



Governing Body

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Policy Development Section

POL

Minutes of the Policy Development Section

Contents

	Page
Employment and Social Protection Segment.....	3
1. Review of progress made regarding the follow-up of the Youth Employment Action Plan (YEAP) for the period 2020–30 (GB.349/POL/1).....	3
Decision.....	9
Social Dialogue Segment	10
2. ILO integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining (GB.349/POL/2).....	10
Decision.....	17
3. Sectoral meetings held in 2023 and proposals for sectoral work in 2024–25 (GB.349/POL/3).....	17
Decision.....	21
Development Cooperation Segment.....	22
4. Enhanced programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories (GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1) and GB.349/POL/4(Add.1)).....	22
Decision.....	38

Employment and Social Protection Segment

1. Review of progress made regarding the follow-up of the Youth Employment Action Plan (YEAP) for the period 2020–30 (GB.349/POL/1)

1. **The Employer spokesperson** commended the Office on the work done in the scope of the Youth Employment Action Plan for the period 2020–30. To support its implementation, Member States needed to be provided with the necessary resources to develop effective youth employment strategies and initiatives that were adapted to local and regional needs. It would also be important to facilitate knowledge exchange to allow challenges to be identified and inform evidence-based strategies. The Action Plan's balanced approach reflected its careful development and coordinated implementation. However, the Office should pay particular attention to market demands in addition to labour supply, meaning it must not only prioritize projects promoting entrepreneurship and employability among young people, but also support the development of regulatory and institutional policies conducive to the creation of productive employment opportunities.
2. He asked how the Office had ensured that youth employment continued to receive the necessary attention following the decision in 2020 to merge the Youth Employment Programme into the Employment, Labour Markets and Youth Branch (EMPLAB) of the Employment Policy Department to align its objectives with the ILO's overall mission. The Office should allocate sufficient resources to the programme and related initiatives while also increasing their visibility, and all stakeholders should demonstrate their strong commitment to them.
3. A holistic approach should be taken to youth employment policies, as young people's situation in the labour market could not be analysed independently from the wider economic situation. It was crucial to have an enabling environment for business growth, as that would provide more youth employment opportunities. Training and skilling must be urgently aligned with the demands of the rapidly changing world of work. He commended the Office's efforts to make the voices of young people heard in policymaking and social dialogue activities and to underscore the social dimension of climate change and the importance of a just transition for young people. Securing adequate financing remained a major challenge; the Office must therefore work hard to mobilize sufficient resources for youth employment to implement the Action Plan and make a tangible impact. The independent mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan would provide a clearer understanding of the situation and challenges arising, enabling the Office to adapt to the evolving needs of young people. He supported the draft decision.
4. **The Worker spokesperson** congratulated the Office on the implementation of the Action Plan. However, the document did not provide concrete information on the impact of activities implemented to support job creation for young people. The deterioration of working conditions triggered by stagnation in youth labour market prospects had contributed to increased migration among young people, exacerbating global inequalities. It would have been interesting to learn how implementation of the Action Plan had helped to anchor a job-friendly development agenda in industrial and sectoral policies that could facilitate structural transformation, contribute to an environmentally sustainable economy and promote greater public and private investment in sectors that created decent jobs for young people.

5. His group supported the actions proposed to enhance the ILO's technical work on youth employment. With regard to the proposed development of integrated policy responses, he highlighted the crucial role of pro-employment macroeconomic policies, which could generate a conducive environment for decent job creation, and welcomed the emphasis placed on the role of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions in that regard. Structural transformation through industrial policies, including investment in the green economy and skills development as part of a comprehensive just transition, could provide decent and formal jobs for young people. Consideration should also be given to integrating the ILO plan of action on inequalities and the Quality Apprenticeships Recommendation, 2023 (No. 208), in such activities.
6. He welcomed the focus on promoting meaningful engagement of young people in the world of work and society, and emphasized the importance of including young workers in designing economic, social and employment policies. He requested clarification on what "youth-inclusive social dialogue" meant, as precarious employment conditions experienced by young people often prevented them from engaging in social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining. That problem could not be resolved through the ad hoc designation of youth representatives. The Office should focus on raising awareness among all young workers of their rights. In addition, since most platform workers were young people, it was crucial to encourage the involvement of young trade union representatives in preparations for the standard-setting discussion on decent work in the platform economy to be held at the 113th Session (2025) of the International Labour Conference.
7. The Action Plan paid insufficient attention to labour organizing, collective bargaining and freedom of association, and the need to ensure formalization (an issue increasingly of concern to young workers given the difficulty of the school-to-work transition, lack of decent employment opportunities and high barriers to entry). The Action Plan should also give more consideration to gender equality, diversity and the racialization of jobs. He called for a change in the quality of employment for young people; they should be paid fairly for their work, regardless of age and experience. Structured wage growth systems should be implemented to assure young workers of regular, reasonable wage increases based on their experience and skills accrued, as such approaches motivated them to remain committed to their roles and improve their skills. The Office should prioritize capacity-building to enable constituents to design and implement labour market policies conducive to a just transition and the creation of decent green jobs.
8. In addition, the Office should advise countries to support youth employment policies and programmes that focused on sectors with decent work creation potential (such as green, blue, digital, orange and care economies). In that context, the Office should provide technical support to constituents on developing apprenticeships in such sectors, taking into account national realities and employment, industrial and public investment policies. The Office should also assist Member States more actively in formulating and evaluating youth-specific employment policies. The decrease in average retention rates among young people warranted consideration, as young people increasingly sought fulfilling jobs that favoured their personal development. The EU Youth Guarantee had created opportunities for young people and acted as powerful drivers for structural reform where trade unions had participated actively.
9. He thanked the Office for embedding youth employment in the wider work of the Office through the Interdepartmental Action Group on Youth Employment (IDAG), and his group strongly supported the proposals to re-establish a youth employment programme within EMPLAB. He agreed with the importance of having created the programme and budget output 3.5 and stressed that resource mobilization on youth employment should be a key

priority going forward, also with regard to including youth issues in initiatives such as the Global Accelerator and the Global Coalition for Social Justice. He supported the draft decision.

10. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Senegal reaffirmed her group's commitment to decent work and productive employment for young people in Africa, in accordance with the Abidjan Declaration. The Action Plan stated that young people were facing huge barriers to entry into the labour market following the COVID-19 pandemic, a problem exacerbated by international tensions. Her group appreciated the technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives carried out in her region, as well as the development of a youth employment strategy for Africa in collaboration with the African Union. However, the Office should provide more information to constituents on the outcomes of such initiatives and their impact on the situation of young people, including data on the number and quality of jobs generated in each country involved. The independent mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan could prove useful in that regard. Furthermore, the involvement of governments and social partners in such initiatives and the coordination of activities should be strengthened to ensure the effectiveness of those activities and the rational use of resources. Her group supported the way forward as outlined by the Office, in particular the prioritization of resource mobilization on youth employment and the inclusion of output 3.5 in the Programme and Budget for 2024–25. She supported the draft decision.
11. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Mexico welcomed the inclusion of output 3.5 in the Programme and Budget for 2024–25 and the proposal to undertake an independent mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan. He highlighted the importance of South–South and triangular cooperation to the promotion of youth employment and expressed hope that the Global Coalition for Social Justice would pay special attention to the education, training and mental well-being of young people. It was essential to take a cross-cutting gender equality approach in the tripartite analysis of youth employment in order to ensure that the implementation of the strategic framework of the Action Plan promoted capacity-building among young people and resulted in strengthened labour market institutions, inclusive and sustainable growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Analysing each cluster of the Action Plan's work plan would help to visualize the outcomes of its implementation.
12. His group appreciated the increase in knowledge development and dissemination activities and the high rate of advocacy and partnership activities carried out by the Office in his region, and acknowledged the Office's efforts to provide technical assistance and capacity-building for the employment of young people in the region. Given the high level of informality in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Office should learn from experiences in the region to inform its programmes on formalization.
13. He called for the continued promotion of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth and expressed hope that the implementation of the Action Plan would contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8 and equip young people with the skills required for the green economy. They supported the measures outlined in the Action Plan. The meaningful participation of young people in the world of work should be encouraged to promote social dialogue. He supported the draft decision.
14. **Speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)**, a Government representative of China highlighted the importance of youth employment to global growth. The divergence in COVID-19 pandemic recovery pathways was contributing to global inequalities in opportunities for young people, with potential negative implications for labour migration, the well-being of young people and social cohesion. Against that backdrop, the implementation of the Action

Plan had achieved fruitful outcomes globally, as in her region. She called on the Office to support Member States in sharing research and experiences on youth employment, an area that had traditionally not received sufficient investment and required greater attention.

15. Youth employment should be a priority of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, and synergies and cooperation with other international organizations and multilateral forums should be enhanced. The ILO should strengthen Government capacities to remove obstacles to youth empowerment. She welcomed the proposal to prioritize resource mobilization on youth employment and the inclusion of output 3.5 in the Programme and Budget for 2024–25. She called on the Office to allocate additional budgetary and human resources to youth employment, include the topic in future programme and budget proposals and mobilize additional regular budget and extrabudgetary resources to support the implementation of the Action Plan. Coordination of resources dedicated to youth employment programmes across the Office should be strengthened to ensure consistency and coherence, and evaluations of the implementation of the Action Plan should be conducted, with outcomes regularly reported to the Governing Body. She supported the draft decision.
16. **Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States**, a Government representative of Spain said that North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Ukraine, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with his statement. The EU was committed to supporting the labour market participation of young people and had implemented a range of regional initiatives in that area. It was positive to see a balanced distribution of youth employment outcomes across the Action Plan's clusters of implementation in all regions and at headquarters, and an integrated approach to tackling the five policy areas of the 2012 resolution entitled "The youth employment crisis: A call for action". In Europe, joint EU–ILO capacity development activities for the implementation of Youth Guarantees were supporting countries in the Western Balkans.
17. Given the persistent impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on youth unemployment, there was a need to support education and training for young people, notably in line with Recommendation No. 208, and to develop effective youth employment policies through youth-inclusive social dialogue. In that regard, he commended the Office's efforts to facilitate the participation of young people in programme design and implementation through youth-inclusive social dialogue, and the support provided to constituents despite budgetary and staffing constraints. It was regrettable, however, that the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine had led to the suspension and/or refocusing of initiatives in the region; the Russian Federation must immediately and unconditionally cease its aggression and withdraw its troops from Ukraine.
18. The review of progress was timely in the light of ongoing work on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Coalition for Social Justice. Integrated policies and cooperation were vital for policy formulation and implementation; initiatives such as the Global Accelerator could support such efforts. It was also important to mobilize resources and strengthen constituents' capacity, while considering the life-course perspective and challenges and opportunities arising from the evolving world of work, in line with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. Improvements could be made at the headquarters and regional levels to work on youth employment, including through staff networks that worked fully or partially on that issue; the new output on youth employment in the Programme and Budget for 2024–25 would be essential for boosting efforts and monitoring progress in that regard. In conclusion, his group supported the draft decision and looked forward to the independent mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan in 2025.

