



# Governing Body

343rd Session, Geneva, November 2021

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

**PFA**

## Minutes of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

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## Programme, Financial and Administrative Segment

### 1. Update on the headquarters building renovation project (GB.343/PFA/1)

1. In preparation for the adoption of a decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 19 October 2021.
2. 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 1 November 2021.

### Decision

3. **The Governing Body:**
  - (a) **approved the proposed budget for phase 2 of the headquarters building renovation project set out in document GB.343/PFA/1, in line with the resources available from the sale of the land; and**
  - (b) **requested the Office to present the budget for the headquarters security perimeter project to the Governing Body at its 344th Session (March 2022).**

(GB.343/PFA/1, paragraph 14)

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

4. **The Workers' group** welcomed the additional savings realized following the close out of accounts for phase 1. Regarding phase 2, the group welcomed the choice made of upcycling the temporary structure and recycling it following the renovation, and the fact that the increased costs associated with the lack of continuity between phases 1 and 2 remained within the total funding available. It welcomed the fact that despite the reduction in conference facilities, temporary meeting facilities would permit seating capacity to largely be maintained, allowing meetings to take place as planned throughout the renovation. It noted with satisfaction that the full project was expected to be finalized by late 2025 – one year earlier than estimated in March 2021. The group noted the information on the headquarters' security perimeter project and looked forward to receiving the budget in March 2022. It was important that ILO constituents continue to have access to the ILO building without major obstacles, while ensuring its security.
5. **The Asia and Pacific group (ASPAG)** noted with pleasure that the close out of phase 1 was complete, with anticipated savings of CHF200,000, and expressed appreciation for the efforts of staff involved in the project. It noted the slight increase in the budget for phase 2, but within previously approved funding available from the sale of the land, and welcomed the fact that work had started on the conference rooms and the security

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<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.

perimeter project. It expressed appreciation for Office efforts to ensure continuity of ILO work during phase 2 and for the temporary arrangements being made to house the conference rooms during the renovation. The group noted that design work was progressing on the security perimeter project and had been approved by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in consultation with physical security experts and the Swiss authorities. That was very important work, which would bring the ILO into line with UN security expectations and ensure the safety of all ILO constituents and guests. ASPAG thanked the Office for managing those major projects efficiently and within approved budgets. It supported the draft decision.

6. **The group of industrialized market economy countries (IMEC)** expressed its sincere congratulations to the Office for completing phase 1 on schedule and under budget, despite the interruptions caused by COVID-19. That was no mean feat. It welcomed the appointment by the Office of a contractor to complete phase 2 within the available funding realized through the sale of the land, and the scheduled completion date of late 2025; it supported the proposed budget. IMEC welcomed the innovative and green solution found for a temporary structure to house conference rooms, offices and storage areas during the renovation, noting that the structure, formerly a temporary supermarket, had been upcycled for ILO use and would be recycled following the renovation. It looked forward to seeing the proposed budget for the security perimeter project in March 2022. IMEC noted with satisfaction that the funding for those measures would also come out of the sale of the land.

## 2. Proposed 2022–23 budgets for extrabudgetary accounts: Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) (GB.343/PFA/2)

7. In preparation for the adoption of a decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 19 October 2021.
8. 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 1 November 2021.

### Decision

9. **The Governing Body approved the income and expenditure estimates of the Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training (CINTERFOR) extrabudgetary account for 2022–23, as set out in Appendix I of document GB.343/PFA/2.**

(GB.343/PFA/2, paragraph 31)

## Summary of the written comment received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>2</sup>

10. **The Workers' group** welcomed the alignment of the proposed 2022–2023 budgets for extrabudgetary accounts with the ILO's strategy for the development of skills. Just as it was important for CINTERFOR's work to take into account the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the framework established by the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), and the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), it must also take other relevant standards into account, including 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), as enablers of social dialogue, Convention No. 111 (discrimination), Convention No. 122 (employment policy), Convention No. 140 (paid educational leave), Convention No. 102 (social security), and Recommendation No. 204 (the transition from the informal to the formal economy). During the recovery from the crisis, reskilling, skills upgrading and other employment policies would be essential to address the needs and expectations of working people in respect of the work of the future. Social dialogue was fundamental to ensure that development, production and employment were aligned and promoted the just integration of all workers into the labour market. Consideration must be given to migrant workers, workers with disabilities and informal workers in the development of skills so as to achieve the goal of leaving no one behind.
11. Concerning the first of the four areas outlined in the document, strengthening the capacity of vocational training institutes and systems, it was important to highlight the role of workers and trade union organizations in those processes given their knowledge of current modes of work organization and up-to-date knowledge of the working conditions and environment in the various sectors of production, forming a broad overview of qualifications in the various sectors of activity. Social dialogue was fundamental for planning sector-wide strategies, strategies for equitable transition and strategies to define development policies, all key economic elements. However, vocational training should not only be shaped by market and supply chain demands, but should also respond to the requirements of workers faced with the uncertainty brought about by change.
12. Regarding the important role of national and sectoral skills systems, their institutional framework and tripartism to strengthen skills and lifelong learning policies, governance models and financing systems, the role of workers' representatives was also essential because it was often trade union organizations that ensured the sustainability of those systems, their management and implementation, and institutionalized social dialogue was fundamental in that regard. The Workers' group emphasized the importance of developing programmes to strengthen the capacity of workers' organizations to promote vocational training clauses in collective bargaining at the workplace and

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<sup>2</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

sectoral levels, with a gender focus and introducing rights such as paid educational leave and vocational training.

13. Regarding the matter of designing and delivering innovative, flexible and inclusive learning options, it was key for innovative proposals in terms of learning to keep sight of the fact that it must be workers who benefited from the process, building on their experiences and needs to promote processes that facilitated opportunities that could be transferred to the working population as a whole.
14. Finally, the group highlighted the need for training systems to facilitate the digital transition of skills development systems and to strengthen digital skills. To achieve that, it was important to start with the differential impact of those processes on each sector of production and also on the situation of the various segments of workers (with various levels of training and skills) that coexisted within each sector, in order to comprehensively manage those digital transition processes. While digitalization and automation were facilitating many tasks, they were replacing many others and were also progressing unevenly due to the digital divide, with many workers being excluded from the labour market. A just transition for those workers was also urgent.

### 3. Programme and Budget for 2020–21: Regular budget account and Working Capital Fund (GB.343/PFA/3)

15. In preparation for the adoption of the decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 11 October 2021.
16. The Screening Group agreed to put the item for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members on 19 October 2021.

#### Decision

17. **The Governing Body delegated its authority under article 16 of the Financial Regulations to the Chairperson who may approve any transfers within the 2020–21 expenditure budget that the Director-General may propose, if needed, prior to the closing of the biennial accounts and subject to the endorsement of such approval by the Governing Body at its next session.**

(GB.343/PFA/3, paragraph 11)

#### Summary of the written comment received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>3</sup>

18. **The Workers' group** thanked the Governments that had already settled their statutory contributions, welcoming the fact that one more State had done so compared to the last biennium, and invited those Governments that had not yet done so to settle their contributions before the end of the year. The group endorsed the draft decision.

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<sup>3</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

#### 4. ILO Information Technology Strategy 2022–25 (GB.343/PFA/4)

19. **The Worker spokesperson** acknowledged the Office's efforts to support constituents during the COVID-19 pandemic through greater reliance on digital means. However, many workers' organizations still lacked the technological infrastructure to fully participate in ILO digital events and use digital tools. As the proposed ILO Information Technology Strategy 2022–25 (IT Strategy) rightly recognized, in order to ensure equal access to ILO products and services and equal participation, the digital divide would need to be bridged. The Office should share more information on how it intended to do that, bearing in mind that maintaining a balance between virtual and face-to-face interactions was also important.
20. He took note of the key lessons, particularly the importance of more sophisticated security controls due to the use of cloud services. Regarding the reliance on external collaborators, the Workers' expectation was that such reliance would diminish in the future by investing in enhancing the skills of current staff. He asked for clarification from the Office in that regard.
21. The Workers supported the two proposed outcomes and stressed that it was important for the Office to enhance the digital skills of its staff and continue to monitor and assess the value of its digital products. Regarding outcome 1 (a more efficient, agile and responsive ILO), the Office must prioritize the protection of sensitive ILO information, including personal data. In that regard, the milestone of 50 per cent by the end of 2023 for indicator 1.3.b. (percentage of ILO staff who have been recertified in IT security awareness training) seemed low. The Office should comment on the possibility of increasing that percentage. Furthermore, it should provide more information on the impact of the Office's automation efforts on staff, in particular the impact of the deployment of computer-assisted translation software under output 1.1 on translators. Regarding output 1.2 on the enhanced use of virtual and mobile technologies to support remote working, it was important to reinforce the protection of data, privacy and a work-life balance, and to strike a balance between telework and a physical presence at the Office in order to protect in-person relationships with colleagues and constituents.
22. For outcome 2 (a more collaborative, insightful and transparent ILO), it was key to support constituents in accessing ILO products, tools and meetings. The group welcomed the implementation of an Office-wide electronic records management system, which should be a priority, given that the Governing Body had not approved the additional funding for its introduction in the period covered by the IT Strategy 2018–21. It also welcomed the proposal to make the resources contained in the ILO's digital repository freely available online and supported the commitment to ensuring that ILO websites were accessible to people with disabilities.
23. The fact that the Staff Union had not been consulted was a matter of concern, given the implications of the proposed IT Strategy for staff. The Staff Union must be consulted with respect to its implementation, including in respect of the indicators under each output. The Workers' group endorsed the proposed IT Strategy.
24. **The Employer spokesperson** said that the key lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis should be continually harnessed during the recovery and beyond. The document did not clearly demonstrate how the IT Strategy would increase the transparency and business

efficiency of the ILO, nor how the lack of digital skills among staff would be tackled. No training or recruitment outputs were provided. The Office should seek ways to enhance training for staff in respect of developing skills in new technologies and data management and to accelerate the recruitment of people with the requisite technological, data and digital literacy in line with human resources policy.

