



Governing Body

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Fourth item on the agenda

Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25

Purpose of the document

This document summarizes the actions taken on the basis of the decision adopted by the Governing Body at its 344th Session (March 2022) on the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25. It describes how the Action Plan was finalized and implemented, taking account of the recommendations of the high-level independent evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts in 2016–21, as adopted by the Governing Body. It also summarizes the monitoring results at the mid-point of the implementation of the Action Plan. It responds to the Governing Body's request to the Director-General to integrate guidance from the Action Plan in pursuing the ILO's mandate to achieve gender equality at work through a transformative agenda, taking into account the resolution and conclusions of the General Discussion Working Party on inequalities and the world of work, especially in implementing the ILO Strategic Plan for 2022–25 and the two corresponding programmes and budgets. The Governing Body is invited to request the Office to continue the implementation of the Action Plan and to report on the results to the 356th Session (March 2026) (see the draft decision in paragraph 28).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome: Outcome 6 of the Programme and Budget for 2022–23: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work; and outcome 5 of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all.

Policy implications: None.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: See the draft decision in paragraph 28.

Author unit: Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY).

Related documents: [GB.344/INS/10](#); [GB.344/PV](#).

► Introduction

1. The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25 (Action Plan 2022–25)¹ operationalizes the ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming and guides the ILO in matters related to staffing, substance and structure towards achieving gender equality. It is aligned with the ILO Strategic Plan for 2022–25 and the two corresponding programmes and budgets.
2. The Action Plan 2022–25 was finalized taking into account the discussion by the Governing Body and its subsequent guidance provided during its 344th Session (March 2022). In addition, the Action Plan 2022–25 incorporates key findings and recommendations from the high-level independent evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts in 2016–21,² as adopted by the Governing Body. The approach of the Action Plan 2022–25 is in line with the resolution and conclusions of the General Discussion Working Party on inequalities and the world of work of 2021, with a focus on accelerating the implementation of a transformative agenda for gender equality, diversity and inclusion.
3. This document responds to the request for the Office to report to the Governing Body on progress and gaps in meeting targets at the mid-point of implementation of the action plans for gender equality.³

► Finalization and implementation of the Action Plan 2022–25

4. The Action Plan 2022–25 is a results-based tool that integrates a set of indicators to measure the ILO's progress in mainstreaming gender equality and women's empowerment, in alignment with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0).⁴
5. On the basis of the recommendations of the high-level independent evaluation, along with the Office's response and Governing Body's guidance, new indicators have been included in the Action Plan 2022–25, which:
 - articulate a more systemic programme-based approach and delivery system for gender equality and mainstreaming capacity development and training within the ILO;
 - support constituents' capacity to deliver on gender equality and COVID-19 pandemic recovery initiatives through region-specific strategies;
 - ensure that cooperation agreements for United Nations (UN)-wide initiatives reflect the ILO transformative agenda for gender equality;

¹ ILO, *ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25*, 2022.

² ILO, *High-level Independent Evaluation of ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts, 2016–21*, 2021.

³ GB.332/PV, para. 198(b).

⁴ United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, *UN-SWAP 2.0: A UN System-wide Accountability Framework to Mainstream Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, 2018.

- give greater consideration to supporting gender equality and mainstreaming processes and tools within the ILO.
6. In addition, the Office has formulated and disseminated an Office-wide theory of change for advancing gender equality in the world of work, anchored in the ILO's tripartite structure and normative mandate.⁵ Published in September 2022, the theory of change charts a path towards substantive gender equality and social justice, addressing the root causes of inequalities and promoting systemic change, as well as a change in attitudes and mindsets. It reinforces a twin-track approach to mainstreaming gender equality throughout all programme and budget outcomes, while also ensuring that work is dedicated towards equal opportunities and treatment for women and men in the world of work.
 7. The importance of optimizing technical capacities in field offices and of ensuring coordination across policy departments, the Bureau for Employers' Activities, the Bureau for Workers' Activities and the International Training Centre of the ILO is captured through the introduction of a new indicator on supporting constituents' capacity to deliver on gender equality and pandemic recovery initiatives through region-specific strategies in line with the recommendations of the high-level independent evaluation.
 8. Furthermore, the Action Plan 2022–25 strengthens the ILO's multilateral collaboration and strategic partnership frameworks on gender equality at the country, regional and global levels. It provides for the inclusion of specific phrasing and impacts that reflect the ILO's transformative agenda for gender equality and non-discrimination in cooperation agreements and their implementation arrangements for UN-wide initiatives.

