

## Plenary sitting

### **High-level section: Visits by Heads of State and Government and other distinguished guests on the occasion of the Centenary of the International Labour Organization**

#### *Contents*

	<i>Page</i>
High-level section .....	1
Statement by His Majesty King Letsie III, Kingdom of Lesotho .....	1
Statement by His Excellency Mr Salvador Antonio Valdés Mesa, First Vice-President of the Republic of Cuba .....	4
Statement by His Excellency Mr Iván Duque Márquez, President of the Republic of Colombia .....	7



---

Wednesday, 19 June 2019, 11.10 a.m.

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

## **High-level section**

### **The President**

I hereby open the 15th plenary sitting of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In order to mark the Centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Conference will be addressed by Heads of State and Government and other distinguished guests, who will gather to reaffirm their commitment to the principle of social justice upon which the ILO was founded 100 years ago and to share with the Conference their own experiences and their vision for the future of work. To begin this high-level section, we have the honour and privilege today to receive the visits of three of these guests. Without further ado, I give the floor to the first of them, His Majesty King Letsie III of the Kingdom of Lesotho.

### **Statement by His Majesty King Letsie III, Kingdom of Lesotho**

**His Majesty King Letsie III,  
Kingdom of Lesotho**

It is with great humility and gratitude that I stand here, joining the other Heads of State who have come before me, to address this high-level sitting of the International Labour Conference. I would like to convey my gratitude to the Director-General of the International Labour Office, Mr Guy Ryder, for his gracious invitation for me to attend this august assembly. I congratulate the ILO for organizing this commemorative session and I have no doubt that the 108th Session of the Conference will be remembered as a significant milestone in the 100-year history of the ILO.

The International Labour Conference has for a century stood as a world parliament where labour practitioners have converged annually to construct and shape labour practices and frameworks from which member States have drawn guidance and inspiration in developing their respective country policies and legislation. I am encouraged to observe that this forum has remained true to its primary task of striving for social justice by developing, reviewing and revising international labour standards, and holding constructive debates on critical issues and developments affecting the labour market. The instruments, declarations, discussions and conclusions of this Conference therefore remain an invaluable reference point for all member States.

The firm stance taken by the ILO in addressing the sensitive and complex subject of violence and harassment in the workplace is indeed laudable. We do hope that a Convention will soon be in place to protect workers from this kind of abuse. We are also mindful of the new challenges that the labour market faces with the advent of rapid technological advancements and other dynamics such as robotics and automation. While this process started a while back, the pace at which such changes are introduced to the workplace in this day and age makes it imperative for key institutions such as the ILO to be proactive in order to proffer advice on what the future may hold for the workplace. If this data revolution

---

unfolds in a similar manner to the Industrial Revolution, we must redouble our efforts in skilling and reskilling our workforces. Experience has taught us that job creation happens when human ingenuity is paired with knowledge-based innovation. Employers and workers alike have to find each other in this era of rapid technological advancement. Both parties should be able to adapt to a new environment of rapid technological developments.

I therefore wish to congratulate the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Prime Minister of Sweden for working tirelessly with the social partners to produce the report in which they have made a number of proposals regarding the future of work. The Director-General also deserves to be commended for his vision and stewardship in conceiving the idea of the future of work.

These Centenary celebrations held at the ILO headquarters are the pinnacle of a process of celebrations that commenced in our countries and regions. At the African continental level, celebrations were held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, during the 3rd African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Social Development, Labour and Employment. At our regional level, I am aware that celebrations at the Southern African Development Community (SADC) were held during the SADC Employment and Labour Sector meeting held in March this year in Namibia. In my country, we marked the Centenary celebrations by focusing on the most vulnerable workers in the labour market, namely workers in the informal sector and in the rural economy. The view of my Government is that we cannot talk about the future of work while we still leave the vulnerable members of the labour market behind. We thus found it appropriate and proper to solicit their views on the challenges they encounter around decent work, and in the process, ideas were exchanged and shared on how they can transit from the informal to the formal economy.

