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

86th Session of the Board (27–28 October 2022)

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1. The 86th Session of the Board of the International Training Centre of the ILO (the Centre) was held in Turin on 27 and 28 October 2022.
2. The report of this meeting is submitted to the 346th Session of the Governing Body (October–November 2022).
3. **The Chairperson, Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo**, Director-General of the ILO, welcomed the members of the Board. He was very pleased that the Board could meet in person again, with some members connecting online.

► Introductory remarks

4. **The Chairperson** gave the floor to the representative of the Government of Italy, to the Mayor of Turin and to the representatives of the Piedmont Region and the Unione Industriale of Turin.
5. **The representative of the Government of Italy, Mr Bianchi**, reaffirmed the continued support of Italy for the Centre and its training activities. He referred to the discussion held in October 2021, when the Board decided on the way forward for the biennium 2022–23. The proposals made then were meant to create a leaner, faster and stronger Centre, able to reach out to more beneficiaries in more countries, while maintaining the capability to deliver face-to-face training. The Centre had turned the crisis into an opportunity for growing, and the Government of Italy appreciated the work accomplished in the biennium 2020–21 and since January 2022.
6. The speaker commended the Centre for the strong increase in the number of participants over the last eight months and congratulated the management for the solid financial results. He stated that the efforts made by both the Centre and the ILO to maintain the current workforce level and to retrain staff to new skills were a tremendous opportunity for people to revitalize their capabilities. The Government of Italy was already thinking ahead towards the new phase in the development of the Centre and would continue to support it as a world-renowned hub of excellence in education to the benefit of the ILO and its constituents, and of the United Nations system as a whole. While welcoming the change driven by technology and accelerated by the health crisis, he acknowledged the fact that face-to-face courses remained and would continue to be an important component of the service mix of the Centre as social interaction and networking were key components of training.
7. The representative of the Government of Italy concluded by highlighting the importance of the ongoing dialogue between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and other stakeholders, with a view to exploring opportunities of cooperation and partnership with compatible organizations and institutions as new potential co-users of the campus.
8. **The Mayor of Turin, Mr Lo Russo**, welcomed the members of the Board in Turin and thanked the Italian Government for its renewed support to the Centre. The newly inaugurated Innovation Lab would consolidate the presence of the Centre in Turin and would be a very valuable asset to make participants come back to the campus and be again ambassadors of Turin, a city with a long-standing experience in international training and knowledge-sharing, in their respective countries. The Mayor reiterated the commitment of the city to continue its collaboration with the Centre and help find new users of the facilities.
9. **The representative of the Piedmont Region, Ms Chiorino**, was very pleased to see the Board meeting again on campus. The pandemic was now coming to an end, but other difficult challenges were emerging, which needed investments in human capital, education and

competences. In this context, the Centre was a very valuable resource for the territory. The speaker reiterated the support and commitment of the Region.

10. **The representative of the Unione Industriale of Turin, Mr Rosi**, commended the Centre for its reaction to the difficulties and the challenges posed by the crisis and, on this backdrop, highlighted the importance of sharing knowledge among all stakeholders of the world of work.
11. **The Chairperson** thanked the Government of Italy for its political commitment and financial support to the Centre, among others for the funding provided for the renovation and refurbishment of Pavilions Africa 10 and 11, which host the brand new Innovation Lab in which the Board was holding its current session. He was also extremely satisfied to see that the Italian Government had earmarked an additional €8 million for the renovation of Pavilion Americas 2.
12. **The Chairperson** also thanked the local Italian authorities for their cooperation with the Centre. He particularly thanked the City of Turin for having signed a multi-year agreement for committing funds to cover extraordinary maintenance works.
13. In his introductory remarks, **the Chairperson** was pleased to notice, and to report to the Board, that the shift in the operational model of the Centre had been successful. In the 2020–21 biennium, the Centre had almost tripled the number of its participants and generated a solid surplus, which had been reinvested in maintenance costs, technology enhancement and innovation, development of new products in new training areas, and significantly in supporting core thematic areas and services to constituents, while maintaining the high quality of the services. He welcomed the alignment with the major technical programmes of the ILO that showed, once again, the synergy between the Centre and the ILO. This was an encouraging signal for the future role of the Centre in the substantive work of the Organization. As a matter of fact, the Centre was referenced in the current draft ILO Programme and Budget for 2024–25 in most outcomes and the result areas in which it is expected to play a role and create synergies with the ILO.
14. With respect to the items on the agenda, the Chairperson had no doubt that the Centre would continue to grow in importance as a learning and capacity development resource for the ILO tripartite constituents, as reflected particularly in the Implementation Report for 2020–21 and by the indicators of achievement, especially those related to the number of workers' and employers' representatives in the training activities and to the level of participation by labour ministries and related agencies, which testified to the growing outreach capacity of the Centre's new business model. The Centre had also increased its profile as a provider of innovative digital learning and collaboration solutions among ILO constituents worldwide and across the United Nations system, and further diversified its service portfolio.
15. The progress report clearly showed that the Centre had repurposed its training activities as online learning activities and rolled out in quick succession a number of digital learning and collaboration solutions for its institutional partners to support them in their own leap forward into the digital learning area. The Centre had continued its digital transformation path from being a provider of mostly face-to-face training towards offering ILO constituents access to a wide range of digitally enhanced capacity development services, for instance individual training online or in hybrid modalities combining face-to-face – on campus or in the field – with distance learning, but also product development support, event facilitation, consultancies, project management support, communication and advocacy services, and knowledge management services. The Chairperson acknowledged the Centre's commitment to digital inclusion and accessibility with the objective of leaving no one behind and insisted on the need of striking the right balance between those modalities and the importance of exchange between constituents sitting in the same room.

