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Report of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO

87th Session of the Board (26–27 October 2023)

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1. The 87th Session of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO (the Centre) was held in Turin on 26 and 27 October 2023.
2. The report of this meeting is submitted to the 349th Session of the Governing Body (October–November 2023).
3. **The Chairperson, Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo**, Director-General of the ILO, welcomed the members of the Board.

▶ Introductory remarks

4. **The Chairperson** gave the floor to the representative of the Government of Italy, to the representative of the Mayor of Turin and to the representatives of the Piedmont Region and the Unione Industriali Torino.
5. **The representative of the Government of Italy, Mr Bianchi**, reaffirmed the continued support of Italy for the Centre and its training activities. The Centre was a core component of the International Labour Organization, which attracts more and more workers, trade unionists, entrepreneurs and government officers with its activities, and it was now reaping the fruits of the hard work that its management and staff had been carrying out since even before the pandemics struck. The speaker acknowledged the significant growth in the overall number of participants enrolled in training activities, with increasing revenues and a positive net balance recorded in the past few years. The Government of Italy supported the long-term financial sustainability of the Centre, and therefore commended its management and its staff for having designed and implemented a business model that had proven to be successful in pursuing a solid and more diversified income basis and in expanding the portfolio of services and activities. The Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25 would consolidate this business model and allow for improvement of the technical, financial and organizational performances of the Centre in the years to come.
6. The representative of the Government of Italy noted that face-to-face learning was growing again. He deemed it critical to maintain over time a vibrant community of people who can meet in person, exchange ideas and best practices and create lifetime links with the Centre, the ILO and Italy. Nevertheless, he also insisted on the importance of cost control as a key element of a sound financial strategy, consistent with the goal of ensuring the Centre's solidity and vitality, as well as its capacity to face and overcome new challenges ahead.
7. The vision of the Government of Italy remained that of an innovative, efficient, cost-effective, inclusive and transparent centre of education, learning and exchange, rooted in United Nations and International Labour Organization values. The speaker acknowledged the good functioning of the Innovation Lab, hosted in one of the pavilions that had been renovated with the contribution of the Italian Government. In December 2022, the Government of Italy had signed with the Centre a new memorandum of understanding on the renovation of the Pavilion Americas 2 and was now assessing a new financial contribution to the benefit of the whole campus, which might host other international institutions interested in sharing a marvellous hub where people from almost all countries in the world meet to learn and to understand each other.

8. The representative of the Government of Italy concluded by mentioning the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the signing by the ILO and the host country of the agreement establishing the Centre. This anniversary could be an opportunity to celebrate milestones and achievements in an inclusive spirit, with one or more events bringing together in the Centre the United Nations family, ILO constituents, the Italian Government, the Region, the city, the other economic, academic and civil society partners, and the local population. He thanked Mr Giuseppe Casale, Deputy Director, for his long service at the Centre.
9. **The representative of the City of Turin, Ms Favaro**, welcomed the members of the Board in Turin and thanked the Italian Government for the renewed support to the Centre. She focused on the collaboration between the Centre and the city, which also provided a glimpse into the future, and guaranteed the excellence all stakeholders should be proud of. She highlighted the role of the campus as a promoter of multiculturalism.
10. **The representative of the Piedmont Region, Mr Gandolfi**, reiterated that the intentions of collaboration among humans with a common purpose for peace, economic development, and environmental sustainability should be continued despite the difficulties. The best tools for this purpose were education and global training to understand and communicate on a large scale in order to build international cooperation which, thanks to the partnership between the ILO and the Region, was becoming something concrete.
11. **The representative of the Unione Industriali Torino, Mr Cappetti**, reminded how important the Centre's work was for the city. He pledged for the huge potential of the presence of the Centre in Turin to be exploited to the fullest.
12. **The Chairperson** thanked the Government of Italy for its political commitment and financial support to the Centre, among others for the funding provided to the renovation works.
13. The Chairperson also thanked the local Italian authorities for their cooperation with the Centre.
14. The Chairperson then had some introductory words about the present and the near future of the Centre. He assured the Board of his own commitment to the role of the Centre as the learning and capacity development resource for ILO tripartite constituents and recalled that in the ILO Programme and Budget for 2024–25 the Centre was referenced in most outcomes and result areas where it was expected to play a concrete role. He was pleased to note that 2022 had been a year of fast growth for the Centre and that this trend was maintained in 2023. Compared to 2021, the total number of learners had grown by 20 per cent, online learning had continued to expand, and face-to-face activities were building back.
15. About the items on the agenda, the Interim Implementation Report for 2022 and the Progress report for 2023 showed that ILO constituents were among the primary beneficiaries of the growth in participants; women represented 40 per cent of all participants reached in distance learning in the first eight months of 2023, and 49 per cent of participants in face-to-face training, which brought the Centre very close to gender balance. More than three quarters of the Centre's activities were directly linked to ILO policy outcomes and the Centre had consolidated its position as a learning hub on decent work topics for ILO and other UN staff and increased its profile as a provider of innovative digital learning and collaboration solutions.