19. **A Government representative of Mexico** said that the challenges presented by the economic crisis, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, conflict and the lack of decent employment must be addressed with the full cooperation of the tripartite constituents, supported by the Office. Political commitment and innovative approaches were essential to improve conditions for young people in the world of work; his Government had made progress in that regard, notably through a dedicated youth employment programme in which the public, private and social sectors worked together to promote the employability and labour inclusion of young people not in education, employment or training. Investment in young people represented investment in the present and future of a society that would fight for social justice.
20. **A Government representative of Indonesia** said that tackling youth unemployment and the enduring effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people's education, training, employment and well-being was of paramount importance, particularly in countries with a high youth population such as his own. Empowering and supporting young people was crucial for sustainable development and social cohesion. The ILO's commitment to implementing the 2012 resolution was therefore commendable. With respect to the diverse initiatives and interventions undertaken in different regions, special attention should be paid to securing an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and establishing lasting peace in the region, as the conflict was having a devastating impact on the safety and employment prospects of young Palestinians.
21. His Government agreed on the need to involve young people in policy and programme design, to strengthen constituents' capacity to deliver integrated packages of youth-targeted active labour market policies and to focus on sectors with decent job creation potential, given that a life-course perspective was crucial to ensure that young people could access opportunities. It also supported the call to prioritize resource mobilization on youth employment, notably of extrabudgetary resources, as that would be essential to scale up the initiatives outlined in the document. His Government remained committed to collaborating with the international community to achieve the objectives of the Action Plan and looked forward to its independent mid-term evaluation.
22. **A Government representative of India** welcomed the initiatives undertaken by the ILO to tackle labour market challenges and promote youth employment, particularly through technical assistance and capacity-building. However, challenges remained and further efforts were needed for more effective implementation of the youth strategy. New forms of work, especially the gig and platform economies, had the potential to address high youth unemployment in developing countries. In that regard, the Indian presidency of the G20 had achieved a milestone by building consensus on the importance of working towards provision of social protection for gig and platform workers.
23. Greater emphasis on building a robust foundation among young people for availing themselves of employment opportunities and lifelong learning could be achieved through better cross-collaboration; in that connection, the Global Coalition for Social Justice could be an effective platform for boosting resource generation, policy and action coherence at all levels. The Indian G20 presidency had also built consensus for the development of an international reference classification of occupations and a map of global skills gaps. She urged the ILO to conduct research and garner support for their implementation. The Office should also continue preparing reports on progress towards the Antalya goal of reducing the share of young people who were most at risk of being permanently left behind in the labour market by 15 per cent by 2025, and provide technical support and policy advice to improve the youth employment situation worldwide.

24. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** asked the Office to clarify which topics were covered under the reported actions on knowledge development and dissemination, how those actions had influenced policy and practice and whether that information would be included in the 2025 mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan. Ongoing work should remain focused on addressing barriers to entry and progression in the labour market for young people in disadvantaged and under-represented groups, and she encouraged the Office to facilitate information sharing on that area of work. She welcomed the proposed action on collaboration in section IV of the report on the way ahead, highlighting the success of collaborative government action in the United Kingdom. She supported the proposal to re-establish the youth employment programme and the introduction of a specific output on youth employment in the Programme and Budget for 2024–25, which would enhance monitoring of that work. She supported the draft decision.
25. **A Government representative of Brazil** welcomed the document's broad overview of activities in cross-cutting areas related to youth employment and shared the Director-General's view that youth employment should be a priority for the ILO; the inclusion of a specific outcome for that purpose in future programme and budget proposals could help in that regard. Her Government had implemented various national measures closely aligned with ILO directives on youth employment, and remained firmly committed to the inclusion of youth in the labour market. In that regard, her Government would be willing to potentially host the next Youth Employment Forum, which would provide an opportunity to exchange ideas that could be linked to other initiatives, such as the Brazilian presidency of the G20 in 2024 and the global partnership between Brazil and the United States for the promotion of decent work. She supported the draft decision.
26. **A Government representative of Pakistan** acknowledged the commendable efforts made by all constituents to tackle labour market issues in Asia and the Pacific, as outlined in the report. However, much remained to be done, as youth employment rates in developing countries still lagged behind pre-pandemic levels. His Government was committed to creating employment opportunities for the country's youth and had two key national initiatives working towards that goal. Another area of national focus was youth empowerment, with a view to increasing gender parity in education and the world of work. He supported the draft decision.
27. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Jobs and Social Protection Cluster) said that the Office's work on youth employment was anchored in the Employment Policy, Job Creation and Livelihoods Department and undertaken in coordination with all ILO technical departments and field offices. The ILO was committed to continually improving its implementation of the Action Plan, and an important step was the introduction of output 3.5 of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25, which aimed to ensure the integration of demand- and supply-side interventions on youth employment. A mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan would be carried out in 2025 and would measure its impact. The Office would continue to focus on targeted interventions for young people in particularly difficult situations and to improve job quality, including through work on, inter alia, social protection, informality, and training and skills development.
28. The Office would continue to support the strengthening of social dialogue that was inclusive of young people and included youth-specific employment outcomes, and to work with the social partners on the rights of young people and strengthen tripartite engagement. It would also pursue its efforts to create strong partnerships with the multilateral system, the private sector and other relevant stakeholders which were instrumental in resource mobilization and leveraging the ILO's work on youth employment. Youth employment was one of the main areas of focus for the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and the

Global Coalition for Social Justice. The Office would continue to provide technical support to the G20 in the area of youth employment. The Youth Employment Action Plan was fully aligned with Recommendation No. 208.

29. **Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Employment Policy, Job Creation and Livelihoods Department), responding to the comments of the Employer spokesperson on the need for an enabling environment for decent job creation, recalled that the *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022: Investing in transforming futures for young people* report revealed how a structured transformation in the digital, green and care economies could help create decent jobs for young people. The ILO was working with the African Union and the African Development Bank to mainstream decent work issues into economic policies and investment decisions.
30. The influence and relevance of the ILO's research in terms of policy and practice would be addressed in the 2025 mid-term review. Its work to analyse the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on young people had informed policy discussion and development, for example, and the *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022* report was being used as an important reference point for policy debate. He thanked Brazil for their offer to organize a Youth Employment Forum that would be further discussed with them.
31. **The Worker spokesperson** requested clarification on inclusive social dialogue. His group urged the Office to clearly advise Member States to increase awareness among young people of their rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, enabling them to join trade unions or employers' organizations so as to participate in social dialogue. The ILO's spending on youth employment needed to increase, as it was a priority issue for the Organization.
32. **The representative of the Director-General** (Director, Employment Policy, Job Creation and Livelihoods Department) said that efforts to, among other things, raise young people's awareness of their rights with regard to social dialogue were an essential part of the Action Plan. In fact, the Office was working to update a guide on workers' rights that particularly addressed young people.

Decision

33. **Subject to the guidance provided in its discussion of the 2020–23 review of progress made by the follow-up Youth Employment Action Plan for the period 2020–30, the Governing Body took note of the review of the progress made and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in continuing to implement the Youth Employment Action Plan, including as regards the allocation of resources in future biennia, and to facilitate the mobilization of adequate extrabudgetary resources to that end.**

(GB.349/POL/1, paragraph 44)

Social Dialogue Segment

2. ILO integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining (GB.349/POL/2)

34. The Governing Body had before it an amended version of the draft decision, which had been proposed by the Employers' group and circulated by the Office, and which read:

The Governing Body endorsed the ~~proposed~~ proposal of an ILO integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining within the framework of the revised action plan on social dialogue and tripartism 2019–2023 and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in developing and implementing the strategy and to submit a progress report at its 352nd Session (November 2024).

35. **The Employer spokesperson** recalled that freedom of association and collective bargaining were fundamental rights that Member States had an obligation to respect, promote and realize by virtue of their ILO membership, even if they had not ratified the corresponding Conventions. He observed that most of the proposed activities were already being carried out by the Office under existing plans of action and strategies and were included in the Programme and Budget for 2024–25. The plans of action concerned should be reviewed by the International Labour Conference during its recurrent discussions on the fundamental principles and rights at work in 2024 and on social dialogue in 2026, in order to take into account new developments and the needs of the constituents.
36. The ILO's activities to promote the right to collective bargaining were therefore already included in a broader strategy to promote social dialogue. There was no need to introduce a separate strategy on collective bargaining; doing so could lead to a two-speed system in the ILO, under which collective bargaining was considered separately from other aspects of social dialogue. That approach did not reflect the spirit of the conclusions concerning the second recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism adopted by the Conference in 2018, which aimed to create a global framework for action that took into account all forms of social dialogue according to national traditions and contexts.
37. Paragraph 52 of the document stated that links would be established between the proposed strategy and other ILO strategies, to ensure that collective bargaining was integrated into them, without providing clarity on how that would be done. It was clear that further guidance from the Conference was needed. Indeed, during its recurrent discussion in 2024, the Conference would examine the opportunities provided by the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the framework of fundamental principles and rights at work to develop synergies between the different principles and rights.
38. The question of promoting collective bargaining for workers in the informal economy and for other vulnerable groups should be integrated into the ILO's existing strategies on those issues, and not considered separately. Furthermore, any activities to promote collective bargaining must respect national regulatory frameworks.
39. Referring to paragraph 19, which stated that there was scope to increase the role of collective bargaining as a regulatory mechanism given the low levels of coverage in many countries, he recalled that collective bargaining, if it was to be effective, must assume a voluntary character and not entail recourse to measures of compulsion which would alter the voluntary nature of such bargaining.

40. The focus on promoting collective bargaining in the multilateral system, including by incorporating the comments of the ILO supervisory bodies into multilateral cooperation frameworks, was unacceptable; those comments were not intended to be used as case law, but were issued in relation to specific circumstances taking into account national contexts. Regarding paragraph 44, it was unclear on what basis the list of research products, which should have been the result of tripartite agreement, had been developed. Certain items of importance to employers were missing from that list. Furthermore, the topics to be covered in the flagship report on social dialogue had already been agreed on and should not be amended at that stage. While up-to-date databases were needed, and the Office had a clear mandate for activities in that respect under the 2018 conclusions, the document provided no proposals on how to overcome the associated resource constraints. It was unclear how public-private partnerships would be used to help promote collective bargaining, as mentioned in paragraph 53. The proposal for the Office to report on the strategy on an annual basis was not in keeping with other ILO strategies and was contrary to efforts to reduce the workload of the Governing Body.
41. The proposed strategy appeared to be an effort to reinvent the wheel and could mean losing sight of the value of social dialogue. An integrated strategy was needed in which collective bargaining played an important role but was not isolated from other aspects of social dialogue. His group had therefore proposed an amended version of the draft decision.
42. **The Worker spokesperson** said that collective bargaining was a fundamental human right and a cornerstone of the ILO. It was one of the best ways to reduce inequalities and promote social justice. The adoption of an integrated strategy would guide the Office's work to promote and implement that fundamental right and give effect to the conclusions and decisions adopted by the tripartite constituents over the years. His group welcomed the growing support in the international community for the promotion of collective bargaining, in particular the establishment in December 2021 of the Multilateral Partnership for Organizing, Worker Empowerment, and Rights (M-POWER) in the United States of America, the launch in September 2023 of the United States-Brazil Partnership for Workers' Rights and the commitment to human rights made in August 2023 at the BRICS summit in South Africa.
43. The discussion of the integrated strategy was, therefore, timely. Indeed, the Governing Body's discussion earlier that week on the high-level evaluations of strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes had underscored the need for the ILO to update its strategies and extend its activities to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining.
44. The document highlighted the need to overcome the challenges regarding the implementation of the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the important role of the ILO's supervisory bodies in that regard. It was fundamental to ensure that all workers in all sectors were able to engage in collective bargaining. The Office, together with governments, had a key role to play in establishing a negotiating framework so that all workers could enjoy that fundamental right. The ILO *Social Dialogue Report 2022*, which his group welcomed, had underscored the key role played by collective bargaining in eliminating inequalities, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
45. Noting with concern the comments in paragraph 20 on the limited capacity of the ILO to respond to requests for assistance, he said that it was essential that sufficient resources should be made available for the implementation of the proposed strategy. Mandatory training was needed for all ILO staff on the right to collective bargaining. International labour standards should be promoted and technical assistance provided to improve national follow-up to recommendations by the supervisory bodies. The main focus of the strategy should be on

extending collective bargaining coverage, and centralized collective agreements, which guaranteed the broadest coverage, should be prioritized. Indeed, the conclusions of the recurrent discussion on social dialogue of 2018 afforded importance to extending coverage to all workers. An assessment was needed of how different workplace rules could undermine the practice of collective bargaining. The transnational element was important, and the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) should be taken into consideration in terms of strengthening the promotion of the operational tools in its Annex II.

