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Summary of Proceedings ¹

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¹ The text of the resolution submitted by the Working Party for adoption by the Conference was published in [Record No.10A](#).

Introduction

1. The Officers of the Working Party had been appointed at the opening sitting of the 109th Session, held on 20 May 2021, as follows:

Chairperson:	H.E. Ms Eunice Irungu Kigenyi (Government member, Uganda)
Vice-Chairpersons:	Ms Lindiwe Sephomolo (Employer member, Lesotho) Ms Amal El Amri (Worker member, Morocco)
2. At its second sitting, the Working Party appointed a drafting group to prepare and submit draft conclusions for its review; and at its third sitting, it appointed Mr Philip Vieira (Government member, United States of America) as reporter.
3. The Working Party held seven sittings.
4. The representative of the Secretary-General (Deputy Director-General for Policy) noted that technological innovations, demographic shifts, climate change and globalization were transforming the world of work, giving rise to new opportunities as well as challenges for people in accessing decent work. The COVID-19 pandemic had caused further disruptions in the world of work. Skills and lifelong learning were key to facilitating a human-centred recovery and had the potential to drive competitiveness, productivity, innovation and equality. An increased momentum to invest in peoples' capabilities reflected a heightened sense of urgency and shared responsibility between governments and the social partners.
5. Yet skills systems in many countries were constrained by low quality and relevance, and inadequate gender-responsiveness and inclusiveness. The discussion of the Working Party on Skills and Lifelong Learning presented a unique opportunity to guide the development of more inclusive, modern and relevant skills systems. It would complement the standard-setting item on apprenticeships and the third recurrent discussion on the strategic objective of employment in 2022, both of which had been placed on the agenda of the 110th Session (2022) of the International Labour Conference.
6. Collaboration between governments and social partners was central to making skills and lifelong learning ecosystems responsive to the needs of the world of work. The Working Party could consider the respective roles and responsibilities of governments, workers and employers, and how the ILO could innovate and scale up services and position itself as a global leader on skills and lifelong learning.
7. The Chairperson noted that the jobs of tomorrow would not look like those of today and would require different mindsets and skills. Providing access to skills development throughout life was vital for supporting transitions from school to work and between jobs. Lifelong learning for all, including disadvantaged groups, helped everyone reap the benefits of transformative change, putting humans at the heart of policy and action.
8. The COVID-19 pandemic had taken more than 5 million lives globally and profoundly affected everyone. It had destroyed millions of jobs, altered the way of working and caused structural change in economies worldwide. Women – especially young women – youth, low-income households and low-skilled people had been particularly affected. Education and training at all levels had been profoundly disrupted. Targeted reskilling and upskilling measures, coupled with reinforced agility and resilience of skills development and lifelong learning systems, were urgently needed.

9. In her country, Uganda, the crisis had deeply affected the quantity and quality of jobs, increased skills mismatches and heavily impacted the large population of low-skilled youth. Skilling people was essential for her country's recovery.
10. The assistant to the deputy representative of the Secretary-General (Chief, Skills and Employability Branch) presented an overview of the Office report and the four points for discussion that had been agreed by the tripartite constituents to guide the deliberations of the Working Party:
 1. What are the key challenges and opportunities for skills and lifelong learning in a changing world of work, further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, to: (a) foster the creation of decent work and productive employment for all; (b) enhance workers' capacity to make use of the opportunities available for decent work and improve productivity of enterprises (including with a focus on SMEs); and (c) promote inclusive, gender-sensitive and sustainable development while contributing to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals?
 2. How can key elements of skills systems including policies, governance, skill needs anticipation, financing and delivery be shaped and, where needed, modernized, while addressing the changes and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, to: (a) ensure more equitable and effective access to high-quality lifelong learning for developing productive capabilities and providing access to productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all; (b) reduce skills mismatches, underutilization and gender segregation; (c) enable more effective engagement by key actors (including teachers, trainers, TVET centres and tripartite constituents); (d) capitalize on the potential of new technologies to foster digital learning and digitization of skills systems accessible to all; (e) recognize all forms of formal, and where appropriate, informal and non-formal learning; (f) promote the development of core skills (including human and social skills); and (g) foster supporting culture and mindset to facilitate this transformative process?
 3. What are the roles and responsibilities of governments and social partners for realizing the transformative potential of skills, lifelong learning, training and education for all, including for the empowerment of women? How can governments and social partners develop and introduce more effective and sustainable governance and financial models? What are the most effective ways to strengthen social dialogue and tripartite governance in skills development and lifelong learning?
 4. In line with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and to strengthen ILO's global leadership on skills and lifelong learning, what should be the core elements of an ILO skills and lifelong learning strategy that makes use of all means of action including research, standards, technical assistance and development cooperation? What would enable the Office to provide enhanced support to constituents to facilitate the adaptation to changes, move beyond the crisis and build back better through skills and lifelong learning, foster policy coherence and coordination and ensure decent work and productive employment for all? How can such a strategy take into account the diversity of countries and regions, gender equality, and the needs of all workers including disadvantaged groups? How can the ILO provide support to constituents on the potential impacts of digital and other technologies on skills and lifelong learning? How can the ILO improve investments to implement this strategy?

General discussion

Opening statements and point for discussion 1

What are the key challenges and opportunities for skills and lifelong learning in a changing world of work, further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

11. The Worker Vice-Chairperson recalled that the COVID-19 pandemic had caused the loss of millions of lives, destroyed more than 140 million jobs and increased the vulnerability of hundreds of millions of workers. In parallel, climate change was impacting communities around the world, demanding a global response based on a just transition. The two crises demonstrated the shortcomings of the global economy and the inequalities between rich and poor. A third major challenge was to exploit the enormous potential of digitalization and new technologies while their potential negative effects were assessed and regulated.
12. Lifelong learning was vital to achieve full, productive and freely chosen employment. Education and training were recognized as rights in the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which called for all persons, on an equal basis and without any discrimination whatsoever, to develop and use their capabilities for work in their own best interests and in accordance with their own aspirations. The report of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work and the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, both emphasized the importance of universal access to lifelong learning.
13. The Working Party had an opportunity to fulfil those commitments and to agree on solutions to key challenges, such as inadequate investment in education and training, the implications of new technologies for workers and enterprises, the need for support to low-income countries and the imperative to redouble efforts to eliminate child labour.
14. Key issues that the Workers' group wished to address in the discussion included: high-quality public education; lifelong learning processes guided by tripartite governance, social dialogue and collective bargaining; adequate investment by employers in lifelong learning; paid educational leave; lifelong learning to fight discrimination and reduce the gender pay gap; equal access for all to training, including for workers in precarious employment, migrants, refugees and people not in education, employment or training; access to vocational training, especially for youth; and the elimination of child labour and getting children into school. Furthermore, social dialogue was needed at all levels, from national to local and also within enterprises, in order to guarantee the acquisition of high-quality, recognized and relevant skills and capabilities.
15. Turning to the first point for discussion, she stated that lifelong learning should be at the heart of efforts to recover from the pandemic and to ensure resilience in the future. Governments should, in consultation with social partners, develop policies to create jobs and achieve full employment, focusing on skills to match available job opportunities. Investment was needed in high-quality education and broad skills development programmes that would allow workers to develop their full potential, including those working in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
16. Public employment and career guidance services, as well as social protection, played an essential role. Trade unions also provided skills training, such as in the Union Learn initiative in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which was an example of cooperation between trade unions and employers. Discrimination against women in accessing education and training needed to be eliminated, and skills in the care sector recognized.

Lifelong learning should be integrated within frameworks for a just and sustainable climate transition. Higher-income countries should share their expertise and provide development assistance for lower-income countries, including through measures enabling them to invest in education. Multinational enterprises should also provide training in their host countries, working with trade unions. Well-funded technical and vocational education and training (TVET) establishments that provided robust courses leading to recognized qualifications were needed to guarantee universal access to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning should take a broad-based approach, aiming at social and human development. Learning pathways should include technical education, continuous training and higher education. Lifelong learning was a collective responsibility where the different actors fulfilled their obligations. It was important to note that the goals of the Working Party could not be reached by taking a narrow approach, nor by putting the burden on workers alone. Technical skills should be accompanied by human and social skills in the overall interests of social development. Ministries of Education and Ministries of Labour had to cooperate closely to identify and agree on collective solutions to shared challenges.

17. The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that skills and lifelong learning was an important topic for her group, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and amid rapid changes in the workplace. As skills development and capacity-building were core aspects of the ILO mandate, it was best-placed to take the lead internationally. As such, more resources should be invested in that area of the ILO's work, including through the ILO programme and budget, and the ILO should do more to strengthen the capacity of the social partners in the design and governance of skills and lifelong learning policies and systems.
18. Employers worldwide faced a major challenge in attracting and retaining workers with the right skills. Recent joint research by the International Organisation of Employers and the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities had revealed that the shortage of skilled labour was a fifth megatrend currently shaping the trajectories of the workplace. Its findings were of considerable concern, as they showed, for example, that the challenge of locating, hiring and retaining skilled workers was felt across all borders, sectors and pay grades, and that the problem was particularly crippling for SMEs. The problem of skills mismatches had risen to an alarming level. A majority of respondents felt that updating educational curricula and aligning them with labour market needs would go a long way in addressing skills mismatches. Making that an integral part of the pandemic recovery was essential for a sustainable and resilient recovery and for building back better. Other research pointed to the need for widespread reskilling and upskilling of workers in order to respond to future business needs.
19. A well-developed and well-governed skills development system that aligned skills training with labour market needs would result in a win-win-win solution for governments, employers and workers alike. In the course of the discussion, the Employers' group would share its ideas regarding how skills policies could be better implemented and how the ILO could be a global leader on skills and lifelong learning.
20. Regarding the first point for discussion, productive and sustainable enterprises were needed to create decent jobs. Unfortunately, the business environment in many countries failed to provide the basic elements that business required to stay in operation in the formal economy, with respect to infrastructure, the policy environment, access to finance and finding the talent required. Sustainable enterprises played an important role as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work, as highlighted in both the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and the Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

- 21.** It had to be recognized that skills development and lifelong learning were fundamental enablers of productive employment, decent work, productivity and sustainability. The draft conclusions of the Working Party should include the following points, which were highlighted in the background report: the importance of balancing supply- and demand-driven approaches to education and training systems; the need to have skills development and lifelong learning as a top priority of all economies; as accelerators for technological advancement and innovation, skills should be promoted for positive structural transformation towards higher-value-added and dynamic growth sectors, including for SMEs; the promotion of skills for the transition to formality; the need for policies and incentives that recognize and support the role of enterprises as generators of employment and that create an enabling environment for business; the importance for building back better of stimulating the economy and employment, and investing in people’s capabilities through skills and lifelong learning, active labour market policies and promoting sustainable enterprises.
- 22.** Business continuity remained a challenge. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) had suffered disproportionately and continued to struggle. Small firms in low- and middle-income countries were particularly vulnerable, as they benefited less from government assistance programmes. MSMEs needed support in accessing and retaining talent, including through incentives such as subsidies, grants and tax credits to upskill and reskill workers. Increased productivity was essential for those enterprises to grow, become competitive and build financial buffers for resilience. It was not enough to focus only on labour productivity or company productivity; productivity at the macroeconomic level also had to be considered. The Office should further develop its approach based on promoting productivity ecosystems for decent work and provide enhanced technical advice to support business resilience and the creation of an enabling environment for innovation, productivity, growth and sustainable enterprises, especially for MSMEs. References to productivity should be included in the draft conclusions, given the strong two-way causality between productivity and skills demand.
- 23.** Skills development was a prerequisite for sustainable development. Too many countries equipped their youth with skills that were obsolete or not needed in the labour market. Skills development was clearly linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4 and 8 and inherently linked to SDG 5. When aligned with labour market needs, effective education and training systems strengthened economic growth and productivity, increased the employability of workers and supported livelihoods. Addressing gender gaps in schools and skills development systems, in particular in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), was critical. Social and cultural barriers, systemic discrimination in education and training systems, and occupational segregation in labour markets, including gender skills gaps, had to be addressed. Special attention should be paid to other groups, such as persons with disabilities, migrants and rural residents, under an inclusive skills and lifelong learning agenda. Finally, given that six out of ten workers globally were in the informal economy, skills policies must help to ensure a smooth transition from the informal to the formal economy, which should be mentioned in the conclusions.
- 24.** The Government member of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, emphasized that skills and lifelong learning were key for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, job creation, improved living conditions and competitiveness, especially in developing countries. The digital divide between developed and developing countries undermined equality in the opportunities brought about by digitalization. The impact of the pandemic had highlighted the importance of digital skills. Calls for actions should widen the digital skills pool and increase access to digital infrastructure and connectivity at the national and international levels.

25. Globalization and global value chains had enabled manufacturers to shift production jobs to developing countries. However, skills mismatches were a growing challenge in Africa and were threatening to reverse some gains, with the reshoring of some manufacturing jobs back to developed economies. The Africa group welcomed the ILO's support to the African Union Commission (AUC) to develop an African Continental Qualifications Framework, which was currently being finalized, underpinned by the key commitments and policies of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area.
26. Due to demographic changes, many countries in Africa might struggle to provide jobs and relevant training, thereby creating a surplus of low-skilled workers and a shortage of medium-skilled workers. Countries that were able to invest in quality education and training might translate the demographic change into a growth and development dividend. He urged the Office to accelerate the efforts aimed at the formalization of economies in Africa, building on the ILO and AUC joint programme, Decent Work for the Transformation of the Informal Economy, to facilitate the development of skills recognition systems across the continent, and to create a knowledge-sharing platform and community of practice regarding skills and labour migration.
27. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States, said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. In line with the European Pillar of Social Rights, the EU and its Member States were committed to placing education and skills at the centre of their political action. There was a recognition that the green and digital transitions would require more investment to ensure every individual's right to education, training and lifelong learning. The main challenges were related to technological, climate and demographic changes, increasing globalization and the COVID-19 pandemic. Strong and coherent policies for skills and lifelong learning were needed to ensure the adaptation of society to new realities, a human-centred recovery from COVID-19, and a fair and just transition to climate-neutral economies. Adopting a whole-of-government approach, public-private networks, and identifying local labour market needs would be key to ensuring decent work for all.
28. There was an urgent need to redouble efforts to fully implement the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182), and promote the ratification and implementation of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). It was essential to ensure that every child had access to free, quality education to acquire both basic skills and digital, green and core skills, and to ensure that individuals at any age were guaranteed a second opportunity to learn.
29. The challenge of skills mismatches could be addressed through effective skills needs assessments, recognizing the needs of MSMEs. Unimpeded access to lifelong learning and guidance, coupled with outreach to all segments of the population, was crucial. That included people in the informal economy, atypical workers and people who were not in education, training or employment, older workers, low-skilled workers, women and those living in rural areas. Specific consideration should be given to promoting gender equality through concentrated efforts to close the digital divide to enable women and girls to participate in STEM fields and a wider variety of education and occupational options. Technological changes could provide new opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in the labour market, in line with the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2021–2030.
30. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC), highlighted the relevance of skills and lifelong learning to the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and its human-centred approach. It was critical to overcome digital gaps and barriers to accessing learning faced by different

population groups – including women, youth, indigenous peoples, people of African descent, migrants and people with disabilities, among others – which often negatively affected access to work and social services. Particular emphasis was needed on promoting women's participation in STEM training, and their acquisition of skills needed for professional development. Existing public programmes needed to be adapted to the new challenges and opportunities in the twenty-first century and in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was necessary to link the labour market with equal opportunities, technological innovation, integration of MSMEs in value chains and the just transition to decent and environmentally sustainable jobs. Placing productive employment and decent work at the centre of social and economic recovery required employment policies to be coordinated with development policies and productive transformation.

- 31.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG), highlighted the indispensable role of skills development and lifelong learning, in line with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. That entailed investment in human capacities and the institutions of work, to achieve fair, safe and inclusive labour market outcomes. Skills and lifelong learning were also key to achieving a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The ILO should play a leading and coordinating role in the process, taking advantage of its normative framework, tripartite structure and expertise, and building on its partnerships. That should be achieved through knowledge-sharing, technical advice, capacity-building and development cooperation. The ILO's programme and budget with a dedicated outcome on skills and lifelong learning adequately reflected those priorities, in line with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, and the ILO Strategic Plan 2022–25. She called for the development of a comprehensive and strategic vision on skills and lifelong learning for a human-centred post-crisis recovery and beyond, based on tripartite consensus.
- 32.** The Government member of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela described the initiatives in his country, drawing attention to the importance of training and education, as well as approaches to formally recognize the skills acquired. Training in both public and private entities was crucial to strengthen the scientific and technological skills of the workforce.
- 33.** The Government member of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland recognized the fundamental role of skills and lifelong learning for securing inclusive recovery from the COVID-19 crisis and the transition to net zero emissions, both of which required a skilled workforce. In her country, initiatives had included job creation schemes for young people, training and work placements, and measures for the long-term unemployed. The social partners and the Government could recommend an action plan to shape green jobs creation. It was an important challenge to bridge the demand of employers for skills and the skills training offered by providers. On the global scale, access to skills and lifelong learning was more limited for marginalized groups, thereby widening inequalities and creating market inefficiencies. Education could play a transformational role in lifting communities out of poverty, growing economies and shaping countries' future. She emphasized the role of the private sector, especially major businesses, in providing both financial and knowledge resources which could be put to work in support of their role within the labour market. An inclusive global agenda on skills and lifelong learning could further ensure equitable foundations for decent work, productive employment and the transition to green economies.
- 34.** The Government member of Australia noted that quality education and skills development would take on renewed importance in the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis recovery, and described the situation in her country. Structural, fundamental and long-term reform of the skills and lifelong learning system was required to ensure that the skills supply and demand in

the labour market were met. The ILO was well positioned to be a global leader on skills and lifelong learning. The general discussion was a timely opportunity to develop an ILO skills strategy. That strategy should consider the support to constituents, faster qualification development, simpler models of funding and skills matching, and enhanced careers education. Strong cooperation at the national, subnational and sectoral levels would underpin those goals, in addition to sound data and information collection.

35. The Government member of Argentina highlighted the considerable disparities in skills and lifelong learning in his region, with both technically advanced sectors and others barely surpassing subsistence levels. The COVID-19 pandemic had highlighted the degree of such fragmentation in the region. The knowledge economy and digital training for workers were vital, as recognized by policymakers in his country. There was also an increasing need in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis for technical training and skills, in combination with core and soft skills, to ensure decent work and economic productivity.
36. The Government member of China said that COVID-19, in addition to other transformative phenomena in the world of work, had brought new challenges to skills and lifelong learning systems. The ILO and its tripartite partners should attach importance to those challenges and identify concrete measures. He provided details on the initiatives in his country, focusing on policy responses to the COVID-19 crisis, such as online training schemes, subsidized skills training through the unemployment insurance fund, targeting of vulnerable groups, a revised apprenticeship programme and an international network on skills development.
37. The Government member of Denmark stated that ensuring that workers possessed the necessary skills was currently one of the most important tasks worldwide. The pandemic had provided an opportunity to invest in reskilling. The Danish Government had concluded 20 tripartite agreements to assist businesses and workers through the crisis, which was an excellent example of the benefit of social dialogue. Committed engagement of government and social partners was the key to ensuring that workers acquired the needed skills for the future.
38. The Government member of Canada stated that the pandemic had had an unequal impact on the Canadian economy, with some sectors hit harder by closures and lay-offs, while others struggled to find workers with the required skills. The pandemic had also accelerated long-standing challenges, which ranged from adapting to new technologies to skills mismatches, labour shortages, adjustments for a clean, green economy, decent work in supply chains and support for diversity and inclusion. Disruptions to education, training and employment caused by the pandemic had exacerbated the vulnerabilities related to access to adult learning systems and participation in the workforce. Prior to the pandemic, vulnerable workers, such as women, people with disabilities, youth, older workers, indigenous peoples and low-wage and low-skilled workers, had already faced barriers to participation and adequate protection, often holding jobs with a high risk of automation. Those population groups were disproportionately affected by the pandemic and risked facing significant long-term impacts. The shift to e-learning posed challenges and exacerbated barriers for those already underserved before the pandemic. SMEs often lacked resources for training and recruiting employees to improve productivity. The pandemic had also reinforced the importance of demand-driven, sector-specific workforce development, including upgrading and reskilling the existing workforce to transition to growth occupations and sectors.
39. The Government member of Japan said that there was a need to focus closely on the pandemic's impact on employment. To support economic growth in the time of the pandemic, a science- and technology-based nation was needed, developed through digital transformation

and green growth. His country also faced a declining birth rate and an ageing population. As working lives became longer and working styles more diverse, support must be provided for the development and improvement of occupational skills and career development for people of all ages. He described initiatives in his country, including provision of public vocational training focusing on technological innovation, promotion of individual learning, subsidies to support human resource development by companies, and a national qualification system for career consultants.

