

# Governing Body

344th Session, Geneva, March 2022

## Policy Development Section

**POL**

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## Draft minutes of the Policy Development Section

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## Employment and Social Protection Segment

### 1. Securing social protection for migrant workers and their families: Challenges and options for building a better future (GB.344/POL/1)

1. The Governing Body had before it an amendment to subparagraph (b) of the draft decision that had been proposed by the Employers' group. The amendment had been circulated by the Office to all groups, and read:
  - (b) requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance when preparing future programme and budget proposals in the follow-up to the 2021 Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) and with a view to furthering measures aimed at ~~securing and~~ extending social protection for migrant workers and their families through all relevant ILO means of action and to provide an update on these promotional and capacity building activities and technical advisory services at a future session of the Governing Body.
2. **The Employer spokesperson** stated that the topic of migration was becoming more pertinent as the world of work became more globalized and dynamic. Also, the importance of social protection had been underscored during the COVID-19 pandemic. The acquisition and maintenance of social security rights by migrant workers, including their preservation and portability, would facilitate labour transition and formalization. As the efforts of businesses to harness migration and create employment were often hindered by shortcomings in normative frameworks, work to extend social protection to migrant workers should also enable those frameworks to allow for regular migration. Special attention should be paid to policy responses for addressing irregular migration and informality. Policies designed to extend social protection to migrant workers in the informal economy should also support their transition to formal employment. There was an obvious, albeit neglected, need for employers' organizations to participate in drawing up migration policies, and broad and effective dialogue between governments and businesses was necessary if migration policy was to be effective.
3. The Employers were committed to the realization of universal social protection. Efforts to extend social protection to migrant workers and their families should be guided by the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202). In setting out the policy measures for consideration in the document, the Office should have considered the challenges raised in the General Survey concerning the migrant workers instruments, for example the Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19), the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143). Policy measures linked to the latter two instruments should go beyond promotion, and it was regrettable that they were absent from the programme of work of the Standards Review Mechanism Tripartite Working Group. Noting that ratification campaigns alone were insufficient, he urged the ILO to promote good practice and lessons learned in the application of relevant Conventions, and to raise awareness of the importance of coherent policy anchored in social dialogue. His group would also support further research and analysis of the impact and relevance of ILO standards to address social protection for migrant workers.
4. Bilateral and multilateral agreements assisted in creating enabling frameworks for regular migration and allowing migrants to work in the formal economy. Such agreements should be developed through dialogue with the social partners; the ILO could offer important assistance

to governments in that regard. He hoped that the guide for policymakers and practitioners would provide clarity on the challenges in extending social protection to migrant workers and their families. The update to the mapping of existing bilateral agreements could contribute to a possible review of Conventions Nos 97 and 143, the related Recommendations and the model agreement contained in the Annex to the Migration for Employment Recommendation (Revised), 1949 (No. 86). The document's lack of information on the beneficiaries of the capacity-building services provided to constituents was regrettable. Those services must be provided in a balanced manner that benefited governments and social partners in all regions, while taking into consideration the barriers to ratification and effective implementation described in the 2006 General Survey on labour inspection.

5. The collaboration with the International Social Security Association and the ILO's contribution within the UN Network on Migration to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration were welcome. He wished to know how the Office was working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The Employers strongly supported the Office's efforts to mobilize resources in the framework of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, in which they hoped to participate actively. His group's proposed amendment stemmed from the relevance of the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session in 2021 and its requirement for the Office to continue to keep the Governing Body apprised of policy measures and other activities.
6. **The Worker spokesperson** noted that migrants were disproportionately excluded from social protection and faced considerable difficulty in accumulating sufficient contributions under contributory schemes and in accessing non-contributory support. Their vulnerability had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some migrant workers were in disguised employment relationships on digital labour platforms abroad and faced additional obstacles to social security. Seafarers were particularly vulnerable. The 2021 resolution should therefore be implemented in full.
7. Strategies to secure social protection for migrant workers and their families must be rights-based and coordinate with efforts to provide decent work to all migrants. Social security policies with that aim must be developed and implemented with the social partners. Equality of treatment between nationals and non-nationals should be incorporated into national legislation aimed at extending social protection for migrant workers and their families. The fact that just 70 governments had done so was cause for concern. Therefore, as a matter of urgency, the standards mentioned in paragraph 11 of the document must be ratified and implemented, along with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). He urged destination countries to ratify Conventions Nos 97 and 143 and reiterated the importance of reaching 70 ratifications of Convention No. 102 by 2026. He listed a number of other relevant instruments, including the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees.
8. Recalling that the International Labour Conference had called on the Office to support and promote bilateral and multilateral agreements on social security for migrant workers and their families, he added that the Office should also raise awareness of the Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962 (No. 118), and the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Convention, 1982 (No. 157), and provide technical assistance for their ratification. Those instruments should be included in a future General Survey to examine obstacles to their ratification and inform the recurrent discussion on social security planned for 2026. Trade