46. It was crucial to strengthen collective bargaining frameworks at the national level, with efforts from public authorities, including dispute prevention and settlement mechanisms and the capacity-building of all social partners. With regard to knowledge development, he underscored the need to draw on the work carried out in the preparation of the *Social Dialogue Report 2022*, and on the data in the *Global Wage Report 2022-23* and the *World Employment and Social Outlook 2023*. Data collection and transparency were essential. Training was needed based on economic, social and financial indicators and empirical sources of information needed to be taken into account in bargaining processes. The identification of participants in negotiations was also important. A strategy on collective bargaining should go hand in hand with the right to freedom of association.
47. His group supported the proposed strategy, which would be coordinated centrally by the Office, and supported the draft decision as originally drafted by the Office. The amended version proposed by the Employers' group was not appropriate as it would limit the strategy.
48. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Mexico said that freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining contributed to the fulfilment of all other rights at work and supported progress towards social justice. Social dialogue was key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and her group would support the ILO in its role in achieving them. In terms of the development of the proposed strategy, the participation of the social partners in good faith was a crucial element. The Global Coalition for Social Justice could play an important role in promoting collective bargaining. Since there was no single model for collective bargaining, the Office would need to identify national circumstances in order to implement the strategy.
49. Her group stood ready to support implementation of the strategy and the activities set out in the document, such as promoting the relevant international labour standards and helping Member States ensure that legislation allowed vulnerable workers and workers in the informal sector to exercise their right to collective bargaining. Data were needed so that the tripartite constituents could follow up on progress made, and the use of new technologies should be enhanced to boost the impact of promotion activities and to provide training and support for States and representative employers' and workers' organizations. Her group supported the original draft decision.
50. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Morocco asked which aspects of the ILO's approach towards collective bargaining needed to be strengthened to enhance the coherence and effectiveness of the ILO's approach towards collective bargaining, including within the Office. She also asked for more information on the nature of the public-private partnerships to help promote collective bargaining more broadly, in line with existing procedures. While her group considered collective bargaining to be a voluntary process, a legal and regulatory framework for collective bargaining, based on international labour standards, would provide for standardized modalities for negotiations and establish the role of tripartite institutions in providing advice on proposals to promote collective bargaining

and collective labour agreements within enterprises or at the sectoral or national levels. Although the document stated that no legal limitation existed on the subject matter for bargaining or on the content of collective agreements, it should be noted that the provisions of collective agreements on general conditions of work, employment and labour relations must provide the necessary clarity with regard to the settlement of disputes and the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work, and the provisions must be no less favourable than those set out in labour law.

51. The success of the proposed strategy would depend on the ability of the Office to provide assistance and capacity-building to constituents with regard to the establishment of a legal framework for collective bargaining, the development of collective agreements, the topics for inclusion in such agreements and the role of the state authorities. With regard to the draft decision, she wished to hear the views of other Member States before expressing her group's view.
52. **Speaking on behalf of the group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)**, a Government representative of Canada said that the enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining were fundamental to the ILO and critical to inclusive economic development, democracy and social justice. The Office should prioritize work on those rights both at headquarters and in the field. Technical support on collective bargaining should be at the heart of the ILO's work. IMEC welcomed the proposed strategy and its focus on strengthening the coherence and effectiveness of the ILO's approach and enhancing the ILO's capacity to foster policy coherence on the subject in the multilateral system. IMEC also welcomed the efforts to increase the competency of the Office and to support the promotion of collective bargaining. Such efforts should include mandatory training for all staff. In the light of the challenges highlighted by the Office, IMEC anticipated that a key part of strengthening internal coherence and effectiveness would be to increase investment in the staff and resources dedicated to collective bargaining. Implementation of the strategy would require outreach to donors and substantial resource mobilization. Voluntary contributions were meant to complement, not replace, the regular budget resources dedicated to collective bargaining. The Office should therefore devote sufficient core resources to enable the full implementation of the strategy. IMEC supported the draft decision as originally drafted.
53. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Spain said that North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine, Iceland, Norway and Armenia aligned themselves with her statement. Her group aligned itself with the statement made on behalf of IMEC and welcomed the proposed strategy. Social dialogue and collective bargaining had proven to be important tools in supporting progress towards social justice and giving effect to international labour standards, driving not only economic and social resilience, competitiveness and stability, but also sustainable and inclusive growth and development. Collective bargaining also played an important role in shaping the future of work. The EU and its Member States welcomed the growing support for the promotion of collective bargaining within the international community. Countries with robust frameworks for social dialogue and a high coverage of collective bargaining tended to have more competitive and resilient economies. The EU was strongly committed to strengthening efforts to support collective bargaining; she therefore welcomed the proposed framework and the guidance in the strategy. She supported the reinforced focus on the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining and agreed that the strengthening of public institutions and authorities was essential to that work. Furthermore, she welcomed the emphasis on the intrinsic link between collective bargaining and freedom of association and supported the efforts to strengthen the capacity of the social partners. She also welcomed the

intent of a common understanding of the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining across the ILO. In that regard, the ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and Convention No. 98 was paramount. The important role played by the social partners should be preserved and enhanced. She supported the proposed strategy and its priority areas for action.

54. **A Government representative of the United States of America**, noting the centrality to the ILO of the enabling rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining, said that more needed to be done to strengthen the time and attention given to those rights. In his report to the 111th Session (2023) of the Conference, the Director-General had acknowledged the need to step up efforts to promote collective bargaining, which continued to play a role in delivering outcomes that were fair, equitable and inclusive. Her Government was committed to helping the Office to achieve the aims of the strategy and accordingly had agreed to fund a new global project, the Research, Innovation and Strategic Engagement (RISE) project, to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining. It planned to provide up to US\$40 million to the ILO over the coming years through the RISE project to: support efforts to strengthen the ILO's contribution to the global debate on the value of freedom of association and collective bargaining to democracy and inclusive economic development; support work with the ILO constituents to foster legal, regulatory and institutional reforms and build capacity in the areas of labour market governance and industrial relations; and support innovative approaches and best practices in industrial relations and the realization of those rights. Her Government would be pleased to discuss opportunities for coordinating support in that respect with other interested donors. However, she recalled that voluntary contributions were meant to complement, not replace, regular budget resources dedicated to collective bargaining. The Office should devote sufficient core resources to enable the full implementation of the strategy. She supported the draft decision.
55. **A Government representative of India** said that global trends, such as those relating to remote working, migration and informal employment, posed new challenges for the recognition and exercise of collective bargaining rights; labour laws, models of association, collective bargaining and union strategies must be adjusted accordingly. His country therefore supported the progressive expansion of the scope and coverage of voluntary collective bargaining, in line with national circumstances. The importance of data and information for evidence-based bargaining could not be overlooked.
56. The ILO should protect the interests of low- and middle-income Member States in trade and investment agreements. The inclusion of labour rights in those agreements should not be allowed to serve as a protectionist measure or a non-tariff barrier. Scarcity of resources, and not lack of will, was the central reason behind some Member States' inability to secure labour rights and social protection for their workers. The imposition of strict obligations to guarantee labour rights without taking into account Member States' respective resources was likely to be detrimental in low- and middle-income countries, potentially worsening social justice and labour rights. Trade and investment should not be linked to labour rights in a manner that would aggravate social injustice and inequality, particularly in the global South. The ILO should develop adequate policy and legal safeguards in trade and investment agreements, as well as undertaking international advocacy, to ensure that low- and middle-income Member States were not penalized for their vulnerabilities or economic constraints. High-income countries should provide technical support and financial assistance for the expansion of economic activities and capacity-building.
57. **A Government representative of Indonesia** recognized the need to develop strategies to respond to the rapidly evolving global labour market, where issues such as informality,

globalization and technological advancement affected collective bargaining. The proposed strategy's alignment with the ILO's strategic objective of strengthening the tripartite constituents and promoting meaningful and inclusive social dialogue was crucial, since strong partnerships between workers, employers and governments, as well as broader societal engagement, were essential to labour policies and practices. The emphasis on policy coherence within the ILO and in the multilateral system was welcome, and he recognized the importance of mobilizing resources to support the proposed strategy. He also acknowledged the significance of efforts to raise awareness of, and promote, international labour standards related to collective bargaining and welcomed in particular the provision of technical support and capacity-building. The proposed strategy's focus on development cooperation would be crucial for countries like Indonesia.

58. **A Government representative of Brazil** highlighted that the creation of quality jobs in the formal sector and the promotion of decent work, including through collective bargaining, could boost consumption, and therefore production, and increase tax revenue and social security contributions, thereby enhancing governments' ability to institute improved public policies. Collective bargaining also helped to reduce wage inequalities and combat discrimination at work. The Global Coalition for Social Justice should be harnessed to promote collective bargaining and better assist the most vulnerable workers. His Government had taken significant steps to promote tripartism, including the conclusion of a national tripartite agreement on yearly increases to the minimum wage above inflation levels, one of the largest collective bargain agreements in the world, covering some 30 million workers.
59. **A Government representative of Namibia** described his Government's actions to promote collective bargaining and tackle some of the challenges addressed by the proposed strategy, whose focus on areas such as capacity-building, comprehensive research and advocacy was welcome.
60. **A Government representative of the Republic of Korea** said that the proposed strategy was timely and relevant. Building an authoritative, evidence-based body of knowledge that allowed Member States to share best practices was commendable, while the provision of capacity-building and training to labour inspectorates would be beneficial to all Member States. He supported the draft decision.
61. **A Government representative of Argentina** welcomed the proposed strategy. Collective bargaining, the right to which her Government strove to protect, could play a central role in tackling global challenges such as technological transitions and gender inequality, and the commitment of the ILO and its Member States to promoting that right was crucial to consolidating democracy and development. Her Government supported the draft decision.
62. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group's proposed amendment aimed to guarantee consistency across the Office's policies, ensure the efficient use of its financial resources and focus its efforts to promote social dialogue. He wondered whether the Office might have departed from the mandate to promote all forms of social dialogue granted to it by the International Labour Conference at its 107th Session (2018) in favour of promoting only collective bargaining. Although a key tool for regulating labour relations, collective bargaining alone was insufficient to achieve social justice. He therefore wished to receive clarification as to how the Office intended to reconcile the proposed strategy with the mandate granted to it by the Conference. His group would also welcome assurances that, should the proposed strategy be endorsed, the social partners would be involved in determining its content.
63. Noting that many governments had delivered statements in favour of collective bargaining but had not yet ratified Convention No. 98, he expressed hope that the proposed strategy would

support them in translating those statements into action. His group was concerned at the use of the ILO supervisory bodies' comments, which, rather than constituting jurisprudence, should be used to guide governments in fulfilling their collective bargaining obligations. Furthermore, the ILO must uphold the voluntary nature of collective bargaining as established in Convention No. 98, and ensure that the different levels of collective bargaining were not negatively affected by the proposed strategy and that collective bargaining by branch of activity was not favoured.

64. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Morocco said that the group, having completed its consultations, could support the draft decision.
65. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster), in response to the concerns expressed by the Employers' group, said that although the proposed strategy had drawn on follow-up to the conclusions adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 107th Session, it had also been informed by recent experiences of collective bargaining, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. While collective bargaining was just one form of social dialogue, it had been recognized by a number of recent tripartite forums as central to the achievement of social justice. Having a dedicated strategy on collective bargaining would not diminish the importance of other forms of social dialogue; rather, it would likely contribute to strengthening it further. The strategy would respect not only the diversity of collective bargaining systems but also their common underpinning principles, including the voluntary nature of collective bargaining, the social partners' autonomy and independence, and freedom from undue interference by governments. The proposed strategy was not intended to impose collective bargaining or any particular outcome.
66. Rather than constituting binding instructions, supervisory bodies' comments would form part of the support provided to States struggling to implement the provisions of Convention No. 98 with the aim of creating a virtuous circle in which positive changes on the ground would inform supervisory bodies' views. In addition to the proposed strategy, collective bargaining was promoted through its mainstreaming in important areas of the Office's work. The proposed areas of research were a reflection of requests submitted by constituents, including the Employers' group, such as the role of collective bargaining in promoting lifelong learning to increase productivity.
67. The proposed strategy sought to strengthen freedom of association and collective bargaining by, for example, reducing fragmentation, building the capacity of ILO staff to generate knowledge that would allow the right to collective bargaining to be exercised meaningfully, and allocating greater resources to support regulatory improvements and strengthen public authorities. The Office provided technical support to Member States, at their request, in considering and implementing labour provisions within the framework of trade and investment agreements, with a particular focus on low- and middle-income countries.
68. **The Employer spokesperson** said that, in the light of the comprehensive explanations provided by the representative of the Director-General, his group withdrew its proposed amendment and supported the draft decision as prepared by the Office. The Employers' group was strongly in favour of collective bargaining.
69. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that the proposed strategy was clear, and its endorsement by the Governing Body marked an important moment for the ILO.

