



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**SEVENTH MEETING AND DRAFTING GROUP OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL
NEGOTIATING BODY TO DRAFT AND NEGOTIATE A WHO CONVENTION, AGREEMENT
OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENT ON PANDEMIC PREVENTION,
PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE A/INB/5/2 Rev.1
Geneva, 06–10 November 2023**

Plenary statement by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Thank you, Co-Chairs. We thank the Bureau and the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing the draft text before us.

The ILO welcomes the collaborative methodology of this process. However, we remain seriously concerned that some of the most critical lessons from the pandemic are not fully reflected in the text before us.

Allow me to reaffirm some of the key principles guiding ILO's engagement in this exercise.

First, we underline that **public health treaties and international labour standards are historically interlinked and mutually supportive**. It suffices to say that nearly half of the adopted international labour standards include elements closely related to occupational safety and health.

Second, **the COVID-19 crisis has served to remind us of the critical importance of key workers**. It showed how our economies and societies would halt if these workers did not come to work.

In particular, the pandemic has strongly underlined **the crucial role of health and care workers for economies and societal well-being**. Of critical importance is also to recognise the indispensable role and protection of key occupational groups such as maritime and transport workers, food system workers, retail workers, security workers, technicians and clerical workers.

While Article 7 acknowledges their contribution, the text must recognise their rights to a safe and healthy work environment, social protection, decent working conditions, and meaningful engagement in decision-making processes.

Third, our experiences have shown the value of **responding to crises through measures based on inclusive social dialogue between business and labour unions**. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social dialogue was vital in protecting workers and ensuring business continuity.

Lastly, the text would also benefit from language that sets out the importance of cooperation among relevant ministries at the national level to **ensure awareness and normative compliance with obligations under ratified and applicable international labour standards**.

The ILO remains committed to promoting decent work, social justice, and effective labour governance in pandemics. We will submit written amendments in keeping with the established procedures. We urge the drafting group to give them adequate consideration.

Thank you