unions should be involved in developing and monitoring bilateral labour agreements, which protected migrant workers' rights. The ILO's role in drafting recent United Nations guidance on bilateral labour migration agreements was welcome.

9. Destination countries should amend social security legislation to include migrant workers. The limited scope of some of the social security measures listed in paragraph 15 of the document meant that they should be deemed complementary measures. The extension of contributory schemes to migrant workers would benefit destination countries by increasing total contributions. The extension of social protection to migrants meant ensuring adequate social protection floors, regardless of an individual's contribution history or migration status, through measures to combat discrimination and disadvantages affecting migrant workers. Countries of origin should ensure that migrants' social security contributions were preserved, and regional organizations should develop agreements to guarantee the portability and preservation of contributions and benefits.
10. The ILO's commendable work on documenting social insurance schemes for agricultural workers should contribute to the extension of social protection to that group of workers. The intersectionality between gender, race, region and migration status on the risks and vulnerabilities should be better addressed in future, and the Office should continue to include social protection and decent work for migrant workers in its contributions to the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. His group supported the draft decision, preferring its broader reference to the programme and budget proposals over the Employers' proposed reference to the 2021 resolution, which was limiting. The Workers could not agree to the deletion of "securing and", and the update proposed by the Employers was too narrow in scope.
11. **Speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)**, a Government representative of Bangladesh drew attention to the mutually reinforcing nature of migration and the global development policy agenda and requested that the Office conduct in-depth research on bilateral and multilateral social protection agreements, taking into account differences in social security systems, so as to support negotiations on such agreements. The Office should also include migrant workers in its social protection activities while respecting States' sovereign right to determine national migration policies.
12. ASPAG shared the Office's concerns with regard to the significant disparities between nationals and non-nationals, although the increase in the number of social security agreements among countries was encouraging. The ILO's leading role in the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions was a welcome step towards guaranteeing workers' social security rights at the global level. He commended the Office's promotion of bilateral, multilateral and plurilateral instruments on migrant workers' social security rights and its related technical assistance. The Office should accelerate its campaign to promote the ratification of the relevant social security instruments and work with the International Social Security Association in that regard. An in-depth discussion of the promotion of migrant workers' social security rights would be welcome. ASPAG could accept the original draft decision and would welcome other members' views on the amendment proposed by the Employers.
13. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Chile acknowledged migrant workers' contribution to development and their particular vulnerability to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had demonstrated the need to broaden social and labour protection. To that end, greater coordination between social protection policies and immigration and employment policies was

required. He encouraged the Office to continue its commendable work on migration within the United Nations system to further international migration governance and requested that it increase its engagement with bilateral and multilateral initiatives in his region, taking migrant workers' needs and individual countries' capacities into account. GRULAC could support the original draft decision, but it could also support the amendment submitted by the Employers if it were subamended to read:

...

- (b) requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance when preparing future programme and budget proposals ~~in the follow-up to the 2021 Resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security)~~ and with a view to furthering measures aimed at securing and facilitating and extending social protection for migrant workers and their families through all relevant ILO means of action, ~~and to provide an update on these promotional and capacity building activities and technical advisory services at a future session of the Governing Body while taking into account the resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security), adopted in 2021; and~~
- (c) also requested the Director-General to provide an update on these promotional and capacity building activities and technical advisory services at a future session of the Governing Body.

14. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Eswatini said that, despite the considerable normative and policy measures in place to guarantee the social security rights of all workers, the challenge of extending social protection to migrant workers and their families had become even greater as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ILO therefore needed to continue to dedicate resources and technical and advisory services to that area. He urged the Office to measure its success based on outputs 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 of outcome 8 of the Programme and Budget for the biennium 2022–23, with a focus on action at the national and regional levels.
15. Increasing the capacity of Member States to develop sustainable national social protection strategies, policies or legal frameworks to extend coverage and enhance benefit adequacy, improving the governance and sustainability of social protection systems, and integrating social protection in comprehensive policy responses to support and protect workers and employers during their life and work transitions remained at the core of building a better future for migrant workers and their families. The Office's work to strengthen its technical advisory services for the tripartite constituents, including regional economic communities, on the extension of social protection based on equality of treatment was commendable. The Africa group wished to work with the ILO and other agencies in the United Nations Network on Migration to give effect to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. A gap analysis should be undertaken to better identify the challenges faced by migrant workers and their families in relation to accessing social protection and to consider the opportunities of its extension. New modalities for financing the extension of social protection, including as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, should be explored. Equality of treatment, including in times of crisis, along with the extension of coverage and effective access through better coordination of social security systems, and through social security agreements facilitating the portability of entitlements to social protection, were crucial to tackling obstacles faced by migrant workers to access healthcare and other social protection benefits. When preparing future programme and budget proposals and mobilizing extrabudgetary resources, the Office should take into account the conclusions of the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 109th Session (2021). The Africa group supported the original draft decision.



- 16. Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States**, a Government representative of France said that the following countries aligned themselves with the statement: Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, Iceland, Norway and Ukraine. The EU reiterated the importance of achieving universal social protection, recalling that migrant workers and their families were particularly affected by deficits in social protection. Social protection schemes needed to be adequate and gender-responsive to reduce the risk of poverty and inequalities significantly. A comprehensive approach to migration was needed, which should include measures to improve social protection for migrant workers legally residing in a State. The conclusions of the recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) adopted by the Conference in 2021 underlined the main action needed. Bilateral and multilateral social security agreements were needed alongside national measures, which were the basis of the response to the needs of the most vulnerable groups, such as workers in the informal economy. The EU welcomed the activities of the Office to secure social protection for migrant workers legally residing in a State and their families, including in respect of knowledge development, capacity-building and strengthened technical advisory services. It was crucial to reaffirm the ILO's mandate and leadership in social protection. The EU welcomed the discussion of international initiatives to boost commitment to social protection and supported the original draft decision.
- 17. Speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, a Government representative of Indonesia noted that universal social protection systems and enhanced international cooperation and coordination were essential to protect migrant workers and their families. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers, ASEAN supported the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. He reiterated the importance of effective and relevant international labour standards on social protection that were fit for purpose, noting in particular Convention No. 102 and Recommendation No. 202. As the implementation of phase 2 of the ILO Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All required comprehensive planning and effective resource mobilization and allocation, the Office should allocate adequate and sustainable resources from the regular budget to the area of social protection. The extrabudgetary resource was a complementary funding channel. To build on the success of the Programme's first phase, the Office should make greater efforts to mobilize resources in line with the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25, including in cooperation with United Nations resident coordinators and country teams. ASEAN looked forward to receiving further support from the Office and development partners in the implementation of the second phase of the ILO Global Flagship Programme. ASEAN supported the original draft decision.
- 18. A Government representative of India** observed that the pandemic had highlighted the need to extend universal comprehensive social protection through an integrated approach for the workforce, including migrant workers. Urgent action was needed to secure social protection for migrant workers and their families. Equality of treatment should be the overarching framework for extending such protection. Social security agreements were one of the most effective policy options, were essential to ensure the portability of entitlements and provided an incentive to undertake regular migration and work in the formal economy. Their implementation required collaboration and information sharing on the part of Member States. His Government had signed a number of social security agreements with other governments and would welcome further technical assistance from the ILO in that area. The ILO should take the lead in promoting bilateral and multilateral social security agreements promoting equality of treatment and continue to provide related technical advisory services to Member States, including on the ratification and implementation of Conventions relating to social security. The ILO should continue to provide capacity-building services through relevant training

programmes in collaboration with its International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin (Turin Centre) and the International Social Security Association.

