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International Labour Conference – 110th Session, 2022

Date: 11 July 2022

Plenary sitting

Closing of the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference

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Saturday, 11 June 2022, 4.00 p.m.

President: Mr Moroni

Signing of instruments adopted by the Conference at its 110th Session

The President

(Original Spanish)

We will begin by holding a very symbolic ceremony at which we will sign the authentic texts of the Amendments of 2022 to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006). As you will recall, these amendments were adopted by the General Affairs Committee and were approved by the Conference by a record vote held on Monday, 6 June.

(The President and the Director-General sign the instrument.)

Presentation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022

The President

(Original Spanish)

Yesterday the Conference adopted, in plenary sitting, the resolution on the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work.

With your permission, today I would like to take this symbolic opportunity to present to you the amended version of the Declaration, which will be published shortly.

I invite the Officers of the General Affairs Committee, as well as the Chairperson of the Employers' group, Ms Hornung-Draus, the Chairperson of the Workers' group, Ms Passchier, and the Deputy Director-General for Policy, Ms Newton, to join me and the Director-General in immortalizing this historic moment together.

(A group photo is taken.)

Closing statements

The President

(Original Spanish)

The Conference, meeting at its last plenary sitting, has concluded its work and has achieved its objectives. The time has come for the closing ceremony, and to this end I invite each of my fellow Officers of the Conference to share with us their thoughts and deliver their closing statements to this global assembly, at which we have considered issues of fundamental importance to the world of work.

Mr Furlan

Employer Vice-President of the Conference

Today we conclude this exceptional session of the International Labour Conference. I say exceptional because many of us had the privilege to meet face-to-face after two years. This

session was not business as usual. Instead, it was a joyful reunion of the ILO community, and with renewed energy we achieved the goals of the ambitious agenda of this session.

What is also noteworthy about this session is that it is the last one with Mr Guy Ryder as Secretary-General. On behalf of the Employers' group, I would like to thank you, Guy, for your dedication to ensuring that the sessions of the Conference under your leadership met their objectives, even when they moved into a virtual setting. You and your team managed to bring us together during the difficult days of 2020 and 2021 and guarantee the cohesion of the ILO's tripartite partners.

The Employers' group would also like to express our appreciation for this year's Report of the Director-General, on the least developed countries. Given the critical challenges these countries face, the report rightly stresses the urgent need for greater solidarity and action.

On behalf of the International Organisation of Employers and the entire Employers' group, I would like to express our deep appreciation, particularly to the superb technical team that so successfully undertook the immensely complex task of organizing a hybrid meeting in the context of building renovations in both the Palais des Nations and the ILO building, with few rooms available for meetings and with a good number of tripartite delegations present in Geneva, and also a number of participants connecting from every corner of the world. Our appreciation also goes to all of the hundreds of Government, Worker and Employer colleagues who have worked persistently through unsocial hours and countless inconveniences to find workable, balanced and realistic solutions to complex topics. We all share a commitment to finding realistic paths forward for an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from COVID-19 – even if we do not always agree on every detail of the direction those paths should take.

This brings me to the substance of the outcomes of this session of the Conference, most of which we can welcome wholeheartedly.

I would like to raise two points related to credentials. First, we welcome the conclusions of the Credentials Committee in the case of the Consejo Superior de la Empresa Privada (COSEP), the most representative employers' federation in Nicaragua. The report of the Committee undisputedly recognized that COSEP was once again denied its rights to nominate Employer delegates. The Government of Nicaragua's failure to comply takes place in an environment of violence and harassment against the leaders, staff and members of COSEP. The Employers' group repudiates these acts in the strongest terms, and will continue to follow the situation closely until it is addressed.

Second, the Employers' group notes with serious concern the use of the hybrid format of the Conference as an attempt to escape constitutional obligations related to travel and subsistence costs of tripartite delegations. Here, the Employers would like to remind Governments that the hybrid format should remain an option at the discretion of Employers' and Workers' delegates. In no way should it be imposed on them as a unilateral decision.

On the recognition of a safe and healthy working environment as a fifth fundamental principle and right at work, I note that the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work came about in 1998 as the ILO's response to globalization, and it has been a key tool to promote social progress and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work. The inclusion of occupational safety and health in the ILO framework of fundamental principles and rights at work is a landmark decision that will have an impact both inside and outside of the ILO. It is an historic occasion and we should all be proud!

Once again, the deliberations of the Committee on the Application of Standards took place in a constructive spirit. The discussions on the General Survey and on the list of individual cases

were not without difficulties, but were successful. This year, the most important message from the Employer members of the Committee was that the needs of sustainable enterprises should become more visible in the promotion and supervision of ILO standards, to reflect the approach agreed in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.

The recurrent discussion on employment evidenced the broad and complex areas where ILO action is required on this most relevant topic. The Committee's conclusions reflect key areas of interest and, in most of them, a common understanding of their relevance for the world of work. The resolution and conclusions are most pertinent in times when continued uncertainty and a rapid and dynamic evolution of labour markets prevail. Long-standing challenges require bolstered action, particularly to overcome the impact still felt from the COVID-19 crisis and other structural and geopolitical issues around the world.

Providing good guidance to the Office for a tailored, effective and output-oriented programme required this Committee to identify areas where the allocation of resources and action can leverage the most relevant impact on enabling environments for business to thrive and continue to deliver its contribution to sustainable development and inclusive economic growth. Among these, we particularly highlighted policies to leverage the use of technology and its potential for job creation; much more adapted and responsive education and skilling frameworks; productivity and innovation; support and dedicated incentives to boost entrepreneurship, along with targeted labour market policies for employability, and the sustainability and resilience of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

While these conclusions represent the substance of thorough debates on the policy priorities, it is worth noting that we unfortunately observe that the temptation of some groups to use the recurrent discussion to pre-empt outcomes of technical policy debate remains. It is also regrettable that some groups and Governments keep attempting to use this recurrent discussion to drive national and ideological agendas for the benefit of some, but to the detriment of a coherent approach to the global need for the attainment of full and productive employment for all. Nevertheless, our group will continue contributing to the implementation of these conclusions by the Office, in a constructive spirit of tripartism.

