# The World of Platform Work

Main characteristics and working conditions

Michael Watt, ILO-ACTRAV

Structure

- Types of platforms

- Working conditions

- Organisational structure

- Steps towards protecting platform workers

- The ILO and the Platform economy: towards a standard setting discussion 2025-26

Despite the diversity in types of digital labour platforms…

International Labour Organization
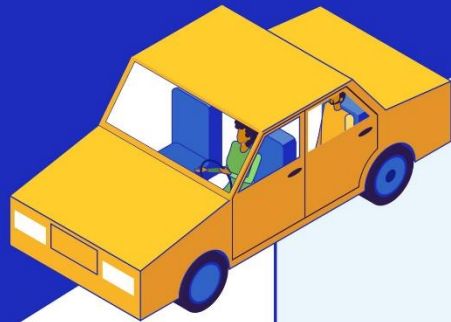
Freelance

Contest-based

Microtask

Competitive programming

Taxi

Delivery

ilo.org

International Labour Organization

▶ ... their business model has common elements

Indicators for matching clients and workers

Client reviews — **60%**

Ratings — **50%**

Worker profile — **46%**

Project history or portfolio — **27%**

Rate proposed by the worker — **21%**

Unilaterally determined by platforms:
- **Exclusivity clauses**
- **Deactivation of accounts**
- **Dispute resolution**

Recruitment and matching

Revenue model

Commission fees and subscription plans are integral to platform revenue model

Business model

Rules of governance

Work processes and performance management

Monitoring, tracking and evaluating workers through digital tools and algorithms

Advancing social justice, promoting decent work

▶ ilo.org

International Labour Organization

▶ Number of active digital labour platforms in selected categories, globally

■ Online web-based ■ Taxi ■ Delivery ■ Hybrid

400

300

200

100

2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020

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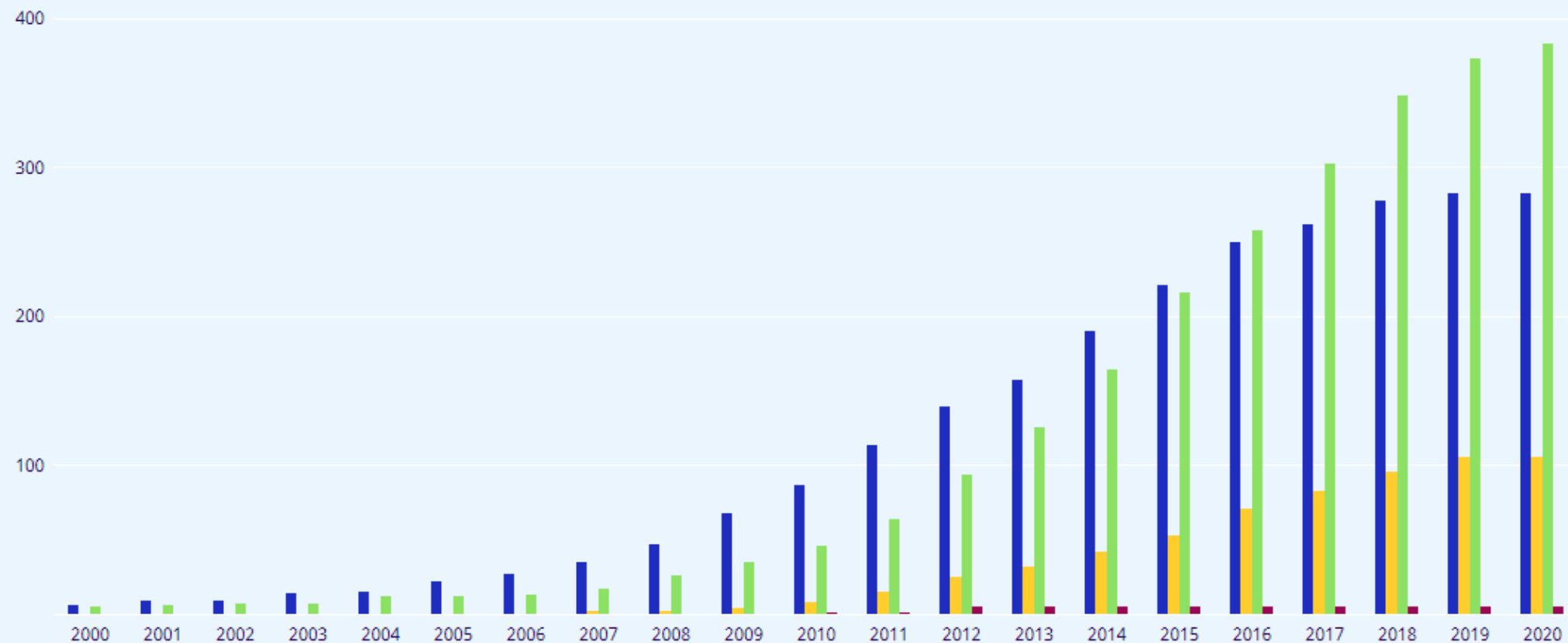
Working Conditions of platform workers

