



General Assembly

Seventy-third session

74th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 10 April 2019, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Ms. Espinosa Garcés. (Ecuador)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 140 (continued)

Scale of assessments for the apportionment of the expenses of the United Nations (A/73/722/Add.4)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like, in keeping with established practice, to draw the attention of the General Assembly to document A/73/722/Add.4, in which the Secretary-General informs the President of the General Assembly that, since the issuance of his communication contained in document A/73/722/Add.3, Palau has made the payment necessary to reduce its arrears below the amount specified in Article 19 of the Charter.

May I take it that the General Assembly duly takes note of the information contained in document A/73/722/Add.4?

It was so decided.

High-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization

Agenda item 14 (continued)

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations

conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): This high-level has been convened to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization, in accordance with resolution 73/282, adopted on 15 January 2019.

Statement by the President

The President: It is an honour to commemorate today the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO). That remarkable body has produced many firsts. It was the first specialized agency of the United Nations. It was the first to bring together Governments, employers and, crucially, workers for ongoing dialogue on social justice. And it was, in my view, the first organization to express so clearly the need to give workers a stake in decision-making that matches their essential contribution to lasting peace and prosperity. It is therefore fitting that the General Assembly — the most representative organ of the United Nations — celebrate the transformative impact of the ILO on the fabric of our societies and on our daily lives. I pay tribute to Member States for mandating this event and to Belgium and Jamaica, the co-Chairs of the Group of Friends on Decent Work.

Decent work is one of my priorities for this session. It is key to making the United Nations more relevant to people. It is a way to demonstrate the tangible, everyday impact of international agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and

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of multilateral bodies like the ILO. Today's event is therefore not only an opportunity to reflect on the many achievements of the ILO, but also to strengthen our resolve to realize Sustainable Development Goal 8, on decent work for all.

When the ILO was founded, in 1919, the world was emerging from four years of brutal war. Millions had died and cities lay in ruin. And, amid all that, leaders decided that an international labour organization was an essential ingredient for peace. I am not surprised that Franklin Delano Roosevelt later called it a wild dream.

But the ILO's founders were far-sighted. They understood that growing economic interdependence, itself a powerful basis for peace, would require international cooperation on labour and solidarity with workers. They recognized that peace could be established only if it were based on social justice. They had seen at first hand that injustice could produce unrest so great it imperilled the world.

And injustice was rife. There was widespread poverty and discrimination. Workers' rights were poorly respected or lacking entirely. Children toiled in factories and fields. Accidents and deaths were common.

Fast-forward 100 years and we now have more than 180 ILO conventions, on everything from gender equality to forced labour. We have ILO programmes that support the implementation of those conventions, including through training and education. But, sadly, injustice is still a reality for millions of people:

“I nearly suffocated in the mine.”

“I worked all day without food.”

“He said he would get me a good job, but he lied. He raped me.”

These are the voices of child workers, forced labourers, those trafficked into prostitution. More than 40 million people today are victims of modern forms of slavery — more than twice the number involved in the transatlantic slave trade, one of the darkest chapters in human history. And then there are the unemployed — 190 million people, a third of whom are young people; the working poor, 300 million people, half of whom are young; and the 2 billion or so engaged in informal work, often without social protections.

This is the context in which we must deliver Sustainable Development Goal 8. Decent work is central to our efforts to fight poverty and inequality. It is key

to leaving no one behind and empowering women, youth, minorities, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. The ILO is the standard-bearer for this Goal. It is also leading the way on the future of work to ensure that we harness the opportunities and mitigate the risks of the rapid changes we are seeing in technology, in demography and in our climate. In June, Member States will receive the outcomes of the International Labour Conference. One thing is clear: issues of social justice will become even more important as the world of work changes.

The International Labour Organization once seemed a wild dream. That dream has been realized. Let us now ensure that the dream of decent work for all also becomes a reality.

(spoke in Spanish)

I now have the honour to invite the Secretary-General, His Excellency António Guterres, to address the Assembly.

The Secretary-General: A century ago, as the rubble from the First World War still smouldered, global leaders came together at Versailles and affirmed a principle that echoes to this day. Indeed, in the first words of the Constitution of the International Labour Organization (ILO), it is written that “Universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”.

It was a time of upheaval. Working people were demanding fair treatment and dignity in work, adequate wages, an eight-hour working day and freedom of association. The nations of the world knew they had to cooperate to make it happen. And so the International Labour Organization was born.

Despite being among the oldest member agencies of the United Nations family, the ILO remains to this day one of the most unique gathering spaces in the international system. Its tripartite governance model is a source of strength and legitimacy. Workers, employers and Governments come together through dialogue for shared solutions. Ms. Frances Perkins, President Franklin Roosevelt's Labour Secretary, recounted how President Roosevelt himself was captivated by this idea in the 1930s, long before the birth of the United Nations. She said:

“More than once in discussing the world organization, Roosevelt pointed out that he liked the ILO structure of representation, which had

in its membership not only representatives of government, but also representatives of the people concerned, and Roosevelt himself said, ‘I hope some day, that kind of thing will grow.’”

Through its tripartite consultative and governance model, the ILO has consistently been able to put its finger on the pulse of people’s concerns. Through conflict and peace, democracy and dictatorship, decolonization and the Cold War, globalization and turbulence, the ILO has played a central role in the struggle for social progress. On his first visit to a United Nations organization, Nelson Mandela told the ILO that he had heard its voice piercing the walls of Robben Island and he felt that he was not alone.

In recent years, the ILO has been out front in recognizing the need to build a fair globalization that expands opportunities, reduces inequalities and responds to people’s demands for the opportunity for decent work — a concept firmly embedded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The ILO has been a trusted voice in expanding opportunities for young people, opening doors and breaking glass ceilings for women, and ensuring social justice in every corner of our world.

I commend Director-General Ryder and the ILO for choosing to focus this centenary on the future of work. We are living in a time of profound uncertainty, disruption and technological transformation. Innovations such as artificial intelligence will help power economies and make progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. But at the same time, we will face tremendous disruption in the labour markets, with an enormous number of jobs created and jobs destroyed. Even the concept of work will change, and the relationship between work, leisure and other occupations will do so too. We are not yet prepared for that. Obviously, we need massive investment in education, but a different sort of education — not just learning things, but learning how to learn. We need a new generation of support and social-protection policies for people. We need to show that we care for those impacted negatively by technological transformation, and we need to mobilize Governments and all actors like never before.

I welcome the call of the ILO Global Commission of the Future of Work, co-chaired by the President of South Africa and the Prime Minister of Sweden, for a human-centred approach to the future of work that reinvigorates the social contract in the digital age.

Since the digital economy operates in a world without borders, international institutions must more than ever play a vital role in shaping the future of work we want.

Let us make the most of this pivotal anniversary to renew our collective commitment to international cooperation, to peace and to social justice.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

In accordance with the provisions of resolution 73/282, I now give the floor to the Director-General of the International Labour Organization.

Mr. Ryder (International Labour Organization): One hundred years ago, recognizing that universal peace can be achieved only if it is based upon social justice, the Commission on International Labour Legislation of the Paris Peace Conference proposed the establishment of a permanent organization and a series of urgent measures to improve labour conditions in the world. These provisions were to become the Constitution of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and were adopted by the Peace Conference on 11 April 1919.

The ILO was the most positive and enduring product of the Treaty of Versailles. Its birth was the first step in the construction of the multilateral system and a forebear of today’s United Nations. The ILO was empowered to negotiate and supervise the global rules of labour and to do so by the joint action of Governments, workers and employers. Never has the idea of “we the peoples” been given such inclusive form.

And this “wild dream”, as Franklin D. Roosevelt described it a quarter of a century later, is one that has prevailed, shaped labour law and practice around the globe, and given substance to our constitutional principle that labour is not a commodity and to our recognition that the primary goal of policy must be the advancement of the material and spiritual well-being of each human being.

The ILO’s journey has not always been a smooth path. From the outset, the Organization has been tested by the turbulence of history and the economic and social realities of its times. In its first 25 years, the Organization’s greatest achievement was its survival. It confronted and overcame the great depression, authoritarianism, renewed cataclysmic conflict, the collapse of the League of Nations and wartime exile in Canada.

Precisely as it emerged from that period of darkness, as world leaders were preparing the creation of the United Nations, the ILO adopted the Declaration of Philadelphia. Concise and compelling, this was truly a vision for a better world. With its groundbreaking statement of rights, the Declaration of Philadelphia was to inspire the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and laid the foundations for the ILO's future role as the first specialized agency of the United Nations.

The ILO and the United Nations embraced their partnership from the outset — perhaps not surprisingly. After all, the first Secretary-General had participated in the ILO Conference in 1925 as a representative of the workers of his country. The first half-century of the ILO culminated in the award to it of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1969. Speaking at the award ceremony, the Chair of the Nobel Committee recognized that few organizations that had “succeeded to the extent that the ILO has in translating into action the fundamental moral idea on which it is based”.

This was carried forward over the subsequent 25 years, which were marked by rapid growth as the ILO's membership increased with the freedom brought to so many peoples by decolonization. The ILO was challenged to meet the needs of these new States and did so by developing its technical cooperation programmes into the crucial means of action that they still are today.

By its seventy-fifth anniversary, the ILO had reached near-universal membership in a world that was itself standing at the threshold of the era of globalization. By then, the confrontation between two ideological and political systems had come to an end, but the apparent triumph of universal liberal economy, proclaimed by some as the end of history, in fact heralded a challenging new chapter in the ILO's history. Many sought a social dimension to a model of globalization driven by the deregulation of markets and fuelled by new technologies.

The ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, of 1998, and the Decent Work Agenda — jobs, social protection, social dialogue and rights — were key responses and stand today at the centre of the ILO's strategy. They are also a pillar of the Sustainable Development Goals.

More than a cause for celebration, the centenary that we commemorate together today is a time to reflect on our purpose and on the course we chart for the future. The world of work is undergoing

unprecedented transformative change, and while that change brings opportunity for many, for others it is generating a profound sense of instability, anxiety and even fear. Today, the ILO and all the organizations of the multilateral system operate in this context of great uncertainty and widespread disillusion about the prospects for sustainable social and economic progress. The very principles of multilateralism are called into question.

Many citizens doubt the capacity of the leaders and institutions of public life to give credible responses to their most pressing needs and concerns. The demand of people across the planet has been and is a renewal of the social contract between Government and people, and at work between labour and capital, that is predicated on the concepts of fairness, equity, cooperation, development, shared opportunity and prosperity, and on inclusiveness and sustainability.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stands as the international community's response. It has decent work at its heart. And it is a pressing responsibility of the ILO at the moment of its centenary to work, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, with the rest of the United Nations system, and through its reform to deliver the 2030 Agenda, with nobody left behind, and nobody lagging behind either.

In this spirit, and because it is determined to look forward rather than to the past, the ILO has focused its centenary on the future of work. The ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, led by President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden, published its report in January, setting out, in 10 key recommendations, a human-centred agenda for growth and development that places women and men and the work they do at the centre of social and economic policies.

The Commission makes the evident yet crucial point that the future is not decided for us. It is not dictated by technological development, but will be the result of the choices that we make about the future we want and our common purpose in its realization. Our Commission argues for a series of investments in people's capacities, in the institutions of work and in the sustainable and decent jobs of the future.

If we are to succeed in realizing these high ambitions, which are also the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda, the Commission believes that all actors must take responsibility, not least in the multilateral system

where, under the impulse of reform, it advocates institutional arrangements to strengthen policy coherence, especially between the areas of labour, trade and finance.

To conclude, the founders of the ILO 100 years ago proclaimed in the Preamble to its Constitution that

“conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled”.

We have progressed much over the past century, but we know that such conditions still exist, as do the dangers. The ILO’s founders called for the war on want to be carried forward with unrelenting vigour. The first 100 years were but the prelude to the future we can and we must construct together now. Let us therefore set about that task with the same courage, vision and urgency, and moved by the same sentiments of social justice and humanity which first gave life to the ILO. History tells us not only what we can achieve, but also what the cost of our failures would be.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Director-General of the International Labour Organization for his statement.

We have heard the last speaker in the opening segment of the high-level meeting.

Before proceeding further, and as indicated in my letter dated 5 April 2019, I would like to consult members with respect to inviting the President of the Economic and Social Council, Ambassador Inga Rhonda King, to deliver some remarks. If there is no objection, may I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly, and without setting a precedent, to invite the President of the Economic and Social Council to deliver remarks at this meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the President of the Economic and Social Council and Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations.

Ms. King (President of the Economic and Social Council): I am honoured to join the members of the General Assembly at this high-level event during the seventy-third session on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment the International Labour Organization (ILO). I congratulate the ILO on

this important milestone and commend its leadership in promoting social justice and prosperity for all.

The founding of the ILO was based on the idea that universal and lasting peace could be established only if it were based on social justice. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisages a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination. Decent work for all has a key role to play in achieving sustainable development and the dignity of people. That is highlighted by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8, which aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The recognition that work, and not just any work but decent work, is a cornerstone of social justice and peace continues to demonstrate the relevance of the ILO in the twenty-first century — a time during which the world of work is radically changing. Technological changes and innovation, which could be a driver of growth and development, are also transforming existing job profiles and related skilled requirements. Together with changes in demographics, globalization, climate change, economic trends, social change and environmental concerns, they will impact the world of work.

Today’s workers need an entirely different set of skills and a new system of education and learning to adjust to a constantly changing labour market. A core concern now and in future is helping workers adjust to constant change and disruption. Our focus must also be on reducing inequalities and fostering greater inclusion, as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. The discussions in the Assembly will help find ways to respond to opportunities and the negative consequences associated with changing labour markets.

The year 2019 is an important one for the ILO, not only because of its centenary but also because the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in July, will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 8. I commend the ILO on taking the lead in that review. The High-level Political Forum will also be reviewing other SDGs that have strong interlinkages with SDG 8. They include SDG 4, on education, SDG 10, on reducing inequalities, SDG 13, on climate change, SDG 16, on peaceful societies and robust institutions, and SDG 17, on means of implementation.

Fifty countries will present voluntary national reviews, which will allow for assessing progress and identifying challenges at the national, regional and global levels.

The ILO has been an active and engaged partner of the Economic and Social Council, particularly in promoting the centrality of job creation and social protection as critical to inclusive growth and sustainable development. At the same time, the Economic and Social Council and its functional and regional commissions are an important link in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Labour issues are always an important item for the functional commissions. This year, for example, social protection has been addressed through the priority themes of both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development.

Just yesterday, we concluded the Economic and Social Council Youth Forum, which dedicated a session to reviewing the implementation of SDG 8. We witnessed the enthusiasm and commitment of more than 800 young participants to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs during the Youth Forum. I am grateful to the President of the General Assembly for giving them an opportunity to share the key messages and recommendations from the Youth Forum during this high-level meeting.

The expectations are high this year. In addition to the July High-level Political Forum under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, we will hold a High-level Political Forum summit under the auspices of the General Assembly in September. We must sustain the momentum around the High-level Political forum, as we need a robust follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda to ensure that its implementation is on track. We must commit to accelerating action in implementing the SDGs at the High-level Political Forum summit. That high-level meeting on the future of work is therefore timely. The outcome of the Assembly's discussions will be a key contribution to both High-level Political Forums.

