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Candidate for appointment to the post of Director-General of the
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***Giving ILO
greater strength and influence***

Over the last decade, globalization and the information and communication technology revolution have profoundly changed the world of work and the relationship between employers and workers, and their respective professional organizations. However, these advances have brought with them increased employment insecurity. Respect for international labour standards has weakened. The economic and financial crises have seriously undermined the social climate and social dialogue.

The principle that *universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice* is today more relevant than it has ever been.

Against this backdrop, my candidature sets out a vision of an **equitable globalisation which respects the environment, and assures greater social justice, wider access to decent jobs and increased freedom for entrepreneurialism**. To this end, we must strengthen the role of International Labour Office as an effective vehicle for proposing and promoting International Labour Organization standards among tripartite constituents.

The conceptual and operational framework for realising this vision is already in place: in particular, the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008) has placed renewed emphasis on the principles and fundamental objectives, as well as the strategic orientations of the Organization over the decades since the adoption of the Declaration of Philadelphia (1944), and placed them within an effective framework for action.

If appointed Director-General, I will first suggest to the Governing Body further actions for the ILO to take to deepen the policy reforms already initiated, including measures to **optimize and utilize the unique strengths of the Organizations, to realise the full potential of its tripartite structure, to make most effective use of all of its means of action and to further develop its human capital**.

The world is changing rapidly. The ILO must prove itself fully capable of addressing the emerging challenges.

Together, we can make the ILO **more responsive, more efficient and more influential**.

Ibrahim Assane Mayaki

1. Strengthening ILO's standard-setting function

This could be done at two levels:

- (i) Improving the **relevance and visibility of ILO standards**, in a context of globalization and crises with multiple consequences. To help address the economic and financial crisis, many countries have recently introduced legislative measures relating to the functioning of the labour market and to social protection, or plan to do so. The ILO could play an advisory role to national parliaments and governments so as to strengthen their capacity in the definition of legal frameworks.
- (ii) Supporting countries to **respect international standards**. Many governments, especially those in developing countries, have not ratified all the core labour standards or face serious problems in their application. The ILO could play a proactive role by interacting with parliaments, governments and social partners in order to identify the priority measures and actions needed to update national legal frameworks and implementation measures.

2. Strengthening the promotion of social dialogue

The overarching priority here is to establish social dialogue as a **pillar of good governance** at both the enterprise and national levels. Social dialogue must become an indispensable mechanism of **transparency**, for **strengthening the rule of law** and for the **consolidation of democracy**.

The economic and financial crisis since 2008 and the subsequent social and political upheavals (the Arab spring, the Occupy movement, etc.) have revealed the importance of social dialogue as an essential tool in creating favourable conditions for access to decent and sustainable employment; more than ever, social dialogue has become a pre-condition for the establishment or re-establishment of a climate of social harmony.

In a changing world, social dialogue in general and collective bargaining in particular must provide the foundation for a smooth, balanced and fair operation of the labour market to *secure social justice*.

In this respect, collective bargaining must be applied as much in Very Small Businesses and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as in large corporations through the implementation of the international framework agreements.

We must equally pay special attention to the development of social dialogue and collective bargaining in the **informal economy**, especially in the many countries of the South. For this purpose, the ILO could develop partnerships with all interested parties at local or international levels, so as to raise awareness and build capacity of relevant stakeholders.

3. Strengthening employment and vocational training policies

Vocational training is a key factor to promote access to decent and sustainable employment especially for vulnerable groups (such as youth, persons with a disability, older persons).

There is a crying need to create a favourable environment for the development of a dynamic and well-structured vocational training system, which can provide programs that correspond closely to the needs of the labour market.

Creating synergy is essential to this. The ILO could play a role as strategist and coordinator of the interactions between governments, social partners, international institutions, Multilateral Development Banks and the private sector so as to create the conditions necessary for the development of vocational training through provision of adequate human and financial resources; the establishment of regulatory authorities for the sector; and the creation of effective systems for tendering and validation of program content.

Finally, we must search out new opportunities and new partners to become involved in vocational training. For example, we could more actively engage with international foundations.

4. Building social protection floors

Promoting social protection is one of the original aims of the ILO. Ongoing debates on the economic and financial crisis - and its tendency to lead to social and political crises throughout the world - advocate placing social protection at the heart of the solutions and remedies. These include measures to secure employment levels and establish social protection floors that guarantee a minimum level of income and access to basic social services to those people worst affected by the consequences of the crisis.

