



World of Work Summit

Panel discussion

Thursday, 9 June 2016

Moderator: Ms Mbanjwa

DECENT JOBS FOR YOUTH

The President of the 105th Session of the Conference, Ms Oliphant, South African Minister of Labour, welcomed participants to the World of Work Summit and provided an overview of the morning session on “Decent jobs for youth”. The session was to include: an introduction by the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr Ryder; a video message from the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Mr Ban Ki-moon; videos on the youth employment situation and the new Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth; two interviews with young people; and a panel discussion with four rounds of questions on, respectively, the youth employment challenge, the solutions, youth employment promotion and youth employment in relation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the new Global Initiative.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General of the Conference said that the dialogue focused on the shared concern about the situation of the millions of young women and men around the world who were finding it extremely hard to get a decent job. Millions had no alternative but the informal economy. Investing today in the employment of young people meant investing in the present and future of our societies. Sustainable development needed to be about both the quantity and quality of jobs.

He recalled that in 2012, ILO constituents had made a Call for action on youth employment for ILO leadership. The ILO had responded by working from the global level to the G20 and regional levels, and had organized technical cooperation with tripartite constituents at the national level to move youth employment up the agenda and propose practical action to get more decent jobs for youth. Most recently, the ILO had taken a lead role in designing and taking forward the UN Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, launched in February this year. The Global Initiative built on the four integrated pillars of alliance, knowledge, action and resources and provided a unique template for collective UN partnership to support member States’ efforts to implement the youth employment objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Following the address of the Secretary-General of the Conference, two videos were shown. The first video illustrated the challenges of youth employment on the long and arduous transition from school to

work, as well as unemployment and working poverty among youth. The second video offered a recorded message from the UN Secretary-General, in which he mentioned his visit to the ILO headquarters in 2014 where he had a fruitful dialogue with young people and, subsequently, with the Director-General of the ILO himself. One consequence of the discussion had been the joint initiative to mobilize common forces which had now borne fruit in the launch of the Global Initiative. He stressed that young people were looking to global leaders, who shared the responsibility for addressing their needs. He invited the audience and the larger development community to join forces in supporting the Global Initiative. He commended the ILO for striving to ensure that decent work was recognized as the critical element in the fight against poverty, and towards achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

The moderator, Ms Mbanjwa (CNBC), from South Africa, took the floor to invite the first round of questions from those present in relation to the youth employment challenge. The first question was posed by a Government representative from the United Kingdom, who asked whether the youth employment challenge today really differed from that in the previous decade and, if so, in what way. The other Government representative, from Cameroon, said that negative trends persisted in Africa, including the increasing share of informal employment. In this context, he wondered how to ensure that national policies took account of the specific challenges of youth. The Employer representative from the Republic of Korea expressed concern at the high level of graduate unemployment in her country and asked how skills and education could make a difference in a context where there were no guarantees of jobs. The Worker representative from Italy asked how the need to create jobs in a setting of austerity could be reconciled with the added demand to create quality jobs; how the use of internships to fill temporarily vacant positions could be reconciled with the aim of creating quality jobs; and what role were trade unions expected to play in the Global Initiative.

The moderator introduced the panel and launched the discussion with a first question to the youth panellist, Mr Trejo Cervantes (*Organismo Internacional de Juventud para Iberoamerica* (International Organization of Youth for Ibero-America), Mexico), on

his views on the main challenges. Mr Trejo Cervantes noted that a principal challenge for young people remained the obstacles to labour market entry and added that a holistic approach would be required to ensure the employability of youth. In response to the same question, another youth panellist, Ms Kimani (entrepreneur, Kenya), reflected that the type of training given to young people was not aligned with the world of work. More concentration on soft skills and technical skills was called for in addressing current labour market opportunities, for example in agriculture.

Youth panellist, Ms Coronacion (union activist, Philippines), shared an anecdote about a worker in the Philippines who had been working in the fast-food business for 11 years without any job security. She said that many young people only had access to precarious work and most were “not living but only surviving”.