The Economic and Social Council will continue to work towards making decent work a reality for all and realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development — leaving no one behind.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/282, I now give the floor to the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Ms. Burrow (International Trade Union Confederation): I do not think I need to convince any of those present that an International Labour Organization (ILO) fit for the twenty-first century is critical. The challenges today, sadly, are as severe as the world saw in 1919. We face historic levels of inequality, a failed model of globalization, increasing conflict and military spending, the displacement of people at levels never seen before, the climate crisis and massive disruption from technology.

The central question is this. Can we achieve consensus among today's leaders — across Government, employers and trade unions — to ensure the rights and social justice envisioned by the ILO Constitution after the turmoil of the First World War and by the Declaration of Philadelphia, concerning the aims and purposes of the International Labour Organization, following the Great Depression and the ensuing social and economic devastation? Can we do that for the new standards that we need to meet the serious challenges of this century? The magnificent vision of leaders 100 years ago and the social and economic successes built through respect for the unique tripartite mandate of the ILO, which established a global floor of labour standards — a guarantee for decent work — is floundering.

We have seen the erosion of that social contract since the 1980s. Consequently, while the world is three times richer than it was just over 20 years ago, inequality is now an overwhelming global risk. More people go to bed hungry than have been lifted out of extreme poverty. The concentration of wealth is being fuelled by the corporate greed of the giant corporations and its dire effects on people, small to medium-sized enterprises and sustainable economic futures.

Up to 94 per cent of workers in global supply chains, on whom wealth is built, constitute a hidden workforce, a fact that obscures the low-wage, insecure and often unsafe work that is the basis — even now with informal and modern slavery — and heart of profit from global trade in the real economy. If we add the evidence of a global slump in wages and collective bargaining to that, then there is both stagnant demand and emerging social unrest in too many countries.

When it comes to minimum wages, the floor of security is far below the promises of the ILO Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia for living wages, because the rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining are increasingly denied. Sixty per

cent of the global workforce is in informal work. And, with progress for women stagnant, working people have simply lost trust in institutions, globalization and, in too many cases, even democracy itself.

This model of globalization has also been at the centre of the theft of tax dollars, which has denied Governments the resources for social protection floors and vital public services. The consequence of all that and the growing cracks in the global economy, whereby demand is undermined and unbalanced, has simply also denied equal development. The failure of the social contract with this model of globalization has therefore put both people and the global economy, as well as multilateralism, at risk. Today, without the guarantees of just transition measures for climate and technological shifts, by which we indeed leave no one behind, we put at risk social cohesion and further divide peoples around the world.

It is simply time for a renewed social contract and to realize Sustainable Development Goal 8 and related goals. The promise of the centenary declaration to be negotiated at the ILO conference to ensure a human-centred agenda for the next century and the recommendations on the future of the economy in the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work require us to agree on the fundamentals. It requires a reaffirmation of the independence in the mandate of the ILO in accordance with its Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia. It also requires a commitment to fundamental rights, social justice and decent work — detailed in the subsequent recommendations — at its heart. For labour, it means a new social contract for Government, business and workers with a universal labour guarantee that provides a protection floor for all workers involved in informal and platform work, and direct employment. It means that rights will be respected; jobs will be decent, with minimum living wages and collective bargaining; workers have some control over working time; social protection coverage is universal; due diligence and accountability drive business operations; women's equality is realized; and social dialogue ensures just transition measures, including skills and, of course, those for climate, technology and displaced people.

We need to recognize that the global disruption of digitalization and emerging business models without enforced employment responsibilities requires new approaches — probably entailing new standards with the United Nations authority also looking at

where the management of data and privacy should be mandated — but, also for our working people, it requires a floor of rights and distribution. That is something for which employers, workers and Governments share a responsibility, and we would want to see that respect extended today. We failed in the 1990s, but it should be extended today across all multilateral institutions: a fair competition floor upon which respect for rights and distribution is in fact at the heart of the Bretton Woods Institutions, the World Trade Organization and other United Nations agencies.

Simply put, we need a human-centred century. The preamble to the ILO Constitution states that the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations that decide to improve the conditions in their own countries. In other words, ensuring decent work is a joint endeavour. Labour is not a commodity. Labour standards and rights cannot be mitigated or denied by the market. We ask everyone here to support a new social contract to mark this century for the ILO and fulfil the promise of the dignity of work. Our sons and daughters deserve no less.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 73/282, I now give the floor to the President of the International Organization of Employers.

Mr. Kiresepi (International Trade Union Confederation): It is a great honour and pleasure for me, as President of the International Organization of Employers (IOE), to speak on this very special occasion to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The IOE represents more than 50 million companies through its independent and representative member organizations in 147 countries. Those companies are leaders and major contributors in shaping national policies and regulations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. More broadly, the IOE is proud to be the first international business movement committed to promoting social values for nearly 100 years. We, too, will be celebrating our centenary in 2020.

The ILO centenary is a milestone of global importance and a celebration of human dignity. The IOE is honoured to be one of the ILO's longest-serving partners, helping the organization to push boundaries, expand opportunity and improve lives worldwide. The Director-General said last year that the ILO's 100

years of achievement is due to its tripartite governance. I could not agree with him more. The engagement of social partners in the governance structures of the ILO is its biggest asset. Social partners bring the voices of the real actors in economies to the table. They strengthen the legitimacy of the decisions taken by the ILO. They contribute concretely to the implementation of policies and programmes. They serve as an essential link in partnerships among the United Nations, the private sector, Governments and workers. In short, the ILO's social partners — employers, workers and Governments — make positive change happen.

Why is the ILO important to the IOE and employers in particular? Employers believe in a fair playing field for business. Labour should not be a commodity. We share the ILO's belief that a skilled workforce is the backbone of our success. We also share their commitment to promoting social dialogue as a means of guaranteeing stability and protecting peace. We believe that the ILO's conventions and recommendations, as well as its supervisory systems, truly matter for business. We are thankful to the ILO for building the capacity of employers' organizations. We are also grateful to it for helping to protect employers' organizations under threat. In all, employers fully support the ILO's determination to ensure full and productive employment and decent work for all, leaving no one behind. Productive employment is the foundation for generating wealth, eradicating poverty, promoting democracy and ensuring respect for human dignity.

Let me talk about the focus of today's event — the future of work. While the future of work and business may seem like abstract concepts, the breathtaking pace of change today is making those global issues impossible to ignore. Technological innovation, underpinned by economic integration, has radically transformed jobs, businesses and markets. Demographic changes, climate change and sustainability are influencing decision makers in businesses and Governments as never before. In addition, the skills needed in this fourth industrial revolution are, and will be, in short supply. The question of meeting future challenges and seizing opportunities is preoccupying individuals, companies, institutions, Governments and society.

Behind the massive change is one essential question: will the future of work be person-centred and person-enabling? The private sector is answering that question with a resounding yes. At the IOE we believe that, to achieve a human-centred future of work, we

need to ensure a prosperous future for business. Every effort must be made to create an environment where business can flourish. Policies need to be put in place that focus on employment and economic growth. As we have seen too often, without sustained growth social progress is likely to stall, and even be reversed.

We are experiencing historic change. It is up to each of us to build a safe and prosperous future. Employers want to be part of the solution and to offer input on shaping a future with human dignity at its heart. That goes beyond helping companies and workers adapt to new technologies; it is about transforming attitudes towards work and business. Governments, employers and workers have a shared responsibility to shape the future of work. To achieve that balanced dialogue, employers' and workers' organizations must be more connected and listened to at the United Nations.

The link between United Nations decisions and their impact on the workplace must be better understood and strengthened. At the same time, the IOE will continue to contribute to the ILO's reassertion of its leading role in the United Nations as an expert in labour rights, social protection and social dialogue, but also in employment creation and enterprise development. The IOE wants to contribute to a robust ILO that thrives on finding solutions for sustainable social progress and economic development. The IOE wants to be part of the ILO's next 100 years and to collaborate with our tripartite partners to advocate for prosperity and dignity for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with resolution 73/282, I now give the floor to the youth representative from the secretariat of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth.

Ms. Amatya (United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth): On 29 October 1919, the then Secretary of Labour of the United States, Mr. William Bauchop Wilson, opened the first session of the International Labour Conference, stating

“Our homes are your homes. We want you to feel that you are not strangers at the gate, but part of us”.

While we have made great progress in the past 100 years, including a Nobel Prize for using economic empowerment and social justice for peace, we have started to see regression. There are too many countries in the world today that have shut those gates, becoming strangers in our interconnected and interdependent world.

It is my honour to be here today. My name is Jolly Amatya. I am from Nepal. I speak on behalf of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth. We are the General Assembly-mandated youth engagement mechanism at the United Nations, originally established in 1992 as an outcome of Agenda 21. These words come from a constituency of over 7,000 youth-led entities from over 170 countries and territories, from local informal grass-roots groups to large youth-led organizations — some of which are even older than the United Nations. And, despite our failing education systems, we have done our homework.

The Constitution of the International Labour Organization (ILO) opens with the statement that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice. Secretary Wilson echoed that, saying that war is waste. Yet globally we spend a combined \$1.7 trillion on militaries because our economic models cannot tell the difference between the production of weapons for mass destruction and instruments of well-being. Our economic models see rises in executive pay as more beneficial than rises in workers' pay, which is why wages continue to stagnate despite massive rises in productivity.

A truly equitable and inclusive future of work cannot be hijacked by the same mindset that has led us to where we are today. Our short-sighted quest and blind obsession with gross domestic product (GDP) growth is perpetuating human-rights abuses against a majority of humankind and is destroying our ecological life-support systems. Unchecked growth is an existential threat. Amid those crises, young people have jumped into action. Young people know that there will be no two-hundredth anniversary of the ILO if we continue to steamroll our planetary boundaries and not take immediate and extreme action to reverse climate change. There are no jobs to protect if we are all dead. There are no jobs on a dead planet.

The eighth Economic and Social Council Youth Forum took place this week under the theme “Youth: Empowered, Included and Equal”. The session on Sustainable Development Goal 8 had three key recommendations.

The first is that we must move beyond GDP and shift our economic models to ones that value and measure the well-being of all and the integrity of the planet. We need alternative development strategies, including sustainable degrowth for the overconsuming.

There is no future for an economic paradigm that puts growth and greed over people and planet.

Secondly, the transitions that young people care about are not just from school to work, but from ageist, undemocratic aristocracies to governance structures that are inclusive of all and based upon intergenerational dialogue, participation and collaboration. We do not need individual leaders. What we need is collective action based upon universality and equity. The Latin root of the word “innovation” actually means bringing old and new into something greater than the sum of its constituent parts, and only equitable and inclusive democracies can create true innovation.

Thirdly, young people's trust in institutions is at an all-time low. Rebuilding that trust is key to moving forwards to the future we want. Our institutions must be recalibrated to align with the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They need to set examples that we can be proud of, and not perpetuate outdated and unjust systems that impose hardships on people. We need civic education that promotes participatory budgeting, collective bargaining and voting.

The first International Labour Conference had five key agenda items: a working-hour maximum, unemployment, women's employment, employment of children and the prohibition of an extremely dangerous chemical in the workplace. Today, 100 years later, it should frighten us that we are still struggling to achieve those things. Again, universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice.

The key to a brighter future of work is an honest reflection on why the present of work has not lived up to our shared collective aspirations. We need to go beyond seeing people as just their potential value added and bring back humanity to the core principles that guide our decisions. Young people's call to action is very simple: we all must work together, all peoples with each other and for each other for a just and peaceful planet. Together we can make it work. We call on Member States to call on us. Either way, we are moving forward.

The President: I thank Ms. Amatya for her very powerful statement.

(spoke in Spanish)

We shall now begin the commemorative plenary segment. I appeal to all speakers to keep their statements brief in order to make maximum use of the

limited time we have for this high-level meeting. In order to enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in plenary meetings should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. Participants with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full-length statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

I now give the floor to the representative of Rwanda, who will speak on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mrs. Rugwabiza (Rwanda): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.

We align ourselves with the statement to be delivered later by the observer of the Observer State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The African Group congratulates the International Labour Organization (ILO) on this very important day — its 100th anniversary. That special landmark celebrates both the ILO's achievements and principles, including the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of forced or compulsory labour, the abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation. The African Group welcomes "The future of work", as the theme of this high-level meeting of the General Assembly, considering that the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) depends largely on SDG 8, aimed at ensuring that growth is sustained, sustainable and inclusive, thereby envisaging a central role for full and productive employment and decent work for all.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reaffirms the fundamental principles of the ILO, which hold that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if based on social justice and prosperity. More people in decent jobs means stronger and more inclusive economic growth.

The ILO's consideration of security, humanitarian, political and economic issues related to work is still relevant to today's reality. The Group reaffirms the 1919 Constitution of the ILO, as well as the principles of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998, and its follow-up mechanism. Furthermore, the Group applauds the reporting

feedback process of the Declaration, holding all Governments accountable in reporting on the measures they have taken towards implementing the Declaration. Moreover, it gives organizations of employers and workers a chance to voice their views on progress made and actions taken. Beyond the progress reports, the global reports provide a dynamic global picture of the current situation with respect to the principles and rights expressed in the Declaration, which should feed automatically into the technical cooperation projects designed to address identifiable needs in relation to the Declaration and strengthen local capacities.

The African Group remains concerned that hundreds of millions of people still suffer from discrimination in the world of work, including those affected by HIV/AIDS, migrants, women and persons with disabilities, although non-discrimination remains the main principle in the ILO code of practice and guidelines on the world of work. Discrimination not only violates the most basic human rights but has wider social and economic implications and consequences. Discrimination stifles opportunities, wastes the human talent needed for economic progress and accentuates social tensions and inequalities.

The African Group recognizes the importance of respecting and promoting workplaces that are more inclusive. We believe that combating discrimination is an essential part of promoting decent work. We believe that is central to success on that front. Equally important is the need to close the gender pay gap by implementing the principle of equal remuneration for men and women for equal work.

The Group further reiterates the importance of providing justice to the victims of human rights violations resulting from trafficking, the majority of them migrant workers, in the light of their vulnerabilities. We acknowledge that and call for a collective effort to implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

More than half of Africa's population is young and the Group believes that is an asset for socioeconomic development on the continent only if investments are made to take advantage of that very demographic potential. Despite the economic growth seen in many African countries and the fact that the continent is making good progress, job creation remains a great challenge for the growing population on our continent.

In that context, the full and effective implementation of Agenda 2030, as well as Agenda 2063 of the African Union, will be possible only if global investments are made to create ecosystems that are conducive to and supportive of productive employment and decent work in order to boost economies and reduce the pressures of migration flows from and across Africa. The Group believes that the objective of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration — encouraging companies to commit to improving business practices to make globalization much fairer and more inclusive in the areas of human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and the fight against corruption — needs to be respected and fully implemented.