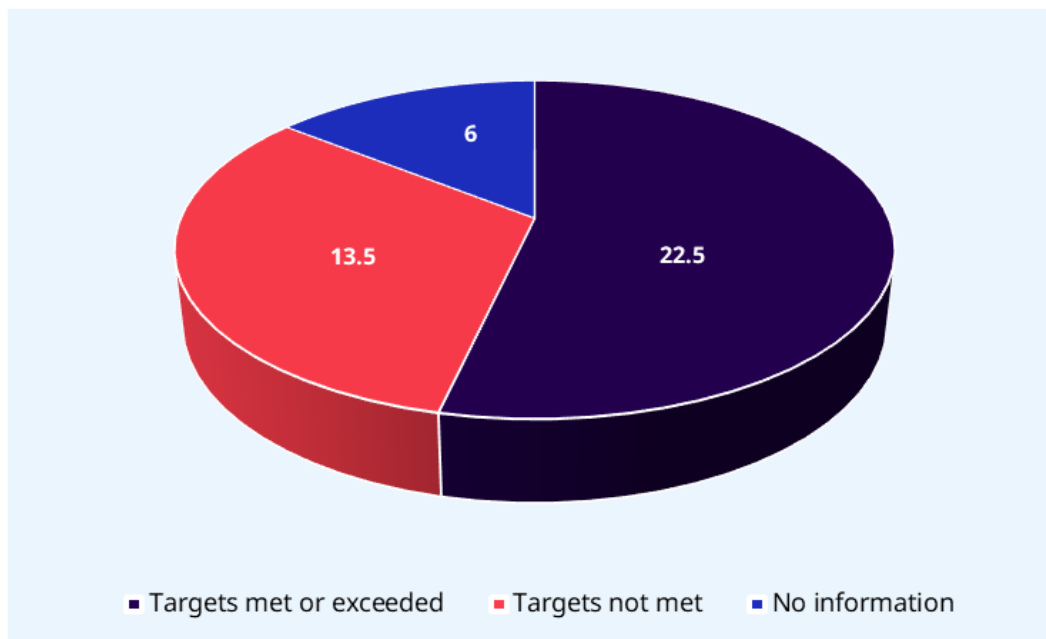
Preliminary results of the monitoring exercise for the Action Plan 2022–25

9. Of the 42 targets in the Action Plan 2022–25, which cover all six UN-SWAP performance areas, at least 22.5 targets (54 per cent) have been met or exceeded, 13.5 targets (32 per cent) have not been met, and 6 targets (14 per cent) were not reported on owing to a lack of data and limitations in measuring the related indicators (see figure 1).
10. As the ILO only began evaluating the mid-term performance of the action plans on gender equality during the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21 (Action Plan 2018–21), the Office has comparable data for one other mid-point evaluation period only. Furthermore, considering that the Action Plan 2022–25 does not replicate exactly the indicators in previous action plans, a direct comparison of overall performance is not possible, or at least does not present an accurate picture of actual performance. Nonetheless, some positive trends can be observed. For instance, compared to the Action Plan 2018–21, the Action Plan 2022–25 has met or exceeded a greater number of targets.
11. It is also worth noting that in terms of targets not met, the implementation of the Action Plan 2022–25 is resulting in a better performance; whereas 42 per cent of indicators were not met at the mid-point of the Action Plan 2018–21, this figure has fallen to around 32 per cent at the mid-point of the Action Plan 2022–25. Indicators such as those measuring the percentage of ILO projects and programmes meeting ILO markers 2 and 3 on gender equality and non-discrimination, the percentage of evaluations that satisfactorily or fully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment, and the percentage of women occupying senior ILO

⁵ ILO, *Theory of Change Towards a Transformative Agenda for Gender Equality in the World of Work*, 2022.

positions are examples of areas where the ILO has improved in comparison with its performance under previous action plans.

► **Figure 1. Overall mid-point performance of the Action Plan 2022–25 (number of targets met)**



Note: The totals in the figure correspond to the number of targets met or exceeded (dark blue), targets not met (red), or targets for which no information is available (light blue).