19. **A Government representative of Ecuador** said that, in her Government's experience, international cooperation was fundamental to the development of policies that guaranteed decent working conditions through the ethical and fair recruitment of migrant workers. She supported the original draft decision.
20. **A Government representative of the United States of America** noted that the ILO was uniquely suited to provide assistance to constituents seeking to extend social protection for migrant workers. Capacity-building for constituents was particularly important, and she welcomed the training activities, practical guidance, intervention models and technical advisory services provided by the Office as well as the mapping exercises it had undertaken. She sought clarification on whether the proposed General Survey on standards relevant for migrant workers' social protection would be limited to Conventions Nos 19, 118 and 157, and requested information on the role of the ILO in producing the new UN guidance on bilateral migration agreements that could support countries in concluding rights-based agreements. She welcomed ILO partnerships with organizations to advance work in that area, and asked whether the Office had cooperated with the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board and whether any financial support was envisioned for its work through such partnerships. She supported the original draft decision.
21. **A Government representative of Argentina** said that under the national Constitution, migrant workers in Argentina enjoyed the same rights as national workers, which was also reflected in national legislation on social protection and other areas, and in a clause of bilateral and multilateral agreements. The Government produced an annual report on international migrant workers in the country, which it could make available to the ILO. He supported the original draft decision or the version as subamended by GRULAC.
22. **A Government representative of Indonesia** noted that his Government was committed to incorporating in its national policy the right to social protection for migrant workers and their families and had reviewed its labour policies to ensure that migrant workers had access to social protection systems. He emphasized the role of the ILO in providing technical support to its Member States to improve national policies related to social protection for migrant workers, in accordance with international labour standards. The ILO should continue its leadership role in ensuring that migrant workers and their families had access to social protection systems. He supported the original draft decision.
23. **A Government representative of Colombia** said that Colombia had adopted the Global Compact for Migration, as migration had an impact at the national, regional and global levels and no country could deal with it in isolation. Colombia had taken a holistic approach to support the socio-economic integration of the increased flows of migrants. Technical assistance and cooperation from the ILO was essential to strengthen policies to protect migrant workers. She emphasized the importance of regularizing migration. The ILO could help Member States develop programmes for flexible labour mobility based on rights and with a focus on migrants, in keeping with the needs of local and national labour markets and the supply of skills at all levels. She supported the subamendment proposed by GRULAC.
24. **A representative of the Director-General (Deputy Director-General for Policy)** highlighted the broad support and insightful guidance from the Governing Body and the reaffirmation that equality of treatment between migrant workers and nationals was essential and that unilateral measures, especially when they complemented multilateral bilateral agreements, could play an important role in providing the needed social protection. She informed the Governing Body

that the previous week, the Office and the International Social Security Association had launched a joint guide on extending social protection for migrant workers, refugees and their families. In response to the comment from the Employers' group on the relevance of Conventions Nos 97 and 143, she noted that, in 2016, the Committee of Experts had underscored the continued relevance of the objectives of both Conventions, and that following the general discussion on labour migration governance at the 106th Session (2017) of the Conference, those Conventions and the related Recommendations were considered up to date. In the conclusions of that discussion, the Conference had requested that the Office should promote their ratification and implementation, as appropriate, which had been included in the approved action plan. Since 2017, the Office had responded to Member States' requests for assistance and clarification concerning ratification of the migrant worker instruments and had received nine new ratifications of the two Conventions.

25. She confirmed that the transition from the informal to the formal economy in line with ILO standards, particularly the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), was a priority for the Office. It had assisted constituents in supporting the transition, including for women workers in the informal economy such as domestic workers, and would continue to strengthen that work through the implementation of standards and provision of technical guidance. As to the involvement of the social partners in bilateral labour migration agreements, the ILO promoted social dialogue in its guidance to constituents on adopting such agreements and social security agreements, and the new UN system-wide guidance, which the ILO had co-led together with the IOM, made a strong call for social dialogue. The ILO was an executive committee member of the UN Network on Migration, which included the IOM, the UNHCR and other relevant organizations with which the ILO collaborated in the network and on the ground. The ILO and the IOM ran a number of joint projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and the ILO worked closely with the UNHCR under a joint memorandum of understanding. ILO Conventions and Recommendations on migrant workers covered refugees, as confirmed in the 1999 and 2016 ILO General Surveys on migrant workers instruments, as did the ILO's social security agreements. The Office provided regular technical advisory services to constituents on refugees and labour markets in collaboration with the UNHCR and other partners.
26. Concerning the next General Survey on social protection, ahead of the third recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) in 2026, if the Governing Body decided that the focus should be on migrant workers, it would provide a more in-depth understanding of the impact of the ILO standards relevant to migrant workers' rights to social protection, including the reasons for the low levels of ratification and the difficulties encountered in their application. In that case, the General Survey would be limited to Conventions Nos 19, 118, 157 and the Maintenance of Social Security Rights Recommendation, 1983 (No. 167).
27. The Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board had not undertaken any specific work on migrants' rights to social protection; however, such partnerships enhanced policy coordination and could create opportunities for joint programming, which could enhance financial support for social protection. The ILO was currently pursuing that approach through the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions.
28. **The Employer spokesperson** thanked the Office for providing the supplementary information. In relation to his group's amendment, he reiterated that the main objective was to ensure consistency between the decision of the Governing Body and the decisions in the 2021 resolution concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security). The resolution resulting from that discussion was important and warranted an explicit reference in the draft decision; point 17 of the related conclusions set out the work of



