

Plenary sitting

High-level section: Visits by Heads of State and Government and other distinguished guests on the occasion of the Centenary of the International Labour Organization

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Monday 10 June 2019, 3.20 p.m.

President: Mr Elmiger

High-level section

The President

(Original French)

I call to order the second plenary sitting of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In order to mark the Centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Conference will be addressed by Heads of State and Government and other distinguished guests, who will gather to reaffirm their commitment to the principle of social justice upon which the ILO was founded 100 years ago and to share with the Conference their own experiences and their vision for the future of work. To begin this high-level section, we have the honour and privilege today to receive the visits of nine of these guests. Without further ado, I give the floor to the first of them, His Excellency Mr Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic.

Statement by His Excellency Mr Sergio Mattarella, President of the Italian Republic

Mr Mattarella

President of the Italian Republic

(Original Italian)

It is an honour for me to take the floor at the International Labour Conference on the occasion of the Centenary of the foundation of the ILO, the oldest organization in the United Nations system.

The inspired idea behind its creation, in the year immediately following the end of the First World War, came from the awareness – made glaringly obvious during the war – that lasting peace could only be achieved through the realization of the basic principles of social justice and the assertion of the right to work and labour law. It now seems particularly far-sighted to have dedicated Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles entirely to social justice and labour, and it is my pleasure to recall that, in 1919, Italy was one of the nine countries that formed the Commission charged with drafting the Constitution of the International Labour Organization.

The mission it was given remains a crucial part of the international agenda, in spite of the great steps forward that have been taken in subsequent decades. It is a very important mission, with objectives that remain valid and can be summed up in the Organization's motto: "*Si vis pacem, cole justitiam*" (if you desire peace, cultivate justice), words with a meaning that is both prescriptive and an antithesis to the violence and war to which they allude.

During its long lifetime, the ILO has withstood numerous tragic events, including the Second World War, and has faced extraordinary challenges, such as the transformations brought on by the rapid pace of globalization.

The credibility of an international organization is constantly measured by the effectiveness of its actions in the face of changes in economic and social life. The challenge for governments today is to achieve the objectives set out in the Constitution in the face of globalization. There cannot – and must not – be any contradiction between the mission and the work that the ILO is doing so commendably, and the standards that are then drawn up by other international organizations and bodies.

In order to be consistent, a social clause must always be included in treaties relating to the future of the planet. Otherwise, not only will the phenomenon of social dumping continue, undermining labour conditions in emerging countries, it will also build recessionary features into the labour markets of countries with mature economies.

What we have seen in recent years bears this out. Remuneration for labour (including the income of self-employed workers) in developed countries has gone from representing 68 per cent of GDP in the mid-1970s, to 58 per cent 30 years later. In addition, while human capital represents 65 per cent of global wealth, in low-income countries it only represents 41 per cent. We are therefore witnessing a drop in the proportion of wages in the wealth created annually.

Although globalization and increases in trading have contributed to a reduction in inequalities between countries, this has not happened to the same extent within those countries.

All this, together with the broad objectives of the Organization and even its “business name”, gives permanent relevance to its mandate and highlights the difficult road that lies ahead for the ILO in affirming its role as the social organization that regulates the process of economic globalization. Its universal vocation, evident since its creation, is to introduce the topic of social justice among countries, not only among social groups. Development has thus become an objective of the Organization, as expressed in the 1969 World Employment Programme and the 2009 Global Jobs Pact, as well as in other documents.

It is timely, on the occasion of the Centenary that we are embarking upon a debate on the future of work. The very rapid and frenetic reorganization of production processes on the basis of global value chains, the impact of innovations, the increasing fragmentation of individual career paths, migratory movements, the ageing of the population in some parts of the world, and persistent youth unemployment, are all disruptive processes that, if they are not managed well, could have unforeseen consequences.

The prevalence of these challenges – which demonstrate the close link between national conditions and international relations – shows us the importance of the decisions that have characterized the direction and work of the ILO over time.

These challenges have been sharply highlighted in a recent study: peace is only possible within a system of social justice; social justice requires a system of cooperation, rather than economic competition; universal peace is based on international cooperation; and lastly, cooperation between all interested parties in the production process is essential. This last point also demonstrates the vital importance of the tripartism that has characterized this Organization since its creation, involving the collaboration of governments, workers’ organizations and employers’ organizations.

Any response to the questions relating to the future of work must be based on the fundamental principles laid down in the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944, a time when the Second World War was drawing to a close with the defeat of Nazi fascism: (a) labour is not a commodity; (b) freedom of expression and of association are essential to social progress; (c) poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere; and (d) the war against want requires to be carried on with unrelenting vigour within each nation.

Many contemporary rights have their origins in the ILO's unflagging efforts to fully protect the dignity of every person, regardless of where they are working and the nature of that work. On the basis of those efforts, we reiterate firmly: No to child labour; No to forced labour; and Yes to gender equality; to the protection of childhood and maternity; to labour security, to social protection, to work as an instrument of freedom and as a way to improve quality of life, to equality in education and in work, and to the free exercise of the right to collective bargaining.

Today's technological revolution, together with the transition from a traditional economy towards an increasingly digital world, is creating new stimulating prospects, as well as unprecedented problems. Therefore, there can be no delay in broadening the necessary skills and knowledge to link economic growth to social growth, and thereby to avoid the negative dynamics that often occur during the transition from one phase to another.

The aspiration for fair conditions of employment is something that unites the destinies of people all over the world. Today, more than 200 million people do not have a job and as many are migrant workers. Almost 1 billion people live below the poverty line. The international community is not unaware of the situation, but efforts to resolve it remain largely insufficient.

The Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143), for example, highlights the need to encourage the transfer of capital and technology, rather than the transfer of workers; emphasizes the need to avoid uncontrolled or unassisted migratory movements, because of their negative social and human consequences; and highlights the need for equality of opportunity and treatment of all workers. A common commitment and struggle should therefore unite the efforts of governmental authorities and social partners, to determine universal criteria and standards, as universal as human rights.

The experience of the ILO exemplifies how multilateralism is the only possible driver of progress for all of humanity, for a true globalization of rights. One hundred years ago, in February 1919, just a few months before the inauguration that we are celebrating here, the first national labour contract was signed in Italy, limiting the work day to eight hours and the working week to 48 hours. The following October, the International Labour Conference, meeting in Washington DC, endorsed the same criteria, giving an international framework to labour legislation and opposing competitiveness in the production of goods and services that was based on worsening labour conditions and cuts to salaries, rather than on innovation. This was a happy convergence of feelings which led to the emergence of the international community's ability to offer real responses to people's concerns.

Access to employment continues to be a condition sine qua non of social inclusion and personal development. The Constitution of Italy, in article 1, establishes labour as the very foundation of the Republic, and holds that people, their dignity, their creative activities, their contribution to the well-being of everyone – including future generations – are the cornerstone of any society. The European Union and the Council of Europe have also defined “second generation” rights.

We all should have the same opportunities for personal fulfilment, regardless of gender, age, social or geographical origin, religious, political, or sexual orientation, and, as far as possible – which is a lot – health conditions.

Recognizing the dedication of the ILO to this endeavour, I should like to reiterate my best wishes to you, Director-General, and to all the staff of the Organization, that you are able to reach the important goals ahead of you. Those wishes come with the appreciation of the Italian people, who are proud to have contributed to the progress of an Organization that – on the basis of its century of experience – works every day to shape our future based on the fundamental principles that, exactly 50 years ago, on the occasion of the award of the

Nobel Peace Prize to the ILO, were justly rechristened as a Magna Carta for all workers. Half a century after that ceremony, we can legitimately affirm the continuing relevance of the inspirational idea behind this Organization: labour is one of the most effective tools for ensuring world peace.

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Nana Akufo-Addo,
President of the Republic of Ghana**

Mr Akufo-Addo
President of the Republic of Ghana

I must, at the outset, say a big thank you to the Director-General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Guy Ryder, and its Governing Body, for the honour of this invitation. The Ghanaian people, the first in sub-Saharan Africa to free themselves from colonial rule, and pacesetters in the development of the principles of democratic accountability, respect for human rights, and the rule of law on the African continent, are truly appreciative and deeply honoured, humbled by the choice of their leader and principal servant by the ILO to be a part of its Centenary celebration, and for the opportunity to deliver this statement.

It is appropriate, on such an occasion, to honour the memory of those who fought the heroic battles that made today's ordinary things possible. It will be lost on many people to learn that lives were lost so, for example, we could have the eight-hour working day being enjoyed in the world, and that it took years of struggle before we could have Saturday as part of the weekend.

For us in Ghana, the role of organized labour, especially during our struggle for freedom and independence from the British colonial power, is written in letters of gold. The historic call for Positive Action in 1950, made by our celebrated leader, Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana, would not have succeeded without the active support of the trade union movement. The likes of Alfred Pobee Biney, Vidal Quist, Anthony Woode, and the other workers' leaders, have secured places in the pantheon of great Ghanaian nationalists, through whose work and sacrifice we inherited the free, independent Ghana we now have. It is equally fitting that we pay glowing tribute to Albert Thomas, Harold Butler, John Winant, Edward Phelan, David Morse, Clarence Wilfred Jenks, Francis Blanchard, Michel Hansenne, and Juan Somavia, predecessor Directors-General of the ILO who, in diverse ways, contributed to shaping this Organization into what it currently is.

And, certainly, I cannot leave out Guy Ryder, who continues to pursue the noble ideals of the ILO. We recall his landmark visit to Ghana in 2015, where he launched our National Employment Policy, and we wish him the very best for the remainder of his tenure as Director-General.

We are here not only to celebrate the achievements of the ILO as the tripartite body that has, over the years, been committed to promoting social justice, decent work, rights of workers, and strengthening workplace dialogue, but also to reiterate our support for the Future of Work Initiative, as captured in this Centenary celebration.

This, for me, is crucial in the face of the *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2019* report, which indicates that some 700 million workers live in extreme or moderate poverty. Out of this number, nearly a third can be found in Africa. The report reveals further, that progress on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which demands that we promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, is not progressing as

expected. Inequality, fragility, high levels of informality, and widespread unemployment, particularly among the youth, continue to militate against the achievement of inclusive, sustainable economic growth. This is not right, and the time has come for the world to find sustainable lasting solutions to these issues.

I came into office two and a half years ago to discover that not only was I, quite appropriately, the nation's chief labourer, but also its chief employer. Why do I say so? We have a large workforce in Ghana, but the majority of people are underemployed, inappropriately employed or unemployed. Indeed, the number of people in what can be described as formal work is a small part of the workforce of our country. The figures suggest that the size of the workforce in our country is about 13 million people, and there are fewer than 2 million people in formal work. Unfortunately, over the years, much of our preoccupation has been with this small group in the formal sector.