I remain in total support of the Universal Labour Guarantee, which is as relevant today as it was a century ago. This is the founding principle on which the ILO was established. The Universal Labour Guarantee addresses the critical challenge of unfair competition in trade across the globe as it ensures that basic labour standards are recognized by all member States. Hours of work remain important, as work has to be balanced with family and other social responsibilities. Similarly, workers have to earn wages that enable them to afford basic needs. The health and safety of workers is of the utmost importance, as an unhealthy workforce cannot be productive. Workplace accidents and diseases that are work-related should therefore be minimized, if not eliminated altogether. Last but not least, workers should be guaranteed earnings even when they become unproductive due to ill health, maternity leave and when they are laid off because of operational requirements. Saving for retirement is absolutely critical, as it relieves governments of the often unaffordable burden of supporting people in their old age who have spent many years in the field of work. While the Universal Labour Guarantee is not a panacea for achieving social justice throughout the world, it is a critical component of the realization of decent work. It therefore remains an undisputed fact that a labour policy or legislation that is missing any of these features will be regarded as wanting.

Permit me at this juncture to direct this august gathering to the important subject of governance, which is at the centre of the existence of the ILO. The uniqueness of this Organization in bringing workers, employers and governments together to discuss issues in which they have a common interest is truly commendable and should be emulated at all levels in our countries' public discourse. I wish to point out that we understand that workers and employers are the backbone of the economic development of all countries. As such, I support the view that this unique triangular form of dialogue should not be restricted only to traditional labour issues but should be extended to other platforms of national debate and discourse.

Nonetheless, no matter how strong this tripartite model may be, it still has challenges that have to be addressed. One such challenge is determining which party has the final say

---

in the event of a stalemate during the negotiation process. The general view is that governments, as the elected representatives of the people, should assume such a position. This is a matter that requires serious engagement by all stakeholders in order to arrive at a consensus. The issue of capacity-building is also important in order for a social dialogue to add value to economic development. I therefore submit that the social partners should be supported to acquire skills and knowledge so that they can serve their institutions efficiently.

The last issue on governance that I wish to address relates to the governance structure of our Governing Body: the governance structure of the ILO itself needs to be revisited. I am persuaded to support the notion that equality and fairness should be the basis on which the Governing Body of the ILO is constituted. By making this point, I am not oblivious to the history behind the current arrangement of having permanent members in the Governing Body. However, we call upon member States to accept that the governance of the ILO should be restructured in such a way that all regions have permanent member States. In other words, we expect the governance structure of the ILO to epitomize equality and fair representation. It is my fervent hope that the Centenary Declaration will highlight our aspirations for equality in the governance structures. If that were to be the case, the Declaration would go down as an important landmark in the long history of this institution.

I wish to now underscore with appreciation the role that the ILO has played in my country since Lesotho assumed membership of the ILO in 1966. At the outset, we wish to register our profound gratitude to the ILO and to the Director-General in particular – whom I had the opportunity to host in my country in July last year – for the generous support of the Organization to the Kingdom of Lesotho. We are particularly honoured by the fact that in recent years an office was established in Pretoria in the Republic of South Africa in order to serve accredited member States in the southern African region more efficiently.

We would like to point out that to date, with the kind assistance of the ILO, we have been able to achieve the following: the enactment of labour legislation that conforms to labour standards; the establishment of an occupational safety and health unit and the Directorate of National Employment Services; the establishment of the Directorate of Disputes Prevention and Resolution and the Labour Court; capacity-building of officers in labour administration; the development of the Lesotho Decent Work Country Programme; the development of the Action Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour; and the development of a national labour policy, to name but a few.

Having said this, I am aware that we still experience some challenges in labour-related matters. There are still a number of areas where we have fallen short in incorporating the application of certain Conventions into domestic law. We would like to point out that we are committed to addressing these issues so that we can demonstrate our appreciation of the importance of complying with international labour standards. As a result, we have heeded the clarion call made by the Director-General for member States to ratify at least one of the ILO fundamental Conventions. In this regard, I wish to proudly announce that Lesotho has ratified the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930. I have been advised that the process of depositing the instruments of ratification with the ILO is at an advanced stage.

Finally, I also wish to request the ILO to support us with their expertise as we embark on our national reforms in Lesotho. One of the important components of these reforms is public service reform, whose objective is to restore the public service to a politically neutral and service-oriented body. We are therefore pleased to announce that the Cabinet has approved a labour policy whose objective, among others, is to ensure that public servants enjoy their full rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining. We therefore look forward to working with the Decent Work Team in Pretoria on these national reforms.

---

The passion displayed by the Director-General for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a clear testimony to the fact that he aspires to promote social justice across the globe. This is truly commendable and we all need to follow his example. It is therefore with a sense of pride that I announce that the Government of Lesotho has also set up a National Coordination Structure to supervise the implementation of the SDGs. The fact that the Chairperson of this important committee resides in the office of the Prime Minister illustrates the seriousness that is accorded this high-level Oversight Committee comprising two houses of parliament, social partners, non-governmental organizations, faith-based organizations and civil society organizations. We therefore have a lot in common with the ILO, outside the traditional labour issues.

