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International Labour Conference – 113th Session, Geneva, 2025

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# Plenary sitting: Closing of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference

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Friday, 13 June 2025, 2.50 p.m.

President: Mr Moyo

## Signing of the authentic texts

Mr Bormioli

The Clerk of the Conference

As you will remember, the Conference decided last week, by record vote, to adopt a series of amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006).

That decision by the Conference, and those on the adoption of the Convention and Recommendation concerning prevention and protection against biological hazards in the working environment, are reflected in formal documents that need to be authenticated by the signatures of the President of the Conference and the Director-General before they are deposited with the United Nations for registration and sent to the ILO archives for safekeeping.

Therefore, I would now like to invite the President, together with Mr HOUNGBO, Director-General of the ILO and Secretary-General of the Conference, to come up and sign the authentic texts of the new Convention and Recommendation, and of the amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006.

**(The President and the Director-General of the ILO sign the texts of the Convention and Recommendation concerning prevention and protection against biological hazards in the working environment.)**

**(The President and the Director-General of the ILO sign the text of the amendments to the Code of the MLC, 2006).**

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

Friday, 13 June 2025, 3.50 p.m.

President: Mr Moyo

## Closing statements

The President

The Conference has now concluded its business and has achieved its goals. The time has come for our closing ceremony.

I will call on each of my fellow Officers to make their concluding remarks to this assembly. I will begin by inviting the Employer Vice-President of the Conference, Mr Diop, to take the floor.

Mr Diop

Employer Vice-President of the Conference

(Original French)

It is an honour for me to address you at this closing session on behalf of the Employers' group. Over these two intense weeks we have once again demonstrated the value of our

tripartite approach and our visible commitment to constructive, unbiased social dialogue. We had to deal with complex situations, diverse views, high stakes and challenges. We did so.

Any society that looks towards the future with confidence and serenity listens to its social partners who express their active citizenship through the republican values of progress, namely, work, productivity, human dignity and social justice. I would say, then, that when the ILO organized this 113th Session, it was to assess the value of our tripartite approach and the extent to which we fulfil our respective regulatory, normative and legal commitments. It was also to share a forward-looking vision of the more vibrant social democracy that we would like to see. A space for tripartite social dialogue, a space for truth and trust, a space for shared human values; that is the space which the International Labour Conference offers every year for the benefit of workers, employers and governments.

*Jobs, rights and growth: Reinforcing the connection.* That connection is enterprises. Identifying that connection means giving due credit to employers, who take risks daily in order to invest, to create jobs, to generate economic growth and also to increase social protection for workers and to make, let us not forget, substantial contributions in taxes to our State budgets. Workers, dear partners, I hear you telling me that enterprises are about more than employers. You are right. What would this connection be without these productive, dignified and committed workers, who must fully enjoy their rights? I also hear governments telling me you are not alone, you can only prosper if we, the governments, the strategist State, concerned for the well-being of workers but also the sustainability of enterprises, are involved. What can we take from this, other than that enterprises are to be appreciated? Indeed, let us also appreciate employers.

We are entering a new era in which the world is dividing and reconfiguring into new blocs, inviting nations to confront geopolitical tensions as well as unprecedented challenges to economic sovereignty and national defence, but also all forms of intolerance, discrimination and obscurantism. The reality of today's world, which we all experience, is one that we, employers, must face up to, as must workers, governments and the ILO. Should the ILO remain silent? I would say not. Today, we must promote our human values of social progress and social justice all the more and allow human reason to prevail over human passion. Take the case of Palestine. Should the ILO remain silent in the face of what is happening there? No, the ILO cannot remain silent. The ILO assumed its responsibilities by adopting the resolution on the status of Palestine. We did so, and it needed to be done. The Employers' group supported this resolution, which fully reaffirms the ILO's commitments to all of its constituents. As a result, the ILO is called on to provide all necessary technical assistance to promote social justice, as well as workers' and employers' rights, in one of the most challenging socio-economic environments in the world. The case of Myanmar is also important and deserves our full attention. Workers' and employers' rights must be protected. That is the very least that we can do, and we are committed to doing so. We underscore once again that article 33 is not a sanction mechanism. Measures should not only be proportional and evidence-based but should also enable compliance with the regulatory framework without increasing the harm suffered by workers and employers already facing extreme difficulties.

