



# General Assembly

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## Seventy-third session

Agenda item 14

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of and  
follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations  
conferences and summits in the economic, social  
and related fields**

### **Letter dated 26 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I am pleased to transmit herewith the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, of the International Labour Organization (see annex). The Declaration was adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 108th session, held on 21 June 2019 and chaired by Jean-Jacques Elmiger, Ambassador, Labour Directorate, Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs. The Declaration outlines the priorities for securing a future of work with full employment and decent work for all at a time of unprecedented change and exceptional challenges in the world of work.

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 14, in recognition of the importance of matters relating to the future of work for the work of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, as well as overall policy coherence.

(Signed) Jürg Lauber  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 26 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

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**ILO CENTENARY DECLARATION  
FOR THE FUTURE OF WORK**

The International Labour Conference, meeting in Geneva at its One Hundred and Eighth Session on the occasion of the Centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO),

*Considering* that the experience of the past century has confirmed that the continuous and concerted action of governments and representatives of employers and workers is essential to the achievement of social justice, democracy and the promotion of universal and lasting peace;

*Acknowledging* that such action has brought historic advances in economic and social progress that have resulted in more humane conditions of work;

*Considering also* that persistent poverty, inequalities and injustices, conflict, disasters and other humanitarian emergencies in many parts of the world constitute a threat to those advances and to securing shared prosperity and decent work for all;

*Recalling and reaffirming* the aims, purposes, principles and mandate set out in the ILO Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia (1944);

*Underlining* the importance of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) and the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008);

*Moved by* the imperative of social justice that gave birth to the ILO one hundred years ago, and the conviction that it lies within the reach of the governments, employers and workers of the world to reinvigorate the Organization and shape a future of work that realizes its founding vision;

*Recognizing* that social dialogue contributes to the overall cohesion of societies and is crucial for a well-functioning and productive economy;

*Recognizing also* the importance of the role of sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work;

*Reaffirming* that labour is not a commodity;

*Committing* to a world of work free from violence and harassment;

*Underlining also* the significance of promoting multilateralism, particularly in shaping the future of work that we want and in dealing with the challenges of the world of work;

*Calling upon* all constituents of the ILO to reaffirm their unwavering commitment and to reinvigorate their efforts to achieve social justice and universal and lasting peace to which they agreed in 1919 and 1944; and

*Desiring* to democratize ILO governance by ensuring a fair representation of all regions and establishing the principle of equality among member States,

Adopts this twenty-first day of June of the year two thousand and nineteen the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

## I

The Conference declares that:

- A. The ILO marks its Centenary at a time of transformative change in the world of work, driven by technological innovations, demographic shifts, environmental and climate change, and globalization, as well as at a time of persistent inequalities, which have profound impacts on the nature and future of work, and on the place and dignity of people in it.
- B. It is imperative to act with urgency to seize the opportunities and address the challenges to shape a fair, inclusive and secure future of work with full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all.
- C. Such a future of work is fundamental for sustainable development that puts an end to poverty and leaves no one behind.
- D. The ILO must carry forward into its second century with unrelenting vigour its constitutional mandate for social justice by further developing its human-centred approach to the future of work, which puts workers' rights and the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies.
- E. The growth of the Organization over the past 100 years towards universal membership means that social justice can be achieved in all regions of the world and that the full contribution of the ILO's constituents to this endeavour can be assured only through their full, equal and democratic participation in its tripartite governance.

## II

The Conference declares that:

- A. In discharging its constitutional mandate, taking into account the profound transformations in the world of work, and further developing its human-centred approach to the future of work, the ILO must direct its efforts to:
  - (i) ensuring a just transition to a future of work that contributes to sustainable development in its economic, social and environmental dimensions;
  - (ii) harnessing the fullest potential of technological progress and productivity growth, including through social dialogue, to achieve decent work and sustainable development, which ensure dignity, self-fulfilment and a just sharing of the benefits for all;
  - (iii) promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies and qualifications for all workers throughout their working lives as a joint responsibility of governments and social partners in order to:
    - address existing and anticipated skills gaps;
    - pay particular attention to ensuring that education and training systems are responsive to labour market needs, taking into account the evolution of work; and
    - enhance workers' capacity to make use of the opportunities available for decent work;
  - (iv) developing effective policies aimed at generating full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work opportunities for all, and in particular facilitating the transition from education and training to work, with an emphasis on the effective integration of young people into the world of work;

- (v) supporting measures that help older workers to expand their choices, optimizing their opportunities to work in good-quality, productive and healthy conditions until their retirement, and to enable active ageing;
- (vi) promoting workers' rights as a key element for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable growth, with a focus on freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining as enabling rights;
- (vii) achieving gender equality at work through a transformative agenda, with regular evaluation of progress made, which:
  - ensures equal opportunities, equal participation and equal treatment, including equal remuneration for women and men for work of equal value;
  - enables a more balanced sharing of family responsibilities;
  - provides scope for achieving better work–life balance by enabling workers and employers to agree on solutions, including on working time, that consider their respective needs and benefits; and
  - promotes investment in the care economy;
- (viii) ensuring equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work for persons with disabilities, as well as for other persons in vulnerable situations;
- (ix) supporting the role of the private sector as a principal source of economic growth and job creation by promoting an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and sustainable enterprises, in particular micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as cooperatives and the social and solidarity economy, in order to generate decent work, productive employment and improved living standards for all;
- (x) supporting the role of the public sector as a significant employer and provider of quality public services;
- (xi) strengthening labour administration and inspection;
- (xii) ensuring that diverse forms of work arrangements, production and business models, including in domestic and global supply chains, leverage opportunities for social and economic progress, provide for decent work and are conducive to full, productive and freely chosen employment;
- (xiii) eradicating forced and child labour and promoting decent work for all and fostering cross-border cooperation, including in areas or sectors of high international integration;
- (xiv) promoting the transition from the informal to the formal economy, while giving due attention to rural areas;
- (xv) developing and enhancing social protection systems, which are adequate, sustainable and adapted to developments in the world of work;
- (xvi) deepening and scaling up its work on international labour migration in response to constituents' needs and taking a leadership role in decent work in labour migration; and
- (xvii) intensifying engagement and cooperation within the multilateral system with a view to strengthening policy coherence, in line with the recognition that:

- decent work is key to sustainable development, addressing income inequality and ending poverty, paying special attention to areas affected by conflict, disaster and other humanitarian emergencies; and
  - in conditions of globalization, the failure of any country to adopt humane conditions of labour is more than ever an obstacle to progress in all other countries.
- B. Social dialogue, including collective bargaining and tripartite cooperation, provides an essential foundation of all ILO action and contributes to successful policy and decision-making in its member States.
- C. Effective workplace cooperation is a tool to help ensure safe and productive workplaces, in such a way that it respects collective bargaining and its outcomes, and does not undermine the role of trade unions.
- D. Safe and healthy working conditions are fundamental to decent work.

### III

The Conference calls upon all Members, taking into account national circumstances, to work individually and collectively, on the basis of tripartism and social dialogue, and with the support of the ILO, to further develop its human-centred approach to the future of work by:

- A. Strengthening the capacities of all people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work through:
- (i) the effective realization of gender equality in opportunities and treatment;
  - (ii) effective lifelong learning and quality education for all;
  - (iii) universal access to comprehensive and sustainable social protection; and
  - (iv) effective measures to support people through the transitions they will face throughout their working lives.
- B. Strengthening the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers, and reaffirming the continued relevance of the employment relationship as a means of providing certainty and legal protection to workers, while recognizing the extent of informality and the need to ensure effective action to achieve transition to formality. All workers should enjoy adequate protection in accordance with the Decent Work Agenda, taking into account:
- (i) respect for their fundamental rights;
  - (ii) an adequate minimum wage, statutory or negotiated;
  - (iii) maximum limits on working time; and
  - (iv) safety and health at work.
- C. Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all through:
- (i) macroeconomic policies that have those aims as their central objective;
  - (ii) trade, industrial and sectoral policies that promote decent work, and enhance productivity;
  - (iii) investment in infrastructure and in strategic sectors to address the drivers of transformative change in the world of work;
  - (iv) policies and incentives that promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth, the creation and development of sustainable enterprises, innovation, and the transition from the informal to the formal economy,

and that promote the alignment of business practices with the objectives of this Declaration; and

- (v) policies and measures that ensure appropriate privacy and personal data protection, and respond to challenges and opportunities in the world of work relating to the digital transformation of work, including platform work.

#### IV

The Conference declares that:

- A. The setting, promotion, ratification and supervision of international labour standards is of fundamental importance to the ILO. This requires the Organization to have and promote a clear, robust, up-to-date body of international labour standards and to further enhance transparency. International labour standards also need to respond to the changing patterns of the world of work, protect workers and take into account the needs of sustainable enterprises, and be subject to authoritative and effective supervision. The ILO will assist its Members in the ratification and effective application of standards.
- B. All Members should work towards the ratification and implementation of the ILO fundamental Conventions and periodically consider, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations, the ratification of other ILO standards.
- C. It is incumbent on the ILO to strengthen the capacity of its tripartite constituents to:
  - (i) encourage the development of strong and representative social partner organizations;
  - (ii) engage in all relevant processes, including with labour market institutions, programmes and policies, within and across borders; and
  - (iii) address all fundamental principles and rights at work, at all levels, as appropriate, through strong, influential and inclusive mechanisms of social dialogue,

in the conviction that such representation and dialogue contribute to the overall cohesion of societies and are a matter of public interest, and are crucial for a well-functioning and productive economy.
- D. The services that the ILO offers to its member States and social partners, notably through development cooperation, must be consistent with its mandate and based on a thorough understanding of, and attention to, their diverse circumstances, needs, priorities and levels of development, including through expanded South–South and triangular cooperation.
- E. The ILO should maintain the highest levels of statistical, research and knowledge management capacities and expertise in order to further strengthen the quality of its evidence-based policy advice.
- F. On the basis of its constitutional mandate, the ILO must take an important role in the multilateral system, by reinforcing its cooperation and developing institutional arrangements with other organizations to promote policy coherence in pursuit of its human-centred approach to the future of work, recognizing the strong, complex and crucial links between social, trade, financial, economic and environmental policies.

The foregoing is the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, duly adopted by the General Conference of the International Labour Organization during its One Hundred and Eighth (Centenary) Session which was held at Geneva and declared closed on 21 June 2019.

IN FAITH WHEREOF we have appended our signatures this twenty-first day of June 2019:

*The President of the Conference,*  
JEAN-JACQUES ELMIGER

*The Director-General of the International Labour Office,*  
GUY RYDER

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