

## Plenary sitting

### Closing of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference

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Friday, 21 June 2019, 10 a.m.

*President: Mr Elmiger*

## **High-level section**

### **The President**

*(Original French)*

I call to order the 19th plenary sitting of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference.

On the occasion of the celebration of the Centenary, the Conference has the honour to receive the visit of His Excellency the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr António Guterres.

### **Statement by His Excellency Mr António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations**

#### **Mr Guterres**

Secretary-General of the United Nations

You come together at the 108th (Centenary) Session of the International Labour Conference during a time of profound turbulence and tests. Globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution are delivering immense opportunities and daunting challenges. Tremendous economic gains at the global level have not been shared equally among or within countries, and those on the margins of our societies are paying the highest price. So is our planet.

More than ever, we need global responses to global challenges; yet, more than ever, multilateralism is under fire. Our problems are becoming more complex, yet our responses are becoming more fragmented, and everywhere we see deficits of trust and a surplus of fearmongering. You could call it an age of disillusion, and the most effective way to rebuild trust is by listening and by delivering. The International Labour Organization plays a central role for one simple reason: its agenda is at the centre of people's concerns – the dignity of decent work, a fair globalization, social justice for everyone, everywhere.

Taking on such large and sweeping challenges is familiar territory for the ILO. It is part of its DNA, and it is the reason the Centenary Session of the International Labour Conference has hosted dozens of Heads of State and Government over the last few days. Indeed, it has brought together one of the largest United Nations (UN) gatherings of world leaders outside of the opening of the General Assembly at UN headquarters in New York. This is not only a testament to the relevance of its mandate, it is an affirmation of the power of multilateralism that it represents. As Director-General Guy Ryder said last week, this is a Conference of confidence; confidence in the capacities of the ILO, and confidence – and I quote – “to construct a future of work with social justice for all”. I thank you for that. You are carrying forward a torch that was lit 100 years ago to help build a new world. A world based on social justice, founded on a model of inclusion, with governments, workers and employers at the decision-making table together.

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From day one, the ILO has been a trailblazer, starting with that unique tripartite structure. In its first decade alone, the ILO established labour standards on a range of issues, including working hours, women's rights, safety and health on the job, protections against child labour and forced labour, and safeguarding the rights of indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. Many of these topics were rarely addressed in the corridors of power. Yet, the ILO forged ahead with its Constitution, reminding the world that – and I quote – “universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”.

In 1944, the Declaration of Philadelphia reinvigorated the ILO's mandates for the post-Second World War challenges. The reformed Constitution captured the mood of old times: “Labour is not a commodity”, it stressed; “Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere”, it boldly told the world. These principles represent the first instance of an international organization making the link between human rights and development, and paving the way for the adoption in 1948 of the landmark Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Decades later, the ILO was among the first to raise warning flags about the negative effects of globalization through the 2004 Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. This far-reaching call for building a fair globalization drew attention to the principle of decent work, which underscored the importance of the quality of work, not just the quantity. That principle is now well established in the policymaking arena, even in sectors beyond those related to employment. It is interwoven through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and at the heart of development itself. It is also integral to our shared reform of the UN development system, which is fundamentally about delivering on the 2030 Agenda for people. That means making sure the sum of our efforts is greater than the parts, through coordinated results-driven action on the ground. As we do so, we will continue to ensure that all mandates are fulfilled, with full accountability to the ILO Governing Body and to our collective commitment to advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Put simply, for the ILO, the reform we are undergoing means recognizing the unique nature of its tripartite governance model and ensuring that people everywhere benefit fully from your unique specialized expertise. I thank the ILO for its support. The world needs a stronger UN development system, and the UN development system needs a vibrant ILO as a critical member of its family.

With this Conference, the ILO embarks on a new chapter. It is not just celebrating a centenary, it is building upon a legacy of achievement guided by the age-old vision of social justice through social dialogue and international cooperation. I congratulate the ILO on adopting a Convention on violence and harassment in the world of work and, of course, the ILO Centenary Declaration that it will adopt later today marks a historic opportunity to open a door to a brighter future for people around the world.