16. On the Programme and Budget Proposals for 2024–25, the Chairperson confirmed they were firmly anchored in the Centre’s Strategic Plan for the period 2022–25. In the next biennium, the Centre would continue to build up its portfolio of face-to-face training activities on campus and in the field while further enhancing its online learning offer. These two modalities of training should indeed be seen as complementary. The Centre would focus on the quality of services delivered, bearing in mind that it would strive to give effect to the call for global action in support of social justice. In this regard, its digital capabilities could be leveraged to amplify ILO outreach on a global scale with advocacy campaigns, knowledge management support and capacity development services. In the next biennium, the Centre would also enhance its international reputation as a learning innovation hub for the world of work. In this regard, the Innovation Lab would continue to serve as a bridge for ILO constituents to access capacity development services.
17. The Chairperson thanked all the staff of the Centre for their hard work and commitment and encouraged them to keep up the good work to ensure that the Centre remains a centre of excellence for the capacity development of ILO constituents in respect of social justice and decent work.

► Adoption of the agenda

18. **The Chairperson** proposed to adopt the agenda.¹
19. **The Board adopted the agenda.**

► Interim Implementation Report for 2022 and Summary of the implementation progress in 2023

20. **The Director of the Centre, Mr Perrin**, presented the documents.² He highlighted the digital transformation that had boomed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This strategy had led to excellent participation results and generated an economic surplus. In his opinion, there was a huge potential to generate new services that would confirm this positive trajectory, and the 2022–23 biennium would more than probably exceed the expected results. To achieve such positive results and greater quality and impact of the services, internal and external evaluations were paramount. The €3.8 million surplus made in 2022 would therefore be reinvested.
21. The Director reiterated the Centre’s mandate and saw in the results for 2022–23 a solid base for the next biennium. The Centre should be more sustainable and proactive in meeting the needs of ILO constituents, and he would strive to restore a better balance between online and face-to-face learning.
22. The Director thanked the Deputy Director for all the work he had done during the transition period and acknowledged the individual and collective contribution of all the Centre’s staff.

¹ CC 87 rev.

² CC 87/1 and CC 87/1/Add.

- 23. The Director of Training, Mr Klemmer**, briefly illustrated the results reported in both documents and insisted in particular on three key points: outreach, impact and revenue. The overall figures showed that the Centre operates in a sustainable manner under its new business model. On the first aspect, in 2022 the Centre had reached out to 100,000 people through its training services, and this figure should be attained in 2023 as well. Adding the other components of the service mix, the Centre should reach around 400,000 people over the biennium, as a contribution to the ILO's call for global action. More than 60 per cent of the activities had been designed and delivered in collaboration with the ILO departments and field offices. About impact, the results from the post-activity assessment tests were stable, but the rate of participants giving concrete examples of application of newly acquired knowledge had steadily increased. About revenue, for the second time in a row, the Centre's turnover should exceed €30 million in 2023. Thanks to the new operational model, the contribution to fixed costs (CFC) had kept increasing after the pandemic, and the CFC target for the biennium should be reached.
- 24. The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Ms Moore**, congratulated the Centre's management and staff for their hard work and for what she regarded as the achievement of positive results. The outcomes of this work represented a high level of individual and collective effort and achievement that contributed to the outcomes of the Centre and their alignment with the objectives of the ILO. The report largely celebrated the success of the Centre and its growth in terms of finances and outreach, but it fell short in explicitly addressing the extent to which the Centre's activities had directly benefited workers. The speaker then raised some specific points in relation to different chapters of the report.
- 25.** On the service portfolio, the group took note of the fact that in 2022, two thirds of the Centre's activities had been training services and one third non-training services. While diversification of the Centre's service portfolio was positive, it was essential to strike a balance between training and non-training services to ensure that the Centre's core expertise in capacity development through training is not diluted. Training remained a critical component of achieving the Centre's mission and should remain affordable and accessible to all ILO constituents. Although improving the Centre's financial capacity was important, this should not be done by changing its nature to a profit-oriented institution. Workers' organizations relied on affiliates' fees and did not have the financial capacity to support their members' participation in training, and fewer would have the capacity to hire the Centre to provide training for them. Therefore, the group warned the Board of the unintended consequences of externalising services, as this would have the long-term impact of further limiting workers' participation in Centre's activities.
- 26.** Regarding the areas of expertise, the Worker Vice-Chairperson urged the Centre to make a greater effort to align its work with the ILO's mandate, priorities and action. She expressed the group's concern over a relatively low number of activities under policy outcome 2 on international labour standards. She invited the management of the Centre to take the necessary steps to improve in this regard and strengthen the International Labour Standards, Rights at Work and Gender Equality Programme.