The general discussion on decent work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE) was an opportunity to clarify the precise contours of this economy and to find a tripartite definition of "social and solidarity economy". The Committee adopted a resolution with balanced conclusions, which recognize the need to pursue an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises and SSE entities, to promote their complementarity and for SSE entities to aspire to long-term viability by promoting their level of productivity and skills development. Rightfully, the SSE is not presented as an alternative model, but rather as an economy with often similar challenges, and whose complementarities can create positive synergies. The conclusions also recognize the need for measures that do not introduce unfair competition for traditional businesses, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. The Employers' group also made it clear that any institutional dialogue conducted with representatives of the SSE should not be confused with social dialogue, which is the exclusive responsibility of the social partners.

Although the Employers' group was opposed to the principle of an annex to the conclusions, including a reference to the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177) – which has been of concern to the Employers since its creation, and due to the low numbers of ratifications (eleven, 25 years after its adoption), among many reasons – the group supported the adoption of the conclusions in the interest of consensus and in recognition of the good work and outcome. It is important to note that the Employers had their critical views on Convention No. 177 reflected in the summary of the proceedings.

The Standard-Setting Committee holding the first discussion on apprenticeships recognized that quality apprenticeships are an investment by any community in its future generations. The core of any apprenticeship system must be developing the youth of a nation and equipping them for a lifetime of employment and employability. Apprenticeships improve employability, job prospects and resilience to labour market and economic changes.

We welcome the conclusions adopted, which set the ground for a Recommendation focusing solely on apprenticeship systems. The conclusions promote a positive message on this on- and off-the-job training. They offer practical considerations for governments to improve their apprenticeship systems, and they take a pragmatic approach to implementation.

The Committee will meet again next year to finalize the Recommendation. We look forward to continuing the conversation to produce an outcome that should remain aspirational, promote incentives for companies to offer apprenticeships, and encourage young people and adults to take apprenticeship paths.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge again all those who have worked tirelessly to make this hybrid session possible – those physically present in Geneva, those on screen, and those behind the scenes, including, of course, the interpreters, without whom our work would be impossible. And finally, I speak for all my Employer colleagues in expressing gratitude to the teams from the International Organisation of Employers and the Bureau for Employers' Activities for their support before and during this session of the Conference. If we have learned nothing else from our hybrid adventures, it is the importance of face-to-face engagement in our negotiations. Thus, we hope to see you all in person in Geneva next June.

Ms Egúsqiza Granda **Worker Vice-President of the Conference** **(Original Spanish)**

It has been an honour for me to serve among the Officers as Vice-President of the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference.

This has been an historic and emblematic session of the Conference, as we have been able to see each other again after enduring a pandemic that left in its wake millions of lost lives, including workers, 25 million lost jobs, and exacerbated poverty and child labour, all of which is deeply deplorable. Thus, I would like to hereby pay tribute to each and every one of those colleagues who, as a result of the pandemic, are no longer with us.

That is why the work that now rests on the shoulders of the International Labour Organization must be human-centred and resilient, in search of a truly just and egalitarian society.

This is an historic task, and one which is now beginning to take shape through the resolution adopted by the Conference recognizing occupational safety and health as a fundamental principle and right at work, meaning that all workers worldwide have the right to a safe and healthy working environment.

As a labour inspector in Peru, I have seen with my own eyes how a worker can come to work fit and healthy but become permanently unfit to work, or never leave the workplace alive, as a result of an occupational accident. I have also seen that hundreds of occupational accidents occur due to a lack of protection for workers, because occupational hazards and risks were not eliminated or minimized, workplaces or facilities were unsuitable, or workers were not provided with appropriate protective equipment. All of this has left workers injured or disabled and resulted in thousands of deaths. Every year, more than 3 million people

worldwide die due to a lack of precautions or to inadequate workplace conditions. My thanks, therefore, go to those who worked throughout these last two weeks to produce the outcome of elevating occupational safety and health to a fundamental right, and thus declaring the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), as fundamental Conventions under the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Their inclusion reflects their importance and focuses on the principle of prevention and the duty to protect workers from occupational accidents and diseases.

In addition, the Conference approved amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006). The Special Tripartite Committee of the MLC, 2006, was established to bring together all interested parties and to constantly review the functioning of the Convention in order to improve working conditions. Its role has been critical recently, as the pandemic has had a devastating impact on many of our counterparts in the sector, who even suffered abandonments and extreme hours of work owing to a lack of crew changeovers.

The Standard-Setting Committee on Apprenticeships is now at the halfway point in the process of establishing an instrument to regulate and improve working conditions in apprenticeships; we are hopeful that we will be able to adopt a standard next year. These last two weeks, I have heard various speakers talk about the importance of young people, so why are we not protecting them properly? This is an historic opportunity to prevent exploitation and to ensure that decent work begins as early as the first steps into the world of work.

We know that quality apprenticeship systems set apprentices on track to a better life. The recognition of the need for apprentices to receive adequate remuneration and to enjoy an environment free from discrimination is a fundamental step forward. We are creating opportunities to better align apprentices' rights with international labour standards, which are our guiding light and the best tool we have to provide for rights on an equal footing.

