

INS/5 Statement to Accompany Vote by Correspondence on Behalf of Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States

On behalf of Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, the United States thanks the Office for this report, which aims to provide an overview of developments and trends concerning the fundamental principles and rights at work in ILO Members that have not yet ratified the relevant fundamental Conventions and the Protocol to the Forced Labor Convention. We note that while the report captures government efforts to give effect to the fundamental principles and rights at work, it does not reflect information on persistent or systemic labor rights deficits globally. Information on serious failures to afford fundamental labor rights is equally critical to evaluating trends concerning the fundamental principles and rights at work.

Forced labor is a serious issue everywhere. Certain ILO member states currently engage in systemic, state-sponsored forced labor. Such forced labor represents a serious departure from the commitment of all member states of the ILO to realize the elimination of all forms of forced labor.

The ILO must continue to be a leader in addressing major labor rights issues around the world. We request the Office to identify ways that the ILO can bring attention to and address serious and persistent labor rights deficits in situations not otherwise captured by this report or the ILO supervisory system, whether through the Follow-up to the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, joining forces with other organizations within the UN system, the work of Alliance 8.7, or another modality, and present options to the Governing Body for its consideration. We appreciate the valuable contribution of the social partners in this regard, and we further request the Office to assess the degree of reporting by social partner organizations on implementation of the Declaration.

We are concerned by the state sponsored forced labor of vulnerable groups and minorities, including in the agricultural and garment sectors, as well as by mass transfers of forced laborers. Reports suggest that rural workers are particularly vulnerable. We are also concerned by the link between forced labor and other human rights violations and abuses, including mass arbitrary detention in some regions.

Forced labor requires international attention and the ILO's leadership and expertise to eliminate it. In line with the 1998 Declaration, it is incumbent upon all Members to promote and to realize the elimination of forced and compulsory labor. We call for this to be a priority for the ILO. We look forward to further discussions of this issue in the Governing Body, including specific cases.