Ghana has good human capital, and our economy has great possibilities for accelerated growth and job creation. In recent years, admittedly, our economy has not done so well, and it has not been successful in improving appreciably the living standards of our people. For a country that has an abundance of valuable natural resources, we have no excuse for not being able to use the blessings bestowed on us by the Almighty to bring progress and prosperity to the citizenry.

Recognizing the severity of joblessness in Ghana, upon assumption of office, we have put in place bold, innovative and urgent steps to ameliorate the situation. We have turned our backs on the old economy, which was based on the production and export of raw materials, and we have embarked on establishing a value-added, industrialized economy, supported by heightened agricultural productivity. This is the sure way of creating thousands and thousands of decent, well-paying jobs for the mass of Ghanaians, and lifting them out of poverty.

That is why our first task has been to get our economy, which has been in the doldrums in recent years, working, and also create the atmosphere for entrepreneurs to bring on the jobs. We have chalked up modest successes in this regard, with Ghana's economy projected by the International Monetary Fund to be the fastest growing economy in the world this year. We are now the largest recipient of foreign direct investment in West Africa, we have some of the world's largest companies setting up shop in Ghana, and we have recently become the largest producer of gold in Africa.

We have rolled out the Planting for Food and Jobs programme, which is providing incentives and boosting the incomes of 1 million farmers. The results of this programme have been spectacular. We had a bumper harvest of produce and last year we did not import, unlike in previous years, a single grain of maize. Additionally, the "One-District-One-Factory" and "One-Village-One-Dam" programmes, and the Zongo Development Fund and the Infrastructure for Poverty Eradication Programme, are all being pursued to stimulate job creation opportunities across the country. We have begun to rectify the serious neglect of skills training by modernizing and strengthening technical and vocational education and training institutions. We are also tailoring the curriculum of skills development and job-learning based institutions to current industrial needs, both at the enterprise level and within the job market. Through these areas of commitment, my Government intends to address the long prevailing skills mismatch between the majority of school leavers and industry requirements.

I am happy to inform you that organized labour, acting through the Trades Union Congress and other labour organizations in Ghana, has fully endorsed these policies, and has pledged support to ensure the attainment of the goal of the creation of decent jobs for all Ghanaians, a pledge that I welcome warmly. We are determined to consolidate further the relations with our social partners. On 18 April, the Government, represented by the

Ministries of Finance and Employment and Labour Relations, signed a landmark social partnership agreement with organized labour represented by the Trades Union Congress, and employers represented by the Ghana Employers' Association, in order to provide a medium for building a sense of cohesion, trust, and self-management, and frank and open discussions to champion the cause of development towards realising our vision of a Ghana Beyond Aid.

We are committed to a new social contract that promotes social dialogue in economic management, and in the making of public policy. It is also to assure our workers and businesses that they are the Government's true development partners, and their ideas are critical in my Government's model for economic management and development.

We in Africa have a responsibility to make our countries attractive to our young generation. They should feel they have a worthwhile future if they stay at home and help build their nations. We should be, and are, shamed by the desperation that drives young persons to attempt to cross the Sahara on foot, and the Mediterranean Sea in rickety boats, in the tenuous hope of finding a better future outside Africa. That is why our efforts in Ghana feed into the African Union's Agenda 2063, a strategic framework for inclusive and sustainable development in Africa.

Despite the persistent security challenges in parts of the continent, Africa is clearly doing much better than she was doing some 30 years ago. The African Union's Agenda 2063 presents the continent with the hope and aspiration of economic transformation over the next few decades, based on the full mobilization of Africa's dynamic, youthful population. We are building a stronger, more resilient, united and prosperous Africa, with a well-defined cultural identity. We are embracing people-centred development, relying on the great potential of the African people, driven by democracy, good governance and respect for human rights.

Africa is quickly turning around her fortunes. The aid narrative is being changed to a focus on investment and trade cooperation. With the imminent coming into effect of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), adopted in March 2018, to create the world's largest free-trade area since the formation of the World Trade Organization, Africa is set to maximize its potential. With a market of 1.2 billion people and a combined gross domestic product of US\$2.5 trillion, the CFTA will eliminate high tariffs, generate employment opportunities for a rapidly growing young workforce, and harmonize the work of our regional economic communities. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) projects annual growth of 52.3 per cent in intra-Africa trade, when the AfCFTA becomes operational. The good news is that, with the ratification by the Gambia of the Agreement on 3 April 2019, the Agreement is ready to come into force. Given the substantial progress that our continent is making on many fronts, I stand firmly with those who say that Africa's moment has come.

But to capture fully our ambitions, we must take advantage of the opportunities that the 17 SDGs present. As Co-Chair of the United Nations Secretary-General's Group of eminent personalities for the SDGs, and I am glad to see my Co-Chair, Prime Minister Erna Solberg, in the room with us this afternoon, I believe Africa, in particular, must implement the SDGs with great gusto. We have the capacities, creativity, knowledge, need and resources to lead the world in the implementation of the SDGs, and thereby realize the goal of promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. So, we must be up and doing.

Before I conclude, permit me to recall the relevance of the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia and the pursuit of social justice. As an organization that has successfully delivered on its mandate over the past century, despite the challenges that have confronted it, the issue of equal regional representation in its governance structure in the next phase of its existence should be fully embraced.

The tripartite constituents are eagerly watching and expecting an improvement in the governance structure of this important Organization. African ministers of labour, at their last meeting in Addis Ababa, in Ethiopia, two months ago on 4 April, were of the strong conviction that improving governance of the ILO is synonymous with the effective implementation of the ILO's responsibility in the interests of its constituents. They reiterated and supported the urgent call for making the Governing Body more representative, by providing a means of appointment of its members which takes into account the various geographic, economic and social interests of its constituent groups. It is my expectation that the Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution, 1986, will be given a chance to feature prominently in subsequent discussions during this Centenary celebration.

It is also my hope that the Report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, and subsequent discussions that will take place, will provide us with some answers to navigate the challenges of the world of work in the twenty-first century. Member countries should welcome the countless opportunities that lie ahead to improve the quality of working lives, expand choice, close gender gaps, reverse the damage caused by global inequality and climate change, and, more importantly, also share in the discharge of the responsibilities towards a more sustainable future that guarantees that we leave no one behind.

Once again, I congratulate the ILO on its Centenary celebration, and, hopefully, we will leave the Conference fortified in our belief that we can provide opportunities for all our citizens to fulfil their aspirations.

**Statement by Her Excellency
Ms Erna Solberg,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway**

Ms Solberg
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Norway

Norway was a founding member of this Organization. In 1919, we pledged to work together to promote economic and social advancement to achieve social justice. Over these 100 years, new technology has transformed our lives and our living standards. Life expectancy has gone up. Basic health-care and education are widely available and most people have seen a rise in income. Working together, we have been able to do far more than we could have done alone.

However, new technology, demographics, climate change and globalization are changing the world rapidly and the world of work is also changing dramatically and rapidly. Our job is far from done and many challenges remain. Decent work still needs to be promoted in all parts of the world. Progress can and must be made. When the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the ILO in 1969, the Nobel Committee referred to the ILO's founding principle: "If you desire peace, cultivate justice." As we mark this Centenary, it is worth recalling what inspired these words and why they remain relevant.

For 100 years, the ILO has been a champion of active tripartite cooperation, binding international regulations, worker rights and equal conditions for competition and social justice. The term "decent work for all" was coined by the ILO. This concept is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 8. Decent work is a major goal in itself, but it is also crucial for a social, sustainable world economy.

Norway's labour market is globalized. We benefit greatly from the migration of skilled workers and free movement of people in Europe, as do most European countries; it has advanced our economy. At the same time, we have seen that large labour migration can put pressure on our labour market, on wages and social benefits. We have also seen an increase

in work-related crime, which we cannot accept. Nobody wants a race to the bottom when it comes to working standards or wages. This could, in turn, lead to increased nationalism, protectionism and populism; it is a challenge for all European countries, and we must take these concerns seriously. We are now increasing our cooperation to enforce the existing rules. My Government is committed to combating crime in the European labour market in close cooperation with the EU and EU Member States. Labour inspection authorities in different countries work together on concrete cases. They share information, learn from each other and fight the unfair and sometimes criminal practices that can be found in the European labour market together.

There is also a wider global dimension to this, reinforced by global migration flows. Illegal migrant workers are at higher risk of being exploited. They risk being absorbed into black market economies where they have few rights and opportunities. We cannot accept exploitation and the creation of shadow economies. We therefore need to have closer cooperation on the return of nationals who do not qualify for residency, asylum or protection.

Norway has a long history of constructive relations between the social partners. We believe in tripartism. We believe it can help to ensure that our globalized economy is geared towards human-centred growth and development, as the Global Commission on the Future of Work underlines. We also consider close cooperation between the Government and the social partners to be a competitive advantage. This helps to create stable conditions in the labour market and contributes to economic growth. We have therefore given high priority to the promotion of social dialogue, based on our experience, in our international work.

Norway provides among the highest levels of aid, both as a percentage of our gross national income and per capita. A generous aid budget allows us to develop strategic partnerships and support global efforts to reach the SDGs. There is a broad political agreement across party lines that financing for development is a key challenge. The 2030 Agenda is guiding Norway's domestic, foreign and international development policies, and I am very encouraged to see that the actors in the labour market, both at home and here in the ILO, recognize the instrumental value of the SDGs. The forthcoming UN high-level political forum on sustainable development will be an important opportunity to take stock of achievements in relation to SDG 8 so far. It should also help us to set our priorities for further action.

With an estimated 40 million people living in slavery today, modern slavery is one of the biggest challenges to global human rights. Modern slavery exists in all countries and in all layers of society. We are all involved in terms of the clothes we wear, the mobile phone we use or the fish we eat. We are all responsible for addressing and eliminating slavery wherever it occurs. A responsible private sector is part of the solution. Both Government and the private sector must take responsibility. I would especially like to thank Prime Minister Theresa May for her tireless efforts to combat modern slavery. The ILO continues to be an important normative actor and is a pioneer in the fight against modern slavery. Binding international standards are crucial. These must be protected and strengthened. Norway is intensifying its fight against modern slavery; in these efforts, we want to join forces with other engaged partners. I am therefore pleased to announce that Norway would like to join Alliance 8.7.

