue over renewal", 11 May 2023.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations, *Memorandum of Understanding between the Russian Federation and the Secretariat of the United Nations on promoting Russian food products and fertilizers to the world markets*, July 2023.

<sup>18</sup> FAO, "FAO brief on the interruption of the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its potential implications on global food markets and food security", 31 July 2023.

in areas that were not directly affected by the flooding are a serious concern, meaning that the effects on employment in agriculture could potentially be much more severe in the medium term. The ILO has contributed to the post-disaster needs assessment that is being carried out jointly by the Government of Ukraine, the World Bank and the United Nations.

## ► Impact on the ILO's constituents and on the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme and development cooperation in Ukraine

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### Government

12. The situation of the ILO's main interlocutors within the Government of Ukraine – the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Social Policy - has not changed. These interlocutors remain fully operational and are laying the ground for early recovery and reconstruction. In this regard, they have reiterated that international support for Ukraine needs to include humanitarian, budgetary and development assistance in parallel, and should not follow a staged approach, with development assistance for the ambitious reform agenda (including accession to the European Union) starting at a later stage.
13. Following a tripartite study visit of a Ukrainian delegation to ILO headquarters in April 2023, the Ukrainian delegation to the International Labour Conference held another round of technical conversations with various ILO specialists, detailing the priorities for the coming months. A key priority is the preparation of employment projections for the next 10 years disaggregated by economic sector and based on different recovery scenarios. The projections are an essential input to the formulation of a high-quality demographic strategy that responds to the growing concerns among the Ukrainian constituents and the international community about a shortage of labour preventing economic recovery. The ILO provided rapid technical and financial support for the preparation of the projections and a first draft paper has been shared with the Government of Ukraine for comments.
14. A second key priority is the preparation of actuarial projections for the solidarity pillar of the social insurance pension scheme. The ILO provided initial funding for collecting data and building the baseline scenario for applying its actuarial model. In a second phase, starting in 2024, the Office will produce the projections, build actuarial capacity within the Government and prepare policy options for pension reforms. As part of this process, the Office is in contact with the World Bank, which is producing microsimulations on the impacts on vulnerable parts of the population, to ensure coherence within the multilateral system in the advice provided to the Government.
15. A third priority is the integration of vulnerable groups in the labour market, including internally displaced persons, war veterans and persons with disabilities. With funding from several development partners, the ILO is already providing support in this area. Since the beginning of the war, the Ukrainian State Employment Service has provided services to some 1.2 million persons and helped 390,000 jobseekers to find new employment. But these services must be scaled up, as the State Employment Service has to cover some 2.8 million unemployed persons, almost half of whom belong to vulnerable groups. On the particular challenge of integrating persons with disabilities in the labour market, the ILO Senior Disability Specialist visited Kyiv in early July 2023 to discuss measures with relevant ministries and other stakeholders to increase the employment of persons with disabilities, including disabilities due to the war. Supporting

the State Employment Service to be better prepared to aid the inclusion of such persons in the labour market, alongside other jobseekers, was identified as an area in need of support. Moreover, Ukrainian employers require support to become more disability-confident and disability-aware. The Office is in discussions with development partners to develop a broader programme of support.

16. The ILO's work in Ukraine continues to reflect the structure of its six-point plan to support the country, addressing humanitarian, early recovery and developmental issues.<sup>19</sup> The plan includes the following points: continuing with humanitarian aid where the ILO can add value; helping refugees and internally displaced persons access labour markets and education; facilitating a range of income support measures; introducing economic stabilization measures in relatively safe parts of the country; supporting development by working with the Government on its priority reforms; and providing financial assistance to trade unions and employers' organizations.
17. Ukraine has made substantial progress in preparing for the ratification of further ILO Conventions. In July 2023, the Ukrainian Parliament ratified the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No.170). The Office provided technical assistance at all stages towards the ratification. Moreover, the country is working towards the ratification of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003, as amended (No. 185). The instrument is of relevance for Ukraine as the country is the source of a large number of seafarers.

