



► Global Forum for a Human- Centred Recovery

Summary of Proceedings

Contents

Introduction	2
Opening session: Advancing a human-centred recovery through strengthened multilateral and tripartite cooperation	2
Thematic session 1: Decent jobs and inclusive economic growth	6
Thematic session 2: Universal social protection	10
Thematic session 3: Protecting workers and sustaining enterprises	14
Thematic session 4: Just transition	19
Closing session: Toward a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient	24

Introduction

1. In response to a commitment made in the resolution concerning a Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis (“the Call to Action”), adopted at the 109th Session of the International Labour Conference (2021), and following the decision taken by the Governing Body at its 343rd Session (November 2021),¹ the ILO convened a major policy forum. The aim of the Forum was to mobilize a strong and coherent global response in support of Member States’ human-centred recovery strategies that are inclusive, sustainable and resilient, including through joint initiatives and enhanced institutional arrangements among international and regional organizations.
2. The Global Forum for a Human-centred Recovery (“the Forum”) was held in a virtual format, from Tuesday, 22 February to Thursday, 24 February 2022. It brought together Heads of State, Directors of international organizations, Directors of international and regional financial institutions, the Officers of the ILO Governing Body and international and regional employers’ and workers’ representatives. It took the form of an opening session, on the topic of Advancing a human-centred recovery through strengthened multilateral and tripartite cooperation; followed by four moderated panel discussions on Jobs and inclusive economic growth; Universal social protection; Protecting workers and sustaining enterprises and Just transition. The closing session was entitled: Towards a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. All participants welcomed the holding of the Forum and agreed on the importance of its theme. The Forum expressed strong support for the United Nations Secretary-General’s Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection (“the Global Accelerator”), for the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, 2019 (“the Centenary Declaration”), and the Global Call to Action.

Opening session: Advancing a human-centred recovery through strengthened multilateral and tripartite cooperation

Participants (in order of speaking)

- Ms Anna Jardfelt, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Sweden to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body
 - Ms Renate Hornung-Draus, Employer Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body
 - Ms Catelene Passchier, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body
 - Mr Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations
 - Mr Ignazio Cassis, President of the Swiss Confederation
 - Mr Macky Sall, President of Senegal
 - Mr Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia President Alberto Fernández, Argentina
 - Mr Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany
 - Ms Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
 - Mr Roberto Suarez Santos, Secretary-General of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
 - Mr Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General
3. **The Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body** (F) welcomed the participants to the Global Forum. She recalled that the purpose of the Forum was to define concrete action to support a human-centred recovery to the COVID-19 crisis.
 4. The Employer Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body (F) said that discussion at the Forum should focus on concrete action to strengthen the international community response. Closer linkages and cooperation between employers’ and workers’ organizations, governments and the multilateral institutions was essential. Her group hoped that the Forum would commit to building business resilience during and after the crisis. The Centenary Declaration had called for an enabling environment for

¹ Follow-up to the resolution concerning a global call to action for a human-centred recovery to the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient (GB.343/INS/3/2).

enterprises. This was a matter of critical importance to the group; especially in respect of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and should be given maximum priority in regional, national and international agendas. The year ahead was crucial to shaping a better, more inclusive, sustainable future for all.

5. The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body (F) said that the Forum provided the opportunity to bring the Centenary Declaration and the Call to Action into reality. To counter existing inequality between and within countries, including in vaccine distribution, and to achieve the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, a change in policy direction was imperative. The recovery must be gender inclusive: women had been disproportionately affected by increasing job precarity during the pandemic. The social partners should participate in policy design at all levels, on the basis of the ILO's four strategic objectives. New jobs must be both decent and environmentally sustainable. Social security systems should be strengthened, including with the provision of a global social protection fund for the poorest countries. The ILO should take the lead in promoting international policy coherence, with labour standards at the foundation of international cooperation.
6. The Secretary-General of the United Nations (M) noted the profound social and economic effects of the pandemic, highlighting in particular the widening inequality between the wealthy and the poor and between developed and developing countries. Wealthy countries could invest more of their GDP in recovery than poorer nations. Women had been especially hard-hit: without robust safety nets and decent work opportunities, many who had left the labour market would be unable to re-enter it. Climate change added an additional layer of difficulty. The world was so far failing to meet the targets set by COP26. Recovery must therefore be both human-centred and green, and it must place people before profits.
7. Universal social protection was a means of putting people first, but emphasis must also be placed on generating decent jobs, formalizing the informal sector, and investing massively in education and training; a renewed social contract was needed. The global financial system should be reformed to allow countries access to resources, through debt relief and fairer tax systems that directed funds where they were most needed. The Global Accelerator, to be led by the ILO, would bring together governments, international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector. It had the potential to create 400 million jobs, especially in the green, care and digital economies, and could extend social protection to four billion people currently not covered. The choices made now would make the difference between a global breakthrough and a global breakdown.
8. The President of the Swiss Confederation (M) noted that the pandemic was a socioeconomic crisis as well as a health crisis. However, it had also accelerated digital transformation and the fourth industrial revolution. That presented opportunities to shape the post-COVID-19 world. Fragmented action by multilateral institutions would not succeed. Issues such as work, the environment, trade, peace and security could no longer be considered individually. The mandates of each individual international organization should be seen as interacting, rather than separate. Switzerland was committed to providing a platform for multilateral cooperation. The ILO should play a key role, as work was central to society and to livelihoods and the right decisions, taken now, would enhance peace and social justice. The way forward would be found through more inclusive multilateralism.
9. The President of the Republic of Senegal (M) recalled the devastating human cost of the pandemic, the millions of jobs lost and the resulting growth of poverty. Vaccine production must be increased, particularly in Africa. African countries were committed to recovery through mobilization of internal resources, but needed donor countries to issue more special drawing rights (SDRs) on agreed terms. Recovery initiatives should be based on the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205). To palliate the effects of the crisis, Senegal had directly supported households to allow them to obtain basic commodities. It had provided finance to encourage job creation in emerging sectors and to fund programmes aimed at integrating young people into the labour market. The government fully supported a human-centred recovery.
10. The President of the Republic of Indonesia (M) highlighted the different health and economic recovery rates between countries and regions, and supported a human-centred recovery. Social protection called for strong political commitment and financial support. It should be an integral part of national economic recovery programmes. Indonesia had allocated significant amounts of funding to support social

protection. The Government sought to establish a pro-investment climate that put people first, and was concentrating on finding innovative ways to generate new job opportunities in the green, sustainable economy. The workforce must be equipped for future challenges through reskilling and upskilling and through raising the level of digital literacy.

- 11.** The Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany (M) said that COVID-19 had taught the world to appreciate more highly the value of workers in the care economy. Germany had drawn a number of lessons from the pandemic. Firstly, a strong State required a strong social partnership: workers must be provided with social protection, and businesses affected by the pandemic must be supported through furlough systems, to save jobs. Secondly, the pandemic had greatly accelerated digitalization of the economy giving rise to a need for targeted investments in skills training, upskilling and education. Most importantly, occupational safety and health should be an integrated part of job creation: work should not make people ill. Thirdly, the pandemic was a global problem requiring global solutions such as binding social standards and due diligence governing global supply chains. Protection of the environment and socially just transformation must go hand in hand. Social protection should be strengthened across the globe, and the Global Accelerator could provide the means to achieve this. New paths must be opened up to bring about a paradigm shift in policy thinking. The G7 Climate Club, proposed by Germany in January 2021, could be part of the way forward.
- 12.** The President of the Republic of Argentina (M) stated that global injustice had increased with the reduction in State intervention and the rise of the globalized economy. Decent work must now be placed at the centre of inclusive, sustainable and resilient economic and social recovery. From its inception, the ILO's modus operandi had been the search for balanced agreement: it was well placed to lead recovery efforts. The Global Accelerator could be a major part of the solution, in promoting the care, green and digital economies and in supporting social protection floors. However, the international financial architecture was not in step with the real economy: it sought rather to undermine social justice. A morally bankrupt system defended the rich and punished the poor. Argentina was in the process of renegotiating the country's external debt. In its negotiations with the International Monetary Fund, Argentina had focused on safeguarding workers' rights, protecting the most vulnerable, and protecting businesses. The international financial system must not impose conditions on national development agendas. A participatory development and growth model was required. To move forward, he put forward the following proposals: the UN should open a discussion on debt, economic growth with social justice and the architecture of the international financial institutions, with participation by the actors of the real economy; universal access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments; implementation of national active employment policies, providing skills upgrading, training and career guidance; a road map to mobilize international funding for countries' transitioning to the green economy; institutionalized national social dialogue to address the effects of economic, social technical and environmental transformation on workers and enterprises; priority to be given to formalizing the informal sector; strengthened policies to counter gender, educational, economic and social inequalities in support of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.
- 13.** The General Secretary of the ITUC (F) highlighted the centrality of social justice and the world of work to peace and prosperity. Social justice provided resilience against future shocks and crises and provided a framework for a new social contract. The fragmentation of the world's societies was recognized as a threat to global peace. It was essential to repair a broken global labour market where 60 per cent of workers were in the informal sector, without rights, social protection or rule of law. Of the 40 per cent of workers in the formal sector, more than a third worked in conditions that could not be classified as decent. The UN Secretary-General recognized the need for a new social contract: the ITUC strongly supported the Global Accelerator. The goal should be full employment. The pandemic had shown that investment needed to go into the care economy, potentially generating over 270 million jobs. Transition to the green economy could generate a further 300 million jobs. The ITUC also targeted the formalization of a billion informal jobs by 2030. Solutions had to be found to enable the large number of informal and unprotected workers operating in internet-mediated jobs to engage in collective bargaining, so as to obtain decent working conditions and a living wage. The pandemic had demonstrated the devastation caused by a lack of social protection, both for workers and for the economy. Social protection and climate friendly jobs were therefore clear priorities and the ITUC had called for a global social protection fund for the poorest countries. Such a fund need not take the form of a formal institution – it could be constituted by such measures as debt relief, SDRs, the creation of

fiscal space, removing the conditionality of international financial institution assistance, and progressive taxation. The pandemic also revealed the failure of multilateralism in not sharing technology in the vaccine race. It was essential that the system operate at a more coherent level. The Centenary Declaration set out a clear social contract based on jobs, social protection, rights, equality and inclusion – that was the model that should be followed.