The programme and budget was adopted, and we reached the consensus that we sought so hard. It was not easy in view of the divergent positions that needed to be reconciled to reach a good compromise in a context characterized, among other things, by the high expectations of the tripartite constituents and budgetary constraints. The Employers' group appreciates the constructive spirit shown by all stakeholders which allowed us to achieve this outcome. We renew our commitment to you, so that the Office might achieve its targeted objectives and identified priorities.

The general discussion on informality addressed a complex, structural and evolving topic taking into account the specific features of the productive sector in different countries and regions, as well as the resulting issues and challenges for the various stakeholders. However, addressing informality is more than a matter of mere compliance. Addressing it fully requires the implementation of social and tax incentives that can facilitate the transition to formality, but also requires the satisfaction of productivity requirements, good private governance, systemic reforms and coherent economic regulation. We still have a long way to go before we achieve these objectives.

The second standard-setting discussion on protection against biological hazards combined responsibility, realism and pragmatism. This is what the Employers' group showed in adopting these instruments. While the Convention is not 100 per cent perfect, it represents meaningful progress in that it takes into account lessons learned from the pandemic and strengthens regulatory frameworks governing occupational safety and health. While the respective responsibilities and duties of governments, employers and workers are now delimited and laid down, the Employers' group nevertheless has reservations in relation to certain of the Recommendation's provisions, the ambiguity and overly prescriptive nature of which could make their implementation at the national level difficult, rather than supporting it. We must therefore ensure that, at the national level, tripartite dialogue reflects the spirit of these instruments and, above all, does not give rise to additional indirect financial costs that could jeopardize both protection for workers and the sustainability of enterprises.

Turning now to the first standard-setting discussion on decent work in platform economies, while we have indeed spoken with one another, we still need a common understanding. What do the employers say, in a constructive spirit? Let us respect national legal systems. Let us preserve the distinction between jobs and self-employment. Let us support innovation and creativity, create decent jobs and ensure the sustainability of enterprises. The complexity and diversity of the platform economy requires us all to listen more and take greater care if we want a fair, balanced, appropriate and sustainable instrument that responds to economic realities. When we enter the second phase of the discussion, let us bear these principles in mind in our negotiations.

The Conference adopted the resolution concerning the Second World Summit for Social Development. This new world should remain attentive to the ILO and its core values of social progress. That is why we, employers, remind you that the social elevator goes up only after passing the first, economic, floor. Social progress and economic growth must go hand in hand. Accordingly, the social partners aim to play their part in the development, implementation and monitoring of socio-economic policies.

During the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards, the majority of governments engaged constructively and expressed their willingness to work with the Office. While overall this is commendable, nonetheless the ILO cannot pass over the absence of the Government of Afghanistan and the Government of Nicaragua in silence. The situation in Nicaragua is more than worrying. We cannot do nothing; we must act. Everything was said about the dismantling of employers' organizations, the confiscation of private property, the sentencing of business leaders to exile. Everything was said about the attacks on freedom of association, the fundamental principles and the very essence of tripartism. We fully support the historic decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry. The international standards supervisory system must be strengthened. International labour standards apply to everyone. They must be respected.