16. The document on Human Resources questions called for dialogue between the management and the Staff Union Committee in order to develop the human resources of the Centre, whom the Chairperson thanked for their hard work. This commitment meant that the Centre and the ILO would proceed together in the alignment of ILO policies.

▶ Adoption of the agenda

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

▶ Implementation Report for 2020–21 and Summary of the implementation progress of the ITCILO Programme and Budget for 2022–23

19. **The Director a.i. of the Centre, Mr Casale**, presented the documents ² and commented that 2020–21 had been a very good biennium despite a volatile operational environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020, the outbreak of the pandemic had forced the Centre to suspend all its face-to-face training activities. The Centre had responded by implementing strict cost control measures and repurposing its face-to-face training activities as online learning activities, taking advantage of earlier investments in its electronic campus. The shift in the operational model of the Centre had been successful. Over the biennium, the Centre had almost tripled its number of participants and generated a surplus of about €5.4 million. The results achieved by the Centre in the first eight months of the 2022–23 biennium reconfirmed the feasibility of the new operational model. The Centre was well on track to achieve its new performance targets for the biennium.
20. As per the 2022–25 Strategic Plan and the 2022–23 Programme and Budget, the Centre would continue on its digital transformation path and keep building its position as a global innovation hub, offering ILO constituents, ILO staff and ILO development partners across the UN system opportunities to co-create and test digitally enhanced capacity development services, ideally in hybrid delivery modalities.
21. Regarding partnerships at the national and local levels, the Director a.i. thanked the Government of Italy as the main contributor to the Centre and its activities, for providing stable financial and institutional support to affirm the Centre's presence in Turin as an innovation hub for ILO constituents and the UN system. The Centre maintained strong and constructive institutional relationships with the city and the Piedmont Region.
22. The Director a.i. highlighted that the Turin School of Development had significantly increased its outreach in close cooperation with the University of Turin and the Politecnico, with the help of ad hoc financial contributions from the Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. The Centre had also maintained

¹ CC 86 rev.

² CC 86/1 and CC 86/1/2.

close links with a pool of traditional development partners, among which were the Governments of Italy, Portugal, Spain, Japan, Ireland and the Wallonie-Bruxelles Federation. These traditional donors provided support to the Centre through different forms of engagement. Additionally, the Centre engaged with a wide network of development partners that resort to the Centre for the provision of tailor-made capacity development services in thematic areas covered by the ILO. Collaboration with other UN agencies, development banks and international financial institutions was steadily increasing.