▶ Platform work is the main source of income for many...

Microtask workers	**32%**	**Taxi drivers**	**84%**
Freelance workers	**59%**	**Delivery workers**	**90%**

... but availability of work is a challenge

Online web-based platforms

▶ **9 out of 10** respondents wanted to do more online work

▶ For about a **half of them**, the unavailability of work prevented them from doing so

Delivery platforms

▶ **69%** of respondents wanted to complete a greater number of deliveries

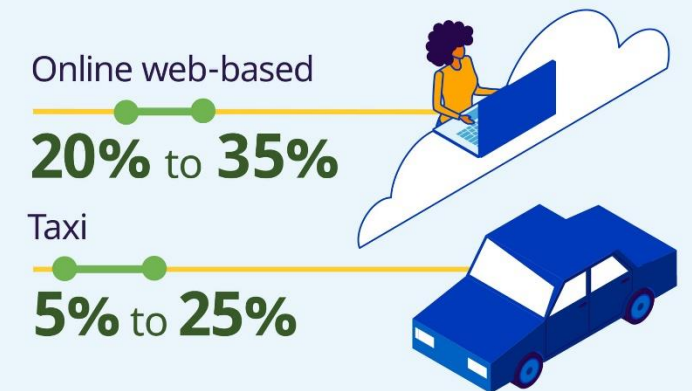▶ **83%** of them could not do so due to lack of availability of work

Earnings vary across countries and types of platforms

▶ Most workers earn less than the average on online platforms (US$3.4)

▶ Location-based platform workers earn more than their traditional counterparts in the taxi and delivery sectors

▶ Differences can be observed between countries and gender:

   - Workers in developing countries tend to earn less than those in developed countries on freelance platforms (60 per cent less)

   - A significant gender pay gap can be observed on some platforms at the country level, while the findings are quite mixed globally

▶ Commission fees have a major impact on incomes

Hourly earnings

Microtask **$3.3**

Freelance **$7.6**

Taxi **$1.1** to **$8.2**

Delivery **$0.9** to **$3.5**

US$0   US$10

Commission fees
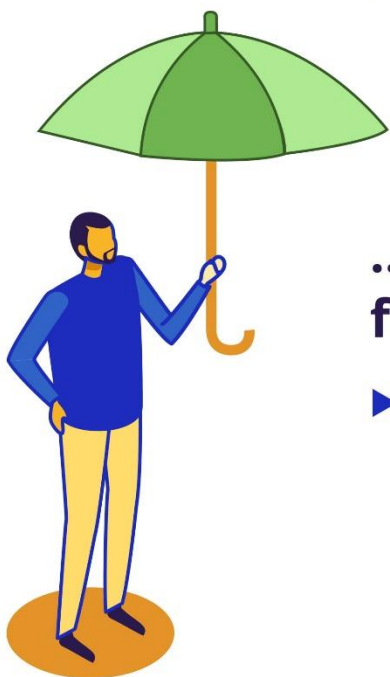
Online web-based
20% to **35%**

Taxi
5% to **25%**

Poor social protection coverage…

▶ Majority of workers on digital labour platforms are lacking social protection coverage

▶ Large gaps in health insurance; work-related injury provision; unemployment and disability insurance; and old-age pension or retirement benefits