To conclude, I wish the Director-General and his team the very best in their efforts to shape the future of the world of work as they continue to work tirelessly to support member States to achieve decent work for all. I have no doubt that the Director-General will fulfil his dreams, as he has clearly demonstrated that he appreciates the pivotal role that the ILO plays in eradicating poverty and ensuring that the dignity of mankind is restored and maintained across the globe.

Even after 100 years, the ILO still remains a vibrant and living organization that is respected and admired by all of us. It is only through the support of its international and national partners that the ILO can carry out its mandate and be an organization that we can all be proud of. For this reason, my Government shall remain committed to supporting the work of the ILO and we look forward to further engagement, collaboration and cooperation with this noble institution.

**Statement by His Excellency  
Mr Salvador Ant3nio Vald3s Mesa,  
First Vice-President of the Republic of Cuba**

**Mr Vald3s Mesa**  
First Vice-President of the Republic of Cuba  
(*Original Spanish*)

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is celebrating its Centenary with great work in favour of social justice, the promotion of decent employment and the protection of workers' rights.

Much progress has been made since the founding of the ILO in 1919 after the First World War. The progress made by the international community in the recognition and protection of trade union freedoms, decent employment, paid rest periods, occupational safety and health, and equality and non-discrimination in employment, to cite only a few examples, can be attributed to the ILO.

Nevertheless, much remains to be done by this Organization; it must continue to work to solve long-standing problems in the field of employment and also to face new problems as a result of technological advances, the fast pace of which poses many challenges, as the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work rightly points out.

As we face this unfinished task and the new goals to achieve a world of work that is more dignified and sustainable, we must strengthen the commitment of all to the ILO and its mandate. Cuba feels justifiable pride and satisfaction to be a founding country of this Organization and it will enter the second century of the Organization's existence with the will to continue strengthening the bonds of cooperation with it and with the commitment that my country has always shown to protecting workers' rights and building a more just world.

---

The context in which the ILO has reached its Centenary is complex. We are very concerned to see how ideas and practices are advanced that dismiss multilateralism as a way to solve global problems and dangerously promote confrontation, aggressive rhetoric and enforcement. They promote disrespect for international law, violation of the Charter of the United Nations, interventionism and interference in the internal affairs of states.

Inequality and poverty are growing because of an unjust international order, with irresponsible and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and undemocratic financial institutions that lack transparency.

In 2018, 26 billionaires were wealthier than the 3.8 billion poorest people on the planet. The current international order makes social justice, decent employment and labour rights an illusion for millions of human beings in the world, including the most humble sectors of developed countries.

The effects of climate change are growing and some are already beyond repair, putting at risk the survival of the planet and the health and quality of life of present and future generations. In the world of work, climate change will result in the loss of millions of jobs. Yet the world's leading power, the United States, is seeking to avoid its historical responsibilities by withdrawing from the Paris Agreement on climate change.

In the wealthiest societies, there is a proliferation of supremacist ideas, hate speech, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance, particularly against minorities and migrants, which has a direct impact on employment. Minorities and migrants almost always face poor working conditions, little or no guarantees, low wages and high levels of exploitation.

Politicization, selectivity and double standards against developing countries are on the rise. Despite their immense wealth, industrialized nations have significant challenges in their own territories in terms of protecting workers' rights and trade union freedoms; they portray themselves as global examples and manipulate the noble objectives of this Organization in order to condemn countries in the South that do not bow to their interests.

Unfortunately, the International Labour Organization has not been exempt from these punitive approaches and selective practices against developing countries. It is necessary to continue to work on the improvement and transparency of the supervisory bodies and working methods of the Organization in order to enable it to better fulfil its mandate and not to have room for it to be manipulated for political purposes.

The imposition of unilateral coercive measures, contrary to international law and to the Charter of the United Nations, is a mechanism that some States use on an increasing basis. These measures have a highly negative effect on the lives of the populations on which they are imposed.

The Cuban people have had to endure nearly 60 years of the criminal economic, trade and financial blockade imposed by the Government of the United States against our country. The blockade is the main obstacle to development and a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of an entire people. It impedes better conditions of employment for workers, especially in terms of remuneration, and forces the State and Government of Cuba to make enormous efforts, under difficult conditions, to ensure safety and health at work and to offer all of society a greater and better social security and assistance.