23. The Director a.i. concluded his intervention by proposing to the Board themes for discussion such as affirming the ITCILO mandate as innovation hub of the ILO; the role of the Centre in delivering against the digital road map of the UN common agenda; digital inclusion and leaving no one behind along the digital transformation journey; and learning innovation for higher education.
24. **The Director of Training, Mr Klemmer**, briefly highlighted the results achieved under the technical and financial pillars of the Strategic Plan during the first eight months of 2022. Concerning the technical performance, measured against the outreach and the impact of the Centre's activities, the figures indicated that non-training services accounted for more than one third of the Centre's portfolio. Such non-training services consisted in product development; communication and advocacy campaigns; consultancies; event facilitation; project management; and data-driven services. Their number might be small, but the revenue they generate might be very high, like in the case of the conference currently running on campus, with more than 300 people participating in an event facilitated by the Centre on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme.
25. With regard to the universe of beneficiaries of the Centre, the Director of Training explained the difference between enrolled participants and engaged, active learners. In total, the Centre should reach out to more than 200,000 people over the 2022–23 biennium. Workers had benefited most from the shift to distance learning in 2021, but in 2022 the trends had reversed, and employers were taking the biggest share. Collaboration with the ILO and with other training institutions had remained stable. Regarding the financial performance, by September 2022, the earned income was comparable to that of 2019, and the Centre was on track to reach its target or even to surpass it. As to the contribution to fixed costs, it was again comparable to 2019; it had been higher in 2021, but only because online training costs less than face-to-face or hybrid delivery.
26. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson, Ms Moore**, recognized and appreciated that a lot of energy and work had been put into the presented documents and thanked the management of the Centre for having navigated the transition in a successful manner.
27. As expressed at previous meetings, for the Workers' group, training activities should remain the main goal of the Centre. The group remained fully cognizant that training is a key tool to promote the primacy and realization of the ILO mandate for social justice, through the implementation of different programmes but wished some clarifications on particular items in both reports. With regard to the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle, as the so-called "clients" of the Centre are different, from constituent to constituent and also from one ILO department to the other, the Worker Vice-Chairperson would like to better understand if the approach provided enough flexibility and adaptability to the client. Then, on the proposal of assessing campaigns and taking the example of the 2021 Elimination of Child Labour campaign, the group was surprised to read that stakeholders had submitted more than 300 pledges, which is higher than the number of countries in the world. This had led the Worker Vice-Chairperson to wonder whether specific design benchmarks were applied to assess campaigns and if the

same approach was used across all topics for evaluation purposes or if there was some adaptability of the goals to be achieved depending on the topic.

28. In relation to human resources, the group acknowledged that efforts had been made to improve staff diversity. However, it observed the same problem as at the ILO, where it seems that a glass ceiling prevents women from accessing P5 positions and would like to hear from the management if any concrete steps were taken to improve this situation. Still on gender and diversity, the group would like to have feedback from the Centre as regards the staff dedicated to promoting this cross-cutting driver. Without concrete actions, gender would tend to remain reflected only on paper, but not in real action. It would be important to better understand the approach to promoting and achieving gender equality.
29. With regard to the tables presented in the documents, the Worker Vice-Chairperson would like to hear how participants in online training are counted for the purpose of this exercise. She asked if the numbers reflected only the enrolled participants or those who had finished the training. The Centre should measure quality in terms of active participation and completion and not only in terms of outreach as expressed by enrolment.
30. The Worker Vice-Chairperson commended the Centre for the financial results reported for the 2020–21 biennium and for the first eight months of 2022. For the first time, annual revenue was forecasted to exceed €30 million, a strong financial position which permits the Centre to absorb the unplanned inflation driving cost increases of campus operations. In this sense, more money meant more work, and although the group was sure that the management invests in enhancing the services offered to constituents, it would welcome some reassurance from the management on this priority.
31. The Worker Vice-Chairperson reiterated the group's concerns about the use of the funds of the Fellowship Fund. It should be reiterated that constituents are very different. For this reason, historically, and given the imbalance of power and capacity to pay for training, workers had received more support than other constituents. The Worker Vice-Chairperson requested details on how these funds were being allocated.
32. The group was very pleased to see that the Centre was slowly going back to normal, including in the forthcoming work, and that some of the "old normal" experiences were being used. It also welcomed the investments in a safe space for experimentation with next-generation learning technology and applications.
33. The Worker Vice-Chairperson concluded with a word of caution. While the numbers looked good, and the report put more emphasis on quantity, the Centre should remain cautious of the need to avoid any possibility that an increased number of participants obstruct the quality of the final product. It should not forget to address the issue of digital exclusion, which could also be measured on the basis of regional participation, income or constituent group, among other issues.
34. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr Kyriazis**, commended the management of the Centre for presenting a well-structured implementation report, more relevant and concise than in previous years.
35. The sustainability strategy was very important, because the Centre had to look over the horizon and plan for the long term. A sound implementation of the sustainability strategy would contribute to the Centre's productivity, competitiveness and resilience against future disruptions. Therefore, it should continuously adapt to the market needs and evolving preferences of learners and organizations. The service offer should be unique and satisfy the

demands of ILO constituents. In this regard, the speaker was pleased to see the steady increase in both training and non-training services.

