



**INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
OFFICE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS**

**74rd Session of the General Assembly
Third Committee
Item 25: Social Development
2 October 2019**

**Statement by: Mr. Matthieu Cognac,
Senior Multilateral Cooperation Specialist,
ILO Office for the United Nations**

Mr. Chair,

In 1995, the World Summit for Social Development pledged to make the conquest of poverty, the goal of full employment and the fostering of social integration overriding objectives of development. Five years later, the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, made 10 commitments to enhance social development. The third commitment was **“To promote the goal of full employment as a basic priority of economic and social policies, and to enable all men and women to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and Work”**

As we speak, almost a quarter of a century later, a majority of the 3.3 billion people employed globally experience a lack of material well-being, economic security, equal opportunities or scope for human development. An estimated 172 million people worldwide are unemployed, including over 59 million young people. Another 140 million people are classified as underutilized labour, and women continue to be much more likely to work part time although a majority of them say that they would prefer more hours of employment.

This snapshot of the world of work may not sound very encouraging, but it lies within the context of unprecedented transformations affecting the labour market. Technological change impacts the way we work and has a direct say on the creation, and not just the elimination, of new jobs. Demographic change entails the need for our young people to find the jobs that they want and that they deserve; while more focus is required on older workers and the need to end discrimination. Whereas climate change, there is much at stake with the potential to create 24 million jobs in the green economy with the implementation of the Paris Climate Agenda.

It is in light of these changes that last month, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted a resolution welcoming the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and calling on UN bodies to consider integrating the Declaration’s policy proposals into their work. The resolution emphasizes the need for a **human-centred approach** to the future of work; and it endorses the

stance that *“full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements of sustainable development, and should therefore be a priority objective of national policies and international cooperation”*.

At stake is the need to strengthen the capacities of people to benefit from the opportunities of a changing world of work, strengthening the institutions of work to ensure adequate protection of all workers, and promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In short, investing wisely in Decent Work helps reduce inequality.

The shift to a human-centred approach aims to ensure a just transition to the future of work. While harnessing the fullest potential of technological progress and productivity growth, it stresses the importance of lifelong learning; and it emphasizes the role of the private sector as a principal source of economic growth and job creation. It promotes workers’ rights and gender equality, both essential for the attainment of inclusive and sustainable growth.

The adoption of the resolution fits within the context of the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. It provides a platform for cooperation and policy coherence within the UN System and it shall contribute to strengthen multilateralism while enhancing the critical role of social dialogue and international labour standards.

The ILO looks forward to working with this Committee to strengthen policies aimed at securing a sustainable, equitable, just and inclusive future of work.

I thank you.