40. The Government member of the United States of America said that well-functioning skills and lifelong learning systems were fundamental enablers of employment, decent work, productivity, innovation and sustainable development. Lifelong learning also supported people in adjusting to ongoing significant changes in the labour market. He endorsed the ILO's focus on skills and lifelong learning systems, and on efforts to reshape them in order to meet challenges and create opportunities for all. Workers, enterprises and societies were confronted by a number of megatrends that presented both challenges and opportunities for skills and lifelong learning. One such megatrend was the proliferation of diverse forms of work arrangements, including in the platform and gig economy. He stressed that support should be comprehensive to enable all workers' access to skills and lifelong learning. Moreover, addressing climate change in line with the Paris Agreement required effective unemployment protection, employment services and skills development in order to enable many workers to reskill and transition to other jobs. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated inequalities in education and skills systems, and women had assumed a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work for young children and ageing parents. Digitalization and new education technologies provided an opportunity to make skills training accessible to a larger number of people. However, the transition to online learning during the pandemic had exacerbated pre-existing inequalities. Megatrends affecting the world of work significantly altered the demand for skills. Effective skills needs anticipation could reduce the risk of skills mismatches.
41. The representative of the World Bank said that the development of digital and higher-order cognitive skills depended on the development of strong foundational skills, such as the cognitive and socio-emotional skills that were ideally built through early childhood and basic education. However, systems continued to fail too many children and youth in that process. The task of technical and vocational education and training and lifelong learning systems thus became one of not only responding to labour market needs but also of remedying the investment failures that preceded them. With COVID-19, the learning losses would be felt in the labour market in the next generation of workers. In a changing world of work, devising mechanisms to more effectively bring together workers and the private sector to shape skills building programmes was an absolute priority. Addressing those challenges would require more effective spending but also more efficient and arguably higher financing for skills programmes. Many of those issues were covered by ongoing joint work between the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the ILO on the future of TVET, which highlighted the importance of partnerships.
42. The representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) highlighted that the partnership between UNICEF and the ILO based on a recently signed memorandum of understanding to strengthen and expand the two organizations' collaboration on the agenda of skills globally was especially critical, as most of the world was dealing with the effects of COVID-19, including increased unemployment. There was an urgent need to ensure that all children and youth acquired the full range of skills, including the foundational, transferable, digital, entrepreneurial and job-specific skills to succeed in school, work and life. The

PROSPECTS partnership with the ILO, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) in six countries in the Middle East and Africa, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was a good example of reaching marginalized youth to provide skills opportunities at scale. He congratulated the ILO on the launch of the global framework earlier in the year on core skills for life and work in the twenty-first century, and looked forward to continued partnership.

43. The representative of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) said that, in addition to national reskilling and upskilling efforts, there was a growing interest in skills mobility, as countries faced difficulties responding to new and fast-changing skills and labour market needs that were increasingly difficult to meet with local workers alone. When implemented effectively, skills mobility could act as a labour market tool and vector for development, serving both countries of destination and origin, to the benefit of migrant workers, employers and local economies. To build flexible and demand-responsive skills mobility channels that were embedded in robust skills frameworks and governance structures, close cooperation between multiple partners was vital, including States, migrant workers, employers, training and education institutions and civil society organizations. Important efforts in that regard were channelled through the Global Skills Partnership on Migration, an initiative between the ILO, its constituents, UNESCO and the IOM that mobilized expertise towards supporting stakeholders to develop and recognize the skills of migrant workers. She looked forward to further collaboration on that topic.
44. The Employer Vice-Chairperson emphasized, in her response to the points raised, that the notion of an entitlement to lifelong learning was based on a recommendation of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, which did not have tripartite consensus. There was lack of clarity in terms of who had to bear the financial burden to access lifelong learning, and a rights-based approach was not sufficient to create a culture that would enable lifelong learning.
45. There was also a risk that unnecessary unproductive costs for companies and governments would be generated. She considered that the issue of paid education leave was a luxury for developed countries only, and noted that SMEs could not afford it. Stronger cooperation and a holistic approach within the multilateral system on skilling initiatives was needed in order to avoid duplication of work among the UN agencies.
46. The Worker Vice-Chairperson stated that the conclusions of the ILO technical meeting on the future of work in the education sector in the context of lifelong learning for all, skills and the Decent Work Agenda had recognized that education was not a commodity. The purpose of education was not to align to the needs of the labour market but rather to contribute to the development of individuals. Workers should not be considered as a talent pool from which only the most capable would be given a job, and it was the responsibility of governments and employers to ensure that workers had access to learning. As workers in precarious employment had been hit hard by COVID-19, collective agreements and social protection coverage were key guarantees to facilitate their transition to the formal economy. In view of the deterioration of the situation of migrant workers, also as a consequence of climate change, the development and recognition of transferable skills and linguistic needs for migrants were essential. In addition, given the high youth unemployment rate, access to full employment for all, including people not in education, employment or training, should be promoted, particularly through apprenticeships. As quality education had to be accessible to all, digital training could not be a substitute for face-to-face learning given the digital divide.

47. Finally, on the issue of financing, workers should not have to foot the bill, nor should public financing aim to reduce taxes for companies to train workers. On the contrary, companies who benefited from government support should contribute to a fund supporting lifelong learning.

Point for discussion 2

How can key elements of skills systems – including policies, governance, skills needs anticipation, financing and delivery – be shaped and, where needed, modernized, while addressing the changes and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?

48. The Employer Vice-Chairperson underscored that the private sector, through national and sectoral business organizations, must be a core member of the governance processes for skills development and lifelong learning systems, as it could provide important insights into current and future skills requirements in the labour market. Strong political will, transparency of policymakers and effective governance based on coordination and synergies among actors were critical to well-functioning skills development and lifelong learning systems. Addressing the lack of coordination was a particularly important challenge in many countries, as various ministries often worked in silos. A lack of consultations with employers' organizations resulted in further misalignment between supply and demand as well as widening skills mismatches. Coherence between education policies and employment policies as well as regular monitoring and evaluation of them were central to improve their effectiveness. She encouraged countries to follow the example of Malaysia, where skills development was placed as a top national priority, with the full engagement of the Prime Minister and employers' organizations.
49. The importance of skills anticipation had to be emphasized as a key enabler for education and training systems to develop relevant skills which helped individuals navigate the rapidly changing nature of work. Active labour market programmes, public and private employment services and social protection could help with the transition and minimize any disruptions which came with the megatrends related to the future of work. Employers' organizations should benefit from capacity-building to provide accurate forecasts and data on skills requirements in the medium and longer term. She called upon the ILO to take a leading role in skills anticipation and to provide policy guidance and technical advice to Member States and employers, recalling the joint responsibility of the governments and social partners to foster a culture of lifelong learning, as enshrined in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019.
50. While recognizing the role of governments and employers in providing learning opportunities to individuals, she stressed the importance of individuals' willingness to learn, because "learning to learn" did not come naturally. Given that workplaces were changing at an unprecedented pace, and skills needs were evolving rapidly, adult workers must ultimately take responsibility for adapting to the evolving world of work. Whereas sector-specific guidelines might also help in addressing skills mismatches, skills underutilization was a concern to employers and needed to be tackled jointly by governments and social partners. Increasing female labour participation in the STEM fields should be encouraged. Moreover, it was important not to underestimate the power and contribution of informal and non-formal learning, the recognition of which should be improved. Finally, she pointed to the crucial importance of promoting the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills and core skills (including interpersonal and social skills) as a way to maintain jobs or adapt to new occupations in the face of technological progress.
51. The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized that the discussion on shaping and modernizing key elements of skills systems should be based on concept of shared responsibility and recognition

of the specific and distinct responsibilities of governments, workers and employers within a comprehensive global infrastructure that recognized the right to lifelong learning and ensured that workers could develop their skills in the world of work and as active members of society. That was based on prior tripartite discussions and conclusions and in particular international labour standards that recognized the guaranteed right to education and training for all workers.

- 52.** Governments and employers must respond to skilling, reskilling and upskilling needs to promote an active labour market and social justice. Eliminating structural inequalities and removing barriers that excluded any group from skills development and lifelong learning was one of the greatest challenges. Workers' organizations played a crucial role in tripartite governance and the implementation and promotion of lifelong learning among their members. Governments must provide an institutional framework that promoted collective bargaining on issues of lifelong learning, and trade unions and employers must include it on their bargaining agenda. Policies must identify future trends and skills linked to the evolution of jobs, automation and climate justice so that the opportunities could be seized. The COVID-19 pandemic had shown the need for systems that were resilient against major shocks. While such shocks were difficult to foresee, there were often early signs. Health and care systems, for example, had already been insufficient in many countries before the pandemic struck.
- 53.** Financing and investment were needed in order to establish and maintain a learning infrastructure to enable lifelong skills development. Trade unions were particularly attentive to the needs of their members and knew their aspirations, as demonstrated by the success of Union Learn in the United Kingdom. Strong engagement by trade unions in the planning and implementation stages had produced tailored programmes that increased workers' employability. However, recent budget cuts and the tendency to invest in fragmented solutions to address skills gaps would not respond to workers' needs and would only provide a short-term solution. Such approaches must stop. She rejected the argument put forward by the Employers' group that adults would have to be responsible for their own education and training. In line with the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), workers must instead be allowed to follow their own aspirations and have access to a training infrastructure to be able to steer their own personal development as members of a community.
- 54.** The future of skills development needed programmes that supported individuals' creativity and adaptability. During the pandemic, the most highly educated and trained workers were able to work from home, and acquire and transfer skills. There was a clear role for TVET institutions, jointly with on-the-job learning, to contribute to the training of trainers and provide pathways to qualifications. They could help to identify gaps in the labour market and facilitate professional transitions. That required an appropriate recognition of their educators and trainers, including an appropriate status and decent remuneration and working conditions. In addition to basic and job-specific skills, workers also needed "soft skills" to communicate at work and in society and to care for older people. However, subjective assessments of such skills must be avoided at all costs to prevent psychological profiling and control.
- 55.** The future of skills development had to pay attention to the needs of vulnerable and excluded workers. The goal must be to promote unimpeded access to employment. In addition, more needed to be done to promote the transition from informal to formal learning. In line with the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), and the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), workers in the informal economy must be supported by a pathway to formal recognition of skills. Digital approaches had potential, but all too often were of limited quality, without professional teachers, which

might exacerbate inequalities. As stated in SDG 9 on building resilient infrastructure, ensuring universal connectivity was crucial for promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation.

56. Taxonomies of skills that were recognized across countries and backed by comparable qualification frameworks were essential to ensure that skills were transferable, and to enable migrant workers to access the labour market in destination countries. An international agreement should reinforce the intent of the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), on that subject. Recognition of prior learning was vital, but must be done by qualified teachers. Micro-credentials were insufficient on their own. They could play a role but needed to be linked to formal qualifications. More efforts were needed for linking learning to translate them into formal, realistic and comprehensive qualifications. Linking career guidance services with skills systems and workers' and employers' organizations could help to achieve that goal.
57. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said that in the last 30 years employment had not always been at the core of development policies in the countries of her region. As a result, employment had not been sufficiently mainstreamed in other social and economic policies, being considered as a residual of growth. There was now an opportunity to reverse the situation. The report before the Working Party highlighted the relevance of addressing the challenges to lifelong learning and the fact that technical knowledge and digitization were having an impact on how the new global world of work functioned. GRULAC considered that the approach to development in its countries must be centred on the well-being of its population and inclusiveness, including the most vulnerable. The employability of the workforce should strike a balance between academic, occupational, soft and traditional skills that enabled lifelong learning and, if necessary, employment transitions. Learning did not happen only in the early stages of life and should be considered an essential right.
58. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said that Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. The pandemic had accelerated the need for responsive, inclusive and modernized skills systems and had highlighted the importance of a coherent and holistic approach. Access to formal education for all and the application of consistent and formalized systems for the recognition of prior learning were necessary. Young people, and young women especially, had been most impacted by the pandemic. A coordinated and robust system would mitigate challenges faced through gender segregation, an ageing population and barriers faced by people with disabilities, while contributing to increased participation in existing learning opportunities and fostering social inclusion. The EU and its Member States were committed to investment in skills, lifelong learning and training, and the promotion of access to green and digital skills, with a focus on bridging the digital gender gap. Those components were essential to the twin transitions, as demonstrated by the commitments in the Osnabrück Declaration, signed by the EU, its Member States and other stakeholders. A broad range of skills were required throughout life; the EU Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning could be a valuable reference in that regard. Such skill systems should be based on social dialogue, public-private cooperation and a people-centred approach. In that context, skills anticipation was an excellent tool to address emerging labour market needs. The European Skills Agenda, the strategic document of the European Commission, identified skills intelligence as one of its guiding principles and emphasized the need for real-time information on skills demand. It also pledged to explore and assess initiatives such as individual learning accounts and paid individual training leave. Finally, the current pandemic had led to the

proliferation of distance learning tools and had magnified the divergence in experiences across countries. Bridging that digital divide was crucial to ensuring equitable access to skills and lifelong learning.

59. The Government member of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that the pandemic had acted as a catalyst for the development of immediate and often innovative alternative solutions to the poorly performing traditional education and training systems in Africa. Information and communication technologies were increasingly being used as a cost-effective way to lower barriers that limited access to training and upgrading of skills in remote areas. The shift had created new challenges related to quality assurance and inequality in many countries. Most formal education systems did not recognize non-formal and informal learning. In that context, recognition of prior learning was an alternative pathway to formal education and training that facilitated multiple transitions between education and the labour market, supporting lifelong learning, employability and formalization of work, as well as social inclusion and equality for disadvantaged groups. ILO expertise should be directed to supporting its Member States in establishing systems for recognition of prior learning and to facilitate the recognition of qualifications across countries. The Office could also assist in addressing the challenges associated with the online delivery of learning, which included a lack of adapted training programmes, inadequate infrastructure and limited digital literacy of users.
60. The Government member of Canada noted that to ensure adequate protection for vulnerable workers in non-traditional forms of employment, such as self-employment or on digital platforms, the Canadian Federal Government was modernizing employment insurance benefits, and improving labour protections through legislation and labour standards. In addition, it was investing in post-secondary education and adult training through research, training and employment programmes. In addition to the Federal Government, Canadian provincial and territorial governments also supported workers and learners to develop foundational, transferable and human skills, as well as technical skills, so they could continuously adapt to new job requirements or transition to new jobs. Moreover, funding was directed to research on the changing nature of work and shifting demands for skills, to inform policies, programmes and services. Expanding virtual learning and employment opportunities required improving digital skills and access to technology.
61. The Government member of the United States asserted that the current impact of megatrends affecting the world of work required policies supporting skilling, reskilling and upskilling throughout all stages of life. Support should be provided to women and specific marginalized groups, including disadvantaged youth, migrants, people with disabilities, racial minorities, indigenous and tribal peoples, and workers in precarious employment. Increasing training resources and concentrating them on the lowest-resourced communities could disrupt poverty cycles and produce greater return on skills investments. Providing digital skills training along with equipment and expanded broadband access to rural and underserved urban areas could open up opportunities for those communities. Skills and lifelong learning systems needed to be future-ready, while anticipating skills needs to reduce the risk of skills mismatches. That required a systematic approach that addressed the key challenges of a lack of funds, technical expertise and reliable data.
62. The Government member of Switzerland stated that the Swiss dual learning and work-based vocational training system had proven to be very resilient to shocks such as the current pandemic. In general, the involvement of social partners in skills development systems was essential. Moreover, orientation based on labour market needs and market-based processes could reduce skills mismatches. That was particularly important for effective needs anticipation and should be supplemented by sufficient protection of learners and quality assurance

measures for training. On-the-job training was an approach that not only enabled the acquisition of the skills demanded by the labour market but could also promote certain fundamental skills, such as social, emotional and cognitive skills. The implementation of those principles required the willingness of all partners to collaborate in good faith.

- 63.** The Government member of Argentina affirmed that skills systems were a major principle underlying public policymaking in terms of ongoing training and lifelong learning. To harness those benefits, it was key to have in place tripartite social dialogue with a proper institutional framework. In view of the great social and productive diversity in societies such as Argentina's, skills systems needed to consider ways to mainstream vulnerable sectors. Moreover, a holistic approach to skills needed to be taken among State actors. For example, in Argentina, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Education had collaborated closely to establish a system of credits to facilitate the recognition of skills.
- 64.** The Government member of the United Kingdom said that the COVID-19 pandemic had underlined great inequalities of access to global skills systems. Among the different measures taken in her country, she singled out the increase in work coaches, who gave tailored advice on skills development, and the development of a new digital one-to-one service, which would help unemployed individuals to find employment. The Plan for Jobs would be further complemented by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which would provide funding for the people and places most in need across the country from 2022. Technology must be used as a tool for widening access to high-quality lifelong learning. Digital learning initiatives could be designed to be inclusive to provide marginalized groups with support to access the available tools and platforms. The United Kingdom's Net Zero Strategy highlighted that to meet the demands of the transition to green economies, new skills and learning opportunities were needed to help young people and adults progress towards a green career. Employers globally must play a central role in designing and developing qualifications and training and demonstrate where there was demand for green and other skills, so that the programmes could be pivoted accordingly.
- 65.** The Government member of Ghana noted that about 69 per cent of employers globally were unable to find the right skills for the available jobs, and that 22 per cent of workers around the world had been identified as underutilizing their skills at their current jobs. It was important to understand and appreciate emerging skills and lifelong learning needs, which had become imperative, especially amid the global pandemic. It was necessary to search for a common approach on skills in respective countries to enhance lifelong learning with a particular focus on the world of work. That could be made possible through a holistic overview of the current policies and the financial arrangement of skills development systems. Considering that low- and middle-income countries faced challenges in financing skills and lifelong learning systems, he called for renewed cooperation and partnerships in that regard to enable Member States to shape and modernize their skills systems for decent work outcomes.
- 66.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson noted that there would be a technical meeting of experts on platform work in October 2022, and that the current discussion should not pre-empt the work of that meeting. The gender pay gap would be addressed in the parallel discussion in the Working Party on inequalities and the world of work; the Working Party on skills and lifelong learning needed to focus instead on the gender skills gap. It was important that skilling met labour market demand. A skilled and agile labour force led to stronger economies, contributed to sustainable enterprises, and improved employability and freely chosen employment.

Point for discussion 3

What are the roles and responsibilities of governments and social partners for realizing the transformative potential of skills, lifelong learning, training and education for all?

- 67.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson emphasized that proactive learning should not stop after schooling. In a constantly changing world of work, the global workforce needed to be up to date with the right technical, human and social skills acquired through formal and informal lifelong learning. Economies and individuals' well-being were dependent upon it. The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), provided specific guidance on the roles and responsibilities of governments and social partners in pursuing lifelong learning. It was important to be mindful that different industries and different countries were at different levels of readiness and different stages of industrial revolution.
- 68.** Eliminating barriers to investment in training was vital to unlocking the higher funding levels needed to address current skills gaps and prevent new ones from emerging. Other barriers to skills development included: the inflexible and non-transparent nature of training levies, governments' underinvestment in education and a lack of recognition of the urgency of the situation.
- 69.** Funding for skills was a joint responsibility between businesses, governments and individuals. Governments needed to ensure that increased investment delivered the greatest possible impact to support skills development systems that were responsive to employers' and individuals' needs and were agreed upon through social dialogue. Solutions should be flexible rather than prescriptive, as adaptable systems were necessary to respond to dynamic labour markets. SMEs in particular required support for investment in training as they lacked the necessary resources.
- 70.** Individuals must make decisions on their career path and be encouraged to invest more in their own learning. There was a difference between training to improve job performance and training to improve career prospects. On-the-job training was rather short, and paid for and delivered by employers during working time. However, there was no reason why an employer should pay for training to improve individuals' career prospects, as it empowered workers with knowledge that would serve them for years, no matter who their employer. Public authorities and the individuals themselves were financially responsible, in line with the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which set forth the primary responsibility of government for pre-employment training and training for the unemployed, as well as the role of the social partners in further training, including the vital role of employers in providing work experience opportunities.
- 71.** She proposed the following ways to improve skills governance: identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing skills institutions; establishing or revamping existing sector skills bodies to promote industry engagement at the sectoral level; redesigning skills development systems, by integrating tripartite and bipartite social dialogue, and reinforcing both the supply- and demand-side needs and interventions; and reviewing the skills levy systems and ensuring that the funds were used for their intended purpose.
- 72.** Closing gender skills gaps was crucial, as referenced in the Global call to action for a human-centred recovery. Women entrepreneurs needed better access to information, finance, upskilling programmes and networking opportunities. Policies and practices across the world should ensure that girls and women had the same right to education and the same access to training and economic opportunities. That included public and private employment services,

career guidance on the different learning pathways and advocacy to increase awareness. Cultural change, mindset and attitudes were key.

