C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81)

Convention concerning Labour Inspection in Industry and Commerce (Entry into force: 07 Apr 1950)
Adoption: Geneva, 30th ILC session (11 Jul 1947)
Status: Up-to-date instrument (Governance (Priority) Convention).

Convention may be denounced: 07 Apr 2020 - 07 Apr 2021

Preamble

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its Thirtieth Session on 19 June 1947, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals with regard to the organisation of labour inspection in industry and commerce, which is the fourth item on the agenda of the Session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of an international Convention,

adopts this eleventh day of July of the year one thousand nine hundred and forty-seven the following Convention, which may be cited as the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947:

PART I. LABOUR INSPECTION IN INDUSTRY

Article 1

Each Member of the International Labour Organisation for which this Convention is in force shall maintain a system of labour inspection in industrial workplaces.

Article 2

1. 1. The system of labour inspection in industrial workplaces shall apply to all workplaces in respect of which legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the protection of workers while engaged in their work are enforceable by labour inspectors.
2. 2. National laws or regulations may exempt mining and transport undertakings or parts of such undertakings from the application of this Convention.

Article 3

1. 1. The functions of the system of labour inspection shall be:
    - (a) to secure the enforcement of the legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the

protection of workers while engaged in their work, such as provisions relating to hours, wages, safety, health and welfare, the employment of children and young persons, and other connected matters, in so far as such provisions are enforceable by labour inspectors;
    - (b) to supply technical information and advice to employers and workers concerning the most effective means of complying with the legal provisions;
    - (c) to bring to the notice of the competent authority defects or abuses not specifically covered by existing legal provisions.

2. 2. Any further duties which may be entrusted to labour inspectors shall not be such as to interfere with the effective discharge of their primary duties or to prejudice in any way the authority and impartiality which are necessary to inspectors in their relations with employers and workers.

Article 4

1. 1. So far as is compatible with the administrative practice of the Member, labour inspection shall be placed under the supervision and control of a central authority.
2. 2. In the case of a federal State, the term ***central authority*** may mean either a federal authority or a central authority of a federated unit.

Article 5

The competent authority shall make appropriate arrangements to promote:

- (a) effective co-operation between the inspection services and other government services and public or private institutions engaged in similar activities; and

- (b) collaboration between officials of the labour inspectorate and employers and workers or their organisations.

Article 6

The inspection staff shall be composed of public officials whose status and conditions of service are such that they are assured of stability of employment and are independent of changes of government and of improper external influences.

Article 7

1. 1. Subject to any conditions for recruitment to the public service which may be prescribed by national laws or regulations, labour inspectors shall be recruited with sole regard to their qualifications for the performance of their duties.
2. 2. The means of ascertaining such qualifications shall be determined by the competent authority.
3. 3. Labour inspectors shall be adequately trained for the performance of their duties.

Article 8

Both men and women shall be eligible for appointment to the inspection staff; where necessary, special duties may be assigned to men and women inspectors.

Article 9

Each Member shall take the necessary measures to ensure that duly qualified technical experts and specialists, including specialists in medicine, engineering, electricity and chemistry, are associated in the work of inspection, in such manner as may be deemed most appropriate under national conditions, for the purpose of securing the enforcement of the legal provisions relating to the protection of the health and safety of workers while engaged in their work and of

investigating the effects of processes, materials and methods of work on the health and safety of workers.

Article 10

The number of labour inspectors shall be sufficient to secure the effective discharge of the duties of the inspectorate and shall be determined with due regard for:

- (a) the importance of the duties which inspectors have to perform, in particular--
    - (i) the number, nature, size and situation of the workplaces liable to inspection;
    - (ii) the number and classes of workers employed in such workplaces; and
    - (iii) the number and complexity of the legal provisions to be enforced;
- (b) the material means placed at the disposal of the inspectors; and
- (c) the practical conditions under which visits of inspection must be carried out in order to be effective.