Let me conclude by repeating what Director-General Guy Ryder said. Indeed, labour is not a commodity. At the centre of human dignity is work. We should therefore all work towards making sure that all humans maintain their deserved dignity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Mr. Sinirlioğlu (Turkey): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Allow me at the outset to thank you, Madam President, for convening this high-level plenary meeting to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

We gather in this Hall at a critical moment, as we prepare for the High-level Political Forum in July, where we will review Sustainable Development Goal 8, on decent work and economic growth, and for the first-ever Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) summit, in September, which will take stock of progress made since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in 2015.

We applaud the ILO for its dedicated efforts aimed at developing and improving labour standards around the globe. As the first specialized agency of the United Nations, the ILO has a unique tripartite structure that brings together Governments, employers and workers in its decision-making mechanisms. Throughout the last century, the ILO has promoted the principles of the United Nations through its contribution to the resolution of international issues in the economic, social

and humanitarian fields. The ILO has also played an important role in the realization of social protection and other objectives set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In recent decades, the world of work has undergone a profound transformation. Globalization and technological advancement offer new opportunities for employment and growth. However, these decades also brought unforeseen challenges resulting from the disruption of existing work arrangements. Strong guidance by the ILO remains essential in helping to address emerging challenges and in enabling an informed debate on the future of work.

The four pillars of decent work — namely, employment creation, social protection, rights at work and social dialogue — are as relevant today as they were 100 years ago. We firmly believe that the ILO will continue to play a crucial role in responding to the challenges posed by the unprecedented changes that the world of work is undergoing.

With a large youth population and diverse technological and social-development levels, the Asia-Pacific region attaches great importance to the future of work and the future role of the ILO. We are going through a transformative period marked by technological, demographic and environmental change, as well as globalization, all of which generates uncertainties, concerns and fears among people, particularly youth and the vulnerable.

The changing realities of the world of work are also having a great impact on countries. The meaning of “work” as we know it is being defined in hitherto unknown ways. Digital and technological advances, especially in the areas of information and communication technologies, create new opportunities for workers and enterprises. The evolution of the world of work requires new skill sets and a paradigm shift to lifelong learning. Automation and robotization increase the demand for technical skills in problem-solving and innovation.

Without adequate education and training systems to equip the workforce with the skills and competencies that will be needed in future, these advances risk widening existing gaps and inequalities within and among countries. Therefore, we need to focus on policy measures aiming at, on one hand, development, the adaptation and diffusion of new technologies, and on the other hand, skill development and capacity-building in

the new generation of workers. We need comprehensive studies on the impact of technology on the job market so that we can harness its job-creation potential.

Progress towards achieving the targets set out in SDG 8 has been slower than anticipated. The target of achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all and equal pay for work of equal value remains elusive. The global unemployment rate has gone down, but more than 170 million people are still unemployed. Given how far current trends are from the targets envisaged under SDG 8, attaining the goal will require greatly increased efforts.

The expanding population of young people in some regions is exacerbating youth unemployment and migratory pressures. In other regions, ageing populations are putting additional strain on social security and care systems. The demographic changes have made the task of creating decent work even harder, and we need committed action from Governments, as well as from employers and workers' organizations.

We also take note of the ILO centenary initiatives — namely, those on the future of work, women at work, standards, an end to poverty, governance, enterprises, and green initiatives — and we look forward to further discussing them. The Asia-Pacific Group envisages a stronger collaboration on these initiatives in various sectors in the coming years.

In the report prepared by the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work, we note the call for a human-centred agenda with a renewed focus on people's wide-ranging capabilities. Given the challenges we face, there is a need for greater focus on the issues of equality, sustainability and inclusiveness in labour markets. A human-centred approach would strengthen the social contract by placing people and the work they do at the core of economic and social policy and business practice. The report underlines the urgency of investments in neglected areas of the economy in developed and developing countries. We welcome the three pillars of action highlighted in the report, which, in combination, would drive growth, equity and sustainability for present and future generations: increasing investment in people's capabilities, increasing investment in the institutions of work, and increasing investment in decent and sustainable work.

We welcome the ILO's approach to the future of work and concur that we should look to the future with a human-centred agenda. In spite of greater use

of automation and artificial intelligence, we should continue to devise policies that address the needs and expectations of our peoples. We should give priority to investing in individuals by training and improving skills. The ILO should remain committed to the creation of decent jobs.

At the same time, we need to work together as Member States, employers, workers' organizations and the international community to bring wealth and prosperity to our societies. We need concerted action to create more equitable, just and inclusive economies. We believe that the ILO, with its human-centred agenda, will greatly contribute to these efforts and to the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

As we conclude, we once again congratulate the ILO on its centenary celebration. Recalling that the ILO Constitution addresses the social role of work by emphasizing that

“all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity”,

we wish the organization a successful future in the service of the founding principles of the United Nations and in the service of humankind.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Poland, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

Mr. Radomski (Poland): I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the Group of Eastern European States.

The centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) represents a very special occasion for the Eastern European Group. Among the countries of our Group are those that were founding members of the organization and drafted the ILO Constitution. They have a shared belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice. That vision resulted in an organization whose longevity, tripartite structure, body of the international labour standards and supervisory system are unique in the multilateral system. The ILO has proved its value in the most challenging moments of the 100 years, inspired by the principles and values enshrined in its Constitution, but also in the Declaration of Philadelphia and, later, in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles

and Rights at Work and in the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization.

The Eastern European Group highly values the technical assistance provided by the ILO to our countries that has allowed us to bring national legislation and practice in line with ILO conventions and develop labour-market institutions and labour law. We strongly believe in a growing leadership role of the International Labour Organization for labour and employment in the twenty-first century. It is crucial to reassert the ILO's institutional role in global governance through policy coherence, in the spirit of the United Nations reform. With its tripartite structure, the International Labour Organization could bring additional value to the United Nations family.

Our Group is committed to the universality and relevance of the international labour standards for the well-being of people throughout the globe. The promotion of the ratification and implementation of ILO standards and the proper functioning of the standard supervisory system of the Organization play a crucial role in achieving decent work for all. Moreover, it is in compliance with Sustainable Development Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We believe that the International Labour Organization is the proper forum for dealing with emerging challenges in the world of work, in particular related to artificial intelligence, automation, digitalization and new technologies, climate and environmental changes, demographic trends, the informal economy and many new growing sectors of activity.

When considering the future of work, we need to keep in mind that the opportunities and challenges that we face are not and will not be distributed evenly. In a world of growing convergence and interconnectivity, we also need to look at the gaps and disparities in accessibility to decent work and livelihoods. We are committed to supporting the ILO in alleviating those differences in order to help reduce the causes of labour migration at its roots.

In conclusion, let me recall the importance of strengthening and reinvigorating the social dialogue and tripartite format as a fundamental means of achieving all the objectives of the ILO in the coming years. Inspired by the ILO's 100 years of experience and its achievements, we should continue to work

together to deliver social justice, equal opportunities and economic security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Mr. Guillermet-Fernandez (Costa Rica): I am very honoured to speak today on behalf of the States members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC). At the outset, we would like to congratulate you, Madam President, on your active engagement with Member States, and in particular we commend your initiative in convening this session to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) — an organization that has played an important role in promoting social justice and decent work for all.

The members of GRULAC value the contributions that the ILO has made in the adoption of international standards to guarantee respect for and the promotion of the rights of workers everywhere and in devising programmes to promote decent work for all, with particular attention to the most vulnerable. The importance of the ILO for the region is long-lasting. Among the founding members of the ILO, in 1919, 16 of them were from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Most of the principles and values under which the organization was founded remain relevant today. Addressing the challenges posed by unemployment, the provision of an adequate living wage and the social protection of workers, children, young people and women were among the values that, along with principles such as the guarantee of a fair and dignified working environment and the freedom of association, have prevailed over time.

Today, as we celebrate the advancements we have seen in labour issues, we also recognize the new and emerging challenges that the future of work brings, which we have to tackle in order to achieve sustainable economies and communities, while striving to leave no one behind. It is estimated that over 600 million new jobs need to be created by 2030 just to keep pace with the growth of the global working-age population. That is around 40 million per year. We also need to improve conditions for the approximately 780 million women and men who are working but not earning enough to lift themselves and their families above the \$2-per-day poverty line.

More than 40 million people globally are victims of modern slavery; they include those in forced marriage, forced labour in the private economy, forced sexual exploitation of adults and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and State-imposed forced labour. One in four victims of modern slavery is a child. Almost 25 million people are trapped in forced labour. There are currently 152 million children — 64 million girls and 88 million boys — trapped in child labour, accounting for almost one in 10 of all children worldwide; 73 million of them work in hazardous conditions. We must deepen our efforts to stop those human rights violations.

The Latin American and the Caribbean countries recognize the challenges and opportunities in the changing world of work and the need to incorporate new work models that better respond to our ambitions to create sustainable consumption and production patterns. In our view, facing the obstacles and harnessing the opportunities will require the collaboration and support, upon request, of the ILO in order to respond to, among other issues, the impact of rapid technological change, unavoidable changes in the demographics of our societies, and the implications of environmental challenges, including climate change.

All of that highlights the need for a just transition of the workforce and the creation of decent work and quality jobs. Our region would also like to stress the importance of recognizing the persistent structural barriers for our development, including, among others, gender inequality in the work place, as well as the gaps in equal pay for work of equal value. We also need to work towards the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions as a crucial part of the integral implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The States members of the GRULAC countries look forward to productive discussions at this high-level event. The General Assembly can count on our continued support as we celebrate this anniversary of the International Labour Organization and its role in working towards the promotion of sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Sweden, who will speak on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the States members of the Group of Western European and other States on the commemoration of the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

As a fractured world came together after the First World War, there was a realization that lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice and the collective efforts of nations. The unique tripartite structure formed with representatives of workers and employers, the premise on which the ILO was established 100 years ago, still holds a unique place in the multilateral system today.

The methods of attaining social justice were concrete. The organization, in its normative function, was mandated to improve labour standards, decide on minimum requirements, adjust them to each country's conditions and assist countries according to their needs. We have come a long way since then, thanks to the ILO's persistent work in developing international labour standards, which have been vital to the promotion of decent work around the globe. Our collective commitment to advancing social justice is at the core of those multilateral efforts.

The way the ILO has chosen to celebrate its centenary bears testimony to the ambitions and persistence of the organization. Under the leadership of Director-General Guy Ryder, the organization has been engaging with its tripartite constituents — member States, workers and employers — and the entire spectrum of stakeholders on the future of work.

One platform of engagement has been the independent Global Commission on the Future of Work, co-chaired by President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa and Prime Minister Mr. Stefan Löfven of Sweden. The Commission was tasked to undertake an in-depth examination of the future of work to provide the analytical basis for delivering social justice in the twenty-first century. The Commission's report identified the fundamental changes under way in the nature of work and the important challenges and opportunities that such change brings. It also called for a human-centred agenda based on a social contract that places people and the work they do at the centre of economic and social policy and business practice, using a rights-based approach. We are convinced that the report will be one of the important reference documents for the discussions on the future of work

and for the outcome document of the 2019 International Labour Conference.

A great deal of work remains to be done. Women's equal rights and participation in the labour market are key for the future of work. We know that most women in the world want to have a paid job, but the social norms, disparities between women's and men's contribution to unpaid work and workplace discrimination limit their access to equal opportunities. Challenging those norms is essential to increasing the participation of women in working life on an equal footing with men and for increasing women's economic empowerment.

We welcome the role of the ILO and the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons in eradicating forced labour. Ending child labour is one of our top priorities. Today 152 million children are involved in child labour. We know the root causes, and we must accelerate our action to uphold their human rights and ensure that no child is left behind.

Health and safety at work are of key importance for all decent work. Preventing fatal accidents should be a priority when 2.7 million workers die every year from work-related injuries and diseases. We must also invest in the institutions of work. Social dialogue and strong and representative social partners are among the essential elements to manage a changing working life, not least for our young people. We need to continue to promote inclusive social dialogue and collective bargaining to reach all workers and employers.

Today's commemoration provides an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to tripartism and our support for strengthening the role and influence of the ILO in the multilateral system as we work together to implement United Nations reforms in order to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, who will speak on behalf of the host country.

Ms. Barrett (United States of America): The United States offers its warm congratulations to the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its centenary. The ILO has carried on its mission through the Great Depression, the Second World War, the Cold War, the period of decolonization and the advent of the digital age. It outlived the League of Nations and has persevered through wartime exile in Montreal and then Philadelphia, as well as seven decades of sometimes

tumultuous progress and change since the end of the Second World War.

Throughout it has been a relentless force for the protection of workers, fairness and the peaceful resolution of disputes. It has helped working people to become more prosperous, safer, healthier and better represented. It has also helped to enable businesses throughout the world, providing tools to improve their labour relations, find trained workers and better achieve industrial stability.

In addition, it has helped countless Governments to develop sound and consistent labour laws and effective means of labour administration, as well as to develop labour standards that serve as the basis for many labour laws and trade agreements. It has also served a role as a repository and source of expertise for all things labour-related.

The United States has been a strong supporter of the ILO, although with some different perspectives. We joined 15 years after its creation, and we dropped out from 1977 to 1980. We have not always supported calls for budgetary increase, and we do not rush to ratify ILO conventions. But we believe in and support the ILO and its important mission. We have played a proud role in the ILO's history.

The ILO's inaugural meeting was held in Washington, D.C., in 1919. When the ILO had to shutter its operations in Europe during the Second World War, it moved its annual conference to Philadelphia. There, in the midst of a brutal and tragic war and in a city where our nation's freedoms were enshrined, delegates adopted the Declaration of Philadelphia, which simply and elegantly sets out clear goals that continue to guide the ILO and shape the world of work across the globe.

We have supported the ILO's supervision of fundamental workers' rights and have spoken out loudly and clearly for the protection of those rights. The United States has been a strong partner in the ILO's programme to eliminate child labour, a focal point of a global effort that has succeeded like no other in addressing practices that could not, and should not, be tolerated by any society in any period.

We have defended the right to freedom of association in the ILO Governing Body and the annual International Labour Conference. In the light of global efforts to roll back democratic gains, defending that right is as important as ever. We have spoken out

against the actions of those countries that tolerate forced labour. And we have contributed to ILO efforts to end that most odious form of labour.

The ILO's efforts to improve labour market policies, promote employment and protect workers' rights help to level the playing field for both workers and employers that play fairly. That is important for all of us. Virtually all of our free trade agreements and preference programmes require our trading partners to protect internationally recognized worker rights, while ILO standards provide the legal framework that defines those rights.

It is with great admiration and respect for what the ILO has accomplished in its first century that we salute its efforts and look forward to an ever more fruitful and successful second century.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by His Excellency Mr. Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini, MP, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Mr. Dlamini (Eswatini): It is a great joy for me, on behalf of His Majesty King Mswati III, Her Majesty the Queen Mother and the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini, to be part of this centenary celebration of the International Labour Organization (ILO), whose objective is to share best practices and offer concrete solutions for shaping the future of work and promoting decent work for all.