In the Recurrent Discussion Committee on Employment, we reached important conclusions that reaffirm the need for comprehensive policy frameworks for quality employment, alongside the need for policies to facilitate inclusive structural transformation for creating decent jobs, including in care, digital, circular and green economies, and fostering the transition to the formal economy.

Within the Committee, the constitutional mandate of the ILO was asserted, which emphasizes the crucial role of decent wages, making a crucial step forward towards an international agreement on "living wages", with the support of the Office. The guarantee of a decent wage with wage adjustment mechanisms that is also attainable through collective bargaining is another aspect of these important conclusions that it worth highlighting. The Committee agreed that Members should promote quality of work and occupational safety and health, providing adequate protection to workers, and the correct classification of employment relationships, including on platforms.

Also of note is that the conclusions made progress towards regulation of telework and the right to disconnect. The conclusions also recognized the need to promote decent work in global supply chains, and the importance of addressing gender equality in the labour market.

In the General Discussion Committee: Decent work and the social and solidarity economy, the first tripartite definition was established of the key values, principles, governance rules and organization types in the social and solidarity economy. The conclusions recognize the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining for workers in these entities, which is an

historic step in advancing social justice. They call for the establishment of a regulatory framework to promote the growth of entities in the social and solidarity economy with the aim of protecting the people whose source of income is this alternative form of living that seeks to place people and planet before profits. More than 100 years into the history of the ILO, a pathway is being opened up to continue moving forward, providing for rights where there is a need.

None of this would be possible without conditions for the protection of and respect for freedom of association, which is why the work in the Committee on the Application of Standards is of paramount importance. Any attempts to undermine the independence of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations must be opposed. While the statements made within the Committee showed that disagreements on the right to strike remain, it was once again emphasized that this right is a fundamental element for the development of freedom of association; to oppose the recognition of the right to strike and its basis in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), is to oppose the effective realization of the founding objectives of the ILO. The right to strike contributes to the full exercise of freedom of association, to the achievement of social justice and to the realization of fairer and more decent working conditions.

This goes hand in hand with the right to collective bargaining, which is impossible if one of the parties declines to take a seat at the table. It is crucial that all stakeholders in tripartite dialogue are committed to their duty to engage in and implement collective bargaining to achieve social progress and growth in the standards that govern employment and working conditions at the enterprise and sectoral levels, as social dialogue is also a fundamental right recognized by Member States through their membership of the International Labour Organization and their attendance at the Conference.

Countries not only have a constitutional obligation to respect the right to collective bargaining, but must also have mechanisms to promote it and ensure compliance in good faith, such that the parties cannot disengage from the bargaining process unilaterally and without justification.

In sum, it has been a great honour and responsibility for me to be Vice-President of the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference, which above all is recognition of the contribution that the Latin America region has made to the ILO since it was founded.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at the Conference for the excellent cooperation; to the representatives of the Workers, Employers and Governments for their willingness to develop standards and agreements that contribute to social justice and decent work; to the staff of the Secretariat for their support and dedication; and, of course, to the interpreters for having done their utmost to break down barriers in understanding and to make us feel a little closer to one another.

I would like to close with a quotation from Paul Auster: "If justice means anything, it has to be the same for everyone. No one can be excluded, otherwise it is not social justice."

Mr bin Samikh Al Marri
Government Vice-President of the Conference
(Original Arabic)

I have had the privilege to work together with you at this 110th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to thank the President and my fellow Vice-

Presidents of the Conference and to pay tribute to the representatives of the various groups – Employers, Workers and Governments – for their very positive and productive cooperation during this session of the Conference. Once again, you have proved the importance of social dialogue and collaboration between the various entities for the future of work, in accordance with the principles established by the ILO.

I would like to pay tribute also to the outcomes of this Conference, especially when it comes to the challenges that the international community is facing today, the labour market in particular. You have concentrated on the least developed countries, countries that run the risk of being marginalized, and I would like to thank the Director-General for having chosen this subject for his report. During this session, we have once again emphasized the need for major structural transformation, as called for in the Doha Programme of Action. Here I would like to draw your attention to the fact that Qatar is hosting the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in March 2023. We thereby confirm our adherence to international cooperation to help the least developed countries in order to ensure that they are at the same level as other countries when it comes to development.

During this session, our Conference has enabled delegations to discuss the various ways and means to ensure decent work and to face up to the challenges of the labour market. I would in particular like to welcome the conclusions that have enabled us to approve the amendments made to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, by the Special Tripartite Committee established under that Convention at its fourth meeting. The amendments were adopted by a majority, in accordance with our discussions since COVID-19 struck, with its harmful effects on maritime work and the conditions of work of seafarers and the need to ensure that they have a decent work environment on ships and for the necessary steps to be taken, given the risks involved.

We welcome the decision that will enable us to take measures to introduce fundamental standards, in particular through paragraph 2 of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998), as amended in 2022, when it comes to safety and health at work. COVID-19 has had an impact on the world of work and this decision will enable us to shore up the fundamental principles of decent work and make progress in this field. We have also designated the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), as fundamental Conventions. This decision will also enable us to make the necessary changes when it comes to social justice, in order to ensure fair globalization.

We welcome the first discussion on quality apprenticeships as a response to the challenges facing us in the world of work, as well as the crisis resulting from COVID-19, so that skills meet labour needs. From now on, workers will be able to obtain the necessary skills to meet the needs of the labour market.

We also welcome the conclusions of the discussion on decent work and the social and solidarity economy. These conclusions will enable us to face up to the challenges and promote the social and solidarity economy for a future of work that is indeed human-centred. We welcome the recurrent discussion on employment that we held as a continuation of the efforts made by the ILO to ensure social justice. We support the activities of the Organization and the programmes to meet these objectives, and here we welcome what has been done as part of the technical cooperation programme between the ILO and the Government of Qatar. This programme is seen as an example that can be followed by neighbouring countries in the region.