Article 11

1. 1. The competent authority shall make the necessary arrangements to furnish labour inspectors with--
    - (a) local offices, suitably equipped in accordance with the requirements of the service, and accessible to all persons concerned;
    - (b) the transport facilities necessary for the performance of their duties in cases where suitable public facilities do not exist.
2. 2. The competent authority shall make the necessary arrangements to reimburse to labour inspectors any

travelling and incidental expenses which may be necessary for the performance of their duties.

Article 12

1. 1. Labour inspectors provided with proper credentials shall be empowered:
    - (a) to enter freely and without previous notice at any hour of the day or night any workplace liable to inspection;
    - (b) to enter by day any premises which they may have reasonable cause to believe to be liable to inspection; and
    - (c) to carry out any examination, test or enquiry which they may consider necessary in order to satisfy themselves that the legal provisions are being strictly observed, and in particular--
        - (i) to interrogate, alone or in the presence of witnesses, the employer or the staff of the undertaking on any matters concerning the application of the legal provisions;
        - (ii) to require the production of any books, registers or other documents the keeping of which is prescribed by national laws or regulations relating to conditions of work, in order to see that they are in conformity with the legal provisions, and to copy such documents or make extracts from them;
        - (iii) to enforce the posting of notices required by the legal provisions;
        - (iv) to take or remove for purposes of analysis samples of materials and substances used or handled, subject to

the employer or his representative being notified of any samples or substances taken or removed for such purpose.

2. 2. On the occasion of an inspection visit, inspectors shall notify the employer or his representative of their presence, unless they consider that such a notification may be prejudicial to the performance of their duties.

Article 13

1. 1. Labour inspectors shall be empowered to take steps with a view to remedying defects observed in plant, layout or working methods which they may have reasonable cause to believe constitute a threat to the health or safety of the workers.
2. 2. In order to enable inspectors to take such steps they shall be empowered, subject to any right of appeal to a judicial or administrative authority which may be provided by law, to make or to have made orders requiring--
    - (a) such alterations to the installation or plant, to be carried out within a specified time limit, as may be necessary to secure compliance with the legal provisions relating to the health or safety of the workers; or
    - (b) measures with immediate executory force in the event of imminent danger to the health or safety of the workers.
3. 3. Where the procedure prescribed in paragraph 2 is not compatible with the administrative or judicial practice of the Member, inspectors shall have the right to apply to the competent authority for the issue of orders or for the initiation of measures with immediate executory force.

Article 14

The labour inspectorate shall be notified of industrial accidents and cases of occupational disease in such cases and in such manner as may be prescribed by national laws or regulations.

Article 15

Subject to such exceptions as may be made by national laws or regulations, labour inspectors--

- (a) shall be prohibited from having any direct or indirect interest in the undertakings under their supervision;
- (b) shall be bound on pain of appropriate penalties or disciplinary measures not to reveal, even after leaving the service, any manufacturing or commercial secrets or working processes which may come to their knowledge in the course of their duties; and
- (c) shall treat as absolutely confidential the source of any complaint bringing to their notice a defect or breach of legal provisions and shall give no intimation to the employer or his representative that a visit of inspection was made in consequence of the receipt of such a complaint.

Article 16

Workplaces shall be inspected as often and as thoroughly as is necessary to ensure the effective application of the relevant legal provisions.

Article 17

1. 1. Persons who violate or neglect to observe legal provisions enforceable by labour inspectors shall be liable to prompt legal proceedings without previous warning: Provided that exceptions may be made by national laws or regulations in respect of cases in which previous notice to carry out remedial or preventive measures is to be given.

2. 2. It shall be left to the discretion of labour inspectors to give warning and advice instead of instituting or recommending proceedings.

Article 18

Adequate penalties for violations of the legal provisions enforceable by labour inspectors and for obstructing labour inspectors in the performance of their duties shall be provided for by national laws or regulations and effectively enforced.

Article 19

1. 1. Labour inspectors or local inspection offices, as the case may be, shall be required to submit to the central inspection authority periodical reports on the results of their inspection activities.
2. 2. These reports shall be drawn up in such manner and deal with such subjects as may from time to time be prescribed by the central authority; they shall be submitted at least as frequently as may be prescribed by that authority and in any case not less frequently than once a year.