Minister Vieira da Silva (Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security, Portugal) said there was a difference between the current situation facing youth and the period before the financial crisis, with increasing over-representation of young people in non-standard forms of employment. Solutions to counter such trends would require sound economic policies to create investment that generated jobs. It was not a question of older workers leaving the labour market early to give way to the younger generation, but rather of finding the right policy mix that balanced the quality and quantity of employment with the overall aim to attain social justice. The moderator asked the Minister to address the conundrum of “quality or quantity?” to which Minister Vieira da Silva responded that that was not a choice.

Ms Kromjong (Secretary-General, International Organisation of Employers) highlighted the importance of aligning education and training with the needs of the labour market and promoting the value of technical training. She noted the importance of soft skills training and the opportunity for apprenticeships or internships to serve as stepping stones into employment.

When asked to address the concerns of informal employment, Ms Burrow (General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation) said that since the ILC had made its Call to action in 2012, the issues had changed, as had the array of solutions. Today there was a systemic risk for young people of never gaining access to a formal job. The challenge was to identify where the jobs would be (for example, in the care economy), to advocate for inclusion (encouraging employers to ensure that young persons were given a chance), and to recognize the importance of entrepreneurship. All solutions, however, needed to take careful consideration of social protection and ensure that young people were able to earn a minimum living wage.

A further young person, Ms Zuluaga (Colombia), was invited to share her experience of growing up in a country undergoing civil conflict. She spoke of the turbulence that accompanies living in an environment of constant fear for one’s own safety and that of one’s family. Having experienced internal displacement and struggled to gain an education intermittently during the years of conflict, Ms Zuluaga’s advice to youth in fragile States was to maintain their goals and to work hard to overcome their challenges, knowing that they could not allow themselves to be victims forever.

A second round of questions was opened by the moderator, this time focusing on the search for solutions to the youth employment challenge. A Government representative from Japan wished to know what government interventions would be the most powerful in helping youth in their transition from school to work in a way that avoided the scarring effect of a poor start. Another Government representative from Panama sought advice on how to create a better balance between soft skills and technical skills, and examples of good practices. The Worker representative from Bulgaria asked the panellists what worked in improving outcomes that were specific to youth, and wondered what the proper balance was between supply-side and demand-side interventions. With regard to a global delivery mechanism for youth employment, he asked how the Global Initiative would be linked to global financing facilities, such as those to be set up in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Finally, the Employer representative from Colombia referred to the 2012 Call for action and asked if there had been lessons learned from the follow-up activities as to which among the multidimensional initiatives had been the most effective.

The youth panellist, Ms Kimani, was asked to give her views on what types of government support could be most effective. She started by reminding the audience that young people maintained their resilience despite adversities, but that they still welcomed any help that governments could give to help them realize their dreams. In her experience with a start-up venture bringing technology and finance to the agricultural sector in Africa, she said that government assistance could best be focused on building the infrastructure that would help young people in rural areas to capitalize on the opportunities that technology and physical access could bring in growing their markets.

In response to the search for evidence on what works, youth panellist Ms Coronacion shared the good experience gained in the Philippines with an industrial council, particularly in the context of promoting social dialogue. She called on governments to put forward policies that aimed to overcome the rampant spread of precarious jobs, including industrial policies that avoided abusive practices in apprenticeships and promoted a better exchange between the education system and the labour market.

Youth panellist Mr Trejo Cervantes added that governments had a role to play in transforming the skills base of young people by modernizing the education system. He added that keeping up with the fourth Industrial Revolution meant equipping young people not just with technical skills but also digital skills, soft skills and, most certainly, entrepreneurship skills.

In response to the question on the concentration on supply-side or demand-side interventions, Minister Vieira da Silva said that a balance between the two was needed in order to promote investment, without which employment would remain stagnant. Regarding the supply-side picture, which primarily focused on youth engagement in education, he called for a long-term approach that started with investment in early education and the promotion of vocational skills at all levels of the education system. He added that the most effective interventions started with collaboration between the education system and the social partners.