25. For outcome 1, the process of digitizing employee personnel files should be conducted in line with the Human Resources Strategy 2022–25 and should allow for a better overview of staff members' experience relevant to the three groups of constituents. Furthermore, the digitization process should allow for business analytics, which would help with ILO workforce planning. The NORMLEX and NATLEX databases required a more user-friendly interface and should be connected with other IT initiatives aimed at strengthening the ILO knowledge base.
26. For outcome 2, IT alone was not enough to deliver a cultural shift in the ILO; the Office must break silos by exercising greater leadership, encouraging shared commitment and enhancing accountability. Regarding the vast volume of digital media uploaded since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, improvements were needed to ensure easy searches and accessibility. Similarly, the ILO public website needed to be redesigned to allow for improved cataloguing, tagging and search functions, and ILO web pages for all units and field offices needed to be intuitive and accessible. The IT Strategy should further increase ILO internal capacities and exposure to new technologies, including machine learning and robotics, in order to improve efficiencies and reduce paper-pushing. Means of converting the ILO to a data-driven organization should also be considered and reflected in outputs in the IT Strategy. Improved data analytical capabilities and data management were needed across the Organization. An improved capacity to integrate data from many difference sources was also needed. IT resources in developing countries must be strengthened through support for staff and constituents, taking into account the fact that technologies evolved and led to regular changes.
27. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Eswatini welcomed the development of an IT Strategy for the ILO, particularly in the light of the role of digital products in delivering the outcomes in the Programme and Budget for 2022–23. He recalled that, during the discussions at the 341st Session, his group had encouraged the Office to improve information technology programmes using savings realized during the pandemic in order to reduce the digital divide and maintain social dialogue for those affected by COVID-19. It had also expressed support for the establishment of a new unit to drive innovation in the ILO. However, there was no mention in the document of such a unit or of the value it would add in terms of driving the implementation of the IT Strategy. The group sought clarification from the Office on that matter, and also on whether the IT Investment Fund would be sufficient for the successful delivery of the IT Strategy.
28. The group noted with great concern the absence of any outcomes or outputs on mitigating the risks of the IT-related threats identified in the document. A third outcome that focused on building organizational resilience to such threats should be developed, with clear outputs, deliverables and indicators. In the absence of an indicator on improved productivity, the Office should explain how it sought to leverage the IT Strategy to measure developments in that regard in the Organization. It should also

develop an indicator to measure the progress made through inclusive dialogue so as to gauge the inclusivity and efficiency of virtual meetings and their impact on meaningful social dialogue. Subject to a satisfactory response from the Office to the questions raised, the Africa group could support the draft decision.

29. **Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)**, a Government representative of Chile agreed with the importance of facilitating new ways of working, with effective and safe support services, to achieve an efficient, agile, collaborative and responsive ILO that promoted transparency. He asked the Office to provide information on: the total estimated costs of the IT Strategy for each biennium; a list of priorities for each activity, in the short and medium terms and for each biennium, on the basis of available resources; a road map; and sources of funding.
30. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of Australia supported the focus in the document on delivering IT capacity to ensure a more efficient, agile, responsive and transparent organization; enhancing digital skills; and ensuring that risks to data privacy and IT security were anticipated and addressed. She encouraged the Office to incorporate specific measures into the IT Strategy to support equitable access to ILO digital products, services and events, and asked the Office for further information on how the IT Strategy could support ILO constituents directly, including by enhancing the performance of field operations and development cooperation activities, and improve organizational effectiveness, outreach and capacity development. The group encouraged the Office to ensure a coordinated approach towards implementing the IT Strategy. ASPAG supported the draft decision and looked forward to working with the Office to ensure the effective delivery of the IT Strategy.
31. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Canada noted that the ILO's IT infrastructure should be up to date, easy to use, relevant and interoperable, and should allow for the highest levels of flexibility. She encouraged the ILO to continue to explore measures to ensure that its IT users were frequently informed of emerging cybersecurity risks and other communication risks, and agreed that enhancing digital skills must be a priority. The ILO should be at the forefront to proactively shape, implement and promote a common IT approach. She asked what was the Office's vision to collaborate with other agencies and the UN International Computing Centre to commonly design, implement and utilize digital innovation. The Office should take every opportunity to increase outreach and integration in the digital world.
32. The group generally supported the outcomes, but the IT Strategy could benefit from the integration of further aspects. First, it would be interesting to learn how the potential of digital tools could be used to deliver the ILO's mandate. Those tools might include applications to facilitate direct contact between the ILO and beneficiaries; upcoming technologies such as blockchain, artificial intelligence and supply chain tracing; and the IT Strategy itself in relation to the implementation of the Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25. Second, it would be interesting to know how the IT Strategy would foster an organizational set-up that ensured constant innovation in digital service delivery, and whether any links would exist between the planned innovation unit and the Programme and Budget for 2022–23. Third, consideration should be given to how the enormous potential for synergies with the United Nations (UN) system could be harnessed. The ILO should be at the forefront of any such developments. In that regard,

the group would welcome information on the Office's vision for collaboration on digital innovation with other agencies, especially the UN International Computing Centre.

33. **Speaking on behalf of ASEAN**, a Government representative of Indonesia supported the Office's efforts to respond to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis through the IT Strategy. ASEAN leaders had recognized the importance of accelerating the inclusive digital transformation as one of the key strategies for the region to recover from the COVID-19 crisis. The ILO and other international organizations must focus on using and enhancing information technology to be able to function properly during the pandemic and beyond. The group wished to see stronger emphasis on support for constituents in both outcomes of the IT Strategy. For example, an output on improved IT platforms and services to support constituents could be included under outcome 2, or support for constituents could be mainstreamed through all outputs. The group supported the draft decision.
34. **A Government representative of Cuba** said that a high-speed internet connection with sufficient bandwidth was still not within the reach of all ILO constituents. The digital divide was an undeniable reality. She expressed appreciation for the Office's efforts to ensure that constituents from countries that were subject to unilateral coercive measures could participate in virtual meetings of the International Labour Conference. The blockade imposed by the United States prevented access from Cuba to virtual platforms such as Zoom and hindered equitable access to international meetings. She underscored the call for an end to the blockade, made during the general debate of the 76th session of the United Nations General Assembly. Access of all countries to the virtual meetings of the Organization was of paramount importance in achieving universal tripartite participation and should be part of the IT Strategy. She urged the Office to pay careful attention to that situation when implementing the IT Strategy in order to ensure that all countries and tripartite constituents could participate in virtual ILO meetings on an equal footing.
35. **A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran** noted that connectivity was one of the main IT challenges and the measures and activities proposed in the IT Strategy were insufficient to address it. As a result of sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the delegation had encountered numerous connectivity issues during the first part of the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference, which would continue in the second part if the necessary measures were not taken. The IT Strategy must therefore incorporate specific activities to guarantee equal access for all constituents to ILO digital products, services and events. He supported the draft decision.
36. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Information and Technology Management Department), responding to questions, said that work was under way to redesign the public website so that materials were easier to find. The Office took note of the strong message on the need to address the digital divide and poor connectivity and would adopt a multi-faceted approach. It would also build the capacity of staff to facilitate online interactions and to increase inclusion and participation in hybrid meetings. It would select secure, well-designed and well-supported mainstream technologies that could deliver content in situations of poor connectivity. Cybersecurity had been a cross-cutting focus for the previous IT strategy, under which tools, processes

and training programmes had been implemented to reduce exposure to and mitigate risks. A security operations centre ensuring round-the-clock IT security had been deployed, and information security and risk management were incorporated into the delivery of all IT products. The Office responded to cyberthreats rapidly and consistently, and also participated with other entities in the UN system to identify common threats and learn from them.

37. Indicator 1.3.b. on IT security awareness referred to recertification. Over 93 per cent of staff had already completed the initial training, but as recertification was recommended every three years, 50 per cent of staff would need to redo the training by 2023. Consultations on the IT Strategy had regrettably begun late owing to staff illness and had been further constrained by the departure of staff for the summer holidays; however, in recent years the Office had consulted with the Staff Union each time a major IT initiative had been implemented, and would continue to do so. The introduction of computer-assisted translation and transcription services was unlikely to have an impact on staff contracts; the main aim was to enable faster initial translation and transcription, but translators would still need to review documents to ensure that appropriate levels of quality were achieved. The Office was likely to continue to rely on external collaborators to fill temporary skills gaps and deliver ad hoc services, particularly when new projects were implemented, given the department's workload and the mix of technologies required to ensure effective delivery to constituents. Additional internal posts would be created where a long-term need for skills was observed and where risk mitigation was needed.
38. Preliminary discussions were under way on the potential replacement of the NATLEX database, and integration of the NORMLEX database into the workflow for the system for the Committee of Experts was almost complete. Training to meet workforce needs was included in the Human Resources Strategy. Once that strategy had been approved, a learning plan would be developed, which would include digital skills and management of the hybrid workplace. She agreed that internal capacities needed to be strengthened to enhance delivery. The Office was already using machine learning to analyse the big data collected for IT security interventions, and would increase that use in the following biennium. The ILO would also participate in a UN-led pilot project to explore the deployment of blockchain technology to create digital identities and enable the secure sharing of private information. The project had the explicit aim of delivering the common UN agenda and increasing efficiencies and coordination between UN agencies. She agreed that there was significant potential for efficiency gains through the digitization of personnel files, but it had to be approached with careful consideration of potential data privacy issues.
39. Regarding the availability of IT investment funds for the delivery of the IT Strategy, US\$4.5 million had been allocated in the Programme and Budget for 2022–23 for the implementation of the enterprise records management system and the completion of the updated intranet. As to the links with the Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25 and the improvement of field operation performance, the IT Strategy was designed to support all of the Office's activities, regardless of funding source or location. The implementation of Microsoft Teams had improved collaboration and knowledge-sharing among staff and with constituents, and efforts had been undertaken to improve secure

information access for staff in the field as well as at headquarters in the 2020–21 biennium.