We further welcome the participation of all delegations at this Conference session in the discussion of the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General, which has highlighted the problems facing workers of the occupied Arab territories, particularly the damage done to their situation as a result of COVID-19, the worsening conditions of work, unemployment, the situation of children, and the absence of decent work as a result of the occupation and settlement. It is vital that all parties respect international law.

We are convinced that the results of this session of the Conference will strengthen decent work and promote sustainable development, and we reiterate our commitment to the principles of the ILO to achieve its objectives for a better future of work.

Finally, I would like to thank Guy Ryder, the Director-General, for the efforts he has made over the last ten years, which have enabled the Organization to undertake a great many reforms and to achieve very important results. I would like to thank him for the work he has done in the field of social dialogue and social justice, as well as tripartism.

I would in particular like to pay tribute to the role of the ILO during the pandemic and the role played by Guy Ryder in the responsiveness of the Organization in support of Member States, to ensure that they were able to face the pandemic. My thanks also go to Ms Newton, Mr Oumarou and Mr Vines for all they have done to support the Director-General in this regard.

I would like to thank the members of the Secretariat of the Conference for all their work, which ensured the success of our Conference: Mr Hagemann, the Director of the Official Meetings, Documents and Relations Department; Ms Dimitrova, for her support and for everything she has done during my mandate; Ms Juvet-Mir, Chief of Protocol; and Ms Muller, Ms Mbinkar Gondo, Ms Ontal and Mr Antonietti, who have supported us in our work. I would like to thank the whole team, the technical team as well, and the interpreters of course, for all the work they have done.

Mr Moroni

The President of the 110th Session of the Conference (Original Spanish)

I would like to begin by thanking you for the privilege of presiding over the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference. It has been an unforgettable experience that has produced excellent outcomes, thanks to the work of all delegates, authorities and members of the Secretariat. I thank and congratulate Ms Dimitrina Dimitrova for her excellent leadership and, on her behalf, all of those working with her.

This session of the Conference is the first one after the pandemic. We have resumed, albeit partially, face-to-face contact and have begun to analyse the consequences of an epidemiological crisis that is nearing an end, against a backdrop of violent international conflicts that we thought were consigned to the past and that are plunging the world into another critical situation.

These various factors, which impact on many of the guiding principles of this Organization, featured in the discussions in the technical committees and in the speeches made by delegates during the plenary sessions.

We are aware of the difficult times we are living in. Political and social peace have been severely affected. We are living in a complex present, with a gloomy outlook of the world moving forward with a comprehensive, sustainable and, above all, inclusive development process that will eliminate the distinction between the winners and hopeless losers. There are widespread forecasts of extensive famines. Inequalities are being exacerbated rather than

reduced and there is nothing to indicate that, as things stand, this trend will change of its own accord. The multilateral system is under stress and is facing an inescapable choice: either be the tool providing a solution or the guardian of an unjust situation. Unfortunately, the current imbalances may pave the way for new balances that are comfortable for certain economic or political sectors, but not for the rest of humanity. Multilateral organizations should not ignore this, as addressing such challenges is their very reason for being.

The conclusions of this Conference are a step in the right direction, and we hope that other agencies will act in the same way, placing humans at the centre of their policies.

Today, more than ever, we need to align our actions with these guidelines. Even if the results are not all as expected or the most brilliant, they will undoubtedly be better than a lack of joint action by countries.

Respect for the identities of capital and labour and social dialogue as an instrument at the service of equitable development remain values that must be promoted, as we have done in this meeting.

The “new normal” to which we aspire will require greater, continuous efforts and, of course, changes in certain paradigms. The economic norms and international financial architecture that were once deemed useful need to be reviewed, as the representative of my Government stated.

I have already said it, but it is worth repeating: the strongest certainty that this pandemic and the tragic current events have left us with is that the ethical choice of placing people at the centre of all policies is the only way forward.

The agreements we have reached in the various discussions share a common basis: in these circumstances, we cannot leave anyone behind. An active State, workers with rights, enterprises with the best environment in which to progress and an equitable distribution of the results of this progress remain the starting points for the new normal.

During this session of the Conference, we addressed key issues. We dealt with the situations that most impact on the dignity of work, and we made good use of the Organization's instrument for this purpose, the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards.

We made progress in improving our labour citizenship, with the right to a safe and healthy working environment being incorporated in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, granting the status of fundamental Conventions to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

We recognized the basic rights of dignity of work in the maritime sector, such as drinking water, healthy food and minimum standards of social protection.

We placed greater emphasis on the phenomenon of the social and solidarity economy, which implies recognizing these types of organizations as specific and growing agents of the productive framework.

We dealt with employment and apprenticeships within a dynamic that is increasingly demanding that workers possess greater and different skills, and also as a fundamental way of facilitating entry into the labour market for the most vulnerable groups of the population, with an emphasis on gender equality.

All the conclusions were accompanied by a road map with specific roles for the State, employers and workers, which is empirical evidence that the road to a fairer world is built by all of us.

During the World of Work Summit, we heard interesting exchanges of different views, needs and demands that show the complexity of the current landscape and the difficulty for both governments and multilateral organizations in finding a uniform response. Perhaps there is no such thing and we will need responses as diverse as the demands and needs.

Mr Guy Ryder, I would like to state, at this last session of the Conference under your leadership, that your work has been invaluable. Social justice, dignity of work, the importance of entrepreneurship, the role of the State and social dialogue were at all times at the core of your actions. The Organization now serves its constituents more efficiently thanks to the administrative reform that you spearheaded.