Ms Kromjong reminded the audience of the need to promote sustainable enterprises as a key starting

point for youth employment and noted that for enterprises to remain viable they needed flexible labour market policies. Given that apprenticeships or internships gave young people an important first step into the labour market, she applauded public-private partnerships (PPPs), such as the Global Apprenticeships Network, which promoted good practices in that regard. However, she added that work-readiness preparation for young people needed to take place even earlier, in other words, within the education system.

Ms Burrow stressed the importance of protecting trainees and offering decent wages during traineeships, all of which could be attained when apprenticeship systems were designed through social dialogue. She then challenged those present in the room to reflect on what they were doing to get young people into secure and formal jobs with guarantees of social protection, that aimed to tackle inequalities and that provided a minimum living wage on which young people could live with dignity. If youth were merely surviving rather than thriving then some deeper consideration of investments needed to take place.

A videoconference session connected participants with Ms Abbas, a young woman who left Somalia at the age of 6 years to settle in Kenya. Ms Abbas related her experience as a young person living as a refugee. Among her principal challenges were the difficulties in accessing education and training programmes, despite which she managed to obtain a diploma and a job as an interpreter. To help others to overcome such misfortunes, she recommended that global leaders deploy additional efforts to improve access to quality education and training for young refugees.

The third round of questions focused on youth employment promotion, led by a Government representative from Canada who mentioned the diversity of youth unemployment and underemployment rates in her country for specific vulnerable groups, including the indigenous population. In that context, where industry did not create sufficient job opportunities for young people, she wondered how governments should respond. Another Government representative from Kenya asked what all parties should do in practical terms when they left Geneva and returned home. The Employer representative from Denmark wanted to know more about the role that the ILO could play in supporting PPPs, such as those successfully promoting apprenticeships in her country. The final question in the third round came from the Worker representative from Barbados, who said that the tendency to address youth employment as an economic rather than as a social issue had brought negative consequences, in that better results had not been delivered. She wondered what could be done to redress the situation and inspire youth who felt marginalized.

In her response to the question of targeting vulnerable groups, Ms Burrow said that constituents must take seriously their shared responsibility to reach the most marginalized, and utilize social dialogue to find solutions that tackled inequality, funded social protection floors, formalized work and took forward the discussion on a minimum living wage.

Regarding policies to support youth entrepreneurship, youth panellist Ms Kimani emphasized the need for holistic entrepreneurship training that included soft skills and recognized the importance of ensuring that young entrepreneurs had access to finance. Ms Burrow added that there were excellent models for

supporting transformative self-employment, such as the Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA) initiative in India. On the same subject, youth panellist Mr Trejo Cervantes seconded the call for support in access to finance but added that governments also needed to play a role in ensuring that young entrepreneurs had the basic skills to succeed. He referred to the new Global Initiative as an instrument to encourage partnerships to promote jobs and skills for youth.

Responding to the question as to whether youth employment was more a social or an economic issue, Ms Kromjong answered that it already was an economic issue. She emphasized the importance of promoting diversity of talents as a mechanism for promoting growth.

Asked to respond to the question concerning what participants should do upon departure from Geneva, youth panellist Ms Coronacion said that she herself would share the discussion and outcomes with her colleagues in the trade union movement and looked forward to receiving their feedback. Furthermore, she would continue to advocate for the rights of young workers and promote important issues through position papers.

A short video was shown to showcase the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth.