40. The contribution of IT to innovation and knowledge management was addressed in outcome 2 of the IT Strategy; the Information and Technology Management Department would work with the Innovation and Knowledge Management Unit to deliver what it required. The Office intended to implement an open data policy for sharing ILO data with other agencies and the general public, and had undertaken additional work to improve metadata and taxonomies to make data more accessible. The ILO was already using a number of services of the UN International Computing Centre, such as managed services for SharePoint, emergency notification services and disaster recovery hosting services. It also collaborated with the UN on the system-wide data cube and participated in the shared global procurement marketplace.
41. With regard to maintaining a focus on delivery to constituents, the Programme and Budget for 2022–23 contained outcomes designed to help constituents respond to the economic and social impact of the pandemic. The related outputs included online workshops, websites, toolkits and many other kinds of data, which would be created with significant input from the Information and Technology Management Department. The deliverables would be detailed in the work plans published during the period of the IT Strategy.
42. As to the budget for the delivery of the IT Strategy, the Programme and Budget for 2022–23 provided for US\$51.5 million regular budget funds for staff and non-staff costs, US\$2 million for support costs, and US\$4.5 million as part of the IT investment funds. It was impossible to foresee what the Governing Body would decide for the Programme and Budget for 2024–25. The main priorities for the current biennium were the two major projects that were funded by the IT investment funds: the electronic records management system and the intranet. The Office also needed to keep business systems running and secured for headquarters and the field. It supported innovation and knowledge-sharing as a priority, and would deliver the outputs identified to support the policy outcomes set out in the programme and budget documents. The details of what the Office would deliver over the next biennium would be determined in the work planning process, which would take place after the approval of the IT Strategy.
43. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, the Government representative of Chile said that, in the light of the Office's explanations, the group could support the draft decision.

## Decision

44. **The Governing Body endorsed the ILO Information Technology Strategy 2022–25 and requested the Director-General to take into account the guidance provided by the Governing Body in implementing the Strategy.**

(GB.343/PFA/4, paragraph 61)

## 5. Proposal for the funding of postponed 2020–21 meetings in the biennium 2022–23 (GB.343/PFA/5(Rev.1))

45. In preparation for the adoption of the decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 11 October 2021.

46. The Screening Group agreed to put the item for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members on 19 October 2021.

## Decision

47. **The Governing Body took note of the information provided in document GB.343/PFA/5(Rev.1) and proposed to the International Labour Conference at the resumed part of its 109th Session (November–December 2021) that part of the projected underspending for 2020–21, amounting to US\$3,312,842, be used to finance the holding in 2022–23 of the meetings listed in the appendix to document GB.343/PFA/5(Rev.1), and that it adopt a resolution in the following terms:**

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization,

Noting that, for the biennium 2020–21, there is a significant projected underspending resulting from the cancellation or postponement of budgeted official meetings in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic,

Decides that, on an exceptional basis and owing to the unprecedented circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic, part of the projected underspending for 2020–21, in the amount of US\$3,312,842, be used to finance the holding in 2022 or 2023 of meetings postponed from the biennium 2020–21, as listed in the appendix to document GB.343/PFA/5(Rev.1);

Notes that, with the above appropriation, the amount available for the 2020–21 financial period under article 18.2 of the Financial Regulations for reducing the

assessed contributions of Member States will have been reduced by the same amount, expressed in Swiss francs; and

Delegates to the Governing Body the authority to deal with any residual financial issues arising out of the holding of these meetings.

(GB.343/PFA/5(Rev.1), paragraph 9)

## Summary of written comments received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>4</sup>

48. **The Workers' group** considered it vital for the Office to be authorized to use part of the projected underspending in 2020–21 to fund the holding in 2022–23 of the meetings listed; it was important that the meetings cancelled as a result of the pandemic should take place in the next biennium. The group therefore supported the draft decision and Conference resolution, including the exceptional derogation of article 18.2 of the Financial Regulations.
49. The group expressed the hope that the public health situation would allow all those meetings to take place in person. If, however, meetings continued to be held virtually or in a hybrid format, greater consideration should be given to the hidden costs that workers might incur if they could not join meetings from their office premises or easily join from home due to the lack of proper information technology facilities. In such circumstances, the Office should seek to address the constraints in the best possible way for the situation.

<sup>4</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

- 50. IMEC** noted that the Governing Body had decided to postpone six official meetings to the biennium 2022–23, and to convene four additional meetings for which no specific budgetary allocation had been made, which could not be organized before 2022. In view of the unprecedented circumstances in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IMEC agreed that the amount of US\$3,312,842 that had not been spent in 2020–21 could be used exceptionally to fund the holding in 2022 or 2023 of the ten meetings specified in document GB.343/PFA/5(Rev.1). When calculating the cost of conducting the deferred meetings, the Office should take into account lessons learned on teleworking measures. On the understanding that the decision would not create a precedent or continuing obligation for future ILO budget cycles, IMEC could exceptionally support the approach set out in the draft decision.
- 51. The Government of Slovenia** supported IMEC's comments.

## **6. Other financial matters: Appointments to the Investments Committee of the International Labour Organization (GB.343/PFA/6(Rev.1))**

- 52.** In preparation for the adoption of the decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 11 October 2021.
- 53.** The Screening Group agreed to put the item for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members on 19 October 2021.

### **Decision**

- 54. The Governing Body renewed the appointment of Mr René Zagolin, Mr Xavier Guillon and Mr Max Bärtsch as members of the Investments Committee for a further period of four years, expiring on 31 December 2025.**  
(GB.343/PFA/6(Rev.1), paragraph 3)

### **Summary of the written comment received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>5</sup>**

- 55. The Workers' group** supported the draft decision, and thanked the members of the Investments Committee for their willingness to serve for another four years. However, it was important to have a succession plan in place so as not to lose the members' knowledge and expertise if they did decide to stand down in the future. The Office should also attempt to achieve greater gender balance in future appointments to the Investments Committee.

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<sup>5</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

## Audit and Oversight Segment

### 7. Arrangements for the appointment of the External Auditor (2024–27) (GB.343/PFA/7)

56. In preparation for the adoption of the decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 11 October 2021.
57. The Screening Group agreed to put the item for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members on 19 October 2021.

#### Decision

##### 58. The Governing Body:

- (a) endorsed the proposed calendar and key dates set out in document GB.343/PFA/7 for the selection and appointment of the External Auditor of the ILO, for a term of office to commence on 1 April 2024 covering the 79th and 80th financial periods; and
- (b) requested the Director-General to establish a selection panel for this purpose, consisting of four Government representatives and two representatives each of the Employers' and Workers' groups.

(GB.343/PFA/7, paragraph 5)

### 8. Appointments to the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (GB.343/PFA/8)

59. In preparation for the adoption of a decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 19 October 2021.
60. 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 1 November 2021.

#### Decision

##### 61. The Governing Body decided to:

- (a) convey its appreciation to Mr Frank Harnischfeger and Mr N.R. Rayalu for the valuable contributions they have made to the work of the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC) during the periods 2016–18 and 2019–21;
- (b) appoint Mr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata and Mr Marcel Jullier as members of the IOAC for a first term of three years commencing on 1 January 2022;
- (c) extend the appointment of Ms Malika Aït-Mohamed Parent, Mr Verasak Liengsriwat and Ms Marian McMahon for a second term of three years commencing on 1 January 2022; and
- (d) retain the candidatures of Mr Mukesh Arya, Mr Rohil Hafeez, Ms Eva Mavroiedi and Mr Suresh Raj Sharma on a reserve list.

(GB.343/PFA/8, paragraph 13)

## Summary of the written comments received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>6</sup>

- 62. The Workers' group** noted with satisfaction the agreement reached by the Governing Body selection panel regarding the candidates. It thanked the IOAC for its inputs regarding the complementary skills and competences needed for the Committee's work, which had proved useful in the final selection of candidates, and recommended that the practice be continued in future selection processes. It concurred that for the next selection process the identification of potential conflicts of interest should be consolidated and, if necessary, the IOAC terms of reference updated. It welcomed the fact that independent reference checks had been undertaken by the consultancy firm and that no concerns had been raised.
- 63. IMEC** thanked the Office for facilitating the process to fill vacancies in accordance with the IOAC terms of reference. It welcomed the implementation of an advertising process to solicit a qualified and diverse candidate pool and asked the Office to consider any further modifications to the process in order to achieve geographic and gender balance in the list of final candidates. The technical assessment of short-listed candidates provided by current members of the IOAC provided valuable insight that facilitated deliberations. IMEC would welcome further consideration, prior to the next selection process, of the issue of independence criteria and the potential or perceived conflict of interest that might arise in respect of candidates who were serving officials of other UN system organizations. IMEC thanked the outgoing IOAC members for their contributions to the work of the IOAC and supported the appointment of new members Mr Gonzalo Castro de la Mata and Mr Marcel Jullier.

## 9. Annual evaluation report 2020–21 (GB.343/PFA/9)

- 64. The Worker spokesperson** welcomed the Office's continued efforts to strengthen the ILO's evaluation function, despite the challenges posed by COVID-19. Referring to Part I of the report, which outlined the progress made towards achieving the biennial milestones identified in the Evaluation Strategy 2018–21, she noted with satisfaction that 18 out of 19 milestones had been either fully or partially achieved. Regarding the efforts to build internal evaluation capacities and the challenges observed in that regard in regions with already heavy workloads, and the proposal to review cost-recovery options to compensate managers for the time their staff devoted to evaluation-related tasks, it was important to maintain an adequate balance between such tasks and other staff responsibilities. In view of the need to reduce pressure on staff and increase efficiencies, she welcomed the achievement of the milestone on the use of cluster evaluations.
- 65.** As the indicator under sub-outcome 2.3 on credible impact evaluations had not been achieved, the Office should take action to ensure that the proposed end target for the sub-outcome was met in 2022. The appropriate implementation of guidelines and recommendations was key in that regard. The Office should also improve on the percentages of project evaluations that satisfactorily included questions relevant to

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<sup>6</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue. In that regard, the guidance note developed by the Evaluation Office on adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate was welcome.