It is fitting to reflect on the circumstances that led to the formation of the ILO. In the aftermath of the First World War, the idea that social justice was a key component in the reconstruction of peace gave rise to the ILO. At a period in history when industrialization was increasing in scope and intensity, it was realized that the world was interlinked, meaning that there was a need for countries to come together to determine common labour standards aimed at addressing the prevailing hardships and conditions faced by workers. Today the ILO bears testimony to our resilience and spirit, which were able to endure and triumph over adversity. The ILO has come a long way; the kind of feats that it has achieved since its creation indeed mark a significant milestone. We therefore congratulate the ILO for being living proof of what multilateralism can achieve.

Notwithstanding the gains the ILO has made throughout its existence, much remains to be done to

assist countries, in particular developing countries, to withstand the emerging challenges posed by technological advances as we work towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The most significant of those challenges include the ever-growing numbers of unemployed young people, climate change, income inequalities and the increasing wage gap between men and women. Recent events in some countries indicate how far the international community still has to go to address those challenges together, as Governments, businesses and workers in the ILO framework.

Our nation and people have always been firm advocates of negotiated solutions as a response to any and all challenges we face, as manifest in various forums involving all stakeholders. I should like to take this opportunity to express Eswatini's profound appreciation to the ILO and its institutions, which have provided continuous technical assistance to our country. The Kingdom of Eswatini joined the ILO in 1975, just a few years after we attained independence. Since then we have worked tirelessly to incorporate ILO labour standards into our laws.

Eswatini is currently positioning itself to respond to the opportunities and challenges brought about by new technology and technological advances, in particular the impact of the fourth industrial revolution. The Government has tasked our schools and tertiary education institutions with designing entrepreneurial curriculums. We believe such measures will increase opportunities for young people to be competitive in the global markets of the future and to integrate their skills into the global value chain.

We remain open to the adoption of favourable national policies and regulations to accelerate our pace towards achieving the objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other emerging global agendas.

The Kingdom of Eswatini is committed to the principles and ideals of the ILO. We look forward to a good outcome from this high-level meeting, which we trust will serve as the cornerstone for the ILO's work as it embarks upon the second century of its journey and will articulate the priorities for the Organization in its quest to execute its core mandate.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine, who will speak on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

At the outset, the Group of 77 and China are pleased to sincerely congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its 100th anniversary. We would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the theme “The future of work”.

Over the past 100 years, the ILO has demonstrated its longstanding commitment to promoting social justice and internationally recognized labour rights. In that connection, the Group wishes to take this opportunity to commend the ILO for its tremendous work and unique role in the multilateral system devoted to achieving social justice, which is essential to universal and lasting peace.

The Group reiterates that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions is the overarching goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and an indispensable requirement for that purpose. The Group also reiterates the importance of the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It recognizes that full and productive employment and decent work for all are important elements of sustainable development for all countries, and therefore an important objective of international cooperation. In that sense, it is imperative to promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, and to further substantially reduce unemployment, which remains unacceptably high.

Furthermore, the Group recognizes the vast potential of young people to contribute to sustainable development and social cohesion, and notes that the unavailability of quality employment in most developing countries not only blocks the successful transition of young people from school to decent jobs but also impedes economic growth and development more broadly. Therefore, it is important for efforts to be taken at every level to improve the quality of, and access to, education and to enhance young people’s acquisition of skills to equip them for decent work.

The Group also stresses the need to address the new forces that are transforming the world of work and creating new challenges. In that connection, we believe particular attention should be paid to the challenges emerging from technological advances and their impact on employment.

The Group recognizes that Sustainable Development Goal 8 will be reviewed at the High-level Political forum this year, which we anticipate with enthusiasm. We note that Goal 8 is of crucial importance to developing countries, as it directly relates to global efforts to reduce poverty and provide decent work for all, while acknowledging that significant aspects of decent work are interlinked with many other development goals.

In conclusion, the Group of 77 and China wishes to express our appreciation, on this very special occasion, for the constructive engagement and continuing support of the ILO. In recognition of the important mandates and indispensable lead role of the ILO in supporting developing countries to achieve Goal 8, we stand ready to work closely with it to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030 and beyond.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Samheng Ith, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Cambodia.

Mr. Ith (Cambodia) (*spoke in Khmer; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is my great honour and pleasure, on behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to attend this auspicious and historic event celebrating 100 years since the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The centennial commemoration of the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations reflects the important active role that the ILO has played in promoting social justice and work opportunities for all. Cambodia has also organized events and activities in 2019 to commemorate the centenary of the ILO, which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of Cambodia’s membership of the ILO. Cambodia will continue its close cooperation with the ILO in pursuit of the ILO’s mission in the context of the fourth industrial revolution.

As we embark upon the second century of promoting social justice and decent work for all, Cambodia fully endorses the ILO Future of Work initiative, a key measure for preparing all Member States and stakeholders to respond effectively to new challenges, especially when it comes to changing skills in response to technological developments.

On this historic occasion, Cambodia would like to reaffirm its firm commitment to continued cooperation with the ILO. On 28 March, Cambodia signed a memorandum of understanding with the ILO

and other tripartite partners to implement its Decent Work Country Programme 2019-2023, which focuses on three core areas — first, the ongoing development of employment, jobs and enterprises in line with social and technological advances; secondly, strengthening and expanding social protection for women, young people and vulnerable groups; and, finally, continuing to improve industrial relations and rights at work in line with international labour standards, including for the benefit of migrant workers.

Cambodia will also continue to strictly implement the ILO conventions it has ratified, especially the eight core ILO conventions, to ensure that labour rights and working conditions are fully, transparently and freely exercised in Cambodia, in accordance with the rule of law and with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8.

In conclusion, Cambodia once again pledges our ongoing support for the ILO's role and mission and stands ready to cooperate with it to implement the Future of Work initiative for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to Her Excellency Ms. Anniken Hauglie, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Norway.

Ms. Hauglie (Norway): In awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1969, the Nobel Committee referred to the motto enshrined in the foundations of the ILO's original building in Geneva: "If you desire peace, cultivate justice". As we mark the centenary of the ILO, it is worth recalling what inspired those words and why they remain relevant.

For 100 years, the ILO has been a driving force for active tripartite cooperation and binding international regulations aimed at ensuring workers' rights, equal conditions for economic competition and social justice. However, now is not the time to relax and enjoy the long and successful history of the ILO. We have a responsibility to decide the direction of the journey ahead of us. The ILO Future of Work initiative and centenary celebrations are therefore timely and highly relevant. Norway attaches great importance to the initiative.

In the ongoing transformation of production and the labour market, we see tripartism as part of the solution for upholding the rules of the game in our globalized economy. The ILO's Global Commission on the Future

of Work calls for a human-centred agenda — investing in people's capabilities, the institutions of work and decent and sustainable work. The Commission's report took a universal approach based on principles that are as relevant in the Norwegian setting as they are in the rest of the world.

Norway is a small country, but we are committed to doing our share for our common future. We take pride in putting our money where our mouth is, allocating 1 per cent of gross national income to development cooperation. Norway is a consistent supporter, politically and financially, of the United Nations and the rules-based multilateral order, which certainly includes the world of work and the ILO.

The main role of any United Nations organization is to assist countries in implementing international norms and standards. Since financial resources are scarce, each United Nations organization should cultivate its own unique role, in its own field of work and in accordance with its own mandate. In that way each United Nations organization will best contribute to common results and to ensuring that the United Nations fulfils its agenda of leaving no one behind. The ILO plays a crucial part in pursuing that agenda.

We wish the ILO every success in its centenary year.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. José Antonio Vieira da Silva, Minister of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security of Portugal.

Mr. Vieira da Silva (*spoke in Portuguese; English text provided by the delegation*): It is a great honour to be here today at the high-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The effectiveness and longevity of the ILO, one of the oldest international organizations in the world, are clearly linked to its tripartite system, which is based on the participation of Governments, trade unions and employers. That tripartite dialogue, coordination and meeting place of ideas make the ILO one of the most socially representative international organizations in the world. It is largely to the ILO that we owe the establishment and consolidation of social dialogue as an instrument of democratic governance at the industrial, regional, national and international levels.

Mr. Yelchenko (Ukraine), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Founded on the premise that universal and lasting peace can be achieved only on the basis of social justice and dignified work, the ILO today continues to be guided by that founding vision. Throughout its 100 years of existence, the ILO has remained firmly committed to establishing fair and decent working conditions and to improving labour standards worldwide.

It is from the ILO that the universal concept of decent work emerged, which has become one of the most transformative and powerful concepts to shape social and human progress. The Decent Work Agenda is more than an objective — it is the engine for social, sustainable and sustained development. The Decent Work Agenda is also applicable to diverse economic and social contexts. It is truly a global agenda.

I would also like to thank the ILO for presenting the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work. This is a moment of consolidation that will allow us to embark upon a new chapter of discussion on this crucial issue for our future — the work we have and the work we want for the future.

In conclusion, I would like to recall that Portugal was a founding member of the ILO, so that our relationship is also celebrating its centenary. It has not always been an easy relationship, and it has evolved in response to complex and contradictory historical developments. However, I can state that our commitment to the ILO today is stronger than ever. We will spare no effort in continuing to uphold that commitment.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Murro, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Uruguay.

Mr. Murro (Uruguay) (spoke in Spanish): It is a great honour to represent my country at this meeting. At the outset, we would like to express our support for the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work entitled *Work for a Brighter Future* — and I say that sincerely with both my heart and my mind. We believe the time has come for us to identify the challenges we face and for all of our countries and Governments to assume their responsibilities and fulfil and advance the social contract.

In the context of Latin America, and specifically in our country, we believe that we have made progress, for example, if we compare today's numbers with those

of 2000 — especially the progress achieved in Latin America and the Caribbean in the run-up to 2015. However, progress has recently stagnated, or has even been reversed, except in some countries, including the one I have the honour to represent.

We believe that in many countries the world over we are in danger of backsliding. We believe that we risk not being able to uphold our commitment to achieve full employment and provide decent work for all by 2030. As stated by that excellent report's authors — the senior leaders of South Africa, Sweden, other countries and the ILO — I believe the time has come to determine whether the political will genuinely exists and to decide what we are and are not prepared to do to achieve full employment and decent work for all.

In our small country of the global South, we have endeavoured to make progress not only over the past 14 years but throughout our history. For example, in terms of democracy we are one of the few full democracies in the world. Moreover, almost all workers, in the public and private sectors alike, enjoy mandatory collective-bargaining rights. Over the past 14 years, salaries and pensions have increased 55 per cent faster than prices. Negotiations are under way in more than 230 areas, with 94 per cent agreement between employers and workers.

Our pension system covers more than 95 per cent of older adults. Uruguay has met the target of halving poverty and almost met that of eliminating extreme poverty. Nonetheless, I believe we must all reaffirm our commitment and be clear as to whether or not we will take the political decisions necessary to achieve full employment and decent work for all by 2030. To do so, I believe, we need not only the commitment of international organizations such as the United Nations and the ILO, among others, but tripartite commitments on the part of each and every one of our Governments if we are to make progress towards the goals of social justice.

The Global Commission's report states that every country should adopt a tripartite plan of action to implement its findings. It is therefore incumbent upon all of us, in each of our countries, to uphold the principles and goals put forward in that extremely valuable report, or risk losing the gains we have made.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Grégoire Owona, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Cameroon.

Mr. Owona (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Rwanda on behalf of the Group of African States.

I would like to say what a great pleasure it is to address the General Assembly in my capacity as Minister of Labour and personal representative of the Head of State of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. Paul Biya.

Cameroon is deeply concerned about the conditions of workers and is committed to the cooperation it has historically enjoyed with the United Nations system and the International Labour Organization (ILO). We hope to further strengthen that historic and constructive relationship with a view to promoting decent work and social justice and helping to maintain a peaceful society.

The fruits of cooperation are many. My country is particularly grateful for the efforts the ILO has devoted to it, especially in implementing the Decent Work Country Programme. Active efforts continue on the gender-based approach in the world of work and in combating child labour.

We must bear in mind that work is strongly influenced by rapid population growth, climate change and technology. Technological progress significantly influences the world of work and may even, if abused or used maliciously, contribute to the destabilization of States in which the social contract is under threat. In our view, it is therefore urgent that we take action to save work — to improve it, better guide it and safeguard its future, the subject of our discussion today. We must do so to preserve peace.

It is likewise important that the international community mobilize to make good use of social networks and counter fake news and deep fakes, which have become a destabilizing weapon, especially in those parts of the world that lack the legislative, legal and technological tools to tackle such digital threats.

Peace above all remains our overarching goal to ensure the future of decent work. Having pledged to serve under the banner of robust social engagement that makes young people, women and the digital economy a top priority and empowers them to grasp the significant opportunities before them, President Biya remains ready to work tirelessly for strong, mutually beneficial cooperation with the ILO and the United Nations that will help us progress towards a world of work at the service of all humankind.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Gbehzongar Milton Findlay, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Liberia.

Mr. Findlay (Liberia): At the outset, I convey the heartfelt greetings of His Excellency Mr. George Manneh Weah, President of the Republic of Liberia, the Government and the people of Liberia on this historic occasion commemorating the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

This milestone presents yet another opportunity for us to robustly reflect on the ILO's accomplishments as reflected in its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Since its establishment, a century ago, the ILO has over the years been devoted to promoting the rights of workers, providing decent employment opportunities, enhancing social protection and strengthening dialogue on work-related issues. The Organization remains seized of, and committed to advancing, those noble and lofty objectives to date. In that regard, we are obliged to commend the ILO on its commitment to continuously strive to better the lives of millions of workers around the world.

In our quest to create decent work for all we must pay close attention to the most vulnerable and those farthest behind, including women and young people. Hence, we must provide an enabling environment for the full participation of women in the labour force, in particular within the formal economy. We must also harness the potential of young people to reap the demographic dividend.

We take pride in having been a member of the ILO since its creation, in 1919. Over that period, Liberia has ratified 25 international labour conventions and has taken the opportunity to partner with the ILO in many areas to advance and promote workers' rights and decent work for all through a number of initiatives, including the decent work Act recently adopted in Liberia, which supports the establishment of an employment service bureau at the Ministry of Labour. We are pleased that the ILO continues to partner with the Government through the provision of technical, financial and advisory services.

While we celebrate our collaboration with the ILO and the gains we have made in concert, we still face challenges. We are cognizant of the fact that employment and decent work require implementation, as does achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to which we aspire. Our development framework, the

Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development, is poised to address some of the key challenges, including gender imbalances, youth unemployment, low economic growth and capacity challenges, among others. To that end, the Pro-Poor Agenda for Prosperity and Development seeks to accelerate the process of transforming Liberia's demographic dividend into a potential driver of growth by expanding social inclusion through work and life-skills opportunities and scaling up technological vocational education and training.

Decent work brings with it dignity. As our Government endeavours to improve the lives of our people, we look forward to continued partnership with the United Nations, international partners and the ILO, in particular in reforming the Decent Work Country Programme, which promotes decent work as a significant component of our national development strategy for meeting our objectives.

Finally, Liberia subscribes to the notion that the future of work must bring all countries along and should encompass innovation, inclusion and equity.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Adekunle King, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Sierra Leone.