- 36.** In relation to the areas of expertise, the data visuals were very helpful for the group to understand the cross-cutting nature of some policy interventions and how they were linked to the higher-level programme and budget of the ILO. Regarding outreach, the Employers' group understood that it had benefited less from the Centre's training services than Workers and Governments, which could be explained by different factors, such as a limited captive audience, competing priorities or lack of interest due to the less relevant topics proposed by other technical programmes. More support should therefore be provided to develop stronger tailor-made training on topics of interest to Employers. It was sometimes heard that Employers do not need capacity-building, but this was far from the truth. Very few ILO Member States had a long tradition of representative social partners and mature institutions in this respect. Besides, the huge majority of enterprises throughout the world being small and medium-sized enterprises, they needed training in order to become sustainable and able to evolve into successful entities and create more and better jobs. All constituents should thus have equal access to learning opportunities, and the Centre should lead by example.
- 37.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson noted signs that face-to-face training was coming back slowly as some parts of the world were recovering from the pandemic. Blended training was a practical solution to meet the needs of learners. In the group's view, it would be unfeasible and strongly counter-productive to go back to a face-to-face income-depending model. Evidence had shown, from a financial and technical perspective, that the Centre was on the right track; all the more, online training had proven to be more inclusive and to lower barriers for women and junior professionals who otherwise would often not be eligible for staff development activities involving overseas travel.
- 38.** The speaker welcomed the information on the financial position of the Centre and was impressed by the surplus for the 2020–21 biennium, at €5.4 million. This demonstrated that the strategy and agreed business model were working in the Centre's favour. The streamlining of activities had increased efficiency and contributed to the productivity and competitiveness of the Centre. On the Fellowship Fund, the group was not in favour of reopening the debate concerning the split of the Fund among technical programmes (as this issue was resolved and closed through the approved budget allocation last year by Board members) and commended the management for removing the administrative bottlenecks for accessing such Fund. On governance, the Employer Vice-Chairperson congratulated the Centre's staff for their adaptation to teleworking and for their excellent performance.
- 39.** As regards the cross-cutting policy drivers, the Employer Vice-Chairperson believed that some of them should be prioritized, such as those identified in the 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the 2021 Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.
- 40.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson had a few words on the summary of the implementation progress of the ITCILO programme and budget. The service mix was now more interesting as more activities fall under distance learning and non-training activities. The group felt that this was the direction towards which learners and the market are moving and encouraged the Centre to continue monitoring the service mix so that it reflects the reality and changing market needs. This was the only way for the Centre to prove its relevance in a world where it had to cope with the fierce competition of other training service providers.
- 41.** The Employer Vice-Chairperson concluded by highlighting the expectations of the group for the coming years under the new Director-General's guidance. The group hoped that the

relationship and reporting between the ITCILO and the ILO would continue to be strengthened and preserved at the highest levels.

42. **The Government Vice-Chairperson, Mr Essah**, welcomed the new Chairperson, the newly elected 11th Director-General of the ILO. He commended the reflection of strong support for the work and role of the Turin Centre contained in the ILO programme and budget and looked forward to further elaboration of the activities of the Centre in support of the broader objectives of the ILO.
43. On the Implementation Report for 2020–21, the group noted the Centre's swift transition and adjustment to the new normal digital learning platform to sustain its mandate of promoting decent work and social justice for all and appreciated the effort made to triple the total number of distance participants but would like more to be done to increase the number of government officials.
44. The Government Vice-Chairperson welcomed the key findings of the external training impact evaluation and looked forward to the implementation of the recommendation on the operational plan on how to best reach target groups in different regions with poor technological infrastructure. He also expected the implementation or the development of appropriate tutor-based distance learning programmes that would facilitate face-to-face interaction with participants as well as the expansion of the Centre's educational consultation with cooperating partners for online programmes. In light of the digital divide, it remained useful to have both online and in-person training. An overemphasis on providing online training risked leaving some constituents behind. An appropriate mix of training delivery models remained therefore appropriate.
45. The group would appreciate additional information on the Centre's efforts to ensure access to training programmes across the various regions and constituent groups, that would include more details about the establishment of regional training hubs. It would also appreciate an impact assessment of the Centre's current scholarship programme and potential pathways to expand it.
46. The Government Vice-Chairperson commended the financial prudence during the period under review and the surplus so generated and noted the significant increase in total revenue generated largely from training and advisory services.
47. Finally, the Government Vice-Chairperson was happy to associate his group with the projected outlook for 2022, that already confirmed that the Centre was on track to achieve its target for the biennium.
48. **The representative of the Government of France** concurred with the appreciation of the Government group. As the organizer of the Alliance 8.7 Conference facilitated by the Centre in March, he had had the opportunity to enjoy the Centre's competences in this domain.
49. **The Director a.i. of the Centre** replied to the comment about access to the Fellowship Fund and mentioned that, out of the €1.2 million allocated to this Fund, only €280,000 had been used so far. He invited all constituent groups to make a larger use of the Fund. Of course, any leftover would be carried over to 2023, but the funds should be spent within the biennium and he was looking for a higher participation of constituents in the Centre's activities. On staff diversity, the Director a.i. recognized that the access of women to P5 and higher positions remained unsatisfactory, and he would work on this.
50. **The Director of Training** mentioned that the PDCA cycle is a generic process that is not specific to any type of organization. It was only used as a basis in order to structure a communication