The Centenary Initiatives were also a hallmark of your leadership. The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, with its human-centred approach and its call to action, reminded us of the starting point and end goal of any exercise aiming to change our reality, the reforms needed in organizations within the multilateral system and the ILO's rightful place within the system in order to achieve a world that is fairer, with urgent attention to those most in need, more sustainable and more resilient.

Dear Guy, as well as respect, I have a particular fondness for you. You are a very special Englishman. You speak perfect Spanish, with an Andalusian accent. You are a fan of football. You have an appreciation for my country, despite Maradona's two goals in Mexico in '86. And you attempted to write a thesis on Peronism, a task that I, as a Peronist myself, do not envy. I would like to thank you so much, on my own behalf and on behalf of the constituents, for your leadership and wish you all the very best in all of your future endeavours.

Mr Ryder

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

I feel pretty sure that we are all sharing a sense not only of satisfaction but also of some relief, as we arrive at the end of a Conference session that has been important, harmonious and productive. Important, because, after the interruption and the complications of the last two years, so many of us have been able to come together again here in Geneva, to renew old contacts, to make new ones and to be able to interact in ways that are still so difficult when we see each other only on the screen. We owe a lot to those participants who have connected remotely, often at great personal inconvenience. At the same time, I think we have reason to conclude that, having weathered the storm of the pandemic, we are now recovering the normal institutional life of our Organization.

As our Credentials Committee reported yesterday, no less than 177 of the ILO's 187 Member States have participated in this session of the Conference, with just over 4,000 people taking part. I think that this is conclusive evidence of your continuing engagement with the ILO globally and demonstrates that this global parliament of labour is alive and well. The only negative in all this is that the rate of participation of women has fallen back to 36.5 per cent. We simply must do better.

Yes, this session has been remarkably smooth and harmonious. That may partly be because we value meeting again in person; a sort of post-COVID "bounce". But it also has to do, I think, with a sense of our collective responsibility. A collective responsibility to find agreed

solutions in the face of the quite dramatic challenges facing the world of work, challenges that were very clearly highlighted at our World of Work Summit yesterday.

That does not mean that our debates have been easy. As always, Governments, Employers and Workers have defended their positions and interests with their habitual skill and determination. Long hours have been worked. But everybody has gone the extra mile to produce the agreed outcomes. This is tripartism at its best: it shows what we are capable of achieving and it is why the ILO matters.

So, what have we to show for all these efforts? Well, firstly, a very concrete demonstration of what the ILO's standard-setting and supervisory functions actually mean and what they can produce. I have said to you on numerous occasions how crucial these functions are and, do not worry, I will not belabour the point again.

But it is of great importance that this Conference has laid very strong foundations for the adoption of a Recommendation next year on a framework for quality apprenticeships. By doing so, it has shown that we are able to elaborate new standards to meet key labour market challenges, and I have to say that I hope that this will continue in the future. Apprenticeships, by facilitating school-to-work transitions and helping tackle the scourge of youth unemployment, need to be a bigger part of the future of work and that is exactly what next year's Recommendation can help bring about. As we heard this morning from people who have done apprenticeships and who know best, these are not "second best" pathways.

Let me also acknowledge the importance of the amendments that we have just formalized to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended. This is a demonstration of the adaptability of that Convention, which has extraordinary importance in the current circumstances in that sector.

We all agree that standards – or at least Conventions – once set need to be ratified, and once ratified need to be applied. It is above all our Conference Committee on the Application of Standards that helps us to make sure that this happens, and when it does not, to make sure that corrective action is taken.

So it is particularly good news that the Committee has once again completed its onerous and sometimes sensitive and difficult work successfully. I am aware – and we are all aware – of the complexities and the controversies that have surrounded the Committee's work in recent years. As I remarked at the opening of the Conference, some of them have yet to be resolved and they need to be. But even with them, the results obtained – in respect of individual country cases, in respect of the general theme of key actors in the care economy and in respect of the overall working of the standards system – are truly remarkable.

Over the years, let me say that I have come to understand that the functioning of the Committee on the Application of Standards is as good an indicator and barometer as any of the overall health of our Conference, and on that measure, I would conclude that this year we have done pretty well.

That does not mean that I am unaware that the Committee's work generates discomfort, and even confrontation. Of course it does. Maybe that is inevitable, and maybe it is even necessary. But during this session of the Conference I have, outside the meeting rooms, received alarming, even harrowing testimony of the situation of people whose lives, livelihoods and liberty are in the balance and where it is above all in the Committee on the Application of Standards that our capacity to come to their assistance resides. I think that a certain level of discomfort in the meeting rooms of Geneva does not weigh very heavily beside our collective

responsibility to come to the aid of such people. Doing that is simply part of the job we come here to do, and we must never retreat from it.

Recurrent discussions on the strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda have become an established item on the agenda of the Conference. That does not mean that they have become routine. Let us remember that their rationale is embedded in the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, 2008. The idea is to better capture the real needs and priorities of constituents and on that basis to shape and to develop ILO programmes and activities that respond to them.

I think that this year's recurrent discussion on employment policy has served that purpose admirably. It equips the Organization to integrate, into its overall endeavours to promote human-centered recovery, employment policy interventions that properly align with the realities that confront Member States and equally to contribute to international initiatives – most notably the United Nations Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. I want in particular to urge Member States to support and to commit to the Global Accelerator.