- 14.** The Secretary-General of the IOE (M) stated that the Employers supported the UN Secretary-General's common agenda. Action should be accelerated in certain areas to promote the social cohesion and stability vital to business. That was convergent with the Call to Action. There was a need for joint action, with international organizations, social partners, civil society and government working together to build efficient partnerships. Ideological prejudices and barriers must be put to one side in order to rebuild trust in shared values, such as human rights, social dialogue and sustainability and the ILO's fundamental principles and rights. Silos should be broken down through the development of a more inclusive, practical multilateralism, in line with the UN Common Agenda, the Centenary Declaration and the call to action. That meant better inclusion of the private sector. The IOE and the business community it represented was ready to commit and engage further to support decarbonisation policies and just transition. That would involve anticipating the new skills required for the new era of work, changing mindsets for skilling and reskilling, advancing the gender agenda inside and outside companies. Strong and sustainable social protection systems should be developed, eradicating child and forced labour and preserving freedom of association. As the UN Secretary-General suggested, the private sector, at both the local and global level, could be more involved in the governance of public goods, including health services. Multilateralism and the new social contract needed to engage with independent employers' and workers' organizations. Multilateralism needs to preserve and strengthen social dialogue, including within the new social contract initiative. That was why the social partners were asking for special status within the UN. Closer UN engagement with local and global employers' and workers' organization would reinforce local and global ownership of the various initiatives. The ILO had 100 years' experience in building a robust tripartite partnership. That experience must be leveraged to support the recovery process and just transition to carbon neutrality.
- 15.** Recovery would not emerge unless protection and support were afforded to the business heroes who had struggled, and continued to struggle, during the pandemic. Those businesses had put their time, knowledge, financial resources and assets into generating decent work. Yet up to 30 per cent of small businesses had closed in low-income countries due to the pandemic. Weak institutions, corruption, informality, harmful policies and regulations and the lack of incentives weakened their capacity to recover. It must be understood that decent work and sustainable enterprises were two sides of the same coin.
- 16.** The ILO Director-General (M) identified four messages from the discussions. They should be considered as challenges, requiring concrete action. Firstly, COVID-19 had precipitated an economic and social crisis that had hit the weakest hardest. The current trajectory, under recovery, was prolonging and exacerbating that tendency. Secondly, there was an imperative need to act to reverse the dynamic and bridge the "dangerous divide" between wealthy and poor, between developed and developing nations. If left alone, the world would become more unfair and more dangerous. Thirdly, global challenges required global responses. There was a need for multilateral institutions to be more inclusive and coordinated and more tightly networked. Fourthly, a certain number of policy areas required urgent attention: vaccine equity – how to address a system that placed profit before people; channelling SDRs towards the countries that needed them; large-scale investments in health, social protection, education and care; and climate change. The question of how to finance these investments must also be taken up. The world of work was at the centre of all these challenges.

Thematic session 1: Decent jobs and inclusive economic growth

Participants (in order of speaking)

▶ Opening statement

- Mr Moon Jae-In, President of the Republic of Korea

▶ Panellists

- Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO)
- Dr Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, International Monetary Fund (IMF)
- Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General, World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Dr Beth Dunford, Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development, African Development Bank (AfDB)
- Mr Muhammad Suleiman Al Jassser, President, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
- Ms Michele Parmelee, Global Deputy CEO and Chief People & Purpose Officer, Deloitte
- Mr Luc Visentini, General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC)

Opening statement

17. The President of the Republic of Korea (M) pointed to the job crisis caused by the pandemic, and recalled that women, youth and self-employed businesspeople had been hardest hit. Poverty had increased, but the already wealthy had grown richer still. The gaps between rich and poor countries had widened, but the pandemic had shown how interconnected the world was and, as stated in the Declaration of Philadelphia, “poverty anywhere constitutes a threat to prosperity everywhere”. Solidarity, shared growth and inclusiveness must underlie the recovery and all countries must work together, with the rich countries providing aid to those poorer than them. The world must respond to the changes brought about by COVID-19, and to the tectonic shifts resulting from climate change and digitalisation. The rise of the latter had resulted in huge numbers of internet service providers, and the workers in those services were often left unprotected by labour law. As forms of labour diversified, workers could not be heard in the traditional social dialogue forum. Consequently, ways must be sought to reinforce social dialogue, smooth the transition for workers, and give them their voice in collective bargaining. The Republic of Korea had launched its Green New Deal Policy to offset the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and employment rates had overtaken the pre-pandemic rates as a result. His country would share its experience of this policy with the ILO and would work to make the Global Accelerator a successful tool for emerging from the crisis and ensuring a human-centred recovery.

Panel discussion

- 18. The Director-General of WHO (M)** said that COVID-19 had highlighted the fundamental role of health-workers in protecting society. Yet many health workers around the world did not have access to vaccines. WHO had launched the ACT Accelerator, to increase access to COVID-19 tools, bringing vaccines, tests and treatments to low- and middle-income countries. The Act accelerator lacked 16 billion dollars in funding, a sum that was insignificant compared to the value wiped out by job losses. Member States should increase their investment in training, improve the quality of employment and ensure access to vaccines. WHO and the ILO were working together to bring vaccines to health care workers. Even before the pandemic, more than 2 million people died annually from preventable diseases. Efforts should be increased to monitor and control diseases. WHO had strengthened its partnership with the ILO to protect health care workers through the Health in the World of Work Network, the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals and the Joint Action Group to review the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world’s transport workers and global supply chain workers.
- 19. The Managing Director of the IMF (F)** said that the Fund’s policy had been to encourage governments to loosen fiscal policies and to spend, so as to stimulate demand and help economies to continue

functioning during the crisis. It advised that any additional financial resources allocated by governments should be targeted to protect the most vulnerable areas of society and the economy. Fiscal policies must however be carefully calibrated to avoid dampening the recovery by allowing inflation levels to rise too sharply. The IMF had been greatly concerned firstly, at the dangerous divergence between the economies of wealthier countries and those of the developing nations, which had been weakened due to existing and rising debt levels and inflation. Secondly, it noted that women and young people were particularly harshly affected. Recovery, to be truly equitable, would have to address those negative socio-economic impacts. Thirdly, the uneven distribution of vaccines was another point of concern. The IMF had joined with WHO, the WTO and the World Bank to establish a task force to increase distribution of vaccines in developing countries. The IMF had committed an amount of US\$170 billion in support of low-income countries, and had issued an allocation of SDRs of US\$650 billion, of which US\$173 went to emerging markets and developing economies. That allocation was aimed at addressing the global need for reserves, foster economic resilience and help vulnerable countries struggling with the impact of COVID-19. It was also intended to promote transition to carbon neutrality.

- 20. The Director-General of the WTO (F)** said that her organization was particularly concerned by the unequal economic recovery, with the economies of Africa, the Middle East and Latin America growing at a lower rate, resulting from lower levels of fiscal capacity, and affected by inadequate vaccine distribution. However, sustainable and inclusive recovery was within reach, with trade as one of its cornerstones. The WTO's founding Marrakesh Agreement, stated the Organization's aims as to raise standards of living, ensure full employment and a large and steadily growing volume of real income. Trade should therefore be encouraged, to limit economic damage to many developing countries. It was also important to address the needs of those working in the service sector. The WTO Joint Initiative on Services Domestic Regulation, 2021, signed by 67 WTO Member States, was aimed at making domestic processes that regulate an authorization to supply a service clear, predictable and transparent. The initiative would particularly help small enterprises and improve conditions for the high proportion of women working in the sector. During the pandemic, e-commerce had greatly expanded. Its use and impact were uneven both in and between countries, and there was a need to establish rules governing it. WTO members were currently negotiating rules for the digital economy, which would surely expand to create more jobs. Trade in the green economy should also be encouraged, in such areas as solar panels. That would provide jobs for the future as well as encouraging the shift to carbon-neutrality. Trade in green industries should be part of the global economy.
- 21. The President of the IsDB (M)** said that the Bank's Member Countries had been affected by the pandemic to varying degrees. GDP growth had declined sharply in 2020, and unemployment had risen, especially for women and youth. Coordinated international efforts to address these issues were indispensable to recovery and to delivering the SDGs. Cooperation must be encouraged between all actors – governments, private companies, research institutions, academics and civil society. The IsDB looked forward to formalizing partnership with the ILO in areas such as the empowerment of women, employment of youth, decent work in crisis response and fragile States, South-South and Triangular cooperation and Islamic finance. The Bank's updated strategy was aimed at boosting recovery, tackling poverty and building resilience, investing in green economic growth and inclusive human capital development. It worked particularly with SMEs and MSMEs. The Bank was committed to using innovative financing to expand social protection and support entrepreneurship. It would work to reduce the digital divide and continue its work in the education sector and create more green jobs for women and youth. It would maintain its cooperation with multilateral development banks (MDBs), international finance institutions, civil society groups and UN specialised agencies and other national and international development partners.
- 22. The Vice President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development, AfDB (F)** said that her institution shared the ILO's vision of a human-centred, inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the pandemic. The AfDB and the ILO had already worked together on a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) mapping study in 16 African countries, the results of which were being used to make improvements in various fields, for example, vocational training in agriculture and rural entrepreneurship in Gabon. The AfDB also collaborated with the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, to produce tailor-made development and training programmes for Bank staff. Within the UN system, the Bank also worked with UNICEF and UNDP to implement resilience projects and was an active part of the MDB network, for example working with the Federal Government of Nigeria to promote

youth entrepreneurship in the digital and creative industries. Momentum was growing around the Bank's Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa programme, supported by the G-7, the Netherlands and Sweden. The AfDB supported the objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and had joined with the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA) in the Africa Adaptation Acceleration Programme, to scale up transformative and climate change adaptation actions across Africa. No single development institution could resolve current challenges alone. The AfDB's collaboration with the ILO and other multilateral organisations, demonstrated that when brainpower, financing, and innovation were pooled, support to countries in their efforts to recover from the crisis carried significantly more impact.

- 23. The President, IOE (F)** said that States, governments, employers, workers and other non-State actors must act together to ensure recovery and sustainable growth. A conducive environment for business, based on constructive social dialogue; the respect of fundamental principles and rights, and stronger multilateral relations and institutions were requirements. Business, governments and the international community needed to work together to tackle barriers to private sector growth, including limited access to financing and skilled labour; protectionist trade policies; unclear tax laws, corruption; lack of focused investments in education; and widespread informality. Business must be aware of its social impact and must rigorously apply the principles of freedom of association, non-discrimination, respect for human rights and protection of the environment. The IOE was committed to those principles.
- 24.** Economic growth depended on a well-functioning multilateral system that protected and promoted trade, ensured the rule of law, provided global economic stability and guaranteed a fair allocation of the world's resources. Promoting sustainable enterprises was essential to achieving the 2030 Agenda. Enterprise need support from such organizations as the UN and the ILO to allow it to play its key role. Engagement with national employers' organizations and business leaders should be expanded and new partnerships between business and the multilateral system pursued. The international community should better support business in ensuring sustainable growth and prosperity for all.
- 25. The General Secretary, ETUC (M)** said that the devastation caused by COVID-19 compounded the pre-existing problems of increased poverty and exclusion that had resulted from liberal austerity policies. Inequalities, including unequal access to vaccine supply or production, impeded recovery. To build resilience and combat informality, there was an urgent need for policy coherence. The international community should design a more just, sustainable and inclusive economic model. That would require sufficient public and private investment to promote decarbonisation, to improve social inclusion, achieve the goal of universal social protection and to advance the decent work agenda. The Global Accelerator was a tool that could help provide resilience against future shocks.
- 26.** Workers must be supported and protected from the impacts of transition to a carbon-neutral world. Job losses in some sectors would be offset by job creation in other, green economy sectors, but the replacement jobs must be located in the communities where the jobs had been lost: populations of workers must not be displaced to seek work. Appropriate legal frameworks to protect workers' rights must be developed, based on social dialogue and supported by multilateralism. Austerity policies were no longer appropriate, and central banks should move beyond a narrow focus on price stability. Fiscal policies must be coherent to deliver sustainable growth. Countries and households had incurred massive debts to face the crisis, and fiscal and economic policies should provide debt relief for low-income economies.
- 27. The Managing Director, IMF (F)** pointed to inflation and debt as the two most significant challenges facing countries as they entered 2022. Those challenges were connected, as rising inflation caused central banks to revisit their accommodative monetary stances by reducing asset purchases and raising interest rates. Debt servicing would become more expensive as a result. The debt burden caused by borrowing to support national economies was particularly harsh for emerging and developing economies. The IMF recommended that countries should consider what could be done to ease the debt service burden, for example by restructuring debt and extending maturities, and reducing currency mismatches to avoid exchange-rate fluctuation. All actors should recognize their shared interest in acting on debt to relieve excessive pressure. For 60 per cent of low-income countries, debt-stress was already a reality. The IMF, with the World Bank, had called for debt suspension during the COVID-19 crisis. The suspension had expired at the end of December 2021, though the IMF had extended its own

action, with G-20 backing, until April 2022. However, few countries had taken up the option, and it should be made more attractive and transparent.