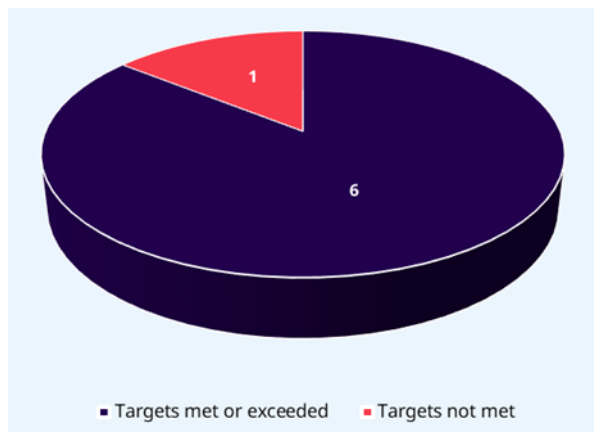
Source: ILO, 2023.

12. Certain indicators and their related targets are no longer applicable given the new organizational structure of the ILO, in particular the new posts of one Deputy Director-General and four Assistant Directors-General. The previous indicators linked to the Deputy Directors-General posts will therefore need to be reviewed and new indicators agreed upon in the light of these organizational changes, in order to report on the results in the final review of the Action Plan 2022–25 and to ensure alignment with the next UN-SWAP.
13. The above preliminary results suggest some progress in meeting or exceeding targets. Notably, the ILO has met and exceeded its targets relating to gender equality and women's empowerment in human resources policies and plans. In the reporting period, around 43 per cent of positions at the P5 level and above were occupied by women, surpassing the target of 40 per cent and improving on the results from previous action plans. The ILO is moving towards achieving gender parity regarding P1–P4 positions, 54 per cent of which were occupied by women in the reporting period compared with 55 per cent in the final monitoring period of the Action Plan 2018–21.
14. The ILO introduced a new indicator in the Action Plan 2022–25 on increasing constituents' capacity to deliver on gender equality initiatives, supported through region-relevant strategies, including a focus on pandemic recovery. Through this support, the ILO held over 30 dedicated capacity-building exercises on gender equality for ILO constituents across all five regions in 2022–23, superseding the target of at least one field office technical capacity activity to be held in two regions in 2022 and in three regions in 2023.

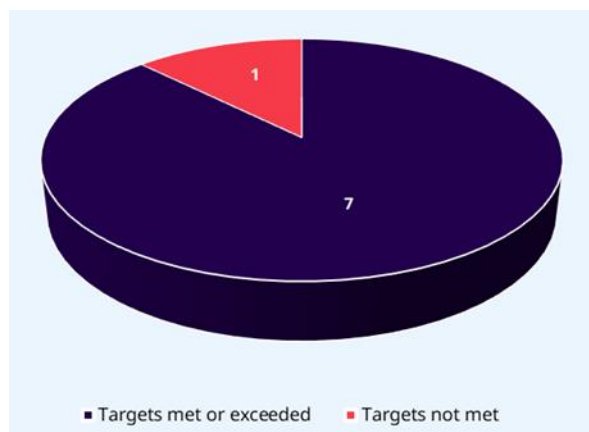
15. In the biennium 2022–23, at least 54 per cent of global UN-wide cooperation agreements and their implementation arrangements contained specific phrasing and impacts that reflect the ILO's transformative agenda for gender equality.
16. Gender-related issues, including the care economy and the implementation of the Action Plan 2022–25 were discussed in 3 out of 14 Global Management Team/Senior Management Team meetings in 2023, meeting the target for the review period.
17. The ILO has exceeded the targets for two of the indicators concerning evaluations. In total, 88 per cent of the representative sample of evaluations have been designed to ensure that data on gender equality and women's empowerment is collected and have either fully or satisfactorily integrated gender equality and women's empowerment within their general scope. Further, 84 per cent of evaluations include effective methods and analysis techniques to address gender equality. With regard to audits, 100 per cent of audited field office reports identified gender-related risks (for example, through quality assurance mechanism reviews of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs)) and actions taken to mitigate them.
18. The ILO's performance in meeting its targets on gender equality is further disaggregated across six main performance areas based on the UN-SWAP categories (see figures 2–7). Some of the findings are further elaborated in the next section.