This Conference allows us to write a great page in the history of the ILO. At this session, the ILO did not remain silent and did not turn a blind eye; it assumed its responsibilities, which is good for the ILO and good for employers, workers and governments. We are proud to be entrepreneurs, proud of our values, proud of being socio-economic regulators contributing to peace and social stability as well as social cohesion at the national and international level. I congratulate and thank you on behalf of the Employers' group and the President and the Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Vice Presidents, Spokesperson and Committee Chairpersons of the IOE. I thank all the competent ILO units and the interpreters, who have allowed us to achieve the objectives of the Conference. I have been delighted to stand alongside the President and alongside my fellow Vice-Presidents and the Director-General.

**Ms Arfaoui**  
**Worker Vice-President of the Conference**  
**(Original French)**

Allow me first to express my profound thanks to the Workers' group for the trust that they have placed in me. It is a great honour to speak to you here on behalf of the world's workers and to defend their hopes and aspirations for a future of social justice.

Now that we are bringing this 113th Session of the International Labour Conference to a close, I would like to welcome the collective commitment and the quality of the debates that have marked our work.

This session has been held in an unstable global context marked by armed conflicts, the growth of inequalities, demographic changes, rapid technological changes and climate crises. Nevertheless, the ILO has remained true to its core mission: to defend dignity at work and to promote social justice by means of tripartite and bipartite dialogue.

The Report of the Director-General reminded us forcefully that social dialogue is not a luxury. It is a central pillar around which to build inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies. Jobs, rights, growth, this is the triptych that guides our day-to-day trade union work.

The Director-General describes the current situation of a world of work, mired in constant uncertainty, that will require more consistent policies and greater attention to decent work deficits in order to bring about sustainable development.

The main point raised by the Director-General at this time of discontent is, without a doubt, the importance of democratic values as the catalyst for sustainable development, in the context of which policies predicated on jobs, rights and growth can be mutually reinforcing.

The importance of strong democratic institutions and actors as a precondition for sustainable and inclusive development is a major point to underscore, including by emphasizing the role and advocacy of the tripartite constituents.

The strong decisions taken at this session include the decision adopted under article 33 of the ILO Constitution concerning Myanmar. This historic decision confirms that the ILO will not remain silent in the face of repression, the destruction of freedom of association and serious human rights violations. It is an act of solidarity, but also one of responsibility. The people of Myanmar do not stand alone.

In this same spirit of justice, we also welcome the decision to grant Palestine the status of a non-member observer State. In a context of extreme humanitarian crisis, particularly in the Gaza Strip, this recognition is of major importance in political and in human terms. It is an

important step towards the full recognition of Palestine as a Member of the ILO with all associated rights, a development consistent with the principles of the United Nations and the founding values of our Organization.

We solemnly call for an immediate ceasefire, for the opening of humanitarian corridors and the protection of civilians and workers in accordance with international humanitarian law. Peace will be achieved through the end of the occupation and of violence.

We have also paid close attention to the work of the technical committees, which reflect the ILO's will to respond to current challenges in the world of work.

We also welcome the progress made by the Standard-Setting Committee on Decent Work in the Platform Economy, which reached a significant milestone by deciding to work on developing a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation concerning decent work in the platform economy. This decision is in line with the expectations of millions of platform workers, who are often young people in precarious work, who are invisible. Guaranteeing their rights, social protection and safety at work is a matter of urgency. Discussions must now move forward with determination so that this Convention can become an actual reality at the discussion in 2026.

We can also be proud of the work done by the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions towards Formality, to which we brought the voices of many vulnerable categories including migrant workers, domestic workers, agricultural workers, street vendors, carers, workers in the construction industry and others. The conclusions highlight the underlying causes of informality: non-compliance with labour laws, stigmatization, evasion of social contributions or even unfair migratory laws.

The conclusions recognize the need to end the misclassification of employment relationships, to strengthen occupational safety and health and to address violence and harassment in the world of work, in accordance with the spirit of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

The Committee also reaffirmed the universality of the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining and recalled the importance of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), which is ten years old this year, as an instrument providing guidance for formalization that is fair, sustainable and dignified.