Decision

- 70. The Governing Body endorsed the proposed ILO integrated strategy for the promotion and implementation of the right to collective bargaining and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in implementing the strategy and to submit a progress report at its 352nd Session (November 2024).**

(GB.349/POL/2, paragraph 57)

3. Sectoral meetings held in 2023 and proposals for sectoral work in 2024-25 (GB.349/POL/3)

- 71.** The Governing Body had before it two amendments to the draft decision, which had been circulated by the Office. The Employers' group had proposed deleting the chapeau of subparagraph (e) and subparagraphs (e)(i) and (ii). A new subparagraph (e) would then be inserted to read: "decided that the meeting on decent work in the railways sector shall take the format of a technical tripartite meeting with a view to discuss opportunities and challenges for promotion of decent work, an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and a just transition in the railways sector, with the aim of adopting conclusions, including recommendations for future action". Subparagraph (e)(iii) would be relabelled subparagraph (f), with the word "requested" inserted at the beginning. The Workers' group had proposed amending subparagraph (e)(ii) to read: "the Office, ~~following subsequent consultations with constituents, to prepare a proposal for a mechanism to update to inform~~ the Governing Body on how the Office has followed up on the conclusions and recommendations of technical meetings as well as the outputs of meetings of experts;".
- 72. The Worker spokesperson** reiterated the importance of adopting a sectoral approach to issues with specific sectoral dimensions, such as occupational safety and health, violence and harassment at work and the digital and green transformations, prioritizing both sectoral and centralized collective bargaining. The Office must ensure that its strategy and work on sectors were integrated and coordinated, and that the conclusions of each sectoral meeting were followed up and disseminated, possibly by engaging with the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre) to design courses to promote relevant tools and approaches. The data contained in the background reports that the Office had provided for each sectoral meeting must not be lost, but duly processed and made accessible.
- 73.** His group welcomed the conclusions adopted during the technical meeting on the future of work in the arts and entertainment sector, especially their emphasis on the need for social dialogue in designing and implementing measures relating to new technologies, which was of particular importance amid the growing use of artificial intelligence in the sector. The Office should prioritize the collection and analysis of data and good practices regarding remuneration and working hours with a view to publishing a study on the matter; the provision of policy guidelines on implementing the right to collective bargaining; the mapping of policies and strategies that promoted respect for working time agreements and the rights of workers not to engage in work-related activities and communication outside working hours and to work-life balance; and regional meetings and workshops.
- 74.** In relation to the follow-up to the conclusions of the technical meeting on a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery for the civil aviation sector, he highlighted the importance of a workshop involving the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the ILO to explore joint initiatives on a just transition. The Office should prioritize the analysis of the application of international labour standards to civil aviation, research on recruitment and

retention in the sector and the promotion of diversity, including opportunities for women. Training on the sectoral implementation of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), should be provided at the Turin Centre.

75. The policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in the agri-food sector should be disseminated as a matter of urgency through all ILO country and regional offices and presented to other relevant United Nations agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, potentially through a virtual workshop.
76. His group considered that the tripartite meeting on the railways sector should be conducted as a meeting of experts, since that format would facilitate the development of a code of practice or guidelines. Welcoming the Office's plan to prepare a study on fundamental principles and rights at work in the world of sport, his group was of the opinion that the Governing Body should decide at its next session, once that study had been finalized, when to convene a meeting of experts on that topic. The ILO must provide leadership and guidance on building a decent work agenda for athletes in a holistic manner. The process of reviewing the list of sectors should be done in full consultation with the social partners, and the Office should increase the visibility of, and resources for, follow-up to sectoral meetings.
77. The Workers' group could not support the amendment to the draft decision proposed by the Employers' group because it not only predetermined the format of the meeting on the transport railways sector, but also narrowed the scope of the meeting to focus on sustainable enterprises. The Workers' group had accepted the convening of such a meeting on the understanding that it would be used to develop guidelines on decent work in the sector. His own group's proposed amendment reflected its view that consultations were not required for the Office to inform the Governing Body about follow-up to sectoral meetings' conclusions and recommendations.
78. **The Employer spokesperson** supported the outcomes of the three sectoral meetings referred to in document GB.349/POL/3. His group particularly welcomed the recognition of the importance of social dialogue in developing regulations and policies at the technical meeting on the future of work in the arts and entertainment sector. The conclusions of the technical meeting on a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery for the civil aviation sector would guide policymaking in tackling future crises as well as assisting the sector in adapting to increases in oil prices and inflation, slow economic growth and environmental and sustainability requirements. The policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in the agri-food sector were balanced and took account of the challenges posed by informality in the agri-food sector and the need to create an enabling environment that allowed business to contribute to decent work and economic growth. The Employers' group supported the proposed dates, duration, official title, purpose and composition of the meetings to be held for the first to third quarters of 2024.
79. Noting that there was still no solid proposal for the review of the list of sectors, he expressed openness to consultations on that matter at the next meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies. His group therefore called on the Office to present a report outlining the eventual need and justification for a revision of the current list of sectors to the next meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies. The Employers' group continued to deem unnecessary the development of a mechanism for reporting to the Governing Body on the implementation of sectoral meetings' conclusions and recommendations. An update presented during the biennial meetings of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies or in an annex to the report to the Governing Body would suffice. As a result, his group did not support subparagraph (e)(ii) of the draft decision.

80. There had not been a sectoral meeting on the railways sector since 1994. As such, an informed tripartite review of the current state of the sector, including its challenges and opportunities, should be conducted before any guidelines or codes of practices were developed. His group firmly believed a technical meeting to be the correct format for such a review.
81. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Uganda acknowledged the importance of supporting decent work in the arts, entertainment and civil aviation sectors. He welcomed the policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in the agri-food sector given the substantial employment opportunities generated by that sector in Africa. There should be greater emphasis on public-private partnerships in sectoral work. His group supported the proposals for global sectoral meetings in the first to third quarters of 2024, as well as the draft decision as prepared by the Office. It was, however, amenable to the amendment proposed by the Employers' group since it was of the view that the meeting on decent work in the railways sector should take the form of a technical meeting.
82. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Mexico said that GRULAC considered that the recommendations of the technical meeting on the future of work in the arts and entertainment sector reflected the challenges to securing decent work in the sector, including in relation to protecting the interests of indigenous and tribal peoples, bridging the digital divide and protecting copyright. Her group agreed with the conclusions of the technical meeting on a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery for the civil aviation sector and acknowledged the challenge of attracting and retaining workers in the industry, as well as the need to ensure companies' sustainability in the context of environmental transition and technological innovation. The agreement on the need to develop fatigue risk management programmes and address mental health, stress and other health hazards was welcome, as were the recommendation to tackle gender discrimination and the agreed action to ensure policy coherence at the international level through cooperation between the ILO and the ICAO.
83. The proposed dates for the second meeting of the Joint ILO/International Maritime Organization (IMO) Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element were acceptable. Her group would await the study on fundamental principles and rights at work in the world of sport before taking a decision on the date of the related technical meeting. GRULAC was of the understanding that consultations on the format of the meeting on the railways sector had yet to conclude.
84. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Germany noted that the late publication of document GB.349/POL/3 had given his group little time to prepare for the discussion. The outcomes and recommendations of sectoral meetings should influence policies and actions in the relevant sectors and future policy developments within the ILO. The Office should strengthen its analysis of the sector-based data that it collected, and he wished to know how the efficiency of such analyses could be improved. Any reporting mechanism should be methodical and coordinated, and the Office should report to the Governing Body on developments in that regard. Furthermore, the Office should provide invitation letters and sufficient detail on the content of sectoral meetings in a timely manner to allow constituents to prepare meaningfully for meetings.
85. Tripartite consultation on a possible review of the list of sectors should be undertaken as a matter of priority. IMEC fully supported such a review to reflect evolving realities in the world of work as well as ensuring that the sectors covered by the Office remained current and aligned with contemporary economic and social trends. The Office should inform the Governing Body of how it intended to approach the review. A meeting of experts on social dialogue in the world of sport should be organized as soon as possible. IMEC believed that the amendment proposed

by the Employers' group limited the scope of the proposed meeting on decent work in the railways sector; the original better reflected the mandate of the ILO. His group supported the amendment proposed by the Workers' group.

86. **A Government representative of Indonesia** stressed that the impact of digital technologies, collaboration and demographic changes in the arts and entertainment sector required careful consideration and commended the adoption of conclusions and recommendations aimed at guiding future action in that regard. His Government took particular interest in the discussion of occupational safety and health at the technical meeting on a green, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery for the civil aviation sector and supported the adoption of conclusions and recommendations for further action. It also welcomed the diversity of perspectives represented at the meeting of experts on decent work in the agri-food sector and the resulting policy guidelines. Indonesia supported the proposed Joint ILO/IMO meeting to adopt guidelines for the medical examination of fishers, the Joint ILO/IMO Tripartite Working Group to identify and address seafarers' issues and the human element, as well as the technical meeting on the promotion of decent work and a just transition in the building materials industry, including cement. The review of the list of sectors should involve thoughtful and inclusive consultation.
87. **A representative of the Director-General** (Assistant Director-General, Governance, Rights and Dialogue Cluster) said that the Office would endeavour to come up with proposals for the review of the list of sectors for consideration by the Governing Body. The systemic collection of sectoral data was complicated by the limited size of the sample of labour force surveys and the lack of sufficient resources, including staff, to collect and process microdata on a systematic basis and in a manner that ensured data quality. Steps were already being taken towards introducing an agile system of reporting on the follow-up given to the outcomes of sectoral meetings.
88. **A representative of the Director-General** (Deputy Director, Sectoral Policies Department) welcomed the participation of the relevant line ministries in sectoral meetings and added that the Office would consider adjusting the invitation process to ensure maximum preparatory time for constituents. This could be done by including information on the matters for discussion in invitations to sectoral meetings and finalizing and circulating the report for discussion and the draft discussion points further in advance of each meeting.
89. **The Employer spokesperson** said that his group could agree to the amendment proposed by the Workers' group. However, with regard to the meeting on the railways sector, he maintained that rather than narrowing the focus of the meeting, his group's amendment sought to introduce a broader approach, advocating for the inclusion of sustainable enterprises. A meeting of experts could perhaps be organized after the technical meeting on the railways sector to establish guidance. Smaller companies in the railways sector and related supply chains must be taken into consideration.
90. There had been no consensus among the Sectoral Advisory Bodies regarding the convening of a sectoral meeting on the world of sport. Given that the study by the Office on fundamental principles and rights at work in the world of sport was still pending, it would be premature to decide to organize a meeting on the subject. Instead, the Office should provide an update on the study at the next meeting of the Sectoral Advisory Bodies, rather than to the Governing Body. The Employers' group strongly advocated for no more than eight meetings in each biennium and would prefer for the number of meetings to be reduced to four or five to free up resources for other activities, including the implementation of recommendations resulting from sectoral meetings.