## Trade unions and employers' organizations

18. Trade unions and employers' organizations remain operational but are severely affected by the war. As described in previous reports to the Governing Body, a key concern for the social partners remains the loss of membership dues and the resulting negative impact on their financial situation. The social partners do not receive financial support other than some donations from sister organizations. Additional resources are needed to support the social partners in their ongoing efforts to maintain their operations and adapt the services they provide to members.
19. The three national employer and business membership organizations in Ukraine report that member enterprises in several industries have continued the gradual expansion of their operations since the last update, although about a third are yet to return to pre-war operational levels. Ukraine's export capabilities remain constrained due to the destruction of production facilities, the blocking of transport and the mining of agricultural land. This has affected in particular the largest agricultural and metallurgical enterprises, which account for a sizeable share of Ukrainian GDP and are predominantly in the Eastern combat zones.
20. In the second quarter of 2023, the ILO continued to provide support to these employer and business membership organizations in their efforts to expand their membership services. For example, the Federation of Employers of Ukraine opened a new help desk for members seeking access to the European Union (EU) market. Initial results are promising. Furthermore, over 60 enterprises participated in international trade fairs, resulting in the signing of new commercial contracts. These contracts had an estimated value of US\$3.5 million between December 2022 and July 2023 and allowed enterprises to retain approximately 1,500 jobs.
21. The Association of Employers' Organizations of Ukraine delivered further training on business continuity and resilience to 50 beneficiary enterprises. This training was in addition to that

<sup>19</sup> ILO, *ILO's response to the crisis in Ukraine*, February 2023.



provided to 1,200 enterprises since the launch of its training and consultancy service in December 2022, and included topics such as EU trade regulations. The Association intends to add a support service for small and medium-sized enterprises embarking on the transition to renewable energy.

22. The Confederation of Employers of Ukraine is in the final stages of designing a knowledge platform on “Business and disability”, including guidelines for enterprises on the employment of people with disabilities and an awareness-raising campaign.
23. The two main national trade union federations – the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine and the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine – continue to assist internally displaced persons, particularly by providing shelter and distributing provisions. The ILO contributes to these efforts. Trade unions are facing difficulties in exercising their functions, as many union offices have been destroyed by aerial attacks. Due to the negative economic impact of the war, including the cessation of the operations of enterprises and worker layoffs, the collection of membership dues has decreased. Some trade union officials have been dismissed or have taken unpaid leave.
24. Workers in the territories occupied by Russian forces continue to report violations of their labour rights. According to trade union reports, workers are coerced into signing employment contracts that include the extension of working hours and unpaid overtime work. There are also reports of forced affiliation with Russian trade unions that continue to establish their offices in the territories under occupation. Unhealthy and dangerous working conditions, combined with an absence of the right to voice grievances, has increased the risk of accidents and injuries. According to reports, workers continue to risk severe punishment, including imprisonment, for participating in trade union activities, as Russian laws restrict the free exercise of public meetings and demonstrations.
25. The situation at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant remains dire and fighting within its vicinity has continued. Ukrainian trade unions have continued to report unsafe working conditions. Emergency response and occupational safety and health management systems do not function effectively. Workers report that they continue to work without personal protective equipment at the plant. An unstable electricity supply puts workers – including some who are, according to trade union reports, being forcibly held at the plant – at risk of increased exposure to radiation and a potential nuclear accident. Remaining Ukrainian nuclear workers that have tried to leave the city of Zaporizhzhia have been stopped at military checkpoints and refused the right to leave the occupied territory. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) recently reiterated its concerns for the mental well-being of nuclear workers, as explosions have been reported in the cities housing nuclear workers close to the nuclear power plants at both Zaporizhzhia and Chornobyl.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, IAEA experts have observed the existence of directional anti-personnel mines on the periphery of the site of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is inconsistent with IAEA safety standards and nuclear security guidance and places additional psychological pressure on plant staff.<sup>21</sup>
26. At the request of the Governing Body, the Office has begun monitoring violations of workers’ rights in other sectors, notably in the electricity, railway and education sectors. According to trade union reports, Russian forces have obliged Ukrainian railway workers to maintain railway operations, given the strategic importance of the railways to transport Russian troops,

<sup>20</sup> IAEA, “IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine (Update 180)”, 22 August 2023.