the Office. To address concerns that the wording was overly restrictive, he proposed, in subparagraph (b), to replace “in the follow-up to” with “while taking into account” before “the resolution”. In the same subparagraph, he welcomed GRULAC’s proposal to replace “securing” with “facilitating”, as the notion of “securing” a right was delicate, and the 2021 Conference Committee had decided not to use the term. He also supported the proposal to include the notion of an update in a separate subparagraph.

29. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile explained that his group was willing to accept the original draft decision; however, as subamendments had to be submitted in advance at the current session, the group had proposed the subamendment to the Employers’ amendment in case the Governing Body was in favour of it, as a means of seeking consensus.
30. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of France suggested that, given the broad majority in favour of the original draft decision, including GRULAC, the Governing Body could adopt it.
31. **The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that the proposed amendment would dilute the essence of the draft decision. Social security was a human right that needed to be secured, not facilitated. Furthermore, rights had to be secured before they were extended. He reiterated that his group supported the original draft decision.
32. **The Employer spokesperson** contended that the considerable work of the ILO in the context of the 2021 resolution should not be overlooked.
33. **A Government representative of the United States** said that referring to the Conference resolution concerning social protection (social security), which was not focused on migrants, but not referring to other equally important conclusions of the Conference would make the scope of the draft decision overly narrow. The original text made clear that the Office should consider all elements in the development of its next programme and budget, and she therefore supported the original draft decision.
34. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile sought clarity on the positions of the other regional groups.
35. The Government representative of Morocco, **speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, the Government representative of France, **speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, and the Government representative of Bangladesh, **speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, confirmed that they supported the original draft decision.
36. **The Employer spokesperson** accepted that the consensus within the Governing Body was to support the original draft decision.

## Decision

37. **The Governing Body:**
  - (a) **took note of the measures and activities for securing social protection for migrant workers and their families, set out in document GB.344/POL/1; and**
  - (b) **requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance when preparing future programme and budget proposals with a view to furthering measures aimed at securing and extending social protection for migrant workers and their families through all relevant ILO means of action.**

(GB.344/POL/1, paragraph 27)

## Social Dialogue Segment

### 2. Sectoral meetings held in 2021 and proposals for sectoral work in 2022-23 (GB.344/POL/2(Rev.1))

38. In preparation for the adoption of a decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 1 March 2022.
39. The Screening Group agreed to put the item forward for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members by a communication of 11 March 2022.

#### Decision

**40. The Governing Body:**

- (a) approved the records of proceedings of the four meetings referred to in section I of document GB.344/POL/2(Rev.1) and authorized the Director-General to publish them;
- (b) requested the Director-General to bear in mind, when drawing up proposals for future work, the recommendations for future action by the ILO made by the technical meetings on urban transport services and on aquaculture;
- (c) decided to forward the report of the 14th Session of the Joint ILO-UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), along with any observations made by the Governing Body, to the International Labour Conference at its 110th Session (2022) for examination in the first instance by the Committee on the Application of Standards;
- (d) authorized the Director-General to publish the code of practice on safety and health in textiles, clothing, leather and footwear;
- (e) endorsed the proposals contained in Appendix I to document GB.344/POL/2(Rev.1) relating to the dates, duration, official title, purpose and composition of the meetings listed therein;
- (f) agreed to notify the Office of the appointment and election of the Chairperson and three Vice-Chairpersons one month prior to each meeting; and
- (g) approved the revised terms of reference of the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters contained in Appendix III to document GB.344/POL/2(Rev.1).