In this context, it is important that the social and solidarity economy has, through the general discussion dedicated to it at this session of the Conference, received appropriate recognition as a key source of decent work. The ILO's engagement in this area is anything but new. In fact, it is as old as the ILO itself. And yet the conclusions adopted are still something of a breakthrough this year. Fundamental issues of definition and of policy have been given substance and guidance has been provided for intensified support from the ILO and from the international system as a whole for the actors of the social and solidarity economy, whose activities are, after all, so closely aligned to those of our Organization.

All of this is a remarkable harvest of achievements for this Conference. But I do not think that I will be saying anything controversial if I recognize that the decision to lift a safe and healthy working environment to the status of a fundamental principle and right at work under the terms of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 1998, is perhaps the most significant outcome of all.

When that decision was adopted, a number of you said that the Conference was making history. It is now our responsibility to make a difference. Because we have made a collective commitment to act together – and frankly, to act better than we have in the past – to make everybody's work safe and healthy. The extent to which we honour that commitment will be measured in terms of accidents and diseases prevented and ultimately lives saved. What indeed could be more fundamentally important than that?

Let me complete this balance sheet of achievement with a few words about the plenary debate on my report on the least developed countries. Of course, the discussion on that report has not resulted in any specific conclusions by the Conference. That was not the intention. However, that does not mean that it will be without consequences. Indeed, I very much hope that the debate will act as something of a catalyst, because speakers from all groups and from all regions concurred with the central proposition in my report, which is that this Organization, with its universal mandate for social justice and its commitment to leave no one behind, must act on its particular responsibilities to its least developed Member States. If we are serious about this, then the Doha Programme of Action and the forthcoming Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Doha in March 2023, are excellent opportunities for us to take up these responsibilities.

In similar vein, and in the light of what is contained in the Appendix to my report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, let me express the hope again that we can renew our efforts to mobilize resources to step up technical cooperation, particularly for the National Employment Strategy.

If we can close this session of the Conference and return to our countries with the sense of having done important work successfully, then that is due to the efforts of a very large number of people: the members of the national and international delegations who, under the leadership of the President and the Vice-Presidents, have, through their commitment, skills and sheer hard work, negotiated the texts that we have adopted; the ILO staff who, with their usual dedication, professionalism and expertise, have, as many of you have been kind enough to recognize, given you the support and orientation you required to get that job done; all of those who have kept us safe, healthy and fed; the interpreters, who, in ways which continue to command the admiration of us all, enable us to communicate with and understand each other, and who occasionally, I suspect, improve significantly on what we actually say; and more than ever, our technology operators, who have made it possible for this hybrid session to work so smoothly. Every one of them, visible or less visible, whatever the job they have done, has been brilliant, and they deserve the thanks of each one of us.

This is my last intervention at the International Labour Conference and so I want to extend my personal gratitude beyond the participants in this session to all those with whom I have had the pleasure and privilege of working during my time as Director-General and, indeed, for many years before that. I do not, I have to say, have any feelings of regret at stepping down now, except that it means parting with so many good friends and colleagues, from all groups and from all regions, and I have learned a great deal from them all. I have many friends and no enemies of which I am aware. I have been very fortunate.

Let me give recognition in particular to my predecessor, Mr Juan Somavia, who is with us today, and who did so much to develop my capacity to do the job I am doing now. I would also like to recognize, for slightly different reasons, my wife Carine, who is sitting next to Juan. I have to say, that it is because of Carine's love, support, tolerance and guidance that I have been able to bring whatever I have been able to bring to this Organization.

The feeling I have is not one of sadness. The feeling I have is that of coming to the end of a long day's work – a meaningful day's work – done together with good and skilled colleagues; a bit tired, it is true, with the understanding that the job is far from completed and that the challenges ahead are formidable, but also with the firm conviction that, under our new Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo, the objectives of this Organization will be carried forward with determination, commitment and skill. He will have, as I have had, the advantage and the privilege of leading an extraordinary group of colleagues in the ILO Secretariat.

I am not going to inflict upon you any message of advice for the future, nor reflections on the achievements and frustrations of the last ten years. Those things are generally not very helpful, and you have more important things to think about. Also, it is getting late. But I will conclude with a quotation that has inspired me ever since I took up this job, and I hope that it will encourage you all as you take the ILO forward. It comes from the great Jean Jaurès, who was assassinated on the eve of the first global conflict that eventually gave birth to the ILO. He was assassinated because of his intransigent defence of the cause of world peace. Jaurès said:

(The speaker continues in French.)

“Labour should be a function and a joy; yet, all too often, it is nothing more than servitude and suffering. It ought to be the struggle waged by all of humankind united against inanimate

things, against the fatalities of nature and the miseries of life; yet it is the struggle of humankind against humankind [...] amid the violence of unlimited competition.”

(The speaker continues in English.)

I think that this is as good a statement as any of the meaning and importance of the mandate of the ILO and of the challenges ahead. And I wish you all the very best in your continuing journey along the very long road to social justice.

The President
(Original Spanish)

Having listened to such statements, I would now like to give the floor to those delegates who have expressed a wish to pay their compliments to the Director-General.

Ms Hornung-Draus
Chairperson of the Employers' group of the Conference

On behalf of the Employers' group, I would like to take a moment to express our deep appreciation to Guy Ryder for his dedication and commitment over the past decade to the International Labour Organization and, of course, to the various sessions of the International Labour Conference.

Guy, your departure is still months away, but we wanted to thank you in this supreme body of the ILO for your strong and consistent dedication to our common values and to the needs of the different constituents of the ILO, including, of course, of the Employers.

Without a doubt, you were an exceptional trade union leader, being one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the International Trade Union Confederation, and you were the first General Secretary of that organization.