We also welcome the work done by the Standard-Setting Committee on Biological Hazards and the adoption of a Convention supplemented by a Recommendation on biological hazards. We need to respond to another urgent matter, namely, improving prevention and protection in the face of health threats. The pandemic showed us that occupational health is a pillar of collective resilience. We welcome the adoption of this Convention and Recommendation, which, properly implemented, will allow us to make progress towards a future without occupational accidents or diseases. Working in an environment free from occupational safety and health risks is a fundamental right. We need more robust standards, effective prevention mechanisms and adequate training to protect workers who might be exposed to such risks.

This Conference has once again demonstrated the relevance of the ILO's tripartite model. We may not always agree, but we do move forward together. That is what makes us strong: dialogue, respectful argument and seeking the common good.

Now that we are returning to our respective countries, let us take with us the spirit of this Conference: the spirit of solidarity, of responsibility and of collective commitment to a fairer, safer and more human world of work.

**Mr Castillo**  
**Government Vice-President of the Conference**  
**(Original Spanish)**

In his report entitled *Jobs, rights and growth: Reinforcing the connection*, the Director-General repeatedly warns of the turbulence shaking the world, the uncertainty it generates and the growing discontent among millions of people.

This was the context in which this session of the Conference took place. Against this challenging backdrop, the vast majority of delegates supported the Director-General's assessments, which led to fruitful discussions, substantive contributions and valuable initiatives aimed at improving labour relations and the quality of life of women and men around the world.

Humanity is suffering from serious and pressing problems. We will touch upon some of the main challenges that, in our humble opinion, we must face.

As has been mentioned by various speakers, war is becoming commonplace in our world. According to the latest report of the Institute for Economics and Peace, 56 wars are currently ongoing, involving 92 countries around the world. This is the highest number since the Second World War. I am convinced that now is the time to step up our efforts to bring about and contribute to peace in the world.

There are also other wars. We are in a geo-economic dispute, where the struggle for markets is reflected in tariff policy.

Growing inequality – which, according to the data and studies available, is reaching unprecedented levels – is the other problem we are facing. In its latest annual report, Oxfam warns that, in 2024, total billionaire wealth increased by US\$2 trillion, with 204 new billionaires created. Meanwhile, according to the World Bank, 3.6 billion people – or 44 per cent of the global population – are living below the poverty line.

The latest update of the ILO's *World Employment and Social Outlook* report, which has just been published, highlights worrying trends in income distribution. The share of global gross domestic product going to workers fell in 2024. According to ILO estimates, workers earned US\$1 trillion less last year as a result.

In addition to these challenges, we are facing a climate change emergency and an environmental crisis, which are having a direct impact on the well-being of millions of people and working conditions around the world.

All these elements present a challenge for us, and so we ask ourselves: can we distribute equitably the wealth that has been generated and ensure that the benefits of science and the technological revolution actually lead to the well-being of the planet? We believe so. In this context, in the Conference, we have demonstrated the importance of dialogue, of reaching agreements and of seeking consensus, to ensure dignity in the world of work, always within a democratic framework, as the report repeatedly states.

As for Uruguay, it is a country with a deep-rooted republican tradition, which this year celebrates 40 years of uninterrupted democratic rule and 20 years of continuous tripartite collective bargaining and trade union freedom. For us, democracy and social justice are inextricably linked.

Let us remember the mandate set out in the Preamble to the ILO's Constitution, which clearly states that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social

justice” and that “the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries”. The current efforts of the ILO to promote social justice are embodied in the Director-General’s initiative on the Global Coalition for Social Justice.

In this connection, we applaud the efforts made to reach agreements and the use of the democratic instrument of the vote. This allowed us to approve the budget, the seven sets of amendments to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended, and the historic resolution on the status of Palestine in the ILO and participation rights of Palestine in ILO meetings, as an observer State, in line with resolution ES-10/23 of the United Nations General Assembly.