<sup>21</sup> IAEA, “IAEA Director General Statement on Situation in Ukraine (Update 175)”, 24 July 2023.

ammunition and other supplies to the front. The operation of trains in areas of conflict and the handling of munitions is extremely hazardous and exposes the workers to life-threatening health and safety risks. There are also reports that railway workers and their families are frequently faced with threats of torture, rape and death, and that some workers have been abducted and have endured violence, abuse and torture for refusing to cooperate. Ukrainian railway workers have also been forced to join Russian trade unions.

27. The Ukrainian teachers' unions and Education International report that Ukrainian teachers have been forced to teach pro-Russian curricula and propaganda. Those who initially refused to cooperate were eventually forced to do so under threats of prison, torture or death. Those who have continued to teach the Ukrainian curriculum in secret or to pass on Ukrainian books to parents and children do so at great personal risk. Reports indicate that some teachers have been killed, while others have allegedly been deported to the Russian Federation. Russian forces are also demanding that Ukrainian teachers join Russian trade unions.
28. The Office has continued to hold regular meetings with the International Maritime Organization and representatives of the Government of Ukraine, the Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union of Ukraine, the International Transport Workers' Federation, the International Chamber of Shipping and several seafarers' welfare organizations on the impact on seafarers of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. It is noted with great concern that the Russian Federation has declared the International Transport Workers' Federation to be an undesirable organization, subjecting anyone who cooperates with it to potential fines and imprisonment under Russian law, which raises questions related to freedom of association. Meanwhile, there are also reports confirming injuries to port workers in the Danube River basin, raising concerns about workers' safety in civilian transport infrastructure.<sup>22</sup>
29. The Ukrainian Marine Transport Workers' Trade Union has expressed concerns to the ILO over the weakening position of Ukrainian seafarers in the global maritime industry caused by the war. Traditionally being among the top-five largest workforce suppliers to the maritime industry, Ukraine may gradually lose its position. The Union has reverted to the ILO for development cooperation to modernize education in maritime training, as some of its training facilities have been destroyed in the war. The ILO and the Union have developed a concept note and are currently seeking financial support from development partners. Recently, the Union's office in Izmail was partly destroyed during a Russian attack on the port facilities and grain warehouses.
30. In view of the reports by trade unions of violations of their members' fundamental rights at work in the occupied territories of Ukraine, the ILO has deepened its collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on labour rights in Ukraine. The situation of Ukrainian workers in the occupied territories was discussed at a workshop held in Kyiv in July 2023 and attended by representatives of Ukrainian trade unions, the ILO, IndustriAll and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. The trade unions learned about the mechanisms for reporting violations of workers' rights that are available through the UN human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine. The mission will include reports on individual violations of fundamental principles and rights at work in its forthcoming publications. The trade unions also gained a better understanding of the process for filing complaints or representations concerning such violations to the ILO's supervisory bodies.

<sup>22</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), "[Statement by the Humanitarian Coordinator for Ukraine, Denise Brown, on the latest attack hitting Ukraine's Danube Port](#)", 3 September 2023.