28. The IMF recognized the need for more financing for higher employment. Countries needed to protect their social expenditure – in particular in education, health and social protection. Loss in education and skills development, caused by the pandemic, would result in huge economic losses in income generation over the lifetime of the affected populations. Investments, while they would be needed in infrastructure, green energy and climate resilience, must also be made in the most important resource for the future: people.
29. **The Vice-President for Agriculture, Human and Social Development, AfDB**, cautioned that African youth was becoming a jobless generation, with fewer decent jobs and opportunities that were limited to the informal sector. The AfDB wanted economies that promoted creativity and innovation. The bank noted that the private sector generated 90 per cent of new jobs, having created 3 million formal jobs yearly since 2017. Private sector industry was thus essential to employment. There was a need for structured investment in youth entrepreneurship. More than 60 per cent of SMEs cited a lack of finance as the impediment to their growth. Youth could not obtain credit because of lack of collateral and trust by financial institutions. The AfDB encouraged youth-focused institutions to support youth entrepreneurship. Policy and technical assistance were vital engines for generating employment. The green economy was a resource for economic renewal and more and better job creation, besides reducing pollution and enhancing energy efficiency. The right policies would produce sustainable, equitable growth. The AfDB's financing policy advocated growing the green economy as a key driver of sustainable development.
30. **The President, IOE, (F)** noted that all participants had supported governments' establishment of policy frameworks that were conducive to growth and job creation in enterprises, including SMEs. Policies should be put in place that supported dynamic, open and inclusive labour markets, that incentivised companies to hire and retain their workforces and to move into sectors where jobs would be created. To build resilience, business required improved access to finance, with fewer bureaucratic barriers. Innovative approaches were needed to combat informality. Investment in national social protection systems would safeguard people from the next crisis. The ILO Centenary Declaration and the Global Call to Action provided the framework for equitable recovery. The pandemic had thrown the importance of the private sector, SMEs and supply chains into sharp relief. Well-functioning supply chains were the basis for growth and development. In the words of former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, "it [was] the absence of broad-based business, not its presence, which condemns much of humanity to suffering".
31. **The General Secretary, ETUC, (M)** said that trade unions were engaging with international finance institutions to ensure sustainable levels of debt and lobbying to mobilize the investment needed to generate decent employment with good wages, conditions and social protection. Effective social dialogue and collective bargaining were fundamental to achieving that goal, and they were lacking in many countries. The ILO and other multilateral institutions should continue to promote social dialogue and implement the proposals in the Centenary Declaration, as well as the proposed global social protection fund. New forms of organization must be developed to cover platform work in the digital economy, to give workers in internet-mediated jobs a voice, to ensure that they enjoyed decent conditions of employment.
32. **The Managing Director, IMF, (F)** added that the disproportionate employment losses incurred by women as a result of the crisis had added urgency to the IMF finalizing its gender strategy to support gender-informed budgeting in Member States, advocating such measures as including access to childcare, safe public transport and measures to enhance women's financial inclusion and promote their entrepreneurship, and to eliminate discrimination. Promoting women's well-being had the knock-on effect of enhancing the well-being of families, communities and ultimately countries.
33. **The General Secretary, ETUC**, agreed that COVID-19 had affected women disproportionately in terms of employment-loss, but also because women occupied more jobs in essential services. There was a need for targeted investment to create decent jobs for women most severely affected by the crisis. Social dialogue and collective bargaining were crucial instruments to reduce and correct inequalities at work, including wage discrimination and working conditions.

- 34. The ILO Director General (M)** highlighted the importance of succeeding on all fronts, including health, trade, and finance, and bringing in all regions, to move from human-centred recovery as an idea to a reality. Current efforts to support the most vulnerable population groups and countries needed to be further enhanced to stop the widely observed and continuing trend of “dangerous divergence”, that could, if not addressed, even lead to breakdown. Substantial collaboration between organizations and sectors was already taking place but needed to be systematized and grounded in participatory approaches.

Thematic session 2: Universal social protection

Participants (in order of speaking)

▶ Opening statements

- Mr Carlos Agostinho do Rosário, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique, *on behalf of* Mr Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique.
- Mr Alexander De Croo, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium

▶ Panellists

- Mr Qu Dongyu, Director-General, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Ms Mari Pangestu, Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank
- Ms Karin Hulshof, Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- Mr Ayuba Wabba, President, Nigeria Labour Congress
- Mr José Abugaber Andonie, President, Federation of Industrial Chambers of Mexico (CONCAMIN)

- 35. The ILO Director-General (M)** pointed to the vital role social protections systems had played in mitigating the human cost of the pandemic. The Global Accelerator would be a tool to fill the financing gap in social protection and to extend social protection to the 4 billion people across the world who were without such coverage. The choice to invest adequately in social protection is not only rational but ethical. It would cost US\$77.9 billion annually to ensure a social protection floor for all low-income countries, while US\$19 trillion had been mobilized to palliate the effects of the crisis.

Opening statements

- 36. The Prime Minister of the Republic of Mozambique, *on behalf of* the President of the Republic of Mozambique (M)** said that social protection was a human right to be enshrined in national constitutions and enjoyed by all. It should be realized through policies and programmes aimed at reducing and preventing vulnerability to poverty throughout the life cycle. To fight the negative effects of the pandemic, Mozambique had adopted a package of measures centred around the individual that sought to balance public health priorities against the functioning of the economy. The package included support for the very poor and vulnerable households, expanded to include workers in the informal sector. To ensure continued recovery, resources must be used effectively. Mozambique would continue to generate employment in the green economy and build infrastructure resilient to climate shocks.

- 37. The Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Belgium (M)** emphasized the importance of multilateral cooperation in the COVID-19 recovery plans. The pandemic had highlighted the essential contributions of often precarious workers – women and the young, working in the care economy. Countries with strong social systems had been able to maintain health care, including provision of vaccines, and guarantee revenues. Countries with largely informal employment had been unable to do likewise. To face future crises, a collective effort must go to strengthening the resilience of institutions. For a truly human-centred recovery, universal social protection must become a reality. Investing in welfare systems was an investment in inclusive, sustainable economic development, and a reduction of poverty. It was also an investment in political and social stability and social peace. Belgium’s development

cooperation aimed at reinforcing national social protection schemes, to arrive at a universal approach. As co-president of the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development, the Kingdom of Belgium was a defender of a renewed and strengthened multilateralism. The Global Accelerator had already encouraged new welfare programmes in the global North and the global South. Belgium had advocated in the ILO and in the UN for over a decade for a broad strengthening of finance for universal social protection, and had launched the idea of a global fund for social protection, now integrated into the Global Accelerator. Engagement with multilateral institutions, including the IMF and the World Bank, was essential to progress, but with today's globalized value chains, MNEs also had a role to play. The ILO should continue to promote its Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration).

Panel discussion

- 38. The Director-General, FAO (M)**, responding to a question as to how the FAO could help extend social protection to agricultural workers and rural populations, said that people living and working in rural areas had been the hardest hit by the pandemic, as the sector was largely informal, with low incomes and scant access to social security systems. The pandemic had widened already-existing inequality. The ILO, UNICEF, the World Bank and other UN agencies should establish a consortium for social protection at the heart of recovery efforts. In 2021, the FAO had introduced 20 Priority Programme Areas (PPAs) to contribute to achieving the SDGs in areas related to building resilient agricultural ecosystems. The Organization was committed to working with its Member States, partners and sister agencies to use technology and digitalization in support of agriculture, to find innovative and responsible investments in rural areas.
- 39. The Managing Director of Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank (F)** said that the pandemic had changed mindsets and shown the shortcomings of narrow, poverty-targeted social protection and highlighted the great need to redesign social protection to be universal, inclusive, applicable to rural areas and adequately funded through investment. The pandemic had hit not only the extreme poor, but also urban and rural sectors, with a higher impact on women. Countries must build innovative, agile social protection systems, which should include reliable and inclusive digital identification systems, to be able to direct aid rapidly where it was most needed, to protect the most vulnerable, such as women, the rural poor, the elderly or persons with disabilities. The Bank's social protection programmes had more than doubled in the past 18 months, covering 57 countries and benefitting up to 1 billion people. Under its previous practice, the Bank's social protection programmes had targeted mostly the extreme poor. With COVID-19, it had to make additional efforts to target women and girls as well. The world's poorest were also at greater risk from climate vulnerability. In Niger, the Bank had protected incomes and consumption through cash transfer programmes, especially for households affected by drought. The Bank agreed on the great importance of the private sector, and had partnered with the International Finance Corporation and the ILO through the Better Work Programme to mitigate the effects of the pandemic in the garment sector. The Bank had also worked with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, ILO and UNICEF to leverage the Organizations' comparative advantages and boost impact for refugees and host communities.
- 40. The Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, UNICEF, (F)** noted that, after 25 years of a steady reduction, the pandemic had caused child poverty to rise again, with an estimated 100 million additional children in poverty, adding to increased inequality, loss of learning, malnutrition, mental health issues and care crises. Inclusive recovery must therefore prioritize scaling up social protection systems and protecting and expanding finance for human capital. UNICEF had been operating together with governments, the UN system, the World Bank and other partners in over 140 countries, including in fragile and humanitarian contexts, to reduce child poverty and scale up social protection. The work had focused on expanding child and family benefits towards universal coverage, building national systems and identifying critical and sustainable financing. Within UNICEF's dual mandate, covering development and humanitarian response, the Organization had helped strengthen national systems to respond to crises effectively and rapidly, and had delivered life-saving humanitarian cash transfers where needed. UNICEF was committed to strengthening universal child benefits, focusing on gender-transformative and family care policies. Action had resulted in the establishment of child benefits in Montenegro and Tunisia. The Organization had expanded cash transfers to reach over 65,000 most vulnerable families in Afghanistan. UNICEF was committed to the Global Accelerator initiative, which

could be a game-changer in the effort to achieve universal social protection for children. The Organization would leverage its country presence and expertise in system-strengthening to assist implementation of the ILO Global Call to Action.