Women make up almost half of the world's working-age population, but only 50 per cent of women participate in the labour force compared with 80 per cent of men. Gender equality and women's participation in working life are important factors for economic growth and a society that functions well. When women do not participate in the labour market, society loses out on labour, tax revenue and valuable purchasing power. Including women makes a wider skillset available. Efforts such as those to promote the SDGs and gender equality are therefore closely linked to both the work of the ILO and to work on SDG 8. We must facilitate women's participation. In Norway, public investment in

infrastructure, social protection and public care services has been key to narrowing the gender gap in the labour market. Enabling women to return to work after having children makes it possible for both men and women to contribute. Maternity, paternity and parental leave are now the norm. Public childcare services are widely available, which makes an enormous difference. Promoting women's participation in the labour force has been a major factor in wealth creation in Norway. Did you know that the first female delegate to the International Labour Conference was a Norwegian? Betzy Kjelsberg was a labour inspector, who represented the Norwegian Government from 1923 to 1935. The Nordic countries are leaders in gender equality, but we still have work to do in closing the gender pay gap.

While violence and harassment in the world of work can affect all workers, it has a significant gender dimension. Therefore, Norway fully supports the decision to give priority to this topic in this year's International Labour Conference and we support the work to put in place a global framework to combat this serious problem. This is a serious problem that must be fought both at the national and at the international level; a new ILO Convention will contribute to this aim.

Education plays a vital role in increasing access to the labour market and in enhancing national development and growth. Education is one of the top priorities in Norway's development policy. Greater investment is needed if we are to achieve quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all. We must do more to meet the educational needs of all children, including those who are hardest to reach. This ambition is at the heart of our commitment to leave no one behind. Vocational training is important to meet the challenges of large youth cohorts. Young people need relevant skills in order to enter the labour market. Vocational training is also important for addressing the skills mismatch; there is increasing recognition that developing good apprenticeship systems is a key element to tackling the youth unemployment crisis.

We are committed to continuing our support for the ILO's skills programme. The skills that we learn when we are young will not last for the whole of our working lives. Education and work have to be better coordinated in order to ensure a process of lifelong learning. More jobs will need to be created and more people will need to develop the skills to find them. Norway supports a human-centred approach. Through social dialogue, we must identify which skills are needed for the future. In Norway, we have set up a tripartite committee on skills needs, and the Government has launched a reform to promote lifelong learning. One of our main objectives is to establish more flexible models for further education and to increase tripartite cooperation on qualifications.

The ILO is a valued member of the UN family and is unique in its tripartite structure. The ILO is also part of a broader multilateral architecture. The multilateral organizations play an important role in facilitating cooperation between States. If we are to solve the greatest challenges of our time, we will need more, not less, international cooperation. The multilateral system is under pressure. Isolationism and protectionism are trends that challenge the rules-based world order. This challenge constitutes a serious threat to our prosperity and welfare. The multilateral system is necessary, and we must do everything we can to strengthen its effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. We need a strong UN that is fit for purpose, but in order to achieve this, member States need to engage and ensure that the reforms agreed upon are implemented.

The Secretary-General's emphasis on economic development is important. It provides an opportunity to advance the Decent Work Agenda in the UN system and beyond. Norway is a consistent partner to the UN, a staunch supporter of a rules-based order. This month we are presenting a white paper on the role of Norway and its interest in the multilateral system. We are also stepping up our efforts to strengthen international cooperation.

This is the time to come together to defend all that we have built up during the past 100 years. The ILO has a long and proud history of standing up for social justice and advancing the welfare of workers worldwide. But it is not the time to rest on our laurels. As the ILO enters its second century, we must ensure a strong, modern and effective ILO, where tripartism and social dialogue form the basis of policies that promote decent work for all and long-term sustainable development. We must ensure that the ILO can guide States on how to adapt to rapid transformations in production and the labour market, that it continues to develop, monitor and enforce binding international rules in the world of work, and that it continues to play an active role in the multilateral system, promoting a human-centred approach to labour in all policy areas including trade, financial, economic, social and environmental policies. It is our responsibility to decide the direction that we take from here. The future depends on the choices we make now. Norway's commitment to equality and social justice remains firm and we will continue to seek common solutions to the challenges we face in our common future.

I think we have a lot of work to do also over the next 100 years.

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli,
Prime Minister of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Nepal**

Mr Sharma Oli
Prime Minister of the Federal
Democratic Republic of Nepal

We are gathered here today, on this historic occasion, to mark the Centenary of the Organization that pioneered the most ambitious social contract in the history of humankind; to mark the Centenary of the vision and aspiration for a just, humane and equitable world; and to lay an equally enduring foundation for the future. This Centenary celebration of the International Labour Organization is a celebration of the rights of the toiling masses to social justice through social dialogue. I extend warm congratulations to the ILO fraternity on this historic occasion. I feel deeply honoured to be part of this momentous occasion, and thank the Director-General for the invitation. I have brought greetings and best wishes from the land of Sagarmatha, Mount Everest, and Lumbini, the birthplace of Buddha and the fountain of Buddhism, for the success of this Conference.

The ILO Constitution was framed in the ashes of the First World War. It reflected the collective desire and commitment of humanity to peace through social dialogue. It was a testimony that relations of production can be transformed through dialogue. The core principles that the ILO advanced, such as equal pay for work of equal value, freedom of association, working hours, an adequate living wage, work-life balance, and social protection, are its unique contributions to human civilization. These are not ordinary achievements. The ILO is a trendsetter of the future.

I would like to mention here two landmark initiatives of the last decade of the twentieth century: the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998, and the Decent Work Agenda, launched in 1999. The Report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, *Work for a brighter future*, provides a sound basis for our deliberations. I believe the Report will set a discourse for another quarter of a century.

The development of technology, shifting demography, migration and change in the organization of work, are creating new paths to prosperity. On the other hand, they are disrupting existing work arrangements. Technology has replaced traditional jobs,

transformed the way we work, and created more innovative workplaces. Artificial intelligence, automation, robotics, the Internet, 3D printing and blockchain are bringing profound changes in the way we imagine work. The gig economy is providing millions of people with the opportunity to work remotely. However, every change comes with new opportunities and challenges. This provides an opportunity to ensure that our destiny remains at human command, but not at the command of technology; an opportunity to hand over a liveable planet to posterity; and an opportunity to create a win-win situation through demographic dividend to supplement where human capital is in short supply.

In managing the changes, we must keep humans at the centre. Investing in people's capabilities, promoting entrepreneurship and creating decent jobs, are critical to coping with change. We must ensure gender equality, strengthen social protection, respect social dialogue, and guarantee rights at work. As climate change is increasing the demand for green jobs, climate actions will be most effective if they begin in the world of work. Green jobs will be the stepping-stones towards a green economy. Adequate wages and time sovereignty go hand in hand. That is the sign of prosperity and well-being of all workers. Labour is not a commodity. The ILO has a role to play to ensure that the core principles of the Declaration of Philadelphia are upheld at all times. Persistent youth unemployment breeds political instability and engenders poverty. We must end this situation.

Nepal is endowed with vast natural resources, as well as a rich demographic dividend. This makes the future of work in Nepal highly promising. We have adopted firm legal and policy reforms to address the dynamic international labour environment. We have transposed into our domestic law the provisions of the fundamental ILO instruments to which we are a party. Our laws do not discriminate against workers on the basis of their status, regular or irregular, outsourced or contractual, and those coming from the organized or informal sectors. We have redefined the notion of lifelong jobs by social protection for all workers, irrespective of the nature of their jobs, ensured fair balance between flexibility and social security, and legally ended the dichotomy of the formal versus the informal sector. In this way, we have successfully concluded the process of formalizing the informal sector.

Nepal's democratic Constitution is founded on the ideals of equality, non-discrimination and social justice. Democracy without economic rights and social justice remains incomplete. Our conception of democracy goes beyond the formalities such as formation of a political party, participation in the electoral process, or enjoyment of freedom of expression. Ours is a comprehensive democracy that empowers the individual in all dimensions: political, economic, social and cultural. Our Constitution embodies social justice, the right against exploitation, the right to work, remuneration and social security, as well as the right to trade union membership and collective bargaining. The rights to education, healthcare, food, housing, culture and language, are guaranteed as fundamental rights of our people.

We have enacted a number of implementing laws to enforce fundamental rights, including those related to the world of work. The entire life of an individual is covered by the social security system. In childhood and old age, the State provides universal social security, and active workers are protected through contribution-based social security. This provision has been incorporated in the Social Security Act. In November last year, we launched a comprehensive social security scheme for working people. This, the largest ever social security undertaking in Nepal, is being implemented through contributions from both workers and employers, and covers benefits such as unemployment, maternity, sickness, old age, accident, dependent family members and disability. For the past 25 years, Nepal has been providing an old age pension to senior citizens, and monthly allowances to single women and those coming from the most marginalized sectors of our society. There has been a gradual increase in the amount and coverage of this critical cash handout.

In February this year, we launched another employment-based social security scheme under the Prime Minister Employment Programme. This flagship programme aims to create jobs, guarantees employment to every working-age citizen, provides allowances in case of unemployment, promotes innovation and entrepreneurship, and supports skilling, reskilling and upskilling. To change the production relations, we have introduced new sets of labour laws that safeguard dignity of work, guarantee equal pay for work of equal value, and ensure flexibility in the world of work. The Trade Union Act protects the collective rights of our workers, in line with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

Inclusion remains the basic tenet of our polity. Special measures are in place to ensure inclusion of all sections of our society in state organs. One third representation of women is guaranteed in the Federal Parliament of Nepal and in provincial assemblies. Elections in 2017 have resulted in over 41 per cent representation of women in elected bodies.

Enterprises are the drivers of modern economies in which jobs are provided and ILO standards are implemented. Our actions should support them to grow, create more jobs, and sustain the economy. By jobs, we mean the development of entrepreneurship, enterprises, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), start-ups and self-employment. Decent jobs for our youths and social security for all are key to addressing the jobs deficit. Migrant workers are often vulnerable to high recruitment costs, contract substitution, unsafe and unsecured working conditions, and non-compliance of terms of employment. Since Nepal is a country of origin, as well as destination, we consider that the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in December last year, provides the framework for cooperation. Our role in the ILO Governing Body and the United Nations Human Rights Council is informed by the basic premise of the Global Compact to make labour migration safe, orderly and beneficial to all.