The Declaration is ambitious, setting out the basis for delivering the ILO's mandate in its second century. But the ILO Centenary Declaration is much more than a statement of wishes or intent. It proposes a shift in the paradigm of how we look at development. The well-being of people must be at the centre of economic and social policies, and we must devote special attention to those who have been left furthest behind, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, older persons, women and young people in vulnerable situations. The guiding principle in all our work is the promotion of human dignity, and decent work is synonymous with a life of dignity.

The Declaration also highlights the interlinked nature of our challenges. We cannot have a more equitable future of work without sustainability, and we cannot have a sustainable future for the world of work without an urgent and definitive response to climate change. Addressing the climate emergency is indeed the defining issue of our time. Climate action could create millions of sustainable jobs. Green business has proven to be good business, but climate change is moving faster than we are, and we are risking a future with

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increased instability, inequality and poverty. That is why I am convening a climate summit this September in New York. We need to inject momentum into transforming our political and economic systems and meeting the targets of the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Declaration will help us to do that, focusing minds and keeping up the pressure.

Our world is in a period of unprecedented change, encompassing climate, demographics, technology, society, and so much else. The world of work is profoundly affected by these factors. Those changes also offer exciting opportunities, but they generate fear, anxiety and the feeling of instability. I welcome the recommendations of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, which fits seamlessly with the findings of my own High-level Panel on Digital Cooperation. As we look ahead, we know new technologies, especially artificial intelligence, will inevitably lead to a massive destruction of jobs and the mass creation of new jobs.

It is difficult to foresee all those impacts now, but it is clear that the future will require a range of new and different skills. More profoundly, the concept of work itself is evolving. There will need to be a new balance in the relationship between work, leisure and other activities, and we are not yet prepared for that. We need massive investment in education, but also a different sort of education; an education rooted not just in learning things, but in learning how to learn, and then education that accompanies people through the years to ensure lifelong learning in an effective way. We also need a new generation of social protection for people, and we will need to mobilize governments and all actors like never before.

Classical forms of decision-making will not often apply to a new generation of challenges that are moving at warp speeds. Analogue policymaking will not work in the digital world. As the pace of change increases, we must reimagine mechanisms for cooperation governance, involving the private sector and civil society and drawing in others with expertise, and the role of ILO partners is an essential one. It is here, once again, that, even 100 years on, the ILO remains ahead of its time, bringing employers and workers into the decision-making process.

*(The speaker continues in French.)*

The world has changed profoundly over the past century, but the basic needs of people remain the same. The thirst for social justice is greater than ever, and more than ever we need the ILO. We can breathe new life into the social contract and strengthen social justice. We can overcome disenchantment through advocacy and optimism. A human-centred agenda will continue to restore trust, reduce inequalities, ensure gender equality and surmount many of the failures of recent economic and social policies.

That is why the ILO Centenary Declaration is so decisive. It is not just a milestone, important though that may be in the remarkable work of the ILO; it will also provide an essential road map for the coming century. Through it, we can move closer to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda and make progress in building a sustainable future for all.

Yes, this is an ambitious Declaration, but setting ambitious goals and achieving them is part of the ILO's history. Thanks to your efforts, it will also be part of its future.

**The President**  
*(Original French)*

On behalf of my fellow Officers and all Conference delegates, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you for having honoured us with your presence today and having shared your thoughts and your vision.

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I hereby adjourn this high-level section, organized as part of the 19th plenary sitting of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference.

*(The Conference continued its work in plenary.)*

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Friday, 21 June 2019, 6.30 p.m.

*President: Mr Elmiger*

## **Signing of instruments adopted by the Conference at its 108th Session**

**The President**  
(Original French)

The Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206), and the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work have been adopted by the Conference at its Centenary Session, which will mark the history of the Organization. I invite the Director-General of the Conference, Mr Ryder, to accompany me to the desk so that we may sign together the instruments adopted today.

*(The President and the Director-General of the ILO sign the three instruments.)*

## **Closing statements**

**The President**  
(Original French)

The Conference, assembled at its 20th and last plenary sitting, has achieved its goals. The time has come for our closing ceremony and I shall call on each of my fellow Officers to make their concluding remarks to our assembly.

**Ms Mugo**  
Employer Vice-President of the Conference

What an intense two weeks it has been! We have consumed thousands of cups of coffee and stale UN sandwiches. We have namechecked the most inspirational world leaders from the past 100 years. We have criss-crossed the Palais and worn out the soles of our shoes. And we have demonstrated the unique value of tripartite social dialogue in action – the good, the bad and the ugly.