- 41. The President, Nigeria Labour Congress (M)** recalled that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined social protection as a fundamental human right. It was a strong tool for reducing poverty and vulnerability, and a precondition for resilience in the face of economic, health and climate crises. Yet more than half the global population, and over 80 per cent of the population of Africa, lacked access to social protection. To remedy that situation, certain conditions must be fulfilled. Firstly, social protection must be universal, with no one left behind, regardless of age, gender, or health status, whether employed or not, in the formal economy or otherwise. Secondly, social protection must be accessible to all, with enabling legislation in place at the national level, and services and structures that ensured delivery of social protection benefits. Thirdly, social protection benefits needed to be sufficient, ensuring basic income security for recipients that protected them from hunger, sickness and destitution. Fourthly, social protection needed to be financially scalable and sustainable and therefore based on adequate domestic budgeting drawn from fair and progressive taxation. Moreover, as an estimated US\$88.6 billion left the African continent annually in illicit financial flows, measures must be implemented to stem those losses.
- 42. The President, Federation of Industrial Chambers of Mexico (CONCAMIN), (M)** said that social protection systems had been insufficiently inclusive to mitigate the effects of the crisis, and their medium to long-term stability was fragile. The 2030 Agenda and the ILO Centenary Declaration both recognized social protection as an essential element for the sustained social and economic development of countries. The 110th Session of the International Labour Conference (2021) also acknowledged the need to strengthen universal access to integrated, appropriate and sustainable social protection systems that responded to risks throughout the life cycle. However, these calls to action regarding social protection focused more on admitting such protection to be a human right, and drawing up goals and targets to be attained, while not sufficiently addressing the question of how these targets could be achieved in a responsible and realistic way. It was now essential to take decisive actions and agree on strategies and policies for achieving financially solid systems that were sustainable, inclusive, offered realistic protection, and were adapted to current circumstances and trends in the world of work. Such systems depended on healthy enterprises that could drive a prosperous economy and create decent work. All countries should develop policies and legal frameworks conducive to enterprise. The main source of financing of social protection systems was the formal economy. Thus, with 60 per cent of the global labour force working outside that economy, it was clear that transitioning from the informal to the formal economies should be at the heart of social protection strategies. Such a strategy would empower those currently in a vulnerable position, and avoid trapping people in poverty. It would also remove incentives that could encourage workers to remain in the informal sector.
- 43. The Director-General, FAO, (M)** highlighted the importance of a holistic approach to promoting rural development and, with that, decent work. This required investment in locally based labour-intensive industry, such as food processing plants in townships, offering employment opportunities for young people; support to small and medium enterprises in townships; and skills development and vocational training.
- 44. The Managing Director, Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank (F)**, explained how the World Bank supported and extended social protection coverage to the informal sector, noting that in most developing countries, between 50 to 90 per cent of workers were in the informal economy, with a high proportion of women and young informal sector workers. In previous crises, the informal sector had provided a buffer to poverty: when formal sector workers were laid off, they moved into the informal sector. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the informal sector equally or more heavily. The World Bank had initially increased its cash transfer programmes to households, hoping it would cover the informal sector. However, there was a need to work more systematically, by expanding identification and registration mechanisms, and introducing digital delivery systems for payments to improve the targeting and effectiveness of transfer systems and render them more responsive. The registration and identification of workers, including those from the informal sector, would also provide data on what skills and training programmes to put in place. The Bank was working to promote savings, develop flexible and scalable digital payment systems and build financial sustainability of social

protection systems. It was examining ways to improve workers' income. For businesses, the emphasis should be on reducing the regulatory and administrative burden and simplifying procedures, improving access to markets and the markets' efficiency. As the reasons for informality varied from region to region, policy reform in the various regions needed to be multifaceted and tailored to each country's needs.

- 45. The Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, UNICEF, (F)** responding to the issue of providing social protection in fragile states, stressed that risk-informed programming could show how action could be directed at those most in need and, where necessary, scaled up, avoiding disruption to delivery, to help households living in conflict affected areas to adapt their own livelihood systems and build resilience. It was important to work with governments to expand their social protection systems, and ensure they could surmount shocks. UNICEF was present in 77 countries to that end. Where national systems could not respond, the Organization needed to deliver cash transfers rapidly to vulnerable families, as a critical pillar of humanitarian response. When UNICEF managed to achieve results in such complex contexts as Yemen and Afghanistan, where it had provided aid to very large numbers of children, it could make a real difference to children's lives. As UNICEF straddled the humanitarian/development mandates, it sought always to integrate its cash transfers with the existing government social protection systems. UNICEF believed that the Global Accelerator would provide the resources and enhanced capacities to make important strides forward, especially in the context where children continued to be left behind.
- 46. The President, CONCAMIN, (M)** addressed the issue of how to stimulate entrepreneurship and the development of SMEs as part of the formalization process. Current challenges must be met without putting too much pressure on enterprises. The focus must be on their survival – in particular that of SMEs and MSMEs. Current social protection systems were not designed to cope with new challenges or deal with new forms of employment, such that simply extending social protection to the informal sector or to the self-employed in new forms of work might prove counterproductive. Rather, social protection networks should be put in place that would make possible a fair transition. There should be a balance between contributory and non-contributory systems to accommodate new ways of working. This would mean making use of portable accounts and innovative application of mandatory and voluntary systems, allowing the resources to grow and provide coverage for workers transitioning through the phases of their careers. Public policy responses to the changing realities could only be found through cooperation between the public and private sectors, effective social dialogue, a realistic focus and good governance. Coordination between employment policies, the labour market and active promotion of decent work were essential to prepare workers and employers for changes in the world of work. There was a need to explore innovative strategies to allow the informal sector to transition to the formal sector and contribute to sustainability. The Employers' sector reaffirmed its commitment to a human-centred recovery from the crisis.
- 47. The President, Nigeria Labour Congress, (M)** addressing the issue of what workers could do to promote universal social protection and social justice for all, said that workers' representatives could advocate for the adoption, ratification and promotion of international labour standards and social instruments and for the achievement of the SDGs. They could put pressure on the competent authorities to ratify and implement standards. The research conducted by trade unions on the deficiencies of, or opportunities provided by, social protection in countries was a further tool at workers' disposal. Recent ITUC research showed that investing in social protection boosted employment, skills development, productivity, demand for goods and GDP. Trade unions could also engage with governments in respect of equitable allocation of public resources, seeking to ensure adequate funds for social protection, and that employers should contribute fairly to the social security systems. It was of concern that some governments had recently reduced or suspended the amount of these contributions, jeopardizing the financing of social protection. Trade unions would pursue their commitment to the formalization of the economy, thus widening the basis for social protection. Official development assistance (ODA) was of great importance to the expansion of social protection, and workers' representative organizations were lobbying to increase its amounts. The identification of global champions of social protection, such as the UN Secretary-General and the Prime Minister of Belgium, could help establish global coordination in support of solidarity and placing people before profits.

- 48. The Director-General, FAO, (M)** stressed that global solidarity should be directed at the most vulnerable.
- 49. The Managing Director, Development Policy and Partnerships, World Bank, (F)** placed emphasis on the need, in an interconnected world, to work together on issues such as the pandemic and climate change. Awareness was growing that cross-border issues, impacting all countries, required global collaboration to be resolved.
- 50. The Deputy Executive Director, Partnerships, UNICEF, (F)** agreed that the global nature of the pandemic meant that it must be addressed globally. The collaboration between governments, civil society, and multilateral organizations was very promising at a time of transformation. Efforts must be made to prevent the effects of the pandemic having a long-term effect on children.
- 51. The President, CONCAMIN, (M)** stressed the need to protect enterprises, in particular SMEs and MSMEs, in order to generate more decent jobs.
- 52. The President, Nigeria Labour Congress, (M)** said that the pandemic, climate change and global security had shown the need, now more than ever, for global solidarity. Greater investments should be made to address the huge financing gap for achieving universal to funding social protection.
- 53. The ILO Director-General (M)** noted that panellists had recalled that social protection was a human right. That meant that the human rights of the 4 billion people not covered by social protection were being violated. Social protection was an act of solidarity to the extent that it was a mutualization of risk. Domestic resources should be mobilized, investments generated and illicit flows stemmed, to provide the fiscal space needed to fund universal social protection; there is an opportunity to build on the avalanche of measures adopted and address the deficits in social protection that were so starkly revealed during the pandemic. The effort was considerable, but it was also feasible. All roads led back to the Global Accelerator.

Thematic session 3: Protecting workers and sustaining enterprises

Participants (in order of speaking)

▶ Opening statement

- Mr Pedro Sanchez, President of the Government of Spain

▶ Panellists

- Mr Naoko Yamamoto, Deputy Director-General, WHO
- Mr Mark Bowman, Vice-President, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)
- Mr Haoliang Xu, Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Ms Jacqueline Mugo, Executive Director, Federation of Kenya Employers
- Mr Felix Anthony, National Secretary, Fiji Trade Union Congress

- 54. The ILO Director-General (M)** introduced the session by saying that although the starting point of the Forum was the COVID-19 crisis, when dealing with the question of protecting workers and sustaining enterprises, account had to be taken of pre-existing problems. The grim fact was that work killed more people than conflict, with two million people dying from work-related causes between 2016 and 2020. The pandemic had shown how vulnerable people were. The Employers had spoken of the need to help enterprises to survive; indeed, many had closed down. The issue of informality had been shown to be one of the major drags on sustainability. It would be important to identify what could be done to ensure that business could thrive, what exactly was meant by “a sustainable business environment”, and then examine how that could be reconciled with taking care of workers.