We welcome the progress made towards drafting a Convention and Recommendation on decent work in the platform economy, which will enable the ILO to provide clear guidance to Member States on social and labour protection. We take note of the outcome achieved in what is a new and constantly changing field, driven by technological innovation. The future instrument should provide key definitions, be clear in scope and establish minimum rights for all workers, regardless of their type of contract or employment status.

Furthermore, we should not rule out the possibility that, in the future, we might have to consider and adopt an international standard on the use of artificial intelligence and its impact on work, as described in the report, in view of the possible complementary effects of such intelligence on the world of work. We consider that key aspects, such as the use of algorithms for labour management and the determination of a legal classification of employment relationships, should be part of any ILO standard-setting solution.

Strong ILO action on this issue would provide a significant contribution, both to countries that still have not legislated on this area and to those – such as Uruguay – whose existing standards do not ensure adequate protection for workers in the digital platform economy. The adoption of an ILO instrument on this subject clearly falls within the framework of the fundamental principles recognized in the Declaration of Philadelphia of 1944, including the war against want, tripartite collaboration, the just share of the fruits of progress and the fact that labour is not a commodity.

This session of the Conference will go down in history as the one at which the Biological Hazards in the Working Environment Convention, 2025 (No. 192), was adopted, broadening the framework of fundamental rights at work. Since its inclusion in 2022, the right to a safe and healthy working environment has been considered as essential to ensure decent working conditions and protect the health of workers around the world.

We also welcome the fact that an issue as topical as promoting transitions towards formality, which is such an important matter on the global agenda, was discussed.

In respect of the Report of the Director-General, we would like to add that social justice relies on the strengthening of the relationship between employment, rights and growth, within the framework of democratic principles, components which all require representative social partners that are fully recognized by the State.

While it is true that growth is a necessary condition for job creation, it is not enough for that growth to be solely market driven. In our opinion, all growth must go hand in hand with a distribution that reduces the levels of social inequality, which have increased markedly in recent years.

Accordingly, we believe that one of the ways to enhance the quality of employment is to reduce working time. We therefore believe that we are in a position to review the standards that maintain the 48-hour week as a working time limit, which may be considered excessive in many contexts given current technological developments in the organization of work. The world has come a long way over the last 100 years and more, except when it comes to the regulation of working time. It is important to analyse this issue, together with the issue of productivity, without prejudice and in a tripartite manner.

In conclusion, we would like to express our thanks for the trust placed in us as an Officer. Not only is it a sign of recognition for our country, but also a great honour and challenge for me personally, given my origins in the social struggle as a trade union leader and political activist and given my current government responsibilities.

I would like to acknowledge in particular the work of the members of the various committees and the Governing Body and their respective support teams. I would also like to give a special mention to the officials, technicians, assistants, translators, advisers, service personnel, photographers, cooks and drivers who have made our task easier and our experience here more comfortable and pleasant.

The strengthening of democracy and tripartite settings with due respect for and support for social dialogue helps to counteract fragmentation and the most negative effects of economic power. I am convinced that, if we succeed in moving towards the goals that we have set ourselves, then we will surely contribute to the happiness of our peoples.

## Mr Hounqbo

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

After two weeks of intense and very stimulating debates and exchanges, the 113th Session of our International Labour Conference is rapidly drawing to a fruitful close. We have hosted no less than 5,407 registered delegates this year and have been honoured by the presence of the President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Luis Abinader, alongside 174 Ministers and Vice-Ministers. And we have accomplished quite a lot.

Sincerely, I could not have asked for more thoughtful, fulsome engagement in the plenary on my report, *Jobs, rights and growth: Reinforcing the connection*, advocating the need to reinforce the nexus and the connection among the three pillars. I note with appreciation your widespread agreement that economic policy must be grounded in a very balanced approach that understands the mutually reinforcing relationship between growth and respect for human and labour rights, including the provision of social and labour protection. All of these elements are an integral part of the process of ensuring sustainable job creation.

