

## **Speech ILC 2018**

Minister Koolmees

6 June 2018

Dear Mr Chairman, Director-General of the ILO, social partners, Member States, ILO officers, NGOs and other guests.

It's a pleasure to speak here today at an organisation that is so valuable to us.

The ILO sets the international standard as far as labour and social security are concerned.

And it has done so for almost 100 years.

But I have to say, the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is slightly ahead of you.

And I guess it will always be so.

By exactly one year.

Because this year we are celebrating our 100th anniversary.

Of course, who is counting, at the respectable age we have reached!

I believe that our celebrations will look quite alike as we have a similar history as well as shared challenges, both at present and in the future.

Our shared past is one of social dialogue.

In the Netherlands, we value this dialogue enormously. It has become part and parcel of our decision making processes in areas where diverse economic and societal interests come together and do not necessarily align.

It has proven to be a powerful instrument to bridge differences of opinion in a peaceful manner,

and it has brought us many positive things.

A joint commitment to employment.

The willingness of employers to support vulnerable groups.

A trade union movement that is constructive, even in troubled economic times.

Similarly, on a global scale, the ILO has been successful due to its tripartite structure.

Indeed, the ILO is the only UN organization that has brought and continues to bring governments and social partners together.

By doing so, these partners can reach a consensus on issues that matter in the world of work, while respecting each other's viewpoints.

This is a history we should cherish and foster.

ILO's tripartite structure can contribute to our efforts to create a level playing field in our labour market, and to our continuous fight for decent work. Also, it can help us reach the Sustainable Development Goals, for example in relation to child labour.

More generally, we can only promote social justice, equality and sustainable development, if we combine our efforts.

The Netherlands will continue to invest in the ILO, both financially and with our efforts to build bridges between the three ILO constituents.

Let's also celebrate recent successes. In this respect I would like to mention the report of the Director-General of the ILO on gender equality. I wholeheartedly support the central conclusion of the report. Yet the road to gender equality is a long one. The ILO must remain committed to achieving equality of opportunity for women and men.

Reaching the age of 100 by no means implies that it is time to rest on our laurels.

You can only keep up by looking ahead.

Looking ahead requires updating our way of working to present standards.

Both on a national and global level, we have to ask ourselves how effective the treaties and recommendations are that we have drawn up and implemented over the past 100 years.

The Netherlands therefore supports the modernization process initiated by the UN Secretary-General, and also, more specifically, the initiative by the three constituents of the ILO to

set up their own committee regarding the modernization of conventions and recommendations. The Netherlands is a member of this committee and we will continue our efforts to support its undertakings.

Modernization is especially important now that the world, and particularly the world of work, is changing so rapidly. The conventions and recommendations should sustain the protection level that we have accomplished, but need to be more goal-orientated. The supervisory system of the ILO should be modern enough to keep track of what is happening in the members of the ILO.

We are facing similar questions on a national and global scale.

How can we better handle further globalisation and anticipate robotization?

What will the future of work bring us?

And how can we assure this future will be a bright one?

These are questions we need to answer. Together.

Dear Mr Chairman,

I will conclude.

The ILO can make a tremendous difference in the world

by creating a level playing field as far as labour and social security are concerned.

Let's commemorate the past, while making future plans. I look forward to the ILO's centenary next year, and the results of the Global Commission on the Future of Work. Thank you.

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