Opening statement

- 55. The President of the Government of Spain** said that the great recession of 1929 had revealed the harm arising from austerity policies and inequality. In the current crisis, the European Commission, the Organisation for Economic Co-ordination and Development (OECD), had called for policies to sustain economic activity until recovery took root. At the highest point, some 50 million workers world-wide were under some form of protection scheme. Recourse to such measures was widespread in Europe and indeed in Spain, where 3.5 million workers were furloughed and 1.5 million self-employed workers received aid. Consequently, economies were returning to normal growth more rapidly than in earlier crises.
- 56.** The pandemic had also accelerated the need to reverse climate change and address digitalization. The interrelated nature of the world economy meant that all parties must work together for a just transition. Multilateralism and social dialogue were indispensable to that process. Spain had recently undertaken major labour reforms, aimed particularly at addressing the high level of temporary work contracts issued, and at establishing oversight instruments. Efforts had also been made to adjust the power balance between employers and workers in collective bargaining. Social dialogue had made it possible to fix the minimum wage at 60 per cent of the average wage. The most vulnerable had profited from this reform, which had also led to a revaluation of pensions and improved gender equality at work. Social dialogue had also made it possible to reach agreements in respect of telework and digitalization – allowing control over working time and ensuring the right to disconnect, as well as regulating the work of self-employed workers engaged by digital food-delivery platforms. In that connection, the Forum heard that Spain had recently ratified the Home Work Convention, 1996 (No. 177) and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

Panel discussion

- 57. The Deputy Director-General, WHO (F)** said that the pandemic had revealed the inequity in society, in particular with regard to health determinants. Health systems, jobs, livelihoods and the economy were closely interrelated, and frontline health workers were at the highest risk of contracting COVID-19, together with transport, cleaning, shop, domestic and public safety workers. Those in essential services were required to be present at work, regardless of their medical vulnerability and lack of protection. Job losses had disproportionately affected poorly educated workers in the informal sector and women. The mental health of such workers had been impacted severely. Education disruption had harmed youth and society as a whole and the pandemic had seen the rise of discrimination and stigmatization. Five points should be borne in mind to palliate its effects. Firstly, efforts to build back better should be intensified, in line with the 2030 Agenda, continuing dialogue around a common vision. Secondly, the multisectoral approach should be strengthened. For example, food insecurity and malnutrition had increased, even in high-income countries: the food system should be transformed in partnership with producers, processors and the procurement sector, to ensure access to safe, nutritious and sustainable food. Thirdly, government should adopt an intersectoral approach to create fairer, healthier and sustainable systems. Universal health care was an important political choice for addressing health equity. Fourthly, governments, multilateral institutions, enterprise and workers must collaborate to ensure healthier, safer workplaces that were more resilient to epidemics and climate-related emergencies. Fifthly, a focus on women, youth and vulnerable groups was essential to all people enjoying health. WHO was keen to work with the ILO and other partners to that end.
- 58. The Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP, (M)** said that the drastic decreases in social and economic welfare around the world brought about by the pandemic made it essential to provide adequate support to vulnerable groups, such as women, migrant workers and youth. Obtaining better, more granular data, combined with sophisticated analytics was key to improving the understanding of specific vulnerable groups and their respective ecosystems. That would allow a better targeting of support measures and improve the effectiveness of solutions on the ground. Digital solutions had shown great potential for positive change in recovery, bringing people into employment and improving social protection. In Africa, for example, the UNDP had worked with a leading African e-commerce platform, and had connected 3500 small enterprises to that platform, enabling them to sell their products.
- 59.** Gender equality was also an important issue regarding digitalization. Many women were excluded from the access to the internet. The UNDP had carried out significant work with the ILO and UN Women to

implement solutions in different regions, especially to build national capacity in Latin America. Private businesses could play a critical role in identifying new and better solutions, such as the Gender Equality Seal, a new initiative to ensure that businesses were more gender inclusive. To date, 1000 companies had been certified and 1.5 million people had been positively impacted under that initiative. Resilience and sustainability were central to building stakeholders' capacity to absorb current and future shocks. In Ghana, the UNDP had worked with the public and private sectors and civil society to build the Waste Recovery Platform, with a specific focus on creating additional green, decent jobs.

- 60. The Vice-President, Policy and Partnerships, EBRD, (M)** said that EBRD policy was based on three, strategic cross-cutting themes: supporting the transition to a green, low-carbon economy; promoting equality of opportunity through access to skills and employment, finance and entrepreneurship; and support for women, young people and other under-served communities, and accelerating the digital transition. These were interlinked and had to be applied in an inclusive manner. Digitalization presented significant opportunities, but also significant associated risks, such as exacerbating digital gaps and leaving parts of society behind. The Bank collaborated closely with the private sector with a view to providing greater equality of opportunity. Its unique model combined investment with policy engagement, technical assistance and capacity building. It worked closely with several partners, including the ILO, investing in inclusion and gender-responsive projects, and generating thousands of high-quality training opportunities, as well as employment opportunities for vulnerable groups, such as youth, women and people with disabilities. 90,000 women entrepreneurs had benefited from the bank's Women in Business programme.
- 61.** The Bank's goal was now to increase the share of inclusive investments and that of gender-responsive investments, as well as its investments in green technology and inclusive infrastructure projects. It would mainstream environmental, social and governance (ESG) criteria, pilot sustainability bonds, and other innovative financial products. The Green Economy Financing Facility was working with local banks to open up access to green technologies and financing opportunities for women entrepreneurs across more than ten countries. One new area of focus was more targeted assistance for inclusive regions, most notably the support for just transition of local economies away from carbon-intensive industries. To deliver on these ambitions, it was absolutely essential to partner with all relevant local, national and cross-regional stakeholders and to collaborate across international institutions. The Global Forum was an excellent means of achieving that.
- 62. The Executive Director, Federation of Kenya Employers, (F)** recalled that the ILO Centenary Declaration recognized the importance of sustainable enterprises as generators of decent work and drivers of innovation. It was therefore worrying that recovery programmes failed to include the promotion of explicit conditions conducive to business. SMEs lacked support; specifically, they required better access to capital and financial institutions. Only thus would they be able to create jobs. Likewise of concern was the disparate impact of the pandemic, with wealthier countries able to protect their economies, while many developing countries were failing to return to growth. The IMF and World Bank projected negative growth in those countries, which was particularly harmful for SMEs, as it increased their difficulty in obtaining capital. International institutions should help poorer countries to bridge the growing economic divide. The pre-COVID-19 labour market difficulties in developing countries had worsened during the pandemic. Up to 50 per cent of employment in many countries was in SMEs and MSMEs. In some instances, the percentage was higher still. It was important that their financial concerns were addressed at the macro level. Central banks should monitor and address inflation, manage economic and financial risks and provide capital to the real economy, of which SMEs and MSMEs represented an important part.
- 63.** The divide between rich and poor countries was also characterised by unequal access to COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. The international response must include financial resources to secure those, as well as to develop facilities for their production. Resources should also go to develop future-based jobs and employment in developing countries, especially in the green economy. Social dialogue had been a powerful tool to respond to the crisis, making it possible for workers and employers to address many important issues as they struggled to overcome the impact of COVID-19. It should be part of any socioeconomic system to build back better.
- 64. The National Secretary, Fiji Trade Union Congress, (M)** welcomed the Global Call to Action and said that for workers, recovery must be based on rights. Governments should make workers' rights

mandatory, strengthen corporate social responsibility obligations, and improve access to reinforced dispute resolution systems. The ILO should coordinate with other national and international institutions to help promote ratification and implementation of international labour standards, which were the main foundation of labour rights and social justice. He noted, and joined his voice to, the warning issued by the ILO supervisory bodies regarding the growing use of non-standard and precarious work. Universal social protection included respect for all fundamental rights, occupational safety and health, minimum living wages and maximum working hours. Any discussion on sustainable enterprises had to include consideration of those important elements. Collective bargaining was essential to address those issues and for economic recovery.

65. Women in paid and unpaid care work were important parts of the economy and social fabric: the global recovery must be gender inclusive. Ratification of the international labour standards aimed at protecting women should be a priority for governments during recovery. Productivity in itself was not a goal, but a means of achieving full employment and raising the standard of living. The Declaration of Philadelphia and the Centenary Declaration both emphasized the need for decent wages to be paid to workers. In consequence, ratification of international labour standards concerning wages should also be part of government policies in building back better after the crisis.
66. the ILO had a role to play in achieving SDG 8.3: to promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of MSMEs, including through access to financial services. The level of informality in supply chains made it important for the ILO to work, possibly in tandem with the OECD, to improve conditions for supply chain workers. All efforts should be made to move informal jobs into the formal sector.
67. **The Deputy Director-General, WHO, (F)** said that WHO and the ILO could collaborate at many levels. A cooperation agreement between the two Organizations had been in place since the foundation of WHO in 1948, which had consistently served to bring the agencies together in formulating occupational safety and health guidelines and material. Recently, the two agencies had identified the need to produce guidelines for the protection of health care workers, as a result of the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a need to raise WHO/ILO collaboration to a higher and more strategic level, to ensure more effective use of resources. Collaboration should also be increased at national and ground level by strengthening relations between public health authorities and occupational safety and health bodies, trade unions and employers' associations, in addressing workers' health-related issues.
68. It was also important to work with international development institutions and banks to ensure that workers' considerations were included in investments for sustainable development. That would include, for example, securing adequate resources for the installation of correct ventilation systems and more open workspaces, to help prevent the spread of occupational diseases.
69. Attention should be paid to the new challenges caused by the expanded use of telework during the pandemic. Those challenges included increased mental health issues experienced by workers during the pandemic. Telework and internet-mediated work would become more common in the future, and there would be a need to address the mental health problems that could arise as a result. There might be a concomitant increase in violence in the home, or problems caused by difficulty in attaining a work-life balance.
70. **The Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP, (M)** addressing the question of how the UNDP and ILO could better collaborate to encourage transition from the informal to the formal economy, noted the highly complex nature of the issue, with multiple social and economic factors involved. The two Organizations could bring their comparative advantages to bear in finding solutions. The ILO had wide experience in labour policy analysis, capacity development and tripartite dialogue on informality. The UNDP had an extensive network of country offices in which it had established accelerator labs. Global policy networks were being led with the UNDP's assistance. The new UNDP strategic plan was to continue work on substantive issues, including increased growth, good governance, energy and environmental solutions, but also to think strategically to find systems solutions to problems, some of which might be digitalized solutions. There had been a wide range of successes, but few had been scaled up. However, the UNDP's strategic thinking and experience of the digital transformation would provide a useful basis for collaboration with the ILO in fields of shared interest. The UNDP and the ILO had recently published a

report entitled *Informality and Social Protection in African Countries: A Forward-looking Assessment of Contributory Schemes*. The two Organizations were also working together in Iraq, Ecuador, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic, and in other countries, to find policy and practical solutions. The UNDP and the ILO had also issued a joint statement to collaborate to develop a common roadmap for the Global Accelerator, including with other UN entities, and launch and implement the joint Global Initiative on Fostering Pathways to Formality.