- 73.** In order to be able to capitalize on the potential of new technologies, it was important to foster digital learning, to modernize and digitize skills systems and to make learning accessible to all. The pandemic had shown that internet access was not a luxury, but a basic necessity for economic and social development and resilience. There was an urgent need for public investment, in collaboration with the private sector, to provide and make accessible the necessary digital infrastructure, connectivity and digital devices. SMEs in particular needed support to improve technology as they were not as adaptive as their larger counterparts. Political will, increased communication and better understanding of the challenges faced by employers were essential in ensuring cooperation to promote lifelong learning and quality education. The private sector could not be left on its own to develop and implement skills development systems. It was critical that government agencies should take the lead on coordination.
- 74.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson reiterated that lifelong learning was a collective and shared responsibility of governments and employers' and workers' organizations, each with distinct roles. Governments must guarantee sufficient public funding for high-quality education and training at all levels, to ensure that lifelong learning was properly linked to other key areas, in particular industrial policy, job creation, social protection and decent work, in line with the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). In accordance with the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), governments were responsible for crafting comprehensive vocational training policies and ensuring that all levels of education and training were interconnected. Governments must also ensure that employers were bearing a fair share of the cost of investing in learning. Employers were expected to support learning through paid educational leave and plans negotiated with trade unions, and to ensure that internal training led to transferable skills. In accordance with the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) and the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), multinational enterprises were called upon to assume their responsibilities and provide training.
- 75.** Governments, employers and workers must participate fully in the tripartite governance of lifelong education and training at all levels, to ensure that no one was left behind and that access to education and training did not depend on workers' status in employment or the size of their employer. Trade union representatives had a role to play in identifying gaps and communicating issues related to learning infrastructure and workers' ability to continue to deepen and diversify their skills. They were also important providers of training. She stressed that lifelong learning should be an integral part of social dialogue and collective bargaining, which would also give effect to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998. The conclusions of the current discussion should further promote the inclusion in collective agreements of a lifelong learning guarantee and of sectoral learning frameworks.
- 76.** The acquisition of qualifications must target women in particular. The COVID-19 crisis had shown the importance of the promotion of skills acquisition and recognition in the care sector. Concrete action for migrants and other vulnerable and marginalized groups, including rural populations and members of indigenous peoples, was also needed. Workers should not be expected to finance their own training. Training funds with sufficient employer contributions must be established and large companies must pay their fair share and ensure that SMEs could also access the system. It was up to governments to develop systems guaranteeing access to

quality lifelong learning. Training vouchers and other grants were not viable solutions as they could encourage short-term training modules that were not linked to appropriate education programmes or qualification frameworks. Planning for training to enable gradual acquisition of both specific and more general skills was preferable.

- 77.** Governments and employers' and workers' organizations needed to contribute to the collection of information and data, which was at the heart of skills development and planning. Involving trade unions was vital when it came to artificial intelligence or digital training, to place people at the centre of policies and programmes, in accordance with the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019. Workers should be able to organize more easily in the informal economy. Apprenticeships in the informal economy could offer access to decent work but the training was often incomplete and provided in poor working conditions. In that regard, the standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships in 2022 would be crucial.
- 78.** The Government member of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, highlighted the importance of primary education in the promotion of skills and lifelong learning, especially in relation to the development of basic literacy and numeracy. Governments, in consultation with the social partners, should therefore put in place education policy measures that ensured: the availability of functioning educational institutions and programmes; equitable access to educational institutions; the appropriateness of education; and the adaptability of education to the needs of changing societies and communities. He emphasized that a "learning to learn" approach should be promoted to enable people to benefit from lifelong learning. Undertaking periodic skills anticipation was important to address skills mismatches. For that purpose, coordinated programmes on skills needs assessment and methods of delivering education and assessing education and training outcomes were crucial. Governments and social partners should promote dual approaches to skilling, along with policy measures for compulsory training programmes to be put in place by employers. Given the importance of the quality of training delivery, particular emphasis should be placed on the training of teachers and workplace trainers. Governments and employers would have to explore innovative measures to ensure adequate funding for successful training and skills development.
- 79.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. Imbalances in opportunity and access to skills development needed to be addressed, especially for the most vulnerable. The changes and challenges the world was facing could not be tackled without sufficient skills and the right policy measures; therefore, integrated and forward-thinking approaches were crucial. A whole-of-government approach in relation to education and training systems was decisive in enabling well-informed, dynamic, efficient and people-centred policy measures, and in encouraging social dialogue and tripartism. Strong cooperation among all relevant stakeholders was essential in facilitating the development and implementation of adequate skills policies and strategies. Cross-sectoral collaboration could help identify innovative solutions to challenges, including with regard to skills supply and recognition of skills acquired in non-formal and informal settings. The European Skills Agenda called for collective actions of all stakeholders to set up large-scale partnerships in specific industrial ecosystems to pool expertise, resources and funding towards concrete actions to allow people to retain or find jobs in the labour market and adapt to the digital and green transitions.
- 80.** Skills and lifelong learning were underfunded across the world. Stakeholder cooperation could help cement the understanding that funding skills was an investment which would yield significant dividends. Adopting a broader perspective and creating an environment that incentivized investment in skills were therefore crucial, along with the important role that

micro, small and medium-sized enterprises played in reskilling, upskilling and job creation. Multilateral partnerships and multi-stakeholder cooperation would allow the exchange of good practices and the development and implementation of actions that met the different challenges faced by each country.

- 81.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, stressed that social dialogue must be strengthened and that sectoral approaches could provide an effective framework for successful policy development. It was important for skills and lifelong learning systems to be able to anticipate skills demand and respond flexibly to the needs of the labour market. A hybrid approach to training, combining face-to-face and digital learning delivery provided an excellent opportunity, especially in areas facing difficulties of access. However, many regions were also facing connectivity issues. It was the responsibility of the government and social partners to create conditions that took advantage of the potential of those means of delivery and to bring them to people in rural areas. Many of the economies in her region were impacted by high levels of informality. Informal learning systems must therefore be promoted, as they had a direct impact on the improvement of people's skills and their transition to the formal economy. Active labour market policies, complemented by support services, scholarships or subsidies, had to be given special attention, especially to support women and as a means to guarantee equal opportunities. A systemic approach based on social dialogue was necessary to enable skills systems to be connected to the requirements of the labour market and to ensure effective training that was conducive to creating decent work.
- 82.** The Government member of Uzbekistan highlighted the impact of the pandemic on economic activities that affected both large enterprises and SMEs and caused high rates of unemployment. His country would ensure equitable access to training that helped people meet the skills required in the evolving labour market. Mentioning the measures taken in Uzbekistan to establish vocational training centres, he stated that his country would further expand such training centres as well as skills assessment centres and new job opportunities. Those measures would help reduce skills mismatches and ensure equitable training access to allow people to fulfil their potential.
- 83.** The Government member of the Philippines stated that social dialogue had been instrumental in the development of the country's national employment recovery strategy. The Government, together with employers and workers and development partners, had supported inclusive recovery efforts, where upskilling and lifelong learning had played a prominent role. COVID-19 was bringing more vulnerability, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity to global labour markets. National skills policies frameworks engaged key national stakeholders in the harmonization and promotion of educational and training systems, and helped provide up-to-date labour market information. They constituted the foundation for the development of training and ensured the provision of modular skills that were mutually supportive and could be recognized across an individual's educational and employment paths.
- 84.** The Government member of Argentina said that governments had the manifest responsibility to implement policies for the development and improvement of workers' skills and qualifications, which would help enterprises to become more productive. Those were to be linked to tripartite governance of skills systems to ensure that the demand of the labour market was met. Social dialogue, which had a strong tradition in her country, was essential for creating consensus and supporting the implementation of comprehensive skills policies and programmes, especially for disadvantaged groups. That included the establishment of continued training systems in the knowledge, green and care economies, with specific attention to women's empowerment. Workers' rights to continuous training needed to be respected, and the potential of enterprises to increase productivity needed to be enhanced.

85. The Government member of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela highlighted the comprehensive training and retraining policies in his country, which targeted the working class and were supporting economic recovery. Comprehensive training necessitated the identification of the needs and abilities of workers to facilitate an appropriate match between productivity and education. Skills development needed to be regarded from a lifelong learning perspective, to ensure diversified economic growth and allow for human talent to flourish.
86. The Government member of Algeria stated that skills and lifelong learning were the most appropriate ways to respond to the changing needs of employers and enabled a better integration of workers in the labour market. His country was moving towards a system which ensured the right to education and made learning and qualifications available to all. Labour legislation had evolved to support apprenticeship training and stronger involvement of the social partners and local stakeholders. Challenges around skills mismatches remained, requiring a comprehensive approach between skills and education systems, including at the higher education and vocational training levels. Skills development for people with disabilities, migrants, refugees and young workers was a priority.
87. The Government member of Canada underscored her country's commitment to the promotion of social dialogue and tripartism, which must be based on strong and independent organizations that possessed the necessary technical capacity and had access to relevant information. Governments played an important role in the creation of coherent policies and a climate for tripartism, while ensuring the participation of regional and sectoral partners. Social dialogue was particularly important in the context of skills underutilization and skills mismatches. It was important that all stakeholders put in place measures that enabled workers to take informed decisions and that increased access to quality training, in response to changing labour market needs. Skills and education systems needed to guarantee access to a wide range of transferable skills that would allow workers to adapt to the changes brought about by automation.
88. The Government member of Ghana noted that social dialogue offered multiple entry points for the development of skills and employability. The need for broad stakeholder consultations with social partners together with a clear delineation of roles could not be overemphasized. In Ghana, the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training ensured policy coherence on skills development issues, while the Government's role was to mobilize resources to effectively realize the potential of skills and lifelong learning for all.
89. The Government member of Switzerland noted that shared responsibility between the Government and social partners as well as joint participation and interests were key to the effectiveness of skills development systems in his country. That approach was particularly relevant to apprenticeships. Tripartism was essential for developing future skills systems, while technology and digitalization needed to be considered within each sector. Furthermore, tripartism had been an asset during the pandemic to inform policy measures related to skills and the labour market. While a clear definition of roles and responsibilities was important, the issues of quality training and financing were closely linked and needed to be shared by all stakeholders.
90. The Government member of the United Kingdom referred to the role of tripartism in her country, highlighting its importance in protecting jobs during the COVID-19 crisis. The Government's Plan for Jobs aimed to create jobs as part of the economic recovery and was being implemented in close collaboration with employers. That also applied to the Net Zero Strategy, which ensured that workers had the skills needed for the transition to the green economy. Tripartism and social dialogue were vital to improving the governance of skills

systems and to ensure that effective skills and lifelong learning was a shared responsibility. There must be a common understanding of the contribution of lifelong learning to productive and decent employment, and of the need for shared and adequate financing. Otherwise, inequalities would widen, with disadvantaged people being unable to realize their full potential.

- 91.** The Government member of the United States stated that governments had a key responsibility for pre-employment training and training of unemployed workers and people seeking to re-enter the labour market. That was the foundation for the 2,400 job centres in his country, which assisted jobseekers in accessing training and finding quality jobs. Grants were provided to public-private partnerships to provide skills training. He stressed that governments should develop equal opportunity strategies to promote and implement training for women and people with special needs with the objective of reducing inequalities. Employers' and workers' organizations played a key role in skills and lifelong learning systems, which was critical for effective workforce development. The right to freedom of association was necessary to enable that role. Skills policies could be more effective when financing responsibilities were shared among stakeholders, giving due regard to social justice and equity. That could include increasing taxes on the wealthy and corporations, improving tax compliance, and broadening fiscal space through accelerating the transition from the informal to the formal economy.
- 92.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked governments for having acknowledged the need to support those in the informal economy and expressed the hope that the conclusions of the Working Party would reflect that point. The conclusions should adopt a balanced approach, acknowledging that the majority of workers were employed by SMEs. As stated in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, it was the joint responsibility of governments and the social partners to foster a culture of lifelong learning.
- 93.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson indicated her agreement that a tax should be levied on multinational enterprises to fund lifelong learning for employees. It was a collective and shared responsibility of governments, employers and workers to provide lifelong learning, each having a differentiated role to play. Employers had to support learning through paid educational leave and negotiated plans with unions for skills and competency development, and to ensure that internal training led to transferable skills. Governments should increase their investment in education and training. The Workers' group considered it unacceptable that workers frequently had to fund their own training, which was not consistent with the provisions of the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142). Employers could finance training provided by trade unions, as in the Union Learn programme in the United Kingdom. Workers had to be prepared for the jobs of the future; that required a tripartite commitment to a combined approach of face-to-face and digital learning. Particular attention had to be paid to the disparities between countries, including the digital gap in low-income countries. The labour market was being impacted not only by the COVID-19 pandemic but also by climate change, which required an immediate response to ensure a fair, ecological and sustainable transition. Workers had to be trained in the complex skills currently in demand in the labour market.

Point for discussion 4

To strengthen the ILO's global leadership on skills and lifelong learning, what should be the core elements of an ILO skills and lifelong learning strategy that makes use of all means of action, including research, standards, technical assistance and development cooperation?

94. The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized that labour was not a commodity. The ILO's mandate was to link peace and social justice, as noted in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019. Workers agreed that decent jobs, good working conditions and learning opportunities for all, built on a strong foundation of labour standards, were essential to ensure a peaceful 100 years to come. She requested the conclusions of the Working Party should include an appendix that listed all relevant international labour standards in that regard. Her group fully supported the development of an ILO skills and lifelong learning strategy 2030, as proposed in the report; nonetheless, the issue of lifelong learning should be integrated into all areas of the ILO's work. The 2030 skills strategy should include the SDGs, in particular SDG 4 as well as SDG 8, with concrete targets set for 2030. The ILO should play a leading role in translating the targets of the SDGs into concrete, ambitious and measurable targets for education and training at the national level. Those targets should start with the ratification and effective implementation of the fundamental Conventions and relevant international labour standards, such as the Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140), and the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), and the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), as well as many others.
95. The Workers' group called for recognition of the universal lifelong learning guarantee, as proposed by the Global Commission on the Future of Work. The ILO should assist its constituents in realizing that universal right through concrete actions and normative frameworks including, among others, to guarantee the right of every worker to a minimum number of hours or days of training, to vocational guidance and to skills recognition. The Office should promote good practices to overcome discriminatory barriers to participation in lifelong learning, contribute to development cooperation resources and create a special lifelong learning fund for those countries most in need.
96. The ILO should undertake research on effective government strategies to ensure lifelong learning for all, and also good practices in social dialogue. Examples should include the informal economy; the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), called for the development of integrated policy frameworks that should address access to education, lifelong learning and skills development. Such research was important not only to underline the need to create gateways to officially recognized qualifications and decent jobs in the formal economy, but also to show how such an approach would help States to increase their fiscal space and support continuous training. Research should also cover the mechanisms used by governments to guarantee a holistic approach to qualifications, ensuring their transferability between different types of education and training systems in order to better prepare workers for flexible labour markets. The awareness of all workers should be raised of their right to lifelong learning, and attention should be paid to the soft skills needed for critical thinking and problem-solving. Workers' means of access to learning should also be studied, and workers' access to learning must be looked at carefully, including the use of vouchers and subsidies, which must be appropriately and wisely assessed.
97. With regard to the application of machine learning to build skills models and anticipate changing labour demands, the ILO should highlight the importance of social dialogue in establishing the assessment criteria and of the involvement of workers' organizations in data governance. It should show how machine learning would benefit workers and how humans

would always remain at the centre of such approaches. Migration was another key issue and the ILO had a key role to play in promoting national and international systems for the recognition of qualifications and skills acquired in other countries.

98. Within the multilateral system, the ILO should always take the lead on issues concerning the world of work, while recognizing the mandates of agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF. The ILO should engage in discussions with institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to demonstrate that education and training were investments that brought high returns in fiscal terms, and in economic, social and environmental development. The ILO should question some of the short-term narrow views taken by such institutions, especially on the role of governments and social partners, the societal role of education and training, and the privatization of education and training systems.
99. The Employer Vice-Chairperson requested that the following proposals to help the ILO become a global leader on skills development and lifelong learning should be reflected in the draft conclusions. First, the ILO programme and budget should be substantially increased in order to include skills and lifelong learning development support for constituents, including through an increased number of specialists and experts at the ILO headquarters and in the field. Second, Decent Work Country Programmes should systematically include skills identification/anticipation, capacity-building and cooperation on skills development and governance at the country level. Third, there should be recognition of skills development and lifelong learning as fundamental enablers of productive employment, decent work, innovation, productivity and sustainability. Fourth, the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) and the ILO Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) should play an important role in building the capacities of employers and workers; the social partners must be involved in the design of training courses so as to increase their relevance.
100. The Employers' group had additional specific proposals for ILO action. First, the ILO should design better assessment tools for early skills anticipation, as the classic methods were no longer relevant. SMEs in particular needed guidance and assistance. Second, models for the recognition of prior learning (formal and informal skills) needed to be harmonized. Some countries had developed effective measures such as skills passports or had negotiated bilateral agreements on skills recognition. The involvement of business in such efforts would improve their efficiency. Third, the ILO should undertake work on the development of human and social core skills, such as adaptability, collaboration, creativity, emotional intelligence and persuasion. Those skills helped shift mindsets to embrace change, increase adaptability and accept responsibility. The fourth proposed area of action concerned skills governance for improved employment generation, including regarding the need for coordination across the various relevant entities in order to address the widening skills gaps. Effective social dialogue models were needed for a variety of purposes, as well as strategic thinking on how to build a strong generation of entrepreneurs. A fifth priority was skills for the transition to the formal economy, as workers in the informal economy needed mechanisms to formally recognize and certify occupational skills acquired informally. Sixth, digital learning was a crucial complementary tool for future lifelong learning. More could be done to improve public and digital infrastructure. SMEs needed support to adopt new technologies and human resources strategies. Finally, stronger cooperation was needed within the multilateral system to ensure policy coherence. The Employers' group wished to see a more systematic and holistic approach, so as to avoid duplication of work and to optimize the use of resources contributed by Member States.

- 101.** The Government member of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, expressed appreciation for the ILO's research and policy analysis on skills development and lifelong learning, especially during the COVID-19 crisis. The Office should leverage its technical expertise and research to promote lifelong learning, especially through work-based learning such as quality apprenticeships. Governments should be supported in setting up skills anticipation systems; such support could include the development of practical guides for skills forecasting as well as training for government officials. As skills development programmes needed to be evidence-based, the ILO should support the development of functional labour market information systems, in collaboration with national statistical offices, especially in developing countries, to help identify and understand skills mismatch problems. It should also support governments to establish national qualifications frameworks.
- 102.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said that North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Iceland and Norway aligned themselves with her statement. There was a need for a more defined and long-term ILO strategy on skills development and lifelong learning, based on continued dialogue with the social partners, governments and other concerned stakeholders. The ILO should be flexible in responding to diverse demands from around the world. Targeted action was needed to remove the barriers faced by the most vulnerable groups in acquiring basic skills and key competencies. The strategy should have a fair and just transition as a central element, including through the identification of skills needs, with a strong gender dimension, for the greening of jobs and the development of reskilling and upskilling programmes. Strong cooperation was needed between ILO headquarters, the ITC-ILO and CINTERFOR. Wider multilateral cooperation was important and the ILO skills strategy should be fully in line with the UN policy agenda and include close cooperation with other UN agencies. The ILO Programme and Budget proposals for 2022–23 should include the resources needed to implement the strategy.
- 103.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, stated that in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, digitalization had become a challenge, especially for companies, including MSMEs, that wished to enhance their added value and competitiveness. The ILO needed to define a global strategy to promote the development of human talent as the main driver for economic growth in an inclusive, sustainable and resilient manner. Capacity-building was key, including for identifying, sharing and implementing good practices in Member States and in skills anticipation in rural and urban areas, which was important for women's empowerment. In building a global strategy for skills development, the ILO would need to integrate and respond to the needs of diverse populations with different social and economic realities. That would require a coordinated and collaborative approach which recognized the value-added of each partner. The ILO should seek to influence the development of policies for economic growth and decent work through an inclusive, human-centred approach.
- 104.** The Government member of Switzerland stated that development of the ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning should build on the many existing initiatives, strategies, tools and good practices in that field. The focus should be on adding value to those existing initiatives, through close coordination and collaboration with other UN agencies, notably UNESCO and the network of its Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (UNEVOC). Any consideration of possible new international labour standards should be subject to a very careful evaluation to ensure they would add value to existing instruments. International standards, in general, ran the risk of being too rigid and not adequately taking into account the wide diversity of national skills systems and development needs.