Even though we are justifiably exhausted, we can be proud of ourselves for engaging in healthy and constructive tripartite dialogue in order to find workable solutions to complex topics across the three committees. These committees were also complemented by a series of thematic panel discussions, in one of which – on child labour – I was honoured to participate.

We need to recognize our collective efforts as the real work starts after this Conference is over, following a short rest for all of us I hope. It is our joint responsibility to translate the policy goals of this house and the commitments made into concrete actions for governments, employers and workers on the ground.

And what an ambitious set of goals we have! The ILO Centenary Declaration negotiated in the Committee of the Whole, whose report we have just adopted, is no ordinary document; it is the compass that will guide the direction of the ILO in the next 100 years. As is to be expected of a document of this high-level nature, achieving a satisfactory outcome has taken a lot of effort, very long hours and big compromises by all constituents. We thank everyone involved for getting the text over the finishing line.

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The Committee of the Whole quickly became known as the “COW” – and now I am not so sure if it is the “Donkey” – but it was known as the “COW”, which is fitting given that we held this discussion in Switzerland. With so many chefs in the kitchen and such a huge beast to tame, it is no surprise that the negotiations dragged on in order to avoid messing up the ingredients or ending up with uncooked “steak tartare”. While we may not have rustled up a perfect sirloin steak worthy of a Michelin star, we also have not made minced meat of the COW.

The Declaration and resolution will give us direction not only for the next 100 years, but in the short and medium term. We are satisfied that the role of the private sector as a generator of employment and decent work has been recognized. We look forward to the ILO strengthening its focus on enhancing productivity, strengthening policy guidance and skills and tackling informality. The Employers will continue to support, and remain engaged with, the work of the ILO.

Turning now to violence and harassment at work, the Employers are very pleased that we have created an ILO Convention on violence and harassment at work. It was always our goal to find an instrument to tackle this unacceptable form of behaviour. Over the past two years, we have had an intense and, at times, emotional debates on how to create a Convention that is balanced and can be widely ratified and implemented on the ground.

We are pleased that the text of the Convention addresses most of the Employers’ biggest concerns; this means that we have laid the foundations for policy development and global action by governments, employers and workers in order to end violence and harassment in the world of work.

The accompanying Recommendation has not, in truth, achieved quite the same positive outcome for the Employers’ group with its problematic scope, its overly prescriptive provisions and its failure to explicitly mention LGBTI people. However, we accept that compromise was needed in order to reach agreement on this text. As my colleague and our spokesperson, Mr Mdwaba, says – and said very passionately during the Committee’s work – “Discrimination is discrimination.”

The Convention rightly covers all workers, and its Recommendation has broad language on vulnerable groups in conformity with international labour and human rights standards. But the two-year negotiations on this Convention also showed that a number of delegates remained trapped in the grip of homophobia and transphobia. This is not a complete shock, but the process has reminded us of the challenge: to ensure that all workers and all employers do, in fact, have protection from harassment and violence at work.

Allow me now to turn to the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS); it is a staple of the International Labour Conference and, once again, its deliberations took place in a constructive spirit as we saw from the team this afternoon. This is essential in order to iron out the differences among the tripartite constituents, and between the CAS and the Committee of Experts.

The Employers’ group is especially pleased that this year’s CAS addressed a balanced shortlist of 24 cases that included a case of progress. It examined 19 cases relating to the fundamental Conventions, three cases relating to priority Conventions and two cases relating to technical Conventions, all of which took into account regional balance and the country’s level of development.

The Employers would like to acknowledge the many people who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to keep the show on the road this past fortnight. This includes the very dedicated ILO staff led by Director-General Guy Ryder, the large UN team at the Palais, the caterers and, of course, the interpreters. We would also like to thank all the world leaders for

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coming to the Conference and addressing us. It has been a who's who of the world stage, and their participation demonstrates the ILO's importance as the most unique multilateral organization that we have in the world today.