Mr. King (Sierra Leone): As we convene to commemorate the celebrated journey of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and consider the future of work, Sierra Leone aligns itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine and the representative of Rwanda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States, respectively.

I should like to reflect on and briefly share our national experience in the global pursuit of social justice and the dignity of work. Since joining the Organization, approximately 58 years ago, Sierra Leone has remained committed to achieving the goal of decent work for all, despite our recent challenges. Driven by our resilience and commitment to the principles underpinning the ILO, Sierra Leone has adopted practical and normative measures, sourced internationally and nationally, to concretely work towards achieving the goal of ensuring decent work for all, while meeting or exceeding the targets of Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In terms of actions taken at the international normative level, Sierra Leone ratified five ILO conventions this past February — the Migration for

Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97); the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155); the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187); and the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006).

We are also working on ratifying six additional ILO conventions before the end of the year — the Labour Statistics Convention, 1985 (No. 160); the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181); the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102); the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150); and the Protocol of 2014 to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).

At the national operative level, Sierra Leone is hard at work implementing international conventions. Activities in keeping with some tenets of the future of decent work have been synergized in our medium-term national development plan for the period 2019-2023. In 2016, we organized a national dialogue forum on the Future of Work initiative, which established a baseline understanding of the world of work in Sierra Leone, examined the circumstances of the country's 2-million-strong workforce and identified the areas of most significant decent-work deficits.

The Government of Sierra Leone's flagship free quality education programme is geared towards building a nation and workforce that is adaptable and resourceful and is able to both take advantage of opportunities and meet the challenges of the future. We have also made huge investments in the area of technical and vocational training to augment technical skills. We therefore look forward to the high-level review of those measures in the context of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, on Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which were agreed by the States and peoples of the United Nations. We also look forward to continuing our partnership with the ILO as we continue to make progress.

It is common knowledge that no country in the world has attained the goal of achieving full employment and decent work for all its citizens. However, with concerted efforts, we can overcome the scourge of decent-work deficits and accelerate progress on Goal 8. We are therefore eagerly looking forward to the thematic panels

on the themes “Achieving unfinished commitments to achieve decent work for all” and “Shaping the future of work”, as well as the President’s summary of the discussion of the two panels, as a contribution to the way forward through that process.

In conclusion, Sierra Leone reiterates its appreciation to the President of the General Assembly for having convened this meeting and congratulates the ILO on its centenary.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Ms. Jayana de Silva, National Secretary of Youth of the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights of Brazil.

Ms. De Silva (Brazil): We in Brazil are discussing a very important topic that is linked to social inclusion through technology. Our current Administration understands the potential of young people and seeks to include those who are most vulnerable and isolated, including those who have never been reached before, such as indigenous people, the *quilombolas*, the river people, the Romani people and the people of the Brazilian *sertão*. That is why it is crucial that we adapt quickly in order for young people to be able to obtain access to the job market. That is also why we are creating and implementing projects and programmes, such as Espaço 4.0, to equip young people with the new skills for the twenty-first century.

Espaço 4.0 is a training opportunity in new job market skills for young people who live in isolated regions of Brazil. The programme is being implemented by means of the installation, in communities with high social vulnerability, of a container equipped with the latest technology. Equipment such as three-dimensional printers and laser cutters will soon cease to be a new trend, and will instead become fundamental to the development of young people as workers. That is why that initiative is so important for the inclusion of our young people.

Brazil has 51 million young people today, a phenomenon known as a demographic bonus. In other words, we have never had before, and likely will never have again, as many young people as we do today. It is very important that they be included both in the workforce and in decision-making. If we do not make the most of that situation, Brazil will have lost a precious opportunity, since 40 years from now one in four people will be 65 or over.

It is very important that the Brazilian Federal Government cooperate and exchange experiences with other Governments and the private sector. We want to be inspired by cases of public policies that lead to more inclusive and prosperous societies.

We want to use the current opportunity to show that we are open to dialogue with the young people and workers of the entire world so as to exchange experiences, facilitate progress in our nations and develop public policies to benefit young people.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Francisco Maria De Vasconcelos, Chief of Civil House of the Office of the President of Timor-Leste.

Mr. Vasconcelos (Timor-Leste): It is my pleasure to deliver this statement on behalf of the President of the Republic of Timor-Leste, Mr. Francisco Guterres Lú-Olo.

I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, for organizing this high-level meeting and interactive dialogue and inviting the President of my country to take part in the centenary celebration of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) on the theme “The future of work”. We warmly congratulate the ILO on its achievements.

We welcome the statement made by the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the representative of Turkey on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

Timor-Leste became a member of the ILO on 19 August 2003, the same day we lost a very dear friend, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, who was killed in a terrorist attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad. As a member of the ILO, we have received technical support in the areas of capacity development, training and job creation through the implementation of various specialized programmes.

We have made significant progress and improvements across several socioeconomic indicators, and several public-sector institutions have been established. However, we still face challenges in building a healthy democracy and a diversified economy and in making do with our limited human capital in terms of skilled labour.

Unemployment is a problem in all regions of the world, and Timor-Leste is no exception. Job creation

and decent work for all is of paramount importance for all.

With regard to the theme of today's discussion — “The future of work” — as we face the current opportunities and challenges relating to technological advances, structural transformation, changing demography, globalization and climate change, we recognize that technology is important, but we believe that it should be people-centred.

Young people account for more than 50 per cent of the population of Timor-Leste. We therefore place strong emphasis on managing education to develop our human resources and skilled labour in a way that is guided by human values. Our policy of inclusion includes gender equality. Women account for the majority of our informal sector, particularly in domestic work and small businesses. We therefore look forward to strengthening our partnership with the ILO in those areas.

To that end, Timor-Leste is engaged in a number of initiatives. The ILO has been working with the Government and the private sector to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 8, on decent work for all. The Roads for Development initiative is under way. Its main target groups — women and men in rural Timor-Leste — are deriving social and economic benefits from improved rural road access. The Enhancing Rural Access for Agroforestry project, which is a component of the Partnership for Sustainable Agroforestry, is also under way. Finally, the ACTION/Portugal Programme is in its second phase, which aims to strengthen the social protection system.

Timor-Leste has a long way to go, but we strongly believe that, in partnership with the ILO, we will build a just and peaceful society for future generations.

Mr. Gallegos Chiriboga (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador associates itself with the statements delivered by the Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine and by the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively.

For our country, employment is a universal right and a social duty. Decision-makers at all levels must promote effective actions in the context of a labour market in constant flux as a result of technological advances, new patterns of production and consumption,

automation, demographic changes and other global challenges such as climate change.

Workers are the principal and most dynamic players in the labour market. Their skills and abilities must change to meet the demands of the market, which presents both an opportunity to support such processes and a significant challenge for the future. We are committed to ensuring that workers enjoy full respect for their dignity, a decent life, fair compensation and benefits and work that is both healthy and freely accepted, and to bringing together all the relevant stakeholders — private enterprise, civil society, trade unions and local authorities — to identify ways to increase the number of fair and dignified jobs, as well as to increase wages and ensure that workers can adapt to changing demands.

I would like to convey the greetings of the Government of Ecuador to this important meeting, as well as our best wishes to the International Labour Organization on its centenary. We wish to reiterate the need to generate youth employment and close employment gaps, including in terms of gender, social class and ethnicity, by defending the rights and opportunities of all, in particular of persons with disabilities, through inclusive employment and ensuring collective responsibility for work and social protection.

Ms. Karvar (France) (*spoke in French*): As a founding member of the International Labour Organization (ILO), France believes deeply in the universal message of the ILO, following a devastating war and the Treaty of Versailles, which brought it to an end. While that message of peace has now been enshrined in the ILO Constitution for almost a century, it still resonates today with the same vigour — there can be no lasting peace without social justice.

At the end of the First World War, the ambition of the founders of the ILO was unprecedented — in the face of political tensions and fatal setbacks, they urged us to fight tirelessly against the root causes of the suffering afflicting peoples the world over. Even today, social and economic inequalities continue to hold back society from its full potential in each of our countries. Such inequalities undermine the very foundations of our democratic institutions — not only at the national level but also within the multilateral system we all hold so dear. It is therefore crucial to redouble our efforts to build a fairer globalization in which citizens may have, to echo the words of the Declaration of Philadelphia,

the satisfaction of making their greatest contribution to the common well-being.

For nearly a century now, the ILO has worked tirelessly to that end in order to reduce inequality and promote common standards and fundamental rights and principles, thereby ensuring that men and women may enjoy decent work and universal guarantees of dignity. While those fundamental concepts are now guaranteed in law, in practice much remains to be done. More than 2 billion people — 60 per cent of the global working population — are today working in the informal economy. Nearly 25 million people, primarily women, are still victims of forced labour; and when women are paid, they still receive on average 20 per cent less than men for work of equal value.

Those are considerable challenges. As the recent report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work points out, profound transformations are under way that will offer future generations as many opportunities to seize as risks to overcome. We have a collective responsibility to build the capacity of younger generations to overcome the challenges of the future of work and to seize opportunities for a better life. Their messages today give us grounds for optimism. That collective responsibility determines, I believe, the priority actions for the ILO as it embarks upon its second century. France fully shares those priorities with the International Labour Office and its Director-General, Guy Ryder, whose robust commitment in that regard I commend.

First of all, tripartism, as its foundational structural principle, and social dialogue, as its driving operational mechanism, are values that we must reinvigorate — by demonstrating their effectiveness every day; by exploring new fields of social dialogue, including at the transnational level, and tackling new issues such as the elimination of violence and harassment in the workplace; and by strengthening ILO engagement with all key stakeholders in the world of work and throughout supply chains.

A second top priority concerns the normative activity of the ILO — its core business. In 100 years of determined action, the ILO has redesigned an international legal framework that is both flexible and rigorous, working towards social convergence among its member States while also taking account of their diversity. As we embark upon a new era, the ILO must remain tireless in its efforts to maintain an effective

system of controls at the same time as it renews its normative policy. That is how we can ensure that workers and employers everywhere in the world will have the right tools for a changing world of work.

Finally, there is one last point that I believe to be critical. Our efforts to support ILO activities would be unsuccessful if the organization's activities were to be conceived in an isolated manner. To strengthen the social dimension of globalization, we must promote a coherent approach and coordinated action among international organizations. To that end, it will be necessary to ensure better integration of international labour standards into the work of financial institutions and in dealing with international trade.

The ILO could thereby help to bring all countries together towards a sustainable and inclusive future of work and globalization. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development would then serve as a target to be reached, and the reform of the United Nations system for development would provide the appropriate deployment framework to achieve it. On its centenary, the ILO has a unique opportunity to reaffirm its central role in shaping the future of work that we want. Here again, the ILO can count on the unwavering support of France.

Ms. Berset Bircher (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland endorses the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Today we commemorate with great respect the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO). For 100 years, the ILO has been committed to social justice around the world. Through its commitment to upholding and respecting fundamental principles and rights at work, the ILO has positively and sustainably influenced social welfare legislation in all countries. In addition, the ILO is engaged on the ground via its technical cooperation pillar. The promotion of decent work is a priority in effectively combating poverty.

During its 100-year history, the ILO has experienced a number of decisive events that have profoundly affected the organization. One of the most important events took place in 1946, when the ILO became the first specialized agency of the United Nations. We come together today at United Nations Headquarters here in New York to remember that unique relationship.

As a founding member and host country of the ILO, Switzerland is doubly pleased with this centenary, which marks 100 years of promoting social justice and respect for human rights in the world of work. This centenary also celebrates tripartism, where workers, employers and Governments participate equally in decision-making. The unique tripartite structure of this specialized United Nations organization is a great asset and an example of the best tripartite and multi-stakeholder dialogues.

Switzerland welcomes and supports the Future of Work Centenary initiative, launched by the ILO Director-General. In that spirit and as a national contribution, we have concluded a Swiss tripartite declaration on the future of work and social partnership in the era of the digital economy. On that national tripartite basis, we will engage actively in an ambitious centennial declaration in June at the International Labour Conference with the following priorities.

First, training and lifelong skills development are fundamental to coping with changes in the world of work. Indeed, structural developments in the global economy are constantly creating new requirements in terms of skills and new ways of transmitting knowledge.

The second priority is a social partnership that best supports current and future developments. Social partnership must allow for the implementation of framework conditions that allow both parties to participate in economic success and that reduce risk.

The final priority is the ILO's partnerships with the entire United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, in addition to collaborations with non-State actors and the private sector. The goal of decent work is now universal and included among the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). That Goal is linked to many other SDGs, such as Goal 5 on gender equality. Because of the interdependencies among all the SDGs, multi-stakeholder partnership is essential.

These three guidelines for a centennial declaration will have a direct impact on the ILO's capacity to act and will enable the successful implementation of the Future of Work Centenary initiative.

Mr. Bessho (Japan): At the outset, I would like to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its centenary and to express my appreciation for the dedication of member States, the ILO secretariat, and the workers and employers involved in the activities

of the ILO. I would also like to express my appreciation for the leadership of the Secretary-General in promoting United Nations reform with a view to strengthening the mandate of and partnership among the international organizations, including the ILO.

Japan is fully committed to the ILO goal of realizing a brighter future of work. Japan will continue to work with the ILO as a founding member and as a permanent member of its governing body. I take this opportunity to introduce some of Japan's efforts concerning the future of work.

Japan is facing enormous structural challenges, such as a declining birth rate and an ageing population, which in turn are resulting in a shrinking working-age population. In order to address that challenge, Japan is carrying out work-style reform with a view to creating a society where everyone can make the most of their abilities. That is consistent with the ILO Future of Work Centenary initiative.

On 1 February, we organized a symposium in Japan commemorating the ILO centenary, which provided an opportunity to exchange views among the Government, workers and employers on the future of work. This year, as President of the Group of 20 (G-20), Japan is determined to have the upcoming June G-20 Summit in Osaka deliver a strong message on leading global economic growth by promoting free trade and innovation and reducing disparities. In addition, we wish to discuss responses to ageing and gender equality, as well as to share national policy experiences on new forms of work at the G-20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting in September. Japan will maximize those and other opportunities to send a powerful message to the international community to lead the way in realizing an inclusive and sustainable society where everyone can fully make the most of their abilities.

At today's event, Japan looks forward to exchanging views on policies and experiences in each country. I sincerely hope that this high-level meeting will be fruitful for all.

Mr. Santos Maraver (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain was among the 40 countries that participated in the creation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in November 1919, in Washington, D.C., amid the social upheavals aggravated by the end of the First World War. The ILO declared that "labour is not a commodity".

The ILO came into existence as a way of channelling and encouraging social justice. Its method, known as tripartism, has proved to be one of the most effective and original contributions to international law and governance, involving Governments, employers and workers alike.

Spain's participation was carried out through the pioneering work of the Instituto de Reformas Sociales, led by Gumersindo de Azcárate. But it was Francisco Largo Caballero, Andrés Saborit, Julián Besteiro and Luis Araquistáin, among others, who participated in ILO conferences from the very beginning. Another Spaniard, Antonio Fabra Ribas, was a key ILO correspondent for Spain, Portugal and Latin America. Mr. Largo Caballero was a member of the Governing Body from 1919 to 1933. He was responsible for the report on the situation of social rights in Spain in 1924 which, at the request of Director-General Albert Thomas, set in motion one of the first ILO labour inspections. As Minister of Labour in the 1930s, Mr. Largo Caballero integrated the ILO conventions and recommendations into Spanish labour law.