- 105.** The Government member of the United Kingdom emphasized the need for equitable access to skills development and lifelong learning, especially among women, youth and persons with a disability. Educating girls in developing countries was the best way to lift communities out of poverty. The ILO should further strengthen its collaboration with UNESCO to ensure a productive school-to-work transition. Research on innovative financing for skills systems as well as strengthened cooperation between the ILO and the private sector on skills and lifelong learning, bringing to bear the respective resources and expertise of each, would be welcomed. She encouraged further replication of the Skills for Prosperity programme in Egypt, which promoted STEM studies and careers for young women from disadvantaged communities in that country.
- 106.** The Government member of the United States agreed with the elements of an “ILO skills and lifelong learning strategy 2030” presented in Chapter 7 of the Office report. The ILO should strengthen its global leadership and coordination in skills and lifelong learning through that strategy. In particular, supporting and scaling up new and innovative solutions were vital elements. Skills systems had to be flexible and responsive to varying needs. In addition, the Office should continue developing its Skills Innovation Facility to engage with constituents in all regions to identify and test promising solutions to address major skills challenges. Moreover, the Office should increase the capacity of Member States to support digital transitions of skills systems and assist in bridging the digital divide in an inclusive manner. Partnerships between training institutions and businesses through apprenticeships played a key role in shaping skills and lifelong learning for the future of work. Finally, the Office should continue building and strengthening partnerships and development cooperation at the global, national and local levels.
- 107.** The Government member of Canada encouraged the ILO to continue working closely with governments, social partners and international organizations to meet the needs of Member States, by promoting gender equality and supporting participation of vulnerable populations. An ILO strategy on skills and lifelong learning should focus on flexibility and be tailored to economic needs. Core elements of that strategy should take into consideration collaboration, adaptability and communication. The strategy should also ensure fair and equitable access to education and training, without being restricted by cost. Technological gaps needed to be closed to allow all interested individuals access to remote learning opportunities. Finally, a tripartite working group might enable the ILO to provide enhanced support by reaching consensus on the most effective policies on skills training and promote an exchange on diversity and gender issues.
- 108.** The Government member of Algeria stated that it was essential to develop practical solutions for the development of skills and lifelong learning, with particular emphasis on strengthening regional and international cooperation of all stakeholders. Investment plans in skills and lifelong learning needed to be regulated according to the needs of companies, the expectations of workers as well as relevant economic and social policies. At the multilateral level, the ILO should work within the framework of the United Nations system to support programmes and strategies for quality education and effective vocational training systems. Finally, the ILO should develop platforms for sharing good practices to support Member States in their efforts to develop programmes and policies for improving learning frameworks and systems, including through South–South and triangular cooperation.

Closing statements on the general discussion

- 109.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson affirmed that the ILO needed to fulfil its role regarding skills acquisition and lifelong learning. She was opposed to the proposal of the Employer Vice-

Chairperson to include in the Working Party's conclusions any reference to budget, as that was outside the scope of the general discussion. She agreed that lifelong learning was crucial and emphasized that it was the role of employers to supply the necessary financial resources for lifelong learning in line with the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), which was based on the explicit commitments by employers to train their workers. Workers and unions also had a role to play, and thus skills development initiatives should always be developed in cooperation with workers. Other options for training provided by the ITC-ILO should be explored. However, short training modules prevented the effective acquisition of skills. Lastly, everybody needed to have adequate access to skills development opportunities and there was a need to foster a transition to the formal economy, which would have the added benefit of increased tax revenue.

- 110.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson maintained her position that issues pertaining to the ILO programme and budget were within the mandate of the International Labour Conference and therefore the proposal to include a reference to budget allocation in the conclusions was appropriate. She was opposed to the concept of a universal entitlement to lifelong learning, recalling that the concept had been introduced in the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, which had not been endorsed by the ILO's tripartite constituents. Finally, funding of skills was a joint responsibility, and governments had acknowledged that point during the general discussion. Individuals needed to invest in their own learning and skills, as workers could not expect always to have an employer throughout their working lives.

Discussion of the draft conclusions

- 111.** The Chairperson informed the Working Party that the drafting group had produced [draft conclusions concerning the general discussion on skills and lifelong learning](#) and that 144 [amendments to the draft conclusions](#) had been received. She explained that the square brackets in the draft conclusions indicated text on which the drafting group had not reached agreement, but that bracketed text would be dealt with in the same manner as non-bracketed text. Once the amendments had been decided on, the brackets would fall and the adopted text would appear in the final conclusions without brackets.

I. Skills and lifelong learning in a changing world of work, further impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic

- 112.** The title of Part I was adopted without amendment.

Point 1

- 113.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete "productivity improvement". She stated that the overall goal of a human-centred recovery went well beyond productivity improvement. While both the Centenary Declaration and the Global call to action for a human-centred recovery referred to productivity, they only did so in the context of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work. Since the main goal was to promote a human-centred approach, it was not appropriate to put productivity improvement on an equal footing with decent work in the very first point.
- 114.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. The improvement of productivity was an essential goal of a human-centred recovery. She noted that "productivity" or "productive" were mentioned 11 times in the Centenary Declaration. It was a concept which was cross-cutting and intrinsically linked to enterprises and hence could not be omitted.

115. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment, and added that the Centenary Declaration included a reference to “productivity improvement”.
116. The Government member of Switzerland did not support the amendment. As the improvement of skills could contribute to improved productivity, it was important to keep the reference in the text. In the context of ILO projects such as the Better Work Programme, work-based learning had helped improving working conditions and productivity.
117. The Worker Vice-Chairperson noted that a reference to “productive employment” already existed in the same point as well as in point 4.
118. The Employer Vice-Chairperson emphasized that the inclusion of “productivity improvement” at the beginning of the conclusions was important. “Productive and freely chosen employment and decent work” was different from “productivity improvement” as an enabler. The latter allowed the creation of a virtuous cycle whereby enterprises were enabled to reinvest savings in labour and capital, which could eventually result in higher wages, consumer demand and employment growth and in turn enhance productivity. She noted that in point 4, the focus was rather on the impact of financial allocations and investment on productivity.
119. The Worker Vice-Chairperson stressed that productivity and decent work should not be put on an equal footing. Yet, in view of the overall comments, she expressed her willingness to withdraw the amendment if the amendment she had introduced under point 12(u), to add “and access to decent work” after “labour market transitions” was adopted.
120. After informal consultations with the Employers’ group, the Worker Vice-Chairperson agreed to retain the words “productivity improvement”.
121. Point 1 was adopted without amendment.

Point 2

122. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to add “including global citizenship competencies,” after “capabilities and qualifications”. Its purpose was to reflect the same level of international commitment made under SDG 4, which referred to global citizenship.
123. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as it was a concept her group was not familiar with.
124. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment. Her group had come to the understanding that the notion of “global citizenship competencies” did not exclude migrants and other vulnerable groups.
125. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment. The notion of citizenship was already covered in the reference to “active members of society”, which had been discussed in the drafting group. The proposed amendment introduced new terminology which was politically sensitive. Given that the conclusions mainly related to SDG 8, it was unnecessary to introduce elements from SDG 4.
126. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a subamendment to replace “competencies” with “education”, which would be better aligned with both SDG 4 and SDG 8.

127. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment. It, too, introduced new language unfamiliar to the International Labour Conference.
128. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the subamendment and stated that it included language already used by other international organizations, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
129. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment or the subamendment.
130. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, provided further clarification on the term “global citizenship” and emphasized that the subject matter was an important issue to the EU and its Member States. Such competencies were needed to be an active member of society globally.
131. The representative of the Secretary-General replied that, according to the definition of the United Nations, “global citizenship” was an umbrella term for social, political, environmental and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale. The term could refer to the belief that individuals were members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks rather than single actors affecting isolated societies. Moreover, she noted that the term “active citizenship” appeared in the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195). Traditionally, “active citizenship” also included participation in elections, referendums and engaging as members of political parties. However, that traditional definition was expanding to also encompass broader engagement in civil society, such as through involvement in political debates and participation in activities such as demonstrations or volunteering. The 2013 European Youth Forum policy paper on citizenship education provided further details on the issue.
132. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that the purpose was to come up with a global document, which was universal and not limited to specific geographic areas or interest groups. Therefore, universally acceptable language was required, with the key issue being the promotion of individuals as becoming active members of society. That was a process that had to start first within the respective local community.
133. The Chairperson requested the Secretariat to prepare a revised text, taking into account the concerns expressed by the members of the Working Party.
134. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced an amendment to replace, after “become active members of”, the word “society” with “labour markets”. That would be clearer within the context of skills and lifelong learning and would give a more precise scope to the draft conclusions.
135. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. It limited the scope and ambitions of the text, which was about investing in human capabilities to enable people to be active members in society overall, not just within the labour market.
136. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment. “Society” extended the scope to something unattainable, whereas focusing on labour markets was more feasible.
137. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted that the labour market was a subset of society and hence he was flexible in supporting the amendment.
138. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment.

139. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, proposed a subamendment to reflect both terms, “labour markets and society”.
140. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the subamendment. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; the Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and the Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, also supported the subamendment.
141. The amendment was adopted as subamended.
142. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add the word “successful” before “effective” and to replace “equitable” by “inclusive” before “labour market transitions”. The phrase would then read: “They facilitate successful, effective and inclusive labour market transitions”. She explained that it was not possible to measure whether a transition was equitable, and that the word “inclusive” would capture aspects such as gender and age.
143. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. The word “equitable” could not be deleted. She noted that her group, and other members of the Working Party, had proposed amendments to the same sentence.
144. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, indicated that his group had proposed an amendment to add the words “successful” and “just” in the same phrase. While he was flexible about the addition of “inclusive”, he insisted on the retention of the word “equitable” in the text.
145. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the Employers’ group’s amendment. He also emphasized that “equitable” should be retained.
146. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the addition of “successful”, and was flexible regarding the term “inclusive”.
147. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the addition of the words “successful” and “inclusive”. However, she did not support the deletion of “equitable”.
148. The Worker Vice-Chairperson also accepted the addition of “successful” and “inclusive” in the phrase, but insisted on the retention of “equitable”.
149. The Employer Vice-Chairperson reiterated that she could not agree to the retention of “equitable” because the notion could not be measured.
150. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the use of “successful and equitable” before “labour market transitions”.
151. The Worker Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment to add the word “inclusive” after “equitable”.
152. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support that proposal.
153. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced an amendment to replace “effective” by “successful”, and to add “and just” after “equitable”, to read: “successful, equitable and just labour market transitions”. He was nonetheless flexible regarding the addition of “inclusive” proposed by the Employers’ group. He highlighted the importance of maintaining consistency with respect to the terminology used to describe labour market transitions in the subsequent text.
154. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment and withdrew a similar amendment to replace “effective” with “just, successful”.

155. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the use of the word “just”, as it was synonymous with “equitable”.
156. The Government members of the United States of America; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and Canada supported the amendment.
157. At the request of the Chairperson, the representative of the Secretary-General presented a proposal, taking into account the discussion, to add, after “become active members of labour markets and society”, the words “in a globalized world” and to use “successful and equitable” in relation to labour market transitions.
158. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, stated that “globalized world” was not a sufficiently precise reference to reflect the commitments made under SDG 4.7. She introduced a further subamendment to read “including those necessary for active citizenship, as defined in the context of SDG 4.7” after “capabilities and qualifications”.
159. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the further subamendment.
160. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and the Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, could support the reference to SDG 4.7 but could not accept the term “active citizenship”.
161. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, preferred the text as proposed by the Secretariat, but was flexible on the further subamendment.
162. The Government member of the United States of America supported the further subamendment.
163. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the further subamendment.
164. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a further subamendment to replace “necessary for active citizenship, as defined in the context of” with the words “including civic skills within the meaning of” before “SDG 4.7”.
165. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, could not accept the reference to “civic skills”, which was an unfamiliar term. He proposed to further subamend the text to add, after “capabilities and qualifications”, the words “to become active members of labour markets and society, including those skills indicated in SDG 4.7”.
166. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced a further subamendment to replace “indicated in” with “as defined in”.
167. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the current version, as the most important aspect was to remove the term “active citizenship”.
168. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the revised text with the latest subamendment.
169. The Employer Vice-Chairperson noted that SDG 4.7 did not define any skills and thus it would be more appropriate to use the word “indicated”.
170. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed using “as identified in SDG 4.7”.
171. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, asked whether the phrase “including those skills as identified in SDG 4.7” referred to all the skills included under SDG 4.7, or only the skills concerning global citizenship.

172. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the latest subamendment.
173. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the revised text as subamended.
174. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, explained that although his group had proposed to add the words “and just” after “successful, equitable”, he could accept the reference to “successful and equitable labour market transitions”.
175. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the use of “successful and equitable”.
176. The Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; the United States and Canada supported “successful and equitable”
177. The Worker Vice-Chairperson also supported it in the spirit of compromise.
178. The Chairperson noted that the wording would be harmonized in the remainder of the document.
179. Point 2 was adopted as subamended.

Point 3

180. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add “skills shortages” in the first sentence, following “climate change”. Her group considered skills shortages to be one of the global drivers in the context of technological change.
181. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. Skills shortages were not recognized as a megatrend affecting the world of work.
182. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the amendment.
183. The Government members of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, and Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment because skills shortages were an outcome of technological change, demographic shifts and globalization. While skills shortages were indeed an important issue, it was not appropriate to include reference to them at that point in the conclusions.
184. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, was open to the addition of “skills shortages”.
185. The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment, despite the fact that her group considered skills shortages to be a fifth global megatrend.
186. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to replace the word “inequalities” by “inefficiencies” after “labour market” at the end of the second sentence. Technological changes resulted in inefficiencies or the failure to use resources in the best way, whereas inequalities referred to the failure to treat people equally. Inefficiencies was the correct word to use in that context. In addition, the question of inequalities was being addressed by the Working Party on inequalities and the world of work.
187. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as inequalities in labour markets could not be denied.

188. The Government member of the United States of America could not support the deletion of “inequalities” and proposed a subamendment to include both “inefficiencies” and “inequalities”.
189. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, and the Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the amendment.
190. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the Employers’ group’s amendment. However, she supported the subamendment proposed by the Government member of the United States of America.
191. The Government members of the United Kingdom and Canada, and the Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the subamendment.
192. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the subamendment.
193. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the proposed subamendment. Inequalities were much more profound than mere labour market inefficiencies.
194. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, proposed a further subamendment to reverse the order of “inefficiencies” and “inequalities”. Putting “inequalities” first would emphasize their importance relative to “inefficiencies”.
195. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and the Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the further subamendment.
196. Point 3 was adopted as subamended.

Point 4

197. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to include the following sentence: “In some cases, lack of social dialogue and tripartite cooperation, weak links between education and training systems and the world of work, and poorly performing institutions affect productivity, employability and social inclusion.” She highlighted the importance of the weak linkages between training systems and the world of work.
198. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. The proposed new text stigmatized the institutions in charge of skills development and lifelong learning. Furthermore, the ways in which the functioning of those institutions could be improved would be addressed in later sections of the conclusions.
199. The Government member of Switzerland stated that a lack of resources was not the only challenge faced by skills development and lifelong learning systems; weak linkages with the world of work were equally important. His Government had therefore proposed an amendment, seconded by the Government member of the United States of America, to add “and weak links with the world of work” after “human resources”.
200. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment to add, after the new text proposed by the Government member of Switzerland, the following words: “impacting productivity, employability and social inclusion”. That would reflect the consequences of the weak links between skills development systems and the world of work.
201. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the Employers’ group’s amendment or subamendment. She proposed a subamendment to the amendment proposed by the Government member of Switzerland, to replace “and weak links with the world of work” by “and the need to improve links with the world of work”, in order to strike a more positive tone.

202. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the latest subamendment.
203. The Government member of the United States of America supported the subamendments, with the addition of a comma after “world of work” to improve the readability of the text.
204. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, preferred the original text.
205. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, preferred the original text but indicated his flexibility regarding the subamendment.
206. The Government members of the United Kingdom and Switzerland said that the language was not clear and needed to be revised.
207. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the Employers’ subamendment to add “impacting productivity, employability and social inclusion”.
208. The Employer Vice-Chairperson stated her belief that there was consensus on the content of the text as subamended, and that it remained for the Secretariat to revise the precise language to reflect that agreement.
209. The Worker Vice-Chairperson proposed a further subamendment to add “and that hinder access to decent work”.
210. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support that proposal.
211. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the subamendment, stating that the addition was not in line with the original intention of the text, which was to address the link between skills development and the world of work.
212. The Chairperson noted that, upon request, the Secretariat had suggested a revised text consisting of the addition of the following sentence: “Stronger links with the world of work would help to access decent work and improve productivity, employability and social inclusion.”
213. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the proposal, noting that the wording was more positive.
214. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Switzerland supported the Secretariat’s proposal. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the proposal in the interest of consensus.
215. Point 4 was adopted as amended.

Point 5

216. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to add “for people” after “structural barriers” in order to clarify that the barriers related to those affecting people, as opposed to institutions for skills development.
217. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, and the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the amendment.
218. The amendment was adopted.

219. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to remove the word “systemic” before the word “discrimination”, as the language “systemic discrimination” gave the impression that the discrimination was designed, and no language of that kind was included in the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).
220. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as structural barriers led to systemic discrimination within institutions for skills and lifelong learning. Many people and workers were excluded and discriminated against systematically because of their social conditions, their status and other factors.
221. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; the United Kingdom; and Canada did not support the amendment.
222. The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment.
223. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete, after “a key cause of exclusion”, the words “and increasing inequality”. The Working Party was tasked with discussing skills and lifelong learning, whereas the issues of inequality were being discussed simultaneously by the Working Party on inequalities and the world of work.
224. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the word “inequality” reflected the real situation; furthermore, the term appeared in the Office report 31 times. She reiterated that the fact that inequality was a reality and that it was increasing could not be denied.
225. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; the United States of America; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and the United Kingdom did not support the amendment.
226. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment to replace “exclusion and increasing inequality” with “labour market inefficiencies and inequality”.
227. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment.
228. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that the word “exclusion” was key, and proposed a further subamendment to add the words “exclusion in”, before “labour market”, and delete “inefficiencies and”.
229. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and the Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the further subamendment proposed by the Africa group.
230. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, withdrew the further subamendment.
231. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed another subamendment, to read “and increasing inequality and inefficiencies”.
232. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment, as she believed that inequality was a more serious phenomenon than labour market inefficiencies.
233. The Government member of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the subamendment.
234. Following informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Working Party agreed to retain the wording “exclusion and increasing inequality within and between societies”.

- 235.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “platform workers” from the list of the groups facing barriers in the access to skills, training and lifelong learning. While the ILO had recognized the particular circumstances of platform workers, those types of workers were not yet categorized properly. Furthermore, the Working Party should not pre-empt the conclusions of the forthcoming meeting on platform workers in 2022.
- 236.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as she strongly believed that platform workers formed a group that should be protected, and that the text should reflect the need to facilitate their access to skills development, lifelong learning and thus decent work.
- 237.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and Canada did not support the amendment. Platform work represented a significant challenge to many labour markets. It was important to acknowledge the increasing relevance of those challenges in the light of further technological progress.
- 238.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that he did not have a strong preference for either the deletion or retention of “platform workers”.
- 239.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson insisted on the amendment. She added that not all countries had platform workers. Furthermore, the categorization of platform workers was still pending the discussions of the ILO meeting on the subject. In some jurisdictions, when platform workers received training, they would become employees and no longer be recognized as independent contractors. Therefore, the categorization of platform workers as vulnerable workers in the text was not acceptable.
- 240.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that he now did not support the amendment, arguing that platform workers could not be removed from the list of vulnerable groups unless the conclusions of the meeting on platform work in 2022 justified it.
- 241.** Following informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson informed the Working Party that the two groups had agreed that the term “platform workers” could be deleted.
- 242.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, reiterated her group’s desire to retain the reference to platform workers in point 5, or to add it in point 14(i).
- 243.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson explained that her group would have preferred to retain the reference to “platform workers”, but considered that platform workers would be covered under “other persons in fragile and vulnerable situations or belonging to disadvantaged groups”.
- 244.** The Chairperson announced that as there were no other objections, the amendment to delete “platform workers” was adopted.
- 245.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, strongly objected to the deletion of the term “platform workers” from point 5, and suggested that “workers in insecure forms of work” could be inserted instead. Alternatively, a reference to “platform workers” could be included in point 14(i).
- 246.** The Chairperson noted that the point had been adopted and that the inclusion of a reference under point 14(i) would be discussed when the Working Party considered the amendments to that point.