We have created an institutional framework for social dialogue at the federal, provincial, local and enterprise levels. Through our common platform of the Joint Trade Union Coordination Centre, (JTUCC) Nepal practises a unique example of unity in diversity with respect to trade unions. This distinct workers' forum represents all working people in Nepal, enabling them to engage in social dialogue, and promoting their interest in a spirit of solidarity and harmonious labour relations. The presence of the tripartite forum at the centre has resulted in improved labour relations that have reduced labour disputes almost to zero. The Government ensures employers' compliance through a labour audit that provides an opportunity for reflection, self-assessment and improvement. Labour inspection and inspection of occupational safety and health are an integral part of the labour audit. The world of work in Nepal has voluntarily developed a social contract to implement rights-related issues and engage in collective agreements to safeguard the interests of workers.

Nepal's own democratic struggles drew significant inspiration from the work of the ILO, as many of our trade union leaders were the torchbearers of resistance against autocracy and pioneers of the democratic movement. Over five decades of my public life, I have fought for equality and social justice for our people. The Government, under my leadership, is focused on realizing the national expression of "Prosperous Nepal, happy Nepali". For prosperity, we need skilled labour. This helps to foster prosperity, which should lead to happiness. In this context, we define it as "Skilled workers, prosperous Nepal, a happy Nepali", to underpin our agenda for decent work, decent wages and a decent workplace.

We intend to end all forms of deprivation and exploitation, ensure equitable development and establish a socialism-oriented state, as envisioned by our Constitution. We aim to end the worst forms of child labour by 2022 and all forms of child labour by 2025. We are committed to meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) before 2030,

including SDG 8 in all its dimensions. With this objective in mind, Nepal joined Alliance 8.7 as a pathfinder country.

To conclude 100 years on, the words in the preamble of the ILO Constitution, which call for the reaffirmation of social justice and lasting peace, continue to resonate in this assembly hall. We must meet the “moral minimum” and move forward to address the more pressing issues of our time. Today is the time to uphold the ILO’s founding ideals and demonstrate that they continue to be relevant in furthering the value of human worth, equality, social justice and a sustainable future. Let us deliberate on how the ILO can secure its own future and the future of its tripartite constituents. I am confident the outcome document of this Centenary event adequately reflects on this important aspect of the Organization.

Tribute by Mr Guy Ryder to the memory of Nelson Mandela, distinguished guest at the 77th Session of the International Labour Conference

(A short [video](#) about former President Nelson Mandela and the ILO is shown.)

Mr Ryder

Director-General of the International Labour Office
and Secretary-General of the Conference

I take the floor to note the remarkable historical circumstance that the Centenary of the International Labour Organization coincides almost exactly with the centenary of the birth of Nelson Mandela, which is worth pausing to reflect upon. The video you just saw came from the 77th Session of the International Labour Conference in 1990, which was an extraordinary occasion: the Berlin Wall had just come down; the democratically elected Prime Minister of Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, came to the Conference, accompanied by a Worker delegate called Lech Wałęsa. And then of course, as we have just seen, there was Nelson Mandela, on his first visit to Europe as a free leader.

Already at that time, Nelson Mandela and Cyril Ramaphosa formed something of a double act – Mandela harnessing the conscience of the world to have freedom and dignity conquer apartheid, Cyril Ramaphosa building the trade unions into a formidable force for social justice. They brought together the forces of civil society – the employers and the trade unions – and finally changed South Africa.

The South African Government had in fact walked out of the ILO in 1964, but subsequently, at the request of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), the ILO sent a Fact-Finding and Conciliation Commission on Freedom of Association to South Africa in 1992. Trade unions and employers in South Africa continued to draw on the tripartite support of the ILO. For three decades, the International Labour Conference pursued and implemented its Declaration and Programme of Action against Apartheid.

In his speech from this rostrum in 1990, Nelson Mandela observed that: “History will surely recall that there are very few other issues which united humanity as much as did the opposition of the nations to the apartheid crime against humanity.” He invited us – as we just heard – to walk the last mile together, and we did that.

Seventeen years after that, in 2007, Nelson Mandela accepted the first ILO Decent Work Research Prize. He had already retired from the presidency of South Africa. In a message to the Conference, he called for “still more effective social dialogue and consultation in all areas of policy”. He reminded us that “decent work is about the right not

only to survive but to prosper and to have a dignified and fulfilling quality of life”, and it should be available to all human beings.

I think these are messages that serve us well as we look to the future of work and the future of the ILO, and I thank you for giving me the chance to say these few words.

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Cyril Ramaphosa,
President of the Republic of South Africa**

Mr Ramaphosa
President of the Republic of South Africa

It is indeed a great honour and a privilege to address this session of the International Labour Conference this year, as the ILO celebrates its Centenary. It is in fact a double honour, as I stand here 29 years almost to the date after Nelson Mandela stood before this august body. That was four years before he became the democratically elected President of South Africa. The ILO, as he asked you to do, supported our struggle over the following four years, and with your help as the ILO, we did indeed win our freedom. And today I stand here, 25 years later, to say thank you once again to the ILO for having supported our struggle. Thank you very much.

This is an occasion to reflect on the profound impact that the ILO has had on the world of work and also on the lives of workers around the world in the last 100 years. For South Africans, the ILO has played a particularly important role in giving form and substance to the labour market dispensation that we have today. Throughout our struggle for democracy, for justice and for workers’ rights, the ILO has been a constant source of practical support. It has also been a source of encouragement and guidance.

Earlier this month, the principle of social justice, which was one of the founding principles of the ILO, was very well demonstrated in our South African courts when lawyers representing mineworkers and five mining companies appeared side by side, asking the court to approve a multibillion-dollar settlement for mineworkers who had contracted illnesses such as silicosis and tuberculosis while working in the mines. This case has dramatic and far-reaching implications for the way workers’ dignity, their well-being, and their health and safety are treated in our country. It is, in many ways, a victory for social justice and brings redress for one of the most vulnerable groups of workers in not just our country but around the developing world. Mineworkers around the world work under extremely dangerous and difficult conditions, as many of us will know, and they are often exploited and denied adequate benefits. This settlement is a real demonstration of social justice, which is what the ILO stands for. But it is also – together with the class action that preceded it – unique in our history, providing compensation for dangerous work situations that workers have been exposed to as far back as 1965.

It is for workers like these, for the protection and promotion of their rights, that the ILO was formed 100 years ago by a group of visionary men and women. This laid the foundation for a new world of social justice where governments, employers and workers can work together and strive together in pursuit of a common goal. When the ILO was formed, we had a vastly different world. The world was emerging from the ravages of war, but the challenges that it faced then are similar to those that it continues to face today. Now the world must confront the question of how to enhance the rights of workers in the face of rapid industrialization, climate change and technological change, and in addressing this question – which poses what I would see as both a challenge and an opportunity – the ILO has been a standard-bearer over the past 100 years.

It is in fulfilment of its founding purpose that the ILO established the Global Commission on the Future of Work. It has been my singular privilege and honour to co-chair the Global Commission with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden. This is an inspired initiative that places the ILO at the centre of global efforts to shape the world of work in a tomorrow that is constantly changing and marked by uncertainty. The work undertaken, the insights that were shared and the recommendations put forward will be of immense benefit for many countries and for my own country, South Africa, as we grapple with the challenges of change. It also provides guidance on how best to embrace the opportunities that this change presents to all of us and to all countries, as well as to all working people, around the world.

Comprising leading global figures from business, trade unions, think tanks, governments and non-governmental organizations, the Commission took the view that rapid and unprecedented change in the world of work required what is characterized as a human-centred response: human beings must be at the centre of all the solutions that we come up with to address the challenges. The Commission recognized that both the workforce and the workplace are being rapidly transformed by the technological advances that are underpinned by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, as the growth of artificial intelligence, automation and robotics threatens jobs.

Unemployment and working poverty have trapped hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Young people and women are at the bottom of most, if not all, socio-economic indicators. The change in work processes is leading to an increase in the casualization of labour in many countries around the world.

The principle of equal pay for work of equal value, especially between men and women, has still not been realized in many parts of the world, calling into question our collective commitment to gender equality and justice. Whether it is an underpaid worker in a garment factory, a taxi driver who has been made redundant by the spread of online platforms or even a female football player in a national team demanding the same pay and benefits as her male counterparts: there is a common experience. Yet we know that the changing world of work also presents new and exciting opportunities. If we are to harness these changes for our benefit, rather than be shaped by them, we do need to come up with a new approach.

That is why the Global Commission on the Future of Work has said that we need to focus on three key areas: first, we must invest in the capabilities of people; second, we must invest in the institutions of the world of work; and third, we need to invest in decent and sustainable work. This approach is essential if we are to achieve what I would call a reinvigorated social contract that encompasses all factors that are fundamental for human development, including rights, access and opportunities.

The Commission proposes formal recognition of a universal commitment as well as entitlement to lifelong learning – what I would call a right that all of us should have to lifelong learning. Employees should be provided with suitable opportunities to acquire skills, to reskill and to upskill. We propose a reallocation of public spending to encourage universal, lifelong social protection, funded through contributory social protection schemes.

The Commission calls for growing investment in the institutions of work, systems and regulations. Now, there is also a proposal being put forward for a universal labour guarantee that recognizes and protects the fundamental rights of working people, such as freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining and freedom from forced and child labour. It seeks to offer protection to all workers with a view to building labour market institutions appropriate for the world of work in the twenty-first century. It should include provisions to ensure an adequate living wage, limits on hours of work, and safety and health at work, as well as provisions giving workers greater control over their time.

The word “guarantee” may well cause some discomfort among some employer groups. I would say that rather than see this as an issue where the parties to this contract diverge, we should see this as an opportunity to reach accommodation with one another because this is the hallmark of what the ILO has always been about over a 100-year period: a place where Employers, Workers and Governments have always found a way of reaching agreement even over the most difficult and intractable problems.

The third pillar of a human-centred agenda is investment in decent and sustainable work. Targeted private and public sector investment, coupled with the right technology, can create millions of new decent and sustainable jobs in the green economy, in the care economy, in infrastructure development and in rural areas, among others. As countries of Africa, we are particularly determined to ensure that this investment focuses on the creation of economic opportunities for young people.

We are, as Africans, a continent that has a huge youth dividend. Many of the young people on our continent are unemployed and lack the critical skills demanded by the workplaces of both the present and the future. In South Africa, we are mobilizing employers around programmes that can provide work experience opportunities to young people on a massive scale. We have called on our major companies to put in place practical measures to close the divide between the world of learning and the world of work. Many employers are joining this process and are finding great benefits, as, by participating in this process, they are able to find talented and well educated young people to join their companies.

The final recommendation of the Commission involves reshaping the incentive structures that guide business activity to encourage long-term, responsible investment in the real economy. We need measures of economic and social progress that are broader than just GDP growth. These measures should capture environmental impact, unpaid work, equality and other aspects of human well-being. We also recommend changes in corporate governance and conduct to make companies more accountable and to ensure that there is greater representation of stakeholders. It is our hope that this Conference will consider and adopt this human-centred agenda that the Commission worked on for so many months, not only to guide our tripartite interaction but also to confirm our renewed commitment to our social contract.