I heard your message that universal social protection is essential to foster economic growth, and I was also impressed to learn of the innovations under way to modernize, and in some cases digitize, access to benefits. Indeed, the importance of artificial intelligence in the world of work was consistently reiterated. We talked about the significant challenges that must be addressed through social and labour protection, and you provided concrete examples of how careful, tailored, technology-based responses can be harnessed to support a just transition, to promote growth, to provide reskilling and to support decent work. Our challenges and our solutions are all interdependent.

I also heard you once again urging the ILO to make sure that we pay attention to the impacts on our work of our policies on women, on youth, on migrants and on developing

countries and small island developing States. You were very specific. For migrant workers, for example, you urged us to continue work on the portability of social protection and skills recognition.

The lessons shared throughout the plenary sittings and within yesterday's action-focused second forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice are a reminder of our collective capacity to inspire with continuous improvement in regulatory experimentation designed to foster dignity and respect in the world of work. Through your responses to my report, I heard a broad consensus that social dialogue and democratic institutions are essential to foster social cohesion, to build trust and to support both sustainable enterprises and human-centred societies.

The particularly fruitful discussion within the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions Towards Formality is, for me, a very good example. It shows how well we do by our Members when, firstly, we harness our capacity to implement supportive, universally applicable standards to guide change – in this case, I am referring to the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) – and, secondly, we acknowledge and work with the diversity of the informal economy across and within countries. With this dual approach, a full ten years on from the adoption of Recommendation No. 204, we witnessed within the Committee the increasing institutional agility, based on social dialogue, to foster innovative, tailor-made and sometimes technologically savvy responses that actually formalize the economy for decent work. There is a lot left to do, as informality rates remain far too high, and we have emerged from the general discussion galvanized to deepen and extend this crucial work.

You also repeatedly demonstrated the power of consensus, the power of tripartism, the power we have when we take the time necessary to listen deeply to one another, to show the ability to adjust and to work collectively for our common good. There is much wisdom in a proverb that many of you will be familiar with: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." This, I would suggest, is the spirit of tripartism and social dialogue that you have ably put into action over the past two weeks.

On decent work in the platform economy, we certainly put this approach to the test. It was never going to be easy – we knew that – in the first discussion. But it was certainly a necessary discussion, and one that illustrates our institutional relevance. Constituents have convened at the International Labour Conference because this work matters. The tripartite groups showed tremendous engagement and preparation, and all this work tells us that we can translate an evidence-based understanding of the mutually reinforcing character of economic growth, rights and jobs into our standard-setting.

This is far from a one-size-fits-all approach. This is how we mediate economic matters with social matters in real time. This is also how, as we welcome Palestine as a non-member observer State, we ensure that we can contribute to a post-ceasefire, job-rich reconstruction that respects human dignity and security for all.

I am also pleased that the Committee on the Application of Standards carried out its mandate with its usual high degree of consideration and with a view to fostering our tradition of consensus-based decision-making on conclusions.

You also adopted a resolution on Myanmar, as recommended by the Governing Body, under article 33 of the ILO Constitution. It is my sincere hope that the range of measures and support will lead to the full implementation of the Commission of Inquiry's recommendations.

I am delighted to congratulate delegates on the adoption of the first international Convention and supplementary Recommendation on biological hazards. These new international labour standards strengthen our occupational safety and health corpus on emergency preparedness and risk management of biological hazards in the working environment.

Of course, the Conference is a prime occasion not only to adopt new standards, but also to ratify existing ones. So I am especially pleased to report that, during this session, 18 instruments of ratification deposited by 8 Member States were registered, in relation to: the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and the Protocol of 2002 to it; the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). We also received ratifications for the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188); the Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131); the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122); the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161); and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).

Last but certainly not least, I am so grateful for the confidence that you have placed in this institution as we adopt our Programme and Budget for 2026–27.