## Development cooperation

31. The Office has been building on previous efforts to increase resource mobilization for its work in Ukraine.<sup>23</sup> In June 2023, the Government of Belgium approved a two-year project aimed at preventing labour exploitation and human trafficking, promoting enterprise development and providing support to enable the social partners to improve the services they provide to members in Ukraine. Earlier in the year, the ILO allocated funding from its regular budget supplementary account for a two-year project increasing the participation of women in the labour market in Ukraine by expanding childcare services. Switzerland is considering the provision of support to local employment partnerships as an economic stabilization measure in selected regions of Ukraine where early recovery interventions can already start.
32. In addition, the ILO increasingly engaged with other UN agencies. In collaboration with the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office conducted a study on the employment of internally displaced persons and challenges in the labour market, held a workshop on preparations for a post-war labour market and is currently developing joint programmatic approaches towards labour migration.<sup>24</sup> With the UNHCR, engagement continued on supporting the livelihoods of internally displaced persons, providing childcare solutions to enable female labour force participation and promoting workplaces free from stigma, violence and harassment. Discussions with the United Nations Development Programme are under way on the issue of providing support for active labour market programmes. There are frequent exchanges with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) on equal pay, particularly in relation to Ukraine's national strategy on gender equality.<sup>25</sup> Knowledge exchanges took place with the FAO on sound chemicals management and the labour market impact in the agriculture sector of the destruction of the Kakhovka dam. Such collaboration helps to coordinate UN support to Ukraine and will prospectively lead to joint programming and resource mobilization.
33. The ILO has also offered its support to the European Union's Ukraine Facility, a dedicated instrument to support Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernization.<sup>26</sup> One of the pillars of the Facility is to support the Ukraine Plan, which the Ukrainian Government is planning to present by the end of October 2023. For that purpose, the Government has undertaken to create working groups mirroring the 35 chapters of the EU acquis by September 2023. The Office will participate in the group on social policy and employment.
34. On 21 and 22 June 2023, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Ukraine jointly hosted the latest iteration of the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London, which was attended by senior ILO staff. The Director-General delivered a video statement at a session attended by representatives of international organizations and international financial institutions and aimed at ensuring the coherence and alignment of interventions within the multilateral system. He highlighted the centrality of decent work and social justice towards a rapid recovery and emphasized the need to deliver development assistance in parallel to humanitarian aid and budget support. The outcomes of the Conference showed signs of a shift among donors towards the provision of development assistance.

<sup>23</sup> For details, see documents GB.347/INS/16 and GB.348/INS/5/2.

<sup>24</sup> ILO, "ILO, IOM help pave road for post-war labour market in Ukraine", 20 July 2023.

<sup>25</sup> ILO, "Despite the war Ukraine keeps up the reform process: addressing the gender pay gap is high on agenda", 12 June 2023.

<sup>26</sup> European Commission, "Recovery and reconstruction of Ukraine".

35. After its participation at the Ukraine Recovery Conference, the Office is following up with the Ukrainian constituents, development partners and donor coordination mechanisms to ensure that the ILO can provide the best possible support to Ukraine's recovery strategy. The recovery strategy provides an opportunity to foster employment-rich growth and highlight the role of international labour standards in ensuring the fair and just treatment of workers and employers. Based on recently signed agreements, the ILO development cooperation portfolio in Ukraine is stabilizing at pre-war levels (US\$13 million). Several donors that have been working with the ILO in Ukraine have not yet decided to initiate recovery and reconstruction projects in parallel to the military, budgetary and humanitarian aid that is being provided.

### Situation of ILO staff in Ukraine

36. The ILO currently employs ten staff members in Ukraine and has four additional vacancies in development cooperation projects to be filled (compared to 14 staff members before the outbreak of the war). Following an assessment by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the adoption of a detailed plan earlier in 2023, the staged return of staff to the new joint office premises with UNHCR in Kyiv has been completed. The daily life of ILO staff remains stressful due to the ongoing Russian airstrikes against Kyiv and other cities in Ukraine. International staff are entitled to regular rest and recuperation cycles outside Ukraine and the Office has taken additional measures to mitigate the stress of national staff as well. The duty of care remains the highest priority of the Office.
37. Going forward, the Office is closely monitoring its operational capacity, with the main priority being an increased presence in Ukraine. The selection process for the position of Country Director in Kyiv and negotiations with the Government of Ukraine on the signing of a Host Country Agreement are progressing. The ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia will directly engage with the constituents, representatives of other UN system organizations and the donor community during a visit to Ukraine planned for early October 2023, with the aim of further defining areas for future action and to prepare the ground for effective implementation.