project and to run consultancies. He referred to the digital brief available on the Centre's website for more in-depth information on this matter. Regarding the challenge of assessing communication and advocacy campaigns, the Centre had commissioned external experts and their report would be available very soon and published on the website. On female participation, currently at 39 per cent for 2022, he agreed that there was still some road to travel to reach the target. In absolute numbers though, the Centre had made significant progress in this field. Replying to the question on the difference between active learners and enrolled participants in distance learning, he explained that every single participant is registered only once as an active learner but counted as an enrolled participant every time they sign up for an activity. Therefore, the number of enrolled participants was higher, which was a good sign as return participants were the proof of the quality and relevance of the Centre's offer.

51. In order to avoid future discussions on the use of the Fellowship Fund, **the Chairperson** invited the management of the Centre to work on a proposal of options for accessing the Fellowship Fund. This proposal should be available to constituents in advance so that it could be presented at the meeting of the Officers of the Board in May 2023.
52. **The Board took note of the documents.**

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

53. **The Chairperson** stated that the document ³ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it after hearing the groups' comments.
54. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** thanked the independent evaluators for carrying out the necessary research, collecting information, analysing and preparing the report. The group did not believe in micromanaging the various activities for improvement, unless an issue can impact the Centre's overall performance and ability to raise funds and deliver training and activities. Therefore, and understanding that not all recommendations could be followed up on, the group took note of the management's responses and the possible measures to address the gaps.
55. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** welcomed the Centre's initiative to continue with systematic annual evaluation of online training activities, which allows the Board to take informed decisions on the delivery modalities of the training activities for the ILO constituents. The group recommended that for next year a similar evaluation should be implemented for online, blended and face-to-face activities to allow for comparison across the three delivery modalities. For this next evaluation, to the extent possible, there should be an increase in the number of survey recipients, specifically to improve overall assessment that covers the other modalities, and to make sure that priorities such as better geographical balance among the regions is being achieved. Information disaggregated by age and gender would also be relevant. In the same line of disaggregating data, it would be also good to have a constituent perspective, to understand whether the strategy for increased outreach would guarantee more training for ILO constituents in the future. The group considered the recommendations from the evaluator to be appropriate and the responses from the management to be quite pertinent.

³ CC 86/2.

Nevertheless, for further evaluations and decisions to be taken appropriately, methodological options should be taken to address what is reflected in the results of the evaluation. The group was concerned, however, by the heavy emphasis put on time flexibility as an advantage of online training. Time flexibility could lead to excessive working hours and undermine freedom of association and collective bargaining. As reflected in ILO Conventions, training should be followed during working hours. Digital progress should not blur the overarching objective of social justice. The Worker Vice-Chairperson was also quite concerned about the fact that online learning is a much more individual process than face-to-face learning, that allows experience-sharing among peers.

56. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** reiterated what he had said during the discussion on the first item of the agenda on the risk of leaving some constituents behind. An appropriate mix of training delivery models should be found. He agreed with the Worker Vice-Chairperson's comments on the challenges associated with online training, when participants are often asked to balance work responsibilities with online training at the same time. The Government Vice-Chairperson highlighted the difficulties linked to online training in terms of internet connection and technical issues and wished to have more information about face-to-face training sessions at the Centre and in the field, and to hear from the management if the Centre would run only online training.
57. **The Director of Training** took note of the observations made by the three vice-chairpersons and indicated that from 2023 onwards, for evaluation purposes the Centre would make a distinction between the different types of activities – face-to-face, blended and online, for the last with a deeper subdivision between tutor-supported and self-guided. He also took the advice of a better resolution of the analytical framework to enable a better use of the collected data and to implement more specific outreach strategies. On digital inclusion, the Director of Training agreed that bridging the divide needs a more coherent, heuristic strategy framework.
58. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Report of the meeting of the Officers of the Board (May 2022)

59. **The Chairperson** stated that the document ⁴ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it.
60. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Financial statements and External Auditor's report for the year ended 31 December 2021

61. **The Chairperson** recalled that the document ⁵ had already been formally adopted by the Officers of the Board in May 2022 and was submitted for information.
62. **The Board took note of the document.**

⁴ CC 86/3.