The fourth round of questions addressed issues of partnerships, including the 2030 Agenda and the Global Initiative. A Government representative from Romania spoke about the rapidly changing future of work and asked what role governments and civil society could play in preparing young people for the future of work in the context of the 2030 Agenda. He noted specifically the potential of supporting PPPs on skills development. Another Government representative from India remarked on the power of social media as a means of expression for the voices of young people and wondered whether there was a risk that social media platforms could make the role of trade unions redundant. The Worker representative from Senegal raised the question of how to build the global strategy for the promotion of productive employment, outlined in SDG 8, adding that the success of a global partnership would depend not just on resources but also on the full participation of the social partners. The final question, raised by the Employer representative from Malawi, related to the negative impact of widespread informal employment. Contrasting that with the aspirations of SDG 8, he asked what role the ILO could play in assisting countries to expand investments in youth employment through existing national policy frameworks.

Minister Vieira da Silva was given the floor first on the theme of aligning existing global strategies and moving towards action. He proposed that having different strategies was positive, since it allowed youth employment to be tackled through different approaches. There were underlying themes, however, in any strategy to tackle youth unemployment which were, first, the importance of education and lifelong learning and, second, the importance of social dialogue. In moving towards a flexible economy he stressed that robust tripartite negotiations would be needed to ensure that young people were protected. The ILO could help in facilitating social dialogue and also in conducting research on what worked across countries.

Ms Kromjong emphasized again that businesses needed flexible labour markets in order to drive a flexible economy and added that it was necessary to recognize that fixed-term contracts might not be a

concept of the future. In looking for policy solutions, she noted the importance of listening to young people, who might have new solutions unknown to policy-makers and the social partners. She stressed the critical role that employers would have to play towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

In response to the previous speaker and the question from the floor, youth panellist Ms Coronacion said that young people did not want flexible work, meaning that the role of trade unions was still highly relevant. She reminded the audience that youth employment was a goal that would not just benefit youth. In helping young people to reach their dreams, she challenged all actors to “get their act together” to create better opportunities for young people.

Ms Kimani, youth panellist, considered how young people could leverage technology so that no young person was left behind. The stepping stones to empowering young people through technology were, first, to facilitate access through investments in infrastructure and, second, to provide all youth with a quality education.

Ms Burrow shared her admiration for the strength and vision of the young women on the panel. She opposed the myth that disruptive technology would necessarily diminish the role of trade unions; rather she welcomed such technology and its effect on promoting democracy. In tackling the issue of youth employment, she seconded the call by the Minister to avoid outsourcing responsibility, and challenged the room to take collective responsibility toward the lofty goal of creating decent employment opportunities for their sons and daughters. One specific means of action that had come out of the discussion on the Social Justice Declaration would be to upgrade the Decent Work Country Programmes.

In his final response, youth panellist Mr Trejo Cervantes expressed his gratitude to the ILO and commended the Global Initiative, expressing the hope

that the means at their disposal would be used to focus on the transformative talents of youth.

In closing, the Secretary-General of the Conference offered some reflections on the morning’s proceedings, the first of which related to the impressive eloquence of the young panellists, who easily dispelled any lingering doubts regarding the value of adding young voices to the agenda. He recalled three dimensions of the conversation: the panellists’ reminder of some of the tough realities on the ground; the discussion around both the social and economic dimensions of youth employment; and the everyday human costs that came with inaction, which was, in a sense, a denial of the right to have a life project.

Noting that youth was not an undifferentiated mass, the Secretary-General of the Conference pointed to the need to recognize the diversity of experiences and needs of youth and to ensure that there was no trade-off between the quantity and quality of employment, not forgetting the importance of the quality of education as well. He spoke of a paradigm shift, whereby the world of work was being transformed, although that transformation must not be used as an excuse to tell young people that they must settle for less as an unavoidable consequence of changing times. That was exactly the wrong message. Rather, the aim was to capitalize on changes in a way that recognized the criterion of decent work for current and future generations. Recalling the words of the Minister, he said that none of us could afford to outsource responsibility for future progress. He emphasized that the message had been heard by the ILO, but the next step would be to show young people what differences could be made in their favour when everyone “got their act together”, borrowing the words used by Ms Coronacion. Only then would those words have meaning.

Special sitting

Thursday, 9 June 2016, 3.00 p.m.