So on behalf of my group – the Employers' group – I would also like to thank our fellow constituents and the many Government representatives from national labour ministries, the permanent missions in Geneva and other arms of government. And of course, we would like to express our thanks and gratitude to the workers' organizations for their passion, commitment and compromises. Compromise is the nature of this game and through frank social dialogue and a willingness to listen, we have achieved outcomes that will guide the world of work in the future. Lastly, I would like to express gratitude for the inestimable support, during this Centenary Conference, of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE); the whole team which formed the secretariat of the Employers' group; and the ACT/EMP team.

As I conclude, I want to quote the Secretary-General of the IOE, Mr Suárez Santos, who said last week, during a speech in plenary: "A hundred years on, the union between employers, workers and governments is as important as ever. Let us go forward hand in hand." And with this, I thank you all most sincerely and wish you safe journeys back as you go home.

**Mr Dimitrov**  
Worker Vice-President of the Conference

It has been an honour for me to serve as Worker Vice-Chairperson on the occasion of this Centenary Session of the Conference, where we are celebrating a movement – not the single Organization only, but a global movement – which, as the Prime Minister of Norway said at the beginning of this Conference, has been fighting for social justice for 100 years.

As regards the Workers' group, we celebrate the adoption – after an eight-year break by this Organization – of a standard-setting instrument in the form of a Convention and Recommendation eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work and of the Centenary Declaration of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which marks the tripartite commitment to social justice.

The Committee on the Application of Standards showed once more that the supervisory system is healthy, objective and strong for the new century. The negotiated instruments recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment and commit governments, in consultation with employers and workers, to developing and implementing an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach for the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work. Through their forward-looking approach, the instruments recognize the impact of domestic violence on the world of work and suggest action to be taken in order to mitigate this impact. We now invite all Governments to ratify this landmark Convention.

The Workers' group would have welcomed a more visionary and ambitious Centenary Declaration. Yet we are committed to working with Governments and Employers to shape a future of work that realizes the ILO's founding vision of social justice in the twenty-first century.

We welcome the clear statement that all workers, regardless of their contractual arrangements, should enjoy a floor of labour protection: a guaranteed and reliable shield that prevents labour from becoming a commodity.

This labour protection floor includes respect for fundamental rights, an adequate minimum wage and maximum limits on working time: as flexible as the workers want, since

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some Governments want to have flexibility, but a maximum limit on working hours. Let us just remind ourselves that 36 per cent of the global workforce is working more than 48 hours a week and, in most cases, not voluntarily, so this labour protection floor that we really want to see should also include safety and health at work. We also strongly support and welcome the tripartite commitment to include safe and healthy working conditions as an additional fundamental right.

What makes the ILO unique is its tripartite nature, its normative system and its core goal of social justice, which is a cornerstone of lasting peace. The promotion, defence and implementation, in law and in practice, of freedom of association and collective bargaining have been, and should be, the pillars of the ILO's work for the next century.

The Workers' group came to this Conference, guided by the Declaration of Philadelphia, in order to deal with unfinished business in the context of a changing world of work. Our commitment was translated into active engagement in the committees, in the thematic discussions and in the rich conversations that took place during the Conference. For each of our delegates, being here is an honour as they come here representing their constituents, who gave them the mandate to defend the interests of working people.

We are celebrating the Centenary here in Geneva. Some people start to speak about black holes, cows, bears, donkeys and many other animals, but let us not forget the people. All of us are going back home to face our realities and respond to our members: working people who, in many cases, are dealing with the same problems of indecent working conditions and salaries and indecent working hours, and whose right to organize and bargain is being denied or undermined. So we are here in order to keep working together for all workers and to make sure that they can enjoy their rights to the full.

A lot has been done during the past century, but a lot remains to be done. As many Heads of State have clearly and strongly pointed out, growing inequalities – and particularly income inequality among people and nations – are the main challenge threatening the social fabric of societies and democratic values.

In his opening speech two weeks ago, Mr Mdwaba said that the Report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work was not the ILO's last word on the future of work. The Report highlights many other challenges and inequalities that the ILO should address and, I believe, that the Governing Body should take into account, in giving effective direction on how to address this issue in greater depth.

The ILO is the house of social justice and, in order to keep on with the excellent work that it has been doing for a century, it should take seriously the fight against inequality as the backdrop against which challenges to the future of work are developing. We do need to tackle income inequality together if we want lasting peace. We need to support the ILO's efforts to take the lead in promoting policy coherence in the multilateral system and putting decent work at the centre of the global agenda if we want to stop growing populism and protectionism. We need to make freedom of association and collective bargaining a reality as the major tools for tackling inequality.