91. **The Worker spokesperson** said that the reference to sustainable enterprises in the amendment proposed by the Employers' group was unnecessary; they were not an integral part of the railways sector, and the subject could be raised by meeting participants if they so wished.
92. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Mexico said that in the interests of consensus, her group would support the convening of a meeting on the railways sector as a technical meeting as proposed by the Employers' group, although consultations on that meeting should continue and its focus should be as reflected in the original draft decision.
93. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Uganda aligned himself with the statement made on behalf of GRULAC regarding the convening of a technical tripartite meeting.
94. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Germany also expressed support for GRULAC's statement.
95. **The Employer spokesperson** while welcoming the consensus on the format of the meeting, expressed regret that sustainable enterprises would not be explicitly included in the scope of the meeting.
96. **The Worker spokesperson** said that his group could agree to the holding of a technical tripartite meeting.
97. **The Chairperson** suggested that the text after "promotion of decent work" should be deleted from the amendment proposed by the Employers' group.
98. **The Employer spokesperson** said that only the words "an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and a just transition in the railways sector," should be deleted from his group's proposed amendment.
99. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, the Government representative of Mexico proposed deleting the words after "technical tripartite meeting" from the wording proposed by the Employers' group.
100. **The Employer spokesperson** and **the Worker spokesperson** agreed to that subamendment.

Decision

101. The Governing Body:

- (a) approved the records of proceedings of the three meetings referred to in section I of document GB.349/POL/3 and authorized the Director-General to publish them;
- (b) requested the Director-General to bear in mind, when drawing up proposals for future work, the recommendations for future action by the ILO made by the meetings referred to in section I of document GB. 349/POL/3;
- (c) authorized the Director-General to publish the policy guidelines for the promotion of decent work in the agri-food sector;
- (d) endorsed the proposals contained in Appendix I to document GB. 349/POL/3 relating to the dates, duration, official title, purpose and composition of the meetings listed therein;
- (e) decided that the meeting on decent work in the railways sector shall take the format of a technical tripartite meeting;

(f) requested:

- (i) the Office to inform the Governing Body on how the Office had followed up on the conclusions and recommendations of technical meetings as well as the outputs of meetings of experts;
- (ii) that consultations within the Office as well as with constituents be organized on the review of the list of sectors with a view to reporting back in a future session of the Governing Body.

(GB.349/POL/3, paragraph 28, as amended by the Governing Body)

Development Cooperation Segment

4. Enhanced programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories (GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1) and GB.349/POL/4(Add.1))

102. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to the draft decision, proposed by the Arab group and circulated by the Office, which read:

- 30. While gravely concerned and deeply saddened by the loss of ~~life in the ongoing armed conflict~~ lives in the region, the Governing Body:
 - (a) acknowledged that the current situation in the region-occupied Arab territories rendered the continuation of the ILO's technical assistance in its current form extremely difficult and in some areas impossible, while at the same time provision of relief for and support to affected workers and employers has taken on further urgency;
 - (b) recalled the Director-General's Reports to the International Labour Conference, the last of which to the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference (2023) on "The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories" ~~and requested the Office to take all necessary measures in response to the observations and conclusions therein, and in light of the urgent and increased needs emerging from the crisis situation;~~
 - (c) ~~requested the Director-General to respond to immediate needs and calls for urgent assistance from workers and employers in occupied Arab territories, and develop a longer term crisis response plan to actively contribute to subsequent coordinated Humanitarian, Development and Peace sectors (HDP) Nexus response mechanisms in the region from the perspective of the ILO's mandate called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, and underscored the obligation to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law;~~
 - (d) called for the immediate opening of safe corridors for humanitarian aid to address the critical shortage of all vital necessities which is severely hampering the daily lives of Palestinian workers and humanitarian workers;
 - (e) expressed grave concerns at the deterioration of the situation in Gaza, in particular reports of ongoing military attacks on civilian facilities, such as hospitals, schools and businesses, and its severe impact on workers and their livelihoods and on employers;
 - (f) welcomed the Director-General's response programme for immediate assistance in paragraph 7 of document GB.349/POL/4(Add.1) to respond to immediate needs and calls for urgent assistance from workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories, and called on the Office to prioritize the safeguarding of wages and social benefits to affected workers;
 - (g) requested the Director-General to submit for the consideration of the 350th session (March 2024) of the Governing Body a report which should be used as the basis for the development of a more detailed action plan to address the impact of the current crisis situation, and would contain:

- (i) the work undertaken by the ILO to support tripartite constituents;
- (ii) proposals for all additional measures that can be taken by the ILO to promote social justice and strengthen the ILO's mandate in the occupied Arab territories and mitigate the devastating impact of the current situation;
- (iii) an update of the Director-General's recent annual report submitted to the International Labour Conference regarding the impact of the current situation on the tripartite constituents, labour market and working condition, and the ILO's work, including the implementation of the current Decent Work Programme 2023–2026;
- (eh) ~~called on~~ urged Member States to provide financial resources for the ILO programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, providing support to realize decent work within the context of wider United Nations' efforts for relief and recovery and to this end, work with the donors to articulate the mobilization of dedicated financial resources.

- 103. A Government representative of Saudi Arabia** speaking on behalf of the Arab group, noted that the proposed amendment had been submitted to reflect the difficult humanitarian conditions faced by Palestinian workers and the wider population in Gaza.
- 104. The Worker spokesperson** said that the tragic events of recent weeks were cause for deep sorrow, concern and anger, and had destroyed all efforts to date to promote social justice in the occupied Arab territories. The ILO should maintain its presence in the region to demonstrate solidarity with workers and the wider population. The Workers' group conveyed a message of compassion and solidarity to all civilian victims of the conflict, and to the people and workers of Palestine. The attacks carried out by Hamas and the disproportionate punishment inflicted on the Palestinian people in response by the Israeli armed forces were appalling and unacceptable, and would not help protect civilians, end the occupation or restore peace.
- 105.** Thousands of Gazans working in Israel had been prevented from returning home, expelled from their places of work, transferred to the West Bank and rendered homeless. They had experienced physical aggression and had their personal belongings, identity cards and entry permits confiscated. The Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) was supporting some of those workers through its branches in the West Bank, but thousands had been arrested and imprisoned and others taken hostage. The Director-General should use his authority to secure their liberation.
- 106.** The Palestinian economy would take a long time to recover from the destruction of infrastructure, the closure of businesses and the attendant loss of jobs. Amid the chaos, much-needed humanitarian aid could not reach the population. She therefore called for the immediate and unconditional delivery of humanitarian aid, in accordance with international humanitarian law, notably Article 33 of the Geneva Convention (IV); all United Nations (UN) agencies, humanitarian organizations and international trade union federations should work together to ensure that assistance could be provided. There must also be an immediate ceasefire and the siege on Gaza must be suspended so that the population could receive basic necessities. All parties must respect international humanitarian law and ensure that civilians, and hospitals, schools and places of worship were protected at all times.
- 107.** Renewed international attention must be given to achieving peace between two sovereign, independent and viable States. Her group supported the two-state solution in line with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The ILO believed in multilateralism and should play a leading role in seeking to build lasting peace through diplomacy and dialogue, notably by actively engaging with the social partners. Her group welcomed the Organization's emergency response, particularly the support provided to the PGFTU, and called for further assistance

from donor countries to meet immediate needs. The Office should act quickly to implement the emergency interventions identified in paragraph 6 of the addendum. The three-phase response programme set out in paragraph 7 was commendable and should ensure an efficient response; hopefully it would soon be possible to initiate the third phase, recovery, in line with the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). A fourth phase on reparation should also be incorporated based on the Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law. In conclusion, she reaffirmed her group's commitment to social justice and peace for all ILO constituents. Her group could accept the proposed amendment but remained open to further suggestions from other constituents in the spirit of consensus.

- 108. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group,** a Government representative of Libya thanked the Office for document GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1), which demonstrated the impacts of the occupation: increased violence, deteriorating economic and social conditions, high levels of unemployment and threats to the livelihoods of all Palestinian workers. She noted the ILO's efforts to support the labour market and enhance social protection through the Palestinian Decent Work Programmes. However, it was deeply regrettable that the recent tragic events and ongoing military attacks on Gaza had undermined progress in implementing the development cooperation programme and other projects aimed at improving conditions and alleviating the effects of colonialism on the population of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including workers and their families.
- 109.** The Arab group strongly condemned the Israeli aggression against Gaza and denounced all unjustified violations by the Israeli occupying authorities, which constituted a flagrant violation of international humanitarian law and would have serious repercussions for regional stability and on regional and international peace and security. The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate; 1.3 million residents of Gaza had been forcibly displaced, thousands had been killed and thousands more injured, while the widespread destruction of residential buildings and basic civilian infrastructure, including schools, medical and educational facilities and water networks, was having a serious impact on the population, including workers and their family members. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Labour, 3,000 workers from Gaza had been arrested inside Israel and tens of thousands of Palestinian workers in Israel had lost their jobs or been expelled since 7 October.
- 110.** In that context, her group welcomed the Director-General's support for the UN Secretary-General's call for an immediate ceasefire, and echoed that call. The massacres and collective punishments imposed by the Israeli occupying authorities on civilians in Gaza, including workers and members of their families, must end immediately and a humanitarian corridor must be opened to facilitate safe access to basic supplies and services for all civilians in need there. The ILO should take the necessary measures to provide emergency humanitarian aid to those affected and to improve the conditions of the social partners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Arab group urged the Governing Body to adopt its proposed amendment to the draft decision.
- 111. Speaking on behalf of the majority of countries in the Asia and Pacific group,** a Government representative of Indonesia expressed support for the proposed amendment. He strongly condemned recent acts of violence by the Government of Israel in Palestine, including the targeting of Al-Ahli Hospital, which had resulted in the loss of innocent lives and injury to civilians, including health workers. An immediate ceasefire was paramount, and the creation of humanitarian corridors to ensure the safe passage of aid to those in need was imperative. Without a durable solution, the ILO's programmes could not realize their potential; its

aspirations to promote decent work, social justice, freedom of association and collective bargaining would be constrained by the persistent instability in Palestine. The promise of dignified employment, fair wages and inclusive growth depended upon sustained commitment to a meaningful peace process that supported the inalienable rights of Palestinians, notably, the right to self-determination, the right to return and the right to an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital. That would make it possible to build a future for the region, where the benefits of labour and industry could be fully harnessed for the betterment of all.

112. The high unemployment levels and lack of decent jobs reflected in the document were deeply troubling and had economic and humanitarian implications. Immediate, coordinated and transformative interventions were needed to pave the way for long-term employment solutions. Acknowledging the importance of the Palestinian National Employment Strategy for 2021–25, he called on the international community to expedite financial and technical assistance to ensure its effective implementation and expressed support for the emerging priorities for new programme development listed in paragraph 29 of the document. The Strategy could, potentially, both address the employment challenge and contribute to broader sustainable development goals in the region.
113. Member States, development partners and donors should work together to increase their financial and technical support in the interest of finding a lasting solution. Strengthening those partnerships would be vital to ensure that Palestinians could access decent work opportunities and social protection. Given the current escalating violence and expanding illegal settlement activities supported by the Israeli occupying forces, a timely, collective response and strong commitment was required. In that regard, his group affirmed its dedication to working alongside the ILO and other Member States to make a meaningful impact on the lives of Palestinian workers and contribute to peace and social justice in the region.
114. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Spain reiterated their condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel and strongly emphasized Israel's right to defend itself in line with international law and international humanitarian law. She reiterated their call on Hamas to immediately release all hostages without any precondition. Civilians must be protected at all times in line with international humanitarian law.
115. Gravely concerned about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza, the EU and its Member States called for continued, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access and aid to reach those in need using all measures necessary, including humanitarian corridors and pauses for humanitarian needs. They would work closely with partners in the region to protect civilians, provide assistance and facilitate access to food, water, medical care, fuel and shelter, ensuring that such assistance was not abused by terrorist organizations. They recalled the need to avoid regional escalation and to engage with relevant partners, including the Palestinian Authority. The EU and its Member States stood ready to contribute to reviving a political process on the basis of the two-state solution, welcomed diplomatic peace and security initiatives and supported the holding of an international peace conference in the near future.
116. She welcomed the issuance by the Office of an addendum to document GB.349/POL/4/(Rev.1) and supported the provision by the ILO, within the terms of its mandate, of emergency assistance to communities affected by the armed conflict. The EU and its Member States could have supported the original draft decision in the document, but wished to examine the

amendments introduced at short notice by the Arab group and consider the broader debate before providing an opinion.

