Conclusions of the Conference of Ibero-American Labour Ministers

“The Future of Work We Want”

At a Conference at Casa de América in Madrid on 4 March 2019—the first event held under Andorra’s Pro Tempore Secretariat, which will come to a close at the 26th Ibero-American Summit—the Ibero-American Labour Ministers discussed the future of work, taking into account the far-reaching changes arising in the spheres of technology, demographics and the environment.

The main conclusion emerging from the Conference is that the future of work is not carved in stone—rather, it will be determined by the policies adopted in response to the transformations underway to prevent the exacerbation of employment shortfalls and inequalities in terms of income as well as gender.

This conclusion is based on the following considerations:

1. The labour market is facing one of its most drastic transformations since the start of the industrial revolution. A transformation stemming from technological progress, globalization, and demographic and environmental transitions. The very nature of human work and its importance as the backbone of social cohesion are at stake.

2. This transformation offers significant opportunities for the creation of jobs and sustainable enterprises, but it also generates challenges and fosters new forms of employment, compounding the current lack of formal jobs, the situation of the working poor, and polarization.

3. In order to maximize these opportunities and tackle the challenges, it is necessary to invest in innovative policies, focusing on decent work, on the creation of sustainable enterprises, on protection and social security, and on dialogue with trade unions and employers’ organizations.

4. The good design of these policies will depend on whether they can adapt to the transformations underway, whilst preserving the basic principles of protection of fundamental rights at work, and social justice. These necessary adaptations include:
   a. Harnessing the digital economy and the green economy to encourage entrepreneurial innovation and create quality jobs;
   b. Extending labour rights and social protection to the informal economy and to the new types of employment. The creation of a Universal Labour Guarantee, as proposed by the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, could be an interesting proposal for all countries to offer a common response to the challenges of our times from the labour law perspective;
c. Strengthening efforts to ensure traceability of work in digital and informal environments, and to curb fraud due to insufficient social security contributions, which undermines the financing of social protection; and

d. Investing in human capital throughout persons’ working lives, mobilizing technological resources, algorithms, and big data.

5. Furthermore, **decent jobs and young people** are key elements of the Future of Work; therefore, we invite all participants to endorse and participate in the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth as a tool to promote and channel solutions at the national, regional and global levels.

6. Lastly, **a truly transformative new agenda is needed in order to tackle the gender gap**, in which co-responsibility and care are an integral part of public policy, going beyond traditionally accepted policies.

The Ministers agree on the **crucial role of business organizations and trade unions, as well as tripartism**, in response to the transformations facing the world of work.

They also restated their commitment to the **Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda**. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed the report of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work and its recommendations.

The Ministers highlighted the **central role of the ILO among multilateral institutions**, which enables it to adopt innovative measures and increase the scope of its activities to include the new digital workers, the workers in global supply chains, and others, such as informal workers, who have historically remained excluded from social justice and decent jobs. The celebration of the ILO’s Centenary will be an occasion for further discussion on the future of work in a collaborative and multilateral environment.

– Madrid, 4 March 2019 –