We will solve inequalities not with charity, but with real wealth redistribution. This is the real solution. We will solve inequalities not with collective begging, but with collective bargaining, which is fairly stated in the Global Commission's Report as a public good. The public good is collective bargaining. We need to address inequality, and we will not solve inequality if we do not have a universal labour guarantee with an adequate living wage, equal pay for equal work and universal social protection. We will only be able to share the fruits of prosperity and build a path towards sustainable development if we realize decent work in global supply chains.

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We are not afraid of the drivers of change in the world of work. We are optimistic by nature; otherwise we would not be here fighting for a better future. We have brought to the table the concept of a just transition. Now we want to turn it into a reality and a practice, to phase in this major transformation that we need to go through, to deal with climate change and digital transformation and, as someone before me said, to be masters of our fate. We insist that all workers must have the same rights as the basis for any conversation to deal with demographic changes.

At the end of my speech, I want to thank all of the workers involved in the preparation, organization and implementation of this Centenary Conference, the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and ACTRAV included. Our commitment is clear and we want a stronger ILO for the next century.

As we said many times during the Conference and in the streets of Geneva on Monday, it is time for a new social contract that definitely includes the internationally recognized right to strike for the next century. We badly need this new social contract in order to restore trust and mutual respect in the world.

**Ms Izata**  
Government Vice-President of the Conference

Two weeks have passed since the opening of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference and 100 years since the beginning of the ILO journey, during which Governments, Employers and Workers have worked together tirelessly to achieve the results you are enjoying today. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to all the Heads of State, Heads of Government, Prime Ministers, Vice-Presidents, Ministers of Labour from member States and Worker and Employer representatives who took time from their busy schedules to celebrate with us the Centenary of the one of the most important and successful multilateral organizations, which remains a unique Organization, especially in the challenging economic and social circumstances faced by the world today.

At the outset, allow me to recall some of the statements made in this plenary that undoubtedly should guide us for the next decade. May I cite, especially, Ms Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, who stated that “the principles that cause us first and foremost to respect the dignity of work, to respect the decency of work, to respect the principle that burdens must be shared fairly, but equally, that bounties must also be shared fairly; those are the only constants that we can assure ourselves of in 10, 20, 30, 50 or 100 years from now”; and the Secretary-General of the United Nations who assured us this morning that the UN system needs a vibrant International Labour Organization as a critical member of its community.

In the same vein, recalling the discussions during the session, I would like to begin with the Committee on the Application of Standards, which is the backbone of the ILO. We reaffirm the examination of its working methods and the discussion of general aspects of the application of Conventions. This led to important recommendations and to the insistence that member States should meet their obligations under the ILO Constitution. The Committee, as we know, examined 24 cases on the application of Conventions that have been ratified. This was done on the basis of observations contained in the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards. The governments that were invited presented information on their specific cases in the light of their circumstances, thus recommendations were made and possibilities for technical assistance were offered. The adoption of a Convention on the eradication of violence and harassment in the world of work, which offered fruitful discussions in the Standard-Setting Committee on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work, will contribute to addressing the lack of international regulation, and many member States can certainly incorporate it into their national legislation. We hope that

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it will enhance the capacity of constituents in the application of good practices resulting from the Convention.

Finally, with the adoption of the ILO Centenary Declaration, we believe that the conditions are created for the ILO to continue to contribute to social justice, peace and the promotion of equality between States, as well as to help member States to cope with changes in the world and the new social challenges that they entail. Such principles can only be fully achieved when all regions are represented equally in decision-making bodies, without any member State being left behind in this process of democratization and governance of the ILO.

The unprecedented changes we are facing in the world of work and the emergence of new technologies will force many of us to rethink and create new alternatives to tackle those changes. The ILO, in view of the challenges ahead and through the Global Commission on the Future of Work, which was established in 2017, identified and proposed measures to reduce and take advantage of the variations that are already taking place in the world of work today. We are looking forward to future exchanges of views, ideas and experiences on this issue.

May I take just one minute to thank the Ambassador of Peru, Ms Alfaro Espinosa, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, for her comprehensive report on the period 2018–19, during which she achieved tripartite consensus on some notoriously complex matters.