- 71. The Vice-President, Policy and Partnership, EBRD, (M)** said that the Bank and the ILO had a history of effective cooperation. They had worked jointly to support countries in transition, promoting strategies for human capital development. The Bank appreciated the collaboration and sought other areas in which to work together. In 2021, the two institutions had led an initiative on the impacts of COVID-19 on the world of work in the western Balkans that had informed the labour market policies of various regional governments. North Macedonia had adjusted its unemployment benefit scheme to support workers whose jobs had been terminated due to the pandemic. In Turkey, the EBRD and the ILO were collaborating on a pilot project to create conditions for a more efficient care economy model. It was hoped that the pilot project would be rolled out to other countries. Future areas of envisaged cooperation could include forced labour, global supply chains, gender-based violence, mental health and occupational safety and health. A just transition to carbon-neutrality would present enormous challenges, and must be undertaken in an inclusive manner. Multilateral cooperation would be essential. The EBRD and the ILO were currently drawing up a framework agreement for signature. The agreement would allow better collaboration and cooperation at the project and technical assistance level.
- 72. The Executive Director, Federation of Kenya Employers,** said that the quest for more sustainable and resilient enterprises could not be achieved by a one-size-fits-all solution. Countries' social and economic contexts were key. Five growth policy initiatives could contribute to effective recovery measures for businesses. They should be applied comprehensively and in a coordinated manner. Firstly, governments should ensure business continuity by securing the financial well-being of enterprises. Many governments had put in place appropriate measures, but had withdrawn them after a year. Enterprises, especially SMEs, required central and development banks to maintain such economic and fiscal measures for recovery. Secondly, enterprise, including SMEs, required access to finance. Liquidity support to vulnerable enterprises to allay the effects of the crisis and allow them to meet their obligations. Thirdly, support should be given to SMEs through investment in training and skills, allowing them to remain competitive, to adapt to the changes introduced by the pandemic, and to attract the skilled workers they needed from the talent pool. Fourthly, if the private sector was to grow, thrive and innovate, allowing companies to invest in better technology, upskilling and reskilling to retain and attract talented workers, an enabling environment was essential. Only in that way would they become more productive, sustainable, innovative and competitive and able generate decent jobs. Fifthly, the regulatory framework should avoid creating new burdens and responsibilities. International agreements, international labour standards, laws and regulations should facilitate, rather than hinder the movement of products or services along domestic and global value chains. Business was ready to contribute to global sustainable development. Enterprises, including SMEs, could offer solutions to sustainability challenges through partnerships. They could contribute to achievement of the 2030 Agenda. When governments, multilateral organizations, the private sector and workers collaborated, inclusive growth would be promoted, and would create more decent jobs.
- 73. The National Secretary, Fiji Trade Union Congress, (M)** noted that recent ILO reports highlighted the effectiveness of social dialogue and collective bargaining throughout the pandemic, as a means of designing and negotiating policies and measures that benefited workers and enterprises and cushioned the impact of the pandemic. That was not happening equally in all regions. Governments, Employers and Workers had made commitments at the adoption of the ILO Centenary Declaration in 2019, and at the adoption of the Call to Action in 2021. Both instruments cited the benefits of social dialogue, its role in encouraging well-functioning and productive economies, and in the design and implementation of national recovery plans and policies aimed at ensuring a job-rich recovery. Those commitments should be honoured by governments when engaging with both workers' and employers' organizations. Multilateral organizations and the UN system had a role to play in that regard. To get the world back on track to achieving the 2030 Agenda would require the constant engagement of multilateral organizations with trade unions at national and international level. Ultimately, the credibility of social

dialogue was at stake – whether it would succeed in addressing the hardships created by the pandemic, and protect workers, and ensuring that nobody was left behind.

- 74. The Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP, (M)**, responding to the question of how to guarantee an adequate minimum wage when prices were rising through inflation, said that society should be structured so that everybody could contribute. Enterprise owners took risks and faced obligations, but workers also contributed to the business's success. The issue of a minimum living wage remained complex.
- 75. The Deputy Director-General, WHO**, stressed the importance of affordable, basic health services. All panellists welcomed a new international financing mechanism that could become a global social protection fund.
- 76. The Assistant Director General, WHO**, [F] referred to a recent ILO/WHO joint communiqué, pledging fuller cooperation by developing and implementing stronger occupational safety and health programmes for health workers.
- 77. The Vice-President, Policy and Partnership, EBRD, [M]** while sharing the other panellists' positive reactions to a new global financing mechanism for social protection, said that the details of such a facility must be closely scrutinized.
- 78. The National Secretary, Fiji Trade Union Congress, [M]** pointed out that the ITUC had been advocating for such a global fund for some time and now hoped it would come into existence.
- 79. The Director-General, ILO, (M)**, said firstly that the ILO and its constituents must both protect workers and promote enterprises. The key to this combination was dialogue. Secondly, to close the gap between commitment and implementation, ILO constituents and international organizations must scale up their cooperation. Thirdly, the widening gap between developing and developed countries must be closed in order to continue moving forward.

Thematic session 4: Just transition

Participants (in order of speaking)

▶ Opening statements

- Mr Abdel Farrah Al-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt
- Ms Fiamé Naomi Mata'afa, Prime Minister of Samoa

▶ Panellists

- Mr Mark Carney, United Nations Special Envoy on Climate Action and Finance
- Mr Nicolas Schmit, Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, European Commission
- Mr Ulrik Vestergaard Knudsen, Deputy Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Mr Ovais Sarmad, Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- Mr Bambang Susantono, Vice President, Asian Development Bank (ADB)
- Ms Toni Moore, General Secretary, Barbados Workers' Union
- Mr Shinta Widjaja Kamdani, Chair, Business-20 Indonesia

- 80. The Director-General, ILO, (M)** acknowledged that with the events currently unfolding in Ukraine, the world was facing the gravest threat to global peace and security in recent years. That confirmed the importance of moving forward with the type of international cooperation that the Global Forum represented.

81. International efforts to confront the climate emergency with urgent transformative action were failing utterly. If it was accepted that human activity was driving the climate change, then it must be admitted that work bore a share of the blame. But it was not necessarily true that jobs and living standards must be sacrificed to achieve carbon neutrality. There were dividends, but they were not automatic. They would depend on action on climate change coinciding with economic and social progress and the promotion of decent employment, and on financing deficits: so far, the world was far short of mobilizing the sums needed to help developing countries to adapt.

Opening statements

82. **The President of the Arab Republic of Egypt (M)** said that the COVID-19 crisis was predominantly a humanitarian crisis before being a health, economic or social crisis, and the response therefore had to be human centred. His country had applied effective, financial, economic and social policies, which had enabled it to return to positive growth. Ambitious programmes had been implemented to raise the living standards of populations in rural areas and the most vulnerable, and efforts had been made to stimulate financial inclusion, integrate the informal economy and promote digitalization.
83. The crisis had laid bare crucial weaknesses in the international system, with great levels of informality, and widely insufficient social protection. To leave that situation behind, unanimous decisions were required on the implementation of integrated policies, effective measures for their implementation and the financial capacity to do so. Recovery from the crisis would require all parties to accept their share of responsibility within a genuine partnership: divergent paths must be avoided. International organizations had an important role to play in policy formulation. The ILO Global Call to Action laid out a clear course for stakeholders. States must be able to abide by their commitments in line with the Paris Agreement, without undermining the principles of fairness and just transition, and ensuring social protection, promoting development and eradicating poverty. This hinged on an international environment conducive to raising the financing required by developing countries to counter climate change, adapt and build capacities for that purpose. Action was needed to realise the pledges made by countries, and to reduce the gaps hindering international action on climate change at all levels. Egypt would be working to that end when chairing COP27, to be held in Sharm El-Sheik in November 2022.
84. **The Prime Minister of the Republic of Samoa (F)** said that her Government's strong public health response had contained the virus, but the pandemic's effect had nevertheless been felt acutely. Small island economies had been badly hit, and unemployment had risen sharply. Support from Samoa's development partners had been critical. Social cohesion had suffered, and Samoans were struggling from living life in isolation. Her Government was trying to build resilience and was aware of the need to remedy shortfalls in social protection sustainably. A strong and coherent global response was needed and Samoa welcomed the call for a human-centred recovery.
85. COP26 had underlined the global threat posed by climate change. The Glasgow Climate Pact made just transition central to its outcome. Samoa's key economic sectors had all been affected by climate change and Samoa looked forward to the Parties providing concrete plans for their net-zero pledges, with the phase-out of all fossil fuels. Climate action must be accompanied by job protection. As Co-Chair of the International Advisory Board of Climate Action for Jobs, Samoa challenged its global partners to leverage the Climate Action for Jobs platform and to drive climate action while ensuring livelihoods were safeguarded. Key areas for interventions on just transition included green skills development and integration into formal education, addressing knowledge gaps on climate change, and building resilient infrastructure. Ensuring investment in science and technology as well as building the necessary capacity to better benefit from these investments was very important for small islands States like Samoa.

Panel discussion

86. **The UN Special Envoy for Climate Action and Finance (M)** said that values and people must be placed at the centre of just transition to carbon neutrality. He put forward several key levers for a human centred transition. Monetary policy and fiscal policy should be used to support incomes through adjustments as well as for re-training and upskilling. It would be necessary to mobilize the private sector to realize the massive investments needed, especially in emerging and developing economies. Credible and predictable climate policies should be put in place, with mandatory reporting and climate disclosure through the international sustainability board. He referred to the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net

Zero's transition plans, including provisions on just transition, and specific education programmes should be developed. The solutions to the climate crisis were tied to financial, fiscal, economic and social well-being. Environmental sustainability could not be achieved if economies and people's livelihoods were sacrificed.

- 87. The Commissioner for Jobs and Social Rights, European Commission (M)** strongly condemned the aggression perpetrated by the Russian Federation in Ukraine.
- 88.** He said that the European Union had been a leader in promoting policies against climate change with a strong social dimension, as reflected in the Paris Agreement and its strong focus on just transition. The European Union must work with other countries and international organizations, such as the ILO, to advance its ambitious objectives, for example the goal of reducing carbon emissions by 55 per cent by 2030. Climate policy ambitions called for great investment, transformation in major economic and industrial sectors, and a revamp of housing and transportation systems. But just transition had the potential to create more and better-quality jobs, as well as ensuring a healthy environment. There must be global acceptance of just transition, involving all stakeholders in the decision process. The European Commission issued a Communication on Decent Work Worldwide in February 2022, which was closely aligned to key ILO messages and included such objectives as changing the work environment and mainstreaming decent work across trade policy. Regarding the important role that must be played by the private sector, the European Commission had adopted a due diligence directive to ensure respect by companies of human and labour rights. The Commission was also working with the ILO in the field of forced labour.
- 89. The Deputy Secretary-General, OECD, (M)** stated that the COVID-19 pandemic recovery was underway, although it was now rendered uncertain by the current geopolitical tension in Ukraine. The 2021 OECD Economic Outlook forecast 5.6 per cent economic growth for 2021, and 4.5 per cent growth for 2022. An average unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent was close to pre-pandemic levels. However, a return to previous figures was not enough, and governments globally must reinvigorate reforms planned prior to the pandemic if they really wished to build back better.
- 90.** The OECD had stepped up its support to national governments in taking effective action, including labour market transformation. Its approach had three facets: evidence-based analysis of labour markets; policy guidance; and acting as an international forum for diverse stakeholders. Assisting countries in the digital and green transition was a key OECD priority, bearing witness to its commitment to the principle of just transition. Policies fostering green growth would lead to job creation in many sectors, such as the organic agriculture or the energy sector. In the latter, the International Energy Agency predicted that up to 2.5 million jobs could be created annually as part of the recovery effort. It was important to adopt appropriate policy to support just transition to avoid losing public support. Government policy must address issues that ran the risk of derailing public support, such as job losses in the fossil fuel sector due to decarbonisation or shifting energy costs. Key OECD priorities for successful just transition included the reskilling and upskilling of workers; expanded active labour market policies that connected people to jobs; better labour market information and dissemination; reinforcing social protection; and fostering tripartite discussion, strengthening social dialogue and collective bargaining.
- 91. The Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, (M)** said that the pandemic presented an opportunity to build back better, more sustainably and smarter. The UNFCCC Secretariat worked with decision makers around the world, encouraging them to develop green recovery approaches for their economic recovery plans. The Secretariat collaborated with multilateral organizations by linking negotiation outcomes to international development cooperation. Support provided to countries included assistance in accessing climate finance; enhancing capacity for the implementation of energy sector transformation; promoting smart agriculture; facilitating technology transfer through the technology framework and the Climate Technology Centre and Network (CTCN). Equally, the Global Climate Action Tracker under the UNFCCC focused on engaging non-State actors on climate solutions.
- 92.** The UNFCCC and the ILO had been working together since 2017 and had organized 12 regional capacity building events to support countries in their just transition initiatives. The aim of the events was to assist Parties in identifying and assessing the employment impacts of implementing climate actions, with a view to enabling them to formulate informed climate policies.