We cherish the spirit of consensus that has enabled us to move forward and to move together. This includes the Conference itself, which showed the ability to adapt when, ten years ago, we reduced our global tripartism forum from three weeks to two. We have maintained all of our vibrancy and have continued to accomplish meaningful results, but I must say that we still need to work harder on improving our gender balance at the Conference. Regrettably, we continue to hover around only 34 per cent – more or less one third – of women delegates. Of all the delegates who spoke, only 24 per cent were women. We can, and we must, do better. As I said in my opening remarks, we are not here to rest on our laurels, but rather to continue to challenge ourselves to reach higher goals.

All in all, in my view, we are emerging from this 113th Session of the Conference with even greater enthusiasm and resolve than when we started. If visionaries had not shown the foresight to found the ILO in 1919, we would most assuredly have needed to establish it now. Our mandate and our work matter. They matter now more than ever. We have come far, and of course we still have far to go. At times, we might not seem to be moving fast enough, but we are duty-bound to keep moving – moving steadfastly forward on the quest for social justice.

## Mr Moyo

### President of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference

Now, with your indulgence, I shall make a few closing remarks myself.

I address you today, on the occasion of the closing of the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference, with profound gratitude for the support that has been rendered to Zimbabwe in presiding over this session. As we come to the close of what has been a very busy and intense fortnight, I am sure many of you here today will agree with me that the Conference has discharged its duties with the utmost diligence, and I must congratulate each and every one of you for your hard work and resilience.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Director-General of the ILO and my dear brother, Mr Gilbert Houngbo, for his insightful report to the Conference, which this year was entitled *Jobs, rights and growth: Reinforcing the connection*, which was the subject of our

plenary discussions. The discussions were insightful, and speaker after speaker emphasized the importance of promoting rights at work for inclusive growth.

As we grapple with the many challenges facing the world today, the mandate of the ILO continues to grow in importance, and the Office should continue to support Member States. As part of the Director-General's report, we took note of the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories and we welcomed the Conference's decision to upgrade the status of Palestine to a non-member observer State.

I would like to appreciate the work of the Finance Committee, which considered the recommendations of the Governing Body on the Programme and Budget proposals for the 2026–27 biennium, and approved them by consensus. While there were notable differences expressed in the Committee, it is pleasing to note that there was an agreement to pass the budget and to continue discussions on the policy issues relating to sexual orientation and gender identity. Going forward, I encourage the tripartite partners to continue to engage to ensure that the views of all will be heard and reflected in ILO policy documents.

I wish to congratulate you all on the successful negotiations over the past two years that enabled this Conference to adopt two new instruments in the form of a Convention and a Recommendation concerning prevention and protection against biological hazards in the working environment. It is indeed gratifying and a particularly humbling experience for my delegation that Zimbabwe has been afforded the opportunity to preside over the adoption of these two instruments. I wish to encourage you all to move with speed in both the ratification and implementation of the new Convention.

The Conference's high-level segment this year had the singular honour of being graced by the Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic, His Excellency Mr Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, whose address to the Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice was highly inspirational, and I wish to extend my gratitude to him for his participation. I would like to urge all partners of the Coalition to continue to work towards achieving its objectives, and call upon the Office to continue engaging with the multilateral system in this regard.

As I now turn to the work of the Standard-Setting Committee on Decent Work in the Platform Economy, I note the robust discussions that were undertaken, involving the technical complexity of the subject matter, and that it was difficult to find consensus on most of the issues. It being the first discussion, we remain hopeful that the Office will diligently work on the next report, taking into account the views expressed by the tripartite partners, and find ways of building consensus on areas of disagreement. That said, it would be helpful for the Office to continue to facilitate dialogue between now and the next session of the Conference, when the Committee will convene its second discussion. It is important to note that, even with technological advancements and the ushering in of new forms of work and changing work environments, we continue to see the importance of protecting workers' rights and promoting sustainable enterprises. We should therefore collectively work towards the adoption of the instruments at the next session of the Conference. In the meantime, let us all do the necessary work in our respective groups to enable success at the next session.