For the ILO to continue with its valuable work, we need to reaffirm our commitment to multilateralism. Although the ILO retains its unique character within the United Nations system as the only organization that has governments, business and trade unions as equal partners, the global multilateral framework remains very fragile at the moment. The prospect of a looming trade war and other disagreements seem to signal greater global tension and polarization. If we are to remain a trusted and credible vehicle through which social justice will be achieved, organizational unity and cohesion, as part of the multilateral system, are paramount. We must continue to reform the governance of the ILO itself so that it promotes inclusivity, fairness and equality as well. As we collectively strive to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, particularly Goal 8 on decent work and economic growth, we look to the ILO for leadership, and this Conference should be able to provide that leadership.

Despite our current global challenges, workers today enjoy improved working conditions, including better wages, unemployment insurance and other benefits. The progress that has been made is the result of a deliberate and conscious recognition that decent employment is intricately linked to peace, prosperity and progress in the world. Looking into the future, we must renew our commitment to the fundamental rights of workers. Let us be reminded that before us, behind us, above us, beneath us and all around us, social justice – which was a key pillar that the founding fathers and mothers of the ILO a century ago recognized and embraced – remains a central aspiration for all the workers of the world, who are yearning for a better future. Let us seize all the opportunities brought about by the

changes in the world of work to deliver greater economic security, equal opportunities and social justice.

When Nelson Mandela stood here, nearly 29 years ago, he said, “I think we are safe in assuming that the ILO will not fail us”. Today, we can declare with confidence that this is a sentiment that is shared by billions of people around the world. They look to the ILO as that august body that will not fail them. Let us therefore work together to strengthen this important Organization and ensure that it continues to fulfil the purpose for which it was established 100 years ago.

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Stefan Löfven,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden**

Mr Löfven
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Sweden

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, my dear friends, it is truly an honour to be here today, not only because of the Centenary but also because of the importance of this Organization.

“The sated day is never first. The best day is a day of thirst.

Yes, there is goal and meaning in our path – but it’s the way that is the labour’s worth.

The best goal is a night-long rest, fire lit and bread broken in haste.

In places where one sleeps but once, sleep is secure, dreams full of songs.”

This was written by the Swedish poet Karin Boye in the 1920s, when the ILO was taking its first tentative steps. I have chosen to start with these words because what we are really celebrating today is not an organization, a Convention, or a date. No, what we are celebrating is a movement, a movement forwards and upwards, from the misery of First World War trenches, of factories and fields, of hunger and squalor. It is a movement that has encountered setbacks, new wars, catastrophes, but has never stopped, always finding new energy and new solutions. It is a movement that is summed up and symbolized by the three letters, I, L, O. It is a movement now marching towards the future. Because we know that “The sated day is never first. The best day is a day of thirst.”

We gather here today with stories from our different countries about what has been achieved and what is still to be done, and I would like to mention two Swedish women, Kerstin Hesselgren and Ingegerd Friberg. Kerstin Hesselgren was born into a wealthy family in the second half of the nineteenth century. Her father was a doctor. She was educated by a governess at home, and then at a school here in Switzerland. Ingegerd Friberg, on the other hand, was born into harsher conditions. Her parents struggled. They could not afford to buy the farm they leased, and they even considered emigrating for a better life. These two women did not know each other, they probably never met, but Kerstin used her privilege and her education to work towards improving the conditions of thousands of workers in Sweden. She became Sweden’s first female factory inspector in 1912, and she came to the first International Labour Conference in 1919 to change the course of the world, together with representatives from many of your countries. As for Ingegerd, she started working at 16, helping out at a hospital, and continued as a maid, a night watch, a newspaper carrier and a factory worker. And when she was almost 90 years old she was interviewed by her daughter and spoke about the changes she had seen over her lifetime. About the more dignified life she was able to lead, about the decent pension she could now live on, and, most important, about her four children and how they could now live the kind of life that would never have

seemed possible to her as a child, and which now was the greatest joy of her life. Just think, she could also dream, as Karin Boye wrote, “Dreams full of songs”.

What Ingegerd and Kerstin’s fate symbolizes is the cooperation that I believe lies at the very heart of this movement. We all come from different backgrounds, different walks of life. We have different values, different opinions. But if we come together, if we make an effort, we can find shared goals and shared dreams. I so strongly believe in this, because it played out in my own life. I was not born into wealth. I grew up as a foster child in a working class family. I began work as a welder. When I later became a trade union leader, the people across the negotiating table had a different education, different values, different lives. Yet, when we sat down, when we talked with honesty and respectfully decided to agree, we could, despite our different starting points, find a shared goal, shared meaning. And this is why I also started the Global Deal, in cooperation with the ILO, in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to promote social dialogue globally, an initiative I urge all of you to join, if you have not already done so.

I have seen what social dialogue between workers, employers and governments can achieve, both on relatively small issues to help improve working conditions for me and my co-workers, but also for the company that we worked for and for the society we lived in. Also, from a bigger perspective, I have seen how it transformed the country that I represent here today from a poor one at the outskirts of Europe to a rich one at the cutting edge of the global economy, because social dialogue and tripartite collaboration can achieve the rare phenomenon of a solution where everyone wins. Workers win, by gaining influence, improved working conditions, higher wages and better opportunities for education and social welfare. Companies win, through a constructive working atmosphere, an openness to change, respect for their right to lead the company, increased productivity and stronger consumers. Society wins, through inclusive growth and social stability. It is a win, win, win situation, “the way that is the labour’s worth”. And it is a fantastic force, one that has driven the ILO’s work for a century.

Where should we target this force today? What direction should our movement take? For my part, I reverted to a Swedish economist who was a professor and contemporary of Ingegerd Friberg, and also to the birth of the ILO. This man’s name was Gösta Rehn, and, just like Ingegerd, he comes from a small village in Sweden, but he had the opportunity to work at the OECD in Paris and the University of California at Berkeley. He saw the difference between, on the one hand, the “safety of the shell” which shields from external dangers and, on the other hand, the “safety of the wings” which helps to reach a better and safer place. He pointed out that true safety did not come about from futile attempts to protect all jobs in a new economy, but by making sure workers could reach new and better heights. He understood the importance of being able to move towards something better: “In places where one sleeps but once, sleep is secure.”

In recent times, I have had the great privilege of cooperating with the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, and together we have had the great privilege of gathering a group of global labour market experts on behalf of this Organization to analyse the future of work. Our goal was to describe how we could best shape the future labour market in light of the major upheavals that the world is facing. And when we saw these experts’ analysis of the latest research, findings and reports, I felt how Gösta Rehn must have smiled up there in his heaven. Because their final report contained nothing more, nothing less, than a version of the “safety of wings” for the twenty-first century.

You are all, of course, aware of the upheavals that are defining our time: climate change and the AI revolution. What do they have in common? Well, they will both require our societies to react with strength by quickly retraining entire professional areas, in which key work assignments are being automated for almost everyone, from lorry drivers to salary administrators, and by quickly making entire sectors of the economy sustainable, as we in

Sweden are now doing with our steel industry, where we aim to be able to produce steel without using coal. All this must be done in a way that does not hamper the economy or put large groups of people out of work. If we do not succeed, we will never manage to hold our societies together. We will not manage to have economies that are strong enough to meet the third major challenge, namely an ageing population. There will be very little time for this change. It will require trust and cooperation between workers, business owners and society, and it will require everyone to dare to try again, to try something new, to perhaps find new abilities they did not know they had. To feel a “day of thirst” for something new, something novel.

So what we propose is an agenda that focuses on the development of women and men and their ability to acquire new skills, to reskill, to upskill. An agenda that creates institutions which help people cope with more job changes during their lifetime. An agenda that supports investment in decent jobs, developing the rural economy in ways that foster prosperity, sustainability and equality. An agenda that creates social safety nets, based on solidarity and sharing risks, and launches a universal labour guarantee, giving fundamental rights to all workers all over the world regardless of their contractual arrangements or employment status. Because it is only when we feel secure that we dare to spread our wings.

Now, let me also mention something in particular. Kerstin Hesselgren’s story did not end at the first International Labour Conference. When she returned to Sweden, she became the first woman ever to be elected to the First Chamber of the Swedish Parliament in 1921. The then speaker had a hard time adjusting to her presence, and for several years he continued to address the chamber by saying “gentlemen”. Once, at a service to mark the opening of the parliamentary session, Kerstin was stopped outside the church by a police officer who said, “No women here”. This seems comical now, but at how many workplaces, in how many leadership positions, do women still hear, “No women here”? How many times in their working lives do they have poorer working conditions than men, lower wages, and are overlooked and ignored, just as Kerstin was when the speaker said “gentlemen”. Now, therefore, our agenda is one that also clearly empowers women, promotes the sharing of unpaid care work at home, eliminates violence and harassment at work and in all other places, ensures equal pay and equal opportunities, and strengthens women’s voice and leadership. This is because, friends, when we talk about the “safety of wings”, we mean the “safety of wings” for everyone.

So, lastly, what force will implement this agenda? How will it be possible? You know the answer. It is through the force that has formed the basis of my own life, my country’s success and the ILO’s 100 years of progress. It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the close cooperation of workers, employers and governments. Cooperation between the social partners is like a bottle of fine wine. You pick it up, you think it looks old and mouldy, but on closer inspection you find that it is better than ever.

So, friends, let us now look ahead to a new century. We must continue to seek energy from pioneers like Kerstin, from workers like Ingegerd who want a better life, whether they are from the forests of Sweden, the textile mills of Bangladesh, the farms of Mozambique, or the bauxite mines of Suriname. Together we need to give each other the “safety of wings” in a time of upheaval. It is, indeed, an enormous task, and therefore I give you the closing line of Karin Boye’s poem: “Strike camp, strike camp! The new day shows its light. Our great adventure has no end in sight.”

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Fuat Oktay,
Vice-President of the Republic of Turkey**

Mr Oktay
Vice-President of the Republic of Turkey

I am honoured to address the Conference on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the ILO's establishment. It is my sincere hope that this Conference will contribute to the welfare of people around the world. I congratulate the ILO – which has sustained its functionality and efficiency for 100 years – for its successful activities and efforts. Turkey attaches great importance to the ILO Centenary year events and the thematic discussions on the future of work. We have therefore made active and substantive contributions to the ongoing discussions.

