

# STATEMENT

61<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women



International  
Labour Office

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## MESSAGE BY

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Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, H.E. Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota,  
President of the General Assembly,  
Secretary-General of the UN,  
Vice President of ECOSOC,  
Executive Director of UN Women,  
Ministers,  
Representatives of women organizations, trade unions and civil society organizations,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

This year's theme for the Commission resonates strongly with the mandate of the International Labour Organization.

In many ways the quest for women's economic empowerment will be lost or won in the world of work. It will be reflected in whether and how women gain entry in the labour market and the terms of their engagement in the world of work - whether in fields or factories, service centres, households or boardrooms.

The world of work is changing rapidly. Where that change will lead in terms of supporting women's economic empowerment, is not clear. Nor is it preordained. What is clear is that to secure a better future of work for all - the right policies and measures must be put into place now.

In 2019, the ILO celebrates its centenary. As we took stock of the world of work to begin charting a course for our second century, a striking feature was the lack of progress globally on women's empowerment and gender equality. Despite a clear rights case, a strong social case and an increasingly persuasive business case for improving both the quantity and quality of jobs for women, women were still losing out.

Consequently, the ILO made the Women at Work Centenary Initiative one of its seven Centenary

Initiatives.

One line of enquiry was to better understand the obstacles to progress, as well as to challenge assumptions of what women want in the world of work. So the ILO partnered with Gallup to design new questions for Gallup's World Poll. The Poll was conducted in 142 countries and territories, with interviews of almost 149,000 adults.

The joint report, "Towards a better future for women and work: Voices of women and men" was launched on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March, and provides the first ever account of global attitudes and perceptions of women and men regarding women and work. The findings are very revealing, and go to the heart of the deliberations of this Commission.

This survey clearly shows for example, that It gives grounding to the need for family-supportive policies, which enable women - at all levels - to remain and progress in paid employment and for men to take their fair share of care work. These are crucial steps towards gender equality and economic empowerment and to delivering on the aspirations of both women and men.

Moving forward the findings of the Report support a policy agenda that must include:

- A clear focus on the care economy, itself a rich source of future jobs, including the link between unpaid care and paid work. This and the measures that support both work and family life are the subject of several ILO Conventions, and feature in our Women at Work Centenary Initiative and the Future of Work Initiative.
- Ensuring equal pay for work of equal value. It is unacceptable that women today earn on average 23 per cent less than men. The ILO's Convention on Equal Remuneration for Work of Equal Value provides direction in this regard.
- Preventing and addressing violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work. In this area, the ILO's tripartite constituents have agreed to adopt new international instruments.

Inclusive job creation, education and training also remain important objectives of the policy agenda. At the same time the role of collective voice and representation in advancing women's empowerment is fundamental. The ILO's Conventions on freedom of association are a powerful complement to those on the right to non-discrimination in the quest for gender equality.

The ILO is firmly committed to joining our efforts with those of the UN family and others to support the implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We bring our decent work mandate to the challenge of making the future of work we want - a future where women's economic empowerment, gender equality and social justice are features of and drivers for a better world.

Thank you.