Social security is now widely accepted to have become a human right, as well as a political, social and economic necessity, and a stabilizing factor in times of turmoil and crisis.

Yet it has to be recognized that the great majority of the world's population lacks access to universal coverage. Indeed, a large part of humanity is still deprived of access to basic health care, while more than half of the elderly receive no pension at all.

If you place your trust in me, I undertake to intensify advocacy for social protection policies that are designed, fully integrated and developed together with employment policies.

I am also committed to engage the Office in the promotion of good governance of social protection programs by fully involving governments and social partners.

5. Making ILO a global hub for employment-related issues

The ILO has added value in action to strengthen national capacity to monitor and assess labour market trends. This particular activity could be a central focus of governments, international and social partners' efforts to stimulate and support employment at the country level.

The ILO could play a leading role in strengthening partnerships on employment-related issues between member States, the Multilateral Development Banks and regional economic institutions.

Finally, the ILO must go beyond its current realm of activity in this area. It must learn from its actions in all regions of the world, identify good practices and successful experiences in order to assess the possibilities of transfer to other regional contexts (through "reverse linkage").

In this regard, we must increase funding for the International Training Centre of ILO (in Turin) to better respond to the need for capacity building of employers' and workers' organizations as well as of government officials.

6. Enhanced private sector involvement and greater access to credit

We must work to bring together the private sector with universities so that the latter are better able to understand employment trends and market needs. We can look for inspiration to the US system of university Chairs, through which American companies are investing to support or develop a university course with potential for a specific business or industrial sector.

At another level, one might think of an inclusive model which covers training, work experience and access to credit, that will provide a more coherent approach than does training alone. The beneficiaries of such programs will have the opportunity to create Very Small Businesses and thus «maximize returns» to the training received.

Technical and financial partners have a key role to play in this system. Thus, Multilateral Development Banks may become more sensitized to the benefits of employment-intensive projects (infrastructure, urban development, agribusiness, etc.).

These partners will be pro-actively approached to increase the number and amount of lending facilities within their country assistance strategies. These credit lines will include for instance a secured portion, intended for the most vulnerable groups (young women, people in post-conflict situations, youth living with disabilities, etc.).

7. Safeguard, increase and properly deploy ILO's human capital

Beyond the normative issues, part of the future of the ILO will depend upon the attention and interest that national constituents and other international institutions accord to its activities and expertise of the ILO.

These days, constituents in most countries of the North make fewer and fewer calls on ILO technical expertise.

But, while effective demand in countries of the South remains high, ILO expertise must be appropriate and correspond to actual needs on the ground, and to distinguish itself from the one provided by local experts or private consultants.

The ILO should make every effort to avoid the depreciation of its human capital. Indeed, its expertise and competence in certain critical areas such as employment strategy, youth employment, rural employment, labour administration, business development and management, business productivity and competitiveness, wage policies, labour market policies and institutions, industrial relations and vocational training policies, etc., must be of the highest standard of excellence

I give my commitment that the ILO will implement a human resources policy that corresponds to the technical needs of its tripartite constituents, based on criteria for **combining technical competence with geographic diversity, on equal opportunity in recruitment and internal promotion, and on gender balance.**

Conclusion: Securing the future of the Organization

The voice of the ILO is paramount in today's world, and will continue to be so in a context where one of the priorities of the international community might be to urge the ILO to develop an international labour code, or to lay the foundations for a universal social protection floor.

At a time when the environment is fast becoming as important a factor as economic and social considerations, assuring the continued relevance of the ILO mandate remains a major challenge to which the Organization has already started to rise, but which must be even better confronted in the future.

Only the International Labour Office can enable the Organization to achieve this goal. And only real change, following the strategic orientations I have presented above, can prepare the Office for this task.

That is why I propose real reforms in governance, in the means of action (particularly in the implementation of technical cooperation), in standard setting, in the working methods of the Office and above all, in the management of its human resources.

My idea is to bring about coordinated change based on the systematic application of the principles of tripartism, of consultation and of dialogue with the Governing Body and the national constituents. This process of change will be driven by the requirements of reporting on activities and results to the Governing Body, and by an over-riding concern for transparency and rigour in the management of resources and means of action.