27. On outreach, the speaker thought that beneficiaries of communication and advocacy campaigns should not be recorded as being on an equal footing with participants in training activities and asked for a clear distinction between them in the Centre's reports. The report did not delve into the quality of outreach; for instance it did not say clearly whether the programmes actually benefited those who needed them the most. In this regard, the share of women remained quite disappointing. The group also lamented the growing and evident preference of the Centre's management for digital learning. Although the Workers' group recognized this modality as useful to reach larger numbers of learners, the Centre should not ignore the digital divide and the high risk to leave behind people living in regions and countries where digital infrastructure is inadequate. Ensuring that ILO constituents, regardless of their location or technical capabilities, can benefit from training was a fundamental aspect of decent work and social justice. Face-to-face events were still of critical importance for networking and peer-to-peer knowledge, social networking and experience sharing. Fund-raising efforts should be directed to ensure more face-to-face activities, especially tripartite activities.
28. On impact, the Worker Vice-Chairperson reckoned that the report did not provide a clear picture of the long-term impact of the Centre's training and non-training services on the achievement of decent work and social justice in the long run. In future editions of the implementation report the Workers' group would welcome concrete examples and evidence of the positive changes these services brought about in the labour market and for individual workers, as well as for companies and governments. The high levels of participant satisfaction were very encouraging. The Centre should continue its efforts to measure the knowledge acquisition of the participants as well as the impact of its training and non-training activities on organizations and systems.
29. On the financial position, the speaker welcomed the detailed figures for 2022 and commended the Centre for its efforts in diversifying its funding sources and expanding its network of partnerships. These initiatives demonstrated a proactive approach to securing resources and enhancing the Centre's capacity to deliver on its mission. It was essential to assess whether the surplus, repeatedly mentioned as an indicator of success, is being reinvested in activities that promote decent work and social justice and that directly benefit workers. The group appreciated the Director's initiative to invite the Officers of the Board to discuss on the allocations of the Fellowship Fund.
30. The Worker Vice-Chairperson also appreciated the information about the governance and internal control mechanisms. While the Report demonstrates the Centre's commitment to transparency and accountability, there was room for improvement in providing more detailed information on recommendations and actions taken to address them. Additionally, a focus on inclusivity, diversity, and representation should be a priority in all aspects of the Centre's work. The Workers' group looks forward to continued collaboration and dialogue to enhance the Centre's effectiveness and transparency.
31. The Worker Vice-Chairperson concluded with a few words on the progress report for 2023, which emphasized expanded outreach, financial sustainability and investments in infrastructure and technology. The group was looking forward to the full implementation of the Centre's work plan.

32. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr Ahmed**, extended the group's gratitude to the Centre for presenting the Interim Implementation Report for 2022. The document adeptly outlined the Centre's significant achievements amidst the prevailing global challenges. From the report, the group discerned an impressive expansion in 2022, with more than 100,000 individuals benefiting from the Centre's offerings; a pronounced rise in training enrolments, noting a 20 per cent growth in learners from 2021, which indicates both the Centre's adaptability and the resilience of its participants; and the Centre's steadfast commitment to digital learning.
33. On the outreach, the speaker thought the data should be carefully read. In the statistics presented in the report, the management included as distance-learning participants those employers' representatives which attended courses organized by employer and business membership organizations using digital platforms provided by the Centre; nonetheless, contents and materials for such courses are not curated by the Centre itself. If such participants were excluded from the statistics, the number of employers' representatives taking part in courses directly organized by the Centre would be much lower. Disaggregated data would reflect the real picture.
34. On the financial side, the surplus of €3.8 million indicated a prudent management. While the increase in voluntary contributions was positive, the Centre should exercise caution. The potential financial constraints that nations might face after the pandemic implied that the Centre should equip its grant application teams with advanced skills to ensure future funding.
35. About impact, the external evaluation of learning activities conducted in 2022 showcased the Centre's transformative effect. With an average satisfaction rate of 4.49 out of 5, the Centre had proven its capability to deliver quality learning experiences. This high rate of satisfaction, especially during an era where digital learning took precedence, underlined the effectiveness of the Centre's online initiatives. Individuals benefited immensely, gaining valuable knowledge and skills that enhance their professional trajectories. On the organizational front, the Centre's meticulous adherence to the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle ushered in notable improvements. The systematic and standardized approach had not only increased the quality of capacity development assignments but had also forged stronger ties with organizational partners.
36. The Employer Vice-Chairperson thanked the management for sharing detailed training statistics and tables, which provided an important snapshot of the Centre's progression.
37. **The Government Vice-Chairperson, Mr Essah**, commended the management and the staff of the Centre for the impressive growth recorded in 2022 and for the results of the first eight months of 2023. The pandemic had challenged the Centre to creatively think of better means and ways of reaching out to sustain its training programmes through online activities. The increase in the number of participants and generated revenue were evidence of the prudent and visionary management of the Centre. The reported budget surplus of about €3.8 million was also commendable. The adopted operational model was delivering as expected on its performance target both in outreach and impact.
38. Nevertheless, the group was still concerned by the low share of government officials among the core constituents benefiting from the Centre's services and asked for more dedicated training programmes, especially on labour inspection in an advanced-technology work environment. It would also appreciate elaborate segregation of the participants by region in order to better understand the existing needs gaps. Collaboration with various regional labour training centres should be strengthened, especially in regions which experience connectivity issues.