93. UNFCCC's intergovernmental process regarding just transition was advanced by the Katowice Committee on Impacts (KCI) and its Forum. That Committee included just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work among its programme areas. Its work was reinforced at COP26 by the decision of the Parties that just transition had to promote sustainable development, eradication of poverty and the creation of decent work and quality jobs. The COP also encouraged Parties to strengthen international and regional cooperation with a view to supporting the planning and implementation of mitigation policies. The UNFCCC was ready to provide the knowledge and expertise the world needed to develop the policies and programmes to implement just transition.
94. **The Vice-President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development, Asian Development Bank (ADB), (M)** stated that the Asia-Pacific region was vulnerable to some of the most devastating effects of climate change, posing an existential threat to some of the least developed countries. Yet, the region was also responsible for over 50 per cent of the current global greenhouse gas emissions. The pandemic continued to add to existing local poverty and inequality. The role of social protection systems was thus critical. The most affected groups included women, youth, migrants and informal workers. Estimates showed that, in developing Asia, the pandemic pushed 75 to 80 million people into extreme poverty in 2020. There was a consensus that the recovery must be resilient, green, and inclusive.
95. The ADB had committed US\$100 billion from its own resources to climate financing from 2019 to 2030. Its operations were fully aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. For example, the new ADB Energy Policy phased out coal-fired power plants. The bank had also signed on to the Multilateral Development Banks Just Transition High-Level Principles to support a just transition. These principles could be implemented in three main manners. Firstly, by creating innovative ways to mobilize financing, such as the ADB's Energy Transition Mechanism (ETM), which was a market-based, equitable, and scalable approach to accelerate the retirement of coal-fired power plants and increase investment in renewable power. Secondly, by collaborating with partners on strategies to support the recovery of labour markets in the region. For example, together with the ILO, ADB worked to transform social protection policies and programme development, with the aim of developing a regional programme to improve capacity and harmonise data collection. The proposed programme would help governments find the best way to adapt and finance social protection programmes to ensure just transition. Thirdly, by strengthening the ADB's knowledge base, so that recovery strategies were truly transformational and did not exacerbate existing disparities such as gender inequality.
96. **The General Secretary, Barbados Workers' Union (BWU), (F)** said that the pandemic had worsened all the pre-existing challenges, including those related to climate-change. There was broad consensus that the recovery must be human-centred. However, the issues were not purely climate related. When there were deaths caused by floods, draughts or landslides, the issue was also social: housing. The global policy agenda could no longer just consist of words: it must be implemented to ensure that the labour dimensions of climate change were given sufficient consideration. The labour dimension of the Paris agreement must be implemented. Forty-nine countries had signed up to that agreement, but labour was not represented at the negotiating table. Therefore, the ILO must be responsible for implementation and act as the guardian of the labour dimension of just transition.
97. A greenwashing approach was inadequate: all investments needed to be climate friendly. Accountability was crucial to ensure that all labour rights were respected. Sustainable development plans must be accompanied by coordinated just transition plans. The protection of ILO standards was integral to achieving the climate protection that recovery policies must tackle. Both crises needed to be tackled simultaneously and appropriate labour market policies, social dialogue, occupational safety and health and social protection were all essential in managing the transition. The ILO had estimated that 100 million new jobs were to be created by 2030. It was crucial that these jobs were not just new, but also decent. Labour market policies were important for the 80 million people who might lose their jobs in transition. Adequate reskilling and upskilling opportunities were vital to assist them, in addition to solid social protection.
98. **The Chair, Business-20 Indonesia (F)** said that after two years of macroeconomic disruption and major change in technology, the time had come for governments, international organizations, employers and workers and other non-State actors to come together to identify what was needed to facilitate an effective recovery and sustainable growth. Businesses were facing strong trends that necessitated

adaptation and transformation. Emission regulation was becoming more stringent and there was a 58 per cent growth rate of ESG regulation worldwide with which businesses had to comply. National climate change policy commitments were becoming more detailed and ambitious. There was also growing consumer demand for sustainable products and pressure from civil society for environmental engagement, with 50 per cent of consumers willing to pay more for sustainable products. Existing business models needed to be transformed to increase resilience. However, there were new opportunities for business. For example, the renewable energy sector could employ 43 million people by 2050. Already in 2021, the sector had employed 12 million globally, albeit with significant variations across countries. Sustainability was receiving large amounts of additional funding with ESG criteria now being applied to 33 per cent of investments by the largest funds. However, care must be taken to avoid price increases in goods of an order that would weaken public enthusiasm for transition. Employment creation and a conducive business environment with adequate support and incentive frameworks were critical for a sustained recovery. Excessive taxation, burdensome regulations and bureaucracy would impede progress.

- 99.** Coherent and coordinated action by the international community was needed more than ever. Employers' organisations should be systematically involved and consulted in negotiations regarding international and national climate action. Anticipation of skills and capacities needed, in collaboration with the private sector, was critical. The current Indonesian G20 presidency was putting great emphasis on a fair and affordable transition to clean energy and a circular economy. Practical measures might include the adoption of an international carbon price floor to facilitate green infrastructure financing and to widen access for financing of green projects. The ILO's global role could be further strengthened via the Just Transition Guidelines and their continued use in country-level planning and implementation as well as through the Climate Action for Jobs initiative.
- 100.** **The Deputy Secretary-General, OECD (M)** said that international policy coordination was essential to achieving just transition, as the Forum had demonstrated. A dual strategy was required, of transition on the one hand, while accompanying the labour force on the other. Measurement frameworks should be reinforced, to allow accurate evaluation of progress and learn from best practice. A more concerted international approach to carbon pricing was required, and the OECD had offered to act as a dialogue forum for that purpose. There was scope to integrate environmental issues better into recovery and stimulus measures. OECD research showed that only 20 per cent of stimulus resources had been invested in efforts to green the economy.
- 101.** **The Deputy Executive Secretary, UNFCCC, (M)** said that it was important to remember that shifting to a carbon-neutral economy would contribute US\$26 trillion to global growth and create 65 million jobs by 2030. Under implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, 27 countries in 2021 had specifically included just transition in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), and 56 Parties had mentioned plans to include the concept of just transition in their NDC implementation. The UNFCCC was working closely with the ILO and other UN agencies to increase the number of countries including just transition in their NDCs. The enhanced transparency framework of the Paris Agreement provided a further incentive, as the framework made it mandatory for all countries to report their plans and initiatives transparently.
- 102.** **The General Secretary, BWU, (F)** stressed that trade unions must have a say in the development of NDCs. In most countries that had included just transition in their NDCs, the workers had not been consulted. International labour standards, in particular those on freedom of association and collective bargaining should be effectively implemented to ensure that the workers could make their voice heard in the transition process.
- 103.** **The Chair, Business-20 Indonesia, (F)** said that to assist employers with just transition, governments should invest in training. Governments needed to take an innovative approach to providing an enabling environment for business, particularly for SME's. The upskilling of the labour market and access to finance were both issues of importance for SMEs, and governments should provide support in those areas. Governments should reinforce their observation of, and predictions for, the labour market impact of transition, to be able to provide improved information, for example statistics on job losses or gains. Enterprises required additional resources and expertise to be able to navigate just transition.

- 104. The Director-General, ILO, (M)** noted a consensus on the need for just transition, with equity as a key element. Public and private funds would be needed to achieve that transition, however the Forum had not developed discussion on environmental investment funds. It would be interesting to examine how to increase the amount of stimulus and recovery assistance allocated to developing environmental resources from the rate, cited by the OECD, of only 20 per cent.

Closing session: Toward a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient

Participants (in order of speaking)

▶ Opening statement

- Mr Andrew Holness, Prime Minister of Jamaica

▶ Panellists

- Catelene Passchier, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body
- Renate Hornung-Draus, Managing Director BDA
- Ms Fanfan Rwanyindo Kayirangwa, Minister of Public Service and Labour, Republic of Rwanda
- Ms Betssy Chávez Chino, Minister of Labour, Peru
- Mr Nayef Stetieh, Minister of Labour, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Opening statement

- 105. The Prime Minister of Jamaica (M)** noted that governments continued to wrestle with complex policy decisions that had arisen from the pandemic. However, the principles enshrined in international labour standards had been reinforced. Social security, guaranteed social protection floors, the decent work agenda and formalizing the informal sector had all come to the fore in the drive for recovery. The Labour markets of developed and developing countries had been severely impacted, but to markedly differing degrees. Developing countries, and especially small island developing States faced serious economic and social repercussions. SMEs and MSMEs had taken the brunt of the impact. A human-centred recovery would require addressing equality in access to resources, opportunity, removing barriers to full and effective participation in labour markets, expanding skill development, retooling and redeployment. Jamaica had considered immediate mitigation methods, and had established a multi-stakeholder economic taskforce to aim for an inclusive recovery.

- 106.** The Government had put cash support initiatives in place for small producers, informal traders, artisans and the vulnerable, and had instigated a new pension scheme. It continued to support a national financial inclusion strategy with support from the ILO and had an action plan on formalizing the informal sector. Child labour and unemployment benefits were further areas where the government was acting. It was thus committed to a human-centred recovery. However, developing countries could not realize sustainable recovery without cooperation and coordinated multilateral action. Investment in technological infrastructure had never been more important. Account must be taken of the long-term learning loss of children. Without effective multilateralism, it would not be possible to take advantage of future possibilities.