66. Her group agreed with recommendation 1 concerning the topics for high-level evaluations for 2022 and 2023 and the extension of the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period by one year.
67. With regard to Part II of the report, on assessing the ILO's effectiveness and results, while the improvements in 2020 in respect of the relevance and cost-efficiency of interventions – despite the pandemic – were welcome, the decline in overall performance for 2021 in terms of strategic relevance, efficiency and sustainability was disconcerting. She noted with concern the decreased involvement of constituents in development cooperation projects and the drop in the rating for the promotion of international labour standards, policy influence and capacity-building within development cooperation projects. Such shortcomings should be addressed in the future.
68. The Workers' group took note of the synthesis review of the ILO's response to the impact of COVID-19 on the world of work and the lessons learned and agreed with recommendation 2 that the ILO should continue real-time learning on the response to the pandemic and use evaluation results optimally to advance the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. The reduction in the performance on sustainable development, disability inclusion and the integration of environmental issues in development cooperation projects was a matter of concern and should be addressed by the Office in a more systematic manner. The group supported the draft decision.
69. **The Employer spokesperson**, referring to Part I of the report, noted with satisfaction the progress made in implementing the Evaluation Strategy and expressed support for the proposal to extend the Strategy's implementation period until 2022, with the introduction of additional targets.
70. With regard to outcome 1, in view of the ongoing capacity constraints, the Evaluation Office should build in better incentive mechanisms to increase evaluation completion rates and make its services more readily available for ILO projects, in particular at the inception stage, so as to increase awareness of evaluation requirements. It would be useful for the Office to report back on the use of evaluation findings by management, constituents and donors. Concerning the selection of high-level evaluation topics, his group had previously suggested that the evaluations to be conducted in 2024 should focus on international labour standards rather than on social dialogue, and on the ILO's engagement in the United Nations (UN) reform and development systems or the strategic allocation of resources, rather than on labour statistics. If the rolling work plan in table 1 could be amended accordingly, his group could endorse recommendation 1. To ensure the relevance of the proposed tailored evaluation training for employers' organizations, the Evaluation Office should look beyond the role of employers in the evaluation of Decent Work Country Programmes and development cooperation activities and consider how employers' organizations could improve the overall monitoring and evaluation of the ILO's work and enhance constituent engagement.

71. Regarding outcome 2, the upward trend of using clustered evaluations was welcome, as it provided a more strategic overview and reduced evaluation fatigue. On evaluation quality, contracted evaluators were required to fully assess the ILO's tripartite structure and mandate, and obtain effective insights into the Office's working methods. Recent evaluation experience had shown that data collection methods could be improved. The Evaluation Office should consult the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the policy departments concerned regarding critical points, without jeopardizing the impartiality of evaluations.
72. With regard to outcome 3, it would be pertinent to know whether a macro-level analysis of the lessons learned and recommendations concerning the *i-eval* Discovery system had been conducted. Office-wide learning and follow-up to evaluations were required. He recalled that his group had previously requested further information on the composition of the Evaluation Advisory Committee, and stressed the importance of the participation of ACTRAV and ACT/EMP. Concerning table 4, on management responses to evaluation recommendations, information should be provided on what measures were being taken to address the recommendations for which no action was planned or had been taken.
73. Referring to Part II of the report, on assessing the ILO's effectiveness and results, he noted with concern that, in the area of strategic relevance and alignment, the steady drop in performance since 2019 in terms of constituent support and the validity of design showed no signs of improvement. In the area of effectiveness, sustainability and impact, the decline in performance in terms of capacity-building, policy influence and sustainability of interventions was also worrying, particularly given that the pandemic had provided an opportunity for the Office to take an innovative approach in that regard. In its post-COVID-19 strategy, the ILO should focus not only on the groups that had been disproportionately affected, but also on rebuilding the institutions of work and enhancing the resilience and productive capacity of enterprises.
74. **Speaking on behalf of ASPAG**, a Government representative of China commended the Evaluation Office for fulfilling its mandate despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and emphasized his group's commitment to support it in its work. The Office should step up its efforts in respect of the milestones that had been partially achieved or had not been achieved. His group agreed to extend the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period by one year, accepted the high-level evaluation topics for 2022 and 2023 identified in the rolling work plan, and encouraged the Office to harness the evaluation of the ILO's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022 to generate high-quality evaluation outcomes to inform the improvement of the ILO's work.
75. He thanked the Office for providing the terms of reference for the independent evaluation of the evaluation function in 2022 and requested it to fully leverage the opportunity provided by that evaluation to strengthen the ILO's evaluation function. The findings and recommendations arising from that evaluation should be shared with the Governing Body at a future session. ASPAG fully supported recommendation 2 and requested the Office to draw upon the lessons identified in the report and to implement the proposed recommendations in full in order to achieve a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. The Office should also redouble its efforts to ensure that the design and planning of development cooperation projects was in line with the ILO's strategic priorities, and enhance coordination with other UN agencies in the project

implementation phase, while taking into account national development strategies. ASPAG endorsed the draft decision.

76. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile noted with appreciation the efforts that the Evaluation Office had made to continue its evaluation work despite the challenges faced by the pandemic. The group agreed that it was necessary to extend the Evaluation Strategy's implementation period until the end of 2022, with additional targets, for the purposes of consolidating the work undertaken to date and for preparing the new Evaluation Strategy 2023–25. Furthermore, the Office should inform the Governing Body of the measures it would take to make improvements in the areas identified in Part II as having an unsatisfactory assessment score, continue to adopt a learning-oriented attitude in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and take action to ensure an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery. His group supported the draft decision.
77. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Iceland also expressed her group's appreciation of the Evaluation Office's proactive approach to the pandemic and its efforts to ensure the continuation of evaluations. IMEC welcomed the progress made and supported the proposed end targets for 2022, in the expectation that serious efforts would be made to achieve them. It also welcomed the proposed cost-recovery scenario for evaluation managers and agreed with recommendation 1.
78. Noting with concern the lack of a consistent trend reflected in Part II of the report on various dimensions of the ILO's development effectiveness, and the relatively low scores on a substantial number of those dimensions, IMEC considered that the next evaluation strategy should be ambitious in promoting an increase in development effectiveness, especially for dimensions with a score of below 50 per cent, and a consolidation of the ratings. Credible evaluations conducted during the crisis would help future decisions. Furthermore, the finding that adaptive approaches should be continued was an important one. The ILO should strengthen strategic relationships with other UN agencies and the development community to promote the goals set out in the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.
79. On strategic relevance and alignment, the weak results recorded in evaluation reports in the area of validity of design/approach was a concern. IMEC welcomed, however, the positive development in respect of poverty reduction and gender strategies. The ILO should increase its efforts to improve the effectiveness, sustainability and impact of its projects, and include the promotion of its core values of equality, inclusion, standards, social dialogue and tripartism in its interventions, particularly in the response to the socio-economic challenges caused by the pandemic. In that respect, IMEC endorsed recommendation 2.
80. Noting the concerns raised with regard to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), IMEC considered that the ILO had an important role to play in mitigating the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and should further improve its organizational agility, the coherence of its actions, and its effectiveness. IMEC supported the draft decision.
81. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Malawi acknowledged the steps taken by the Evaluation Office to ensure that it continued to

fulfil its mandate amid the challenges encountered due to the COVID-19 pandemic and took note of the process followed to select topics for high-level evaluations. Social dialogue had proved to be a useful tool for helping Africa to address the challenges it was encountering as a result of the pandemic. He took note of the evaluative insights on a way forward for the ILO's post-COVID-19 strategy, welcomed the adaptive measures being proposed and called on the Office to assist African countries in implementing Decent Work Country Programmes that specifically targeted vulnerable groups, particularly women and children. Implementing the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis should be a priority for the ILO. The Africa group supported the draft decision.

82. **A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Evaluation Office) welcomed the comments, which would guide the Evaluation Office in improving its work. While good progress had been made on all indicators, only limited progress had been made on the impact evaluation indicator because projects often only had sufficient resources to cover standard performance evaluations. The Evaluation Office had provided support for more extensive impact evaluations where there had been expressions of interest, but such evaluations were conducted for learning rather than accountability purposes and work was carried out directly by the technical departments concerned, with technical support from the Evaluation Office. He recalled that extending the Evaluation Strategy 2018–21 by one year would enable the Evaluation Office to consolidate the work done thus far and incorporate findings from the independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function in 2022 into the new evaluation strategy. Nineteen additional targets had been added to facilitate the transition to the new evaluation strategy.
83. In response to a question by the Employers' group, he said that it would be almost impossible to describe all the ways in which the findings of evaluations were being used. A number of examples were provided in the report. Furthermore, findings from 83 per cent of high-level evaluations had been reflected in the Programme Implementation Report for 2018–19 and two out of three high-level evaluations had been reflected in the Programme and Budget for 2022–23 and in the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25. In addition, the recommendations of many project evaluations were used to inform the Office's work. The Office was also very responsive to recommendations, with 90 per cent of responsible officers responding to evaluation recommendations and a recommendation completion rate of 78 per cent. The Evaluation Advisory Committee, which did not operate under the authority of the Evaluation Office, was available to oversee follow-up to the recommendations of high-level evaluations. He would consult with the chairperson of that committee as to whether it would be possible to involve Employer and Worker representatives in its work.
84. With regard to completion of evaluations, the Evaluation Office prioritized independent evaluations to ensure sufficient oversight of its work and demonstrated high compliance with independent evaluations. Compliance with internal evaluations had increased from 45 per cent to 65 per cent, and the rate of timely completion of independent evaluations had fallen only 10 per cent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, from the 100 per cent the previous year. Good progress had also been made in clustering evaluations, despite initial hesitancy: over four years, 80 project evaluation needs had been met through 20 cluster evaluations, reducing the Office's workload and increasing the efficient use of resources. In response to comments from IMEC, he confirmed that the Evaluation Office

had worked with other organizations in the UN system on joint evaluations, including in the context of the funding for the COVID-19 response and the SDGs, and had been actively involved in the COVID-19 Global Evaluation Coalition set up by the Development Co-operation Directorate of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. A number of groups had welcomed the investments made during the COVID-19 response in terms of the evaluation process and the Evaluation Office's efforts to glean the first lessons from ILO's response to the pandemic. Although it was too early to pass final judgement in that regard, positive trends had been observed in various parts of the response. The high-level evaluation of the COVID-19 response planned for 2022 would consider in more detail the Office's efforts to adapt its methods and the resulting outcomes.