You were the Director-General of the International Labour Office during a turbulent decade. When you were appointed, we were still dealing with the scars of the 2008 financial crisis. Later on, the multilateral system came under threat, and just now we are still experiencing the consequences of a global pandemic, to name just a few examples. A crisis can either make or break you. You navigated the International Labour Office through these crises, and of course through other crises, with great skill and understanding of the needs of the constituents. We certainly have not always agreed with your approach, but we respect your willingness to listen, we admire your strong commitment to the International Labour Organization and we really appreciate your proximity to all constituents, no matter what the hierarchy.

Let me end by highlighting what is, in my opinion, one of the most important achievements of the ILO during your mandate: the adoption, in 2019, of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. You supported the Committee of the Whole in this global process, leading to a consensus on this landmark document. It has all the potential to impact this Organization and the action that the Office and constituents take for decades. This, Guy, is a very impressive legacy. We know, of course, that you will stay connected with the ILO community, but for now let me thank you again for your work here and your unwavering commitment to social dialogue and social justice. Thank you, dear Guy.

Ms Passchier Chairperson of the Workers' group of the Conference

I need a bit more time than my neighbour, and I know we all want to go and enjoy the beautiful sunny day outside, but I think after ten years of the Director-General leading this Organization, we also need to reflect and celebrate.

Guy, long ago you very successfully led the international trade union movement through stormy weathers. And let me tell everybody who has not been in a trade union organization that if you can manage the manifold challenges of keeping a global trade union movement together – which is like keeping frogs in a wheelbarrow, as we say in my country, or herding cats, as they seem to say in English – you can lead just about any organization. So, the Workers were very proud to see you elected to lead this very august house. It shows that all of us, representatives from all sides, can rise to the occasion of serving the public cause, as we also see many of our former trade union and Employer colleagues on Government benches.

When you were elected, Guy, I am not sure that you were aware of the scale of the challenges that were before you. To begin with, as Renate also said, the financial crisis, which for workers meant large-scale unemployment, with austerity measures, and public spending on social protection heavily under pressure. Then I have to mention, of course, the 2012 crisis, where the Employers' group challenged the right to strike in relation to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), shaking our supervisory system to its very core. Then in 2015 an agreement, maybe more a truce, allowing the supervisory system to resume its functioning more or less properly, although the conflict is still lingering on, and in my view now really needs to be resolved. But that will certainly also be a challenge for the next Director-General. And I should mention, importantly, the start of our work on the Standards Review Mechanism: the Tripartite Working Group has held six successful meetings to date but has also had challenges within them. At the end of your tenure, you had the pandemic, the war in Ukraine and the many other wars raging in the world, geopolitical tensions and a multilateral system under enormous pressure.

You led the Organization with a firm hand through all these storms, navigating the challenges with a strong focus on the tripartite mandate of the ILO for social justice and peace, with tenacity, impartiality and integrity. There were important achievements: the inclusion of decent work and social protection in the UN Sustainable Development Goals; the ILO taking on an increasingly important and visible role in the UN system; and although standard-setting was increasingly a difficult issue – and still is, I think, a difficult issue – we saw the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, come into being, which is a very important achievement; likewise, the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), and of course this year we started the discussion on apprenticeships.

But what you will certainly be remembered for is what Renate also mentioned: you organized the Organization's thinking, focusing in on the reasons for its existence for over 100 years, with seven Centenary Initiatives, a Global Commission on the Future of Work, and then indeed a Centenary Declaration, which both Renate and I were on, together with one of the Deputy Directors-General. (I always tell people that we were in the dungeons of the Palais, as we did not see any daylight. Although here in this beautiful room we do not see a lot of daylight either.) We came out with a very important product that is still very relevant, even though the world has seen some further storms since 2019. And at the same session of the International Labour Conference, we saw the adoption of the very important Violence and

Harassment Convention (No. 190) and Recommendation (No. 206), 2019. Last but not least, as I said yesterday, we all gave you a goodbye present, which we just celebrated with a picture, which is the addition of a fifth fundamental right to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

This is the International Labour Organization. It is not the organization *of* the workers, but the organization *for* the workers. You were not the workers' Director-General, but everybody's Director-General. Thank you very much, Guy, on behalf of the Workers' group at the ILO, and also on behalf of all the workers of the world.

Ms Daytec

Government (Philippines) speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the Government group of the Conference

I would like to say, first, that the Government group's statement will be delivered by various speakers, from different locations in the world and in different languages, to show the universality of our message.

Ms Fohgrub

Government (Germany), speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chairperson of the Government group of the Conference (Original German)

This 110th Session of the International Labour Conference is the last we will have with Mr Guy Ryder as our Director-General. That is hard to believe. He has been Director-General of the ILO for a decade and through nine sessions of the International Labour Conference. It is difficult to imagine the Organization without him.

He is leaving us at a turning point in history, when we are realizing more than ever the value of tripartite cooperation. We need this cooperation to navigate the challenges in our efforts to achieve the goal of social justice through decent work. This is a period when we are witnessing rising inequalities in a world of work whose patterns are changing. At the same time, the world of work is struggling to recover from an unprecedented pandemic.

Mr Samasme

Government (Morocco), speaking on behalf of the Africa group (Original Arabic)

Mr Ryder has always been truly the personification of tripartism: the heart and soul of the ILO, which sets it apart from the other organizations in the UN system. Many of us recall that moment when he accepted his election as the tenth Director-General of the ILO in 2012 with these memorable words, and I quote:

Let us hold on also to what we have and what is invaluable to us and in us. The capacity that we have in the world of work – employers, workers and governments – to sit down, to talk, and to find good solutions. The idea that tripartism is not a conspiracy against good decision-making but a pathway to social justice.

Ms Durbin**Government (Australia), speaking on behalf of the Asia and Pacific group**

Mr Ryder envisaged and worked for an ILO that is relevant to all workers, including those in the informal economy and those in vulnerable situations, as can be gleaned from his report to the session of the Conference we are concluding today.