39. About the progress report, the Government Vice-Chairperson noted the stability of the service mix and the robust financial position, which would probably translate, for the second consecutive year, in an annual revenue exceeding €30 million.
40. The Government Vice-Chairperson thanked the various funding partners for their support to individual projects and tailor-made activities in line with specific thematic and geographic priorities.
41. **The Director of the Centre** wished to reassure the Board that the Centre would remain a public service institution and would not operate as a private, profit-oriented body. He took note of the comment from the Workers' group on activities linked to outcome 2 of the next ILO programme and budget. He acknowledged the need to further diversify the Centre's revenue base and the request for disaggregated statistics. On the cost of participation in the Centre's activities, the Director replied that it is a constant concern for the management, which tries to address the problem with a series of instruments such as fellowships or free courses.
42. **The Director of Training** reacted to the observations concerning the three key points of his previous intervention. On the distinction between participants and active learners, he explained that this was based on the number of certificates downloaded at the end of an activity and mentioned that the download rates were higher for face-to-face activities and for fee-based courses. He agreed that the Centre should focus on the issue of participants dropping out, in particular for free, self-guided courses. Similarly, for non-training services, only actively engaged beneficiaries were reported. For activities delivered in collaboration with other institutions, for instance online platforms, direct and indirect beneficiaries were reported separately, and the latter should not be considered as second-class beneficiaries, but rather as a proof of the sustainability of the Centre's offer. As far as impact is concerned, more should indeed be done to measure the long-term impact. The Director of Training referred to the section of the Programme and Budget for 2024–25 on the deepened collaboration with the ILO's Evaluation Unit.
43. About activities linked to international labour standards, the Director of Training mentioned that the Centre designs and delivers its activities together with the ILO and therefore, to a certain extent, follows the demand of the ILO departments.
44. **The Board took note of the documents.**

▶ Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25

45. **The Chairperson** stated that the document ³ was submitted for decision.
46. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** acknowledged that the Centre's management had put in place a good consultative process with the Officers of the Board to ensure the groups would have been able to provide comments in the drafting stages of the document. He saw in the submitted document a continuity in the business model of the Centre, which had led to important achievements over the last years both in terms of outreach and financial performance.

³ CC 87/2.

47. On the technical dimension, the Employers' group expected the Centre to further expand the outreach and improve the impact. It supported the portfolio diversification and, in particular, the large emphasis on further investment for distance learning developments and the increasing proportion of advisory services and advocacy campaigns among the activities of the Centre. The group reiterated the importance of servicing the core ILO constituents and of regularly assessing ILO constituents' needs to make sure that the Centre's training offer and other services have an impact at individual and organizational level.
48. Regarding the financial dimension, it was essential to continue to strive for a more diversified mix of finance; the group commended the efforts made to increase the number of funding agreements and to explore new funding opportunities through biddings and long-term partnerships. About such tenders and financial agreements, both Programmes for Employers' and Workers' Activities should be integrated into the process, from the project's design and formal appraisal, to inception, implementation and monitoring and evaluation. On the Fellowship Fund, the Employer Vice-Chairperson asked for more information about the forecasted balance at the end of the year.
49. On the governance level, the group supported the renewed emphasis on empowering staff by providing quality learning experiences on both soft skills and technical matters, took note of the introduction of the new performance management system and encouraged the development of career path for the Centre's staff.
50. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** welcomed all the efforts made to reach out to participants through digital learning and collaboration solutions and reminded that face-to-face training on campus was still the DNA of the Centre. As the Centre was receiving more requests than expected for activities in the field and on campus, the trend should be for more blended training because constituents were willing to travel and meet in person again. Parallely, new technologies and the costs linked to them, should not prevent workers' organizations to access them. In this sense, the Worker Vice-Chairperson would like to have more details on the costs related to the use of these technologies in the Centre.
51. The speaker drew to the attention of the Board that most of the International Labour Conference conclusions and all the latest conclusions of sectoral meetings, included references to the Centre. This should be considered as a value added for the Centre and duly taken into consideration in the implementation of the strategic plan and supported in order to fulfil the commitments agreed by constituents in tripartite settings. This was also linked to the support of the Centre in the development of the Global Coalition for Social Justice and the four priority action programmes, with the involvement of the social partners.
52. In relation to the operational knowledge, a key implication of blending face-to-face training and online learning was the need to find a right balance between face-to-face training on the Turin campus and face-to-face training delivered in partnership with local organizations in the field. It was within the competences of the Board to define this right balance.
53. The group took note that the Centre aimed at increasing the number of beneficiaries who actively engage in its communication activities and take part in large-scale conferences and major dialogue events. Assuming that 2022-23 growth trends would hold, the Centre would reach more than 1 million people during the lifespan of the 2022-25 Strategic Plan. The group also noted that there were no major changes being proposed for staff and that the work overload would even get worse; therefore, the group questioned how the management intends to grow without further staffing the Centre. The speaker also conveyed the group's concern about the reprofiling exercise and the redistribution of staff between the support functions and the delivery roles.