Panel discussion

- 107. The ILO Director-General (M)** asked the Employer and Worker Chairpersons of the ILO Governing Body to reflect on what had been discussed at the Forum and what conclusions they could draw from it. The Centenary Declaration and the Global Call to Action set out a vision and provided pathways to achieving a human-centred recovery. How far along that path had progress been made?

- 108. The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body (F)** expressed profound regret that war had come to the world again, in Ukraine. She stated her solidarity with the families of workers whose lives were threatened by the conflict, underlining that social justice was essential to lasting peace.

- 109.** The Workers expected strong, impactful outcomes from the Centenary Declaration and the Global Call to Action. Governments must move from words to action. Many speakers had noted that recovery was unequal, uncertain and fragile. That must change, and the highest priority should be to tackle the inequalities in the world of work and bridge the dangerous divergence, including vaccine inequality, between advanced and emerging economies. The pandemic would not end for anyone before it ended for everyone. As the Director-General of WHO had said, frontline health workers were especially vulnerable during the pandemic. Other workers in a harsh situation included seafarers, who had been isolated at sea for months, or even years, without being able to go ashore. They were critical workers who kept supply chains going and handled 90 per cent of world trade. Their rights should be restored forthwith.
- 110.** Precariousness at work had gone too far and, unless addressed, would result in precarious recovery. Support had been expressed for the Global Accelerator, and its aims with regard to social protection. Likewise, there had been strong support for extending social protection, including labour protection, to all workers, regardless of their employment status. This initiative required greater policy coherence and must be built on the basis of the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda. The Workers supported targeted action to finance universal social protection in the form of a global social protection fund, to ensure social protection floors in the poorest countries. That could only be achieved with the establishment of more effective tax systems to create fiscal space. Social spending was not a cost, but an investment. Strong support had emerged from the discussions for linking climate action to social dialogue, social justice and decent work. Many speakers had also insisted on any action taken being gender-inclusive. The Centenary Declaration and the Global Call to Action made that a central issue, and it was of utmost importance. The Workers welcomed calls for policy coherence, but noted that much was still to be achieved in that field. The Forum would promote development of a comprehensive ILO strategy with strong social dialogue. International labour standards should be promoted in any interaction between the ILO and other institutions and in heeding the UN Secretary-General's call for a renewed social contract. The Forum could provide an important step in that direction.
- 111. The Employer Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body (F)** said that the social partners, governments and international institutions could all contribute to a “breakthrough scenario”. More constructive cooperation could be promoted across the multilateral system in each of the areas addressed by the Forum. No time must be lost. The year ahead remained crucial for all to work together, rebuild trust, increase regional, national and international cooperation, and shape a better and more inclusive, sustainable and resilient future for all.
- 112.** The Centenary Declaration and the Call to Action both provided direction in navigating the crisis. To attain just, sustainable and resilient economies, fight poverty, informality, and achieve decent work for all, governments must stimulate and accelerate employment creation. To do so, they must prioritize the establishment of strong incentives to support entrepreneurs, businesses and assist workers in their quest for employment. Obstacles to driving growth and employment should be dismantled. Workers should be given improved access to the full range of employment, through training and career guidance, to ensure that they maintained their employability and relevance in a fast-evolving employment market. Regulatory frameworks should be put in place that would revitalize employment creation, and would ensure dynamic, flexible and inclusive labour markets, relevant to the 21st century.
- 113.** Employment, growth and entrepreneurship and decarbonization were linked. The ILO should take care that decarbonization policies and climate change policies did not come at the expense of employment, nor at the expense of decent work and economic growth. Successfully managing a human-centred, sustainable and resilient recovery required a vibrant business community. The Centenary Declaration recognized the importance of the private sector in employment creation and decent work. But economies could not return to previous levels of prosperity without sustained, adequate financial support, and an enabling business environment. In the absence of governments creating such an environment, growth would not take place, and productive employment and decent work would not be created. There was a need to return to the principles of promoting business activity, entrepreneurship, and employment. Strong social dialogue would be essential in ensuring a sustainable, human-centred and resilient recovery in which no one would be left behind. Solid, independent and knowledgeable representative organizations of employers and workers, as well as global solidarity amongst them, would be more relevant than ever for achieving the future the world wanted.

- 114. The Minister of Public Service and Labour of the Republic of Rwanda (F)** observed that there was a common objective in achieving inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery from the pandemic. However, in Africa, including in Rwanda, efforts to promote sustainable development had been much hindered by the effects of COVID-19, and a relaunch of action was needed. Her Government supported the Global Accelerator, which should be fully rolled out as soon as possible. Together with the Call to Action, it would serve to underpin Rwandan national policies. Substantial efforts had been made at a national level in the recovery process. A fund had been established to provide finance to companies affected by the crisis, especially SMEs. Fiscal policies had been drawn up offering tax relief to companies hit hard by the pandemic.
- 115.** Such policies, which were funded from national budgets and support from development partners, were helpful but not sufficient. Something on a larger scale was needed, and the ILO could play a catalyzing role in this process. The tripartite platform provided by the ILO would serve as an excellent springboard on which to base discussions, in order to promote different policies, and to ensure implementation of the Global Call to Action and the Global Accelerator. It was time to move from words to action. Bilateral relations between countries were helpful, but multilateral organizations had an important role to play in economic recovery. All international organizations should lend their support to the Global Call to Action and to the Global Accelerator. Rwanda was focusing on pre-pandemic issues as well as those provoked by the pandemic. National policies were not enough to overcome the crisis alone. National policies must be supported and assisted by international organizations.
- 116. The Minister of Labour and Employment Promotion of the Republic of Peru (F)** said that the pandemic had exacerbated pre-existing structural problems in Peru. The informality rate in her country stood at 70 per cent – one of the highest rates in the region – while the tax rate was at 16.2 per cent. Decent work deficits in the country had reached unprecedented levels with low social protection and no labour rights for those working in the informal economy. In the past year, a national decree on labour had been promulgated to tackle issues in the informal economy, and extending social benefits to workers. The Government had set a goal of reducing informality to below 60 per cent by 2030, while keeping unemployment below five per cent rate. That would allow one in five Peruvians to have a decent job. Green jobs must be created and promoted as part of just transition to a greener and more productive economy. That required addressing socio-environmental conflicts, reducing the greenhouse gas effect and pollution, and adapting to climate change. The Peruvian economy relied heavily on the mining sector, an industry that had imperatively to become more responsible.
- 117.** The Government was also tackling issues of discrimination based on gender, or against persons with disabilities, and efforts were being made to reduce inequalities, provide employment opportunities on an equal basis and put an end to discrimination in Peru. A temporary multisectoral working group had been created to elaborate intersectoral interventions complementary to national policies to promote women's access to employment. This had had a beneficial effect on job creation. In 2021, the Ministry had set up 16 offices throughout the country which had provided advice and guidance to over 11,000 workers and given formal economy training to 4000 people. Specific subsidies to promote and maintain formal jobs had been allocated to employers affected by the national state of emergency declared during the pandemic. A very recently adopted amendment to the labour legislation on outsourcing, drafted with ILO assistance, had made it impossible for shell companies to outsource contracts to third parties. Under the amended legislation, companies could not outsource their core business. That would end the fraudulent practice that had previously been possible in the country. Peru would continue to strive for full, decent employment based on the principles of the Decent Work Agenda, and in full respect of workers' rights.
- 118. The Minister of Labour of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan** said that Jordan's pre-crisis rate of 19.2 per cent had risen still higher in 2021, affecting both small and large enterprises in the country. However, throughout the pandemic new internet-mediated businesses were created, especially in logistics, high-tech and medical consumables. To assist companies and prevent additional job losses, the government launched a programme in partnership with the ILO, and secured US\$210 million through its Central Bank to support business by subsidizing wages. Workers received compensations to encourage them to return to work during the pandemic, rather than staying locked down in their homes. At the same time Jordan, as a large receiving country for refugees, had to deal with national and migrant workers, equally affected by job losses during the pandemic, as well as trying to mitigate the

effects of the pandemic on the informal sector and on other, vulnerable populations that were without any social protection. The issue was not purely financial. It was simply that the Government had had no systems in place to deal with the multiple situations at hand. Support from the ILO, both from the Regional Office for Arab States and from headquarters, had been effective and much appreciated. The ILO was also working with Jordan to formalize the informal sector.

- 119.** Since the beginning of the pandemic, Jordan's development and employment programme had supported the expansion of labour market policies, such as State and private job placement services, and offered help to those starting self-employment. This measure had a beneficial effect, especially for young people, as it helped them to access finance, deferred their credit payments, and supported them in starting their own enterprises.
- 120.** In 2022 the Government had launched a national employment programme, also with ILO assistance, aimed at helping the country's private sector to create sustainable jobs and engage more vulnerable people at a time when many firms were recovering from the initial impact of the pandemic. The programme had committed over US\$800 million to create 60 to 70,000 jobs, provide US\$200 in individual monthly wage subsidies and give companies the needed support for on-the-job training. Rather than providing the financial aid needed to create sustainable and gender-sensitive jobs, the government had focused its efforts on building a whole ecosystem, paying more attention to vocational and technical sectors. The pandemic revealed that the lack of digital services and insufficient regulation had negatively impacted the Jordanian labour market. The Government had therefore engaged in a national dialogue with private and public sectors with a view to creating sustainable jobs for Jordanian workers in reformed and dynamic vocational and technical sectors.
- 121. The ILO Director-General (M)** asked the Vice-Chairpersons of the ILO Governing Body to name one thing that they would like to be different in the new, post-pandemic normal.
- 122. The Worker Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body (F)** said that all governments should fully recognize freedom of association and social dialogue. They provided a basis for bringing about positive change.
- 123. The Employer Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body (F)** cautioned against a new normal that was too new. Humans would continue to need the same things to live - personal contacts, employment, a meaningful way of earning their livelihoods and engaging in society. Laws and policies should be put in place to create an environment that would allow SMEs to thrive, to move into the formal economy and to create employment.
- 124. The ILO Director-General (M)** said that the Forum had covered a wide range of issues familiar to the world of work and had grappled with the challenge of how to finance all the ambitions expressed. Indeed, there was no lack of ambition, agendas, calls to action or plans, but these were not always put fully into practice. It was important to understand that little would happen unless all actors worked together coherently and maximised resources. The pandemic had reminded the world of the vulnerability of large parts of humanity, and the Forum had sent a strong message on the importance of building resilience. That could only be achieved through policy coherence and networked multilateralism - another strong message that had emerged from the discussions. It was clear that the multilateral agencies must partner one another far more closely and systematically. Many speakers had appealed for solidarity between countries and between organizations. It was essential that the world did not submit to a divergence so dangerous that it became a threat to peace itself.
- 125.** That so many eminent leaders had agreed to participate in the discussions showed how seriously the subject of a human-centred recovery from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic was taken globally. The ILO Governing Body would shortly meet to decide what next steps should be taken. The success of the Forum would be measured by its consequences.