The ILO's performance according to the six main UN-SWAP performance areas

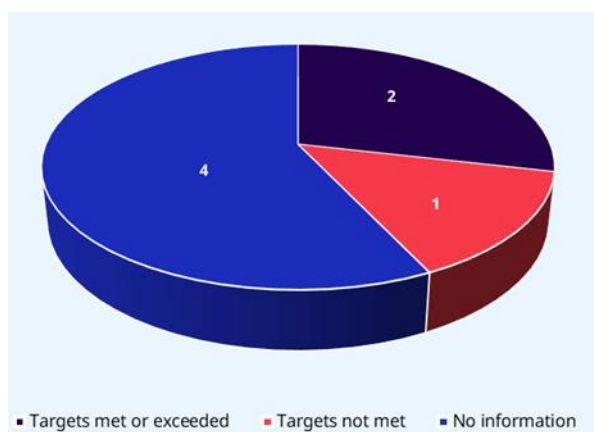
► **Figure 2. Results-based management: Gender-related Sustainable Development Goal results, reporting on gender-related reports, and programmatic results on gender equality**



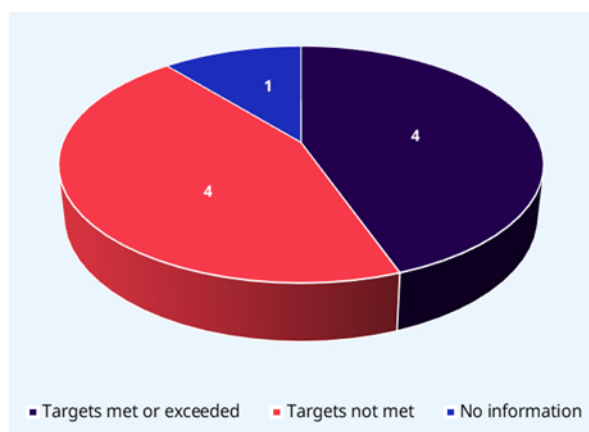
► **Figure 3. Oversight: Evaluation and gender-responsive auditing**



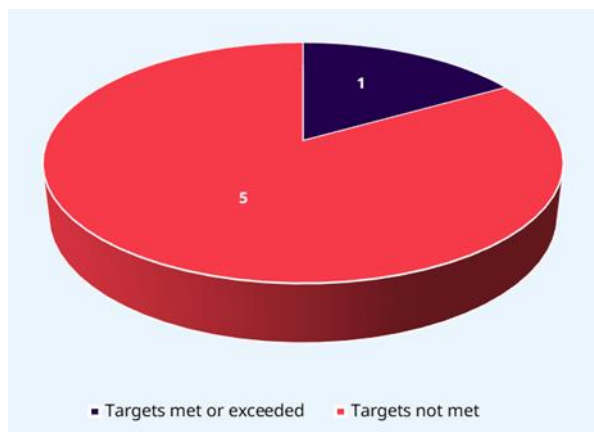
► **Figure 4. Accountability: Policy and plan, leadership and gender-responsive performance management**



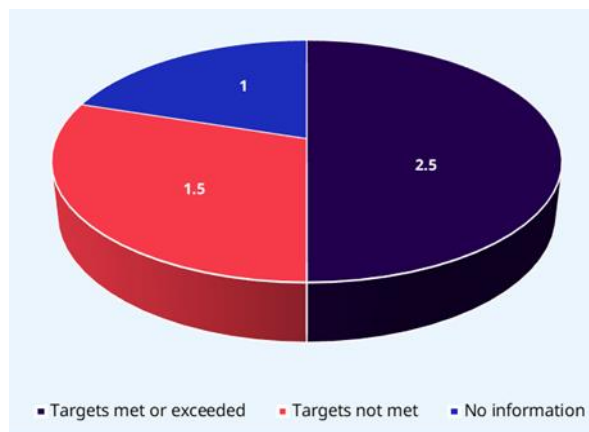
► **Figure 5. Gender architecture: Equal representation of women, organizational culture and financial resource allocation**



► **Figure 6. Capacity assessment and development**



► **Figure 7. Knowledge, communication and coherence**



Note: The totals in the figures correspond to the number of targets met or exceeded (dark blue), targets not met (red), or targets for which no information is available (light blue).

Source: ILO, 2023.