### ► Impact on the ILO's constituents and on the implementation of Decent Work Country Programmes and development cooperation in other affected countries in the region

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38. In addition to the support provided to the ILO's constituents in Ukraine, the ILO has also focused on the situation in the Republic of Moldova, where the war in Ukraine is having a deep and profound impact, due to the Republic of Moldova's geographical proximity and its close economic ties with both Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Despite its own economic limitations, the Republic of Moldova has offered support to many Ukrainian refugees. On a per capita basis, the Republic of Moldova has hosted more Ukrainians than any other neighbouring country.
39. The ILO continues to provide technical support to the Moldovan constituents to enhance decent work prospects for both host communities and refugees. During the first months of the war, the National Confederation of Trade Unions of the Republic of Moldova made its properties available to host Ukrainian refugees, providing more than 20,000 bed nights. Moldovan unions continue to support their Ukrainian counterparts and provide facilities to

host ILO training sessions. The ILO has also partnered with labour inspectorates in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine to prevent human trafficking and labour exploitation among refugees and host communities.

40. In addition, the ILO assisted the Republic of Moldova in advancing a broad reform agenda to enhance citizens' living standards and to support EU accession. Through consultations with the ILO and the social partners, the Moldovan Government adopted a new gender-responsive employment programme that will be in place until 2026. Part of this programme is the expansion of local employment partnerships, aimed in particular at promoting the inclusion of women and young people in the labour market. In the last five years, 2,400 young people not in education, employment or training (including 1,385 women) entered the workforce under this programme. The ILO also provided technical inputs to the discussions on the Republic of Moldova's minimum wage reforms.<sup>27</sup>
41. Earlier this year, Switzerland started supporting ILO interventions on employment creation in the Republic of Moldova through a two-year project.<sup>28</sup> Sweden is providing financial support to the ILO to help narrow gender employment gaps via innovative childcare approaches. The European Union and the ILO are in negotiations on a technical cooperation project to advance the reform of key labour market institutions, notably the State Labour Inspectorate and the National Employment Agency. Austria, Liechtenstein and the ILO are currently finalizing a project agreement on skills development for a greener future of the Republic of Moldova.
42. To support trade unions in the region, the Bureau for Workers' Activities and the International Training Centre of the ILO will conduct a course on decent work, peace and resilience in October 2023. The aim of the course is to train workers' representatives from Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Slovakia and Ukraine on implementing the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), which focuses on creating employment opportunities and promoting decent work during crisis situations caused by conflicts and disasters.
43. The DWT/CO-Moscow continues to provide technical cooperation and assistance to all countries in the subregion other than the Russian Federation and Belarus,<sup>29</sup> with the necessary adjustments to ensure the delivery of its services. The handover of responsibility for Georgia from the DWT/CO-Moscow to the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest (DWT/CO-Budapest) was completed by 1 July 2023, and a first workshop was held in September to familiarize the constituents with the process towards establishing a Decent Work Country Programme for Georgia. Office assistance to the constituents in Central Asia and the South Caucasus has continued along the technical areas outlined in the previous reports to the Governing Body, both in terms of the technical assistance provided by the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team in Moscow and through the implementation of development cooperation projects.<sup>30</sup> The Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia monitors the evolving situation and is also engaged with the constituents and donors to respond to emerging needs and opportunities. There have also been positive developments in resource mobilization for the subregion, with about US\$4.5 million in the pipeline for new potential projects. This increase in the portfolio also reflects a diversification of donors, as funds are provided by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, the European Bank for

<sup>27</sup> ILO, *An empirical assessment of the minimum wage for evidence-based social dialogue in the Republic of Moldova*, 2023.

<sup>28</sup> ILO "ILO and SECO launch collaboration to accelerate employment creation in Moldova", February 2023.