⁵ CC 86/4/1.

▶ Plan for the audit of the 2022 financial statements

63. **The representative of the External Auditor, Mr Martin,** presented the plan.⁶ This plan aimed to express an independent opinion and reasonable assurance as well as make observations with respect to the efficiency of 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 evaluation of training activities undertaken by the Centre. Training being the core activity of the Centre, the review would provide an assurance as to whether there was an adequate and functioning framework, strategy, policy, and effective controls in the evaluation of the Centre's training activities, as well as whether the training programmes have achieved their specific objectives.
64. **The Board took note of the document.**

▶ Report of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 December 2021

65. **The representative of the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO), Mr Watson,** presented the audit report⁷ for the year ended 31 December 2021. As major capital or renovations works are inherently high risk and may be exposed to delays, cost overruns, poor quality work and materials, scope creep and fraud, it was natural that the IAO would have focused on the renovation project of the Pavilions Africa 10 and 11, especially as a budget had been made and a timetable set for the completion of the works. The audit had not reported any critical findings and provided assurance that the governance and controls over the renovation of the project had been in place and operating effectively, and subsequent audits had maintained this view. However, the report had raised one concern about flexibility over non-structural elements of the works given there might be a need to adapt to changes in the Centre's business model. In its response, the management of the Centre had assured IAO that the project management team could maintain a sound degree of flexibility to adapt the design of non-structural elements to fit with the future operations of the Centre.
66. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** asked what the non-structural aspects of the works were.
67. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** supported the idea of a third audit of the renovation works in 2023. The group took note of the report.
68. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** aligned himself with the question on non-structural aspects and inquired about the results of the April 2022 audit.
69. **The representative of the IAO** explained that the non-structural aspects of the works were linked to the design of the building and to its relevance with the new operational model, but the initial concerns had been solved. He briefly documented the results of the April audit, which had been comforting.
70. **The Board took note of the document.**

⁶ CC 86/4/2.

⁷ CC 86/4/3.

▶ Follow-up to the recommendations of the Chief Internal Auditor for the year ended 31 December 2021

71. **The Chairperson** stated that the document⁸ was submitted for information. No audit recommendations had been issued in 2020. He requested the Board to take note of it.

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

▶ Human resources questions

73. **The Chief of the Human Resources Services, Mr Lopez-Armand,** introduced the document.⁹ This document reported on the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) applicable to the organizations belonging to the UN common system; on the proposed amendments to the Staff Regulations concerning the performance management system; on the exceptions to the Staff Regulations approved by the Director; and on the review of the Staff Regulations to render them linguistically gender neutral.

74. **The Worker Vice-Chairperson** 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.

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

76. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** commended the work of the Centre to promote gender equality through the review of the ITCILO 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.

77. **The Board approved the point for decision.**

▶ Administrative questions

78. **The Chairperson** stated that the document¹⁰ was submitted for information and requested the Board to take note of it.

79. **The Director a.i. of the Centre** reiterated his thanks to the Government of Italy for their financial support to the renovation works. He emphasized that the Centre had been a safe place throughout the pandemic. He thanked, for the work done, the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) and the Medical Service.

80. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** asked for explanations on the activities run on campus with local partners.

⁸ CC 86/4/4.

⁹ CC 86/5.

¹⁰ CC 86/6.

81. **The Director a.i. of the Centre** explained that such activities were actually in constant demand from these local partners, who ask the Centre to provide services like event facilitating or expertise-sharing. These activities were therefore sustainable.
82. **The Board took note of the document.**

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

83. **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.
84. **The Employer Vice-Chairperson** praised the dedication and the resilience of the ACT/EMP–Turin team and encouraged them to keep up the good work. He also saw scope for constructive work with the Workers’ group to increase the outreach of the Centre’s activities.
85. **The Government Vice-Chairperson** had no comments to make.
86. **The Board took note of the documents.**¹¹

▶ Concluding remarks

87. **The Chairperson** proposed that the 87th Session of the Board of the Centre be held just before the 349th Session of the Governing Body of the ILO, which should take place in Geneva from 30 October to 9 November 2023. Therefore, the 87th Session of the Board would be held, if possible, in Turin, just before the Governing Body, namely on 26–27 October 2023.
88. **The Board approved the Chairperson’s proposal.**
89. **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 346th Session of the Governing Body. He 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.
90. **The Board approved the Chairperson’s proposal.**
91. **The Chairperson closed the 86th Session of the Board.**

¹¹ CC 86/7/a and CC 86/7/b.

