

Thank you chair!

First of all I want to thank Guy Rider for his excellent leadership of the ILO over the past 10 years. He has been a true advocate for the labour rights in his role as director general. We are also very pleased with the election of Gilbert Hounbo and we will do all we can to support him once he takes office in October later this year.

During the pandemic the ILO has been working hard to signal, respond and advise on the devastating effects of this crisis, since it has been affecting workers worldwide, especially in the Least Developed Countries, as signaled in the report of the director general. It is in these countries we'll find those who were hit the hardest by the crisis: workers in the informal economy, youth, women, migrant workers and refugees, people living with disabilities and others suffering discrimination in the world of work.

This is aggravated by the increasing violations of trade union rights worldwide, we see how this is reducing the capacity of workers to fight for social justice and prosperity.

The enduring effects of the pandemic in 2022 and beyond, will continue to confront the world of work with great uncertainty and persistent decent work deficits. This is now aggravated by the war on Ukraine that was started by Russia. The conflict can result in a global crisis of food, energy and finance.

The Covid-crisis has made it very clear to us that the implementation of the Centenary Declaration is more urgent than ever. We therefore support the draft resolution on the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment in the framework of fundamental principles and rights at work of the ILO, following from the Centenary

Declaration for the Future of Work, which was mentioning that “safe and healthy working conditions are fundamental to decent work”

We want to make a special plea here for a just and adequate social security arrangement for those that fought the effects of the pandemic in the frontline, mainly care and education workers. In the Netherlands more than 40% of healthcare employees with long-term complaints after a corona infection (so called ‘long Covid’) have now been given notice of dismissal, with no special compensating measures from the government. This is a slap in the face for all those professionals who were on the front line to keep the Netherlands going during the pandemic.

We do appreciate the intention of the Dutch government to ratify convention 190 this year and we hope many countries will follow.

In response to the DG’s report on ‘The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories’ we are glad to see some economic improvement after the strong social and economic effects of the Covid-crisis on the Palestinian people. We coincide with the observation of the Director General that the continuing occupation and expanding settlement activity are blocking the Palestinian economy, depriving the capacity of Palestinian institutions to deliver growth with decent work and respect for fundamental rights. This is aggravated by the recent rising tensions in the occupied territories, which are casting a shadow over the fragile economic recovery.