President: Ms Oliphant

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MR JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER, PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

The PRESIDENT

It is my honour to welcome our distinguished guest speaker, His Excellency Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission. I now call on the Secretary-General of the Conference to welcome and introduce President Juncker.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

For almost 100 years, European governments and social partners have played a leading role in promoting the ILO's mandates and activities. I believe that this historic partnership between European countries and the ILO has played a role in inspiring the foundations upon which the European Union (EU) has been and continues to be built. Indeed, the ILO and the EU share more than 28 member States. We also share fundamental values and principles that are at the very heart of our respective mandates. The promotion of a high level of employment, the endeavour for the constant improvement of people's living and working conditions, a guarantee of adequate social protection for all and the fight against social exclusion are some of our common objectives.

Mr President, your presence here today illustrates the solid cooperation that the ILO and the EU have forged over time with you as both a witness and an actor. Your experience as a European leader is unique. Before you became President of the European Commission in November 2014, you were Prime Minister of Luxembourg for 18 years and President of the Eurogroup for nine. You also held the positions of Minister of Finance and Minister of Labour, which gave you an opportunity to experience the International Labour Conference from within. Our records show that at various times between 1983 and 1999 you sat on the benches below you and were part of the work of the International Labour Conference, so I have every reason to say "Welcome home".

I think, without exaggeration, that your previous contact and experience with the ILO has helped to strengthen your strong commitment to social dialogue, another value shared by the EU and the ILO. In fact, one of your key initiatives, immediately after becoming President of the European Commission, was to invite the social partners to a new beginning in their dialogue. This was gratefully appreciated and

much needed after the difficulties brought about by the 2008 financial crisis and its consequences and was heartily welcomed by the ILO and our tripartite constituents.

So I am really delighted to welcome you to this, our World of Work Summit, and I thank you again for your presence with us today.

The PRESIDENT

It is now my honour to invite President Juncker to address the Conference.

Original French: Mr JUNCKER (President of the European Commission)

I am speaking to you this afternoon with all the respect and admiration that I have for the International Labour Organization. I am here not because my dear friend, Guy Ryder, invited me but because, to a certain extent, I invited myself and Guy was wise enough to accept my suggestion. I am also talking to you because I was rather jealous of the European Commissioner on Labour Matters, Marianne Thyssen, who had the opportunity to speak to you last year. Our institutions have worked together for many years but my personal and more intimate relationship with this Organization goes back much further, to the 1980s. For 17 years I was Minister of Labour and, to a certain extent, I still am. It is in that capacity that I had the opportunity to share with many of my friends who are here today experiences that I later found useful. In other words, this Conference has no secrets from me. It has rightly been called the World Parliament of Labour but it is also the Parliament of my heart. So I address you as a friend and as a European, a firm European friend who, in 2014, campaigned for election to the presidency of the European Commission – and unexpectedly won, to the regret of some – on a platform of employment, growth and social justice. These are also the priorities of the Commission over which it is my honour to preside.

An ambitious social policy in Europe is nothing new. European social dialogue was extremely important as far back as the 1980s, when I shared responsibility for it with my friend Jacques Delors. During the 1980s, Europe made considerable progress in terms of health and safety at work and gender equality, and we will continue to launch initiatives, particularly on the issue of health and safety at work, during the coming year. All of our achievements, those that I mention and those that I do not, have made Europe a model for social issues worldwide.

Having said that, I still believe that social issues remain, to a certain extent, the “poor relation” of European policy-making.

Some of Europe’s gloss and attractiveness has rubbed off over the past ten years as a result of the unprecedented crisis. I think it is high time that it recovered its social dimension and that social development in Europe really took off.