The Tenth European Regional Meeting was held in Istanbul in 2017. During the meeting, we discussed extensively how to shape a future of decent work in Europe and Central Asia. Very recently, we also got together to discuss these key issues with all stakeholders at Turkey's Labour Assembly, held in Istanbul, with the participation of Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder. We strongly believe that international organizations that function in a way that is effective and results-oriented are of benefit to everyone at the global level, by helping to achieve and maintain social justice and peace.

Last year, in 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. It is a fact that there have been many radical developments and crises around the world since the foundation of the ILO in 1919. The ILO's achievement in healing the wounds of two world wars, addressing together with all stakeholders the social tensions generated by economic and social hardships and sustaining better working conditions with the key principle of building consensus through negotiation are the milestones in its successful history. Our view is that the ILO has proven its relevance by not only establishing social peace, but also in contributing to international peace. This background makes the ILO all the more relevant and well placed to play an important role in the next century too.

Cooperation between Turkey and the ILO commenced at a very early stage, in 1927, just after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. This cooperation has had a significant impact on our foreign relations and on the structuring of the world of work, institutions and customs in Turkey. Today, our cooperation with the ILO in respect of all aspects of work – from youth employment to women's employment, and from preventing unregistered employment to the integration of refugees to working life – continues.

The unemployment of young people, ageing societies and the sustainability of social security systems are great challenges for us. Technological, demographic, economic and social developments are matters of concern to societies for the future. Change is an inevitable reality but it also poses challenges. Today, our people are expressing these concerns and asking us to find effective solutions. As decision makers, we have to find solutions to ensure the peace and stability of our countries and regions. Our primary responsibility is to take the necessary steps and measures to overcome these concerns while taking all aspects of change into consideration.

In this regard, it is obvious that demographic change, including the local, regional and international movement of people and migration, will be a considerable challenge for the global agenda in the future, as it is today. The experiences of countries with ageing populations and outstanding numbers of migrants clearly demonstrate that enormous challenge.

The tragedy in the Syrian Arab Republic, which started in March 2011 and eventually turned into a civil war, should not be overlooked. The Syrian conflict is in its eighth year. Today, we are encountering a situation of migration on the largest scale, involving a quarter of a billion refugees since the end of the Second World War. Turkey has opened its doors to more than 4 million Syrians, who have fled from violence, terror, civil war and oppression. We have not hesitated to share our limited resources with our Syrian guests, to provide them with accommodation, food, education and employment opportunities. So far, our total assistance in financial terms to those who are in temporary protection in Turkey amounts to more than US\$37 billion.

I sincerely believe that the humanitarian tragedy that we are facing will be relieved only if the international community applies the principle of burden- and responsibility-sharing. Thus, no single country should be held responsible and bear this tragedy alone because of geographical proximity. Our active engagement with international organizations such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the ILO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on matters relating to migration and refugees continues. Furthermore, we have initiated the Budapest Process with other countries. In addition, we were active and effective in shaping the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the global compact on refugees and strived hard to finalize them. We will be a co-convenor of the Global Refugee Forum to be held in Geneva later this year with the participation of President Erdoğan.

Migrants bring important contributions to the economies of the countries where they live. However, the negative stereotyping, xenophobia and discrimination that migrants and refugees encounter serve to further deteriorate the dramatic conditions in which they live. If managed effectively and efficiently, migration can create a win-win situation for both migrants and their host countries. Governments have to find ways to improve living and working conditions as well as to tackle unacceptable trends such as anti-migrant sentiments and xenophobia. I congratulate the ILO for its work, contributions and initiatives in respect of migration and refugees, as many developed countries consider migrants and refugees as existential threats and are adopting populist policies against them.

Unemployment is one of the most serious problems that we face today. Unemployment and the inability to find a job are causes of great concern, creating distress among people and setting them further against technological advancements as well as against migration and refugees. People expect to live in a prosperous country where everybody can find a decent job and where peace and stability prevail. Our primary approach as the Government of Turkey is to create new and high-quality jobs. In order to achieve this goal, we aim to strengthen our economy and to sustain employment-friendly economic growth that is suitable for our workforce potential. We are also striving to reduce unemployment to permanently low levels in a context where the workforce market is more effective. Despite all the challenges, we created 1,247,000 new jobs in 2018. We have initiated an employment campaign with an aim to create 2.5 million new jobs in 2019. In this regard, we have outlined new incentives in various fields, active labour market measures and training programmes to increase the quality of workers' skills.

We attach great importance to youth employment, which we deem to be our country's future. We are actively pursuing our efforts in the light of the common aim that was defined under Turkey's presidency of the G20 and in the light of our national employment strategy. Furthermore, we attach importance to and support the contributions of the ILO on the subject matter. During our presidency of the G20, significant work was carried out, together with the ILO and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), on developing skills and on strengthening the link between education and employment. Today, working on ways to enhance the abilities of young people gains all the more significance. The lifelong learning concept is becoming a priority, since it might require the re-evaluation of our education system. Our Government has taken important steps towards this aim and

has established a General Directorate for Lifelong Learning under the Ministry of National Education.

Furthermore, as has been the case until now, we will continue our coordination with the social partners regarding regulations on working life. Our main goals are to prevent any unjust treatment towards either workers or employers, and to make compromise our guiding principle. Within this context, we have enabled state employees to conclude collective agreements instead of collective negotiations and have taken steps to strengthen unions of civil servants. A new and independent law on occupational health and safety, in line with the standards of the ILO, entered into force in 2012. We have made significant progress in adopting legislation on freedom of association. We have facilitated membership of trade unions. Compared to general trends across the world, it goes without saying that the developments in Turkey in the field of trade unions over the last ten years are very significant and positive in nature. Following the increase in the level of women's education and the shifts in their individual and social choices towards jobs, the rate of women's employment has increased dramatically.

In order to achieve a fairer income distribution and better quality of life, the salaries of employees have been increased substantially in recent years in Turkey. While income distribution has deteriorated in many countries as a result of the global crisis, our country has continued to increase employment and strengthen social policies. Turkey is among the OECD countries that have been able to improve their income distribution swiftly.

Furthermore, thanks to the measures that we have taken, we have been successful in decreasing the level of unregistered employment to a considerable extent. Our social security institution and other public institutions have been working together well on the subject matter. The rising numbers of people covered by social security in recent years are a significant indicator of the successes in that field. By covering the whole population under the social protection umbrella, we have succeeded in achieving our goal of not leaving any citizen behind, in other words uncovered by a social protection system. As of today, the rate of coverage of our citizens by the social protection umbrella has almost reached the level of 100 per cent.

Turkey sincerely supports the ILO's human-centric approach to the future of work. Our reforms and accomplishments have been realized with an understanding of the human-centric approach while prioritizing investment, employment and production. We are also striving to achieve a more human-centric, just, inclusive and sustainable global economy and global order. Global political instability and conflict have an adverse effect on production and employment. This eventually reflects on workers as it affects all parts of society. In this regard, I welcome the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*.

The decades-long occupation of Arab lands and the issue of Palestine deeply damages the sense of justice in the world. As shown in the Report, intensified oppression, violence and various restrictions further worsen the daily lives of the Palestinians. Labour rights and human rights have been adversely affected by the Israeli occupation. This constitutes a major handicap to the improvement of the labour market of the occupied territories. We believe that lifting the restrictions and revitalizing the peace process are a precondition for economic recovery in the region and for the creation of new employment opportunities.

On this occasion, I would like to bring to the attention of international public opinion that some of the structures linked with the FETÖ terrorist organization – which tried to attack our democratic institutions and the well-being of our nation – established themselves as trade and civil servant unions just before the heinous attempted coup in Turkey in 2016. In order to fight it, it is crucial to know the working methods of this criminal organization, which aimed to overthrow the elected Government and the President and the constitutional order

in Turkey, as a result of which 251 innocent citizens were killed and more than 2,000 people were wounded.

The closure of those institutions – which were organized under the guise of trade unions and comprised a mere thousand people – in the wake of the attempted terrorist coup should not be allowed to be held against Turkey on international platforms. An impartial approach should also be taken in respect of the termination of the labour contracts of those FETÖ terrorists that were nested within the public institutions. The perception of victimization and the image that the FETÖ terrorists are trying to create are very, very deceptive. It is a natural right of all States and all public and private institutions to terminate the labour contracts of those who pursue the interests of their affiliated organizations above the interests of their employer institutions and who aim at harming the institutions at which they are employed. Judicial processes are under way in an independent and impartial court, and international institutions should respect the decisions of the Turkish courts. In fact, labour unions have never been closed down or banned in Turkey, except during military coups and interventions. Our track record testifies to this fact. In recent years, the membership of trade unions has increased by 60 per cent.

The UN and other international organizations are required to act in cooperation and reconciliation and if necessary they must be re-adapted to the needs of the time. Therefore, I would like to emphasize once again the motto that we have adopted under the leadership of our President Erdoğan: “The world is bigger than five”. There are ten permanent members of the ILO, who are a favoured group. We believe that fairer structures should be adopted in ILO bodies so that the equal representation of countries is secured. It is necessary for the social partners to collaborate for the longer term and for the benefit of everybody, instead of pursuing only narrow and current interests. The ILO has the necessary experience and expertise driven from its century of history. It is high time to equip the ILO with the necessary instruments in order for the Organization to adapt to the changing conditions. Turkey is ready to be part of this process. We call upon all Members to combine their forces. The Declaration to be prepared presents a unique opportunity to design an international organization that is compatible with the components and objectives of the ILO. Within this context, in order for the ILO to have better representational power, I would like to emphasize that for the ratification and entry into force of the 1986 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution, we expect more effort from all parties.

Let me restate that Turkey attaches the utmost importance to ILO standards. These standards played a key role in the preparation of our employment legislation. However, humanitarian aspects such as child labour, occupational health and safety and wages should not be considered as elements of competition and rendered a commercial mean. Furthermore, we must not turn a blind eye to efforts to make these aspects a front for protectionism. The work of the ILO and the existing standards in respect of such activities should not be allowed to fail or be exploited. Conflict, protectionism, customs barriers and physical walls should be replaced by reconciliation, cooperation and investment in the future of our people.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my best wishes to delegates for successful deliberations and for the preparation of the Centenary Declaration. I sincerely hope that the spirit of the Preamble to the 1919 Constitution and the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia will provide guidance to this Conference. I congratulate the tripartite structure of the ILO with its representatives of governments, employers and workers, as well as ILO staff. Again, I wish you every success for the future.