(GB.344/POL/2(Rev.1), paragraph 26)

## Summary of the written comments received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>1</sup>

41. **The Employers' group** expressed support for the draft decision, on the understanding that the programme of sectoral meetings to be held in 2023 would be finalized by the Governing Body at a later stage. The workload proposed for 2023 was unrealistic and one of the sectoral meetings should be postponed to 2024 to enable constituents to engage in meaningful exchanges. The group did not support the request made at the briefing session to develop implementation plans to follow up on the outcomes of sectoral meetings, as that would duplicate a framework that already existed as part of the programme and budget.
42. **The Workers' group** emphasized the important role of industrial policies in creating employment and development models that took into consideration the global environmental emergency. Moreover, the group encouraged the Office to increase efforts in respect of the promotion and implementation of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in relation to sectoral policies.
43. The group welcomed the conclusions of the technical meeting on the future of decent and sustainable work in urban transport services and called on the Office to conduct in 2022 the research requested in those conclusions, for consideration by the sectoral advisory bodies in 2023. The newly adopted code of practice on safety and health in textiles, clothing, leather and footwear should be promoted, including in the training activities hosted by the Turin Centre and in the ILO's relations with other United Nations agencies. The group also welcomed the conclusions of the technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy, which noted the need to develop a code of practice on occupational safety and health in aquaculture and to update the Guidance on addressing child labour in fisheries and aquaculture (2011).
44. The group welcomed the report of the 14th Session of the Joint ILO-UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART), and encouraged the full implementation of the recommendations contained therein. The group further welcomed the results of the examination of allegations from teacher unions regarding the application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel, and encouraged the Office to promote all CEART recommendations in the countries reviewed and in a wider context. The group noted the statement on recognizing teacher professionalism in the post-pandemic recovery, noting especially the need to ensure that teachers and their representative organizations were heard with regard to working conditions and other challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.
45. Commending the work carried out by the Sectoral Policies Department (SECTOR) in 2020–21, the group requested the Office to present to the Governing Body in November 2022 a plan for the implementation of the conclusions of technical meetings and the promotion of tools resulting from meetings of experts. The group recommended that the additional meeting for 2023 should be dedicated to the manufacturing sector, as the proposals relating to green technology and the changing patterns in the steel industry had received tripartite interest. Finally, the group welcomed the progress made in relation to the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters, and agreed with the revised terms of reference.

<sup>1</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

46. **The group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)** reiterated its support for the ILO's approach to sectoral work as a means to achieve decent work for all. Commending the balanced nature of the upcoming programme of sectoral meetings, IMEC supported the draft decision. IMEC welcomed the conclusions and recommendations of the technical meeting on the future of decent and sustainable work in urban transport services and the technical meeting on the future of work in aquaculture in the context of the rural economy, as well as the adoption of the code of practice on safety and health in textiles, clothing, leather and footwear, which would be of great benefit to that sector. IMEC agreed with the proposal to authorize the publication of the records of proceedings of the four meetings referred to in section I of document GB.344/POL/2(Rev.1) and approved the modalities for the two technical meetings to be held in 2023 set out in Appendix I to that document. IMEC noted the information provided regarding the appointment of Officers of technical meetings and meetings of experts and the corresponding notification requirements. IMEC supported the Office's continuing commitment to strengthen strategic partnerships across the multilateral system to promote policy coherence and to leverage support for decent work for all. Lastly, it supported the revised terms of reference for the Joint FAO/ILO/IMO Ad Hoc Working Group on Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing and Related Matters, noting the importance of multilateral cooperation in that sector.

### 3. Update on preparations for the Fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour (GB.344/POL/3)

47. **The Worker spokesperson** said that, given the limited period of time available before the Fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour (Fifth Global Conference), it would have been advisable to discuss the issue earlier, but her group understood that the uncertainties related to the COVID-19 pandemic had led to the postponement of the discussion. Her group was deeply concerned about recent estimates on the rising number of children in child labour, particularly as such figures only reflected the situation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, which had further exacerbated the problem.
48. The forthcoming Global Conference therefore came at a critical time and urgent actions by all were needed to achieve target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on the elimination of child labour. To that end, full respect for workers' rights, decent work for adults, universal social protection, quality public services and free education for children, inter alia, were key. There were clear links between adult unemployment and underemployment with poor wages, and growing child labour practices, as the children of parents without decent work often worked to boost household incomes. The elimination of child labour required a rights-based approach and a long-term engagement.
49. Her group emphasized the importance of timely preparation and consultation ahead of the Fifth Global Conference. It expressed its gratitude to the host Government, the Government of South Africa, for the inclusive and participatory process established, and the constructive engagement with the tripartite constituents. Noting that the various consultations on the envisaged outcome were ongoing, her group reiterated its support for an action-oriented outcome document in the form of a call to action. With regard to the follow-up mechanism, it was important to avoid duplicating or undermining existing monitoring processes, including the ILO supervisory mechanisms and processes under Alliance 8.7; the follow-up mechanism should be defined before the following consultation.