85. In response to questions from the Workers' group, he elaborated on steps taken to improve the way in which the ILO's mandate for normative work and social dialogue was reflected in evaluations, a concept that had arisen in the independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function in 2016, but had not been addressed in past evaluations. In the period under review, 95 per cent of project evaluations had yielded evaluative information on normative work and standards promotion, and 100 per cent had yielded information on tripartism, but findings had indeed shown that the level of effort in the evaluated projects to promote ILO standards and social dialogue was not enough. That demonstrated the importance of keeping track of performance, and the figures would prove useful in the long term.
86. Turning to Part II of the document, he said that the ILO's overall effectiveness and results was evaluated on the basis of evaluation reports. The Evaluation Office could not provide a single definitive picture of the ILO's overall performance, but used the reports as proxies to assess the ILO's progress against 26 performance indicators. The Evaluation Office had been using the methodology to report on the ILO's performance for eight years and it was now possible to see trends in the results. From the figures in the document, performance might appear to have been highly fluctuating, because the Office used the median rather than the mean to calculate performance scores. Performance was observed to have improved in 2020, but had dipped slightly in 2021. The sample for 2021 was small, because the data reporting cut-off date had been June 2021; the Evaluation Office expected that once it was possible to evaluate all data from 2021, the figures might show a similar level of performance as in 2020.
87. Responding to a request from the Employers' group, he explained that some high-level evaluation topics had not featured on the rolling work plan because the Office was currently only asking for approval for evaluation to be undertaken in 2022 and 2023. The evaluation topics for 2024 and 2025 were indicative and would be discussed the following year.

## Decision

88. **The Governing Body endorsed the recommendations of the annual evaluation report 2020–21 (paragraphs 11 and 92 of document GB.343/PFA/9) for implementation by the ILO.**

(GB.343/PFA/9, paragraph 95)

## 10. High-level evaluations of strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes (GB.343/PFA/10)

89. **The Employer spokesperson** noted that the high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategy and actions for promoting fair and effective labour migration had correctly assessed that employers' organizations were most concerned about skills, yet there were no recommendations to place addressing skills gaps at the centre of the strategy. Recommendation 6 should include an assessment of labour market needs and the promotion of appropriate migrant labour policies to make more of a measurable impact. On coherence, the Office should examine how to pursue synergies and opportunities in the work of its constituents, such as working with business to improve regulatory frameworks to promote labour mobility and reduce improper recruitment practices. Regarding recommendation 3, the plans to ensure the sustainability of development cooperation should include measures allowing the social partners to increase their ownership of ILO interventions and incorporate dedicated capacity-building activities for their benefit.
90. As to the high-level evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, the quality and methodology were concerning. The key findings had not taken into account the genuine institutional efforts, and the recommendations were too generic to result in tangible improvements in the ILO's work. The evaluation did not mention the Governing Body's decision to introduce a dedicated policy outcome on gender equality and non-discrimination in the Programme and Budget 2020–21, nor did it refer to how the ILO supported employers' and workers' organizations in promoting gender equality. There was also little information on the work of the Equal Pay International Coalition or capacity-building activities at the International Training Centre of the ILO. As key finding 8 referred to a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on specific gender programme objectives, he asked whether the Office had a mechanism for that purpose. In terms of efficiency, the Office should identify synergies across field offices to avoid duplicating work and optimize the use of resources. He asked how the evaluators had concluded that the ILO's work on gender equality lacked an overall strategy, despite its inclusion as a policy outcome of the Programme and Budget for 2020–21, the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25 and the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21. The Office response would likely be more effective in improving the ILO's work on gender equality and should therefore be prioritized over the evaluation's recommendations to avoid creating parallel strategies and action plans. The Employers' group therefore proposed amending the draft decision to include a reference to "the Office responses and the guidance provided during the discussion to pursue follow-up".
91. On the independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's programme of work in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, he noted that many points reflected concerns already raised by the Employers' group, but the Office appeared reluctant to follow up on the recommendations of past evaluations. In relation to key finding 2 on relevance, strengthening capacities among employers' organizations to address relevant labour market issues was a shared responsibility and should be supported across all policy outcomes. As to key finding 6 on coherence, given the limited availability of resources for the areas in greatest need of ILO support, the Office should consult more with donors to better align the priorities and needs of constituents with those of donors. The Office

should also assess the capacity of ILO country offices to create the space needed for constituents in the UN development system. He welcomed recommendation 1, which clearly articulated the need to align future projects and resource allocation with the needs and capacities of the social partners and to strengthen institutional capacities of organizations of employers and workers. However, the group disagreed with recommendation 5, as maintaining relationships with the social partners was the main responsibility of specialists acting as direct points of contact.

92. **The Worker spokesperson** expressed concern that the evaluation on labour migration had not recognized the ILO's normative mandate as part of its added value. The ILO's work on migration must be grounded in the protection of migrant workers' rights in line with international labour standards. The group fully agreed that there was an overlap of the ILO's work and that of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and that responsibilities should be better divided in accordance with each organization's mandate. She thanked the Office for its efforts to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers and supported the suggestion in recommendation 6 to enhance efforts to address the challenges caused by COVID-19 on social protection for migrant workers and refugees. The Office should now focus on accelerating the ratification of Conventions on migrant workers and on addressing the heavy workload and the lack of staff with sufficient technical expertise in labour migration. She endorsed recommendation 1 of the evaluation on labour migration, which would increase the ILO's visibility in terms of its vision, activities and standing in the UN system. The adoption of the new five-year Fair Recruitment Initiative and Knowledge Hub was welcome, as it would help constituents to implement ILO standards and guidance. Greater emphasis should be placed on the protection of migrant workers in cross-border recruitment processes, in particular by imposing sanctions for the charging of unfair fees, and on the prevention of brain drain.
93. She agreed with the Employers' statement. It was regrettable that the full high-level evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts had been posted online only days before the Governing Body's discussion. The ILO's work in that area was a key priority, and the limited gains had been reversed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation therefore provided a timely reminder of the urgent need for the transformative agenda on gender equality called for in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. She expressed regret that country programme outcomes linked to the ratification and application of international labour standards had registered the lowest frequency of gender-responsiveness results and requested the Office to address those gaps in the future. The Office should also enhance the ILO's profile on gender matters, including within the UN system, by building on its added value of its normative mandate and social dialogue. The capacity-building support envisaged under recommendation 2 should focus on the institutions of work, such as promoting the inclusion of gender equality clauses in collective bargaining agreements. The transition to telework during the pandemic had particularly affected women, so the Office should consider the impact of telework from a quantitative and qualitative angle in the implementation of recommendation 4. When designing the next action plan, the Office should take into account the Office response, the relevant recommendations of the evaluation and the measures already identified for accelerating progress on specific indicators of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21.

94. The Workers' group welcomed the high-level evaluation of the ILO's programme of work in Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The group supported recommendation 1, as the largest share of time and resources in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) was currently allocated to national governments, whereas capacity-building support should be shared more evenly among tripartite constituents. Urgent steps should be taken to improve the effectiveness of DWCPs in promoting social dialogue and international labour standards and to better address environmental concerns in country programming. The evaluation's finding that some of the ILO's corporate administrative procedures had hindered DWCP results must be considered in a human resources policy, as it went beyond the mandate of regional offices. The Office should identify, promote and retain qualified personnel in order to respond to constituents' needs, therefore recommendations 6 and 8 were welcome. Noting the priorities identified under recommendation 3, regarding the socioeconomic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, she stressed the importance of social protection and occupational safety and health, and called on the Office to address international labour standards, social dialogue and environmental concerns in its support to constituents to address the gaps identified in the evaluation. The Workers' group supported the draft decision as amended by the Employers' group.
95. **Speaking on behalf of the Africa group**, a Government representative of Eswatini emphasized that the recommendations contained in the report should be instrumental in the implementation of the Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25, the Programme and Budget for 2022–23 and the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25.
96. Regarding the evaluation of labour migration, he agreed that the ILO's role in migration governance should be clearly defined to avoid overlap with that of other international bodies and to ensure better use of limited resources. Development cooperation on labour migration should be aligned with the ILO's labour migration priorities, and should focus on fair recruitment, social protection, non-discrimination and combating stereotyping of migrant workers. He asked why the Office had carried out only eight detailed studies, just two of which had included countries in Africa, when a detailed review across all regions would have provided more balanced results. The ILO's work to ensure fair and effective governance of labour migration must be an integral part of the COVID-19 recovery efforts, particularly in countries of destination. To sustain the progress made on labour migration, the Office should take into consideration all the recommendations of the evaluation, and in particular recommendations 1, 2, 5 and 6 in relation to Africa.
97. On the evaluation of gender equality and mainstreaming, he reaffirmed the Africa group's commitment to gender mainstreaming in the design, development and implementation of ILO programmes and strategies and commended the focus on capacity-building for constituents to promote gender equality. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be integrated into new DWCPs to ensure that the principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and a just transition to environmental sustainability were well reflected. He asked whether the diagnostic instruments to support the planning, monitoring and evaluation of DWCPs with respect to the SDGs were in use for gender analysis. He endorsed the recommendations made in the evaluation and noted with satisfaction that the Office had already begun to implement

them. The Africa group supported the draft decision, and could support the amendment proposed by the Employers' group.

98. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile agreed that the ILO's work on labour migration was unique owing to its added value based on tripartism and social dialogue. The ILO should develop partnerships to raise its visibility and consolidate its leadership on labour migration and fair recruitment, without duplicating the efforts of other organizations. It should also demonstrate the impact of its actions in the field, by working on an appropriate sustainability and follow-up plan based on data. The group welcomed the development cooperation and technical assistance provided by the ILO at the national and regional levels, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and encouraged the Office to continue building the capacities of technical teams in field offices.
99. GRULAC recognized the ILO's efforts on gender equality and non-discrimination. It was important to include gender and non-discrimination in programme indicators and Programmes and Budgets 2016–21, which was consistent with its mandate for social justice. Tripartite efforts and the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21 were particularly welcome, and were in line with the Centenary Declaration, the ILO Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, and the ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), by eight Member States. The group urged the ILO to continue to maintain coherence among its plans and strategies, to generate inter-agency partnerships and to implement programmes to promote women's access to the labour market and the representation of women in political and social positions of influence. GRULAC supported the draft decision as amended by the Employers' group.
100. **A Government representative of Bangladesh** urged the Office to examine the causes of the low-scoring areas of the evaluations, particularly in relation to efficiency and likelihood of impact and sustainability, and take action to address them, taking national and regional circumstances into account. In the pursuit of effective labour migration, the Office should enhance technical support to Member States for skills enhancement and fair recruitment of the potential migrant workforce, and should develop partnerships with stakeholders in countries of origin and destination to support returning workers, particularly in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Gender equality and women's empowerment should be a top priority within the ILO's tripartite structure, and accountability should be ensured to produce visible impact. In relation to DWCPs, the Office should remedy its corporate administrative procedures to improve efficiency in achieving DWCPs, in close consultation with the tripartite partners at the country level. In the case of the DWCP in Bangladesh, he called on the Office to enhance technical support and mobilize global resources to facilitate progress towards a world of decent work.
101. **A Government representative of Pakistan** expressed appreciation for the recommendations of the high-level evaluation of DWCPs in four countries of South Asia, which should contribute to further improvements in the ILO's operations at the country level. Pakistan valued the support provided by the ILO Country Office. International support was crucial to a successful human-centred recovery from the pandemic, and the

ILO could make a key contribution to improving job creation and protection, social protection and decent working conditions.