…leaving platform workers at risk from COVID-19

▶ On location-based platforms, **7 out of 10 workers** indicated not being able to take paid sick leave, or to receive compensation, in the event they were to test positive for the virus
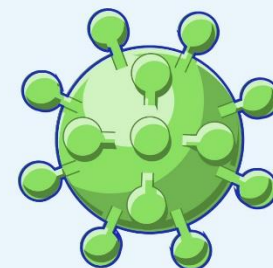
Social protection (access to pension)

Online web-based	Taxi	Delivery
20%	18%	17%

▶ilo.org

1/3 of every hour is unpaid on online web-based platforms

▶ # Working hours and risks to occupational safety and health

Online web-based platforms

▶ **27 hours** on average in a typical week

▶ Spend **8 hours** in a typical week doing unpaid work

▶ About half of the workers also had other paid jobs, working **28 hours** on average per week in these jobs

▶ Unsocial and unpredictable hours, **82%** of respondents on freelance platforms indicated that they worked beyond normal hours

Working hours and risks to occupational safety and health

Location-based platforms

- **65 hours** per week (taxi sector) and **59 hours** per week (delivery sector)

- Majority reported feeling stressed due to their work
  - Traffic congestion
  - Risk of work-related injury
  - Insufficient payment

- COVID-19 has increased OSH risks

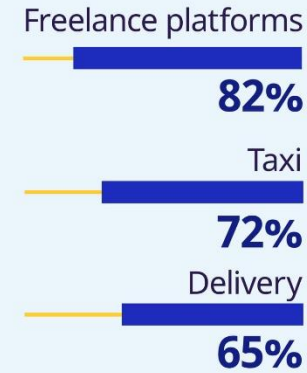*Advancing social justice, promoting decent work*

Organisational Structure

Algorithmic management is defining the everyday experiences of workers
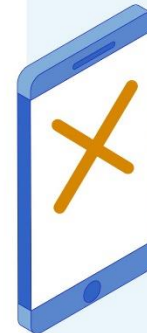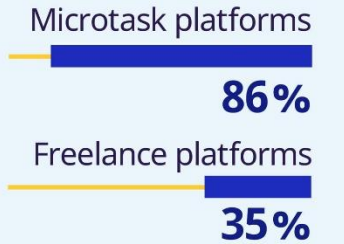
- ▶ Ratings and reputation are decisive for accessing work
- ▶ Rejection of work and low ratings are common
- ▶ Unable to refuse or cancel work without negative impacts
- ▶ Some workers face account deactivation
- ▶ Many are unaware of formal process for filing a complaint or seeking help
- ▶ Monitoring of work processes and tracking of workers

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Workers' ratings are decisive for accessing work