50. Cognizant of the challenges posed by the hybrid format of the Fifth Global Conference, her group trusted that suitable arrangements would be adopted to ensure the full participation of ILO constituents from all regions, taking into account gender-balanced participation and support for administrative arrangements for participants. The same tripartite consultation modus that would be applied for the participation of civil society and businesses should apply to the participation of children. A new discussion should be held at the session of the Governing Body in November 2022 or March 2023 on the follow-up to be given to the Fifth Global Conference and its call to action. Her group supported the draft decision.
51. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the Fifth Global Conference could play a key role in quickly and significantly reversing the increase in child labour. He agreed that the outcome of the upcoming Global Conference needed to be action-oriented, with strong concrete commitments to follow up on and resolutely address child labour. It was not enough to simply draft another resolution or declaration. The Employers supported the proposal for the outcome document to take the form of a call to action, which must be a consensual document. As many colleagues from many countries would only be able to attend the Fifth Global Conference virtually, it was important to work within a time slot that respected the time differences of the various regions. The Employers endorsed the South African Government's suggestion to focus on the structural root causes of child labour, which was essential to ensure progress in the eradication of child and forced labour. His group strongly advocated a further strengthening of Alliance 8.7. The ongoing efforts to monitor progress and the efforts of pathfinders, peer learning between pathfinder countries, and coordination in research and capacity-building were cornerstones in that regard. The achievements made through collective action in countries such as Qatar and Uzbekistan, where the governments were successfully eradicating child labour under ILO stewardship and strong social partner engagement, should be replicated.
52. It was necessary to follow up on the implementation of the pledges made at the Fourth Global Conference in Buenos Aires, in order to improve interventions. The discussions in Durban should be guided by an evaluation of the implementation of these pledges. The ILO and its constituents should aim to mainstream the call to action throughout the policy debates at the national and international levels. Follow-up would also mean better coordination by the ILO of the various departments as part of a "One ILO" approach, to ensure proper collaboration in the elimination of forced and child labour. The Employers supported the draft decision.
53. **Speaking on behalf of the Government group**, a Government representative of the Philippines emphasized the need for the effective implementation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182) and Recommendation (No. 190), 1999. He encouraged governments to consider ratifying the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and to implement the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). The elimination of child labour required global commitment and cooperation. It was absolutely vital for efforts to be mobilized to address the reversal of the progress made in the fight against child labour and to accelerate action by all means. The broad engagement of various partners and key stakeholders in the preparatory consultations to produce an action-oriented outcome document was welcome. His group fully supported an inclusive process to monitor and address the issue of child labour, and endorsed the draft decision.
54. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Sudan said that it was high time for the Global Conference to be held in Africa, and commended the South African Government for accepting the major challenge of hosting the event. Her group was concerned about the increased use of child labour during the pandemic, which was partly due to high levels of poverty that made families more dependent on child labour. It was essential to adopt



measures to protect children in such particular circumstances. She supported the draft decision.

55. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile noted with regret that the pandemic had stalled efforts to reduce child labour and jeopardized the objective of elimination by 2025. While the trend of child labour in his region was low, estimates for the number of children and young people who would still be in child labour in 2025 and 2030 were concerning. GRULAC hoped that the Fifth Global Conference would enable all participants to share best practices and viable and sustainable solutions to step up the fight against child labour in line with SDG target 8.7. To achieve lasting efforts, it was necessary to strengthen cooperation and coordination among the various agencies in the UN system, and promote coordinated action at all levels. Further clarification on the content of Annex 1 of the preliminary draft call to action developed during the preparatory process would be welcome. GRULAC was concerned that the efforts of governments, which already reported on most of the indicators under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, may be duplicated. In the future, necessary measures, such as the drafting of periodic reports, should be taken to obtain more accurate knowledge of the practical implementation of the outcomes of such conferences. GRULAC welcomed the hybrid format of the Fifth Global Conference and the Office's efforts to ensure participation in equal conditions, particularly in relation to access to Zoom. He endorsed the draft decision.
56. **Speaking on behalf of the EU and its Member States**, a Government representative of France said that Montenegro, Albania, Iceland, Norway, Ukraine and Georgia aligned themselves with her statement. The EU and its Member States aligned themselves with the IMEC statement. The fight against child labour required a global approach, including strengthened political dialogue, to address the root causes of child labour, particularly in the informal sector. She also underscored the need for enhanced implementation of Convention No. 182, and universal ratification of Convention No. 138.
57. Preventive activities should be accelerated to address the mired progress in the elimination of child labour resulting from the pandemic. She invited all stakeholders to demonstrate their commitment by supporting the proposed call to action. Importing countries had an important role to play in the elimination of child labour in supply chains. The EU and its Member States supported the actions carried out under the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and Forced Labour (IPEC+), which aimed to address the impact of the pandemic on the most vulnerable. She endorsed the draft decision.
58. **A Government representative of Ecuador** said that alliances with the private sector should be strengthened as a priority to promote the inclusion of zero-tolerance policies against child labour in value chains, with an emphasis on the agricultural sector, including the banana- and flower-growing and fishing industries, in which child labour was the most present. Her Government was firmly committed to eliminating child labour by 2025. It wished to express its willingness to renew action and accelerate the adoption of measures to ensure the full exercise of the rights of children and young people, and called for global action to be taken to eradicate child labour.
59. **A Government representative of Argentina** said that the consultations held in preparation for the Fifth Global Conference had demonstrated the plurality of the issues to be addressed, and the need to renew commitment to collective action based on the Buenos Aires Declaration on Child Labour, Forced Labour and Youth Employment. His Government recognized the value of multi-stakeholder participation in the efforts to eliminate child labour, and highlighted the

regional work carried out within the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR). He supported the draft decision.

60. **A Government representative of Cuba** recognized the importance of intergovernmental and tripartite cooperation to eradicate child labour. She requested the Office to clarify whether the financing of the activities concerning the Fifth Global Conference would have an impact on the contributions paid by ILO Members. The organizers of the Fifth Global Conference should take into account the fact that it was not possible to access Zoom in Cuba, due to the restrictions imposed by the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the Government of the United States of America. While the hybrid format of the Fifth Global Conference was welcome, the organizers should analyse the situation of the Member States on a case-by-case basis. If the Cuban tripartite delegation was unable to attend in person, it would be prevented from participating virtually from Cuba by the blockade-related restrictions. Her Government hoped that a solution would be found to ensure the participation of all ILO Members in equal conditions.
61. **A Government representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland** said that, to strengthen international efforts, there must be an outcome-focused call to action resulting in the practical implementation of commitments that were monitored and evaluated up to 2025. The COVID-19 pandemic had had devastating consequences regarding child exploitation. Robust research and evidence were essential to inform policymaking and implementation, and more data and analysis were needed to address the widespread nature of child labour in the informal sector. Her Government would like to see increased and effective engagement with employers in the call to action, to ensure greater transparency in supply chains. It was paramount for survivors of child labour to participate in the Fifth Global Conference and for their voices to be given a platform to inform the commitments, policies and programmes arising from the call to action and the discussions held.
62. **A representative of the Director-General (Deputy Director-General for Policy)**, noting the concerns raised about access to Zoom, said that the Office would work together with its colleagues from the South African Government to look for alternative solutions to enable the Government of Cuba and any other Member States experiencing access issues, to access all conference sessions and panels. The financing of the Fifth Global Conference would have no impact on the contributions of Member States, as funding provisions had been made to cover the difference using internal and external resources. Regarding the concerns about potential duplication of reporting requirements on child labour, any new monitoring and reporting requirements would, to the extent possible, build on existing efforts, avoid duplication and facilitate follow-up on commitments with a pragmatic approach. A proposal on the matter would be presented in the framework of the consultations on the call to action. The Office would be willing to look into the Workers' request for the Governing Body to have a discussion on the follow-up to the Fifth Global Conference and its call to action, provided that there was agreement by other Governing Body members.

## Decision

63. **The Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into account the views expressed during the discussion as the Office continued to engage in the preparatory process for the Fifth Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour in 2022.**

(GB.344/POL/3, paragraph 23)