- 117. Speaking on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC),** a Government representative of Oman offered condolences to the families of Palestinians killed or injured by the attacks perpetrated against them. He reaffirmed his group's support for the ILO's work in Palestine, expressing deep concern at the significant damage to the labour market caused by the occupation and the persistence of violence and arbitrariness, particularly given the deteriorating socio-economic situation, high unemployment levels and the threat to the livelihoods of Palestinian workers. He strongly condemned Israel's recent aggression against Gaza, which was undermining efforts to mitigate the impact of the Israeli occupation on Palestinians, including workers and their families. The GCC condemned in the strongest terms Israel's aggression against Gaza and deplored all serious violations by the Israeli occupying authorities of international humanitarian law, including the indiscriminate bombardment and killing of defenceless civilians and the use of internationally prohibited weapons. Some 1.3 million people had been forced to flee their homes, seeking refuge from almost daily Israeli bombardment. Their places of refuge, including places of worship, hospitals and schools, had not been spared. Further such flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and treaties would have serious repercussions for regional stability and regional and international peace and security. Further joint efforts to bring about peace were needed.
- 118.** The reported expulsion of thousands of Gazan workers from Israel would worsen living conditions for their families and sow further chaos. The GCC therefore called on the ILO to take measures to guarantee the rights of Palestinian workers and the necessary measures in response to the unlawful practices of the Israeli Government and its collective punishment of the population of Gaza and the Palestinian people, which had exacerbated labour market tensions and further degraded the socio-economic conditions of Palestinian workers and their families. It also called on the Office to establish a mechanism whereby specific measures could be taken on the ground in connection with the outputs of the Director-General's Report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. The GCC supported the proposed amendment.
- 119. Speaking on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC),** a Government representative of Pakistan recalling the Preamble to the ILO Constitution, said that the values of social justice, humanity and a yearning for enduring peace were the foundation of the OIC's work at the ILO. The targeted destruction of Gaza and its people was currently the biggest threat to those values. He expressed grave concern at the devastation, loss of lives and destruction of livelihoods in Gaza. The impact on workers in the area presented a huge ongoing challenge.
- 120.** Both document GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1) and the Director-General's latest Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories painted a sobering picture of the Palestinian economy and its impact on employment, social welfare and sustainable livelihoods. Workers continued to suffer the socio-economic consequences of the 56-year occupation and remained trapped in poverty; recent events had only added to their woes.
- 121.** The declining financial capacity of the Palestinian Authority impacted its ability to support employment. In that regard, Israel's unilateral deductions from clearance revenues and decreasing external funding merited attention. The ILO's development cooperation programme in the occupied Arab territories had made an important contribution to the outcome of the second and third Palestinian Decent Work Programmes; countries that had

contributed to it should continue their partnerships with the ILO in the wake of the ongoing violence and concerned Member States should build partnerships with the ILO as part of an empathetic response. The document clearly demonstrated how joint efforts and collaboration with the ILO could help to create and provide access to economic opportunities that were inclusive, resilient and sustainable. He therefore supported the call for Member States, development partners and donors to provide financial support for the implementation of ongoing projects and the rehabilitation work required in the aftermath of recent tragedies.

122. He expressed solidarity with the people and workers of the occupied Arab territories and reiterated his support for international calls for the immediate cessation of hostilities, as well as an end to the illegal Israeli occupation. He called on the Office to develop a strategy to address the ongoing crisis facing the social partners in the occupied Arab territories and share a detailed follow-up report at the next session of the Governing Body. He supported the proposed amendment.
123. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Sudan welcomed the implementation of the ILO programme of development cooperation in the occupied Arab territories. The recent escalations had negatively affected planned activities and had a severe impact on workers and employers. He commended the Office's initial response to the situation, as outlined in the addendum, including the emergency interventions and urgent assistance in support of workers and employers. His group also welcomed the extensive discussions on amendments to the Palestinian Labour Law, which were crucial to improving working conditions, and noted the achievements made towards strengthening social dialogue platforms to advance on social security reforms.
124. Unemployment in Gaza was among the highest in the world. With more than 50 per cent of the population forcefully displaced, the current escalation had further worsened the devastating work environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. His group therefore supported the Office's efforts to ensure more predictable and sustainable financing in the occupied territories, which would contribute to enhancing employment opportunities and livelihoods for Palestinians. They also welcomed the support for the programme of development cooperation and requested the Governing Body to support the Office's work with Member States, development partners and donors to provide financial support for the implementation of the Palestinian National Employment Strategy for 2021–25 and the ILO's three-phase response programme.
125. He expressed grave concern at the deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and its severe impact on workers, employers and work environments, a situation further worsened by the lack of humanitarian access. His group fully supported the UN Secretary-General's call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, and the call for an end to the collective punishment imposed on the civilian population in Gaza, including the immediate release of thousands of detained workers and the opening of a humanitarian corridor. He requested the Director-General to monitor the situation closely and submit a follow-up report to the next session of the Governing Body, with a view to addressing the impact on the ILO's work. He supported the proposed amendment.
126. **A Government representative of Colombia** expressed concern about the language used in paragraph 1 of the addendum. The actions of the Israeli security forces in Gaza in densely populated civilian areas, resulting in the loss of more than 8,000 lives including hundreds of children, were a serious violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people and must be repudiated.

127. Thousands of people had been left without work or any means of subsistence. Essential goods and services must therefore be provided for all civilians in Gaza immediately and on a continuing basis. The ILO must request the immediate opening of humanitarian corridors to mitigate the situation for Palestinian and humanitarian workers. It was time to initiate dialogue, put an end to the disproportionate military attacks against the Palestinian people. An international peace conference should be convened as soon as possible, alongside efforts to protect nature, as both war and environmental threats posed a risk to the planet and the future of humanity.
128. Colombia supported the proposed amendment. The Governing Body must call for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire and insist on the obligation to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The genocide of the Palestinian people must stop.
129. **A Government representative of Algeria** condemned the siege and its deleterious implications for Palestinians, in particular workers in Gaza, and strongly condemned the Israeli military aggression against the civilian population, which had caused enormous loss of life. She called for an immediate ceasefire and urged the ILO, in coordination with other UN agencies, to take immediate action to put an end to the inhumane situation and uphold the fundamental rights of Palestinians in general, and workers in particular, to live in peace, security and dignity.
130. She recognized and supported the ILO's work to promote decent work and improve living conditions in the occupied Arab territories, particularly in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The socio-economic situation there remained a grave concern; it was exacerbated by a blockade that deprived all Palestinians of basic essentials and increased the difficulties faced by workers, most of whom were unemployed. Persistently high unemployment levels, particularly among women and young people, were of particular concern.
131. Her Government welcomed the initiatives taken under the Palestinian Decent Work Programme and strongly supported the ILO's actions, including those relating to access to economic opportunities and quality social services, as well as the Director-General's proposal for a three-phase response to the current situation. She called on the ILO, its Member States, development partners and donors to strengthen their support to promote social justice and guarantee respect for decent work. Algeria remained committed to supporting the ILO's work and working to ensure dignified living conditions for the people in the occupied Arab territories in general, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory in particular. She supported the proposed amendment.
132. **A Government representative of the United States** said that she mourned the victims of the 7 October terrorist attack by Hamas and expressed condolences to the families of the Palestinian civilians killed or injured during the conflict. Her Government stood with Israel and supported its right to defend itself. Israel, like all States, must adhere to international humanitarian law. Her Government recognized the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people and supported equal measures of justice and freedom for both Israelis and Palestinians. Hamas did not represent those aspirations and had only perpetuated the suffering of the Palestinian people. The United States was working to reunite hostages with their families and increase the flow of humanitarian aid into Gaza. She expressed appreciation for the ILO's emergency interventions to support workers and enterprises in light of the current situation and supported the redirection of resources for the proposed three-phase response programme. The ILO should continue to coordinate with other United Nations agencies in that regard.

133. To enable consensus and give clear direction to the Office regarding how best to continue its mandate to deliver development cooperation and support decent work in the West Bank and Gaza, she proposed a subamendment to subparagraphs (c), (d) and (e) of the amendment proposed by the Arab group, which read:

- (c) ~~called for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire, and underscored the obligation to respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law;~~
- (d) called on all parties to promptly allow and facilitate, consistent with international humanitarian law, the full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, including by adopting practical steps, such as the establishment of fully secured humanitarian corridors respected by all parties and other initiatives for the sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians throughout Gaza for the immediate opening of safe corridors for humanitarian aid, to address the critical shortage of all vital necessities which is severely hampering the daily lives of Palestinian workers and humanitarian workers;
- (e) ~~expressed grave deep concerns at the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Gaza, in particular reports of ongoing military attacks on civilian facilities, such as hospitals, schools, and businesses, and its severe impact on~~ and its grave impact on the civilian population, including workers and their livelihoods and on employers, and especially the disproportionate effect on children and women, underlining the urgent need for full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and stressing the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;

134. A Government representative of Australia said that her Government did not align with the statement delivered on behalf of the majority of ASPAG, as it had not recognized the terror group Hamas as the perpetrator of the 7 October attacks. She condemned the actions of Hamas and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages held in Gaza. Israel had a right to defend itself, but how it defended itself mattered: civilian lives should be protected and international humanitarian law must be observed. Her Government's position had always been to support the pursuit of progress towards a just and enduring two-state solution. Hamas's actions had precipitated a devastating humanitarian situation in Israel and Gaza. There must be humanitarian pauses of hostilities to allow essential supplies to reach people in desperate need and to allow civilians to reach safety. She commended the ILO and the tripartite partners for their work to build peace and social justice, for the sake of all Palestinian workers. She supported the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States.

135. The delegation of Kiribati had asked her to also put on record that it did not align with the majority ASPAG statement.

136. A Government representative of Indonesia aligned himself with the statement made by the Arab group. He strongly condemned the recent acts of violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which had resulted in the tragic loss of innocent lives. There needed to be an immediate ceasefire, and humanitarian corridors must be created to ensure the safe passage of aid. The alarming rates of unemployment, particularly among women and young people, required immediate coordinated action. Indonesia supported the need for transformative interventions that could pave the way for long-term employment solutions. The emerging priorities for new programme development were all highly relevant and deserved attention and support. He called on Member States, development partners and donors to increase their collaborative efforts, both financially and technically, to ensure that the Palestinian people could have access to decent work opportunities and social protection. Indonesia reaffirmed its dedication to working alongside the ILO and fellow Member States to address the pressing challenges in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

- 137. A Government representative of Namibia** said that she condemned the violence and extended her condolences to the friends and family of those who had lost their lives in the conflict. A ceasefire was necessary to protect civilians and allow access to humanitarian aid. She welcomed the Office's emergency intervention to support workers and employers and the three-phase response programme, and reaffirmed her support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people against the Israeli occupation.
- 138. A Government representative of France** expressed his utmost condemnation for the terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas against Israel in October 2023. He said that Israel had the right to defend itself and called for the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages. International law applied to all countries, including Israel, and civilians must be protected. Given the increasing numbers of Palestinian civilian victims and the urgent humanitarian situation in Gaza, safe, rapid, unimpeded and lasting access must be guaranteed for humanitarian workers to Gaza. A humanitarian truce and a two-state political solution to the conflict were needed, and he encouraged the ILO to provide all possible assistance to workers and their families in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Given the gravity of the situation and the need for a consensus-based decision, he supported the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States.
- 139. A Government representative of the United Kingdom** expressed his condolences to all Palestinian and Israeli people who had suffered or lost loved ones in the recent conflict. He said that the Palestinian people were also victims of Hamas, a terrorist organization that did not speak for, or act in the interests of, the Palestinian people. In view of the growing humanitarian crisis, the ILO must work to ensure that more humanitarian support entered Gaza, and the UK Government had announced a further £30 million in humanitarian assistance to the region. Humanitarian pauses in the conflict were required to ensure a constant flow of aid; however, a full ceasefire would only allow Hamas to entrench itself and launch further attacks on the people of Israel. He supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group with the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States.
- 140. A Government representative of Canada** said that she wished to extend her deepest condolences to the families of all victims of the conflict following the brutal terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas against Israel. She supported Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law and stood firmly with Israeli and Palestinian workers, employers and their families. Healthcare and humanitarian workers must be protected in all circumstances, and the rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian workers was essential; humanitarian pauses should be considered to that end. She shared the Office's concerns regarding the impact of the conflict on the region's economy and labour market, and commended the work of ILO staff in the region. She supported the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States.
- 141. A Government representative of Germany** condemned the horrific and unjustifiable terrorist attacks carried out by Hamas, and expressed his support for Israel and its efforts to defend its population, while recognizing the right to self-determination of the Palestinian people. He said that Hamas only brought death and suffering to Israel and Gaza, and did not represent the Palestinian people. While Governments' perspectives on the conflict differed, they all shared the common goal of bringing an end to the suffering of people in the Middle East. Lasting peace could only be achieved through a two-state solution. In view of the need for rapid and unhindered humanitarian aid, his Government had provided €50 million in emergency assistance.