Freelance platforms
82%

Taxi
72%

Delivery
65%

Workers whose work was rejected

Microtask platforms
86%

Freelance platforms
35%

Workers whose account was deactivated

Taxi
19%

Delivery
15%

Lack of awareness of a dispute resolution mechanism

Freelance platforms
52%

Taxi
42%

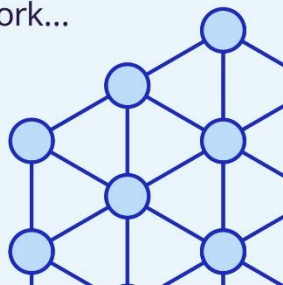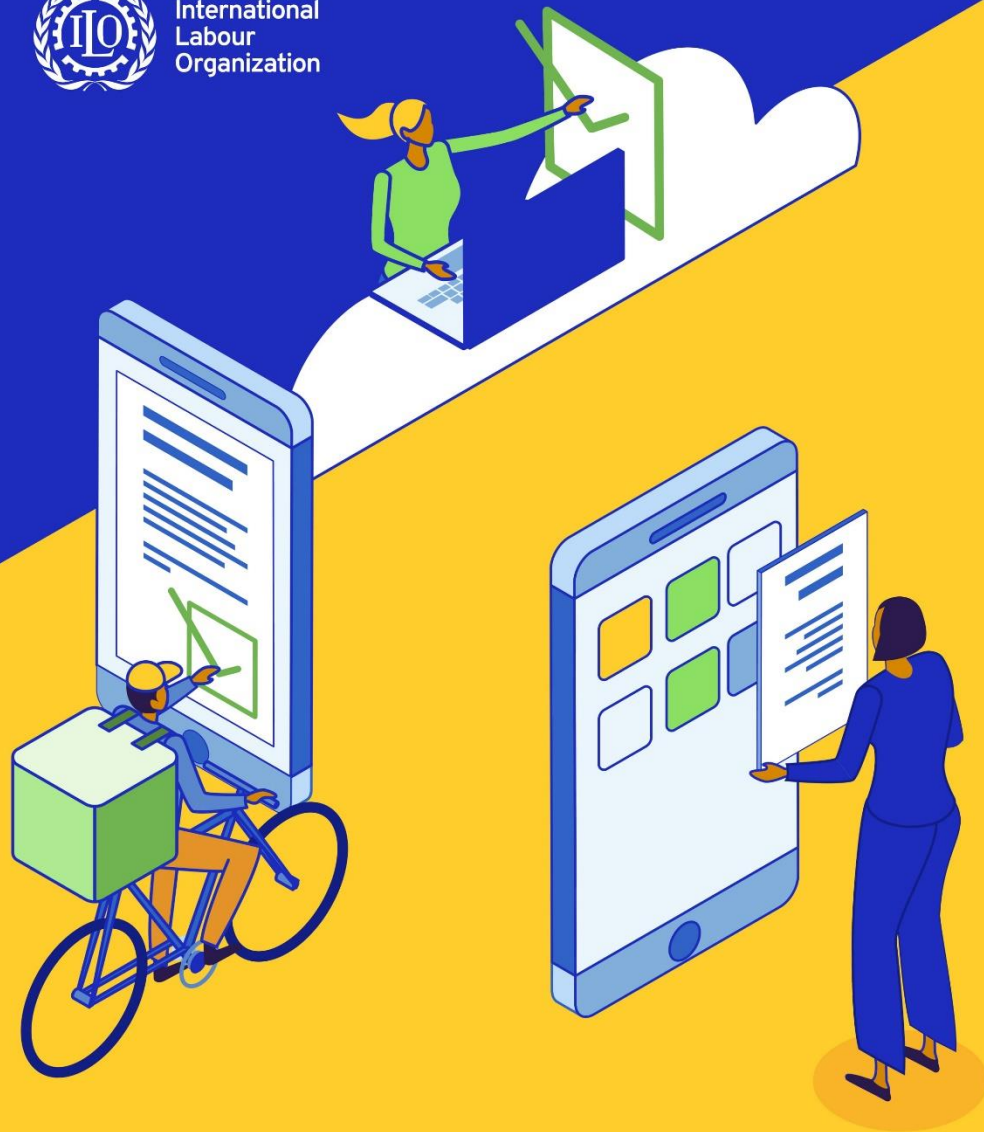Delivery
32%
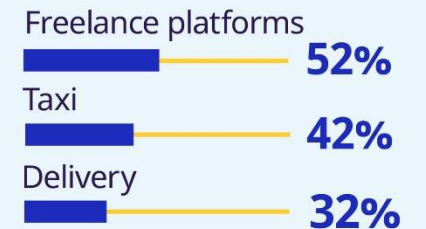
Workers on freelance platforms

47% are monitored by their clients for hours **worked...**

46% are required to take screenshots of their work...

43% are required to be available during a specific time...

▶ **on a regular basis**

Working conditions regulated by terms of service agreements...

Terms of service agreements

▶ Contracts of adhesion and are unilaterally determined

▶ Characterize the contractual relationship (not one of employment)

▶ Define aspects related to working time, pay, customer service etiquette and applicable law, user rights over data, among others

...while challenges remain for collective bargaining and unionization

▶ Prohibitions in competition law

▶ Geographical dispersion

▶ Workers have started to organize in some regions, including through digital means

Steps towards protecting platform workers

International Labour Organization

▶ **Ensuring protection for workers**

Data protection

Freedom of association and collective bargaining

Employment relationship

Dispute resolution mechanism

Occupational safety and health

Non-discrimination

Fair remuneration and working time

Social security

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The ILO and the platform economy: towards an ILS

➔ **June 2018: ILC conclusions on the** *recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism*:

  ➔ research regarding the access to freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining of digital platform and gig economy workers

➔ **March 2021: Governing Body (GB)**

  ➔ requested "the Office to convene a tripartite meeting of experts on the issue of 'decent work in the platform economy'

➔ **October 2022: Meeting of experts on decent work in the platform economy**

  ➔ Very tough discussion with no conclusions adopted

➔ **Oct-Nov 2022: Governing Body (GB)**

  ➔ decision to place on the agenda of the 2025 ILC an item on DW in the platform economy and requested the Office to prepare a "normative gap analysis" (i.e. coverage of ILS) to inform the nature of the item.

