



**Speech by Mr. Omar Faruk Osman Nur, General Secretary of
Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) at the 107th
Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC)**

WORKERS' DELEGATE FROM SOMALIA

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Speech to the International Labour Conference Plenary

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Chair

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU), I bring you fraternal greetings from the working women and men of Somalia. Indeed, it gives me great pleasure to address the 107th session of International Labour Conference.

I would like to congratulate the ILO Director General, Mr Guy Ryder, for the well-researched and thoughtful reports that he has presented to this august assembly for discussion.

The Director General's reports on women at work initiative, the ILO centenary initiative on women at work and the conference agenda item to address violence and harassment at work are all key in our quest to circumvent obstacles to gender inequality, in particular, the structural factors that are responsible for the marginalization of women at work and community.

These reports have clearly outlined the achievements, lessons learnt and challenges encountered by the Office and Member States towards the realization of the of goals of Decent Work Agenda and gender equality in the world of work and in the wider society.

Somalia has been plagued by crises engendered by a barbaric and cyclic natural disasters for more than two decades. This dark history of our country is a universal knowledge. Despite this challenge, we Somalis are hopeful and committed to a better future by consolidating the gains and dividends of peace and resilience that characterize post-conflict and fragile states.

Gender-based violence and decent work deficits are key chronic issues in Somalia. Women are not only breadwinners, they are also the economic backbone of our society but this has for too long gone unnoticed in our besieged country. Violence against Somali women is unbearable as they face on a daily basis inconceivable levels of discrimination in the workplace and at the community level.

For this reason, the Federation of Somali Trade Unions (FESTU) supports the adoption of a comprehensive ILO Convention and Recommendation on "Violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work".

As this conference unfolds, the Somali government has made a significant positive move in adopting the Sexual Offenses Bill, which combats sexual harassment and violence against women, and protects women who are regularly abused. We congratulate the government for this historic initiative, especially the wonderful work of the Minister of Human Rights and Women, H.E. Deqa Yasin for challenging the dangers and ensuring that this bill is tabled.

No country desperately needs decent work more than Somalia. Endemic poverty, mass unemployment and underemployment are basic problems that are preventing the realization of peace and stability in Somalia. Yet, Somalia does not have an operational program on decent work. This unfortunate situation has left the majority of our youth at the mercy of extremist armed groups who have forcefully conscripted them within their ranks to unleash mayhem on the population.

The Somali authorities must provide an enabling environment for the operationalization of the DWCP and must uphold the respect for freedom of association and social dialogue. This is the reason that both workers and employers' organisations in Somalia are fully supporting the Global Deal Initiative as a unique platform for social dialogue, decent work and inclusive growth.

The status quo, with union leaders and activists hounded and denied their legitimate rights and space is unacceptable. Indeed, we expect our government to encourage and empower trade unions to help with the peace process and the task of inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

The time is ripe for legislative intervention. In line with the ILO's principles and standards, all draconian decrees and laws that have infringed upon workers' and unionists' rights in Somalia should be repealed from our statute books immediately. Compliance with international labour standards will do much to ensure the national development.

I am thoroughly convinced that working together between trade unions, government and employers is irrefutably, the path towards achieving our shared developmental aspirations.

I thank you.

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