- 247.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, stated that her group could accept the text as proposed, but wished to state for the record that that was on the understanding that the agreement on the text of the conclusions was within the scope of that Working Party only and that it would not be extended to other upcoming discussions, including in the upcoming standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships.
- 248.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment, which was proposed jointly with the Government member of Canada, to add, after “migrant workers”, the words “in line with national legislation and international agreements”. She emphasized that the inclusion of migrant workers among the groups of vulnerable people was in line with United Nations commitments. She also emphasized that the proposed amendment was in line with agreed UN language and could be found in the Brussels Declaration of the 2018 UNESCO Global Education Meeting. She believed that consistency with other international commitments and documents was vital, as some countries could not guarantee access to all types of trainings, unless they were in line with national legislations and international agreements.
- 249.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, arguing that international agreements might or might not be ratified.
- 250.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as migrant workers fell squarely within the category of vulnerable people.
- 251.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment, as the addition singled out migrant workers from the list of vulnerable people.
- 252.** The Government member of the United Kingdom proposed a subamendment to move the words “in line with national legislation and international agreements” to follow “equitable access to skills, training and lifelong learning for all”.
- 253.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, said that it was unclear what “international agreements” referred to; therefore, he did not support the amendment.
- 254.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the subamendment proposed by the United Kingdom. She preferred to leave the text “in line with national legislation and international agreements” in its original position. However, she then suggested a further subamendment to replace “in line with national legislation and international agreements”, with “as appropriate”.
- 255.** The Government member of the United States of America indicated that he had submitted an amendment to insert “as appropriate” after “migrant workers”.
- 256.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support that proposal. He reiterated that it was discriminatory towards a group of vulnerable people to single out migrant workers and not to mention other groups, for example, low-skilled workers or indigenous peoples.
- 257.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the inclusion of “as appropriate” after “migrant workers” opened up the possibilities for subjectivity.
- 258.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, preferred the original text but proposed a subamendment to add “as appropriate” after “international agreements” for clarity.

- 259.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, explained that the language of her group's proposal was in line with UN commitments, including the outcome document (Brussels Declaration) of UNESCO's Global Education Meeting, 2018, which called for a "commitment to include migrants, displaced persons and refugees in our education and training systems and to facilitate the recognition of their qualifications, skills, and competencies, in line with national legislation and international agreements". Her group had no intention to discriminate against any specific group, including migrant workers. However, in some countries, it was not possible to guarantee access to all types of training to people who did not have a work permit.
- 260.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, proposed a further subamendment to move "where appropriate" to follow "lifelong learning for all" and so the text would read "access to skills, training and lifelong learning for all, including, where appropriate, for women ...".
- 261.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the further subamendment. However, he did support the original subamendment proposed by the Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, to add "as appropriate" after "international agreements".
- 262.** The Government member of Canada held the same view as GRULAC and did not support the further subamendment to add "where appropriate" at the beginning of the list of vulnerable groups. She remained flexible, however, on the rest of the wording in the text.
- 263.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the subamendment proposed by the Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG.
- 264.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, said that adding the words "as appropriate" only with regard to migrant workers was discriminatory and would stigmatize them. He proposed a further subamendment to add "as appropriate" at the end of point 5, after "disadvantaged groups", to cover all the groups.
- 265.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced a further subamendment to delete both "where appropriate" and "as appropriate", as the reference to national legislation and international agreements made them redundant.
- 266.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, clarified that "as appropriate" referred to the national legislation and international agreements and not to the migrant workers as a group. Nonetheless, he could support the further subamendment introduced by the Workers' group to delete both "as appropriate" and "where appropriate".
- 267.** The Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States; and the United States of America supported the subamendment introduced by the Workers' group.
- 268.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, could support the subamendment, but proposed the addition of "relevant" before "international agreements".
- 269.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and the United States of America, supported the latest subamendment.
- 270.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, could not support the subamendment. He restated his position that the reference to legislation should apply to

all vulnerable groups and not only to migrant workers. An inclusive approach had to be adopted that covered everyone.

- 271.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, reiterated that she had no intention to discriminate against any specific group. Her group's amendment aimed to clarify that, in some national systems, access to all types of training could not be guaranteed for everyone regardless of their work permit status.
- 272.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add "refugees" after "migrant workers" in recognition of the fact that refugees were among the most vulnerable groups.
- 273.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson; the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; Canada and the United States of America supported the amendment.
- 274.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, could agree to add "refugees", subject to the addition of the words "in line with national legislation and international agreements" after it.
- 275.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment, as it would single out a specific group; she supported the subamendment that had been proposed by the Africa group to add "as appropriate" either at the beginning or at the end of point 5.
- 276.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson questioned the need to add "in line with national legislation and international agreements" again.
- 277.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the subamendment proposed by the Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, to add "relevant" before "international agreements".
- 278.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, recalled the overwhelming support shown in the Working Party for the addition of refugees as a vulnerable group. However, the addition of "in line with national legislation and relevant international agreement" with respect only to migrant workers and refugees was contentious. His group could not accept that subamendment.
- 279.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, restated her group's position that migrant workers and refugees had a very different status to the other vulnerable groups listed, for whom it was not relevant to make reference to national legislation and relevant international agreements. By contrast, migrant workers and refugees were treated differently in national legislation around the world, and encountered a specific problem with regard to their work permit status.
- 280.** The representative of the Secretary-General recalled that the Working Party was in the process of adopting conclusions of a general discussion that summarized the views expressed on the various issues addressed throughout the discussion. The Working Party was not drafting a binding legal instrument such as an international labour Convention or a treaty, but mere policy and programmatic guidance for the ILO's tripartite constituents and the Office. Therefore, the addition of qualifiers might not always be necessary. By definition, any measure, policy or initiative listed in conclusions should comply with national law and any relevant and applicable rules of international law. Nonetheless, she proposed, should the Working Party so desire, that "in line with national legislation and relevant international agreements" could be added after "These barriers should be addressed".

- 281.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson contended that the text proposed by the Secretariat would cause complications, as national legislation itself could be discriminatory, for example, when there were legislative barriers affecting women.
- 282.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the text proposed by the Secretariat, as it covered all interests and did not discriminate against any specific group.
- 283.** At the request of the Chairperson, the representative of the Secretary-General presented a proposal from the Secretariat, whereby the reference to national legislation and international agreements would be deleted and the list would be preceded by the words “Special attention should be paid to”.
- 284.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the Office proposal.
- 285.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to delete the words “fragile and”, before “vulnerable”. “Fragile” was appropriate with reference to the environment, whereas “vulnerable” referred to the situation of people.
- 286.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as there had been a consensus in the drafting group to retain the term “fragile” alongside “vulnerable”.
- 287.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson agreed with the Worker Vice-Chairperson.
- 288.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the amendment.
- 289.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, withdrew the amendment.
- 290.** The revised text read: “Special attention should be paid to women; young people, especially those who are not in education, employment or training; older people; persons with disabilities; informal workers; migrant workers; refugees; people in rural areas; low-skilled workers; indigenous and tribal peoples; and other persons in fragile and vulnerable situations or belonging to disadvantaged groups.”
- 291.** Point 5 was adopted as subamended.

Point 6

- 292.** Point 6 was adopted without amendment.

Point 7

- 293.** The Chairperson announced that 20 amendments had been received to point 7 and proposed that, in order to expedite the proceedings, the Working Party should consider all of them together.
- 294.** The original text read: “Providing universal access to free, quality education for adults requiring basic literacy, numeracy and requisite language skills is also critical for lifelong learning”. The following amendments had been proposed:
- GRULAC had submitted an amendment to replace “universal” by “equitable” and to insert “all” before “adults”.

- The Africa group and the Employers' group had submitted identical amendments to delete the word "universal" before the word "access".
 - The EU and its Member States, Canada, Switzerland and the United States of America had submitted a joint amendment to replace the word "universal" by "equitable".
 - The Employers' group had submitted an amendment to delete the word "free" before "quality education".
 - The Government members of Canada, Switzerland and the United States had submitted a joint amendment to replace the word "free" by "affordable" before "quality education"; ASPAG and GRULAC had each submitted an identical amendment.
 - The Africa group had submitted an amendment to add "demand-based", so that the phrase would read: "free, quality, demand-based education for adults".
 - The EU and its Member States had submitted an amendment to replace "adults" by "people of all ages".
 - GRULAC had submitted an amendment to add the word "improved" before "basic literacy".
 - The EU and its Member States, together with Switzerland, had submitted an amendment to add "at a minimum" before "basic literacy ... skills".
 - GRULAC had submitted an amendment to add "digital and" before "basic literacy".
 - The EU and its Member States, together with Switzerland, had submitted an amendment to add "digital" after "numeracy".
 - The Africa group had submitted an amendment to add "digital" before "basic literacy".
 - GRULAC and ASPAG had submitted identical amendments to replace "skills" by "proficiency" after "language".
 - The EU and its Member States, together with Canada, Switzerland and the United States of America, had submitted an amendment to add "which are a part of core skills," between "skills" and "is also critical".
 - GRULAC and ASPAG had submitted identical amendments to add "skills development and" before "lifelong learning".
- 295.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the deletion of "universal", but could accept "equitable" in its place, together with "all" before "adults". She did not support the deletion of the word "free" or the replacement of "free" by "affordable". She did not support the proposal to add "demand-based". Similarly, she did not support the addition of "people of all ages", as the point referred specifically to adults. She was flexible regarding the addition of "improved" before "basic literacy" and supported the addition of "at a minimum". She supported the proposed addition of "digital" but preferred its placement after "basic literacy, numeracy and requisite language skills" and the repetition of "basic" in connection with "digital skills", as in the French and Spanish versions. She supported the use of "proficiency" after "language", but would prefer the use of the term "maîtrise" in the French version. She could support the addition of "which are a part of core skills", although she considered it redundant. She supported the addition of "skills development and" before "lifelong learning".
- 296.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the deletion of "universal" and the insertion of a reference to "all" adults, but did not accept the addition of "equitable". She could support the

inclusion of “affordable” but not of “demand-based”. She did not support the replacement of “adults” with “people of all ages” or the insertion of the word “improved” before “basic literacy”. Nor did she support the insertion of “at a minimum” before “basic literacy”. She did not support the insertion of the word “digital” before “basic literacy” but did support its insertion after “numeracy”. She supported using the term “language proficiency”, but did not support the insertion of “which are a part of core skills”, which in her opinion was unnecessary. Finally, she supported the addition of “skills development and” before “lifelong learning”.

- 297.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the replacement of “universal” by “equitable”, but did not support “all adults”. He supported the deletion of “free” and the addition of “affordable”. He did not support the replacement of “adults” with “people of all ages”. He supported the insertion of “digital”, and was flexible regarding its placement in the text. He was likewise flexible on the use of the term “language proficiency”. He did not support the insertion of the wording “which are a part of core skills”, but was flexible on the insertion of “skills development and” before “lifelong learning”.
- 298.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the insertion of “equitable” and was flexible with regard to the proposed deletion of “universal”. He could not accept the replacement of “free” by “affordable”. He supported the replacement of “free” with “affordable”, and was flexible on the proposed insertion of “demand-based”. However, he could not support the replacement of “adults” with “people of all ages”. He was flexible on the insertion of “improved” before “basic literacy”. He did not support the proposals to insert “at a minimum” or “digital”. He supported the proposals to use the term “language proficiency” and to insert “skills development and” before “lifelong learning”. Regarding the proposal to insert “which are a part of core skills”, he requested clarification from the Secretariat as to whether the term “core skills” covered all the basic skills listed in that point. The Secretariat confirmed that it did.
- 299.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, stated that her group’s proposals for the whole of point 7 were intended to form the basis of a compromise position, on the condition that the word “free” remained in the text, in line with article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and was not replaced by “affordable”. As the provision of universal access to education was currently unrealistic, the word “equitable” struck the right balance between ambition and reality, and it was used in SDG 4, it was agreed language that could provide a good compromise. She did not support the amendment to add “demand-based”, before “education for adults”, as basic education was everyone’s human right. Her group had proposed an amendment to replace “adults” with “people of all ages”, as access to basic education was key for everyone. She had also proposed an amendment to add “at a minimum” before “basic”, as her group aimed at the achievement of more than a basic level. The group had also proposed to add “digital” after “numeracy” to complete the list of basic skills, and to add the words “which are a part of core skills,” after “requisite language skills”, to clarify the difference between “core skills” and “basic skills”. She was flexible on the amendment to replace “language skills” with “language proficiency”, and on the amendment to add “skills development and” in front of “lifelong learning”.
- 300.** The Government member of the United States of America supported the deletion of “universal” before “access” or the replacement of “universal” with “equitable” together with the insertion of “all” before “adults”. He could support either the proposal to delete “free” before “quality education” or the proposal to replace “free” with “affordable”. While governments could commit to providing access to free education for children, some governments might only be able to provide access to affordable education for adults. He supported the amendment to add “digital”, either after “numeracy” or at the beginning of the list of skills; and the amendment to

replace “language skills” with “language proficiency”. He was flexible regarding the proposals: to add “demand-based” before “education”; to replace “adults” by “people of all ages”; to add the word “improved” before “basic literacy”; to add “at a minimum” before “basic literacy”; to add “digital and”, before “basic literacy”; and to add “skills development and” before “lifelong learning”.

- 301.** The Government member of Canada supported either the deletion of “universal” before “access”, or the replacement of “universal” with “equitable” and the insertion of “all” before “adults”. She supported either the proposal to delete “free” before “quality education”, or to replace “free” with “affordable”. She supported the amendments proposing: to add “digital”, either after “numeracy” or at the beginning of the list of skills; to replace “language skills” with “language proficiency”; to add the word “improved” before “basic literacy”; to add “at a minimum” before “basic literacy”; to insert “digital” in the list of skills, either before “basic literacy”, after “numeracy” or at the at the beginning of the list of skills; to add, after “language skills”, the words “which are part of core skills”; and to add “skills development and” before “lifelong learning”. She was flexible regarding the amendments proposing: to add “demand-based” before “education”; to replace “adults” with “people of all ages”; and to replace “language skills” with “language proficiency”.
- 302.** Following a request of the Working Party, the Secretariat proposed the following revised text for point 7: “Providing equitable access to affordable, quality education for adults requiring basic literacy, numeracy, digital and requisite language skills is also crucial for skills development and lifelong learning”.
- 303.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the proposed text. She noted that “language skills” was the more general term, which would include proficiency.
- 304.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the proposed revised text. Access to education and skills for adults with a low level of literacy needed to be free and was the responsibility of governments. Employers were also responsible for tackling illiteracy when hiring workers. Moreover, she believed that the term “proficiency” was important, since workers’ language skills might be very basic.
- 305.** The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; the United States of America; and Canada supported the text.
- 306.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, underscored that since the word “universal” had been replaced by “equitable”, it was important to retain the word “free” instead of “affordable”, to guarantee that everyone enjoyed the right to education. She requested clarification from the Secretariat on whether basic skills were part of core skills, since they were not mentioned in the text.
- 307.** The representative of the Secretary-General confirmed that core skills were reflected in the list of skills indicated in the text.
- 308.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said that he was flexible on the proposed text.
- 309.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the text, with the understanding that “affordable” referred to efforts and provisions made by governments to ensure access to skills and lifelong learning.
- 310.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced a subamendment to replace “affordable” with “free” and “language skills” with “language proficiency”.

311. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the proposed subamendment. Proficiency was already covered by the word requisite, which referred to the level to be attained.
312. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; the United States of America; and Canada did not support replacing “affordable” with “free” but were flexible in replacing “skills” by “proficiency”.
313. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group was flexible on replacing “skills” by “proficiency”.
314. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, submitted a further subamendment to replace “requiring” by “including”, as she considered that providing only basic skills for adults would be too limited.
315. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the further subamendment.
316. The Chairperson noted that there was a strong support for the deletion of the word “free” in the text.
317. The Worker Vice-Chairperson agreed to the deletion of the word “free”, but proposed a further subamendment to delete the word “affordable”, to remove any references to costs.
318. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; Canada; Switzerland; and the United States of America supported the further subamendment.
319. Point 7 was adopted as subamended.

Point 8

320. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment, which had been submitted jointly with the Government members of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to add “including” before “through tripartite social dialogue”, as strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining was not the only area where the ILO provided technical assistance to its Members.
321. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment.
322. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment either, and noted that her group had submitted an alternative amendment, to read “social dialogue, including collective bargaining and tripartite cooperation”. It was unnecessary to mention “tripartite” when referring to social dialogue, and social dialogue included collective bargaining and tripartite cooperation.
323. The Government members of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, indicated that they were flexible on the amendment.
324. The Government member of the United Kingdom noted that the addition of “including” would emphasize that skills development and lifelong learning could be strengthened through other means in addition to social dialogue and collective bargaining. However, she also supported the Employers’ group’s amendment.

- 325.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, withdrew her group's amendment and indicated that she could be flexible with respect to the Employers' group's amendment.
- 326.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the Employers' group's amendment.
- 327.** The amendment was adopted.
- 328.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete, after "other crisis situations", the words "including those described in the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205)", as the listing of instruments should be avoided. She noted that the Africa group had submitted an identical amendment.
- 329.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as Recommendation No. 205 provided a basis for resolving issues and challenges related to the COVID-19 crisis and any other crises which might arise in the future. Furthermore, references to instruments were commonly included in conclusions of the International Labour Conference. The conclusions on skills and lifelong learning should therefore follow a rights-based approach, which was the fundament of the ILO.
- 330.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, were flexible on the amendment.
- 331.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment, stating that it was important to refer to Recommendation No. 205, as it was a unique and valuable instrument that addressed employment and decent work in crisis situations.
- 332.** The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and the United States and America; and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, were flexible on the amendment.
- 333.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the amendment.
- 334.** Following informal consultations between the Employers' and Workers' groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to retain the reference to Recommendation No. 205.
- 335.** Point 8 was adopted as amended.

II. Guiding principles for inclusive, responsive and resilient skills and lifelong learning systems

- 336.** The title of Part II was adopted without amendment.

Point 9

- 337.** Point 9 was adopted without amendment.

Point 10

- 338.** Point 10 was adopted without amendment.

Point 11

339. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, and the Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, introduced identical amendments to replace the word “must” with “should” in the first sentence.
340. The Worker Vice-Chairperson could not support the proposal. It was important to agree on an obligation to take action on developing policy frameworks for skills development and lifelong learning systems. Therefore, the stronger option of “must” was preferable.
341. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the proposal, as it was in accordance with the previous discussions of the drafting group.
342. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and the Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the amendments.
343. The amendments were adopted.
344. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to delete the list of instruments, from “including the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)” to “the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, 1966”. The list was not exhaustive and that could represent a constraint for some Member States, who should have the discretion to align their policy frameworks with those instruments that were most relevant in their own context, which may go beyond those listed in the text.
345. The Chairperson noted that the Employers’ group and ASPAG had submitted identical amendments.
346. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. The objective of the conclusions was to provide guidance for constituents, and it was therefore important to indicate which were the specific instruments most relevant to skills development and lifelong learning. In addition, the instruments were mutually supportive and it was therefore logical to list them all.
347. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, could accept either the retention or deletion of the text.
348. The Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, and the United Kingdom did not support the amendment.
349. The Government member of the United States of America did not support the amendment either, and noted that the list was preceded by the word “including”.
350. After informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, an agreement was reached to retain the list of instruments and to insert “take into account” before it.
351. Point 11 was adopted as subamended.

Point 12 chapeau

352. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the word “increased” before “investment”. The existing text presupposed the existence of investment, which was not always the case; it was therefore not possible to talk of “increased investment”. By deleting “increased”, the intention was to strengthen the case for investment.
353. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. All countries already invested in skills development and lifelong learning, albeit at different levels, and that investment needed to be increased.