➔ **March 2023: Governing Body (GB)**

  ➔ took note of the normative gap analysis and decided (after a vote) to place on the agenda of the 2025 ILC a **standard-setting item with a double-discussion procedure.**

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Development and adoption of ILS

Aug 2024
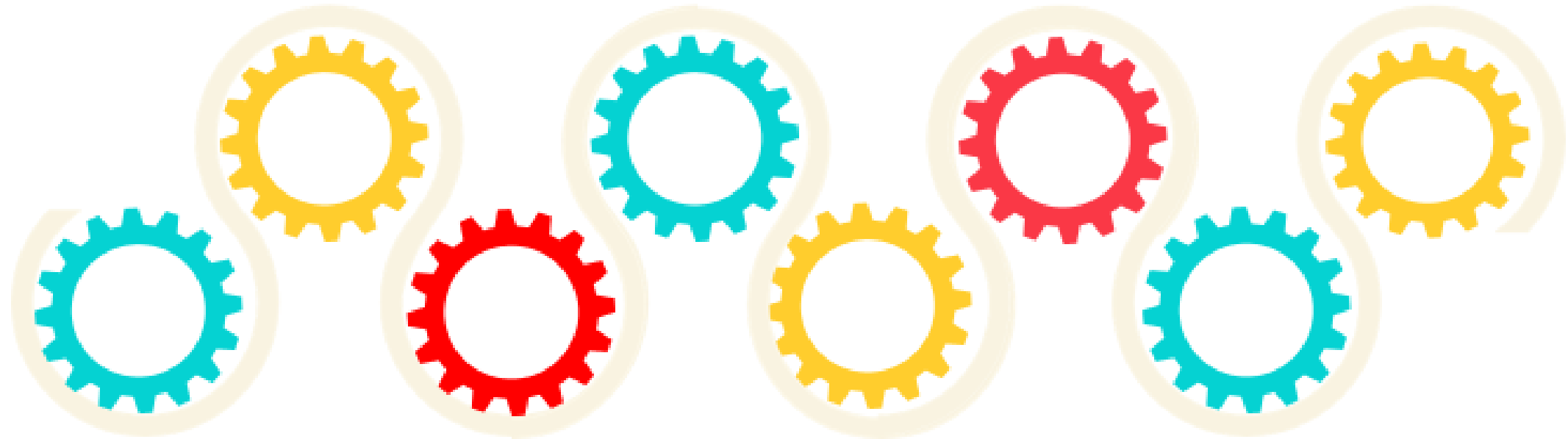Constituents submit replies to **questionnaires**

June 2025
113th session of ILC adoption of **Resolution and Conclusions**

Nov 2025
Constituents submitted replies to the 3rd report

June 2026
114th **session of ILC** adoption

Feb 2024
1st **Report ILC 113 IV(1)** on law and practice including a questionnaire

Feb 2025
2nd **Report ILC 113 IV(2)** including proposed conclusions based on constituents' replies

Aug 2025
3rd **Report ILC 114 IV(1)** containing the proposed Recommendation and Office commentary

Feb 2026
4th **Report ILC 114 IV(2)** containing the proposed recommendation, constituents' comments and Office commentary

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Preparation to the standard-setting discussion

- **First step: report on the law and practice related to platform work (published in Feb 2024):**

Report VI(1): <u>Realizing decent work in the platform economy</u>, ILC, 113th Session, 2025

- ➢ **This report has a questionnaire (pp.109-129); gvts, W and Emp are invited to answer it as soon as possible.**

- ➢ **Any workers' organisation can answer it – until <u>AUGUST 2024</u> (obligations for gvt to share report if C144 ratified)**

- ➢ **→ These answers will help the Office prepare a text that will be discussed at the ILC**

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