As I have said in the past, it is time that Europe earned a triple A rating on social matters. Unfortunately, we are still a long way from that goal. It is true that, from the economic point of view, the situation in Europe has improved but the crisis will not be over until we reach full employment again. A continent with tens of millions of unemployed people cannot claim that the crisis is behind us. It is difficult to understand how a continent as wealthy as Europe could relinquish a principle that should be universal: the young people of today and tomorrow are entitled to a job. If they are to have one, we have to breathe new life into social dialogue everywhere, because it is essential and because Europe has a very particular way of tackling both economic and social issues.

It does so through and on the basis of unbroken social dialogue between governments, trade unions and employers’ organizations – in other words, tripartism. Those who claim that economic integration and social dialogue cannot go hand in hand are very wrong. The French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, said, “I like things that go together”. Social dialogue and the building of Europe are things that go together; you cannot have one without the other.

That is why, when I was elected President of the European Commission, I appointed a deputy who is responsible for both social dialogue and for the euro, as a clear sign of my belief that in Europe, the two go well together. That is also why I have proposed that the rules on the posting of workers in the EU be revised, to avoid abuses and address the risk of “social dumping”. There is a simple principle on which we must agree: the same pay for the same work at the same place. This is also why we have proposed the establishment of a European platform of minimum social standards, in other words a sort of *cordon sanitaire* that would encircle the labour market so as to better protect it. This platform of minimum social standards will set a definitive lower limit. I confess that the idea of a minimum – not minimalist – platform draws philosophical inspiration from the ILO Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 and the 2008 Social Justice Declaration. Once established, the European platform of social standards will, we hope, be a lodestar for the new European convergence towards which we are working.

That is why, when we negotiated a financial support package for Greece in the summer of 2015, I personally ensured that the social dimension was taken into account. I demanded that, for the first time, a social impact study of the adjustment programme be carried out. During the Greek crisis, I also appreciated again the importance of ILO labour standards; at the umpteenth endless European Council meeting, I was able – and indeed had – to explain to recalcitrant heads of State and government the principles of the ILO Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154). We also ensured that the ILO provided advice and expertise when reforms were being introduced under Greece’s Adjustment Programmes; I would like to thank the Director-General for involving your Organization in that work.

Greece is now firmly established in the eurozone and I have every hope that with the recent agreements, it will soon be on the road to recovery. During all these years of crisis, European solidarity has been tested and in many cases, Europe has turned inward. However, a navel-gazing Europe that is over-preoccupied with itself and less concerned with others is not the Europe of my dreams.

That Europe is a host, and must be able to welcome, in decent conditions, those who turn to us for assistance and protection, in the knowledge that the problems faced by Europeans are minor when compared with the burden borne by far poorer countries. Look at the number of refugees that Europe will be taking in and then compare it with Jordan, Lebanon or Turkey; Europeans have every reason to be a bit more modest about what we have done rather than lecturing others. At a time when we are facing the worst population displacement crisis since the Second World War, I am proud to say that the EU remains a beacon of hope for millions of people, defending that Europe. That Europe is a Europe that realizes that migration is a source of enrichment for our societies and our economies. This week, at the Commission, we have launched new initiatives to help migrants to integrate into society. Europe is, and must remain, an open Europe that offers legal avenues for migration, whether by resettling refugees or, through a revised Blue Card scheme, making it easier for skilled workers from other countries to enter our labour market.

That Europe is a Europe that works with its neighbours, such as Turkey and other countries, to save lives at sea and bring an end to the horrific business model of people-smugglers and traffickers who are profiting from human misery and have ruled the waves for far too long in the Aegean Sea. The new Migration Partnership Framework that we announced this week will allow us to extend this type of cooperation to countries in Africa, and some countries in Asia, in order to better manage international migration. Our ambitious foreign investment plan, adapted to the needs of developing countries, will allow us to adequately address the root causes of migration by mobilizing €30 billion of investment, or €60 billion if EU Member States follow the Commission’s proposal.

Shortly after we came into office, we launched a European investment plan, the Juncker Plan. It was not I who called it that; it was those who were certain that it would fail and wanted to identify in advance the persons responsible. But it has not been a failure; to date, we have been able to mobilize €100 billion in investment funds. Now that the Plan has become a success, it is not called the Juncker Plan any more; it is called the European Investment Plan. We would like to be able to share this investment plan, which we have implemented successfully within the EU, with our friends outside our borders who have serious problems, particularly with migration.