- 142. A Government representative of Bangladesh** aligned himself with the statement of the Arab group. He expressed condemnation for the barbaric attacks on unarmed civilians by Israel, and the detention and expulsion of Palestinian workers in Israel. The attacks on hospitals and civilian infrastructure by Israeli forces could only be described as crimes against humanity, and the Appendix to the Director-General's Report should be updated to reflect that. He expressed concern at the lack of long-term international funding to support the Palestinian National Employment Strategy; the ILO's one-size-fits-all approach to collective bargaining and social dialogue when Palestinian workers were being treated like human animals and deprived of fundamental rights; and the lack of progress in job creation and social protection for Palestinian workers, including those in Israeli settlements. He urged the Office to present to the Governing Body an analysis of development cooperation expenditure for Palestine; design projects prioritizing job creation, skill development and social protection; and build an international coalition to restore social justice for the Palestinian people. The immediate end of the illegal occupation was a precondition for a lasting solution to the crisis, and he urged the international community to use dialogue and diplomacy to end Israel's war of aggression. An immediate ceasefire and the opening of safe corridors for humanitarian aid were needed. He supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group.
- 143. A Government representative of Cuba** said that the Israeli occupation and the resulting conflict in Gaza had not only severely impacted the rights of workers, but had created a dire humanitarian situation. He condemned in the strongest terms the murder of civilians on both sides and of United Nations humanitarian workers. The ILO had a duty to show unwavering support for the tripartite constituents that had been victims of the conflict; protect the safety of employers, workers and their families; and consider the long-term implications of the displacement of the workforce and destruction of places of employment. He supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group. The present situation in Gaza was the result of decades of Israeli practices of illegal occupation and settlement, in flagrant violation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people in their own territory, and of long-standing disregard for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, including numerous relevant UN resolutions. Cuba strongly opposed the death of civilians and innocent people from all sides to the conflict, irrespective of ethnicity, nationality or religious faith; and it condemned in the strongest possible terms the murder of civilians, in particular women, children and UN system humanitarian workers; as well as the indiscriminate bombardment of the population in Gaza and the destruction of homes, hospitals and civil infrastructure. Depriving the population of Gaza of water, electricity and fuel services constituted a grave violation of international humanitarian law.
- 144. A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** said that the continuous and indiscriminate bombardment of Palestine by the Israeli occupiers constituted genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. The situation of innocent workers and employers in Gaza had worsened and the danger of ethnic cleansing against Palestinians had increased. Relentless attacks on civilians and infrastructure, including hospitals, had forced Palestinians to flee while aid channels had been blocked. It was shocking that Palestinian freedom fighters were being blamed for the current conflict and that the 70 years of occupation of Palestinian territory were being ignored, and it was appalling that Governments that vociferously advocated human rights opposed parts of an amendment that called for the occupier to observe international human rights law. She called for international cooperation to stop the brutality and human rights violations by the occupying forces, the immediate deployment of humanitarian aid, observance of international human rights law, and further assistance from the ILO to workers and employers in Palestine.

- 145. A Government representative of Mexico** said that she condemned the terrorist attacks by Hamas against the Israeli population and recognized Israel's right to ensure its security in accordance with international law and the principles of necessity and proportionality. She supported the call for the hostages to be freed, who included Mexican nationals. She also condemned any attack that was indiscriminate or targeted against the civilian population, medical or humanitarian personnel, and essential infrastructure; expressed concern at the effects of conflict on Palestinian workers in the occupied Arab territories; and called for an immediate and lasting cessation of hostilities. The ILO should make every effort to provide urgent assistance to workers and employers and devise a long-term plan for crisis response, development assistance and peacebuilding. A comprehensive and definitive political solution was needed that allayed Israel's legitimate security concerns and consolidated a politically and economically viable State of Palestine within internationally recognized borders. She supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group but would welcome further discussion on the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States in order to achieve consensus.
- 146. A Government representative of Iraq** said that the events in Gaza constituted a grave violation of humanitarian law and ILO standards.
- 147. A Government representative of China** said that the key to breaking the cycle of Palestinian-Israeli conflict was the resumption of peace talks and the establishment of an independent Palestinian State. He endorsed the ILO's efforts to provide technical support to workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories, strengthen communication and coordination with the relevant United Nations agencies and minimize the negative impact of the conflict on the region's economy. He supported the amendment proposed by the Arab group, which focused on humanitarian assistance and were in line with the ILO's mandate.
- 148. A Government representative of Saudi Arabia** called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza and for the international community to stop all forms of military escalation, and denounced Israel's ongoing attacks against defenceless civilians. She said that the peace process should be advanced in line with United Nations resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative, and a Palestinian State should be established according to its 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The international community should renounce its double standards and selective application of international law when it came to Israel's actions. The recent conflict had undermined the progress made in implementing the ILO development cooperation programme intended to improve the living conditions of the Palestinian population. Safe corridors for humanitarian aid should be opened immediately, and she urged the ILO to provide emergency assistance to affected workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.
- 149. A Government representative of Guatemala** condemned the terrorist attacks perpetrated by Hamas against Israel, which undermined the Palestinian cause and international efforts to achieve peace in the territories, and acknowledged the right of Israel to self-preservation. She recognized the importance of the ILO's work in the area in the scope of the enhanced programme of development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories. Discussions on the draft decision should focus on strengthening that mandate and supporting the Office in fulfilling its responsibility to address challenges facing all social partners affected by the situation in line with its mandate. The amendment proposed by the Arab group went beyond the parameters of the Governing Body's discussion. In the interest of consensus, she expressed support for the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States.

- 150. A Government representative of Italy** condemned Hamas for its brutal and indiscriminate terrorist attacks across Israel and emphasized the right of Israel to defend itself in line with international law. He reaffirmed the importance of ensuring the protection of all civilians in line with international humanitarian law and deplored the loss of any civilian life. He supported the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States.
- 151. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of Spain welcomed the subamendment proposed by the Government representative of the United States. Constituents should continue engaging in informal discussions to reach consensus.
- 152. A Government representative of Israel** authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders on a matter concerning the situation in her country, said that some groups had omitted key facts in their interventions, including the killing of 1,400 Israelis and abduction of 240 more. For many years, her Government had warned the international community about Hamas and had demanded that the ILO should investigate the implications of its control on the conditions of the working population in Gaza, but it had been ignored. Since 2021, the income of Gazans working in Israel had increased by 34 per cent and the employment rate of Gazans had risen by 2.7 per cent. Her Government had upgraded the Kerem Shalom crossing and extended the operating hours of the Erez crossing to improve economic conditions in Gaza and the lives of Palestinians with a view to decreasing the chance of conflict in the region. However, a number of Palestinian workers with work permits allowing them to enter Israel had produced detailed maps that had been used by Hamas to target Israeli communities. Hamas had also destroyed the Erez crossing used by 20,000 Palestinian workers each day. Hamas was not a liberation movement but a terrorist organization that sought the destruction of Israel and endangered the Palestinian people. It had targeted not just Israelis but also foreign workers and students. The impact of the war on labour and the livelihoods of the Palestinian people and Israelis was high; nonetheless, her Government had an obligation to protect its population.
- 153. A Government representative of Türkiye** authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, said that attacks on civilians and the blockade imposed on Gazan civilians, workers and employers were unjustifiable. International humanitarian law was being openly violated, and a humanitarian catastrophe must be avoided. An immediate ceasefire and unconditional humanitarian access to and within Gaza were urgently needed. He called on the parties involved to work towards lasting solutions. The ILO should continue to take effective measures to tackle the challenges facing the Palestinian labour market and support the efforts of social partners to address the current situation.
- 154. A Government representative of Niger** extended his condolences to the Palestinian victims of the occupation and recent violence. His Government was gravely concerned by the destruction of Gaza and the deterioration of conditions to the point that the ILO's technical assistance had become extremely difficult, or even impossible. In that context, humanitarian aid was vital; the Office should make every effort to maintain its assistance and collaborate with the United Nations and other partners to that end. He supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group.
- 155. A representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia** authorized by the Officers of the Governing Body to speak in accordance with article 1.8.3 of the Standing Orders, condemned the disproportionate military attack on Gaza, which had caused thousands of civilian casualties. There must be an immediate ceasefire and action must be taken to alleviate the impact of the

current situation. She called for respect for human life and international humanitarian law. She welcomed the amendment proposed by the Arab group.

156. **The Chairperson** noted the request for the floor from a representative of the Palestinian Authority and indicated that the Officers had considered the matter and, in keeping with past practice, had decided to authorize the representative of the Palestinian Authority to speak.
157. **A representative of the Palestinian Authority** (Minister of Labour) noted that he was participating remotely as the current restrictions prevented him from travelling internationally. He emphasized that the current problem had begun not on 7 October, but with the start of the illegal occupation. Gaza was a small area under blockade, which was under attack by one of the world's strongest armies. In recent weeks, hospitals, places of worship and schools had been destroyed, thousands of civilians had been killed or injured – two thirds of them women and children – and disinformation had proliferated. Israel was flouting international law and it was high time that its unacceptable campaign was ended.
158. The ILO had continuously called for justice, human dignity and decency to be upheld. Palestinian workers granted permission to work in Israel were not supporters of terrorism, yet they were arrested, persecuted or killed on the basis of their identity, and their wages were stolen; even with an official permit, 8,000 workers had been expelled and another 4,000 workers continued to be held hostage. Moreover, discussions on the economy were meaningless when business premises had been destroyed.
159. He thanked the Office, in particular its staff in Beirut and Jerusalem, for its ongoing support in recent weeks and for its unwavering support for the Palestinian Decent Work Programme. He appealed to the Governing Body to call for an end to the war, in which thousands of civilians were being massacred. Access to electricity, water, food and humanitarian assistance must be secured for Gaza. A recovery programme was needed to help Palestinian workers and to build on what could be salvaged of the Palestinian labour market. He thanked all parties that supported justice and humanity and reaffirmed the commitment of the Palestinian Authority for a two-state solution to provide peace, security, prosperity and stability.
160. **The Employer spokesperson** condemned the unacceptable acts of terrorism, attacks and violence that had been committed and expressed solidarity and empathy with all victims. The path to political stability, security and sustainable development was closely linked to the pursuit of peace. The ongoing conflict in the region had significantly affected the business landscape, workers' rights, freedom of movement and access to vital services, resources and decent work opportunities. An ongoing fiscal crisis had hampered the governance capabilities of the Palestinian Authority, restricting the provision of essential public services and exacerbating the economic challenges faced by Palestinians.
161. The situation in the occupied Arab territories had been included on the agenda of the Governing Body and the Conference for many years. Attention had been drawn to the profound impact of the occupation on jobs, businesses, peace and stability in the region, as well as the ILO's efforts to enhance economic opportunities, fortify governance institutions and support social partners. The ILO had been instrumental in promoting social dialogue in the region, particularly in the review of the Palestinian Social Security Law, and had worked to ensure that such laws were consistent with international benchmarks and best practices. Regrettably, those hard-won achievements were now under threat from escalating violence, with profound implications for the employment landscape and labour market in the region as well as enterprise sustainability, job creation and economic development.