Far from being resolved, the situation has been compounded for Cuba by the recent decision of the United States' Government to strengthen the blockade with the full implementation of the Helms-Burton Act, which constitutes a legal aberration and is not valid, as well as to the announcement of other measures of economic pressure and harassment, which also undermine international law and freedom of trade. With these

---

measures, they are seeking to internationalize the blockade against Cuba, stifle our economy and scare away foreign entrepreneurship so that it does not invest in the country, which has a highly negative impact on the Cuban economy, seriously affects foreign trade and investment

This neo-colonial law seeks to strip the Cuban people of their resources, property and hundreds of thousands of jobs in order to extract political concessions from the Cuban nation. However, it will not achieve the stated aim of forcing our people to surrender or breaking the will of our people to build their own future. This policy of outright hostility is rejected by the international community which, every year at the United Nations General Assembly, has called for an unequivocal end to the economic, trade and financial blockade of the United States against Cuba.

Cuba's commitment to the ILO and workers' rights has remained unchanged. As a sign, our country is a party to the eight fundamental Conventions of the Organization.

The objective of building an increasingly sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation, on the basis of which we have continued to refine the model of economic and social development, includes strengthening protection and promotion of workers' rights and freedoms of association. An example of this is the Republic's new Constitution, ratified in a popular referendum on 24 February by a favourable vote of 86.85 per cent of voters, following a broad, participatory and democratic process of popular consultation on the debate of the draft Constitution in workplaces and education centres and in communities.

The new Magna Carta of the Republic, which is one among other economic and social developments, further strengthened the recognition and legal protection of workers' rights, including those in the non-state sector of the economy. It recognizes the right to work and to gain decent employment, enshrines that all people without discrimination receive equal pay for equal work and prohibits the work of girls, boys and adolescents. It also recognizes and protects the right of workers to rest, to an eight-hour working day, to weekly rest and paid annual leave, as well as to social security protection when the person is prevented from working by age, maternity, disability, or illness. At the same time, it enshrines the responsibility of the State to organize the right to occupational safety and health and to organize institutions and services that support working families.

In addition, the Labour Code, adopted in 2013, ratified the protection of trade union freedoms, including the freedom to voluntarily partner and form trade union organizations. In Cuba, trade union work is essential for the realization of workers' rights and for the achievement of the economic and social objectives that we have set ourselves as a nation. The trade union organizations that comprise the Cuban Workers Centre are autonomous in nature. Their members approve their own statutes and regulations, discuss and take agreements democratically, and elect or dismiss their managers. They carry out their work without interference from the authorities and their leaders have the necessary guarantees for the exercise of their management. More than 90 per cent of Cuban workers are unionized. They are beneficiaries of social, participatory and democratic dialogue. Collective bargaining is a reality in Cuba.

Policies that promote full employment, encourage the inclusion of young people in work, protect women and the working family, and strengthen social security and social assistance have continued to be implemented in our country.

We have continued to promote access to work for people with disabilities without exclusion or discrimination, taking into account their choices, their level of training and the demands of the economy.



---

We have demonstrable results in terms of women's access to employment. Women, who make up the majority of the workforce in various sectors, enjoy equal rights to men, including in work-related matters; they receive equal pay for work of equal value and the maternity rights of working women are protected with specific rules and policies. We have continued to make progress on the right to equality which, in the workplace, has been expressed with greater safeguards against non-discrimination on grounds harmful to human dignity.

These are all permanent goals on which we will continue to move forward tirelessly and without regression. Our people, who have made the greatest sacrifices and faced the greatest dangers in preserving their sovereignty, deserve that their institutions should continue to work to improve welfare and social justice.

In the Centenary year of the International Labour Organization, we reaffirm the validity and relevance of its mandate. We are aware that the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro Ruz, expressed the view that creative work, work that is not the product of exploitation, work for the benefit of the worker and for the benefit of the people, is the most honourable occupation that we can have.

**Statement by His Excellency  
Mr Iván Duque Márquez,  
President of the Republic of Colombia**

**Mr Duque Márquez**  
President of the Republic of Colombia  
(*Original Spanish*)

I come before this plenary as President of Colombia, very proud and extremely motivated. One hundred years ago, this Organization was born. An Organization that, since then, has provided the world with the best ways and the best policies to foster tripartite understanding between the private sector, workers and the State. This exercise is unique and historic – because, for the first time, an international organization was founded with this tripartite nature to encourage understanding in policies that are beneficial for workers – and today it is celebrating its 100th birthday. We are pleased that Colombia, as a founder partner, as a founder member, is able to be here today to discuss with you all, to reflect with you on this important theme related to the future of work.