- 354.** The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the amendment. The latter noted that it was the joint commitment, rather than the increased investment, that was mandatory.
- 355.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment.
- 356.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced an amendment to add, after “in consultation with the social partners”, the words “while taking into account national circumstances”. It was critical to allow governments to develop their own skills and lifelong learning policies in line with national conditions.
- 357.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
- 358.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson could not support the amendment, as the conclusions indicated that collective bargaining and social dialogue should be used, and that required the involvement of the social partners, regardless of national circumstances.
- 359.** The Government members of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the amendment.
- 360.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment.
- 361.** At the request of the Chairperson, the Secretariat suggested that the chapeau could instead end with the words “and should include the following, while taking into account national circumstances”.
- 362.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, noted that a reference to national circumstances in the chapeau was decisive for reaching consensus on point 12, and that he was flexible on the position of the reference in the chapeau. He clarified that the intention was not to make the consultation with social partners conditional on national circumstances.
- 363.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the proposal. She emphasized that the outcome of the Working Party’s discussion was in the form of conclusions, not a Convention, and that in any event, ILO instruments always made reference to taking into account national circumstances.
- 364.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the proposal of the Secretariat.
- 365.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the proposal. The latter noted the overwhelming support for the inclusion of the reference.
- 366.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson indicated that she could accept the proposal by the Secretariat, in the spirit of compromise.
- 367.** The chapeau was adopted as amended.

Point 12(a)

- 368.** The Government member of Canada introduced an amendment, submitted jointly with the Governments of Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to add the words “and subnational” after “national” to recognize the fact that some countries had subnational jurisdictions with respect to lifelong learning policies and strategies.

- 369.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, all supported the amendment.
- 370.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment. The clause should deal with policies at the national level only. Should certain countries wish to develop policies at the subnational level, they could do so, but that was not relevant for all countries.
- 371.** The Government members of Canada, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America submitted a subamendment to add, after “national”, the words “and, where appropriate, subnational”.
- 372.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(b)

- 373.** Point 12(b) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(c)

- 374.** Point 12(c) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(d)

- 375.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the word “innovative” with reference to financing mechanisms, as there was no agreed definition of the meaning of innovative financing mechanisms, nor was evidence available of their impact and effectiveness, which were the subject of controversy. The Governing Body had requested the Office at its 335th Session (March 2019), on the subject of an “Overview of relevant and existing forms of innovative finance mechanisms, related opportunities and risks, and potential for ILO engagement” to “continue to build its knowledge of innovative finance mechanisms ... including by identifying and assessing the risks and opportunities relevant to decent work outcomes”. It was therefore not the appropriate time to move ahead with such innovative mechanisms.
- 376.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the word “innovative” meant “creative” and did not refer to a specific type of financial mechanism.
- 377.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the amendment. Innovation was important in the context of financing for skills and lifelong learning systems. Governments should apply the most suitable financing mechanisms given the particular circumstances of each country.
- 378.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and the United Kingdom did not support the amendment.
- 379.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment. She encouraged the Office, in reference to the decision of the Governing Body, to conduct research on the opportunities and risks of innovative financing mechanisms.
- 380.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to replace “equitable” by “transparent”, as it was impossible to measure “equitable”. “Transparent” was the appropriate term to use with respect to financing mechanisms for skills development systems and would ensure that investment was not diverted to other purposes.

- 381.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as transparent financing mechanisms would not necessarily be equitable. Financing mechanisms had to be equitable in order for all people to be able to benefit from them.
- 382.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, could not support the deletion of the word “equitable”. He proposed a subamendment to include both “equitable” and “transparent”.
- 383.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, and the Government members of the United States of America; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Canada; and Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, all supported the subamendment.
- 384.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.
- 385.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the words “with shared responsibilities between governments and employers, and where appropriate workers, that enable and incentivize participation in skills development, promote employability and enhanced skills utilization, and support sustainable enterprises”. She did not agree that workers shared the responsibility to finance their training. Her group supported free access of workers to skills development
- 386.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. Indeed, the Employers’ group had submitted an amendment to delete the phrase “where appropriate” before “workers”, as it was contradictory to the notion of shared responsibilities to which the clause referred.
- 387.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a subamendment to insert “as appropriate”, after “workers”, so that it would apply to governments, employers and workers.
- 388.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a further subamendment to read “with shared responsibilities, as appropriate, between governments, employers and workers”.
- 389.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and the United States of America did not support the amendment. The latter noted that the text contained the words “including, where appropriate” with reference to workers.
- 390.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment, as workers could not benefit if they were unwilling to share responsibilities. She highlighted that “innovative, transparent, equitable and sustainable financing mechanisms” were developed through social dialogue and workers therefore could not be excluded.
- 391.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the subamendment, as workers should have some responsibilities on training and developing competences. The reference to “where appropriate” recognized that many people in various countries did not have the means to pay for training.
- 392.** The Government member of China did not support the deletion of “and, where appropriate, workers”, as he believed that tripartite constituents had shared responsibilities. While workers might join some training programmes for free, they could not be entirely excluded from the shared responsibilities. He could, however, support the inclusion of “workers’ capacity to benefit from decent work opportunities”.
- 393.** The Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States did not support the subamendment.

- 394.** The Government member of the United Kingdom did not support the subamendment, because it would be appropriate for those in employment to pay for their own training.
- 395.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted that his group had submitted an amendment to delete the phrase “where appropriate”, because point 12(d) concerned a tripartite arrangement, and social partners and governments should be involved in the tripartite process.
- 396.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson proposed two further subamendments: to replace “workers” with “workers’ organizations” and to replace “enhanced skills utilization” with “workers’ capacity to benefit from decent work opportunities”.
- 397.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the first subamendment, as the wording “and, where appropriate, workers’ organizations” was contradictory to the meaning of shared responsibilities. Moreover, the term “workers’ organizations” excluded the workers who were not members of trade unions. Therefore, she proposed a further subamendment to remove the words “where appropriate” and “organizations”. She could support the second subamendment, to replace “enhanced skills utilization” with “strengthen workers’ capacity to benefit from decent work opportunities”.
- 398.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the subamendment to remove “where appropriate”, but did not support the replacement of “enhanced skills utilization”.
- 399.** The Government member of the United States of America did not support the subamendment to remove “where appropriate”.
- 400.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson withdrew the subamendment to replace “workers” with “workers’ organizations”. She did not support the subamendment to remove “where appropriate”.
- 401.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson clarified that “shared responsibility” in the context of the clause did not mean workers would have to pay for their own training.
- 402.** After informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed on the wording “with shared and differentiated responsibilities, as appropriate, between governments, employers and workers, that enable and incentivize participation in skills development, promote employability, strengthen workers’ capacity to benefit from decent work opportunities and support sustainable enterprises”.
- 403.** Point 12(d) was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(e)

- 404.** Point 12(e) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(f)

- 405.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the word “universal” before “acquisition of basic and necessary digital skills”. Considering that half of the world’s population did not have access to the internet, the acquisition of digital skills could not be universal.
- 406.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the acquisition of basic and necessary digital skills needed to be universal in order to overcome the digital divide.

407. The Government member of the United States of America did not support the amendment, as the strategy should aim for the universal acquisition of basic and necessary digital skills.
408. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the amendment.
409. The Government member of Canada did not support amendment, as the strategy should aim for the universal acquisition of basic and necessary digital skills, and access to digital technologies.
410. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment.
411. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, asked the Office for clarification of the meaning of “universal” in that context.
412. The deputy representative of the Secretary-General explained that the reference to “universal acquisition of basic and necessary digital skills” was intended to mean that everyone would be able to access and acquire basic and necessary digital skills.
413. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment. It was appropriate to include “universal”, as “access for all” had already been included in point 12.
414. The Government member of China was flexible regarding the inclusion of the word “universal”.
415. The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment.
416. Point 12(f) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(g)

417. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to add “technical and vocational education and training” before “apprenticeships and work-based learning”, to making the text broader and more inclusive.
418. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; the United States of America; Canada; and Switzerland supported the amendment.
419. The amendment was adopted.
420. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, the United Kingdom and the United States of America introduced an amendment to replace “occupational health and safety” with “occupational safety and health”, as that was the usual ILO terminology.
421. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; Canada; China; and the United States of America supported the amendment.
422. The amendment was adopted.
423. The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add “public and” before “private sector”, to better reflect the fact that quality apprenticeships and work-based learning took place in close collaboration with both the public and private sectors. The Africa group had proposed an identical amendment,

424. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of China; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and the United States of America supported the amendment.
425. The amendment was adopted.
426. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to move the word “government” to come before “trade unions, employers and training providers”.
427. The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; the Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China; and the United States of America supported the amendment.
428. The amendment was adopted.
429. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to delete, after “decent working conditions”, the words “including guarantees for occupational safety and health”.
430. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment.
431. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
432. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment, as occupational safety and health was a key concern with respect to decent work in work-based learning and apprenticeships.
433. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and the Government members of the United States of America and Canada did not support the amendment.
434. The Government member of China said that he could support the general consensus, as decent working conditions already incorporated occupational safety and health.
435. The amendment was withdrawn.
436. The Government members of the United Kingdom and the United States of America introduced an amendment to replace “guarantees for” with “with reference to” before “occupational safety and health”.
437. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
438. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the word “guarantees” was stronger.
439. The Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, and China supported the amendment.
440. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and Canada said that they preferred the original text but could be flexible with the amendment.
441. In view of the overall support, the Worker Vice-Chairperson said that her group could support the amendment.
442. The amendment was adopted.
443. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “should facilitate effective partnerships between trade unions, employers, training providers and governments and deliver training arrangements that have adequate social protection and decent working conditions, including guarantees for occupational safety and health”, because those

requirements would be a deterrent to quality apprenticeships and work-based learning programmes. Moreover, the Working Party should not pre-empt the upcoming standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships.

444. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the text in question was meant to promote decent working conditions and the deletion would produce an unbalanced paragraph. Furthermore, it was the only reference in the conclusions to occupational safety and health. All constituents could agree that occupational safety and health belonged to the fundamental rights and principles, as stated in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.
445. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Canada; and the United States of America did not support the amendment. The latter expressed his agreement with the Worker Vice-Chairperson that it was particularly important to retain the reference to occupational safety and health in the document.
446. The Government member of China expressed his flexibility on the amendment.
447. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment, as cooperation among the listed stakeholders in apprenticeships and work-based learning, including social protection and decent working conditions, was relevant and important.
448. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted that the social partners should play an active role, and asked the Secretariat to explain the underlying principle.
449. The deputy representative of the Secretary-General explained that work-based learning, including apprenticeships, required strong cooperation between the social partners, governments and all other stakeholders for the training to be effective and successful. The purpose of the sentence in question was to emphasize the importance of ensuring appropriate working conditions for those people engaged in training activities, especially in the area of social protection, decent work and occupational safety and health.
450. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment, so that the text would read: "They should facilitate effective partnerships between workers, employers, training providers and governments and deliver training arrangements that provide for decent working conditions, including appropriate measures for occupational safety and health".
451. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment, as the purpose was to enter into partnerships with workers' organizations and not individual workers; she could consider replacing "trade unions" with "workers' organizations". However, she could not support the proposed deletion of the reference to social protection, as it was a key pillar of decent work.
452. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a further subamendment to replace "appropriate measures for" with "with reference to".
453. The Government member of the United States of America did not support the subamendment proposed by the Employers' group, as the words "adequate social protection" should remain. He considered that ensuring safe and healthy working conditions should be the highest priority for workers, a vision which was also shared by the Government member of the United Kingdom. Both Government members supported the wording "with reference to" before "occupational safety and health".

454. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and the Government member of Canada did not support the subamendment proposed by the Employers' group, but said that they were flexible on the further subamendment of "with reference to".
455. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the replacement of "trade unions" with "workers' organizations", but did not support the rest of the subamendment.
456. The Employer Vice-Chairperson reiterated that she preferred the word "workers" as opposed to "workers' organizations", as many companies did not have any form of workers' organizations. Noting that many countries lacked social security or social protection schemes, she proposed a further subamendment to add ", as applicable" after "social protection".
457. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted that the Working Party had agreed to add, in the chapeau of point 12, the words "according to national circumstances" to cater for those issues. The addition of "as applicable" proposed by the Employers' group was therefore unnecessary and would make the sentence too general. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and China agreed.
458. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment of the Employers' group.
459. The Chairperson requested the Secretariat to propose a revised text for consideration.
460. The Chairperson introduced the text proposed by the Secretariat, which read, "They should facilitate effective partnerships between governments, workers, employers and training providers and deliver training arrangements that provide for social protection, as applicable, and decent working conditions, including occupational safety and health".
461. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the proposed text.
462. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the wording "social protection as applicable". It was important to guarantee social protection, for example for safety and health at work.
463. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a subamendment to delete the words "as applicable," after "social protection".
464. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the text proposed by the Secretariat and said that they were flexible with the subamendment to delete "as applicable".
465. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the text proposed by the Secretariat.
466. The Government member of the United States of America supported both the text proposed by the Secretariat and the subamendment to delete "as applicable".
467. The Government member of Canada supported the text proposed by the Secretariat, but did not support the subamendment.
468. The Worker Vice-Chairperson emphasized that social protection was one of the pillars of decent work and supported the subamendment proposed by the EU.
469. The Employer Vice-Chairperson said the issue of social protection should be left to national legal systems; therefore, the words "as applicable" were needed in the clause. Furthermore, the upcoming standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships would address issues of social protection, therefore, the words "as applicable" should be retained to avoid pre-empting that discussion.

- 470.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson recalled that the chapeau already stated that national circumstances would be taken into account; therefore, there was no reason to discuss whether social protection and decent working conditions should be left to national legal systems. Furthermore, social protection could also apply to an occupational accident or illness.
- 471.** Following informal consultations between the Employers' and Workers' groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed on the following wording: "They should facilitate effective partnerships between governments, workers, employers and training providers and deliver training arrangements that provide for social protection, as appropriate, and decent working conditions, including occupational safety and health".
- 472.** Point 12(g) was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(h)

- 473.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to add "vocational" before "training", so that the text would read "in education and vocational training, including TVET".
- 474.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
- 475.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the abbreviation "TVET" stood for "technical and vocational education and training" and therefore already included "vocational training".
- 476.** At the request of the Employer Vice-Chairperson, the deputy representative of the Secretary-General confirmed that TVET was part of the broader concept of "training".
- 477.** The amendment was withdrawn.
- 478.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, introduced an amendment to replace "basic skills for green jobs" with "skills related to environmentally sustainable economies" as the term was more comprehensive and would be consistent with wording elsewhere in the conclusions.
- 479.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson said that she could be flexible on the amendment.
- 480.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
- 481.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment, as the proposed terminology was too narrow. He proposed a subamendment to replace "basic skills for green jobs" with "relevant skills related to sustainable development".
- 482.** The Government member of the United Kingdom did not support the amendment or the subamendment, as the original text was more in line with relevant ILO terminology.
- 483.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Canada and the United States of America indicated their preference for the words "green jobs" or "environmentally sustainable economies", rather than "environmentally sustainable development".
- 484.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the amendment to use "environmentally sustainable economies".
- 485.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, explained that the term "environmentally sustainable economies" was used in the 2015 ILO Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all. Furthermore, it had been adopted in point 12(m) as "digital and environmentally sustainable economies",

and point 12(s) referred to “environmentally sustainable and affordable infrastructure”. His group’s proposed amendment therefore aimed to ensure consistency.

486. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, proposed a subamendment to read “relevant skills for sustainable development, including those that contribute to environmentally friendly economies”, which would broaden the scope.
487. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment. The term “environmentally sustainable economies” was in line with the language of the 2015 ILO Guidelines for a just transition, in which the importance of skills development for environmentally sustainable economies was highlighted.
488. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the latest subamendment and preferred the wording “environmentally sustainable economies”, which dealt with ecosystems and was directly related to the concept of “green jobs”.
489. The Government member of the United States of America did not support the latest subamendment proposed.
490. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, could be flexible, and proposed a further subamendment to replace “friendly” with “sustainable”.
491. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, could support the replacement of “friendly” with sustainable”.
492. The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, and the United Kingdom supported the amendment proposed by the Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC.
493. The Chairperson observed that that original amendment, “and relevant skills related to environmentally sustainable economies”, enjoyed majority support and was therefore adopted.
494. Point 12(h) was adopted as amended.
495. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, emphasized that point 12(h) did not receive support from the Africa group.

Point 12(i)

496. The Government member of Canada introduced an amendment, submitted jointly with the Government members of Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to add, after “national”, the words “and subnational”.
497. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment, as the conclusions were intended for policies at the national level only.
498. The Government member of Canada proposed a subamendment to add “as appropriate” after “subnational”.
499. The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the amendment and the subamendment.
500. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the subamendment, but sought clarification as to whether the phrase “as appropriate” would apply only to the word “subnational” or also to the word “national”.

501. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the subamendment, but proposed a further subamendment to rephrase “national and subnational, as appropriate” as “national and, where appropriate, subnational” for clarity.
502. The amendment was adopted as subamended.
503. Point 12(i) was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(j)

504. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to delete the word “strong” before “public and private education”.
505. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment.
506. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment to replace the word “strong” with “effective”, which would reflect the original intention of the text.
507. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and the United States of America, supported the subamendment proposed by the Employers’ group.
508. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a further subamendment to include both “strong” and “effective” before “public and private education”, with a view to reaching consensus.
509. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the further subamendment, as she preferred to include only the term “effective”, which was measurable with regard to the performance of education and training institutions, whereas the term “strong” was difficult to measure.
510. The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that the qualifier needed to be stronger than “effective”. She thus proposed a further subamendment to replace “effective” with “robust”.
511. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that he was flexible and could support the further subamendment on the use of “robust”, instead of “effective”.
512. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the further subamendment on the use of “robust”, since the word already appeared later in the same sentence, in the context of social dialogue. In the interests of consensus, however, she could support the subamendment to use both “strong and effective”.
513. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and the United States of America supported the subamendment.
514. The amendment was adopted as subamended.
515. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to delete “aim to” before “ensure decent work”.
516. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
517. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as “ensure” was equivalent to a guarantee, would be very difficult to provide.
518. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, preferred the original text but expressed flexibility on the amendment.

519. The Government member of the United States of America did not support the amendment.
520. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, withdrew the amendment.
521. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add “full, productive and freely chosen employment and”, before “decent work for all”, to use the language of the Centenary Declaration and to make the aspirational conclusions more meaningful.
522. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment.
523. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the amendment.
524. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment.
525. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, was flexible with regard to the amendment.
526. The Worker Vice-Chairperson insisted that clause (j) referred to institutions, and that in that context, it was not appropriate to introduce the macroeconomic concept of full, productive and freely chosen employment. Moreover, that concept was already mentioned in point 1.
527. The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, and the United States of America supported the amendment.
528. The amendment was adopted.

Point 12(k)

529. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to delete “qualified”, before “teachers”. Teachers and trainers would have to be qualified to be employed and be part of the educational system, therefore the word “qualified” was not needed.
530. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), underlined the importance of qualified teachers by calling on ILO Members under paragraph 5(d) to “assume the primary responsibility for investing in quality education and pre-employment training, recognizing that qualified teachers and trainers working under decent conditions, are of fundamental importance”.
531. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; the United Kingdom; and the United States did not support the amendment.
532. The amendment was withdrawn.
533. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to replace “geographical mobility” with “learning mobility”, as geographical mobility was a broad term that also encompassed labour mobility.
534. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as portability of qualifications was meant to facilitate geographical mobility of workers.

- 535.** The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment.
- 536.** The amendment was withdrawn.
- 537.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to move the words “qualified teachers and trainers” to follow “validation of skills and competencies”, because teachers and trainers could support the validation of skills and competencies but not the recognition, which was a state responsibility.
- 538.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as teachers and trainers did more than just validating skills and competencies, and supported the whole training and skills development system. The amendment limited the ambition of point 12(k).
- 539.** The Government members of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and the United States of America were flexible with the amendment.
- 540.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson requested the Secretariat to explain whether qualified teachers were in a position to recognize skills. She proposed a subamendment to add “and where applicable” before “the recognition of partial and full qualifications”.
- 541.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General explained that the recognition of qualifications was certified by the State but the recognition process itself could involve teachers and trainers.
- 542.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson noted that that explanation confirmed the central role of teachers and trainers.
- 543.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson asked the Secretariat to propose a text that would reflect the discussion and the explanations provided.
- 544.** The Chairperson introduced the proposal of the Secretariat, in which the word “assessors” was added after “supported by qualified teachers and trainers” and the phrase was placed towards the end of the clause, to read: “robust systems for the validation of skills and competencies and the recognition of partial and full qualifications (including micro-credentials) acquired through all forms of prior learning, including formal, non-formal and informal learning, which are supported by qualified teachers, trainers and assessors and which create lifelong learning pathways to enable and enhance the portability of skills and facilitate labour, social and geographical mobility”.
- 545.** Point 12(k) was adopted as amended.