- 102. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Evaluation Office), focusing on methodological questions, explained that the high-level evaluations were conducted by an independent team of external consultants in accordance with the ILO's evaluation policy and protocols. The Evaluation Office worked with them to ensure a good level of quality and accuracy but did not alter findings. The evaluation teams assessed the topics using a combination of data collection methods. Those included secondary data review, surveys and case studies. The latter usually involved field visits, but they had been replaced by virtual interviews as a result of COVID-19. While there were limitations with that approach, sufficient data had been gathered to validate all evaluation findings through triangulation. For the case studies, Africa had possibly been underrepresented in the evaluations, which would be rectified in subsequent evaluations. He noted that document GB.343/PFA/10 contained only a short summary and did not do justice to the richness of the full evaluation reports, which were typically between 80 and 100 pages. For example, for the evaluation of gender equality and mainstreaming, the full report contained the details sought by the Employers' group on employers' activities and capacity-building. The full evaluation reports had initially been published online on 12 October, followed by fully formatted versions on 29 October 2021.
- 103. Another representative of the Director-General** (Director, Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY)), responding to comments on Part II of the report, confirmed that the ILO had mechanisms to monitor progress towards meeting gender-related indicators under the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21. There was also a mechanism related to the programme and budget proposals. The Employers' group had rightly noted that a policy outcome dedicated to gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work had been introduced in the Programme and Budget for 2020–21, as well as a gender and non-discrimination marker for all policy outcomes, which introduced more stringent requirements compared to the former cross-cutting policy driver on gender equality. The Office response had highlighted the importance of developing a theory of change that connected the high-level commitments on gender equality in the Centenary Declaration and the Global Call to Action with both the Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Programme and Budget to ensure that the Office could deliver more effectively. The Office was currently identifying and developing swift methodologies to trigger chains of changes to deliver the intended results in different countries and regions, taking into account their specific circumstances.
- 104.** With regard to the concern that country programme outcomes linked to the ratification and application of international labour standards had registered the lowest frequency of gender-responsive results, discussions were under way with the International Labour Standards Department to examine possible reasons and remedies. One possible cause might be that standards specialists considered only those standards labelled as relating to gender, whereas ratification and implementation of standards on a broad range of issues, including social protection, transition to the formal economy and minimum-wage fixing, had clear gender dimensions and policy implications. On enhancing the ILO's visibility within the UN system and the broader multilateral arena on gender issues, the Office would build on the lessons learned from past and current partnerships to identify

partnerships more strategically in the future. The diagnostic instrument being used to develop the new generation of DWCPs did indeed incorporate a gender lens; the Office would assess the exercise in early 2022 and its impact on gender equality. As to accountability and delivering on gender equality and women's economic empowerment, the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21 contained indicators relating to accountability and leadership, which were essential for visible and sustained impact. To follow up on a request from the Governing Body at its 340th Session, the Office had published a document for information on measures to accelerate progress in respect of specific indicators of the Action Plan, including leadership.<sup>7</sup> Regular and related discussion within the ILO's global management team had encouraged positive competition and sharing of good practices among regional directors, and was expected to facilitate understanding of why progress under some indicators was faster in certain regions.

## Decision

- 105. The Governing Body requested the Director-General to take into consideration the recommendations of the three high-level independent evaluations presented in document GB.343/PFA/10 (paragraphs 26–37, 78–90 and 112–132), the Office responses and the guidance provided during the discussion to pursue follow-up, and to ensure appropriate implementation.**

(GB.343/PFA/10, paragraph 142, as amended by the Governing Body)

## 11. Matters relating to the Joint Inspection Unit (GB.343/PFA/11)

- 106.** In preparation for the adoption of the decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 11 October 2021.
- 107.** The Screening Group agreed to put the item for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members on 19 October 2021.

## Decision

- 108. The Governing Body took note of the information contained in documents GB.343/PFA/11, GB.343/PFA/11/REF/1 and GB.343/PFA/11/REF/2 and provided guidance to the Office.**

(GB.343/PFA/11, paragraph 21)

## Summary of the written comments received during the consideration of the item by correspondence<sup>8</sup>

- 109. The Workers' group** supported the Office's position on the recommendations concerning the review of the investigation function in the UN system and the ongoing consultative process on recommendation 3, given that provisions related to the

<sup>7</sup> GB.343/INS/INF/3.

<sup>8</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

resolution of harassment grievances are subject to a collective agreement that would have to be renegotiated to make any changes. The group also concurred with the Office's position on the imposition of time limits for the Chief Internal Auditor and its incompatibility with the ILO staff rules and regulations.

110. The Workers' group also agreed with the Office on the report covering policies and platforms to support learning, in particular recommendation 6 on external platforms, which had not been accepted due to concerns over effectiveness, increased learning uptake and an inadequate level of diversity in external course content. Any consideration around a more collaborative approach to capacity-building within the UN system must respect the unique role of the ILO Turin Centre at the international level in providing capacity-building to ILO constituents.
111. The Workers' group agreed that the report on UN common premises went beyond its designated topic by including statements on the UN reform, and therefore supported the position of the Office on the recommendations. The group reiterated the need to ensure free access to workers' organizations to UN/ILO common premises and, more generally, the importance of securing respect for the tripartite nature of the ILO and its rights-based mandate as part of the UN reform, especially at the country level.
112. The ILO's tripartite structure was also important when discussing greater collaboration on public-private partnerships within the UN system. Despite the potential merit in learning from best practices among UN agencies, the group was not in favour of any attempt to centrally administer public-private partnerships that may circumvent the ILO's internal mechanism, one of whose criteria was the need for companies to respect ILO values and international labour standards. On enterprise risk management, the group agreed with the Office and considered the frequency of the Governing Body's discussions on risk management to be sufficient.
113. Lastly, the Workers' group agreed with the statements made by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and the Office on the recommendations relating to multilingualism, notably their non-acceptance of two recommendations owing to the existence of other relevant inter-agency arrangements, and noted with satisfaction that the ILO had appointed an ILO CEB Focal Point Coordinator on Multilingualism.
114. **The Government of Colombia** commented that it would have liked document GB.343/PFA/11 and the two reference documents to contain more detailed information on the recommendations that were not accepted and the reasons for not accepting them.

## Personnel Segment

### 12. Statement by the Chairperson of the Staff Union

The statement by the staff representative is reproduced in the [Appendix](#).

### 13. Amendments to Staff Regulations

*(No amendments were submitted to the Governing Body at this session.)*

## 14. Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 (GB.343/PFA/14)

- 115. The Employer spokesperson** said that the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 was inadequate for multiple reasons. The document did not present any specific strategy on how the ILO would effectively ensure that its workforce composition would better relate to and deliver on constituents' needs. No key deliverables addressed the importance of practical knowledge of the world of work and its constituents to rebalance and strengthen the diversity of the ILO. The key indicators aimed at monitoring the achievements of the key deliverables did not serve the purpose of tracking the ILO's performance in the focus areas. She reiterated her group's request for information on the status of the skills mapping exercise to understand workforce needs and existing skills, and to be able to provide relevant input. The mapping should include an internal assessment of the ILO's capabilities and limitations, an external environment scan to review constituents' needs and service functions such as human resources to assess whether ILO departments providing support services to frontline staff were adequately equipped with the right client-oriented skills. The section on lessons learned did not provide a comprehensive analysis of what had or had not worked in the previous Human Resources Strategy. Regarding workforce planning, the Office should take a more proactive and strategic approach, reinforced by an organization-wide inventory of existing workforce talent including skills profiles for staff at all levels.
- 116.** The focus area on planning for future workforce needs provided no action points or deliverables that safeguarded organizational continuity or preserved institutional knowledge. As most retirements involved senior ILO officials with substantial institutional knowledge, it was critical to establish a structured transition and handover process to prevent significant disruptions and inefficiency in ILO operations. ILO workforce diversity should be more comprehensive and include elements such as age, religion, ethnicity, experience and expertise. The Employers wished to know why certain regular budget positions were left unfilled for excessive periods, and what action the Office was taking to address such bottlenecks. The Office could hold managers accountable for delegated authority for selections and take remedial action to resolve delays. The revised functional and geographical mobility mechanisms should promote mobility as an intrinsic part of career development.
- 117.** Managers must be trained in and ultimately held accountable for their team's engagement, with high performance recognized and underperformance addressed. They must also receive adequate support in terms of administration, time and resources to be accountable for staff performance. It was necessary to maintain a healthy balance between providing tools and designing processes and assignments for managers, and increasing their engagement with staff. Greater efforts were required to support those transitioning into management roles, in order to assess their strength and skills gaps and enable them to obtain the necessary knowledge. Regarding the focus area on a respectful and ethical workplace, the ILO should strengthen its approach to allow staff at all levels to navigate ethical dilemmas and meet the highest expectations for workplace conduct. Her group requested the Office to foresee mandatory training on ethics and harassment for all staff as part of the key deliverables. The Office must also enhance the human resources experience for staff more proactively, by undertaking a review of human resources services and capacities to identify gaps, increase

responsiveness, improve conditions of service and address staff health and well-being. She proposed amending the draft decision to read as follows:

The Governing Body endorsed the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 and requested the Office to take the guidance provided into account in implementing the Strategy, and set clear deliverables to attract, recruit and retain a more diverse workforce with experience relevant to the three constituent groups, as well as the target groups such as women, youth and young professionals, under-represented nationalities and persons with disabilities.

