

"The goal of "social justice" (...) has proved to be a dynamic concept (...). Thus, the ILO has never seen, and will never see, its role as that of a defender of the status quo".
David A. Morse, Nobel Peace Prize Acceptance Speech, 1969.

A NEW IMPETUS FOR THE ILO !

The ILO is almost 100 years old and its record is impressive, prestigious even. **Unique by its tripartite structure and universalism, and enriched by its diversity, its legitimacy remains intact** in a globalized world and its values retain their relevance. The "decent work" message and Agenda launched by JUAN SOMAVIA have spread worldwide. The global crisis and its social consequences demonstrate daily the visionary nature of the founding texts of our Organization – its Constitution and the Philadelphia Declaration – according to which "*universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice*".

Almost a century later, globalization has profoundly changed the world of work and business, which invents new forms of employment, new technology and new trades, and forges new working relationships, every day. **The meaning and position of work have evolved even further.**

When labour starts becoming a good like any other, the **ILO must not remain silent**. When global mass underemployment, and poverty and inequality, which are incompatible with human dignity surge, the **ILO must not close its eyes**. **Nor can it be deaf** to calls by the world's young generations for greater freedom and social justice. The **ILO must act!**

The moment has come for ILO to make labour central to its work once more, to remind the modern world that labour is neither a commodity nor a variable to be adjusted, but an achievement by each human being; that poverty and unstable labour are a danger for the prosperity of all; that there can be no political democracy without social democracy; and that just globalization must be balanced, with economic and financial considerations on the one hand, and social and human considerations on the other.

FIVE YEARS TO MAKE HISTORY

The ILO must be the inspiration for a new social contract for the 21st century. **To be an actor of global governance** (I), the ILO must become THE reference on labour, employment and social protection (II).

To ensure the confidence of its constituents, the ILO needs to adapt its tools to its goals, concentrating its efforts on its essential roles, firstly **the standards system** (III); the ILO needs to strengthen **the role of the Governing Body** and the Conference (IV); the Office needs to become **a model of management within the United Nations** (V).

I. ILO, a crucial global governance actor

Whilst the ILO has already acquired legitimacy on the international scene, today's world needs a strong, credible ILO more than ever; not only a forum for debate, reflection, expertise and resources but also a body capable of **allying social and human requirements with economic competitiveness**.

As a crucial global governance actor, the ILO must be **the true social conscience of a constantly changing world**, whilst promoting the competitiveness of business. It must be equal, in the framework of its missions and through the quality of its work, to other multilateral institutions, to be listened to and make itself heard by all, by governments, social partners and citizens of the whole world. **The ILO must work more with other institutions**. The debate on coherence is truly relevant here, in full respect of the missions and competences of each party. **The 2008 Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization will be fully implemented and will guide our action**.

Having been made responsible by the President of the French Republic for the social component of the G20 in 2011, I understand the scale of this challenge and am committed to ensuring ILO has its full place. At the G20, I impressed upon the Heads of State and Government the imperatives of a social dimension to globalization and the concerns of non-G20 countries.

II. ILO, a centre of excellence

To maintain its position, the Organization will constantly demonstrate the added value of its work. This will involve increasing levels of analysis and research work, statistics and databases, as well as increased dialogue with all stakeholders.

The research and policy planning capacities of the whole Office, including its Institutes, will be mobilized and better used by all. Better sought on-the-ground resources will feed into this work.

The ILO will have to show daring and curiosity for the intellectual resources of the whole world in order to be an authority in its analysis of and responses to labour and employment matters, as well as contemporary themes such as youth employment, the creation of sustainable enterprises, social protection floors, the new needs created by technical, societal and demographic evolutions (migration, health in the workplace, etc.) and major changes in labour. New momentum will be given to the role of the ILO in corporate social responsibility, on the basis of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

We must implement **effective technical cooperation**, focused on the essential missions of ILO and adapted to the real needs of the constituents, particularly developing and newly industrialized countries, to achieve results which are more tangible and evaluated in a more qualitative manner.

III. Standard-setting, at the heart of ILO work

Standard-setting is the core work of our Organization today, as it was in the past. **Social dialogue is its driving force.**

The body of standards must be more applicable if it is to be **more widely applied**. With the 1988 Declaration, the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work gained in visibility and international recognition. Building on this *acquis*, the ILO must now take new steps to enhance the relevance of its standards policy in employment and social protection matters, and better support State efforts to implement them, in the spirit of the Declaration of 2008.

