



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NINTH 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

Geneva, 18-28 March 2024

Plenary statement by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Thank you, Co-Chairs. We thank the Bureau, all Member States and the Secretariat for their efforts in advancing the negotiation process.

The ILO acknowledges the recently released statement by the [WHO Health in the World of Work Network](#) supporting the ILO's proposed amendments.

We note with appreciation and satisfaction the revised language included in Article 7. It takes into account ILO suggestions in relation to the protection of decent working conditions for health and care workers as well as other essential workers who made a critical contribution during the pandemic.

In this regard, we strongly believe that the term “essential workers” should also be included in the title of Article 7 to ensure consistency.

Similarly, we recognize and support the concerns highlighted by some Member States regarding the need to reinforce the current draft by including adequate measures ensuring the protection of workers who are essential for the normal functioning of supply chains, such as seafarers and other cross-border transport workers. We must not forget that more than 80 per cent of world trade is moved by sea, and supply chains cannot work without seafarers and other cross-border transport workers.

Therefore, learning from the painful lessons of the COVID-19 pandemic, we must recognize the fundamental necessity of facilitating their transit and transfer and ensuring their access to medical care in times of crisis.

Unquestionable evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that energy, food, medical and other essential supplies cannot be provided without a functioning and well-protected workforce of seafarers and other cross-border transport workers.

The ILO remains committed to promoting decent work, social justice, and effective labour governance in pandemics. We call on all Member States to consider the observations shared by the ILO Director-General in his letter dated 10 January 2024 and subsequent observations made during INB 8.

I thank you.