- 118. The Worker spokesperson** said that his group fully supported the proposed human resources strategy and in particular its efforts to ensure that the conditions of employment of development cooperation project colleagues were aligned with those of regular Office staff. He invited the Office to negotiate with the Staff Union on the modalities for a framework of flexible work arrangements. It was important to find the right balance between virtual and face-to-face contact, taking into account the remaining barriers to the transition to a digitalized world of work and the nature of the ILO's work and support to constituents. It was too early to draw many concrete conclusions from the experience collected and the working methods used during the pandemic; the crisis was not over, and additional empirical evidence was needed before permanent changes to working methods could be introduced.
- 119.** His group supported efforts to map current and future skills needs and to introduce more robust tools for workforce planning, which should go hand in hand with a succession plan, and the Office's commitment to diversity. In that regard, the deliverables on outreach, training and career development for selected target groups should include applicants with experience relevant to the three constituent groups. The Workers expected the increase in the gender gap for D-1 and D-2 posts observed in the mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21 to be reversed in the period 2022–25. It would be crucial to maintain a positive and constructive climate between the Office and the Staff Union in the implementation of the Strategy. His group supported the original draft decision.
- 120. Speaking on behalf of the Africa group,** a Government representative of Rwanda recommended the Office to take bold steps to implement the Strategy, including by mobilizing resources and setting clear annual targets in line with its objectives and expected outcomes. It was important to ensure an assessment of future workforce needs that would cater for global and specific regional and national requirements. Internship programmes should be strengthened to allow young people to gain experience and to be better prepared for recruitment opportunities. The Office should ensure the effective implementation of strategies aimed at providing outreach training and career development for women, under-represented minorities and persons with disabilities, in line with the targets set out in the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality and the ILO Disability Inclusion Strategy. He emphasized that the number of women in senior professional posts remained at 38 per cent and needed to be increased. His group supported the original draft decision.
- 121. Speaking on behalf of ASPAG,** a Government representative of Japan commended the Office's commitment to strengthening its human resources function and expressed support for all three key priorities of the Strategy. Geographical diversity was of

particular importance, including for the smooth implementation of development cooperation projects by ILO country offices. He therefore encouraged the Office to improve geographical diversity beyond the target set and requested it to consider adding further indicators on geographical representation to the Strategy, including one relating to senior positions. He also requested the Office to provide, in the follow-up document of the Strategy or in a separate document, detailed annual data on underrepresentation at all grades and on progress achieved. Furthermore, he proposed that requirements such as extensive international experience and language skills should be removed from generic job descriptions if not needed for particular positions. In order to improve workforce diversity, the Office should also focus on disability inclusion and gender parity; conduct a strategic outreach campaign targeting under-represented groups and nationalities; and raise awareness of diversity among managers and staff involved in the recruitment process, including through unconscious bias training. In addition, it should remain open to talented external candidates rather than focusing solely on internal career progression. Geographical mobility should be promoted by factoring it into decisions on moving to high-level positions at headquarters. The ILO's work at the central level would also be strengthened by recruiting high-performing staff from ILO regional and country offices, to enable the Office to capitalize on their experience in the field and interaction with local constituents, which would increase the capacity to take into account the needs of constituents. He requested the Office to make specific plans to improve geographical mobility and report on its progress to the Governing Body; increase the proportion of ILO officials working in the field to help manage increased workloads due to UN country teams; provide a detailed mapping of potential vacancies for the coming three years; and increase transparency in the recruitment process.

122. Turning to priority 2, he called on the Office to steadily proceed with the ongoing revision of the disciplinary framework and raise awareness of its zero-tolerance approach to workplace discrimination and harassment to enable employees to reach their full potential. Although flexible working arrangements could boost diversity and inclusion, the Office should remain mindful of potential challenges, such as difficulties in coordinating work, mental health issues and insufficient guidance for young staff including junior professional officers (JPOs). He expressed appreciation for the increased frequency and granularity of the performance evaluation. Developing additional recognition schemes would help to build a self-motivated workforce; to that end, it was worth considering higher salary or bonuses for high performers. With regard to priority 3, in its work to leverage technology for efficient human resources services, the Office should prioritize measures conducive to the achievement of outcomes 1 and 2, and ensure coordination in the implementation of different ILO strategies in areas such as human resources and information technology in its efforts to innovate and digitalize the human resources function. Provided that the Office heeded its guidance, considered reporting detailed annual data on representation and progress achieved and further considered more appropriate indicators to monitor geographical diversity, his group would support the draft decision.
123. **Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile urged the Office to continue its development of action plans that helped fulfil its objectives. Expressing his group's broad agreement with the Strategy's key priorities and expected results, he

drew attention to the need for vacancy announcements to promote the recruitment of women, young people and persons with disabilities. The measures to accelerate progress in respect of specific indicators of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21 (GB.343/INS/INF/3), while welcome, should not replace in-depth analysis of job profiles to address possible barriers for people with more diverse profiles. The Strategy's gender, diversity and inclusion approach must be translated into measures that addressed the factors preventing women and officials from all regions from accessing senior management positions.

124. The ILO should inform all staff of additional conflict resolution communication channels that could be used without fear of reprisals. His group would welcome further information on the medical and mental health support provided by the Office to its staff during the COVID-19 pandemic, and on the measures adopted in relation to the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Although the ILO's human resources and information technology strategies were closely linked, neither the document under discussion nor the ILO Information Technology Strategy 2022–25 (GB.343/PFA/4) addressed the material or human resources required to achieve their objectives. Staff surveys should be undertaken to help measure the impact of human resources strategies, and the Strategy should reach all staff and remain on-budget. His group supported the draft decision, as amended by the Employers' group.
125. **Speaking on behalf of IMEC**, a Government representative of Canada said that she welcomed the proposed Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 and the Office's commitment to recruiting staff with the highest standards of competence and integrity through a competitive and transparent process based on merit and qualifications. The low level of ambition for gender parity among ILO staff was cause for concern; every effort should be made to achieve gender equality within 3 per cent parity in senior positions by 2025. Her group would appreciate receiving detailed information from the Office on development towards achieving gender parity for ILO's senior positions, including the trends and direction over time. The Office should make disability inclusion an additional selected key indicator under outcome 1 of the Strategy. She noted the importance of hiring qualified JPOs and wished to know how staff members were prepared for their role as supervisors of junior professional officers and requested an update on recruitment policies for junior professional officers following completion of their contract.
126. Noting that the Strategy referred to action to prevent and address harassment, including sexual harassment, she reiterated the importance of tackling that issue among ILO staff, implementing partners and with respect to beneficiaries. She noted the importance of a standing ILO policy to prevent and address sexual harassment, as well as sexual exploitation, abuse and other forms of harassment and abuse of authority, and sought assurances that the policy is available online, is regularly updated and broadly communicated to staff and implemented both at headquarters and in regional and country offices. Information on flexible working arrangements and how they had contributed to the retention of women in senior positions would be appreciated. The ILO had a duty to act as a leader on workforce management practice in the United Nations system. IMEC supported the original draft decision.

- 127. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** welcomed the fact that the ILO's human resources development strategy sought to recruit staff with the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity. Concerning geographical representation, he said that the phrase "less-than-adequately represented nationalities", which was used in the Appendix to the document, should be replaced by "under-represented countries" in line with the terminology used in the rest of the document.
- 128.** The transition to remote working, made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic, should be considered to be an exceptional measure. Introducing flexible working arrangements would require financial investment and a review of the contract system and salary scales. Such an important decision should not be rushed, and should first be discussed within the framework of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and the Human Resources Network of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. Regarding staff mobility, the ICSC had recommended linking mobility with professional development, and he encouraged the ILO to take that into account when developing new staff mobility mechanisms. The ILO should continue to work constructively with the ICSC, and any conditions of service approved by the UN General Assembly should form the basis for ILO human resources policy.
- 129.** He welcomed the inclusion of focus area 2.1 and said that effective human resources management policies required incentives and penalties to ensure accountability for performance. Turning to gender equality, he noted that there were more women than men in positions at the P1 to P4 levels, and said that gender equality must apply to both sexes.
- 130.** Finally, regarding the amendment put forward by the Employer spokesperson, he proposed adding the phrase "continue recruitment and appointment processes in accordance with the ILO Constitution and Staff Regulations" after "implementing the Strategy,".
- 131. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Human Resources Development Department) took note of the guidance provided by constituents, which would help the Office in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25. The Strategy applied to all staff, including those recruited on contracts financed through extra budgetary development cooperation projects, and was underpinned by a "One ILO" approach.
- 132.** The ILO's commitment to geographical diversity had been evidenced in a recent UN report commissioned by the ICSC, which had confirmed that the Organization was one of few in the UN system that had defined criteria for monitoring and measuring equitable geographical representation. In line with the Action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce, adopted by the Governing Body in 2019, constituents received a detailed breakdown of statistics each year, and the current figures showed that progress had been made. It must be noted that, like other organizations in the UN system, the ILO's calculation of geographical diversity only took into account positions in the Professional and Director categories that were financed under the regular budget, which only amounted to 23 per cent of total ILO staff. It would therefore be pertinent to expand the scope of the topic to include staff employed through other contract modalities in order to provide the full picture of the Office workforce diversity.