54. On the technical performance, the Worker Vice-Chairperson highlighted that, unlike what one could read in the document, employers' and workers' representatives were not on an equal footing, and there was a fundamental imbalance of power that the ILO should continue to address to level the playing field through its mandate to protect workers' rights and to achieve social justice.
55. Mentioning the ratios between training and non-training services, and between online and face-to-face training, set in the document at 2:1, the speaker asked if those ratios matched the management's intention.
56. On the operational efficiency, while the Workers' group understood the importance of reducing campus-related costs, it had strong doubts about the fact that a strong reduction of the campus should be the correct way to ensure a stronger tripartite Centre in the future.
57. The Worker Vice-Chairperson had a final query about the apparent reduction of General Service staff and its implications on the CFC distribution among technical programmes. There was a risk that the Centre would end up having to rely on external collaborators for administrative tasks and therefore outsourcing General Service staff.
58. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** supported the overall framing of the Centre's programme and budget proposals for the coming biennium, recognizing the environment of change in which the Centre operates. He commended the Centre's continuing adjustment to the new realities of training delivery after the COVID-19 pandemic, which had accelerated long-term trends that change the world of work, particularly digitalization. The programme and budget proposals demonstrated the Centre's efforts not just to respond, but rather to leverage these changes to maximize training, outreach and impact.
59. The group appreciated the prioritization placed on financial sustainability, including through continued institutional investments in the four funds, and welcomed the closer alignment of the Centre's programme and budget with the ILO's mission to promote decent work, with a particular emphasis on its social justice mandate for the 2024–25 biennium.
60. On the technical performance, the Government Vice-Chairperson supported the focus on enhanced service outreach and improved service quality and acknowledged the careful planning and forecasting that should ensure the Centre targets the right service mix to guarantee its sustainability while delivering on its core mandate to service ILO constituents' training needs. He commended the expansion of the Centre's online learning offer, including an increased emphasis on free self-guided distance learning activities to increase awareness of core ILO concepts.
61. With respect to the financial performance, the Government group commended the efforts to shore up the financial sustainability of the Centre through further diversifying its revenue mix, and strengthening in-house project acquisition and management capacities.
62. On the organizational performance, the Government group generally supported the outcomes related to upgrading the campus, including by further developing in-house event management capabilities to make best use of campus facilities, ensure digital technology is inclusive and secure, and ensure the Centre operates at a high-level of good governance.
63. Turning to the cross-cutting strategy drivers, the Government Vice-Chairperson supported a continued focus on innovation; gender equality, inclusion, and diversity; and international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartism across all of the Centre's work.

64. **The Director of the Centre** replied to the groups' questions. On the end-of-year balance of the Fellowship Fund, this was an accounting matter. He provided the relevant elements of explanation and also ensured the Board that all funds would be used.
65. On the 2:1 ratios, the Director stated that they were not written in stone and that the actual ratios between online and face-to-face training and between campus and field would depend upon the constituents' needs and demands.
66. About human resources, the Director reminded that some years ago the Board had agreed to maintain 176 positions. All these positions had been kept, some of them being reclassified or redistributed. This was the result of both natural attrition and deliberate will of the management; this approach was aligned to that of the ILO. The Director recognized that, if gender balance was reached at the junior level and almost for P4 staff, however efforts remained to be made at the upper levels.
67. **The Director of Training** commented on the resource mobilization efforts, adding that the focus would be placed on segment-specific outreach and that campaigns would be organized, to closer align the Centre's offer with ILO action programmes.
68. Answering the question on how to expand the outreach with the same staffing levels, the Director of Training referred to the global events which target larger audiences, giving the example of a future tripartite fair on follow-up action on the quality apprenticeships recommendation that would take place on campus in February 2024, with 300 participants in presence and thousands connecting online, supported by the Innovation Fund.
69. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** understood from the management's response that the 2:1 ratios should remain a proposal.
70. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** inquired about the funding of the forthcoming renovation of the Pavilion Americas 2.
71. **The Deputy Director of the Centre, Mr Casale**, answered that the contribution of €8 million from the Italian Government had been fully received and that the costs were consequently covered.
72. **The Director of Training** confirmed that the 2:1 ratios could be adjusted and modified according to the constituents' needs.
73. **The Chairperson** stated that the Centre's management would give further information on the questions raised. He thanked the three groups for their sense of flexibility and assured the Board that training would remain the backbone of the Centre's actions during the next biennium. Priority should be given to face-to-face over online training, while keeping the door open to this modality based on actual demand.
74. **The Board adopted the Programme and Budget proposals for 2024-25.**