Article 20

1. 1. The central inspection authority shall publish an annual general report on the work of the inspection services under its control.
2. 2. Such annual reports shall be published within a reasonable time after the end of the year to which they relate and in any case within twelve months.
3. 3. Copies of the annual reports shall be transmitted to the Director-General of the International Labour Office within a reasonable period after their publication and in any case within three months.

Article 21

The annual report published by the central inspection authority shall deal with the following and other relevant subjects in so far as they are under the control of the said authority:

- (a) laws and regulations relevant to the work of the inspection service;
- (b) staff of the labour inspection service;
- (c) statistics of workplaces liable to inspection and the number of workers employed therein;
- (d) statistics of inspection visits;
- (e) statistics of violations and penalties imposed;
- (f) statistics of industrial accidents;
- (g) statistics of occupational diseases.

PART II. LABOUR INSPECTION IN COMMERCE

Article 22

Each Member of the International Labour Organisation for which this Part of this Convention is in force shall maintain a system of labour inspection in commercial workplaces.

Article 23

The system of labour inspection in commercial workplaces shall apply to workplaces in respect of which legal provisions relating to conditions of work and the protection of workers while engaged in their work are enforceable by labour inspectors.

Article 24

The system of labour inspection in commercial workplaces shall comply with the requirements of Articles 3 to 21 of this Convention in so far as they are applicable.

PART III. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Article 25

1. 1. Any Member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention may, by a declaration appended to its ratification, exclude Part II from its acceptance of the Convention.
2. 2. Any Member which has made such a declaration may at any time cancel that declaration by a subsequent declaration.
3. 3. Every Member for which a declaration made under paragraph 1 of this Article is in force shall indicate each year in its annual report upon the application of this Convention the position of its law and practice in regard to the provisions of Part II of this Convention and the extent to which effect has been given, or is proposed to be given, to the said provisions.

Article 26

In any case in which it is doubtful whether any undertaking, part or service of an undertaking or workplace is an undertaking, part, service or workplace to which this Convention applies, the question shall be settled by the competent authority.

Article 27

In this Convention the term ***legal provisions*** includes, in addition to laws and regulations, arbitration awards and collective agreements upon which the force of law is conferred and which are enforceable by labour inspectors.

Article 28

There shall be included in the annual reports to be submitted under Article 22 of the Constitution of the International Labour

Organisation full information concerning all laws and regulations by which effect is given to the provisions of this Convention.

Article 29

1. 1. In the case of a Member the territory of which includes large areas where, by reason of the sparseness of the population or the stage of development of the area, the competent authority considers it impracticable to enforce the provisions of this Convention, the authority may exempt such areas from the application of this Convention either generally or with such exceptions in respect of particular undertakings or occupations as it thinks fit.
2. 2. Each Member shall indicate in its first annual report upon the application of this Convention submitted under Article 22 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation any areas in respect of which it proposes to have recourse to the provisions of the present Article and shall give the reasons for which it proposes to have recourse thereto; no Member shall, after the date of its first annual report, have recourse to the provisions of the present Article except in respect of areas so indicated.
3. 3. Each Member having recourse to the provisions of the present Article shall indicate in subsequent annual reports any areas in respect of which it renounces the right to have recourse to the provisions of the present Article.

Article 30

1. 1. In respect of the territories referred to in article 35 of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation as amended by the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation Instrument of Amendment 1946, other than the territories referred to in paragraphs 4 an, 5 of the said article as so amended, each Member of the Organisation which ratifies this Convention shall communicate to the

Director-General of the International Labour Office as soon as possible after ratification a declaration stating--

- (a) the territories in respect of which it undertakes that the provisions of the Convention shall be applied without modification;
- (b) the territories in respect of which it undertakes that the provisions of the Convention shall be applied subject to modifications, together with details of the said modifications;
- (c) the territories in respect of which the Convention is inapplicable and in such cases the grounds on which it is inapplicable;
- (d) the territories in respect of which it reserves its decision.