These are my modest impressions of the Conference and I am proud to have been of service to the Conference.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate all the participants for the results achieved during this Centenary Session of the Conference.

**Mr Ryder**

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

Let me say that, throughout this Centenary year, I have often had the occasion to ask myself what I will be in a position to say from this podium at the end of the Centenary Session of the International Labour Conference. I think you can understand why I ask myself that question, because we have set high ambitions for this Conference. I think that we are all aware that a lot was riding on our success in bringing about a successful outcome to this Conference – a lot for our own Organization, but a lot as well for those who we work to serve. Why do I say this? Because, I think more than has been the case for a long time, we are all very much, in this Centenary year, in the public eye; people are watching, people are listening to us and people must be asking themselves a certain number of questions. They are asking if this is an Organization that can really come up with the credible responses that people need – and demand – about their working life today and tomorrow. Can they look to the ILO to build that future of work that they really want, with all of the worries as well as the opportunities that are out there?

Beyond that, would we be able to bring our respective positions and different interests and come to consensus together and, by doing that, demonstrate once again that social dialogue truly is, and remains, the key to good decision-making when it comes to the world of work? Would we be strong enough? Would we be principled enough to continue to uphold the application of the rule of international labour law through our supervisory processes? Would we be able as well to add to our normative instruments when there was such obvious need to do so? In our Centenary year, would we be able in this – as the Secretary-General of the United Nations phrased it this morning – “age of disillusion” to provide as well an

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example of how the multilateral system that started with, and was built from, the ILO is capable of providing the responses to the global challenges that we all face together? So, in the face of those questions, how have we done? What has the world heard and seen from us in these last two weeks in Geneva?

Firstly – and this has been commented upon already – the fact that no less than 34 Heads of State and Government have done us the honour of participating at our Conference speaks volumes, I think, about the respect that is held for this Organization. It speaks volumes too about the expectations that the world’s leaders have of us all. But more important, I think, than the number of leaders who came here, are the messages that they brought. They brought messages of support, messages of confidence and messages of expectations, and so – let us make no mistake – a great deal is expected of the International Labour Organization. If other people are investing confidence and expectations in this Organization, we, as its constituents, can do no less than share that confident self-belief and that ambition and move forward to realize what is expected.

The Secretary-General of the UN said this morning – and it is important to note it – that, with its tripartite structure, the ILO was ahead of its time. He also expressed his confidence in us, making it clear that, having been ahead of our time in bringing together governments, workers and employers in the context of this 100-year-old social contract, the ILO has a key role to play in the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

With this extraordinary presence of illustrious guests at this session of the Conference – the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, the Director-General of the World Trade Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and the list goes on – we, the world parliament of labour, have turned up in force. We have had just over 6,300 participants at this session. We have had 178 out of 187 member States represented here. We have had 162 ministers. All of these are records; we have never done this before. I think that our energy and self-confidence are reflected in these numbers. The numbers are evidence of a vibrant Organization, an Organization that enjoys the engagement and the enthusiastic commitment of our Members. But I am conscious in a Conference where issues of productivity have been mentioned that it is not really the number of workers who come to do a job that matters, it is what gets done.

What have we done? Well, as we saw this morning amid scenes of justifiable enthusiasm, we have adopted a very important Convention and Recommendation on a very important issue, namely the abuse that violence and harassment at work represents. The Convention we adopted this morning is the first one we have adopted since 2011. I think it is important that the ILO’s standard-setting function is maintained and that we demonstrate at this Centenary Session that we are ready, able and willing to proceed with that process. This afternoon, we adopted the Centenary Declaration, about which I will say a little more in a moment. We have a budget, which was adopted rather quietly earlier this week, that implies a modest increase in our real resources. I say “modest”, but it represents as well a serious effort by our member States, for which I am duly grateful and which I recognize. And yes, we have done our supervisory job as I said at the opening sitting, which is not the easiest part of the work that the ILO does, but it is certainly among its most important dimensions.

In the light of what has been said this afternoon, let me just make two brief comments. Firstly, when it is a question of reform, or of modifying or improving our standards activities, we are doing it. One of the Centenary Initiatives that has been put in place – and has been pursued with great assiduity – is specifically aimed at reviewing our standards and the manner in which they are supervised and at making improvements wherever necessary.