Point 12(l)

- 546.** The Government member of Canada had submitted an amendment, together with the Government members of Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to insert, after “national”, the words “and subnational”. She introduced a subamendment to include “where appropriate”, before “subnational”.
- 547.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson; the Employer Vice-Chairperson; and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the subamendment.
- 548.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(m)

549. A similar amendment and subamendment to insert “, where appropriate, subnational” after “national” was adopted in clause (m).

Point 12(n)

550. Point 12(n) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(o)

551. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to replace “special” with “specific”.
552. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment, as “specific” was as opposed to “general”, and was the more appropriate term.
553. The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the amendment.
554. The amendment was adopted.
555. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “and large” before “enterprises” and to delete “across both the public and private sectors”. As the focus of the clause was on the informal economy, which did not usually include large enterprises or public sector enterprises.
556. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as in many countries, large and public enterprises subcontracted informal enterprises.
557. The Government member of the United Kingdom did not support the amendment.
558. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, remained flexible, but preferred the original wording, which was more holistic.
559. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, remained flexible.
560. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the amendment and particularly the deletion of the word “large”, as it made the text more relevant to the needs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in the informal economy.
561. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the amendment as informal forms of employment could be found in both the public sector and large enterprises.
562. The Chairperson requested the Secretariat to propose a revised text.
563. The Chairperson presented the text suggested by the Secretariat, which read: “... taking into account the specific needs of different economic units, including, the self-employed, and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, in both public and private spheres.”
564. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
565. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group questioned the use of the word “spheres” instead of “sector”, but supported the amendment.

- 566.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, stated that “spheres” was language used in the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204). He was flexible with regard to the use of either “sectors” or “spheres” and supported the amendment.
- 567.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(p)

- 568.** Point 12(p) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(q)

- 569.** Point 12(q) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(r)

- 570.** Point 12(r) was adopted without amendment.

Point 12(s)

- 571.** The Government members of Canada, United Kingdom and the United States introduced an amendment to include after “national” “and subnational”, and a subamendment to add “where appropriate” before “subnational”.
- 572.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.
- 573.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “including through public-private partnerships” after “devices and tools”, as there was a lack of evidence of the intended benefits of public-private partnerships on skills and lifelong learning, especially in developing countries. Moreover, they carried significant risks of corruption.
- 574.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. Governments did not always have the required capacity to implement innovative technologies, build environmentally sustainable and affordable infrastructure or provide affordable access to enhanced internet connectivity among other things. She noted that the text mentioned “including through”, which meant public-private partnerships were just one option among others.
- 575.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the amendment, as public-private partnerships were important for the development of skills and lifelong learning systems.
- 576.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment either, as although public-private partnerships experienced failures in some contexts, there was insufficient evidence that they could not be successful in other contexts.
- 577.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support the amendment.
- 578.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States introduced a subamendment to add, after “public-private partnerships”, “as appropriate”. She recognized the positive experiences of public-private partnerships in Europe, which had proved to be extremely useful in skilling and upskilling initiatives, especially in the context of digitalization.
- 579.** The Government member of the United States of America supported the subamendment.

- 580.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced a further subamendment to include, after “including through public–private partnerships, as appropriate”, the words “with safeguards”.
- 581.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the addition of “as appropriate” but not of “with safeguards”, as the safeguards were not sufficiently defined. She also noted that the ILO promoted public–private partnerships as part of its development cooperation strategy.
- 582.** The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, said that they were flexible on the addition of “as appropriate” but did not support the proposal of the Workers’ group.
- 583.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced a further subamendment to replace “as appropriate, with safeguards” with “while respecting the rules of good governance”.
- 584.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the further subamendment, as the meaning was unclear. Clause (s) concerned the development of digitalization strategies, and governments lacked the requisite capacity to do that alone; public–private partnerships were therefore essential.
- 585.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, strongly supported the original text but could accept the amendments.
- 586.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, could be flexible on “while respecting the rules of good governance”.
- 587.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, could accept the addition of “as appropriate”, but did not support the addition of “while respecting the rules of good governance”, which was subjective and lacked a clear definition.
- 588.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the addition of “while respecting the rules of good governance”.
- 589.** After informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to include, after public–private partnerships”, the words “as appropriate”, but not “with safeguards” or “while respecting the rules of good governance”.
- 590.** Point 12(s) was adopted as subamended.

Point 12(t)

- 591.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the words “in combination with paid educational leave”, as the clause concerned social protection and paid educational leave did not exist in all countries. It was also unclear how unemployed or sick people could benefit from paid educational leave.
- 592.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as paid educational leave was a crucial mechanism to ensure non-discrimination. Vulnerable persons, including persons with disabilities, were entitled to paid leave in order to retrain, reskill and build their capacity. The clause included “where applicable”, and the chapeau text provided that policies would be based on the national circumstances.
- 593.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment. Paid educational leave was an important enabler for people reskilling and attempting to transition to sectors with higher labour demand, and that would

also support just, digital and green transitions. The inclusion of “where applicable” in the text allowed for the fact that paid educational leave might not apply in every country.

594. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, could not support the inclusion of “in combination with paid educational leave”. Any Member State that had adequate resources was free to implement that provision and ratify Convention No. 140.
595. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and the United States of America could accept the inclusion of paid educational leave on the condition that “where applicable” was retained.
596. The Employer Vice-Chairperson said she could not identify the nexus between paid educational leave and social protection and insisted on the importance of this question to her group.
597. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a subamendment to move the reference to “and, where appropriate, paid educational leave” to follow “social protection”.
598. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment, which changed the meaning of the clause.
599. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the subamendment proposed by the Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States.
600. Following informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to remove the reference to paid educational leave from the clause.
601. Point 12(t) was adopted as amended.

Point 12(u)

602. The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add the words “and access to decent work” after “labour market transitions”, to emphasize that lifelong learning represented an investment in people and was not just a matter of the labour market. That human element was reflected in the Centenary Declaration.
603. The Employer Vice-Chairperson observed that access to decent work was already included in the meaning of the clause. Since adding the wording would be redundant, she did not support the amendment.
604. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; and the United States of America, supported the amendment.
605. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment.
606. The Worker Vice-Chairperson expressed her surprise that the amendment was facing resistance. It was important to emphasize the access to decent work in addition to labour market transitions.
607. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, could support the amendment.
608. The amendment was adopted.

Point 12(v)

- 609.** The Government member of Canada, speaking also on behalf of the Government members of Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, introduced an amendment to add, after “national”, the word “subnational”, and proposed a subamendment to place “as appropriate” before “subnational”.
- 610.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.

III. Measures to promote inclusive, responsive and resilient skills and lifelong learning systems

- 611.** The title of Part III was adopted without amendment.

Point 13 chapeau

- 612.** The Government member of the United States introduced an amendment to delete, after “Recognizing that education”, the words “and training”, and to insert, after “is a right for all” the wording “recalling that the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), states that Members should recognize that education and training are a right for all”. He explained that article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 13(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights stated the right for all to education, neither treaty indicated the right for all to training.
- 613.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Canada, and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the amendment. The latter withdrew a similar amendment.
- 614.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, were flexible with regard to the amendment.
- 615.** The amendment was adopted.
- 616.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew her group’s amendment proposing to begin the sentence with “Members should recognize”.

Point 13(a)

- 617.** Point 13(a) was adopted without amendment.

Point 13(b)

- 618.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “aim to” before “ensure access to quality lifelong learning opportunities for all”, noting that the chapeau of point 13 used the word “should” and allowed for sufficient flexibility to take into account national circumstances.
- 619.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment.
- 620.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the amendment and noted that her own group had submitted an identical amendment.
- 621.** The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, also supported the amendment.

- 622. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and Canada could be flexible regarding the amendment.
- 623. The Government member of the United States did not support the amendment.
- 624. After informal consultations between the Employers' and Workers' groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to delete the words "aim to".
- 625. Point 13(b) was adopted as amended.

Point 13(c)

- 626. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete "fair and" in the phrase "ensuring fair and inclusive labour markets". "Fair" was a subjective notion, and it was impossible to say who should measure it and how.
- 627. The Worker Vice-Chairperson could not support the amendment. She noted that the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization made reference to fairness. Furthermore, other concepts used by the ILO, such as "inclusion" or "justice", would not be measurable either. She could support the replacement of "fair" with "just".
- 628. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, could accept the amendment to delete the word "fair", but noted the importance of using consistent terminology throughout the conclusions.
- 629. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf the EU and its Member States, did not support the amendment, as it was important to mention social fairness in the context of integrating skills development and lifelong learning into employment policies. She could support the subamendment to replace "fair" with "just".
- 630. The Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; the United States of America; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, indicated their flexibility. The latter inquired why it was proposed to qualify inclusive labour markets.
- 631. The Employer Vice-Chairperson emphasized that "just" or "fair" could not be measured. She proposed a further subamendment to replace "just" by "equitable".
- 632. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, stated that inclusive labour markets should already be equitable, therefore, he preferred "fair" or "just" to "equitable".
- 633. The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and the United Kingdom were flexible on the words "fair", "just" or "equitable". The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, was also flexible, but preferred "equitable" as it was more commonly used term.
- 634. The Worker Vice-Chairperson could support the use of "equitable". She clarified that the term would refer to labour market access, as labour markets as such could not be equitable.
- 635. The amendment was adopted as subamended.
- 636. Point 13(c) was adopted as subamended.

Point 13(d)

- 637. Point 13(d) was adopted without amendment.

Point 13(e)

638. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to add the words “cooperate with” before “other relevant stakeholders”. In the drafting group, there had been some concerns about the involvement of other stakeholders. She wished to clarify the text to indicate that governments should involve the social partners while also cooperating with other stakeholders.
639. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
640. The amendment was adopted.
641. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced an amendment to add “where appropriate” between “design” and “implementation”.
642. The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as the social partners had to be involved throughout.
643. The Employer Vice-Chairperson supported the amendment.
644. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, indicated their flexibility on the amendment.
645. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted that decisions on resource allocation were the domain of governments, which could consult with the social partners if they so wished.
646. The Worker Vice-Chairperson recalled an earlier amendment that had been adopted regarding the involvement of the social partners; it was therefore not necessary to revisit that point. In the spirit of compromise, she proposed a subamendment to add “where appropriate” after “including resource allocation”.
647. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, proposed a further subamendment to add “consultation on” before “resource allocation, where appropriate”, as resource allocation was the government’s prerogative, but it could nonetheless choose to consult with others on that issue.
648. The Worker Vice-Chairperson could support the subamendment proposed by the Africa group, but with a further subamendment to move the words “where appropriate” to follow “relevant stakeholders” and before “in the design”.
649. The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the Workers’ group’s subamendment, which would exclude social partners from the design of policies. Neither did she support the subamendment by the Africa group. She wished to retain her group’s amendment regarding the deletion of “including resource allocation”.
650. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the Employer Vice-Chairperson’s remark regarding the exclusion of the social partners, and proposed to delete the comma before the words “where appropriate”.
651. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, had originally sought deletion of the words “including resource allocation”. However, he had then proposed a further subamendment, “including resource allocation, where appropriate”, in an attempt to build consensus in the Working Party.
652. The Chairperson requested the Secretariat to propose a revised text.

- 653.** The Chairperson introduced the revised text prepared by the Secretariat, which read “involve the social partners and cooperate with other relevant stakeholders, where appropriate, in the design, implementation (including consultation on resource allocation), monitoring and evaluation of skills development and lifelong learning policies, systems and programmes”.
- 654.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the text proposed by the Secretariat. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, expressed flexibility on the amendment.
- 655.** Point 13(e) was adopted as amended.

Point 13(f)

- 656.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to replace the term “national conditions” with “national circumstances”, as it was the more common term.
- 657.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG all supported the amendment.
- 658.** The amendment was adopted.
- 659.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, requested the Secretariat to clarify whether the expressions “national practice” and “national circumstances” were both accepted language.
- 660.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General confirmed that both expressions were used in official ILO documents.
- 661.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, withdrew his amendment to insert “in line with national practice”.
- 662.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced two amendments. The first was to add “well-designed and transparent employer contribution-based training funds, including” before “incentive schemes”. The aim was to make reference to best practices in financing for skills development, such as the Union Learn programme in the United Kingdom. The second proposed to delete “and outcome-based funding for training institutions, where applicable” at the end of the clause, as it was inappropriate for the funding of training institutions to be conditional on results, which would represent an additional constraint on them.
- 663.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support either amendment. The conclusions were an aspirational document, whereas the amendment was overly prescriptive. The chapeau text called for flexibility in financing models and it was unacceptable to require employers alone to fund skills development on their own. As to the second amendment, training institutions had to be accountable and taxpayers’ money could not be invested in non-performing institutions.
- 664.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the first amendment, as it was not applicable to all national circumstances and was too restrictive. He also did not support the second amendment, as the inclusion of “where applicable” already provided for flexibility.
- 665.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, did not support either amendment.

- 666.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, proposed a subamendment, to read: “according to national circumstances and practices, introduce and implement diverse, equitable and sustainable financing models, including incentive schemes for learners and enterprises and, where appropriate, well-designed and transparent employer contribution-based training funds”.
- 667.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson said that an ILO study had shown that 90 per cent of training funds were provided by employers, and requested confirmation from the Secretariat.
- 668.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General responded that according to an ILO report that analysed the financing of different types of training funds (such as an employer’s levy from the payroll taxes and public subsidies), 63 out of the 75 countries assessed had training funds financed via payroll. However, it was not entirely clear whether that was full or partial funding via payroll.
- 669.** The Chairperson requested the Secretariat to propose a revised text.
- 670.** The Chairperson introduced a proposed revised text, which read, “according to national circumstances and practices, introduce and implement diverse, equitable and sustainable financing models, including incentive schemes for learners and enterprises and where appropriate well-designed and transparent employer contribution-based funds;”.
- 671.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the revised text.
- 672.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the revised text. She could not support the insertion of “well-designed and transparent employer contribution-based training funds”, as employers should not be prescribed as the only contributor to the funding of training. She also did not support the deletion of “outcome-based funding for training institutions where applicable”, as the governments could not continue to the funding of non-performing training institutions.
- 673.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced a subamendment to delete the word “employer” in “well-designed and transparent employer contribution-based training funds”, as it would capture various potential funding options from diversified sources. He also proposed to retain “outcome-based funding for training institutions where applicable”, which added value to the conclusions.
- 674.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the subamendment. The removal of “employers” could be appropriate, as training funds contributed by the social partners and governments existed in many countries, including Nigeria.
- 675.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson stated that vocational training had to be funded by employers, as reflected in ILO instruments. The conclusions contained references to innovative funding and shared responsibilities, and acknowledged the fact that national practices needed to be considered.
- 676.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, clarified that the subamendment proposed by his group was to retain the reference to “outcome-based funding for training institutions where applicable”.
- 677.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, expressed the view that “employers” should not be mentioned specifically, as workers could also contribute financially to training. He supported the retention of “outcome-based funding for training institutions where applicable”.

- 678.** After informal consultations between the Employers' and Workers' groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to delete the word "employer" before "contributions-based" and to delete "outcome-based funding for training institutions."
- 679.** Point 13(f) was adopted as subamended.

Point 13(g)

- 680.** The Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; introduced an amendment, submitted jointly with the Governments of Canada, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, to add "career guidance" before "training" and delete "career" before "support services". The purpose was to present a comprehensive overview of the services which could be made available to support workers.
- 681.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group supported the amendment.
- 682.** The amendment was adopted.
- 683.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to add "and strengthen needs-based targeted policies and, where applicable, tailored financial support as needed" after "career support services". Targeted policies worked best to ensure upskilling of workers to become productive members of the labour market. Furthermore, as the provision of financial support was not always possible or desirable, the inclusion of "where applicable" before "tailored financial support" was necessary.
- 684.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and the United States of America supported the amendment. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, was flexible.
- 685.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment. She proposed a subamendment to delete "needs-based", as companies, particularly SMEs, also needed such support.
- 686.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, was flexible on the subamendment.
- 687.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the subamendment.
- 688.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.
- 689.** Point 13(g) was adopted as subamended.
- 690.** The Chairperson noted, in relation to four amendments concerning the qualifiers preceding "labour market transitions", that the Working Party had adopted the wording "successful and equitable labour market transitions" under point 2, and proposed that the same wording should be used in point 13(g).
- 691.** The proposal was adopted.

Point 13(h)

- 692.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete, after "all enterprises", the words "in particular micro, small and medium sized enterprises", as the intention was that all enterprises should be supported.

- 693.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment as micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) were particularly in need of support.
- 694.** The Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and Canada did not support the amendment, as the importance of MSMEs should be acknowledged.
- 695.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, added that MSMEs required particular attention to in the context of apprenticeships, which were the subject of the clause.
- 696.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, highlighted the importance of SMEs in developing countries.
- 697.** The amendment was withdrawn.

Point 13(i)

- 698.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, had submitted an amendment, together with the Government members of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to replace “ecosystem-level collaboration” with “sectoral collaboration”, because “ecosystem” was not yet established terminology. Similar amendments had been proposed by the Employers’ group and ASPAG.
- 699.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, and the Government members of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the amendment. The latter sought clarification from the Secretariat on the use of the terms.
- 700.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General explained that the Office was beginning to use the term “ecosystem”, since it was more synthetic and also referred to within-sectoral mechanisms, but, the two terms were used interchangeably.
- 701.** The amendment was adopted.
- 702.** The Chairperson observed that the Africa group had introduced an amendment to delete “including the creation of large-scale partnerships involving all stakeholders”; ASPAG had submitted amendments to delete “including the creation of large-scale partnerships” and to add “relevant” before “all stakeholders”; and the Employers’ group had submitted an amendment to delete “including the creation of large-scale partnerships involving all” and to replace it with “by involving relevant”.
- 703.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson asked the Secretariat whether “stakeholders” included workers’ organizations, which the deputy representative of the Secretary-General confirmed. The Worker Vice-Chairperson then supported the amendment to replace “all” with “relevant” before “stakeholders”.
- 704.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, expressed his flexibility in accepting “all” or “relevant” before “stakeholders”. He proposed a subamendment to insert “multi-” before “sectoral” and sought clarification from the Secretariat on the intention of the clause.
- 705.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General explained that the first reference to collaboration referred to collaboration within one sector. The reference to cross-sectoral collaboration at the end of the clause referred to collaboration between different sectors.

706. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, withdrew the subamendment.

707. Point 13(i) was adopted as subamended.

Point 13(j)

708. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to add, after “providers of training”, the words “career guidance services and career counselling”, and noted that the EU and its Member States had submitted a similar amendment proposing to add, after “providers of training”, the words “and guidance services”.

709. The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, and Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC supported the amendment.

710. The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment to add, after “training”, the words “and where appropriate, career guidance services and career counselling”, as employers’ organizations did not provide career guidance and career counselling services.

711. The amendment was adopted as subamended.

Point 13(k)

712. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, introduced an amendment to insert, after “COVID-19 pandemic”, the wording “identify possible gaps and overlaps to strengthen the coherence and efficiency of lifelong learning systems, ensure evidence-based policymaking”.

713. The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, and China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the amendment.

714. The amendment was adopted.

715. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, introduced an amendment to replace “fragile” with “vulnerable”.

716. The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, supported the amendment.

717. The Worker Vice-Chairperson affirmed that “vulnerability” was about people whereas “fragility” referred to the context in which they were placed. She introduced a subamendment to retain both words “fragile and vulnerable”.

718. The Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government member of Canada supported both the amendment and the subamendment.

719. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said that “vulnerable” was much clearer than “fragile”.

720. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, expressed his preference to retain “vulnerable” instead of “fragile”, but could support using both words.