It is true for all of us that the things humanity is facing today, talking about the Fourth Industrial Revolution, are bringing enormous challenges for the future of work. That is why it is so important that countries adapt their policies and their initiatives so that the workforce will be triumphant and victorious when faced with so many technological changes, which most certainly generate pressure and permanent challenges for the type of work and the conditions governing recruitment and employment relationships. The Report on the Future of Work helps all of us to understand that the challenge of informality is significant and that it requires us to have the best instruments in place so that, in our societies, quality of employment exists alongside savings to ensure social protection for the elderly and, of course, the widest possible coverage of social security.

Decency in work is another of the pillars on which the Report is based, and that is in line with the monitoring mechanism of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), because decent work is the thing that brings permanent dignity to human capital and it also ensures that no person feels discriminated against or feels as though they are being treated as if they are inferior. And of course, we are facing an enormous challenge with regard to youth employment. There are many countries in Latin America, including Colombia, which are facing an enormous challenge because it is not easy to find formal and sustainable

---

employment for young people. We have unemployment rates that not only make us think, but also encourage us to make bold decisions from a regulatory point of view, so that more young people aged between 18 and 28 years can penetrate the labour market and begin to build their own protection through savings and social security, thinking about when they are older.

Likewise, we are facing visible challenges in the areas of forced labour, child labour, discrimination, and human trafficking in many parts of the world. These issues have been addressed in the Report, and have been the subject of comments that have been made here in this plenary, which motivate countries like Colombia to join together in this cause: to achieve the total eradication of child labour; to guarantee the dignity that is required across the whole labour market and to succeed in eradicating forced labour from the face of the planet; and, of course, to ensure that any labour relationship is based on recognizing the individual and strengthening the skills and talents of each individual.

For this reason, I am here today as the President of Colombia, to demonstrate our commitment and to confirm that, in Colombia, we want to adopt the best practices and that in our National Development Plan, which is called “Pact for Colombia, pact for equity”, we understand that working conditions are a part of closing gaps and reaching a higher level of development.

I am pleased to see private sector leaders here today, but even more so, union leaders and members of the judicial branch, because institutionally in Colombia, the State, the private sector, the workers and the independent institutions such as the courts have understood that the continuous improvement of working conditions is fundamental if Colombia is to align itself with the SDGs.

In only ten months of Government, we have been able to demonstrate authoritatively our goal to care for the workers in our country and seek a healthy balance between entrepreneurship and improving the working conditions of our workforce. Therefore, I am proud to share with you all that, as President, I participated for the first time in the Round Table for Labour Dialogue, which was attended for the first time by a President of the Republic in order to highlight the urgent need to sign a decent work agreement, an agreement that was announced in Colombia in September 2018 and which is a milestone because the private sector, the State and the workers have all set joint objectives. That agreement and that participation in the labour round table have already brought forth visible fruit in these ten months of Government. For example, together we have managed to obtain the largest increase in the minimum wage in real terms in the last 25 years. This is a significant step forward, which is also accompanied by the largest increase in the transport allowance in 14 years. And we did it because as well as demonstrating the importance of reducing the tax burden on micro, small, medium-sized and large enterprises so that they are able to invest in and hire more workers, it is also important to recognize the effect of the last few years on the purchasing power of the population.

I am also motivated by the fact that, in an innovative exercise of dialogue – anticipated, transparent and fraternal dialogue – we have managed to agree that all the unions and the Government will sign an agreement to increase the wages of public workers by almost 4.5 per cent, which is almost 1.3 percentage points higher than inflation, meaning that it is the biggest increase since that joint policy, launched in 2013, has existed. This shows that when we say we are going to reach an agreement, we do it, and we do it because our goals are the same.

However, I can also tell you that in these ten months of Government, we have made sure that all labour inspectors, the 906 labour inspectors in our country, have access to a virtual education platform, a virtual campus, where they can see not only the best techniques,

---

but also learn more about the best evaluation instruments so that they can better protect workers' rights.

I must also mention that, over these ten months, we have made progress under Resolution 0312 of 2019, which established minimum standards for health and safety systems, in order to provide workers with mechanisms to ensure the protection they need in a transparent manner, while at the same time providing certainty to the private sector regarding which parameters and objectives had to be met.

