



Statement by

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Candidate for the post of Director-General of the International Labour Organization

and Motivation | Settings Priorities | Improving Delivery | Experience and Motivation | Settings Priorities | Improving Delivery | Experience and Motivation | Settings Priorities | Improving D

Our world faces a global jobs crisis. While economic growth is considerable in some places, overall unemployment and social exclusion are on the rise; enterprises are under pressure; investment and access to credit are lacking, and the gap between the wealthy and the poor is widening. Countless women and men around the globe feel excluded from the world of work, their dignity denied. Global leadership faces the challenge of turning this situation around. The contribution of the International Labour Organization is indispensable.

The new Director-General must ensure improvements in ILO's delivery and efficiency, while building on the major accomplishments made during the tenure of the current DG, Juan Somavía, in particular the Decent Work Agenda. The ILO should broaden the Agenda's scope and impact by connecting the inextricable objectives of job creation, sustainable enterprise and labour standards as the path to economic development and social progress.

If elected Director-General my objectives will be:

1. to make job-generating growth a key target of national and global economic policy;
2. to ensure that ILO standards and goals are implemented worldwide and to promote access to decent work and social protection floors;
3. to support national and international efforts aimed at all-inclusive education, vocational training and the employment of young people.

Making a difference and being a credible partner in global economic governance will require a comprehensive internal reform agenda. The leadership I will provide towards this effort will engage constituents and build on:

- *impartiality*, in order to strengthen the ILO's consensus-building capacity and to be seen as a true representative of the ILO's unique tripartite constituency and method;
- *experience* in government in promoting employment, sustainable enterprise, social protection and labour legislation;
- a *record of managing* the complexity of a large international organisation and of building consensus among multiple parties;
- a *commitment to in-country action*, with an aim to transfer resources from Headquarters in order to strengthen local impact;
- a *background outside the organisation* that makes it possible to take a fresh look at the internal status quo.

The Governing Body (GB) and the International Labour Conference (ILC) guide the Director-General's work. I will ensure that my leadership and actions are in keeping with the interests and priorities of the membership as a whole. I have personally engaged with and consulted many ILO constituents over the past several months, and as Director-General I will continue to do so.

Settings Priorities

Global advocacy and governance

The ILO is the organisation that stands for the real economy, where work, education/training and entrepreneurship are central to productivity and prosperity. It builds on tripartism and social dialogue, with the ambition to put 'labour' on equal footing with 'capital'. It acts in support of corporate social responsibility initiatives. The ILO's visibility and influence have been reinforced by its active role in the G20 process. Its relevance and added value will be further tested by its ability to deliver timely and substantively, on the basis of a two-sided complementarity with, in particular, the World Bank and the IMF. The ILO must strengthen its knowledge base and data collection practices by focusing its research efforts on job-generating growth and by delivering on policy recommendations on enterprise and work in countries themselves, in support of effective tripartite action. The enormous potential of learning from and strengthening south-south cooperation should be recognized in advice and action. Prioritising jobs and decent work will also be of crucial importance for attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

Decent work in practice

Expectations differ about the ILO's role in promoting and supervising labour standards, which are at the heart of its unique mandate. A renewed effort is required to reinforce the consensus. Do standards meet today's expectations? How should they be formulated to have a real and universal impact? How can technical assistance to member states be delivered in a more effective and efficient way? And how will the supervisory system be made more flexible and up to date?

The Director-General should bring all sides together to enhance the implementation of standards for decent work, in addition to the ongoing priority of ratifying and implementing the eight core labour conventions in which the fundamental principles and rights at work are enshrined.

Furthermore, in many parts of the world, the informal economy is flourishing, to the detriment of workers' rights and the rules of fair competition. The ILO's efforts must be directed at strengthening governance and tripartite practice to establish rights and rules. Decent work conditions and sustainable social protection floors cannot be achieved without turning around the informal economy. The ILO should step up action in support of the common interests of employers and workers to address this fundamental obstacle to progress.