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Saâd-Eddine El Othmani,
Chief of the Government of the
Kingdom of Morocco**

Mr El Othmani

Chief of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco

(Original Arabic)

It is an honour and privilege and gives me great pleasure to join you today to participate in the activities of this the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference, which this year coincides with the celebration of the Centenary of the establishment of this august Organization. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Swiss presidency of this International Labour Conference and to thank the Swiss authorities for the warm welcome to Geneva, this beautiful city of diplomacy, neutrality and peace. I also thank the Director-General for his kind invitation and note his personal efforts to achieve the noble goals for which this Organization was established 100 years ago. This is also an occasion to acknowledge the Organization's pioneering role in promoting social justice and decent work and to reaffirm the faith of the Kingdom of Morocco in the importance of multilateral organizations and their vital role in multilateral action to address global issues that affect broad swathes of men and women. Such sensitive, broad-ranging matters cannot be addressed in a bilateral framework; they can only be addressed through multilateral cooperation. Therefore, I underscore the commitment of Morocco to multilateral diplomacy, particularly in recent times with regard to fundamental matters such as international migration management measures and addressing climate change, which have significant repercussions in various fields, particularly the social field.

Over the past 100 years, there have been numerous valuable and noteworthy collective achievements, in particular the adoption of a tripartite approach to achieve the real engagement of governments and the social partners. The scale of the challenges and changes that our world faces today requires us to scrutinize them honestly, so that the Organization and member States are able to formulate effective and powerful responses to the challenges of both the future of work and the work of the future.

At this juncture, I would like to acknowledge the recent ILO report on the future of work, prepared by the Global Commission on the Future of Work, and its correlation of labour market balances with the need to preserve workers' rights. I have no doubt that this, our 108th Session of the International Labour Conference, will serve as an excellent point for us to stop and take stock of the current situation and further improve the conditions of workers worldwide, ensure decent work for all, promote trade union freedoms and social dialogue, extend and strengthen universal social protection, combat child labour and forced labour, improve working conditions, develop occupational safety and health regulations, combat discrimination against women at work, protect the rights of migrants and promote corporate social responsibility and, on the basis of principles and values such as these, achieve social justice and provide a decent life for all. This is also an opportunity for me to reiterate the serious and willing commitment of Morocco to the Organization's programmes, to the implementation of its Conventions and resolutions, to cooperation and to the exchange of expertise and experiences with member States, for the benefit of all.

The economic and environmental challenges that the world is facing, technological developments, substantial and rapid population growth and profound changes in production patterns will result in the loss of thousands of jobs and the disappearance of a number of professions, all of which will widen the gap between supply and demand in the labour market, exacerbate social and sectoral disparities, both within countries and between countries of the North and South. It has therefore become necessary more than ever to adopt

policies based on social justice, to reduce disparities between different groups and sectors in society, distribute wealth fairly and provide decent work for all, and to adopt a human-centred approach to development by working for balanced, integrated and sustainable economic growth in the service of humanity, above all.

These major global transformations also call for new entrants to the labour market, in particular the young, to be equipped with the skills that they need to better integrate into professional and social life. At the same time, we must ensure that new employment relationships are established that take into account the growing impact of the digital and technological revolution and changes in the environment, and transform all of these threats into opportunities to create more jobs and provide decent work.

Morocco, like other countries, is concerned by these transformations and their impact on the labour market, and by the new and emerging patterns. We therefore value the ILO's attention to this issue and the fact that it is one of the main themes of this session. Morocco shares this concern with the Organization; thought and preparation will be required in order to find novel and appropriate responses to keep pace with the challenges posed by technological developments, as well as those posed by environmental change, and the possible positive or negative consequences of these on existing employment relationships and working conditions.

The new jobs and professions arising from this rapid technological development require specific skills and special training and knowledge in addition to individual qualities such as perseverance, cooperation, entrepreneurship and the ability to adapt rapidly to change and integrate swiftly into the labour market. This makes it imperative for countries to invest more intensively in human capital and training; this investment is the main mechanism that will ensure that the new generation is prepared to respond to the changing nature of work and the associated opportunities and threats. Considering this to be a stake of fundamental importance, the Kingdom of Morocco developed the strategic vision for the reform of the education and training system 2030, supervised by the Higher Council for Education and Training as a constitutional advisory institution, following consultation with various components of society.

The major global transformations taking place call upon us all not only to strengthen North–South cooperation but South–South cooperation, in which the Kingdom of Morocco plays an appreciable role. In particular, the Kingdom of Morocco is concerned with cooperation between African countries experiencing demographic upheavals, extraordinary labour market pressure, rapid development and serious environmental shifts.

The Kingdom of Morocco, on the basis of its constitutional authority, has made a clear choice to cooperate positively with the normative system on labour and employment which this Organization has established through its experience and history of struggle in this domain. As the President said, Morocco has had the honour to be a member of the Organization since 1956, directly after it obtained independence. In this regard, I would like to note that Morocco has recently deposited its instruments of ratification for three major ILO Conventions, namely: the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97), and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102). All of this is consistent with the involvement of Morocco in building democracy and its commitment to strengthening the human rights system. For many years now, Morocco has been steadily expanding the scope of fundamental freedoms, working to enshrine, respect and promote human rights and cooperating constructively on an ongoing basis with United Nations human rights mechanisms. It has also launched a number of major reform initiatives in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres with a view to laying solid foundations for an open, modern, democratic and inclusive society, thereby consolidating democracy and the rule of law.

Consistent with the choices made by Morocco under the new migration policy launched by His Majesty King Mohammed VI and with the Global Compact for Migration signed in Marrakech – Morocco had the honour of hosting the Global Forum on Migration and Development at which the Compact was signed – Morocco has deposited its instruments of ratification for Convention No. 97, on migrant workers. This initiative is consistent with the national migration and asylum policy, which is based on a humanitarian and responsible approach that aims to regularize the situation of migrants and refugees, guarantee their rights and better integrate them into the country and Moroccan society, consistent with the international Conventions and instruments by which Morocco is bound. In order to reward Morocco for these efforts, the African Union decided, at the African Union Summit two years ago, to designate His Majesty King Mohammed VI as an African pioneer in migration. He is currently working on a detailed plan to address migration in Africa. In addition, at the most recent African Union Summit, the project to establish the African Migration Observatory was approved and a headquarters agreement was signed with the Kingdom of Morocco where the Observatory will be located, in recognition of the efforts of Morocco and those of His Majesty King Mohammed VI in this area.

The deposit by the Kingdom of Morocco of its instruments of ratification for Convention No. 102, on social security, is also consistent with its desire to establish a universal social protection system. The Kingdom of Morocco has worked continuously to mainstream and expand the social protection system and broaden the beneficiary base. For some years, it has focused in particular on expanding access to medical care for disadvantaged and vulnerable people. In 2015, health coverage for students was introduced, as was a compulsory basic health insurance scheme for the self-employed and for independent and non-salaried persons engaging in private activities; a pension scheme for these groups was also established. The health coverage rate has increased considerably, rising from 16 per cent in 2005 to over 60 per cent today. With the reforms that have been introduced to date, we aim to achieve approximately 90 per cent coverage between 2021 and 2023. In addition, the Moroccan Government has started to expand and develop the governance and cost-effectiveness of the social protection system and social support by ensuring that public policies are aligned and public social policies are complementary. It is also developing a system for monitoring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups by establishing a unified social register at the national level, with a view to better targeting these groups through social programmes, of which there are many in Morocco today. In addition, the Government is working to improve access to the support programme for widows, which has been expanded, as well as the Family Mutual Assistance Fund, which provides support to disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, divorced women, women in vulnerable situations and women responsible for orphans.

The fact that we have deposited the instruments of ratification for Convention No. 187, on the promotional framework for health and safety, is consistent with our conviction that the provision of good occupational health and safety conditions at work are among the most important prerequisites of decent work. This conviction is reflected in the work that we have undertaken with the social partners, through the tripartite committee on health and safety, to formulate a national health and safety policy. This coincides with Morocco's preparations to host the International Congress on Occupational Health in Marrakech in 2024.

In addition to the areas covered by the aforementioned tripartite Conventions, the Kingdom of Morocco has made sustained and strong progress in the fight against child labour; action for the economic, social and political empowerment of women, the achievement of gender equality in the labour market and the criminalization of violence against women, including in the workplace; and action to preserve the dignity and safety of domestic workers. During the past two years, the Moroccan Parliament has enacted legislation in all of these areas; a law on combating violence against women was updated, developed and adopted; and a law on domestic workers of both sexes entered into force this year. We are fully aware that despite our efforts and initiatives, much further work remains

to be done to achieve the desired objective, but we consider that Morocco is on the right track.

Employment is a matter of major importance. Collective global mobilization is required to make employment a leading national priority, at the national and the local levels, to make it the core of all policies and strategies and to stimulate investment in traditional sectors such as industry, agriculture and services, as well as in the social economy and new occupations. It will also be necessary to: provide the necessary support to young people so that they can implement their projects as micro-entrepreneurs or as self-employed workers; adopt updated policies to encourage companies to certify, train and employ young people; carry out a comprehensive review of the mechanism and public support programmes for the employment of young people in order to render them more effective and ensure that they respond to young people's aspirations; prioritize training and apprenticeship where opportunities exist and ensure that an effective early guidance mechanism is adopted; conduct a comprehensive review of vocational training programmes in order to ensure that they respond to the needs of the labour market, keep pace with changes taking place in different sectors and occupations and partner with training professionals and training companies in order to afford graduates better opportunities to integrate professionally. The Kingdom of Morocco has continued its efforts in all these areas through policies and programmes that aim to reduce the unemployment rate and align different relevant sectoral initiatives. To this end, the Moroccan Government has developed a national employment promotion plan with clear strategic guidelines, with the effective participation of the private sector and the authorities. It should be noted that the social policy of Morocco of which this plan forms a part enjoys national consensus and is led effectively by His Majesty King Mohammed VI. In this regard, the National Initiative for Human Development could be mentioned in particular, as well as the creation of an ambitious and innovative vocational training project for the establishment of regional cities of professions and skills, in partnership with economic actors and national companies, focused on the professions of the future and overseen by His Majesty King Mohammed VI. It is thanks to these policies and cumulative achievements that Morocco has been able to attract industrial investment from all over the world, in particular the automotive and aeronautics industries, which has contributed and continues to contribute to the creation of a considerable number of jobs. At the same time, the development of the renewable energy sector embodies the country's vision of sustainable development and reflects its active engagement in international efforts to combat climate change, as well as creating a larger pool of new, environmentally friendly and sustainable employment opportunities. Morocco has developed a national strategy for sustainable development and an ambitious national renewable energy strategy, which is progressing.