- 133.** In the interest of concision as requested by the Governing Body, the document had not described all relevant strategies and initiatives developed by the Office on relevant areas such as gender parity and disability as that information was available in other ILO strategies. Recent actions taken to improve diversity included increasing targeted job advertising to qualified potential candidates and enhancing collaboration with platforms such as LinkedIn. Over 3.5 million people had visited the ILO recruitment platform, demonstrating that many people viewed the ILO as a desirable employer. The Office had also taken steps to rejuvenate its workforce by strengthening its excellent Junior Professional Officer Programme, which allowed young professionals to learn from senior managers with extensive expertise. Senior staff members received support from the Office to ensure that they were well prepared to engage in all stages of the programme, from the drafting of job descriptions to the selection and training of new staff members. Over 50 per cent of junior professional officers continued their careers at the ILO on contracts financed both through the regular budget and development cooperation projects. Although certain roles were not open to Junior Professional Officers on development cooperation contracts until they had five years of experience, those staff members could benefit from training to enable them to apply for internally and externally advertised positions.
- 134.** He shared the concerns raised by some constituents regarding the work still to be done to secure gender parity, especially at the senior positions levels of the Organization. However, it was important to be realistic about the progress that could be made in only four years: achieving full gender parity by 2025 would require each upcoming position to be filled by a woman. The goals in the Strategy had therefore been established on the basis of current staff numbers, upcoming vacancies, and current trends. The Office was implementing several actions to support female staff, including training, coaching and mentoring programmes. He expressed his hope that the new ways of working would facilitate an increase in female staff in senior roles.
- 135.** In response to questions posed by the Employers' group, he said that ILO's vacancy announcements indicated clearly that applicants with the relevant experience to the tripartite constituents are encouraged to apply. Although all positions required applicants to have experience relevant to the three constituent groups of the Organization, he recognized that many vacant positions may not always be attractive to members of workers' or employers' organizations. The Office would continue to work with the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) to make vacancies more attractive and to encourage members of such organizations to apply for them. Concerning the employment of persons with disabilities, he noted that the ILO was already implementing its policy on disability inclusion. He also recalled that flexible working arrangements had been introduced successfully well before COVID-19. They were used effectively during the pandemic largely as a result of the commitment of ILO staff. It was now necessary to compile the lessons learned into a new and updated policy, and the ILO would work with other UN agencies to ensure that any new measures introduced were relevant, effective and functional.
- 136.** Concerning respectful and ethical conduct, the ILO was participating in a number of UN working groups and all personnel had been informed of the ILO's policy of zero tolerance for acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. He could provide more information about work

in that area if required. He also confirmed that the ILO's current part-time position of Ethics Officer would be converted into a full-time position in 2022. Finally, while a pilot project had been rolled out in some departments, the planned Office-wide skills mapping exercise would be carried out in 2022, at the start of the Strategy's implementation period.

- 137. The Employer spokesperson** said that it was important to ensure that the Office was given clear deliverables concerning attracting, recruiting and retaining a more diverse workforce, which was the purpose of the amendment she had proposed to the draft decision. In that regard, she supported the additional amendment proposed by the Government representative of the Russian Federation. Thanking GRULAC for its support of her proposed amendment, she urged the constituents to seek a consensus.
- 138. The Worker spokesperson** said that the amendment proposed by the representative of the Russian Federation did not follow the Governing Body's usual practice and that it was unnecessary to mention the ILO Constitution and Staff Regulations in the decision. If the draft decision was going to be amended to include more precise guidance for the Office, then wording from the Governing Body's decision (GB.341/PFA/16, paragraph 42, as amended by the Governing Body) in March 2021 should be used, by adding "including with a view to attract, recruit and retain a workforce of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity, with due regard being given to the Action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce (GB.337/PFA/11), including in terms of gender, geographical diversity, also addressing under-representation, experience relevant to the three constituent groups, and opportunities for youth and young professionals" after "implementing the Strategy," in the original version. The inclusion of a reference to setting clear deliverables seemed to imply that the Governing Body was trying to micromanage the work of the Office. In his opinion, there was little support for the amendment proposed by the Employer spokesperson, and several constituents had supported adopting the draft decision without amendment.
- 139. A Government representative of the Russian Federation** asked the Office to comment on the plan to introduce more flexible ways of working, which he believed would require an overhaul of the ILO's contract and remuneration system. Moreover, the introduction of remote working during the COVID-19 pandemic had affected many organizations, and therefore any decision on such working arrangements should also be agreed across the UN system. The International Civil Service Commission was the ideal body in which that decision should be made, and it had considered matters relating to flexible working arrangements at its Ninety-second Session in August 2021, concluding that any decision on changing remuneration parameters for remote work would be premature.
- 140.** Finally, he said that he supported the original draft decision, and said that the amendment he had proposed would only be required if the original text of the draft decision was not adopted.
- 141. Speaking on behalf of IMEC,** a Government representative of Canada said that her group would like to see greater ambition on gender parity but recognized that the targets were realistic and could be exceeded. On diversity and inclusion, she took it that the Office was prepared to consider integrating a dedicated target in that regard in the future. She said that further clarification of the Junior Professional Officer Programme

would be required to ensure that it was successful for the UN system and for the young professionals who participated in it. Finally, her group supported the original draft decision.

**142. The Worker spokesperson** emphasized that he supported the original draft decision as contained in paragraph 49 of document GB.343/PFA/14. His proposal to use wording from the decision adopted in March 2021 would only be necessary if agreement could not be reached on the original version.

**143. The Chairperson**, noting the wide support for the original draft decision as contained in paragraph 49 of document GB.343/PFA/14 and in light of the clarifications provided by the Office, asked whether the Governing Body was ready to adopt that draft decision without amendment, on the understanding that the guidance provided during the meeting would guide the future work of the Office during its implementation of the Strategy.

**144. The Employer spokesperson** said that there was no consensus on the draft decision and recalled that the amendment she had proposed had received some support. Therefore, constituents should be given more time to reach a consensus. The Governing Body was required to provide specific instructions to the Office for its future work, which should not be confused with attempts to micromanage its work.

**145. A representative of the Director-General** (Director, Human Resources Development Department) said that the ILO's flexible working policy had in fact been in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and that the Office was now seeking to take into account the lessons learned during that period. The work of the ILO's Global Management Team concerning flexible working was aligned to that of the rest of the UN system. The work of the International Civil Service Commission on this matter had just begun.

**146. The Chairperson** proposed postponing the decision on the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 until consensus could be reached.

*(The Governing Body postponed consideration of the item until a later sitting.)*

**147.** When the discussion resumed, **the Chairperson** announced that the consultative group had endorsed a proposal for a revised draft decision, which had been circulated to Governing Body members.

**148. The Worker spokesperson** supported the revised proposal.

**149. The Employer spokesperson** emphasized that the diversity of ILO staff must be more expansive. Familiarity with workplaces and their actors was key, as was experience of social dialogue and tripartism in action in different cultural contexts throughout the world. Several groups had expressed dissatisfaction with aspects of the HR Strategy, particularly on diversity, but further consultations had led to a consensus-based decision. It took into account the need for a proactive approach extending beyond merely the inclusion in vacancy announcements of a requirement for candidates to have experience that was relevant to particular constituents. However, the removal of a reference to the action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce could leave a substantial gap. She suggested that the Office should consult the groups on whether to update and strengthen the existing action plan or to adopt a new one, and on the potential content; that would mean that it would not have to be submitted for the

Governing Body's consideration. The Employers' group would be closely following progress at future sessions and paying particular attention to indicators and deliverables regarding profiles with experience relevant to the three constituent groups. She requested the Office to include that information in the document on the composition and structure of staff. Her group supported the amended draft decision.

- 150. Speaking on behalf of GRULAC**, a Government representative of Chile supported the amended draft decision, which brought together the positions of the three constituent groups, and included a reference to persons with disabilities, as requested by GRULAC. However, he echoed the concern that there would be no new plan to replace the action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce that would expire at the end of 2021. He requested the Office to include, in the document on the composition and structure of the ILO workforce, actions and measures to meet the requests of constituents, along with appropriate deadlines. He urged the Office to keep the Governing Body informed of the results and progress achieved under the action plan on diversity.
- 151. The Chairperson** informed the Governing Body that the Director-General had confirmed that consultations would be conducted on the action plan on diversity.

## Decision

- 152. The Governing Body endorsed the Human Resources Strategy for 2022–25 and requested the Office to take the guidance provided into account in implementing the Strategy, with a view to attracting, recruiting and retaining a workforce of the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity, with due regard being given to gender; geographical diversity, also addressing under-representation; experience relevant to the three constituent groups; and opportunities for youth and young professionals and persons with disabilities.**

(GB.343/PFA/14, paragraph 49, as amended by the Governing Body)

## 15. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO: Recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by other international organizations (GB.343/PFA/15)

- 153.** In preparation for the adoption of the decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 11 October 2021.
- 154.** The Screening Group agreed to put the item for a decision by correspondence and the decision was approved by consensus and announced to all Governing Body members on 19 October 2021.

## Decision

- 155. The Governing Body approved the recognition of the Tribunal's jurisdiction by the Global Water Partnership Organisation (GWPO) with effect from 19 October 2021.**

(GB.343/PFA/15, paragraph 11)

## Summary of the written comment received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>9</sup>

- 156. The Workers' group** noted with satisfaction the request by the GWPO to recognize the ILO Administrative Tribunal's jurisdiction, which would extend the Tribunal's jurisdiction to 57 organizations other than the ILO. The group welcomed the fact that the Tribunal continued to attract new international organizations, which was surely because of its reputation, independence and impartiality. The Workers' group supported the draft decision.

## 15.1. Matters relating to the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO: Administrative arrangement to improve case management (GB.343/PFA/15/1)

- 157.** In preparation for the adoption of a decision by correspondence, the Office held a briefing session for Governing Body members on this item on 19 October 2021.
- 158.** 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 1 November 2021.

## Decision

- 159. The Governing Body decided to approve the administrative arrangement outlined in document GB.343/PFA/15/1 to improve the functioning of the Tribunal, with effect from 1 January 2022 for a trial period of five years.**

(GB.343/PFA/15/1, paragraph 8)

## Summary of the written comments received during the consideration of the item by correspondence <sup>10</sup>

- 160. The Workers' group** took note of the request sent by the President of the Tribunal to the Director-General to put in place an administrative arrangement that would permit the President or Vice-President of the Tribunal to be available in Geneva between sessions of the Tribunal in order to expedite case management. The arrangement would improve the functioning of the Tribunal and ensure timely judgment delivery in a context where an increasing number of complaints were being filed and a growing number of procedural requests were being made to the Tribunal.
- 161.** The group noted that the salary to be paid to the judge would be included in the overhead costs of the Tribunal, to be apportioned among all the organizations having recognized the Tribunal's jurisdiction, and welcomed the fact that the organizations concerned had been consulted and had raised no objection in that regard. It also noted that it would be for the Tribunal to nominate the judge who would undertake the

<sup>9</sup> The complete text of each comment in the original language is available on the [Governing Body's web page](#), together with the decision.

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additional tasks. The group supported the implementation of the new arrangement as of 1 January 2022 for a trial period of five years.

- 162. The Government of Cuba**, referring to paragraph 6 of the document, considered that more information was needed on the selection process for the judge who would work permanently in Geneva, especially if there were expressions of interest from multiple judges.