In these ten months, we have made progress in developing the one-stop shop for all labour matters, which is being populated with many more proceedings and procedures as quickly as possible so that workers are able to file complaints and have their rights protected, but also so that employers can work more flexibly if they wish, and which also reduces the costs that, at the end of the day, have an impact on their capacity to offer better benefits to members of their workforce. This has been a titanic effort, an effort that forces us to think much further beyond obvious short-term issues to understand that, in Colombia, we also require large-scale transformations to protect those who are not currently covered by social security. Therefore, I can also tell you that in these ten months and as part of our National Development Plan we launched an important mechanism, which is the Minimum Social Protection Floor, through which, the most vulnerable workers, who have often worked in the informal economy, are now going to be able to access pension coverage and will have a transparent and efficient mechanism so that their working conditions will be protected; but in addition to that, it will strengthen the universalization of social protection as a basic and fundamental principle for the whole country.

To these criteria and these activities, we must also add something that has been a source of innovation and in which the State wishes to take leadership. Colombia has had a higher youth unemployment rate than the rest of Latin America, but we all need to face that problem together and to do so successfully. Therefore, just as we established the National Development Plan, we have also set a goal for ourselves that 10 per cent of the payroll of public workers will be made up of young people between the ages of 18 and 28; thus, they will not only gain work experience, but will progress on the labour market and do so in the service of the State, because we understand that training them with purpose and dedication in the twenty-first century is equally transformational.

I must also mention that one of the tasks that we have ahead is the relevant training of a workforce that must be fit for purpose to face the challenges of the twenty-first century and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Therefore, just as we have placed a significant stake in education, allocating the largest budget in history to this sector of our country, we have also set ourselves the task of doubling the number of schoolchildren on an improved single school day, so that, in the final three years of the baccalaureate programme, we can begin to provide training that is relevant to the world of work through the National Training Service. Thus, when they graduate, they have their baccalaureate certificate in one hand and, in the other, they have a technical qualification and are ready to be employed. That is where we want to introduce innovation with techniques, professions and skills, such as integrated data analysis or programming and coding, as we think about the demands that the labour market is making, requiring people to have this kind of training. This is an essential task.

Attending this Centenary of the ILO also means being transparent and clear about the goals that we wish to attain. We know that there are many challenges, but we would like our National Development Plan to take us to August 2022 when we will be completing our term of office as a country that will have created 1.6 million new jobs. We would like to reach an unemployment rate below 8 per cent, which would be the lowest rate in Colombia in the past three decades.

---

These are our tasks, and this is the path that we are carving out, the road we are planning every day and the work we are doing in the regions of Colombia, because we understand that social justice begins with having clarity, ambition and the motivation to make the labour market the main instrument of justice in a society.

This Government believes in entrepreneurship as a way to formalize employment. It has therefore made significant changes aimed at ensuring that enterprises in the fields of technology and creative industries have the conditions to grow competitively, but always while generating a minimum number of employment positions in exchange for an investment that also has a favourable impact on the economy. We believe the work of all union leaders should seek to resolve these structural issues in today's world: the future of work and the ability to share the benefits across the whole country; they should feel that exercising union leadership is not a barrier, and much less contradictory, to boosting entrepreneurship. I can proudly tell you that when I was privileged to serve as a Senator in my country, we enacted a law that creates enterprises with collective benefit and interests, enterprises that not only understand financial profit, but understand the meaning of social benefit and their impact on society. One of the elements that can set someone apart is how they promote leadership, and how they promote the strategic participation and opinion of the workforce. Therefore, for me, this Centenary is an opportunity to share with you the achievements of our Government, to share with you what we want our country to be, but also to invite you to reproduce and enhance these pillars, the principles that we have implemented, in the other countries represented here. I firmly believe that the ILO must be the leader in this discussion to determine the challenges we are facing in terms of coverage and benefits for workers in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, but it must do so in harmony with other institutions, so that we do not each take different paths, but rather we join together our common goals, and perhaps most importantly, do so under the umbrella of the SDGs.

I conclude by saying to you all that my presence here today, at the celebration of this Centenary, is because the institutions that have been so innovative in conceiving the idea of tripartism in labour policies, are worthy of another 100 years of existence, 100 more years of innovation. Colombia, a country that has ratified 61 of the ILO's Conventions, today reaffirms that it wants to continue to work with our employers and our workers in order to build the road towards decent work.

## **The President**

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.

I hereby adjourn this high-level section, organized in the 15th plenary sitting of the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference.

*(The sitting adjourned at 12.35 p.m.)*