▶ Independent external evaluation of the ITCILO online training and learning activities

75. **The Chairperson** stated that the document ⁴ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it after hearing the groups' comments.
76. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** welcomed the noticeable increase in the number of activities evaluated as compared to the previous evaluation thus providing a wider scope for assessment of the Centre's activities and hence better appreciation of conclusions drawn. She also appreciated the mix of methodologies applied in the evaluation and the gender distribution of the responses. There was yet room for improvement on the gender dimension and relative to the geographical disaggregation of data. The speaker congratulated the evaluation for providing respondents' socioeconomic backgrounds for the first time and invited the Centre to continue improving data collection in order to have a deeper articulation of all potential demographic-specific barriers and strategies to address emerging challenges and ensure an inclusive approach to service delivery. She encouraged the evaluation to give a breakdown of the response rate by age, to provide a comprehensive assessment of the activities within certain age groups.
77. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** commended the Centre's management for establishing the practice of evaluating training activities through external evaluators and for its response to the recommendations, which indicated a great degree of attention to the findings of the report. He proposed further reflection on the impact dimension. Though measuring impact of training is a difficult exercise, this dimension was paramount because the ultimate objective of training is to have an impact on the core ILO constituents and other stakeholders. There was most probably scope to expand the sample, increase the low response rate and identify how activities of the Centre contribute to the achievement of the ILO programme and budget targets. This could be a way to further align the operations of the Centre with ILO strategic documents.
78. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** thanked the independent evaluators for carrying out assessment on the Centre's training activities and commended them on the methodology employed which used the same analytical framework as in previous evaluations and thus allowed cross-comparison of results. He acknowledged the management's bold response and commitment to implement measures aiming at addressing the concerns raised in the report.
79. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Report of the meeting of the Officers of the Board (June 2023)

80. **The Chairperson** stated that the document ⁵ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it.
81. **The Board took note of the document.**

⁴ CC 87/3.

⁵ CC 87/4.

82. At the end of the first session of the Board, **the Chairperson** warmly thanked Mr Giuseppe Casale, Deputy Director, for his long-standing career with the ILO and the Centre.

▶ Financial statements and External Auditor's report for the year ended 31 December 2022

83. **The Chairperson, Ms Drake**, Deputy Director-General of the ILO, opened the meeting on Friday morning and recalled that the document ⁶ had already been formally adopted by the Officers of the Board in June 2023 and was submitted for information.
84. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** would like to know if the Centre is aware of variance occurrences in such a way as to be able to effectively respond in a timely manner.
85. **The Treasurer of the Centre, Ms Boulanger**, explained that there are various layers of budget monitoring and that regular reviews are made throughout the year, which allow a timely response to any problem that might occur.
86. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Plan for the audit of the 2023 financial statements

87. **The representative of the External Auditor, Mr Faisal**, presented the plan. ⁷ This plan aimed at expressing an independent opinion on and adding credibility to the Centre's financial statements, and at making observations with respect to the efficiency of the financial procedures, the accounting system, the internal financial controls and in general, the administration and management of the Centre. The operational audit would focus on the review of the management of participant support services. The review would provide an assurance as to whether there were adequate and functioning framework, strategy and effective controls, sufficient resources in the management of participant support services, periodic evaluation, monitoring, and reporting of those support services and whether staff meet qualification requirements.
88. **The Chairperson** thanked the Commission on Audit of the Republic of the Philippines for having provided the Centre with their services over the past eight years.
89. **The Board took note of the document.**

⁶ CC 87/5/1.

⁷ CC 87/5/2.

▶ Report of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 December 2022

90. **The representative of the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO), Mr Watson,** presented the audit report ⁸ for the year ended 31 December 2022.

91. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Follow-up to the recommendations of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 December 2022

92. **The Chairperson** stated that the document ⁹ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it.

93. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Human resources questions

94. **The Chief of the Human Resources Services, Mr Lopez-Armand,** introduced the document. ¹⁰ This document reported on the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) applicable to the organizations belonging to the UN common system; and on the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations concerning parental leave and conflict resolution mechanisms.

95. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** missed a reference to the current process of staff reprofiling. This important topic deserved a concrete explanation within this chapter. In addition, important staff changes mentioned in the programme and budget proposals, such as career development or reduction of General Service staff positions should also be included in the document on the human resources questions, with due explanation. She recognized the importance of aligning the Centre's procedures with those of the ILO and insisted on the need of a continuous dialogue between the management and the Staff Union Committee.

96. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** endorsed the report and supported the point for decision.

97. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** commended the work of the Centre to promote gender equality through the review of the Staff Regulations with a view to rendering them linguistically gender neutral. The Government group welcomed all efforts made to ensure the Centre promotes gender equality, both through its training services but also in its role as an employer. The Government group welcomed the new provisions on parental leave, which would contribute to enhancing recruitment and retaining personnel, and appreciated the ongoing consultations and work related to aligning the Centre's informal conflict resolution mechanism with that of the ILO. To that end, the group would welcome additional information on whether

⁸ CC 87/5/3.

⁹ CC 87/5/4.

¹⁰ CC 87/6.

the Centre's engagement with the ILO Joint Advisory Appeals Board included any additional requirements, such as gender balance in the three-person body, or recusal procedures for conflicts of interest.

- 98. The Chief of the Human Resources Services**, in response to concerns over seeking the Board's approval of proposals giving effect to ICSC recommendations that were still subject to approval by the General Assembly, the ILO Governing Body used to similarly approve such conditional proposals until November 2011 when the Director-General was given a standing delegation of authority through a limited amendment to article 14.7 of the ILO Staff Regulations to implement, through amendments to the Staff Regulations, routine decisions of the General Assembly concerning changes in common system salaries and entitlements. This removed the requirement of Governing Body approval of such matters. Since then, the Office provides for each March session of the Governing Body a summary of such decisions and highlights other aspects of the annual report of the ICSC that are relevant to the ILO and its staff. The Board could consider adopting similar arrangements.
- 99. The Board approved the point for decision.**

▶ Administrative questions

- 100. The Chairperson** stated that the document ¹¹ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it.
- 101. The Deputy Director of the Centre** commented on the infrastructure projects, the streamlining of support processes, the security on campus and the greening of operations.
- 102. The Employment Vice-Chairperson, the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Government Vice-Chairperson** had no particular comments to make.
- 103. The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Reports of the Trade Union Training Committee and the Employers' Training Committee

- 104. The Worker Vice-Chairperson** took note of the reports, welcomed the new manager of the ACTRAV-Turin Programme and encouraged the respective technical units to implement the adopted programmes for the upcoming period.
- 105. The Employer Vice-Chairperson** praised the dedication and the resilience of the ACT/EMP-Turin team under the leadership of the retiring manager, welcomed the new manager of the ACT/EMP-Turin Programme and encouraged them to keep up the good work.
- 106. The Government Vice-Chairperson** had no comments to make.
- 107. The Board took note of the documents.** ¹²

¹¹ CC 87/7.

¹² CC 87/8/a and CC 87/8/b.

▶ Concluding remarks

- 108. The Chairperson** proposed that the 88th Session of the Board of the Centre be held just before the 352nd Session of the Governing Body of the ILO, which should take place in Geneva from 28 October to 7 November 2024. Therefore, the 88th Session of the Board would be held, if possible, in Turin, just before the Governing Body, namely on 24–25 October 2024.
- 109. The Board approved the Chairperson’s proposal.**
- 110. The Chairperson** informed the members of the Board that the report of this meeting of the Board would be considered in the Institutional Section of the 349th Session of the Governing Body. She proposed that, in order to facilitate the preparation and finalization of the report, the Board should delegate the task of approving the draft report to the Officers of the Board.
- 111. The Board approved the Chairperson’s proposal.**
- 112. The Chairperson closed the 87th Session of the Board.**

▶ Appendix

Statement by the representative of the Staff Union Committee to the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO

87th Session of the Board of the Turin Centre, 26–27 October 2023



ITCILO STAFF UNION
SYNDICAT DU PERSONNEL DU CIF-OIT
SINDICATO DEL PERSONAL DEL CIF-OIT

The 87th BOARD OF THE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF THE ILO (ITCILO) 26–27 OCTOBER 2023

ITCILO STAFF UNION SPEECH ON 27 OCTOBER 2023

Mr Director-General,
Distinguished members of the Board,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honor and a pleasure to address you today on behalf of the Centre's staff in my role as Vice Chair of the ITCILO Staff Union Committee. We would like to extend again our greetings and congratulations to Mr. Christophe Perrin, as the new Director of the Centre.

We also wish to extend our deepest gratitude to the City of Turin, Regione Piemonte and the Italian government for their unwavering support.

The Staff of the Centre is again demonstrating a strong commitment to achieve excellent results, contributing to the positive outcomes indicated in the strategic documents presented to this board.

