

## **Address of Mr. Guðmundur Ingi Guðbrandsson, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Market in Iceland, to the 110th Session of the International Labour Conference**

Mr. President, Director- General, Honourable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, and others outside of those two categories.

First let me start by thanking the Director-General for his leadership for the past 10 years and extend heartfelt thanks for his excellent work for the ILO during this time.

The overarching goal of the UN 2030 agenda is to put an end to poverty. This includes to secure employment and decent work for all and to “leave no one behind”.#

This is a commitment that we all share and resonates with the mandate of the ILO on social justice.

Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic has disrupted the labour market worldwide and has made our task more difficult.

The evidence show that the least developed countries (LDC) have especially been hit by these challenges. Concerns relate to how the LDCs have suffered from the uneven distribution of vaccines and how the employment ratio has fallen. Women remain a vulnerable group and are largely unemployed. Other vulnerable groups that often fly under the radar are also people with visible and invisible disabilities and people from the queer community. It is also worrying how the informal economy has grown during the pandemic. This has resulted in poor working conditions, lack of access to social security and low wages.

It is important that ILO and its members keep working towards advancing the decent work agenda in the LDC, as this is a matter to the international community.

Iceland also is committed to “leaving no one behind” in our own country.

Despite the fact that poverty rates in Iceland remain relatively low, challenges relating to poverty, loneliness, the gender pay gap, and uneven opportunities for people with disabilities, immigrants and other vulnerable workers, remain in society.

We believe that the solution can be found in investing in people through flexible and inclusive labour market and education for us all. It is our firm believe that education and human resources are the foundation for equality, long-term economic growth and prosperity.

Iceland is committed to creating a labour market that is accessible to all and that takes into account the challenges of the future, including just transition relating to climate change and technological change. The goal, being to promote employment and social inclusion by effectively mobilise vulnerable groups on the labour market, such as the low skilled, young people, people of foreign origin and individuals with reduced work capacity.

Measures involve creating labour market that takes into account the physical, psychological and social factors of workers that can affect their ability to work and increasing the number of flexible and part-time jobs, as well as a carefully designed live-long learning programmes.

A labour market that is inclusive and open to all is a prerequisite for decent living and an important step in combatting poverty.

Finally, Iceland strongly condemns Russia's unprovoked and unlawful aggression against Ukraine. After over hundred days, there is no end to the horrors of war, death, and destruction in Ukraine. We are also facing devastating consequences globally that are already negatively impacting our mutual work towards achieving the UN 2030 Agenda.

I thank you for your attention

*Check against delivery*