- 162.** While a holistic resolution required a political strategy, the ILO, as an organization rooted in the principles of social justice, was duty-bound to act. Its mandate to advocate for peace through social justice and decent work remained pivotal. However, the independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019–23), had noted that the ILO had not effectively adapted to operating in high-risk areas. The Organization faced more bureaucratic challenges than its humanitarian counterparts in the UN system. Recovery scenarios did not fit into the mould of humanitarian emergencies or traditional development contexts, and they were unpredictable and fraught with risks. If the ILO aspired to be a significant actor in such scenarios, it must reform its operational procedures and overcome bureaucratic impediments to achieve a more agile response. The current situation represented an urgent call to action for the Organization to address its internal challenges and refine its efficiency in humanitarian emergencies. Any delay in the implementation of its three-phase response programme could exacerbate the critical situation. The ILO must be proactive rather than reactive.
- 163.** Her group had been willing to support the draft decision as amended by the Arab group, but would give due consideration to the subamendment proposed by the Government of the United States in the interest of consensus.
- 164. Speaking on behalf of the Arab Employers' group,** an Employer member from the United Arab Emirates expressed deep condolences to Palestinians in the light of the hostilities waged by Israel in Gaza, and called on the international community to mobilize resources and ensure that humanitarian assistance reached civilians. All parties must work to prevent the conflict from spiralling and spreading through the region. Palestinians had been forcibly displaced, lacked access to water, electricity and food and were under siege in conditions violating international law. He expressed his group's full support for the Palestinian people, who were entitled to recover their dignity and legitimate rights. The ultimate objective was peace; to achieve that goal, his group called on the international community to adopt more robust measures that complied with international law and resolutions. He fully supported the draft decision.
- 165. The Government representative of the United States** said that the mass killing of civilians in Israel had evoked painful memories left by millennia of anti-Semitism and by the Holocaust. It was saddening that many speakers had condemned the loss of life in the Occupied Palestinian Territory but had not acknowledged the 1,400 civilian lives lost in Israel. Hamas' terrorist attacks were an act of evil, and dozens of Americans had been murdered and kidnapped. Israel had the right, and indeed the duty, to defend itself, and her Government supported the action taken by Israel to protect its people from terrorists, consistent with the rules of war. Allegations of Israel's carrying out indiscriminate attacks and deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure were reckless and unfounded. Israel was trying to identify terrorist targets and minimize civilian casualties; however, Hamas members were running their operations in sites such as schools and hospitals. Hamas was violating its obligations as a non-state actor under international humanitarian law by taking hostages and using civilians as human shields. Every innocent life lost – Israeli or Palestinian – was mourned, and her Government was seeking to increase the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those affected by the conflict. The Israeli labour market had also been severely impacted. She affirmed the importance of focusing on the ILO's mandate and her Government's sincere interest in reaching consensus on the draft decision.
- 166. Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States,** a Government representative of Spain said that, in the interest of consensus, the EU and its Member States supported the draft decision as amended by the Arab group and subamended by the United States.

- 167. A Government representative of Israel** said that it was disappointing that lies, misinformation and propaganda were being spread. Israel was not targeting the people of Gaza, but a terrorist organization that had murdered 1,400 innocent people. Members of the Governing Body had made references to genocide and ethnic cleansing, but that was precisely what the Israelis were suffering: rape, mutilation and murder, including of children. A nation acting in self-defence, which was also warning Palestinians in advance of attacks and facilitating their access to aid and water, was not committing genocide. The security forces had to respond to prevent further loss of Israeli lives in what was a modern-day pogrom. A Hamas spokesperson had justified its actions and denied Israel's right to exist. Discussing the root causes of the conflict without condemning the actions of Hamas was tantamount to supporting terrorism and atrocities. Israel would no longer tolerate living next to a terrorist entity whose goal was to eradicate Jews.
- 168. Another representative of the Palestinian Authority** said that it was regrettable that some speakers seemed to have lost their humanity and, instead of calling for the respect of international law, were interpreting it as they saw fit. The argument that Israel's defence should prevail over any other considerations, despite the fact that it was an occupying power, was deplorable. There was no evidence of the alleged rapes committed on 7 October. The Israeli authorities had lied repeatedly about the facts, including its initial denial of bombing a hospital in Gaza. Of the 9,000 Palestinians killed, the majority were women and children. Israel was not conducting a war against Hamas, it was carrying out a genocide against the innocent Palestinian people. It was a lie that no civilian sites had been targeted: in fact, four churches, eleven mosques, eight schools and many medical facilities had been shelled. The massacres the Palestinian people were witnessing were war crimes. The Palestinian Authority condemned terrorism, and had done so since the launch of the peace process 30 years previously. International law had to prevail, and only peaceful resistance could lead to a solution. The occupation must be recognized as the root cause of the current escalation. The Palestinian people would continue to fight for their right to self-determination.
- 169. A Government representative of Israel** expressed her disappointment that the representative of the Palestinian Authority was not representing his people, but shielding a terrorist organization. There was ample evidence – for those who opened their eyes to it – of women being raped, as members of Hamas members had documented their crimes.
- 170. The representative of the Palestinian Authority** said that the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, established in 2021, would investigate crimes committed within the occupied territories and Israel and the Palestinian Authority was ready to shoulder the responsibility for any crimes proven to have been committed by Hamas. However, international law was being targeted and Israel must not be above the law. The United Nations had been established in the wake of the horrors of the Second World War, yet it and its institutions were being undermined, including through repeated vetoes in the Security Council. The ILO must focus on its mandate.
- 171. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, ILO Regional Office for the Arab States) thanked the Governing Body for its continued support for development cooperation for the occupied Arab territories. She noted that the new subparagraph (g)(iii) proposed by the Arab group was technically problematic, as the next Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories would be published in May 2024 and its publication could not be brought forward, as the high-level interviews required extensive planning, and up-to-date statistics would only be available in early March. She suggested that the Governing Body might consider removing the reference to updating the recent annual report and reverting to the original wording of subparagraph (b) of the draft decision.

- 172.** In response to the Workers' group's comment that the ILO should continue to be present in the region, she highlighted that 15 ILO staff members in the Occupied Palestinian Territory were working to deliver activities under the Decent Work Programme. One staff member was currently in Gaza along with his family, moving around attempting to escape the hostilities and to help others in need, despite increasingly unsafe living and working conditions. The priorities of the Decent Work Programme remained highly relevant, including providing support to tripartite partners for a human-centred response and recovery. The ILO had initiated emergency response measures to support workers from Gaza who were stranded in the West Bank; it would extend support into Gaza, alongside sister agencies and partners, as soon as the conditions allowed. As to resource mobilization, the Office was already engaged in discussions with multiple partners and a meeting of development partners had been scheduled for the following week to discuss the labour market situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the role of the ILO on the ground.
- 173.** She agreed with the Employers' group's comment that the ILO needed to enhance its agility and streamline procedures; however, the ILO's response to the current situation had been swift. Already, US\$1 million of existing resources had been reallocated to address the urgent needs of displaced Palestinian workers from Gaza and further reallocation of internal resources was under way. The Office was also implementing an agreement with the Palestinian Employment Fund to deliver emergency income support to workers. Concerning the ILO's strategy to address the crisis faced by social partners in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, she drew the Governing Body's the three-phase response plan outlined in the addendum. The Office would shortly publish a first assessment of the impact of the conflict on the labour market and livelihoods in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It was estimated that 390,000 Palestinians had either lost their jobs or had been temporarily displaced from their jobs as a result of the crisis, which represented daily income losses of approximately US\$16 million. The Office would continue to work with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to track the status of the labour market on a monthly basis.
- 174. The representative of the Palestinian Authority** thanked the Officers of the Governing Body, and the Director-General and his team for their hard work to support his people. He accepted the explanation provided by the Office on the desirability of removing the reference to the recent annual report in subparagraph (g)(iii) of the draft decision. He expressed the hope that justice would prevail and that there could be an end to the bloodshed.
- 175. Speaking on behalf of the Arab group,** a Government representative of Libya noted that the draft decision could not be implemented in full without a ceasefire. However, her group was ready to accept the draft decision, as subamended by the Government of the United States, with a view to facilitating urgent assistance to workers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in Gaza.
- 176. The Worker spokesperson** said that her group would also have liked the draft decision to call for a humanitarian ceasefire to enable humanitarian workers to deliver aid in safety. However, as the Arab group, which had submitted the amendment containing a reference to a ceasefire, had agreed to the subamendment in which the reference had been removed, the Workers' group was prepared to join the consensus and adopt the draft decision as subamended.
- 177. The Employer spokesperson** said that she was pleased to see that consensus had been reached. Her group supported the draft decision as subamended.
- 178. The Director-General** thanked the Governing Body for reaching a consensus on the way forward, which would give the ILO a stronger mandate. The Office would do its utmost to support all workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories. The objective of the

meeting mentioned by the Regional Director for the Arab States was to garner support for the ILO's ongoing work in the region, for which the aim was to raise US\$20 million. The Office would fund 10 per cent of that total, but time was of the essence to mobilize the remainder of the necessary resources. The ILO would continue to work to gain access to all areas in question and the Israeli mission had recently issued several visas. In addition to the regional office, staff members from the priority action programme on decent work in crisis and post-crisis situations were being mobilized, as were the finance and programme teams. The ILO could make a real difference on the ground and would report to the Governing Body in March 2024 and the Conference in June 2024.

Decision

179. While gravely concerned and deeply saddened by the loss of lives in the region, the Governing Body:

- (a) **acknowledged that the current situation in the occupied Arab territories rendered the continuation of the ILO's technical assistance in its current form extremely difficult and in some areas impossible, while at the same time provision of relief for and support to affected workers and employers had taken on further urgency;**
- (b) **recalled the Director-General's Reports to the International Labour Conference, the last of which had been to the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference (2023) on "The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories", and requested the Office to take all necessary measures in response to the observations and conclusions therein, and in light of the urgent and increased needs emerging from the crisis situation;**
- (c) **underscored the obligation to respect international humanitarian law;**
- (d) **called on all parties to promptly allow and facilitate, consistent with international humanitarian law, full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access, including by adopting practical steps, such as the establishment of fully secured humanitarian corridors respected by all parties and other initiatives for the sustainable delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians throughout Gaza;**
- (e) **expressed deep concern at the humanitarian situation in Gaza and its grave impact on the civilian population, including workers and employers, and especially the disproportionate effect on children and women, while underlining the urgent need for full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, and stressing the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence;**
- (f) **welcomed the Director-General's programme for immediate assistance in paragraph 7 of document GB.349/POL/4(Add.1) to respond to immediate needs and calls for urgent assistance from workers and employers in the occupied Arab territories, and called on the Office to prioritize the safeguarding of wages and social benefits to affected workers;**
- (g) **requested the Director-General to submit for the consideration of the 350th Session of the Governing Body (March 2024) a report which should be used as the basis for the development of a more detailed action plan to address the impact of the current crisis situation, and which would contain:**
 - (i) **the work undertaken by the ILO to support tripartite constituents;**
 - (ii) **proposals for all additional measures that could be taken by the ILO to promote social justice and strengthen the ILO's mandate in the occupied Arab territories and mitigate the devastating impact of the current situation;**

- (iii) **an update on the impact of the current situation on the tripartite constituents, labour market and working conditions, and the ILO's work, including the implementation of the current Decent Work Programme 2023-2026;**
- (h) **urged Member States to provide financial resources for the ILO programme in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, providing support to realize decent work within the context of wider United Nations' efforts for relief and recovery, and to this end work with the donors to articulate the mobilization of dedicated financial resources.**

(GB.349/POL/4(Rev.1), paragraph 30, as amended by the Governing Body)