A Europe that is open to the world is a Europe that knows how to shoulder its responsibilities. The EU is not just a source of soft power; it is also a fully-fledged partner, active on all fronts and helping to develop the rules that will govern the world in the future as we did with climate change, during the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) last year and as we do on a daily basis with regard to development issues. The EU and its Member States are already the major sources of official development assistance (ODA) worldwide; in 2015,

our contribution was €68 billion, 15 per cent more than the previous year. We also reiterated our commitment to meeting the common ODA target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI). Very few countries have achieved that target, either in Europe or worldwide, with the exception of Luxembourg, which spends over 1 per cent of GNI on development policy.

The EU's role on the international stage is also visible every day in the area of trade. The EU, the world's largest trading partner, is now the market most open to exports from developing countries. If we exclude energy products, the EU imports more from the least developed countries than the United States, Canada, Japan and China together. For us as Europeans, trade is not just a question of sharing economic benefits; it is also a matter of values and basic principles which must be defended at home and elsewhere. We do not hesitate to use our trade policy to promote respect for fundamental international standards: human rights, workers' rights, environmental protection, good governance and greater responsibility in global supply chains. That is why we work closely with the ILO in several countries. In Bangladesh, for example, we are trying to improve working conditions and health and safety at work. But Bangladesh is not the only example; at the moment, we are cooperating with the ILO in four countries – El Salvador, Guatemala, Mongolia and Pakistan – to assist with the implementation of international labour Conventions. In exchange, these four countries benefit from a preferential trade relationship with the EU.

During the discussions on the Transatlantic Trading and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the United States, much has been said about standards. A week ago, when I met with President Obama in Japan, we agreed to pursue the negotiations on the world's largest trade agreement. Let me be crystal clear on this point today: we shall not be lowering European standards on health, labour or other principles that we hold dear; we shall protect them. Therefore, any agreement with the United States will need to include ambitious, far-reaching provisions on all of the fundamental rights of workers under the ILO Conventions and to ensure a high level of health and safety at work and decent working conditions.

For almost 100 years, the ILO has been a body in which discussions and debates have focused on the world in which we live and the kind of society that we want to build. As the Organization's centenary approaches, I would like to pay tribute to the Director-General, Guy Ryder, who has not been here for 100 years of course, but almost, for putting the ILO at the heart of the challenges that the world must face. The ILO is beginning to have an impact on the G20 and the G7 and your Director-General is playing an essential role in that process. Decent work is now recognized as one of the 2030 SDGs, and here I am thinking particularly of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, which is fully consistent with Europe's youth guarantees and skills development initiatives. I am also thinking of your Future of Work Initiative, in which the EU will play an active part. I do not, of course, wish to pre-empt any conclusions that you may reach, but I do have some personal views on this question, which are not necessarily shared by all Europeans. In my opinion, and I am old-fashioned on this point, a normal employment contract is open-ended. Yes, businesses need to be able to plan ahead, but so do workers.

I know that the world is changing at a dizzying pace and, at the global level, the world of work is doubtless changing more rapidly than ever. The challenge we face is to adapt our current model to reflect our values. We can and must take up this challenge together. It is often at times of challenge that the EU shows what it does best by ensuring stability, acting responsibly and promoting solidarity within and beyond its borders. It is also when challenges arise that international organizations such as yours provide an essential anchor and a global perspective. You can count on me and on the European Commission to support you in your work, and if Guy wishes to take the initiative, I will not need to invite myself to celebrate with you the centenary of your Organization.

The PRESIDENT

Many thanks, President Juncker, for those insights into the world of work. On behalf of the Conference, I would like to thank you for your presence here today.

(The World of Work Summit adjourned at 3.30 p.m.)

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