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My second comment is that, whatever the criticisms may be of the ILO's past performance in supervising its standards, let it never be forgotten that the most historic achievements of this Organization have been brought about through perseverance and principle, an approach which comes from our supervisory system. I can see no future of the ILO where that will be different.

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019, that has been adopted, has been the subject of a number of comments. I think that we have a very powerful Declaration that can take us forward, because our work on the future of work does not finish with this historic session. What we have adopted today is, as has been said, a road map, a compass to take us forward in the future of this Organization, because the future of work is the future of our Organization. I learned in the negotiation of this Declaration that what for one person is vision, ambition and necessary is, for another person, unrealistic, utopian and out of reach. That is the nature of social dialogue and that is the reason that we have the Declaration that we have. But we will go forward on the basis of what is in the Declaration, and on the basis of the resolution which accompanies it, in the first instance, to prepare our programme and budget proposals in November and to steer our Organization in the direction that you have instructed us to follow.

As we move forward, one lesson of this session, I think, and frankly every other session we have had, must be borne in mind. The progress that we make, what we accomplish and sometimes what we fail to accomplish is entirely dependent upon our capacity to engage constructively in social dialogue, to listen as well as to talk, to weigh in the balance the views of others with our own views, and to be faithful to the social contract of tripartism for social justice.

That is what has taken us forward in this session of the Conference, although it has been an up and down story. It has been rather like the weather outside there in Geneva; sunny periods and then some rather violent storms, but in the end we came out in good shape.

So we go forward in that spirit. It has fallen to all of us – staff and constituents – to be a part of this historic Centenary Session. In some ways, I think we have had a great amount of good fortune to have been here. All of us can say not only that we were here, but that we met our responsibilities to make this Conference a success and to fulfil the purpose for which we were all sent to this job; for that, I thank you and I congratulate you.

**The President**  
*(Original French)*

Allow me to thank you for having granted me the great honour of presiding over the Centenary Session.

Our Conference is the global parliament of labour. It gives governments and the social partners a unique opportunity to debate social questions and decent work. In this respect, international labour standards play a central role. One hundred years after the founding of the ILO, and in the current context of globalization and digitization of the economy, tripartite discussions are more important than ever. I would therefore like to start by expressing thanks and appreciation to all the tripartite delegates and technical advisers. Without their commitment, the Conference would not have the same impact. The smooth running of the Conference is also predicated on perfect preparation, painstaking organization and cooperation between all teams.

The international labour standards were duly supervised, in a spirit of tripartite social dialogue, with a view to promoting and respecting Conventions that have been ratified.

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We adopted a robust and operational budget that should allow the ILO to pursue its mission for social justice in the service of peace.

The thematic forums fostered discussion of issues of central importance for the future of our societies, for work and for our respective economies.

We also had fruitful discussions on the Reports of the Director-General, the Global Commission on the Future of Work and the Chairperson of the Governing Body.

On 14 June 2019, the Conference showed that it stood with the cause of women in Switzerland and around the world. I applaud that step and that awareness, which shows that multilateralism and solidarity are more than just words; they also lead to action.

In addition, in terms of the smooth running of these two weeks of intense work, I would like to express cordial thanks and deep gratitude, first to the Officers of the Conference, the Vice-Presidents: Ambassador Izata, Ms Mugo and Mr Dimitrov. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Director-General Guy Ryder, and the ILO senior management team. My sincere thanks also go to the staff made available to the Officers, particularly the entire team of assistants that the secretariat placed at my disposal, and all those in charge of protocol, who have been with me throughout this wonderful adventure.

I am endlessly grateful to the entire ILO protocol team. The high-level visits that we had the honour of organizing and the dignitaries and senior officials we received require thorough preparation. I was thinking about this again this morning, remembering an earlier discussion, on this very spot, with Ms Juvet-Mir, whom I thank. We came to the conclusion that a visit scenario or programme for a day was only final when the visit or programme was over. Before that, anything can happen. And I think we can say here, quite honestly, that everything ran like clockwork. That is good for the image of our institution; it is good for us, but it also enhances the institution's image.