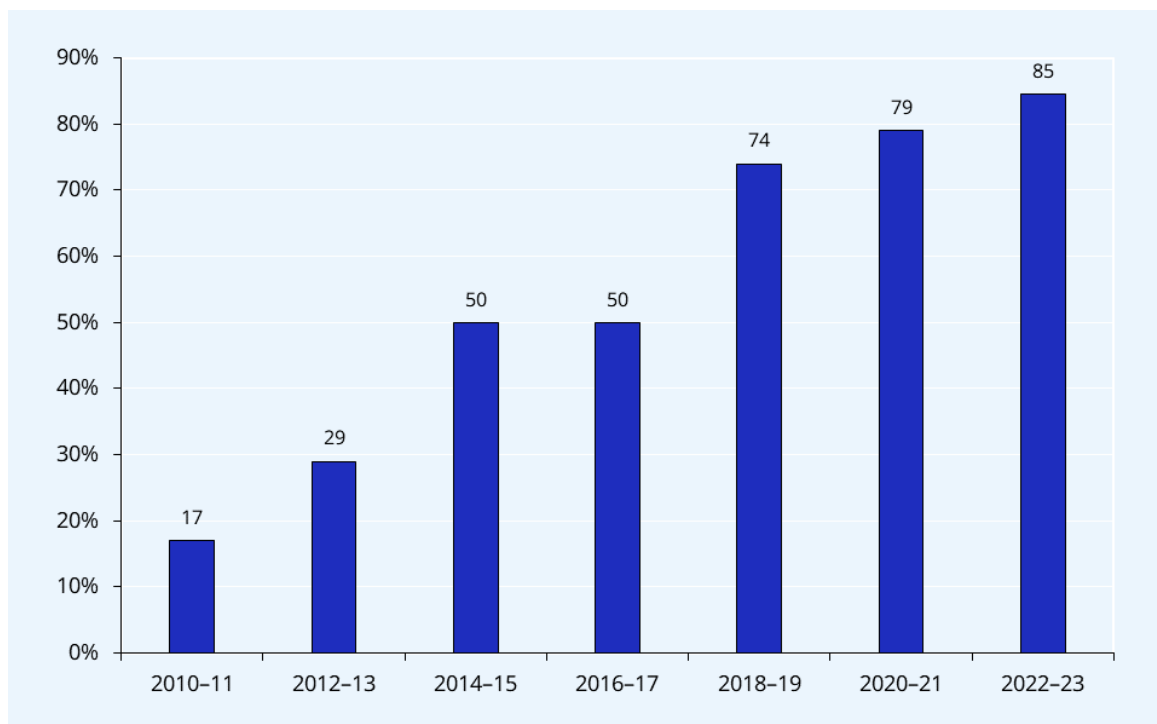
Progress areas and promising trends

19. A direct overall comparison with previous action plans is only partially possible, as not all the indicators are exactly the same. Nonetheless, for those indicators where such a comparison is possible, there are some areas of positive change in all three priorities, namely staffing, substance and structure. For example:
- The ILO is moving closer to achieving gender parity regarding the percentage of women occupying positions at the P5 level and above, which increased from 34 per cent in 2009 to around 43 per cent in 2023, surpassing the target of 40 per cent. However, the results differ among regions, with some registering at least 10 percentage points below gender parity. For instance, in the Americas and the Caribbean, and the Asia and the Pacific regions, women occupy 36 and 33 per cent, respectively, of positions at the P5 level and above. A more detailed analysis shows the following in relation to the percentage of women occupying P5-level positions and above: (a) 100 per cent of Deputy Director-General positions; (b) 78 per cent of Assistant Director-General positions; (c) 57 per cent of D2-level positions; (d) 41 per cent of D1-level positions; and (e) 40 per cent of P5-level positions. The ILO needs to capitalize on the overall momentum created in attaining gender parity to ensure that the progress made towards achieving a gender balance at all levels is maintained.
 - A consistent rise in the proportion of newly adopted gender-responsive DWCPs has been recorded, increasing from 17 per cent in 2010–11 to 85 per cent in 2022–23 (see figure 8). Examples include China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Pakistan and Viet Nam.
 - Progress has been recorded in the increased visibility of women at events organized by the Research Department, with the percentage of women speakers at such events growing from 44 per cent in 2022 to 57 per cent in 2023.
 - At the programmatic level, the ILO has surpassed expectations regarding the contribution of policy outcomes to achieving gender equality and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls). While the target for 2022–23 was 63 per cent, intense consultations and discussions led to the integration of SDG 5 and gender equality-related activities in all policy outcomes of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25, thus resulting in 100 per cent of policy outcomes contributing to achieving gender equality and SDG 5).⁶ This represents a crucial shift in planning and responds to the objective of fully integrating gender equality considerations in the ILO's mandate.
 - A further positive trend includes the ILO's performance on the indicator measuring the percentage of evaluations whose scope integrates gender equality and women's empowerment. This indicator improved from 51 per cent in 2020–21 to 80 per cent in 2022–23. This positive trend is representative of the ILO's overall performance regarding organizational oversight (gender-responsive evaluation and auditing), as the ILO met or exceeded seven out of eight targets (see figure 3).
 - It is also worth noting that in the reporting period all targets concerning communication were met. The ILO Global Communication Strategy (2022) emphasizes the importance of gender equality and disability inclusion in all ILO communications. Currently, at least 90 per cent of the Department of Communication and Public Information's plan and guides include