▶ Appendix

Statement by the representative of the Staff Union Committee to the Board of the Centre (86th Session of the Board, 28 October 2022)

Mr Director-General,

Distinguished members of the Board,

Dear colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour and a pleasure to address you today on behalf of the Centre's staff in my role as Vice-Chairperson of the Staff Union Committee. We would like to extend our greetings and congratulations to Mr Gilbert F. Hounqbo, as the new ILO Director-General.

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

Thanks to the ITCILO staff and their extraordinary ability to work and to adapt, the Centre has been able to obtain excellent results, demonstrating its resiliency and capability to adapt in the face of unprecedented global turbulence.

When we had the opportunity to meet with the transition team a couple of months ago, we spoke about the Centre's three pillars:

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

The first pillar is the Centre's motivated staff.

If we have a look at the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2021, its paragraph 11 says:

... the increase was due to two reasons: a significant increase of 60% in the number of activities, going from 625 in 2020 to 1 006 in 2021, and an increase of some 127% in the total outreach of participants, going from approx. 36 500 in 2020 to some 82 800 in 2021.

We consider that this growth is unsustainable; there is a lot of pressure on the staff, and this level of pressure can undermine and even erode the motivation and broader well-being of the staff.

There are growing concerns regarding whether the work distribution is efficient, fair and ultimately sustainable. Unfortunately, when it comes to certain decisions taken on the grounds of efficiency and cost savings with consequences on staff workload, the staff and the Staff Union are afforded little regular opportunity to input prior to the implementation stage, with many decisions presented as a fait accompli.

The Director of the training imposes higher and higher targets on the departments in his desire to reach the moon both in terms of surplus and in terms of participants. To have

1 million participants has been adopted as an aspirational goal – again without input from the staff responsible for the day-to-day work in the Centre.

As the Staff Union Committee, we say sustainability: yes, but that financial growth for the sake of financial growth is a misplaced principle in a UN organization such as ours. More importantly, we would like to see a far greater share of the annual surplus reinvested into the staff and into the campus. This is not something new and has been a request of ours that has been put to the Board in past meetings.

There are a number of other issues affecting staff motivation which we feel compelled to draw your attention to:

- (a) career development, or lack thereof, in particular for the staff of the General Services category; we raised this in our speech to you one year ago;
- (b) precarious contracts, which seem to disproportionately affect women far more than men, in both categories;
- (c) the growth for growth business logic already mentioned;
- (d) the fight against agility. Agility does not come when you overload colleagues or redeploy them without prior and meaningful consultation.

On the issue of career development, we must acknowledge the ongoing exercise to update the job descriptions in ITCILO, in accordance with the Centre's programme and budget. The senior management has implemented this process through the establishment of a technical Task Force with a view to examining the existing General Services job families in the Training Department.

The work accomplished thus far by colleagues, representing different parts of the Training Department, is to be applauded. While as the Staff Union Committee we too were active in this exercise, we must point out that the technical basis has at times been lacking internal coherence (for example only three of the grades in the General Services category have been included whereas the Staff Regulations makes reference to seven grades). Furthermore, we have raised doubts about the conformity of the review with ICSC standards, raising a question about the legality of the outcome.

On the basis of the good faith demonstrated by colleagues thus far, we remain confident that solutions can be found in the future.

The Centre's second pillar is in regard to the campus facilities.

It is important, given the historical role of the Centre, that its delivery model combine the enhancement of digital training with residential programmes, both on campus and in the field.

The ITCILO Staff Union Committee fully supports the position presented by the Director of the Centre during the 2021 Board meeting where he stated that he "foresees that the Centre maintains full responsibility over the whole campus in its current size", and we ask for this commitment to be upheld.

The Centre's third pillar is its capability in digital training and its long experience in training delivery and capacity development.

For the staff of the Centre, a model based on blended learning should drive the operations of the Centre.

As we can see in the Independent external evaluation of the ITCILO online training and learning activities, in the chapter called "Demand for online learning", 32 per cent of

respondents said they would prefer to go back to fully face-to-face training, while the majority of 40.9 per cent of respondents want blended learning courses, and only 27.2 per cent of respondents prefer fully distance-learning courses.

