

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Key features

Type of organisation: United Nations specialised agency

Charter/Constitution: [ILO Constitution](#)

http://www.ilo.ch/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:62:0::NO:62:P62_LIST_ENTRIE_ID:2453907:NO

Membership

- Nature: States, with tripartite constituents - representatives from governments, as well as from employers' and workers' organisations
- Number: 187 members States

Year of establishment: 1919

Headquarters: Geneva

Country offices: around 40

Secretariat staff: 2 700

Total budget: US \$797,390,000 (2016-17)

See www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---program/documents/genericdocument/wcms_565220.pdf

Type of activity: Development of international labour standards, together with the supervision of their application, as well as of other instruments, policies and programs; technical cooperation, training and research activities.

Sectors of activity: Labour and social justice

Website: www.ilo.org/global/lang-en/index.htm

Members

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, , Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, , Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China (People's Republic of), Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Côte D'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Congo (Democratic Republic of), , , Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea (Republic of), Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, , Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico,, Republic of Moldova, , Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, , Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, , Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, , Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia (Republic of), Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania (United Republic of) Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste (Democratic Republic of), Togo, , Trinidad and Tobago, Trust Palau, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, , United States, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Relationship with non-Members

The ILO engages in cooperation and consultation with international NGOs (INGOs) both in its standard setting mechanisms and in the implementation of its development cooperation programmes. Each year between 60 and 80 INGOs are invited to participate in the International Labour Conference on issues on which they have a special interest and can make a contribution to the technical discussions. Several non-governmental international organisations have been granted general consultative status with the ILO: the International Co-operative Alliance, the International Organisation of Employers, the International Trade Union Confederation, the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, Business Africa, and the World Federation of Trade Unions. Moreover, the ILO has registered more than 150 INGOs in its Special List covering a wide variety of fields, such as the promotion of human rights, poverty alleviation, social security, professional rehabilitation, gender issues, and youth matters.

In addition, non-Member States may have the status of observers, as well as liberation movements recognised by the Organisation of African Unity or the League of Arab States, both of which may thus be invited to be represented at the International Labour Conference.

Mandate

The ILO's mandate in the pursuit of social justice is based on four equally important objectives that are inseparable, interrelated and mutually supportive: employment, social protection, social dialogue and tripartism and fundamental principles and rights at work. The only tripartite U.N. specialised agency, the ILO brings together governments, employers and workers representatives of 187 member States to set international labour standards and supervise their application, as well as provide guidance and technical assistance, including through development of policies and programmes, to promote decent work for all women and men.

IRC processes taking place within the International Labour Organization



*In the context of the ILO dispute settlement refers to the facilitation of conciliation or mediation in the context of the operation of certain supervisory bodies and of the technical assistance provided by the Organization

Categories of legal and policy instruments

	Is it taking place within the IO?	Approximate number
Treaties for ratification by States (excluding the funding one)	✓	189 Conventions (and 6 Protocols – formally Conventions)
Legally binding decisions		
Recommendations	✓	205
Political declarations	✓	Resolutions, incl. Declarations: www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/departments-and-offices/jur/legal-instruments/WCMS_428590/lang-en/index.htm
Model treaties or law		
Production of technical standards	✓	For example, Codes of Practice www.ilo.org/safework/info/standards-and-instruments/codes/lang-en/index.htm
Non-binding guidance/best practices document	✓	

Interactions with other international organisations active in the field

Mechanisms of interaction		Approximate number of IOs involved	Examples
Develop joint instruments	✓	Several (ad hoc) – e.g. UNESCO	www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_dialogue/---sector/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_493315.pdf
MoU or other agreements	✓	27 UN bodies or specialised agencies, 14 other international organisations and 36 regional organisations	www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/departments-and-offices/jur/legal-instruments/WCMS_442247/lang-en/index.htm
Participate in co-ordinating institution	✓		Integration in the UN system, e.g. through the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB): www.unsystem.org/content/ceb
Joint meetings that provide forum for co-ordination	✓	Several (ad hoc) – e.g. with IMO, FAO or WHO	www.ilo.org/gb/WCMS_084097/lang-en/index.htm
Observe relevant actions of other bodies	✓	Numerous agreements with other organisations recognize mutual observer status	
Exchange information	✓	Numerous agreements with other organisations (see above) provide for the exchange of information.	

ILO history

The International Labour Organization (ILO) was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. The Constitution was drafted between January and April, 1919, by the Labour Commission set up by the Peace Conference. It resulted in a unique tripartite organisation, bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its general conference and executive body. In 1946, the ILO became a specialised agency of the newly formed United Nations. The Organization won the Nobel Peace Prize on its 50th anniversary in 1969. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work was adopted in 1998 followed, in 1999, by the adoption of the Decent Work Agenda. In 2008, the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization was adopted.

Source: Data provided by the ILO to the OECD as part of a data collection exercise, October 2017.