⁶ GB.347/PFA/1.

gender-related references, and 90 per cent of its training labs follow a gender-equal approach.

► **Figure 8. Percentage of gender-responsive Decent Work Country Programmes**



Source: ILO, 2023.

20. However, there is scope for improvement in other areas. For instance:

- Realizing gender equality in the ILO's architecture is an area where the ILO has experienced mixed results (see figure 5). While the ILO has recorded progress in meeting its targets related to staffing, it has consistently failed to meet gender parity in official meetings, for which information is collected in relation to the International Labour Conference and regional meetings. In 2023, the percentage of women delegates and advisers accredited and registered in the Conference was 36.5 per cent vis-à-vis a target of gender parity (from 47 to 53 per cent). Dedicated awareness-raising for ILO social partners on the need for and positive implications of achieving gender parity in delegations needs to be increased through conscious efforts to raise the issue in regional briefings in preparation for official meetings, as recommended by the indicator custodians in 2021.⁷ Further, such statistics should be routinely collected and assessed for all ILO official tripartite meetings, such as technical meetings and meetings of experts.
- Likewise, the ILO needs to intensify efforts to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment in its capacity assessment and capacity development programmes (see figure 6). For instance, more efforts are needed to increase the percentage of female participants in the training activities of the International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin Centre), which currently stands at 39.5 per cent compared with a target of 43 per cent. This can be achieved by increasing ILO stakeholders' awareness of the need to prioritize women's

⁷ GB.343/INS/INF/3.

nominations and by creating incentives for women's increased participation. While there are ongoing efforts to encourage more ILO male staff to attend the Turin Centre's training activities with a focus on gender equality, the current proportion of male staff participants has stagnated at around 17 per cent, indicating a need to proactively raise interest in such activities among men.

- In its mandated capacity to monitor the progress of the UN on gender equality through the UN-SWAP, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) has recommended that the recent ILO training programme on gender equality designed to address capacity gaps and promote gender equality integration should be made mandatory for both ILO and Turin Centre staff and that efforts should also concentrate on increasing the share of gender-responsive ILO development cooperation in global projects and underperforming regions.
- Efforts should also be devoted to introducing effective mechanisms to measure financial resource tracking and allocation, and to adopting improved methodologies for quantifying the disbursement of funds that promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This would require the upgrading of current resource tracking mechanisms and efforts to bring the ILO into line with current UN practice and the corresponding UN-SWAP indicator.
- Attention should also be given to increasing the percentage of studies authored by women, which currently lags behind gender parity by 6 per cent.