Under Mr Ryder's strong leadership, major instruments that promote social justice through decent work were adopted by the ILO: the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, to address modern forms of slavery; the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation (No. 204), adopted in 2015; the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, (No. 205), adopted in 2017; and the Violence and Harassment Convention (No. 190) of 2019.

Mr Carvajal**Government (Chile) speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries
(Original Spanish)**

Moreover, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), was universally ratified. Mr Ryder also launched a robust campaign for the ratification of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization Instrument of Amendment, 1986, which now only requires a few more votes for its entry into force, including those of three Member States of chief industrial importance.

During his term of office an important road map for a human-centred future of work was adopted, which not only constitutes a strong reaffirmation of the ILO's social justice mandate and of the crucial role of social dialogue and international labour standards, but will also guide the work of the ILO in the coming years. We also wish to make reference to the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which served as the basis for the Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient, issued this past year. A further milestone in Mr Ryder's success story is the decision by this very session of the Conference to adopt a safe and healthy working environment as the fifth fundamental principle and right at work.

Mr Dedieu**Government (France) speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States
(Original French)**

We are certain that the initiatives that Mr Guy Ryder promoted were anchored to the shared values and principles of the International Labour Organization and did not deviate from the ILO's mandate, including the enforcement of its standards system. The same may also be said about his programme of reforms, which he pursued passionately. He demonstrated his openness to constructive criticism. One example is that the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee reported to the Governing Body that the ILO is a cooperative organization that is willing and able to implement audit recommendations. A similar observation was made by the Member States who headed the Multilateral Organization Performance Network (MOPAN). It is beyond doubt that the ILO's leading role in the United Nations system in guaranteeing decent work was strengthened under his leadership.

Ms Draksler**Government (Slovenia) speaking on behalf of the Eastern European group**

Mr Ryder will forever be remembered for his leadership in times of crisis. When our Organization had to deal with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed his skilful management as he steered the ILO to be visible, relevant and useful. He made sure that the ILO's doors were open for business, even though most of the Office's operations had to be carried out virtually. The communication channels with the ILO's tripartite constituents, including with the Permanent Missions, were constantly open.

Ms Daytec**Government (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the Government group of the Conference**

While we are saddened to see Mr Ryder go, we are excited to welcome Mr Gilbert F. Hougbo in October 2022 as the new Director-General of the International Labour Office. We congratulate him on his election. There is no doubt that he is a worthy successor to Mr Ryder, with his impressive credentials and a remarkable, proven track record, to lead an international organization. He is no stranger to the ILO, as he served as Deputy Director-General prior to his current position as President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development. It is also important to point out that when he was Deputy Director-General, Mr Ryder was the Director-General and they worked as a team. We remember that when Mr Hougbo spoke after his election, he committed to continuing the remarkable programmes of his great predecessor. We are therefore confident that the transition between these two great men will be seamless.

We further note that Mr Hougbo is the first person from Africa and from the Global South to be elected to the top of the organization that works for, and strives to create, decent work globally and a working environment that provides workers and employers with a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress. We are hopeful that he will bring to the Organization perspectives that will make the ILO mandate of promoting a fair globalization and social justice through decent work more inclusive. We assure him of the support of the Government group for his successful leadership.

We thank Mr Ryder for his great service to humanity and wish him happiness in his retirement.

We look forward to working with Mr Hougbo and the Employers' and Workers' groups for a world of work that will benefit everyone everywhere, leaving no one behind.

Ms Qian**Government (China)
(Original Chinese)**

China congratulates all participants on the successful conclusion of the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference and wishes to thank all organizers and all the technical staff.

We would also like to thank Director-General Guy Ryder for his contribution to the international labour movement over the past decade. Under his leadership, the ILO has provided timely and effective policy advice and technical assistance to Member States in terms of promoting decent work, improving social security and strengthening the protection of workers' rights and interests. The ILO's position in global labour governance has also been

enhanced. China is particularly grateful to Director-General Ryder for his interest in employment and social security questions in China, and for the fruitful cooperation between the Office and China. China looks forward to further strengthening cooperation with the ILO in the future and jointly promoting the global labour cause. We wish Director-General Ryder all the very best.

Lastly, we would like to wish all delegates a safe and smooth return journey.

The President (Original Spanish)

The 110th Session of the International Labour Conference has been an extraordinary session for us all, as circumstances finally allowed us to meet in person after so many months. We have appreciated the importance of face-to-face negotiations to achieve the tripartite consensus that has characterized our work. This consensus has been reflected in the excellent outcomes of our session.

In the Committee on Apprenticeships, a standard-setting discussion was initiated that will facilitate the inclusion of young people in the labour market. We have broadened the horizons of our work with the discussion on decent work and the social and solidarity economy. Together, we have succeeded in strengthening the ILO's framework of fundamental principles and rights at work by including occupational safety and health in this framework. I think that we can congratulate ourselves on the excellent results we have achieved together this year.

Mr Ryder Director-General of the International Labour Office and Secretary-General of the Conference (Original Spanish)

I have one last statement to make to the Conference, and the reason I am asking to take the floor is in order to fulfil a long and important tradition of this house. I would like to present the President with an engraved gavel, which is a symbol of his authority at this session of the Conference, but above all it is a token of appreciation from all the delegates present here. If we have had a successful and productive session of the Conference, it is largely thanks to his presidency.

The President (Original Spanish)

Thank you so much, dear Director-General. I am now going to use my new gavel to declare the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference closed.

(The 110th Session of the Conference adjourned sine die at 5.30 p.m.)