



**International Conference
«New Perspectives in Feminist Labour: Work and Activism»**

***University of Bologna, Aula Prodi
17 – 18 January 2019***

**Welcome address by Gianni Rosas,
Director ILO Office for Italy and San Marino.**

Dear Professor Capuzzo,

Dear Professors Betti and Tolomelli,

Dear scholars and participants,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to convey my warm greetings to all of you on the occasion of this international conference.

It is with much regret that I cannot be with you today to underline ILO's interest in the topics that will be discussed in the course of this two-day event and express our appreciation to the colleagues of the University of Bologna, to the organizations that joined in support of this important event and to all of you.

As ILO, we are particularly proud of being associated with your event that opens a yearlong of initiatives in Italy with the Members of the ILO, universities and other institutions to mark the Centenary of our Organization.

Indeed, during its 100 years of existence, the ILO has carried out a great deal of work in support of women and gender equality. At the same time, women have played a pivotal role within the Organization and its Members in the advancement of decent work and social justice around the world.

Women workers' rights and empowerment, as well as gender issues, have been at the core of ILO's work since its foundation. The principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value that is enshrined in the 1919 Constitution, the Hours of Work (Industry) and the Maternity Protection Conventions of 1919, the Equal Pay Convention of 1951, the Discrimination in Employment and Occupation Convention of 1958, the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention of 1981 and the Part-time Convention of 1994 are few examples of the vanguard work of the ILO in the advancement of women workers' rights and gender equality at work.

A hundred years ago, it was unimaginable that workers would have been entitled to weekly rest, paid annual or sick leave, and maternity and other benefits. The adoption of several ILO Conventions in these and other areas set the standards for many countries to progress in their quest for gender equality and social justice. Today, these rights and benefits are indeed an *acquis* for workers in many countries.

Despite this progress, there are still a number of hurdles that stubbornly persist and that hamper the realization of gender equality.

Globally, being a woman means having nearly one-third less chance than a man of being in the labour force and, often, being at the bottom of the economic ladder.

Only a small number of women have broken the glass ceiling and made it to the top of the corporate world.

The majority of women workers in the world are in low-paid jobs and over-represented in the informal economy with little or no voice.

The global average of 20 per cent gender pay gap represents one of the major injustices of contemporary societies.

Compared to other workers, women are many times more subject to violence and harassment at work.

It is clear that we need a new push for equality in order to remove the obstacles I just mentioned and to ensure that economies and societies value women's work fairly.

This requires a renewed and stronger commitment to gender equality, which is not just a women's but everyone's business.

I have seen from the programme that in these two days you will be touching upon several of the issues I just mentioned. Among others, you will be discussing what history teaches in terms of breaking gender stereotypes in employment and occupation; women workers' rights achievements through activism in networks, movements and trade unions at both national and international levels; and productive and reproductive labour.

All of these topics are of the utmost importance in contemporary labour markets and societies.

I believe that history helps us learn from the past, better understand the present and shape up the future of work we want and I am sure the discussions of these two days will provide useful insights for our onward journey on the road to making decent work and gender equality a reality.

I wish you the best success and look forward to learning about the outcome of this very interesting conference.