In the context of the ILO's distinctive tripartite approach and believing in the need for collective action and partnership between the Government, the social partners and the economic partners, the Government of Morocco has paid particular attention to social dialogue which, by dint of the concerted efforts of all parties, led to the conclusion last April 25 of a social agreement for the three-year period 2019–21.

I would like to commend the social and economic partners for this fruitful dialogue.

(The speaker continues in French.)

I wanted to commend and thank the social partners and the economic partners for their active participation in a dialogue that led to a social agreement.

(The speaker continues in Arabic.)

This agreement, which is the culmination of a process of social dialogue, includes a set of reciprocal commitments, including: increasing the purchasing power of employees and

workers; enshrining trade union freedoms; establishing social dialogue; strengthening social protection; developing legislation relating to labour and labour relations; and creating a healthy social and economic climate, which will contribute to the establishment of social peace and the improvement of social conditions, as well as strengthening the national economy and making it more competitive.

We cannot allow this global celebration of labour to pass without recalling the suffering of the Palestinian people and, in particular of Palestinian workers facing the siege imposed by the Israeli Occupation, which deprives them of their right to a decent life and of their right to exercise all of their rights on their national territory. We must therefore all condemn the deprivation of the financial rights of Palestinian workers, support the Palestinian people and uphold their efforts to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for his support to workers in the occupied Palestinian territories in the face of restrictions on their legitimate rights to work, to freedom of movement and to a livelihood, and for calling on the international community to step up its efforts to take the necessary measures to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians and enable them to enjoy all of their rights, in accordance with international instruments and human rights principles and thereby ensure that social justice is promoted for them and that they are provided with decent work and the fundamentals of a decent life, to guarantee their dignity.

In conclusion, I extend my greetings to you all again. I hope that the work of this session of the Conference will be successful and that all of the objectives set will be achieved, in order to ensure a dignified and decent future of work for all.

**Statement by His Excellency
Mr Daniel Kablan Duncan,
Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire**

Mr Duncan
Vice-President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire
(*Original French*)

It is with great honour and pleasure that I take part in the celebration of the Centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on behalf of the President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, His Excellency Mr Alassane Ouattara. I would first of all like to take this opportunity to offer warm greetings and congratulations on the occasion of the celebration of this important event in the life of our shared Organization, the first specialized agency of the United Nations System, created in April 1919. Please allow me to convey to the tripartite constituents, Mr Ryder, Director-General of the ILO, and to all the staff of the Organization, the congratulations of the President of the Republic and of the Government of Cote d'Ivoire for the remarkable progress made by the Organization in the world of work during its first century. This progress includes the recognition of the value of work, the fight against forced labour, the affirmation of freedom of association, the rights of workers such as paid holidays, setting the number of hours worked in a day, social protection, etc.

In this year of 2019, we celebrate with great pride and much hope the jubilee of 100 years of the ILO. This Organization, which is unique in the world for its tripartite structure, helps Member countries to secure a decent working environment and better living conditions. Indeed, with the ILO, we have come a long way. We have striven to build a world of work from which we can take great pride today. Fundamental principles have been defined and serve as the foundation for building a world that we want to be more just, safer, better able to preserve human dignity and to ensure fulfilment for all. Although we can feel

satisfaction at the many ways in which we have given a human face to the world of work, as in any human endeavour things are far from perfect and we must be vigilant in maintaining our achievements. That is why we encourage the Organization to pursue and increase its efforts to strengthen the social contract and to promote decent and sustainable work in the context of continuous and rapid change in our economies.

Côte d'Ivoire, as you recalled, joined the ILO in 1960 and has worked to embrace the ideals and values of the Organization and to improve the working and living conditions of its people. In this context, since his accession to the highest office of State in May 2011, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Ouattara, has, in pursuit of the same ideal, made the improvement of the living and working conditions of his citizens one of his main priorities. To this end, he has implemented two ambitious national development plans that have stabilized the macroeconomic framework and sustainably boosted the country's economy, with an average annual growth rate of 8 per cent from 2012 to 2018; this makes Côte d'Ivoire one of the four countries in the world with the highest growth rate. This strong growth is becoming increasingly inclusive, thereby ensuring shared prosperity. In so doing, my country has benefited from the invaluable support of a number of technical and financial partners, including the ILO, in the implementation of many policies and programmes. Côte d'Ivoire is pleased to have remarkable and active cooperation with the illustrious institution that is the ILO, which has enabled it to make significant progress in a number of areas, including: the implementation of specific schemes to address the issue of young people's access to employment and entrepreneurship; an almost two-fold increase in the guaranteed minimum wage (SMIG); setting up women's empowerment programmes through income-generating activities; the revision of the Labour Code, which has made it possible to deal with essential issues such as harassment at work, the fight against precarious employment, the strengthening of occupational safety and health, as well as improving the employability of young people; and, finally, the development of a National Integrated Strategy for transition from the informal economy to the formal economy for the qualitative transformation of jobs.

One of the most emblematic achievements is undoubtedly the return to Abidjan of the ILO Regional Office for Africa, serving 54 countries, a process which was completed in 2016. This is the appropriate forum in which to reiterate our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the return of this office, which will undoubtedly strengthen the cooperation between Côte d'Ivoire, Africa and the ILO. As we celebrate this momentous event for our Organization, Côte d'Ivoire remains firmly committed to the promotion of tripartism, social dialogue, decent work, youth and women's employment and to the relentless fight against the worst forms of child labour. These efforts, which are part of five-year employment policies, aim to significantly reduce unemployment and, in particular, youth unemployment. This system is supported by the adoption of decrees for the application of the Labour Code and fiscal measures provided for in various finance laws, with, in particular, the granting of tax credits in exchange for internships or for the recruitment of people with disabilities. This policy is all the more justified since the Ivorian population is very young. Indeed, 77.7 per cent of the people are under the age of 35 and they are, of course, the future of our country. This policy also led to the creation of a ministerial department dedicated to youth employment.

Improving the quality of life of populations means guaranteeing them social protection. The Government of Côte d'Ivoire, which has been working tirelessly since May 2011, adopted a National Social Protection Strategy in 2014 with the aim of progressively building a system that strengthens the capacities of households and individuals, particularly the most vulnerable, to manage social risks. To this end, the focus has also been on the social aspect, with spending for the poor rising from €1.3 billion in 2011 to €3.8 billion in 2019, a three-fold increase in eight years, to a total cumulative amount of €10.3 billion over the period between 2011 and 2018. In order to increase this momentum, and go even further, other important measures have been taken in the form of a programme of social safety nets worth

some €114 million financed by the World Bank, which allows 125,000 households to receive a regular allocation over the period 2015–24, thus contributing to a sustainable fight against poverty, and of universal health cover (UHC), which is highly anticipated and will become fully effective in 2019. After a transitional period, Côte d’Ivoire is now implementing large-scale UHC that will allow access to quality care for all, at lower cost. A new multisectoral social programme for 2019–20, costing €1.1 billion, complements the government action mentioned above.

Our efforts to extend and improve social protection also aim to finalize a supplementary funded pension scheme, particularly for civil servants and state employees, and a social security scheme for the self-employed. From all the foregoing it follows that the development of human capital is a real priority for the Government of Côte d’Ivoire, because there can be no growth or progress without an improvement in peoples’ living and working conditions. Thus, the year 2019, which marks the Centenary of the ILO, has been declared “year of social progress” by the President of the Republic of Côte d’Ivoire. It is up to the Government, which can congratulate itself on the economic performances recorded, to enable communities to benefit more from the fruits of this growth.

The Government’s work programme has also given prominence to the promotion of decent work and social justice. Our work to ratify new ILO instruments is one of many examples. Following the ratification of six Conventions in 2015, the Government of Côte d’Ivoire has decided to ratify the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170); the Protocol of 2002 to the Safety and Health Convention, 1981, and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. In addition, Côte d’Ivoire is working to ratify the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), in order to combat child labour, a problem that our country has been facing since the mid-2000s. In this respect, it is important to note that the President of the Republic has also made combating this phenomenon one of the priorities for government action. This has resulted in the reorganization of the institutional coordination mechanism through the creation of the National Supervisory Committee for Action against Child Trafficking, Exploitation and Labour and the Inter-Ministerial Committee to Combat Child Trafficking, Exploitation and Labour. These two Committees are chaired respectively by Mrs Dominique Ouattara, First Lady of Côte d’Ivoire, and by the Minister of Employment and Social Protection, who is present here. In collaboration with all stakeholders, these two Committees have adopted a national response strategy that has translated into national action plans to combat child trafficking, exploitation and labour. The development and implementation of the national action plans for 2012–14 and 2015–17 has enabled the country to make significant progress in reducing the vulnerability of children and families. As a result of these actions, political, firm institutional and social foundations have been laid for the gradual elimination of child trafficking and the worst forms of child labour.

Côte d’Ivoire is firmly committed to making every effort to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including targets 8.7, 8.8 and 16.2. The development of the 2019–21 National Action Plan to Combat Child Trafficking, Exploitation and Labour aims to address the root causes of the phenomenon. Likewise, our country’s commitment to being one of the pioneers of Alliance 8.7 fits perfectly within this framework. All these advances, the list of which is not exhaustive, have been made possible thanks to the commitment of the Ivorian Government to tripartism, the founding principle of the ILO. Indeed, all the subjects I have just discussed have been the subject of a fruitful social dialogue that has allowed us to move forward harmoniously and to avoid social crises.

In partnership with the workers, we have made it a point of honour to preserve trade union freedoms and freedom of association. With regard to employers, we strive to continually improve the business environment and the competitiveness of our economy. In short, we are acting together for a common goal, namely the development of our beloved country and the improvement of the quality of life of our people. In this regard, I would like

to assure you of the commitment of Ivorian constituents to taking all the necessary actions to meet these many challenges. The task is of course immense and difficult. It includes key projects such as consolidating social democracy and taking into account major changes in the world of work. This is why, in a rapidly changing world, the ILO should promote lifelong learning and skills development as the means to ensure the sustainability of jobs, and multilateralism as the best framework for managing conflicts related to current and future challenges.

In this context, we know that we can rely on the ILO, at the dawn of its second century of existence, and are convinced that it will bring about significant progress in decent work and social justice. And it is on this note of hope that I would like to close my remarks by extending to you, on behalf of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Mr Ouattara, an invitation to meet in Abidjan, in December, for the 14th African Regional Meeting of the ILO.

The President
(Original French)

On behalf of my colleagues from the Office and all Conference delegates, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you for having honoured us with your presence today and having shared your thoughts and your vision.

I hereby adjourn this high-level section, organized in the second plenary sitting of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference

(The sitting adjourned at 7.40 p.m.)