

ILO Committee on the Application of Standards: UK statement (June 2022)

Following the Committee of Experts report on China's non-compliance with Convention 111, the United Kingdom is deeply concerned about the continued reports of a widespread and systematic programme of forced labour in Xinjiang involving the Uyghur and other Turkic and Muslim minorities. New evidence continues to emerge to reveal the scale and severity of the human rights violations in the region, including from the Chinese Government's own documents.

In order to effectively implement the recommendations found in the Committee of Experts report, we strongly call for the Chinese Government to accept a high-level tripartite mission in Xinjiang. We urge the Chinese Government to grant all necessary accommodations to enable the mission to carry out its duties in a meaningful and unfettered manner – just as we did prior to the recent visit by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. We request that this mission be conducted before the next sitting of the International Labour Conference in 2023.

In addition, we suggest that the Chinese Government avails itself, without delay, of all available technical assistance to ensure comprehensive compliance with Convention 111 in law and practice.

We request that the Chinese Government provides detailed and complete information on the application of Convention 111 to the Committee of Experts before its next sitting in December 2022.

Such is the seriousness of this case that we believe it merits the inclusion of a special paragraph in the final report.

Furthermore, we take note of the announcement by the National People's Congress to ratify Convention 29 on Forced Labour and Convention 105 on the Abolition of Forced Labour. We call on the Chinese Government to officially ratify both Conventions, and any accompanying Protocols, by depositing the legal Instruments at the International Labour Office, and to take expeditious action to align its laws.

The United Kingdom pays tribute to the Committee of Experts for bringing this serious issue to the attention of the ILC, and we call on China to immediately cease its repressive and discriminatory policies in Xinjiang.

Thank you, Chair.