<sup>29</sup> Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

<sup>30</sup> For details, see documents GB.347/INS/16 and GB.348/INS/5/2.

Reconstruction and Development, the multinational clothing company Inditex and the United Nations Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, among more traditional ILO donors. Conversations with donors are ongoing and some project proposals are under review or have been shortlisted for funding consideration.

## Situation of ILO staff in the Russian Federation

44. The DWT/CO-Moscow remains fully operational. The security situation is closely monitored in cooperation with UNDSS, and the continued operation of the office is in line with the UNDSS security assessments for Moscow. The Office continues to extend additional temporary flexibility measures to the staff of the office in line with its duty of care, including the option for them to temporarily relocate to the ILO premises in Budapest. Four international staff members have chosen to work from Budapest. Following a cost/benefit analysis, the Office considers that keeping the present premises in Moscow is the best option.

## ► Areas for further action

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45. With changing circumstances in Ukraine and the stabilization of refugee flows in neighbouring countries, the Office is revising its service offer to reflect the latest priority needs of the constituents. It aims to strengthen delivery capacity towards reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine and towards the better labour market integration of refugees and host communities in other affected countries, which is in line with priority needs of the Ukrainian constituents and with the outcomes of the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London.
46. In Ukraine, multiple workstreams are helping to build the evidence base that will allow for more targeted policy and capacity-building interventions going forward. Data and analysis serve as the foundation for the development of further assistance programmes. This sequencing is particularly important in the context of high uncertainty. Interventions in Ukraine are focused on “learning by doing” and need to be adaptable to changing circumstances. To remain agile, the Office has strengthened its internal coordination efforts and advocates for policy coherence towards the Ukrainian constituents and development partners.
47. To respond to the growing demand for ILO assistance resulting from the war, more funding is needed. The Office continues to engage in fundraising efforts to help shape an employment-rich Ukrainian recovery and reconstruction that mainstreams the principles of decent work. To this end, it actively engages with the donor community. Multiple bilateral discussions are ongoing, and the Office continues to engage in all relevant international forums. In this process, the Office is in close contact with the Ukrainian constituents at every step of the way, to ensure that ILO support is based on actual demands and meets the most urgent needs of the constituents. A similar approach is being followed in other affected countries across Europe and Central Asia.

## ► Draft decision

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48. **In the light of the developments in Ukraine outlined in document GB.349/INS/15 and the resolution concerning the Russian Federation’s aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the mandate of the International Labour Organization (ILO), adopted at**

its 344th Session (March 2022), and taking into account the discussions held and the guidance provided during its 349th Session, the Governing Body:

- (a) noted the information provided in the document;
- (b) reiterated its most profound concern at the continuing aggression by the Russian Federation, aided by the Belarusian Government, against Ukraine and at the impact that this aggression is having on the tripartite constituents – workers, employers and the democratically elected Government – in Ukraine, and on the world of work beyond Ukraine;
- (c) urged the Russian Federation again to immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine;
- (d) urged once again the Russian Federation to meet all the obligations following from its ratification of ILO Conventions, including the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), in particular in relation to the repatriation of seafarers and access to medical care; the Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115), in relation to the exposure of workers to ionizing radiations in the course of their work; and the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and its accompanying Protocol of 2014;
- (e) reiterated its unwavering support for the tripartite constituents in Ukraine, requested the Director-General to continue to respond to the constituents' needs in Ukraine and to expand the ILO's resource mobilization efforts, including in forthcoming international donor conferences on recovery and reconstruction, and welcomed the update on the establishment of an ILO Country Office for Ukraine in Kyiv;
- (f) requested the Director-General to continue to enhance resource mobilization efforts for other affected countries across Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
- (g) requested the Director-General to continue to monitor the impact on the world of work of the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine and to report to the Governing Body at its 350th Session (March 2024) on developments in the light of the resolution, including the ILO's continued engagement with the relevant United Nations bodies involved in monitoring human rights violations and the situation of maritime and nuclear workers.