I address warm thanks to the translators and interpreters. I extend sincere appreciation to the security services of the Palais and the ILO. I also send a huge thank you to the technical and distribution services. But now I would like to turn to my delegation, the Swiss delegation, and express special gratitude to its head, Secretary of State Boris Zürcher, and to all the members of the tripartite Swiss delegation who accompanied me with enthusiasm and dedication. My thanks to my compatriots also go to the representatives of the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva, and to my colleagues from Presence Switzerland, who helped us organize the very successful reception that you all enjoyed.

Lastly, I wish to thank the Government of Switzerland, the Federal Council, which showed that it had entire confidence in me and two members of which honoured our Conference with their presence.

I have no doubt forgotten many people who participated in the Conference and whom I should have thanked. I ask them to accept my apologies if I have omitted to mention them, and assure them of my warm gratitude.

This year, we specifically deliberated issues relating to the future of work and the fight against workplace violence and harassment. The words of the eminent persons who honoured our Conference by their presence heightened our awareness of the current and future challenges and opportunities facing the world. We had set ourselves ambitious goals. I believe I can say that we have achieved them all. The Centenary Declaration we adopted will strengthen the future role and mandate of the ILO and ensure social justice in keeping with the fundamental values of the Organization. The new Recommendation and Convention reflect the political will of the ILO tripartite partners to fight violence and harassment at work. Let us hope that the Convention will be widely ratified.

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From Geneva, the ILO, and more specifically our Centenary Session, have contributed over these past two weeks to the strengthening and development of multilateralism, a multilateralism that places men and women at the heart of our efforts. Our Conference, which is coming to a close, has had a special format and a unique meaning. It empowers the ILO to pursue its mission for social justice in the service of peace in the world, in a more people-centred world of work. It shows that the ILO is the only international entity bringing together players from the real economy to prepare the world of work without leaving anyone behind. I believe that we can say that our Conference will make history, just as the creation of the ILO marked a new era of social justice 100 years ago. Multilateralism and tripartism are the cornerstones of our commitment. Without them, the ILO could not continue drawing up the international framework conditions for fair economic and social relations. Without them, the fundamental rights and principles at work could not have a positive and lasting influence on the social well-being of all the world's countries. Without them, we would not be able to foster – or rather rebuild – trust in a socially and environmentally responsible economic model.

The Conference is ending – but our work continues.

The dignitaries who honoured us with their presence also left us with a task: to ensure that the commitments made at this Conference and over the last 100 years are honoured and discharged, both nationally and internationally. I therefore wish you courage and perseverance. I wish you every success in executing that task in the future. I wish you a safe trip back to your countries and simply say thank you to each and every one of you.

**Mr Ryder**

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

As you have seen during this session of the Conference, the International Labour Organization (ILO) is a modern organization, adjusting to new times. Changing, demonstrating its capacity to adapt, but, at the same time, this is a house of traditions as well, and one of the great traditions of this house – I cannot say if it is 100 years old, I have not been around that long, but it has been around in recent decades – is the presentation that we make to the President of our Conference as the proceedings come to a close. It has been the tradition of this house to present to the President of the Conference the symbol of his authority, this gavel with which he has controlled proceedings. I have to say, Jean-Jacques, you have done it with the greatest diplomatic skill and you got us into port really on time after an extraordinarily busy time.

I said at the outset that the election of Ambassador Elmiger as our President was testimony to the role that Switzerland, as our host State, plays in this Organization. We are extremely grateful for that. But it is also testimony, Jean-Jacques, to the role that you personally have played in this Organization for a very long time. I think you have probably been in this Organization as long as anybody here; you have been part of it since the early 1980s. Certainly, in my experience at the ILO, you have been a permanent and very influential presence in the Organization, and I know – not because we have already talked about it in these terms, but just from observing the role that you play – how much you identify with the values and objectives of this Organization.

I have noted that this gavel is exactly the same size as the one we present every year. I thought that, on the 100th year, we might give you a slightly bigger and more elaborate one. But it does not matter, what does matter is that when the history books of the future are written, it will record that the Centenary Session of the International Labour Conference was presided over by Jean-Jacques Elmiger. Merci, Jean-Jacques.

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**The President**  
(Original French)

I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference. I now use my gavel to declare the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference closed.

*(The Conference adjourned sine die at 7.40 p.m.)*