If we were to acknowledge that blended courses are a mix of face-to-face and online learning, we may conclude that 72.9 per cent of respondents continue to prefer the face-to-face format either as a stand-alone or in combination with digital learning.

As reported, we have seen in 2021 that there was an explosion in terms of the number of participants reached. This is an important achievement; however, it is not so clear to us whether this has translated into a greater share of ILO constituents among our courses. The trends observed to date in 2022 may suggest the opposite.

Our greater concern here is in regard to the toll digital training is having on staff workload and the implications of a blended learning model moving forward on staff.

As you are aware, an independent external evaluation was recently carried out of the ITCILO online training and learning activities. One of its key recommendations was to conduct a review of the staff workload involved in online training activities. Both an actual increase in online training activities and enrolments and a perceived increase in staff workload voiced by many interviewees needs to be carefully reviewed. The findings also commented that the economic merits of online training compared to face-to-face training should also be critically reviewed.

As the Staff Union, we obviously share the concerns voiced by the evaluators in their report and ask that the different issues raised be looked at closely.

We also feel that it is important that we convey to you our concern that the mandate of promoting gender equality and diversity inclusion remains a key function and technical area within the ITCILO organizational chart. This is very much in keeping with the ILO's historical two-pronged approach (focusing on systematic gender mainstreaming and on gender-focused and targeted interventions), but also to ensure the gender-transformative promise of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

If you pay attention to the percentage of women among participants in 2022, it is only 32 per cent, an increase of 5 per cent over the baseline; this figure grows in percentage terms when enrolments are considered, where the proportion of females is 39 per cent in 2022, a decline of 2 per cent over the baseline.

No matter how you look at this indicator, the numbers historically speak for themselves. The Centre has plateaued at between 40 and 44 per cent female uptake of its courses since 2014 with gender parity an apparently impossible feat to achieve.

As the new Director-General has made it clear that gender equality is a high-level priority, as the Staff Union we feel that the time has come for you, the Board, to act decisively to address this matter, giving clear guidance to the management of the Centre on how to overcome this impasse, such that the parity gap can be closed in a tangible manner.

The same would apply in our view in regard to the continuing disparities observed inside both the Professional and General Services staff categories of the Centre. In both instances these disparities have been present for many years.

We are raising these different gender-related challenges as in our view these situations of inequity among both participants and staff of ITCILO will not be reversed unless measures are taken to substantially strengthen the Centre's own gender equality mainstreaming architecture.

The International Labour Standards, Rights at Work and Gender Equality (ILSGEN) Technical Training Programme once a fully fledged technical programme has in recent years been downsized to become a nested cluster within the Centre's broader international labour standards programme, with only one specialist remaining.

The timing of this regression is unfortunate as it coincides with the findings of the recently conducted high-level independent evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts which call for a more important and strategic role of the ITCILO in supporting capacity development of both ILO staff and constituents.

The ITCILO Staff Union Committee disagrees with the prevailing view of the senior management of the Centre that gender as a technical work area can be dismembered, and its parts assimilated into other technical areas on top of colleagues' normal duties. This practice reflects a lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming and a further belief that gender mainstreaming does not have value in itself as an area of expertise.

The Centre needs to give the deserved importance to gender equality and diversity mainstreaming returning to have a fully-fledged technical programme, working in coordination with ILO headquarters.

Finally:

ITCILO human resources management efforts should continue being geared towards addressing some of the essential Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures that could contribute to improving the functioning of the Centre and its overall close relations with the ILO.

It is in the interest of both the ILO and the ITCILO to seek further alignment on HR practices and procedures to the fullest extent possible.

To reiterate the importance of the role of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) as the institutional channel for discussion of the implications for staff arising from the business process review, we acknowledge that the JNC is serving as a real space for discussion and bargaining regarding the implications for staff of the ITCILO reform process.

The Staff Union Committee of the Centre is committed to this collective bargaining process stemming from your decisions as Board, referring to all the issues already mentioned.

The ILO Guidelines on Managing Change and Restructuring processes and the Centre's Staff Regulations, HR policies and procedures, are a key tool for this process, with concrete implications stemming from its implementation being the subject of consultation and negotiation via the internal social dialogue mechanisms as well as the JNC.

Once again, as the ITCILO Staff Union Committee, we feel deeply committed to defending and recognizing the great contribution of the Centre's staff who have amply demonstrated their capability, commitment and professionalism to deliver a huge training offer under difficult circumstances.

Thank you for your attention.