The modernization of the body of standards and the supervisory mechanism must reflect the founding values applied to our time. Reflections have begun along these lines and I intend to renew discussion through increased dialogue with the three groups. I am sure to find men and women open to a **standard modernization process promoting their effective, progressive and consented implementation**, on an "*EVERYBODY WINS* " basis: States, employers and workers.

IV. Good governance begins at home :

the role of the Governing Body

My experience in the Governing Body since 2007 and in chairing the Conference in 2010 enables me to affirm that good governance starts with **enhanced dialogue between the Office and the Governing Body**.

I will keep up the momentum of the reform of the Governing Body, which must fulfil its role and on which I intend to rely even further. This reform is a move in the right direction. This procedural progress must be harnessed **to give the Governing Body the full political and strategic dimension it should have**. It must exercise all its prerogatives, giving clear directions to the Office and evaluating their implementation.

I will ensure that the Governing Body has documents in time, that it has more concrete and concise reports. Qualitative and practical aspects will be prioritized and will support increased readers-per-copy, quality debates and decision-making – and follow-up of decisions through increased intersessional work.

Together we can successfully reform the Conference to make it more adapted to the missions of the ILO, so that this “World Parliament of Labour and Employment” can better prepare for and act on events and offer the world a forward-looking vision on world labour and employment issues.

V. A model of management within the United Nations

The confidence of the constituents must be earned through exemplary management. The added value and quality of ILO missions depend largely on internal organization and day-to-day management of services.

Rigorous, transparent, economical and coordinated management

I will propose improvement, not only of elaboration procedures but also of budget implementation.

Before discussing it in the Governing Body, the members of the Body will be able to debate several budget options, informed with costed and comprehensive documents comprising prioritized objectives and five-year budget simulations with annual adjustments.

Development of human resources

ILO must be a model of social dialogue. All members of staff must find their appropriate place and prospects in a clearly shared project with ownership by all personnel.

We will move from administrative management to **dynamic management of jobs and careers**. I will personally ensure and conduct exchanges with staff representatives. This policy of participation, which respects partners, is the method I have applied successfully for the last 40 years, both in the private sector for 25 years and in the public sector (as mayor of a French town, Amiens, with a budget and workforce equivalent to those of the ILO, and as French Minister for Education with 1.2 million civil servants).

Training programmes, qualitative evaluations and rigorous and **transparent recruitment procedures** will enable the ILO to benefit from the capacities of the best possible staff and will enhance the Office's competence.

A united ILO...

I want to see a single ILO, mobilized with the same objectives. Headquarters and field must work in concert. Field offices have an essential and difficult role: as a natural extension of the headquarters, they must fulfil most missions in association with it.

Clear rules will cover the links between Geneva and the field. These links must be tightened, with guidelines and reporting procedures so that headquarters and the field share information, analysis and data. Whilst policy is the responsibility of the Governing Body, central administration needs to take back a role of initiative, coordination and evaluation of field work.

Closer coordination will be established with **the Training Centre in Turin, whose enhanced role is essential** for the outreach of ILO values.

...in its diversity

As a French-speaker who understands English, I will attach particular importance to the respect and promotion of **geographical, cultural and linguistic diversity** across the Office.

A small, complementary and economical team

My Cabinet will have a very **small staff**, to allow me to lead the Office directly and in close confidence with managers.

I will recruit a deputy to work alongside me, on the basis of criteria of excellence in management, who, as a **high-ranking administrator, will be responsible for the good day-to-day running of the Office under my supervision.**

I am aware of the particular responsibility of the Director-General to obtain and consolidate the confidence of States and social partners, but also to represent the ILO and share its message. I am ready for that responsibility.

*In the course of my **professional, parliamentary, governmental and diplomatic career**, I have acquired **real experience**. I was at the origin of a law supporting cooperation between social partners and have always had a passion for consensus-seeking through social dialogue. I will put this passion to the service of ILO, where cooperation between the three constituent groups is vital for progress. **I am committed.***

I want to honour the ILO members and take inspiration from the men and women who have worked to share its values since 1919. To pay homage to them and address the challenges of the 21st century, let us give

A NEW IMPETUS TO THE ILO !

Gilles de Robien

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gilles de Robien", written in a cursive style. The signature is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.