721. The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the proposed subamendment.

722. The amendment was adopted as subamended.

723. Point 13(k) was adopted as subamended.

IV. Recommendations for future ILO action

724. The heading for Part IV was adopted without amendment.

Point 14 chapeau

725. The chapeau of point 14 was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(a) chapeau

726. The chapeau of clause (a) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(a)(i)

727. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “particularly cost and time to learn” after “barriers”, as they were not discriminatory barriers in the way that as race, age or sex were.
728. The Worker Vice-Chairperson stated that many low-income workers could not afford training, hence cost was indeed a discriminatory barrier to their access to skills acquisition and lifelong learning.
729. The Government member of the United States of America introduced a subamendment to delete the word “discriminatory”, and replaced “particularly” by “including” before “cost and time to learn”, such that the text would read “barriers, including cost and time to learn”.
730. The Government member of the United Kingdom said that cost and time were a practical rather than discriminatory barrier. She introduced a further subamendment so that the phrase would read: “Such measures should identify discriminatory, time and cost barriers and the means to overcome them”.
731. The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced a further subamendment to delete “discriminatory, time and cost” before “barriers”, to read “identify barriers and the means to overcome them”. She underscored that even employers faced barriers when it came to skills development and lifelong learning which needed to be addressed.
732. The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the subamendment proposed by the Government member of the United Kingdom but not the further subamendment of the Employers’ group.
733. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, supported the original text, but could support the subamendment introduced by the Government member of the United Kingdom and was flexible on the further subamendment of the Employer Vice-Chairperson.
734. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; the Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States; and the Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the subamendment introduced by the Government member of the United Kingdom.
735. The Employer Vice-Chairperson expressed her preference not to specify the types of barriers, but introduced a further subamendment to add the word “mindset” between “time” and “cost”.
736. The Worker Vice-Chairperson asked the Employer Vice-Chairperson to explain the meaning of “mindset” and how it constituted a barrier to skills development.
737. The Employer Vice-Chairperson explained that “mindset” referred to the ability of a person to receive training, skills and education; it therefore constituted a barrier when people were

unwilling to accept training. Research had confirmed the positive effects of supporting culture, attitudes and mindsets in adapting to and facilitating transformative processes. However, she repeated her preference not to specify the types of barriers.

- 738.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as “mindset” was a subjective concept. Furthermore, workers who refused to undertake training would face consequences, which might include losing their job. The text was referring to barriers keeping people from learning and “mindset” was misplaced.
- 739.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, expressed the view that “mindset” was not an appropriate term in an ILO document. He proposed that the Secretariat should suggest alternative wording for the concept, which might include “and other barriers”, to capture all types of potential barriers.
- 740.** The Chairperson introduced the alternative wording suggested by the Secretariat: “Such measures should identify and address discriminatory, time, cost and motivational barriers, among others, and promote an openness to learning;”.
- 741.** After informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to add a reference to “promote an enabling environment” to the text proposed by the Secretariat, to read: “Such measures should promote an enabling environment and openness to learning, and identify and address discriminatory, time, cost and motivational barriers, among others”.
- 742.** Point 14(a)(i) was adopted as amended.

Point 14(a)(ii)

- 743.** Point 14(a)(ii) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(a)(iii)

- 744.** Point 14(a)(iii) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(a)(iv)

- 745.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced an amendment to replace the word “and” by “in close collaboration with” after “measures to assist governments”. The aim was to clarify that it was the primary responsibility of governments to achieve the SDGs. In so doing, they should collaborate with the social partners who could assist them in that respect.
- 746.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson and the Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the amendment.
- 747.** The amendment was adopted.

Point 14(b)

- 748.** Point 14(b) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(c)

- 749.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “including a ratification campaign [for the Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140), and] for the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)”, as it was for the Office to determine

which international labour standards to promote for each country where it provided support and it was not appropriate to list specific instruments.

- 750.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson contended that skills development and lifelong learning was a specific subject area on which guidance was needed on the most relevant instruments, namely Convention No. 142 and Convention No. 140, and specifying them in the text would help provide the Office with the means to promote them.
- 751.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support retaining the reference to Convention No. 140 and could accept deletion of both Conventions.
- 752.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, noted that his group had proposed an amendment to delete the reference to Convention No. 140, but he could support retaining a reference to Convention No. 142.
- 753.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, did not support deletion of the references to the two Conventions and preferred the original text. She said that it was good for the future of work to promote the ratification of Conventions.
- 754.** After informal consultations between the Employers' and Workers' groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed on the following rewording: "... including a ratification campaign for the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142). The Office should identify possible obstacles to the ratification and implementation of the Paid Educational Leave Convention, 1974 (No. 140), and provide technical assistance to overcome them ...".
- 755.** Point 14(c) was adopted as subamended.

Point 14(d)

- 756.** Point 14(d) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(e)

- 757.** The Government member of Canada, speaking also on behalf of the Government members of Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, introduced an amendment and subamendment to insert "where appropriate, subnational" between "national" and "and regional".
- 758.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.

Point 14(f)

- 759.** Point 14(f) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(g)

- 760.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to replace "reinforce the focus on" with "reflect" before "skills development and lifelong learning at the country level", as it would provide clear guidance to the Office and the Governing Body, without prescribing the details.
- 761.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as "reflect" was a weaker term.
- 762.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, proposed a subamendment to replace the word "reflect" with "focus on" at the beginning of the paragraph.

- 763.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the subamendment.
- 764.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the subamendment.
- 765.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, noted that the word “focus” could be counterproductive as it may dilute the significance of other policy areas.
- 766.** After informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to replace “reinforce the focus on” with “focus on”.
- 767.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete “in collaboration with the United Nations resident coordinator system [and enhance the field structure, including human resources, to support skills development and lifelong learning systems]”. The Governing Body of the ILO was responsible for deciding on matters of resource allocation across different areas of work, for the Director-General to implement. The text appeared to provide guidance to the ILO to increase resources in a particular area, which was not within the purview of the Working Party.
- 768.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as Decent Work Country Programmes were the main vehicles for ILO support to countries. The field structure, including its human resources, needed to be enhanced in order for the ILO to deliver on skills development and lifelong learning.
- 769.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the amendment.
- 770.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, recalled that the drafting group had already reached consensus on the retention of “in collaboration with United Nations resident coordinator system”, and there was no reason to revisit that discussion.
- 771.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson could agree to retain “in collaboration with the United Nations resident coordinator system” with a view to ensuring the policy coherence that the ILO had always pursued. However, she still proposed to delete “enhance the field structure, including human resources, to support skills development and lifelong learning systems”, as it was not the role of the Working Party to instruct the Director-General to increase the capacity of field offices, which depended on the Organization’s budget. Enhancing field capacity would entail increased expenditure, which in turn would require governments to increase their contributions.
- 772.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, noted that her group had submitted an amendment to “enhance the field structure, including human resources, to support skills development and lifelong learning systems”.
- 773.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson pointed out that the International Labour Conference was the supreme decision-making body of the ILO and that the Governing Body determined how to implement those decisions. The Office did not have the requisite resources to carry out the work needed and she felt very strongly about maintaining the reference to enhancing the field structure. She asked the Secretariat how many skills specialists were employed in the field.
- 774.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General informed the Working Party that there were 11 skills specialists in the field and five skills specialists in ILO headquarters, funded by the regular budget. There were also additional staff members in the field working on development cooperation projects, but he did not have the exact number.

- 775.** The Government member of the United States of America said that it was not clear whether enhancing the field structure necessarily implied shifting resources from headquarters, potentially from other critical areas of work. He therefore proposed a subamendment to replace “enhance” with “explore possibilities for enhancing” before “the field structure”.
- 776.** The Government member of Costa Rica did not support the deletion of the reference to enhancing the field structure but could support the subamendment.
- 777.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, asked the Secretariat whether resource allocations included human resources as well as financial resources.
- 778.** The deputy representative of the Secretary-General confirmed that both financial and human resource allocations were included in the term “resource allocation”.
- 779.** Following informal consultations between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to delete the reference to enhancing the ILO field structure. The revised text read: “focus on skills development and lifelong learning at the country level in Decent Work Country Programmes, in collaboration with the United Nations resident coordinator system”.
- 780.** Point 14(g) was adopted as subamended.

Point 14(h)

- 781.** Point 14(h) was adopted without amendment.

Point 14(i)

- 782.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, introduced an amendment to replace “paid educational leave” with “skills development and lifelong learning” and to delete, after “informal economy”, “those in insecure forms of work”. The purpose was to ensure greater flexibility for the Office to identify research topics. He noted that the document might be overly restrictive if the term “paid educational leave” was retained.
- 783.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Government members of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group; and the Government member of the United States of America supported the amendment.
- 784.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment and introduced a subamendment to add “and paid educational leave” after “skills development and lifelong learning”.
- 785.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson; the Government members of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC; and Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the subamendment.
- 786.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, expressed flexibility on the deletion of the term “paid educational leave”.
- 787.** Following informal discussions between the Employers’ and Workers’ groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed on the deletion of “paid educational leave” and on the following rewording: “research by the Office to highlight pathways for workers in the informal economy, the self-employed and workers in forms of work such as part-time work, fixed-term contracts and working through private employment agencies to effectively access skills development and lifelong learning”.

- 788.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, reiterated her request for the Working Party to consider including a reference to platform workers in point 14(i), as it had been deleted from point 5. Since there was a growing number of platform workers, the ILO should undertake research in that area. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, echoed her comments.
- 789.** The Chairperson observed that the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons did not support the proposal.
- 790.** Point 14(i) was adopted as subamended.

Point 14(j)

- 791.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the whole of clause (j), as the provision of advice on technologies and the use of artificial intelligence, was not within the mandate of the ILO, nor did the Office have the necessary expertise.
- 792.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government members of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States; China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG; the United States of America; and Canada did not support the amendment. The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, recognized the added value of including the text on artificial intelligence.
- 793.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson proposed a subamendment to delete the word “tripartite” before “governance” and the words “especially the use of artificial intelligence, with a focus on data protection and management” so that the clause would read “provide coherent advice around the importance of governance of the technology used to build skills systems”.
- 794.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, agreed that the wording “especially the use of artificial intelligence, while paying attention to data protection and management” went beyond the scope of the ILO’s work.
- 795.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, acknowledged that governance of skills was a critical aspect to be addressed in the conclusions, but did not support the word “tripartite” before “governance” as it did not reflect the reality in many countries in Asia and the Pacific. He proposed a subamendment to replace “with a focus on” with “paying attention to” before “data protection and management”, as the issue of artificial intelligence was much broader.
- 796.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, supported the subamendment. He introduced an amendment to replace “tripartite governance” with “tripartite cooperation”.
- 797.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson supported the replacement of the words “tripartite governance” with “tripartite cooperation” and the use of “while paying attention to”.
- 798.** The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, said he was flexible and supported the amendments.
- 799.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said she preferred the original text, but she was flexible with the proposed amendments.
- 800.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, supported the replacement of the words “tripartite governance” with “tripartite cooperation”. His group could also support the proposal of the Employer Vice-Chairperson.

- 801.** The Government member of the United States of America supported the replacement of the words “tripartite governance” with “tripartite cooperation” and was flexible with the rest of the text.
- 802.** The amendments were adopted as subamended.

Point 14(k)

- 803.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to delete the entire clause (k): “strengthen the ILO’s work on skills and lifelong learning through the integration of such work into the ILO’s programme and budget and strategic plans, with clear follow-up mechanisms indicating short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives and setting out the human and financial resources required”, stating that it was not necessary for the conclusions to contain such details.
- 804.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as if the ILO wanted to lead in skills development and lifelong learning, the programme and budget should be dealt in the current discussion. The programme and budget had been mentioned in previous conclusions of the International Labour Conference, such as the 2015 Conclusions concerning small and medium-sized enterprises and decent and productive employment creation, the 2013 Conclusions concerning achieving decent work, green jobs and sustainable development and the 2007 Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises, hence a reference to the programme and budget could be justified in the Conclusions on skills and lifelong learning. Clause (k) did not imply increased budget allocation from the governments but rather reallocation of resources to the area of skills and lifelong learning.
- 805.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the deletion of the clause.
- 806.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, requested the Secretariat to explain whether the original text of clause (k) would have any consequences on the total budget of the ILO.
- 807.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, requested the Secretariat to explain whether there would be any budget implications for Member States’ contributions, and whether the reference to budgetary allocation concerned internal sources.
- 808.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson proposed to replace clause (k) with a reference to the programme and budget in the resolution that would be proposed to the Conference for adoption.
- 809.** The Legal Adviser provided clarification on the legal nature of the conclusions of the Working Party and the decision-making authority of the International Labour Conference in matters related to resource allocation. He explained that the conclusions of the Working Party would be included in a resolution which would be proposed to the Conference for adoption on the last day of the session. Resolutions of the Conference were non-binding in nature, but did have binding effect on the organs of the ILO, in particular the Governing Body and the Office. The Conference was mandated to set the priorities of the Organization, and left it to the Office, under the guidance of the Governing Body, to operationalize and implement those priorities. The Governing Body had overall responsibility for coordinating the activities of the ILO and taking decisions in relation to their financing. The Office carried out the duties assigned to it by the Conference and the Governing Body. The standard language of resolutions provided that the Conference invited the Governing Body to request the Director-General to take the conclusions into account when preparing the programme and budget proposals and to give

effect to them to the extent possible when implementing the programme and budget for the immediate next biennium. The Conference was the supreme organ of the Organization, with full powers to allocate resources within the limits of the programme and budget adopted and make all relevant decisions. Yet, it needed to leave the implementation of decisions to the Governing Body, and through the Governing Body to the Director-General and thus the Office.

- 810.** After considering the text of the draft resolution, the Working Party agreed on the deletion of point 14(k).

Point 14(l)

- 811.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to include, after “engage”, the words “and cooperate”, as it was important for the Office to go beyond engagement.
- 812.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support the amendment, as cooperation could be the result of engagement but was no substitute for it.
- 813.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the amendment, as it was his understanding that the conditions for such engagement had already been agreed upon between the ILO and the international financial institutions.
- 814.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, did not support the amendment.
- 815.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said that she could be flexible on the amendment.
- 816.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment.
- 817.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson introduced an amendment to add, after “international financial institutions”, the words “for resource mobilization” and an amendment to delete “to extend the fiscal space for education and training and engage with all relevant institutions for a more balanced international policy” after “organization’s mandate”, as extending fiscal space was not within the mandate of the ILO.
- 818.** The Worker Vice-Chairperson did not support either amendment.
- 819.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, proposed a subamendment to add “and allocation” after “resource mobilization”.
- 820.** The Government member of the United Kingdom expressed concern that the addition of a reference to resource mobilization and allocation would change the meaning of the clause, and proposed a further subamendment to add “including for” before “resource mobilization”.
- 821.** The amendment was adopted as subamended.
- 822.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, did not support the Employer Vice-Chairperson’s proposed deletion. He introduced an amendment to replace “balanced” with “coherent” before “international policy”.
- 823.** The amendment was adopted.
- 824.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said she was flexible regarding the addition of “for resource mobilization” proposed by the Employers’ group but did not support the deletion of “to extend the fiscal space for education and training and engage with all relevant institutions for a more balanced international policy”.

825. The Employer Vice-Chairperson withdrew the amendment to delete the phrase, given that Government members did not consider the deletion necessary.

826. Point 14(l) was adopted as subamended.

Draft resolution

827. At the request of the Chairperson, the representative of the Secretary-General proposed the following draft resolution:

Resolution concerning skills and lifelong learning

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting at its 109 Session, 2021.

Having undertaken a general discussion on the basis of Report VI, *Shaping skills and lifelong learning for the future of work*,

1. Adopts the following conclusions; and
2. Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to request the Director-General to develop a strategy and action plan on skills and lifelong learning, and to promote and support its implementation, including through the allocation of resources within the existing and forthcoming programmes and budgets and mobilization of extrabudgetary resources.

828. After informal consultations between the Employers' and Workers' groups, the Employer Vice-Chairperson announced that they had agreed to add, after "strategy and action plan on skills and lifelong learning", the words "to strengthen the ILO's work in that area", and to add, after "implementation", the words "with clear follow-up mechanisms indicating short-term, medium-term and long-term objectives".

829. The draft resolution was adopted as amended.

Concluding remarks

830. The Chairperson congratulated the Working Party on the successful completion of its work by the adoption of the conclusions and invited the members of the Working Party to make concluding remarks.

831. The Worker Vice-Chairperson thanked the Chairperson, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, the Government group spokespersons and all members of the Working Party for their persistence and collaboration in arriving at a consensus. She gave special thanks to her own group for their support. The conclusions of the Working Party were very important for the world of work, for businesses, for workers, for countries and for economies. It was now time to move forward to implement the conclusions.

832. The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked the Chairperson for her patience, her counterpart on the Workers' group, the Government members of the Working Party, as well her own group. She expressed appreciation to the Secretariat for its support. She remained convinced that the ILO was best placed to lead on skills development and lifelong learning at the international level and the conclusions would position the Organization exactly where it needed to be.

833. The Government member of Costa Rica, speaking on behalf of GRULAC, thanked the Chairperson for her excellent work, and the Employer, Worker and Government members of the Working Party. He expressed appreciation for the support provided by the Secretariat and the interpreters. He expressed his gratitude, and that of his group, for the experience of

participating in the Working Party and looked forward to working towards putting the conclusions into practice.

- 834.** The Government member of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the Africa group, expressed his gratitude to the Chairperson, to all members of the Working Party and the Secretariat. He noted the flexibility, constructive engagement and the understanding shown, including in discussions that had at times been difficult. He thanked the EU, in particular, for the additional online consultations held to resolve issues of mutual interest. He looked forward to implementation of the conclusions. He did, however, note his group's concern regarding the absence of agreement on one point. He expressed his hope that, in the future, it would be possible to learn how better to accommodate differing views.
- 835.** The Government member of China, speaking on behalf of ASPAG, thanked the Chairperson and all the members of the Working Party for the effective and fruitful discussions to deepen mutual understanding, which was so important for tripartite social dialogue. It had been an honour for him to participate in the negotiations. He especially appreciated the efforts of the social partners to reach consensus. He expressed his thanks to the members of ASPAG who had worked so late at night. He thanked the Secretariat and interpreters for their tireless work. ASPAG looked forward to further engagement of ILO constituents on the important issue of skills development and lifelong learning in the near future.
- 836.** The Government member of Slovenia, speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States, said that Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Iceland, Norway and the Republic of Moldova, aligned themselves with her statement. She thanked the Chairperson, Vice-Chairpersons, the Secretariat and the interpreters for their tireless work. The constructive engagement of all concerned had produced conclusions through consensus despite the virtual format. The conclusions adopted by the Working Party represented an important step in advancing the discussion on skills development and lifelong learning, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda, in particular targets under SDGs 4, 5 and 8, and the joint commitments set out in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019 and the Global call to action for a human-centred recovery. Investment in skills and lifelong learning was an investment in people and in the future. The ILO had a pivotal role to play in that area and should reinforce its leadership by developing a coherent, inclusive and gender-responsive strategy on skills and lifelong learning for 2022–30, expanding its collaboration across the multilateral system and its capacity-building efforts. She expressed hope that the conclusions would pave the way for more robust, resilient and adaptive skills and lifelong learning systems that were accessible and inclusive for all, including vulnerable groups and persons with disabilities, helping people to navigate transitions throughout their lives. She looked forward to the standard-setting discussion on apprenticeships in 2022 and 2023.
- 837.** The Government member of the United States of America thanked the Chairperson and all members of the Working Party for the constructive spirit of collaboration that had resulted in the adoption of the conclusions, and expressed his gratitude to the Secretariat for its support.
- 838.** The Government member of the United Kingdom said that it had been a privilege to participate in the Working Party and thanked everyone involved. She looked forward to the implementation of the conclusions in order to improve skills and lifelong learning.
- 839.** The Government member of Canada expressed her gratitude to everyone involved in the work of the Working Party, the Chairperson for her leadership and guidance, the social partners for their hard work and willingness to negotiate, and the Government members for their effective input. She thanked the Secretariat for its excellent support throughout, including the interpreters.

840. The Chairperson expressed her gratitude to the members of the Working Party for their perseverance and the spirit of tripartite social dialogue, which had been reflected in the excellent outcome. It had been an honour for her personally and for her country, Uganda, to act as Chairperson. The task had been ambitious and challenging, and the results exceeded her expectations. The conclusions signalled a strong commitment to promote skills and lifelong learning. She thanked especially the Employer and Worker Vice-Chairpersons, without whose commitment a meaningful outcome could not have been achieved. She also thanked the Reporter of the Working Party, the Government group spokespersons and the other Government members for their commitment to consensus-building. Lastly, she thanked the members of the Secretariat for their tireless efforts to support the Working Party. She declared the sitting closed.