Common ground in employment relations

The ILO should not shy away from recognising fundamental changes in the world of work and commit to seeking common ground between employers' interests and workers' concerns. The ILO should also, in relevant situations, address migration issues and the prospect of an aging work force. Reforms should be part of a fair deal, which recognises key conditions for enterprise productivity

and competitiveness, on the one hand, and vital requirements for workers' protection and skills development, on the other. These ought not to be contradictory, and I am determined to direct the ILO's efforts and potential towards bringing more unity to the world of work.

Accelerating gender equality

While the ILO has long been a staunch advocate of the equality of women at work, there is a need for further efforts to match policy statements and action. In many parts of the world, discrimination and lack of opportunity stand in the way of recognising the rights and potential of countless girls and women. In seeking stronger synergies with UN Women, a more concentrated effort should be made to acknowledge the 21st-century reality that economies stand to benefit from the talents of ever more qualified women.

Improving Delivery

The recent reform process undertaken by the Governing Body is an important step to ensure the focus and timeliness of the debate that will be necessary for increasing the ILO's relevance and influence. The internal organisation and work processes should be geared towards that goal. If elected, I will therefore:

1) Emphasise country work

A shift of emphasis is needed in order to provide policy and technical support to constituents in countries. Attaining maximum impact will require scaling up operations, such as through "Better Work" and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, and seeking synergies within the UN. More than ever, such an effort is a necessary corollary to the ILO's higher profile in global policy. For example, poverty reduction strategies in sub-Saharan African countries cannot succeed without job creation; and political stability in Arab countries and elsewhere is directly linked with providing training, work and business opportunities for young people to contribute to the future of their societies.

2) Promote change for results

With this in mind I intend to oversee a thorough "scan" and review of current activities, staffing and budgets, examining current practices in the light of criteria for tangible results and greater resource efficiency. This will ensure that scarce human and financial resources find their way to the priorities of today and tomorrow. Sharpening the focus of programmes and management and transferring resources from the Headquarters budget in order to better support activities and constituents in countries themselves will be key to realising change.

Given the ILO's tasks and ambitions, the Director-General should be ambitious in mobilising resources. As a prerequisite, the ILO should be accountable at all times for making good and efficient use of taxpayers' money, especially in periods of austerity in many member states.

In effecting internal change it is vital to recognise the staff community as a major asset of the organisation's capacity to accomplish its mission. It is necessary to take seriously into account the views, skills and diversity of staff – at Headquarters and in country operations alike – and ensure merit-based recruitment and appointment practices.

3) Strengthen governance, accountability and transparency

I intend to seek permanent improvement concerning the standards of governance, accountability and transparency to which the ILO adheres. Auditing and oversight practices should be in accordance with generally established principles at public organisations. This includes recognition that management stands to benefit from recommendations by the Independent Advisory and Oversight Committee.

The interaction between the Director-General, the ILC and the GB should be such that constituents feel substantively and equally engaged in decision-making processes. Reform should include increased transparency with regard to the implementation of GB and ILC decisions by the Office and a firm adherence to results-based management, supported by a rigorous evaluation system. Measuring results should be more than process management. After all, it is on its contribution to job creation and social progress that the ILO's relevance will be judged.

Experience and Motivation

In my view the new Director-General should be prepared to take on different tasks simultaneously: to make an impact on the global agenda, strengthen country assistance and manage the Office well.

As a Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, and serving at the World Bank, UNDP and as the Secretary-Generals Special Representative for Iraq, I have been privileged to be in positions that provided me with the opportunity to show concrete results. These experiences have provided me with the motivation and skills to lead the International Labour Organization towards its centenary, working together at all times with the tripartite membership and acting with impartiality in representing the interests of government, workers and employers alike.

Moving the ILO forward and achieving results requires the conviction that economic growth and social development are intertwined; the determination to connect principles of global governance with the reality of countries; and an all-out drive to defend the interests of women and men aspiring to a decent job and income and a better future for their children.

This is my pledge: to help the ILO and its constituents to go the extra mile towards prosperity and social justice for all.

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