The ILO's solidarity with democratic and social rights in Spain would stand the test of time, but especially between 1941 and 1956 and, subsequently, up until the end of the Franco dictatorship in 1977. While we celebrate the ILO centenary, it is fair to acknowledge that debt and reiterate Spain's reciprocal commitment to the organization. Spain has ratified the eight ILO conventions, which are binding on member States, and we call for their universal ratification.

The ILO is an organization with a proud history, but above all it is entrusted with the future. The achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is inconceivable without extending the coverage of international conventions and standards to ensure that decent work is performed in adequate health and safety conditions, with guarantees of fair wages, negotiated collectively in full freedom of association for trade unions and companies. The establishment of an interprofessional guaranteed minimum wage has been a crucial part of the fight against poverty, especially among women and young people. Almost 3 million workers die every year in accidents at work and another 374 million are injured, with estimated losses of up to 4 per cent of the gross world product.

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes the universal right to material

conditions to exercise citizenship in our democracies. However, 53 per cent of the population has no social coverage whatsoever. Women continue to bear the brunt of the work in the so-called care economy, for which we still lack statistics. The ILO has promoted the development of social protection systems in 136 countries, but perhaps the greatest challenge is to achieve universal social protection to guarantee the exercise of those fundamental rights.

The ILO has been at the forefront in protecting the rights of migrants and victims of forced labour and in denouncing precarious employment opportunities and the erosion of social rights as a result of automation and the use of algorithms in the organization of work. The increase in productivity as a result of the application of science must be the legacy of all humankind in order to gradually liberate it from necessary work and increase liberty, in harmony with nature. That is the goal of sustainable enterprises and economies in the twenty-first century.

Discussions on the future of the work that we want were at the heart of the recent events inaugurated in Madrid by Director-General Guy Ryder and the President of the Spanish Government, Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón, which is one of the seven objectives set by the ILO at its venerable centenary. Spain will contribute at the levels of Government, business associations and trade unions to achieve all of those initiatives.

One hundred years ago, the ILO was born of the affirmation that social justice is possible. Today, in the wake of the great recession of 2007-2008, it is crucial that we revisit the social issue with the methods of the ILO and commit once again to ensuring that work is not a commodity. Let us do so.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level meeting on the topic of the future of work to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The creation of the ILO in 1919 was an important step in efforts to achieve full and productive employment, promote labour rights and improve the quality of the worker's life. We commend the many positive contributions made by the ILO over the past 100 years and its efforts as an important and valuable tool in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8,

on promoting lasting economic growth and providing decent work for all.

Guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination to give women access to decent work and equal pay in the labour market is of vital importance because women often suffer disproportionately from precarious labour conditions, including low levels of pay. In that regard, developments in the world of work and swift technological changes require investment in capacity-building of digital skills and make it incumbent upon us take into account the needs of certain sectors of the population that suffer from discrimination and to ensure equal opportunities and decent work. Those are all basic elements that will allow us to achieve sustainable economic growth and identify the future of work, which is the topic of our meeting today.

For the State of Qatar, it is a strategic choice to promote and protect labour rights. That is reflected in the provisions and principles of our Constitution and national legislation, in accordance with the relevant international human rights conventions and instruments that we have joined. In line with our State policy on strengthening human rights, we have spared no effort to improve and update legislation on workers and to provide them with a decent quality of life. We have been dealing with this issue in a transparent manner, which reflects the commitment of the State of Qatar to international labour standards and migrant workers who contribute to the process of our State construction and development. We have also undertaken the legislative and executive measures necessary to protect and promote the human rights of migrant workers. We have even enacted laws to carry out many work-related reforms, including abolishing the system of labour sponsorship known as *kafala*.

His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, issued Law No. 13 in 2018, which was welcomed and commended by the ILO. The law guarantees and promotes the rights of migrant workers and the implementation of a contract-based system, in line with international labour instruments. We have also signed many bilateral conventions and memorandums of understanding with countries of origin of migrant workers in order to provide those workers with legal protection. We have further set up a fund to support migrant workers, ensure their rights and provide them with a healthy and safe working environment, in line with Law No. 17 of 2018. The creation of the fund reflects our concern for protecting

the rights of workers and ensuring their financial compensation, while complementing the legislation that we have adopted in that regard.

We highly appreciate the important and effective role of the ILO in strengthening the rights of workers and providing them with social protection and decent work. Our cooperation with the ILO was reflected in the opening of the ILO Project Office in Qatar after we had signed a technical cooperation convention with the organization. The technical cooperation project reflects the joint commitment of the State of Qatar and the ILO to abiding by the international labour conventions to which we are party. It also seeks to implement the fundamental principles and rights of work in the State of Qatar in many areas, such as in improving the payment of salaries, inspecting workplaces, ensuring health and safety conditions in the workplace, increasing protection and prosecution against forced labour and listening to workers' concerns. Consequently, the project clearly reflects our tireless efforts to implement many reforms pertaining to work legislation and to ensure additional guarantees to promote and respect labour rights.

In conclusion, my country will pursue its efforts to support the ILO in fulfilling its mission and the objectives that the international community expects from it, including the implementation of the relevant international instruments in this field.

Mr. Nazirov (Uzbekistan): First of all, I would like to commend the President of the General Assembly for convening today's high-level meeting dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labor Organization (ILO), which is indeed a very important milestone for the ILO.

Today, in my brief intervention, I would like to share with the Assembly Uzbekistan's experience in advancing labour rights by introducing innovative initiatives in collaboration with the ILO.

For the past two and half years, Uzbekistan, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has been stepping up its cooperation with various United Nations agencies, including the International Labour Organization, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In Uzbekistan, issues of employment, social and labour guarantees are aligned with the 2017-2021 strategy of action in five priority areas of the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan, which was adopted in 2017. That strategy provides for establishing the growth of the real incomes of the population as

the basis for ensuring the well-being of citizens and rational employment of the population by creating opportunities for people to fully realize their labour and entrepreneurial activities, improve the quality of the workforce, expand the system of vocational training and retraining, and improve the qualifications of persons searching for employment. The visit by ILO Director-General Guy Ryder to Uzbekistan last year opened new horizons for further expanding bilateral collaboration.

We in Uzbekistan fully support the initiatives of the ILO and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In order to advance them, we convened, last December in Tashkent, an international conference on labour issues. In close collaboration with the ILO, we are currently successfully implementing a national decent work programme aimed at, first, developing national labour legislation; secondly, improving the labour market; thirdly, ensuring employment and strengthening social protection; and fourthly, maintaining a constant dialogue with the public at large.

We have also reinforced a system of parliamentary and public control over the country's compliance with international standards, which has resulted in the elimination of the use of child and forced labour in the cotton sector, wherein the Government has introduced an innovative approach to allow third-party monitoring, which is carried out by ILO experts accompanied by a trade union representative.

Since 2015 various Uzbek organizations, together with the ILO, have also been conducting an annual campaign to raise awareness of labour rights. In addition, at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, an advisory council for the development of civil society has been established. That body is in charge of maintaining a systematic and effective dialogue between the State and civil-society institutions at the highest level.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Uzbekistan has demonstrated strong political will and implemented effective measures in addressing child and forced labour issues. Therefore, it remains committed to continuing to cooperate closely with the ILO and other relevant United Nations specialized agencies in ensuring Uzbekistan's full compliance with universally recognized labour standards and is ready to share its positive experience of collaboration with the ILO with other States.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker for this meeting. We shall continue the plenary segment tomorrow at 10 a.m. in the Hall to hear the remaining speakers. The closing segment for the high-level meeting will be held once the list of speakers has been exhausted.

The meeting was suspended at 1.05 p.m. and resumed at 10.15 a.m. on 11 April 2019.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Tiare (Burkina Faso), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before proceeding further, I would like to appeal to all speakers to make their interventions brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time we have for this high-level meeting. To enable all on the list of speakers to be heard, statements in the plenary segment should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. Delegations with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and to submit their full-length statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate the President of the General Assembly for organizing this high-level plenary meeting to commemorate the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which is an opportunity to celebrate 100 years of work for social justice.

We in Argentina consider ourselves to be allies of the ILO, since we have been members of the organization since its founding in 1919. Argentina deeply values all the work of the ILO, from the dialogue it has fostered among the various actors — States, trade unions, entrepreneurs — to the development of standards based on its various conventions. In this regard, Argentina has ratified 81 ILO conventions, including the eight fundamental ones. Domestically, we created the Commission on Social Dialogue for the Future of Work, which is a national body that brings together social actors and the national Government to promote compliance with these conventions within the framework of a dialogue designed to generate proposals for the improvement of labour standards in our country.

Argentina is also working with the ILO to strengthen labour inspection mechanisms. A key aspect of that effort is the fight against undocumented work

and fraudulent labour, as well as the institutionalization of inspections through innovative methods. In that framework, it is particularly important to work together in designing tools to detect and permanently eradicate child labour and the trafficking in persons.

We are also Deputy Chair of Alliance 8.7, which demonstrates that our commitment to eradicating modern slavery is not limited to our domestic policy and that we consider the defence of decent work a pillar of our foreign policy, hand in hand with the defence and promotion of human rights, which is an Argentine State policy.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has identified as one of its priority goals the achievement of decent work for all, whose objective is social justice, which lies at the heart of sustainable growth and inclusive development policies. That will not be achieved so long as various forms of exploitation persist, including informal labour and the trafficking of children. I would also like to stress the importance of eradicating all forms child exploitation, including child labour; early, child and forced marriage, as well as all other forms of the exploitation of children, which is a flagrant violation of the human rights of the most vulnerable.

I would also like to highlight the link between labour policies and education policies. That is why, during the Argentine presidency of the Group of 20, we held a joint meeting of Ministers of Labour and Ministers of Education. In order to confront together the challenges of the future of work, we need to think in the long term and consider the complementarity between the education and labour spheres.

Lastly, I want to express my gratitude to the International Labour Organization in assisting countries in moving towards a world where decent work for all is a reality.

Ms. Rosa Suazo (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation is grateful for the convening of this commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are pleased to join others in congratulating the ILO on the great strides it has made since its foundation in 1919.

All States are fully aware of the comprehensive nature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of how achievements in implementing one of the

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has an impact on and intersects with the implementation of the others. SDG 8, on decent work and economic growth, is therefore a linchpin in the efforts of Honduras to eradicate poverty and leave no one behind.

Honduras has been carrying out intensive work to align our long-term planning with the implementation of the SDGs. For that reason, with respect to SDG 8, we set up a task force to generate employment, opportunities and income, which functions as an inter-institutional structure that coordinates actions under the national employment policy focused on four strategic aims: competitiveness, generating employment, the creation and development of businesses, and developing human capital. In an economy that is changing at breakneck speed, we must identify areas in which we can generate long-term employment and equip the population, especially young people and women, with the knowledge and skills necessary to join the new labour markets.

One of the most significant achievements of the ILO over the 100 years of its existence has been the creation and expansion of social-protection mechanisms. Although we now have new structures and different ways of working, the future of work must continue to afford benefits and protections to those who are fully entitled to them, that is, our workers. Therefore, our social-protection-system framework law is geared towards enhancing health, retirement, pension and unemployment benefits for our country's workers, including 100,000 new members in the next 100 years, and establishing a labour reserve that will guarantee at least 50 per cent of employment benefits in cases of warranted separation.

In conclusion, I congratulate the ILO again on behalf of my delegation and reiterate our commitment to supporting it as a catalyst and coordinating force in confronting the challenges of protecting labour rights. The next 100 years will bring new challenges, but with the ILO's leadership and the commitment of Member States, we are sure that we will continue to see progress in the implementation not only of SDG 8, but of the 2030 Agenda as a whole.

Mr. Al Harthy (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) as we commemorate its 100th anniversary under the theme "The future of work". The cooperation of the international community, especially our venerable Organization, with social

partners will make a positive contribution to the future of work for all, accompanied by sustained social and economic benefits.

Based on its commitment to labour standards pertaining to social justice, the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the three entities involved in production — the Ministry of Labour, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and the General Union of Workers — signed a memorandum of understanding with the ILO in 2011 to implement the national decent work agenda. The memorandum was renewed in 2014 and 2017 for two years. Furthermore, we have been working to protect our labour force from violations and exploitation. We have acceded to various relevant international conventions and ratified in particular four of the ILO's fundamental conventions. We have also ratified many international conventions to preserve the rights of all those involved in the production process in their work place.

One element that the Sultanate of Oman values in particular and which has been a priority for us is the creation of a legislative system that guarantees the rights of workers without discrimination, in line with international labour standards. That has had a positive impact on development prosperity, economic growth, employment stability and social harmony.

Our labour code and its application decrees have addressed the most important basic rights of workers, including by encouraging workers to form labour unions to defend their interests and rights, improving their economic and social situations and representing workers in all matters that concern them. By late 2018, the number of labour unions had reached 261. There are also five federations, as well as a general union of workers. Furthermore, we are working on strengthening bilateral dialogue among workers and employers.

We have enacted laws to regulate collective negotiations, resolve labour conflicts and improve labour conditions and productivity. We have also adopted regulations pertaining to labour safety and occupational health in businesses under labour law in order to ensure a healthy and safe working environment for our workers, in line with international standards. Moreover, we have developed a workplace inspection system, which has been further strengthened by an increasing number of qualified inspectors and have received specific training, in cooperation with the ILO, to implement the rules and regulations in force.

In conclusion, the Sultanate of Oman reiterates its full support for the ILO in achieving the objectives of the Future of Work Centenary initiative and to allow States around the world to benefit from their natural resources so as to create decent work conditions that are friendly to the environment.

Mr. Kuzmin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to congratulate everyone here on the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the oldest and one of the most authoritative bodies in the United Nations system. We are pleased that the ILO has continued to strengthen its position as a universal body for shaping the social and labour agenda. The cooperation between the Russian Federation and the ILO is expanding. We value its expertise in settling labour disputes, developing social partnerships, regulating the labour market and improving labour legislation standards. Russia has now ratified 77 ILO conventions, and all of its fundamental conventions.

The centenary is an important milestone in the ILO's history, and it will be essential to make the most of the 108th International Labour Conference, in June, to discuss strategic issues such as the future of work generally and the ILO's place and role in the world. We support the formulation and adoption of a centenary declaration, which should be focused on achieving concrete practical results. The conclusions of the Global Commission on the Future of Work could go a long way to shaping the declaration's conceptual foundation. In general, the proposals of the Director-General of the ILO are an adequate reflection of current trends and challenges in the area of labour as well as of the ILO's goals for the future, and they deserve support. We believe it is important to continue our efforts to achieve equality between men and women in the labour arena.