2. 2. The undertakings referred to in subparagraphs (a) and (b) of paragraph 1 of this Article shall be deemed to be an integral part of the ratification and shall have the force of ratification.
3. 3. Any Member may at any time by a subsequent declaration cancel in whole or in part any reservations made in its original declaration in virtue of subparagraphs (b), (c) or (d) of paragraph 1 of this Article.
4. 4. Any Member may, at any time at which the Convention is subject to denunciation in accordance with the provisions of Article 34, communicate to the Director-General a declaration modifying in any other respect the terms of any former declaration and stating the present position in respect of such territories as it may specify.

Article 31

1. 1. Where the subject matter of this Convention is within the self-governing powers of any non-metropolitan territory, the Member responsible for the international relations of that territory may, in agreement with the Government of the

territory, communicate to the Director-General of the International Labour Office a declaration accepting on behalf of the territory the obligations of this Convention.

2. 2. A declaration accepting the obligations of this Convention may be communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office --

    - (a) by two or more Members of the Organisation in respect of any territory which is under their joint authority; or
    - (b) by any international authority responsible for the administration of any territory, in virtue of the Charter of the United Nations or otherwise, in respect of any such territory.

3. 3. Declarations communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office in accordance with the preceding paragraphs of this Article shall indicate whether the provisions of the Convention will be applied in the territory concerned without modification or subject to modifications; when the declaration indicates that the provisions of the Convention will be applied subject to modifications it shall give details of the said modifications.
4. 4. The Member, Members or international authority concerned may at any time by a subsequent declaration renounce in whole or in part the right to have recourse to any modification indicated in any former declaration.
5. 5. The Member, Members or international authority concerned may, at any time at which this Convention is subject to denunciation in accordance with the provisions of Article 34, communicate to the Director-General a declaration modifying in any other respect the terms of any former declaration and stating the present position in respect of the application of the Convention.

PART IV. FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 32

The formal ratifications of this Convention shall be communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration.

Article 33

1. 1. This Convention shall be binding only upon those Members of the International Labour Organisation whose ratifications have been registered with the Director-General.
2. 2. It shall come into force twelve months after the date on which the ratifications of two Members have been registered with the Director-General.
3. 3. Thereafter, this Convention shall come into force for any Member twelve months after the date on which its ratifications has been registered.

Article 34

1. 1. A Member which has ratified this Convention may denounce it after the expiration of ten years from the date on which the Convention first comes into force, by an act communicated to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for registration. Such denunciation shall not take effect until one year after the date on which it is registered.
2. 2. Each Member which has ratified this Convention and which does not, within the year following the expiration of the period of ten years mentioned in the preceding paragraph, exercise the right of denunciation provided for in this Article, will be bound for another period of ten years and, thereafter, may denounce this Convention at the expiration of each period of ten years under the terms provided for in this Article.

Article 35

1. 1. The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall notify all Members of the International Labour Organisation of the registration of all ratifications, declarations and denunciations communicated to him by the Members of the Organisation.
2. 2. When notifying the Members of the Organisation of the registration of the second ratification communicated to him, the Director-General shall draw the attention of the Members of the Organisation to the date upon which the Convention will come into force.

Article 36

The Director-General of the International Labour Office shall communicate to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for registration in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations full particulars of all ratifications, declarations and acts of denunciation registered by him in accordance with the provisions of the preceding Articles.

Article 37

At such times as it may consider necessary the Governing Body of the International Labour Office shall present to the General Conference a report on the working of this Convention and shall examine the desirability of placing on the agenda of the Conference the question of its revision in whole or in part.

Article 38

1. 1. Should the Conference adopt a new Convention revising this Convention in whole or in part, then, unless the new Convention otherwise provides:
    - (a) the ratification by a Member of the new revising Convention shall ipso jure involve the

immediate denunciation of this Convention, notwithstanding the provisions of Article 34 above, if and when the new revising Convention shall have come into force;

- (b) as from the date when the new revising Convention comes into force, this Convention shall cease to be open to ratification by the Members.

2. 2. This Convention shall in any case remain in force in its actual form and content for those Members which have ratified it but have not ratified the revising Convention.

Article 39

The English and French versions of the text of this Convention are equally authoritative.