► Scaling up efforts for more ambitious gender equality outcomes

21. In the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan 2022–25 and the current performance indicators, the Office has identified a range of challenges that should be taken into consideration in the implementation process of the second phase of the Action Plan 2022–25 and in future iterations of such action plans. This could provide an opportunity to improve the quality of some indicators while raising the bar of the ambition of the Action Plan. For instance, the measurement criteria to be applied when reporting the results of some indicators would benefit from greater clarity to allow for improved data collection. For example, the methodology for the indicator on the percentage of project and programme proposals meeting the ILO marker on gender equality and non-discrimination runs the risk of negatively misrepresenting the performance of regions with small development cooperation portfolios. An adjustment to the methodology would allow for the collation of annual data that is comparable and accurate and can be used for tracking gender mainstreaming in the development cooperation portfolios of the different regions.
22. There is also substantial room for improving the alignment between the Action Plan 2022–25 and the UN-SWAP 2.0. For example, UN-SWAP indicator 6(c)(i) on measuring “up to date policies and plans implemented on gender equality and women's empowerment, including gender mainstreaming and the equal representation of women”, is reported and measured in the Action Plan 2022–25 in terms of the “percentage of ILO professional positions (P1 to P4, regular staff) held by women”, which only partially provides the related information. Similarly, UN-SWAP indicator 6(c)(ii) on “specific senior level mechanism in place for ensuring accountability for promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women”, could be further strengthened in the Action Plan 2022–25. In this regard, further efforts would be

needed to implement the capacity development plan for ILO staff formulated in 2022. In addition, UN-SWAP indicators 10(b) and 10(c) on financial benchmarks for resource allocation for gender equality and women's empowerment do not have an equivalent under the Action Plan 2022–25.

23. As the ILO's architecture has changed as a result of its new leadership, there is a need to reflect these changes in the Action Plan 2022–25 to ensure that progress does not stall or regress and that valuable opportunities are not missed. For example, there is scope to embed recently launched programmes and initiatives, such as the priority action programmes, within the Action Plan 2022–25 with a view to furthering efforts on delivering on a transformative agenda for gender equality. This will require significant consultations on and coordination between the Action Plan 2022–25 and the elements of the new direction in which the ILO is heading.
24. There has been considerable progress in recent years in efforts to mainstream gender equality within the ILO's research, capacity-building and policy work. However, it is essential to take stock of other gender-related activities conducted outside of the framework of the Action Plan 2022–25, such as significant technical work that advances gender equality in the world of work, and which might not be reported or captured within the reporting mechanisms of the Action Plan. This, coupled with similar limitations resulting from the framework of the programme and budget, obscures some of the critical work on gender equality carried out by the ILO at the global, regional and country levels.
25. As the work on gender equality evolves, reflecting new global challenges and trends, it is critical to ensure that ILO staff are well equipped to address gender inequality and discrimination. To this end, making the recently launched ILO online training course "Gender equality matters: Achieving gender-transformative change" mandatory as part of a broader capacity development plan for all staff, together with enhancing the role and capacities of the ILO Global Gender Network, could be essential in delivering on the mandate of the ILO. Programmes delivered in collaboration with the Turin Centre such as the Gender Academy and recently rolled out training on care and decent work could also help to achieve this goal, and it would be forward-looking to enhance cross-fertilization with the experience of the implementation of the ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy 2020–23.
26. The ILO has consistently met or exceeded most of the targets set in the previous action plans on gender equality. However, achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is a continuous exercise, and the ILO needs to challenge itself to build on its success to ensure that meeting performance indicator targets does not become a perfunctory exercise. Instead of eliminating performance indicators that have been consistently met over the years, as is the current practice, these indicators should be recalibrated towards catalysing action for a more significant impact. Such recalibration should also be made in line with the UN-SWAP reporting framework. For instance, the indicator in the Action Plan 2018–21 relating to work–life balance through policies on maternity, paternity, adoption and family emergency leave, breastfeeding and childcare was considered to have been achieved and was therefore not included in the Action Plan 2022–25. However, challenges related to work–life balance change in line with societies' evolving needs and demographics, thus requiring new measures such as care leave for all, including care for the elderly, and not just for parents.
27. In addition, to further align the Action Plan 2022–25 with the UN-SWAP, efforts could be considered towards aligning the Action Plan 2022–25 with the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. This would further strengthen synergies between the two frameworks and better promote a holistic and intersectional approach to combating different dimensions of

inequality and discrimination in line with the resolution and conclusions of the General Discussion Working Party on inequalities and the world of work.

► Draft decision

28. The Governing Body requested the Office to:

- (a) continue the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25, taking into account the Governing Body’s guidance and lessons learned; and**
- (b) report to its 356th Session (March 2026) on the results of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25, along with the proposed approach for the subsequent action plan, with a view to a heightened strategic positioning of the ILO’s work on gender equality in its pursuit of social justice.**