We look forward to the Director-General's visit to Sochi to participate in the opening on 22 April of Russia Occupational Health and Safety Week, which is timed to coincide with the ILO's centenary, with the cross-cutting theme of the future of occupational health and safety. Incidentally it is not the only such event in our country. On 4 and 5 February in Ufa, in the Republic of Bashkortostan, we held an international forum on the future of work linked to the ILO's anniversary in which approximately 600 representatives of Governments, social partners and academia from many countries around the world took part. A thematic exhibition dedicated to this landmark date in our lower

parliamentary chamber, the State Duma of our Federal Assembly, is literally opening tomorrow. We are also working on holding a celebration in May in the Foreign Ministry's historic mansion. All of this represents Russia's contribution to realizing the ILO Director-General's proposal that member States observe the centenary with significant events at the national level. The Russian delegation at the June anniversary session of the International Labour Conference will be headed by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in affirmation of the high level of our relationship with the ILO. We hope that the Prime Minister's forthcoming trip to Geneva will help to strengthen it further.

Russia's vision for the future of labour is based on a comprehensive approach and the importance of achieving a social consensus among the Government, employers and workers. It is based on the provisions of the fundamental international instruments, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the declarations of the leaders of the Group of 20 and of the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, and the relevant ILO conventions and recommendations. In formulating our national policy on the future of work we have focused on three main components, the human dimension, the establishment of high-quality workplaces and effective institutions. We intend to continue contributing to promoting the principles of decent work, partnership, a tripartite approach and the formulation of a long-term, people-centred strategy for developing social-labour relations.

Mr. Ma Zhaoxu (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation associates itself with the statement made by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and congratulates the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its centenary celebration.

The world of work is undergoing significant changes today. Economic globalization, the new technological revolution, climate change and demographic shifts represent both tremendous challenges and new opportunities for the labour market. The theme of this meeting — the future of work — is therefore especially relevant. China would like to make the following proposals.

First, in order to seize the opportunities that technological advances have brought to the world of work, States should actively promote the transformation of employment, develop new employment models and

open up new space in the job market through innovation. Secondly, in order to forge ahead with supply-side structural reforms and expand green employment, States should implement innovation-driven strategies and work constantly to deepen their structural reforms and translate the dividends of those reforms and innovations into better job opportunities, in terms both of quality and quantity, so as to promote decent work. Thirdly, in order to respond actively to ageing populations, States should develop their silver economies with a view to creating more job opportunities and minimizing the negative impact of such demographic trends on the labour market. Fourthly, with regard to improving labour governance systems and promoting decent work, China supports the ILO's Governance Initiative and its efforts to explore options for reforming its supervisory mechanism and ensuring that decent work and social justice remain the overarching objectives of the ILO in its journey through a new century.

In recent years, China's human resources and social-security programmes have achieved significant results. Employment levels continue to rise with an optimized employment structure and relatively low unemployment rates. Our employment situation has remained largely stable, and China's social-security reform continues to move ahead. A national social-security system covering both urban and rural residents has been established, with benefits that are steadily increasing. The income distribution system continues to improve. The tripartite mechanism is playing an increasingly stronger role. The rights and interests of workers are well protected, and relations between workers and employers remain harmonious and stable. Those achievements are contributing not only to improving and protecting the well-being of the Chinese people, but also to ensuring global productive employment, expanded basic social security, a high ratio of work-related income, reduced inequality and the achievement of decent work based on a Chinese proposal.

The Belt and Road Initiative has created significant job opportunities for countries along its routes. In collaboration with relevant countries, China has established more than 82 overseas cooperation parks, creating more than 300,000 jobs for local communities. The second Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation will be held later this month. We are confident that it will create stronger partnerships and more tangible results in the Belt and Road cooperation

efforts, thereby making an even greater contribution to employment in the countries involved.

In conclusion, I would like to wish the ILO every success in providing even better service to its tripartite constituents as it enters a new century and in mobilizing concerted efforts for the realization of a better future for work.

Mrs. Mills (Jamaica): Jamaica welcomes this opportunity to join in commemorating the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO). We are proud to have partnered with Belgium earlier this year in introducing the resolution calling on the General Assembly to suitably mark this auspicious occasion (resolution 73/282).

With the 187 labour conventions adopted since its establishment, the ILO has been steadfast in its determination to ensure that working conditions and the special rights of workers are constantly improved. The ILO has recorded a long and distinguished record of accomplishment, of which it can rightly be proud. Its signal 2001 *Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work*, which has been printed and distributed in 30 languages, along with, for setting standards, the 2008 revised International Labour Code, speak to the responsive nature of the organization to contemporary challenges. The same holds true for the Decent Work Country Programmes, through which the ILO provides technical and other support to member nations. The current efforts to strengthen the ILO's technical capacity and improve its policy analysis are welcomed, and indeed encouraged, by my delegation.

Jamaica is among those States with which the ILO has had an enduring relationship since we became a member, in December 1962, a mere four months after gaining our independence. Our relationship is characterized by mutual respect and collaboration. Jamaica continues to observe the tenets of decent work. We have maintained very strong tripartite relations, and as a result have made significant advancements in the implementation of the labour codes. Over the years, Jamaica has ratified 31 ILO conventions and one protocol, including all eight of the fundamental conventions, namely, those concerning forced labour, the freedom of association, the protection of the right to organize, collective bargaining, equal remuneration, discrimination, minimum age and the worst forms of child labour.

Over the past three years, Jamaica ratified the 2006 Maritime Labour Convention as amended, becoming the eighty-fourth member of the ILO to do so. In that same year, Jamaica also ratified the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, in keeping with our determination to combat trafficking in persons and forced labour in all its forms.

Our commitment to promoting decent work underpinned our decision to ratify, in 2016, the ILO Convention C189, also known as the Domestic Workers Convention. Our support for, and commitment to, building an equitable and just society is complemented by the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and they remain strong and unwavering.

We join the ILO in its celebration as Jamaica celebrates its own centenary of the Trade Union Act. We will be marking these two momentous occasions with appropriate activities, which will include all our stakeholders — workers, employers and the Government — as well as our international partners, including the ILO.

Mr. Koba (Indonesia): Allow me to commend the General Assembly and the International Labour Organization (ILO) for staging this historic event.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Turkey, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States, and the representative of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

It is a privilege to join everyone in the Hall today to celebrate the ILO centenary. For a century, the ILO has been playing a pivotal role in advancing social justice. It is a crucial pillar for sustaining peace. The theme “The Future of Work” is pertinent, especially for countries that will soon enjoy their demographic dividend. However, the future is not as far off as we think; in fact, it is already here.

Technology and Industry 4.0 is already taking hold in the global economy. In collaboration with the ILO, Indonesia has developed various vocational training programmes that integrate information technology (IT) and 34 national competency standards in the IT sector and has established nine certification agencies in that regard. The Government and the private sector are joining forces to better meet labour-market demand in the new digital economy in order to reduce skills mismatch, which we perceive as one of the costs of the decent work deficit.

Technology development cannot guarantee the attainment of decent work. We must go above and beyond by promoting labour rights, social-security coverage and decent income. Decent jobs entail dignity, equality and a sense of prosperity, including for migrant workers. In that regard, Indonesia believes that comprehensive social-protection policies are essential for eliminating inequality. Efforts are currently under way to expand social-security coverage to the whole population as well as to extend universal health coverage and the social-security system for the employed.

Youth are the leading actors when we discuss the future of work. For a country that has a demographic dividend like Indonesia, the creation of decent work for our youth is extremely important. If we fail to provide sufficient and well-targeted policy responses, we will face a high rate of unemployment. Appropriate measures should be taken. Future labour-market policies must enable young workers to take full advantage of the labour market. We support the ILO's continued focus on this issue.

In conclusion, I wish the ILO a happy 100th anniversary. We look forward to another 100 years.

Mrs. Saran (South Africa): On behalf of my President, His Excellency Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, and the entire nation of South Africa, I take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, for convening this momentous high-level meeting, a gathering that provides us with an opportunity to mark a significant milestone and congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) as it celebrates its centenary.

This statement is aligned with those delivered by the Permanent Observer of Palestine and the Permanent Representative of Rwanda, who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Group of African States, respectively.

For us as a country, this occasion signifies a beautiful coincidence of history, as the International Labour Organization centenary celebration is happening as we wrap up celebrating the centenary of the birth of our icon, Nelson Mandela.

Since its founding, in 1919, the ILO has remained the only tripartite agency in the United Nations striving for social justice in the world of work. Its mission, informed by an implicit recognition that decent

employment is inextricably linked to peace, prosperity and progress in the world, remains relevant today.

This year South Africa is celebrating 25 years of freedom and democracy — a democracy that was won, in no small part, through the sustained struggles of workers and the unwavering support of the ILO. The entire history of the anti-apartheid struggle underscores the centrality of workers and their rights, conditions of work and general well-being to the success and prosperity of any society. The ILO's contribution in assisting workers in my country to fight against workplace injustices gave hope and encouragement to the broader struggle for national liberation. South Africa proudly and without hesitation thanks the ILO.

As the ILO begins its second century of advancing social justice in the world of work, we remain heartened by the recommendations from the Global Commission on the Future of Work, co-chaired by President Ramaphosa and the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Stefan Löfven. Through those recommendations, real-economy actors reinvigorate a human-centred social contract anchored in the principles of social justice — the vision of the International Labour Organization.

Our leaders call on us to manage and harness the transformative forces of labour markets driven by a single objective: to leave no one behind. We are called upon to focus on what needs to be done to create the best future for the greatest number of people in a fundamentally different world of work. That can be done only if we succeed in building a world where work does not result in the commodification of the human being, but in a higher standard of living, protection of rights and the possibility for advancement — a world where men and women in the workplace are equals before the law and protected from prejudice and injustice. As the ILO report *Work for a Brighter Future* recommends, that requires transformative investments that seek to advance gender equality, develop the rural economy and explore supplementary indicators of human development and well-being.

Let me conclude by quoting President Ramaphosa:

“Our collective fortunes depend on the creation of a society where every human being is accorded dignity both through, and in, work.”

We therefore need to continue the dialogue on those recommendations at the United Nations to realize a

human-centred approach to shaping the future of work to ensure that no one is left behind.

Mr. Cooreman (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): We welcome the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and are proud to be able to commemorate its founding today. Belgium is a founding member of the ILO and one of nine countries that contributed to the drafting of the ILO's statute. Our commitment is still reflected today in our joint chairmanship with Jamaica of the Group of Friends of Decent Work for Sustainable Development here in New York.

Unique to the ILO within the United Nations system is its foundation on the principle of tripartism for the formulation of standards and policies dealing with labour issues. This tripartite approach ensures broad support from all ILO stakeholders. Tripartism is also important at the national level and is a mode of operation deeply rooted in the culture of social dialogue in Belgium.

Belgium has spared no effort to put decent work at the top of the political agenda. We share the vision that decent work contributes to economic growth, stabilizing the labour market, reducing inequalities, fighting poverty and protecting the most vulnerable. In addition, we are convinced that decent work for all reduces the likelihood of social instability, and even conflict.

Through our current tenure on the Security Council, we will also continue to support ILO objectives in situations of fragility, conflict and crisis. Let us not forget that the ILO was created just after the First World War to contribute to lasting peace through social justice and job creation.

Social justice is impossible without respect for human rights, including the right to the freedom of association. We all have an obligation to safeguard trade union rights. Any violence against trade union representatives and activists is unacceptable.

Our joint chairmanship of the Group of Friends of Decent Work allows us to continue to promote decent work as part of the ongoing reflection on the future of work launched by ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder. Opportunities and challenges must be systematically updated in the context of technological change, digitalization and e-commerce, automation and robotization, but also in the contexts

of the new green economy and, more generally, of continuous globalization.

The globalized economy, internationalized value chains and the individualization of employment have created a new working environment. Traditional models of social dialogue and traditional labour standards, including opportunities for association, are sometimes under pressure. The labour market is evolving towards a different work concept, with less job security in the traditional sense and more flexibility. We must manage such changes well, taking into account the insecurities they cause. The decent aspect of work must remain our main ambition in defining labour standards in future.

Belgium will continue to defend its own model of social dialogue as an example for a globalized labour market, where the three parties — employers, employees and Governments — can come together, each starting from its own responsibility, and together promote decent work and sustainable economic growth as a global objective.

This commemoration is a great opportunity to acknowledge the International Labour Organization as an essential partner for Belgium and as a key actor within the United Nations for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We wish it every success in continuing to fulfil its mission.

Mrs. Ellertsdottir (Iceland): Iceland aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Sweden on behalf of States members of the Group of Western European and other States.

Today we commemorate the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), a milestone that reaffirms the strength and resilience of multilateralism and can serve as inspiration for the entire United Nations system as we currently address modern challenges, including the future of work and actions required to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We welcome the work of the Global Commission on the Future of Work. I believe its report, *Work for a Brighter Future*, to be a critical basis for the discussions on the future of work. I would particularly like to highlight the importance of women's equal rights and participation in the labour market, which is key for the future of work and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It has been repeatedly confirmed that more equal and inclusive societies result

in stronger economies and that the rise in women's employment leads directly to economic growth.

Last week, Iceland hosted a conference held in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers and the ILO on the future of work and the issues linked to gender equality in the world-of-work issues. In her speech, the Prime Minister of Iceland addressed the gender pay gap and the Government's process of implementing the 2018 law on equal-pay certification, which requires companies and institutions of 25 or more employees to undergo an equal-pay audit.

The equal-pay standard was developed in close collaboration between the Government and social partners. The standard transfers the responsibility of equal pay from the individual employee to the employer. In doing so employers now have the responsibility to ensure that there is no wage discrimination within their institution or company. Iceland has thereby set the target of closing the gender pay gap by 2022.

Globally, the gender pay-gap remains persistent, and we still have a lot of work to do. Iceland is one of the countries that initiated the cooperation effort of the Equal Pay International Coalition, led by the ILO, UN-Women and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which contributes to the achievement of SDG target 8.5, focusing on equal pay between women and men for work of equal value.

Today's celebration presents an opportunity to reiterate our commitment to further strengthening the role of the ILO and acknowledging its importance in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the multilateral system as a whole.

Mr. Rybakov (Belarus): The International Labour Organization (ILO) was established in the wake of the First World War, along with several others that we often call the first generation of international organizations. Many of them did not survive the next war, but the ILO did. This fact attests to the lasting vision and foresight of its founders. Indeed, the rationale behind its creation, which is that peace, prosperity and social justice were inextricably linked, is as true today as it was a century ago. Thanks to the International Labour Organization, the world has witnessed the development and proliferation of a great number of international labour conventions. Their implementation has contributed immensely to fairer work worldwide. Thanks to the ILO, a tripartite pattern of cooperation among Governments, employers and trade unions was

born. It has consistently ensured that no one's key interests in work are ignored.

Today we are addressing the future of work. The International Labour Organization is facing a multitude of contemporary challenges. We are seeing, to name but a few, technological advances, new patterns of global production and supply chains, growing inequality, rising population, worsening climate change and persistent slave labour. Beyond dealing with these challenges, the ILO has to fully adapt its activities to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We believe that its Future of Work centenary initiative is exactly what is needed to address those multiple challenges.