Concerning the work of the Committee on the Application of Standards, I wish to recall that on the birth of the ILO in 1919, the main objective of this Organization was to promote social justice in the world of work. Today, the modern world continues to be confronted with the very issues that laid the foundation of the ILO. As the Committee continues to improve its work, may it be a source of inspiration for Member States to look forward to receiving positive narratives, not a platform that is used to consistently name and shame Governments who are striving to provide conducive environments for workers to enjoy their rights to decent work

and for enterprises to thrive. The work of the Committee on the Application of Standards is a vital cog of the Conference, which, as a standing committee, meets at every session. It is therefore of critical importance that the Committee continues to discharge its mandate in a fair, transparent and constructive way.

Turning to the General Discussion Committee on Promoting Transitions Towards Formality, I note with pride the adoption of the Committee's conclusions. The issue of informality has been with us for a long time, culminating in the adoption of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), in 2015, and it is pleasing to note the continued discussion in this area. It is important that, as we face the future, Governments, Employers and Workers strategize on ways to create an environment that are conducive to the formalization of the informal economy, as well as putting safeguards in place to protect those in the formal economy from sliding back into informality.

At its 113th Session, the Conference also had an opportunity to reflect on the Report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body. Of importance was the issue of the democratization of the ILO, in particular with reference to the 1986 Instrument for the Amendment of the ILO Constitution. Coming from Africa, a region which has attained 100 per cent ratification of the instrument, I wish to call upon all Members who have not yet ratified the instrument to do so in the near future. In an age where democracy is enjoyed in many of our countries, it is critical that the same be enjoyed in an organization that was established on social justice. The fact that two thirds of ILO Member States have ratified this instrument – signifying their wish for a more democratic ILO – and yet the instrument cannot come into force remains a cause for concern for Africa. It is our hope and expectation that the wishes of the majority will be respected. Going forward, it is high time that the Conference considers a practical and decisive way to navigate a way out of the constitutional provisions that now negatively impact upon the full democratization of the ILO.

As I reach the conclusion of my remarks, I would like to thank the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the employment and labour sectors, the entire Africa group and all Governments and social partners for the confidence that you entrusted in Zimbabwe to preside over this session of the Conference and for the support that you provided to my delegation during our tenure. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General, his management, the Secretariat led by Mr Luca Bormioli, all the support staff, interpreters and translators, and those who continue to work behind the scenes, for the consistent and high-quality work that helped to ensure the smooth running of the Conference. I wish the Secretariat all the best in its preparations for the 114th Session of the Conference.

Finally, on behalf of the tripartite partners of Zimbabwe, I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to all of you for making this session of the Conference a resounding success. I want to thank you very much for your continued presence in the room, your silence in the audience and the speakers' excellent time-keeping.

We invite you to take time off from your busy schedules in the future and consider visiting Zimbabwe's many tourist attractions, which include the mighty Victoria Falls, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. I wish you all safe travels back to your respective homes and wish you all the best in the work that you do to make the world a better place.

**Mr HOUNGBO**

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

On behalf of all the delegates, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President. I sincerely appreciate his reference to the Victoria Falls and hope that we can avoid any diplomatic dispute between Zimbabwe and Zambia over which side is better. Let me, on behalf of the Conference, present him with this gavel as a token of our appreciation for his presidency of the 113th Session.

**The President**

I would like to thank and congratulate all the participants for their dedication and commitment to this year's session of the Conference. We have once again, through social dialogue, managed to overcome what have been at times divergent views in favour of millions of people around the world. We can congratulate ourselves on these achievements.

I now declare the 113th Session of the International Labour Conference closed.

**(The 113th Session of the Conference adjourned sine die at 4.55 p.m.)**