We had the opportunity to present during last year's speech our view about the Centre's three pillars, we think it is still important to mention:

- **its motivated staff,**
- **the residential facilities of the campus,**
- **its growing expertise on digital competence and training, its experience on training delivery, training methodology and capacity development.**

Our Staff

We extensively presented the issues affecting staff motivation:

- (a) **career development, or lack thereof**, in particular for the staff of the GS category; we raised this priority 2 years ago in our previous speech;
- (b) **precarious contracts** which seem to disproportionately affect women far more than men, in both categories;
- (c) **the growth for growth business logic**
- (d) and Finally **Agility** overloading colleagues or redeploying them without prior and meaningful consultation.

All these issues remain unfortunately until today without a real commitment to tackle and solve, we do hope that a renewed trust and collaboration will bring positive results in the near future.

The Summary of the implementation progress in 2023 refers and I quote to:

The new service mix has had implications for the support functions of the Centre. The success of the new model relies on the further upskilling of staff by exploring new ways of working and changes in the structure, job profiling and the skills set of the Centre's staff. By September 2023, the Centre had accordingly completed the re-profiling of Job Descriptions for both General Service staff and Professional Service staff initiated in 2022.

On the issue of **career development**, we must bring to your attention that the ongoing exercise to update the Job Descriptions in ITCILO, is not taking into consideration the aspiration of the staff to see their work recognized and rewarded. This is an opportunity to reclassify the jobs instead of keeping the status quo and distributing Generic Job Descriptions at the same levels. The review did not take into consideration the requests and recommendations to include higher grades as per our staff regulations allowing for career prospects and empowering the staff.

Under outcome 5 of the Programme and Budget proposals 2024–25 we are surprised that the following statement is not measurable or supported with data to demonstrate the effective career development opportunities offered to the staff:

“The further diversification of the service portfolio has opened new lines of work and new opportunities for career development”

Precarious contracts are still affecting women far more than men. We are tireless; we will keep insisting and mobilizing our collective efforts until gender balance, diversity and inclusion among the staff and especially at managerial level is achieved.

Growth for growth business logic the work overload that the staff is currently suffering from, will continue if we look at planned outreach and financial targets, doing more with less is not a recipe for quality and success.

Agility of this business logic seems to be at the detriment of the staff wellbeing and motivation, decreasing the number of General Service category and redeploying staff without meaningful consultation.

Under item 2 reference is made to streamlining and digitalization:

“Without simple and streamlined internal processes and rules, continued growth may not be possible, as the volume of operations continues to increase while staffing levels remain the same.”

We believe that this is sufficient to understand the idea of more with less mentioned previously. Digitalization cannot substitute the work of the staff, it is a tool to avoid repetitive tasks and speed up the processes, and you still need the people behind the wheel.

Our Campus

Based on recent projections residential on Campus training activities are growing faster than expected. The demand for our facilities is high and support services are facing difficulties to respond to this return to normal.

The need for face-to-face training on Campus is still important. Online training cannot substitute the benefits and the learning experience of exchanges between participants from different countries on our premises.

As indicated in the Summary implementation progress in 2023:

“the Centre made fast progress in better building forward its face-to-face training outreach, with outreach numbers for campus based activities having doubled since 2022”

We also note the following:

“The trend curve confirms that as face-to-face training activities on campus are increasing again in number....the Centre will move more small group based training activities to the field for joint delivery with local partners, while continuing to expand the suite of interregional events on campus.”

However, the information shared under item 2 appears to suggest an approach that deviates from the aforementioned indications. It explicitly indicates a 50 per cent reduction in on-campus face-to-face activities at ITCILO and I quote:

“the new model will result in changing classroom needs on campus and reduced hotel occupancy for Centre-based activities.”

Our Expertise

Quality is a central pillar of the Results-based Management Framework.

The independent external evaluation of the ITCILO capacity development activities covers a wide range of criteria, which are relevance, outreach, coherence, validity of the training design, effectiveness, efficiency of resources use, effectiveness of management, impact orientation of the activity.

For the Staff of the Centre and based on the evaluation recommendation a model based on blended learning should drive the operations of the Centre and I quote:

“When considering the effectiveness of different training modalities (face-to-face, blended or online), it is overwhelmingly acknowledged that the blended modality is the optimal and preferred option in almost all instances and most promising in capturing benefits of both face-to-face and online training.”

Taking into account the portfolio of activities the outreach is expected to continue to grow thanks to the commitment and hard work of the staff.

Finally

Due consultation and negotiation process with the ITCILO Staff Union is a necessity not an option when going ahead with innovative approaches affecting staff; this is a pre-condition to enhancing staff satisfaction and creating a more enabling environment for innovation and growth.

As the ITCILO Staff Union Committee, we reiterate that the staff of the Centre is a resource to invest on, not a cost to reduce. We will continue to defend its rights and push for the recognition of its important contribution to the success of our Centre.

Thank you for your attention.

The ITCILO Staff Union