While wishing the ILO the best, let us bear in mind that it does not function in a vacuum. Its successes and failures reflect global trends, which, unfortunately, are far from benign. The world has been adrift for much of the twenty-first century. War and conflict still abound. International tension is increasing. Cooperation among the great Powers is waning. Unless this context is reversed, all efforts in specific areas will ultimately prove futile. What is needed is a comprehensive global security dialogue. Let us first mend the whole, and then we will find it easier to sort out the parts and details.

Mr. Kakanur (India): The centenary celebration of the International Labour Organization (ILO) is a landmark moment. I would therefore like to start by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this very special meeting.

The ILO, the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations, has played a pivotal role throughout some of the most difficult economic and political crises in world history since 1919. India and the ILO have always had a very special bond. Not only was India a founding member of the organization, but it has also been a permanent member of its governing body since 1922. We are particularly happy that, in the recently concluded Global Compact on Migration, the ILO has found a prominent place of recognition because of the unique value that it brings to migrant-labour issues.

Anxiety about the impact of technology on the world of work is not new. The questions of how technology shapes work and labour and how society should shape technology through choices and policies have always fuelled intense public debate. While change has always been a constant factor in the working lives of human beings — from creating fire to sending a red sports car to fly by Mars — the fourth industrial revolution,

characterized by its convergence of the physical, digital and the biological worlds, will add the dimension of unpredictability to the change factor.

If people are to have a secure future with dignity, economic security and equality in a carbon-neutral digital age, the broader dimensions of development, including the rights and enabling environment that broaden people's opportunities to improve their well-being, will need to be localized and re-examined. Automation potential must be distinguished from automation adoption. While a great number of tasks might be technically automatable, the adoption of particular technologies will depend on a complex interplay of factors, including the cost of labour, levels of education and skill, legal frameworks for innovation and labour-protection policies.

More than 50 per cent of India's population is under the age of 25, and more than 65 per cent is under the age of 35. As we speak today, the national elections in India have commenced. For the General Assembly's information, 15 million young people in the 16 to 18 age group are casting their votes for the first time. These demographics have made education and decent work a highly connected and key priority.

To commemorate the centenary celebrations of the ILO and the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, in a truly innovative collaboration with the ILO, a beautiful mural, created by the prominent artist Victor Ash, was commissioned for the side wall of the Permanent Mission of India. In this mural, a gigantic weightless astronaut floats in space and looks at Earth to find that the world is a greener place than it was 20 years before. India is among those countries that have contributed a significant measure to that increase, which was recently corroborated by data obtained from NASA satellites. A greener future is also a harbinger of green and sustainable jobs. On that positive note, I would like to invite everyone to come to the Indian Mission to see that beautiful mural.

Ms. Melwani (Netherlands): First of all, the Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on celebrating its centenary. Over the past 100 years, the ILO adopted almost 200 international labour standards, each of which is a great achievement, paving the way to more than just decent work. Each one shows us not only how the ILO can affect the lives of people but also how it can save lives.

During yesterday's panels, we heard the personal struggle of workers whose lives are deeply affected by the decision made by an organization like the ILO. This is exactly where the ILO's impact lies: on individual lives. It is not about Governments, organizations or systems; it is about people and making lives better. And today we celebrate its value.

In the light of that, the Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the ILO report on the future of work, entitled *Work for a Brighter Future*, and its focus on a human-centred agenda. The question now is how the ILO can develop priorities to ensure a human-centred focus moving forward. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore fully supports the adoption of a declaration at the ILO's International Labour Conference in June. The declaration should acknowledge the ILO's achievements over the past 100 years and, at the same time, build on those achievements by setting new and concrete actions for the ILO moving forward. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore believes it is vital to address the following six priorities.

First, we must have a focused discussion on a framework for a possible universal labour contract, building on the Declaration of Philadelphia.

Secondly, there must be a general discussion on a framework of lifelong learning, including training and building the skills of workers based on the needs of the labour market. We should aim for a framework that helps social partners and Governments when implementing national strategies.

Thirdly, we should investigate the possibility of a core convention on occupational safety and health. That would allow for a discussion leading to a higher level of protection for all workers.

Fourthly, we must strengthen the modernization process of the existing ILO conventions and recommendations. That must aim at a modern and robust set of conventions to secure a higher level of protection, ensuring sufficient scope for implementation.

Fifthly, building on the previous point, we need to further strengthen the supervisory system, especially through the enforcement of core standards of the ILO, building on international and national legislation.

Finally, we need to strengthen social dialogue through innovation, enlarging the legitimacy and strength of the ILO policy conclusions and the position of the ILO in the multinational framework. Working on

that, we should also focus our efforts on cross-border social dialogue.

The ILO is the only tripartite United Nations agency. It brings together Governments, employers and workers' representatives of 187 member States to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all. The Kingdom of the Netherlands looks forward to continuing to support and actively contribute to the work of the ILO, especially in the framework of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to ensuring that policies are adapted to promote sustainable development, enhanced growth, resilience and most importantly, decent work for all.

Mr. Ahmad Tajuddin (Malaysia): First of all, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its 100th anniversary. Malaysia reaffirms its support for the centenary initiatives that have been underlined by the ILO for the benefit of all stakeholders.

In the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, which the world is facing presently, we are seeing industries being driven by the convergence of advanced technologies, such as robotics, artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things, among others. That transformation has the potential to disrupt almost every industry in every country and is evolving much faster and with greater impact than any of the previous industrial revolutions. It is also transforming the world's workplaces, with the expectation of countless jobs being created and eliminated at a rapid pace, and the many social implications such disruption entails.

Low-skilled manpower jobs, such as manufacturing operators, figure among those that will probably be on the line as such workers are gradually replaced by robots or other computerized systems. On the bright side, there will be demand for highly skilled manpower to design, develop software and artificial intelligence and run programmes, in the current and future job market. In addressing the future of work that may be developed and at the same disrupted by the fourth industrial revolution, Malaysia believes that the education system needs to reflect these changes. Exposure to the fourth industrial revolution can help in the development of skilled manpower that caters to the job market.

In that regard, the Government of Malaysia has established a higher education framework to address the issues and challenges of the fourth industrial

revolution. Under the framework, universities have to change their curricula and delivery to ensure that their graduates have jobs. One of the measures being taken is to produce holistic, balanced and entrepreneurial graduates who can adapt to and fill jobs that are yet to exist. Besides that, the process of teaching and learning has to be changed to incorporate the latest technologies.

Recognizing the need to achieve the goal of decent work for all, which includes increased efforts to ensure the full and equal participation of women in the labour market, Malaysia has carried out programmes on the upskilling and reskilling of workers. Technical and vocational education and training are emphasized to produce highly skilled workers. In that context, the Government has established programmes to promote collaboration between technical and vocational education and training and industry players, as well as with foreign training institutions, with a view to strengthening teaching and learning processes. More recently, the Government of Malaysia established the Institute-Industry Management Board, which gathers all stakeholders to ensure all training institutions fulfil the current requirements of industry players.

As we embrace the change that the fourth industrial revolution can offer, Malaysia welcomes the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, which is underpinned by its human-centred agenda. We hope that the ILO can provide technical support on the matter, especially in terms of preparing human-resource development to cater to the future needs and demands of member States.

In consultation with the ILO, Malaysia is now in the final phase of finalizing its decent-work country programme, which is expected to be signed during the International Labour Conference this coming June. Malaysia believes that it would help to address various challenges and issues in promoting decent work that would serve as an integral component of national development.

In closing, Malaysia appreciates the unique role played by the ILO in upholding the International Labour Standards and believes they are vital to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8. Malaysia reaffirms its full commitment to our common goal of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and will continue to work closely with the ILO and all stakeholders in this regard.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): On this commemorative occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Sri Lanka wishes to extend its warmest felicitations to the ILO on its tireless work in promoting social justice and human and labour rights. Indeed, the pivotal message of social justice acquires a new meaning, relevance and resonance as we move towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The ILO plays a vital role in promoting opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work while enjoying basic rights, such as human dignity, equality, freedom and security. Sri Lanka has a history of strong and resilient cooperation with the ILO since becoming a member of the organization in 1948. The ILO country office was established in Sri Lanka in 1984, and Sri Lanka has ratified 43 ILO conventions, including all eight fundamental conventions. The ILO is active in Sri Lanka in a number of areas, such as green jobs, wages, social security, labour migration, combating trafficking, labour-based technology, including the planning of small-scale infrastructure, gender mainstreaming and so on. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the positive contribution of the ILO to Sri Lanka's social, economic and labour market development, and I express our profound thanks.

Sri Lanka welcomes the initiative taken by the President of the General Assembly to set decent work as one of her seven priorities for the agenda of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly, creating opportunities to discuss the pressing challenges we face while we endeavour to implement the 2030 Agenda. Sri Lanka believes that decent work is central to efforts to reduce poverty and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. That requires renewed dedication on our part to the core objectives of the ILO.

Reducing inequality is key to ensuring that no one is left behind. The Government has taken various initiatives in recent years to reduce inequality in access to services and opportunities; however, challenges remain.

Frontier technologies are set to change the way that people consume, produce, live and work. It is widely recognized that new technology allows a renewed lens for viewing and addressing the challenges that we face as a global society. Artificial intelligence and other technologies can assist global efforts to address poverty,

hunger, education, health care and the protection of our environment. Digitization can have a positive impact on the innovation strength of developing countries.

We must, however, ensure the development of and take measures to have in place policies and opportunities for people, particularly our youth, to acquire the new and relevant skills required to face these fast-changing realities. We must work to engage young people in those efforts and proactively ensure their involvement in the effective harnessing of technology to improve the quality and sustainability of life on our planet. The challenge is to harness the positives of technological advancement while minimizing the negatives of technological unemployment or underemployment.

Youth skills development is of critical importance to Sri Lanka. In 2014, Sri Lanka and Portugal, with other co-sponsors at the United Nations, spearheaded the call for a dedicated day for skills development that would benefit global youth. Since then, events have been held worldwide on 15 July to commemorate World Youth Skills Day, with a view to bringing to the forefront the imperative need for bridging the youth skills gap in an increasingly technologically oriented world and tackling the issue of youth unemployment and underemployment. Once again, we appreciate the efforts of the ILO in making that event a productive one.

We take this celebratory event as an opportunity for Governments to reiterate and strengthen their commitments in order to promote access to digital skills, foster youth training and assist workers in preparing themselves for the opportunities ahead in the technological transition we are witnessing.

Mr. Srivihok (Thailand): Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As one of the founding members of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and with a long-standing collaboration with the organization, Thailand wishes to warmly congratulate the organization on its 100th -anniversary commemoration.

The founding of the ILO was based on a set of principles that placed human rights and social justice at its heart. We have come a long way but still need to completely fulfil past aspirations and to advance our commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thailand has ratified 19 ILO conventions and one protocol and has been working continuously with numerous stakeholders to close the implementation gaps by placing humans at the centre of the future of work agenda. That includes improving labour recruitment, enhancing equal opportunity, promoting social protections, ensuring occupational safety, and addressing job vulnerabilities arising from technological transformation, among others. Earlier this year, Thailand deposited its instrument of ratification of the ILO Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), making it the first country in Asia to have ratified that important labour protection standard.

One of the most ambitious efforts that the Royal Thai Government has made to overcome decent work deficits and accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to eliminate the vulnerabilities of migrant workers by regularizing more than 2 million undocumented migrant workers in Thailand, enabling them to be legally protected and gain access to basic social services, including health care.

Clearly, we all agree that a broad range of partnerships is crucial to achieving the 2030 Agenda, including SDG 8. The Royal Thai Government has been working closely with the private sector and youth to promote the green economy. Following the visit of the United Nations Working Group on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises to Thailand last year, Thailand's national action plan on business and human rights has been developed and is now at the stage of being finalized.

In celebrating this centenary, Thailand wishes to reiterate its unwavering commitment to further strengthening and consolidating its efforts to achieve a future of work, decent work and sustainable work for all.

Mr. Grignon (Kenya): At the outset, I align my remarks with the statement delivered by the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and that delivered by the Permanent Representative of Rwanda to the United Nations on behalf of the Group of African States.

My delegation considers the convening of this plenary meeting on the future of work to be timely and takes this opportunity to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its centenary, to be celebrated in October.

Since 1919, work has evolved and continues to change. Progress is evident, and technology has made it easier to deliver on tasks. But technology is advancing so fast, with new and emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, increasingly taking over tasks traditionally performed by people. That poses serious challenges, since not all countries have the technological capacity to tap into the emerging technologies.

Sustainable Development Goal 8 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development focuses on promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The quantity and quality of jobs, especially for young women and men, remain the priority policy agenda in all regions, despite facing constraints on both the demand and the supply sides of the labour market, thereby creating a mismatch in terms of jobs needs and availability. That needs to be addressed to secure future jobs for our growing populations.

My delegation believes that economic growth is an important factor in creating jobs, increasing decent work and eradicating poverty. In recognition of that, my Government has identified four priority areas to address in the next five years: food security, affordable housing, universal health care and manufacturing. Each of those priority areas is geared towards eradicating poverty and improving the standards of living of our people.

Kenya's Constitution provides that all public appointments must adhere to the one-third rule with respect to either gender. Over the years, we have witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of women in high offices, but there is still a lot to be done as women still represent the biggest share of unpaid care providers and those living and working in informal sectors.

In 2017, Kenya's Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology embarked on a digital skills-training programme to enable 1 million young people to secure online work, such as transcription and software development. That programme has enabled many young people to secure and create work online.

Education and lifelong learning are the backbone of any economic growth in a country. Kenya attaches a lot of importance to early learning, and the Government has made both primary and secondary education free and compulsory for all children. The Government also continues to fund students in higher institutions of

learning through student loans and bursaries. That has translated into a more innovative and skilled workforce.

At this point, let me emphasize the words of Mr. Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO. As the ILO celebrates its centenary year, the organization must help to tackle inequality in the world of work through the efforts of its 180-plus members, and towards this end call for the eradication of all forms of forced labour and gender-based violence and harassment in the work place.

In conclusion, I would like to mention that Kenya is a maturing democracy that respects freedom of association. In fact, Kenya has very vibrant trade unions, encourages collective bargaining and supports ILO's principles of elimination of forced labour, child labour and discrimination in employment.

Mrs. Zappia (Italy): The celebration of the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) comes at a critical time, when labour and social policies are at the centre of crucial transformations in our societies. As has been pointed out in the course of this debate, a number of drivers are structurally reshaping the world of work and having a profound impact on the type and quality of jobs. Technology and innovation are driving us towards a new paradigm in the relationship between labour, productivity and employment. Critical changes in our societies in terms of demography, education, social norms and lifestyles are directly impacting the way work is organized and implemented.

Globalization has increased the potential of labour markets, supply chains and work force mobility, but in some situations it has also deepened inequalities and left vulnerable groups behind, both across and within countries. Harnessing the benefits of those structural changes while at the same time addressing their potentially destructive implications requires a new mix of social and economic policies that can combine greater investments in human capital with more effective and extended social protection.

Article 1 of the Italian Constitution says that Italy is a democratic republic founded on labour. Labour stands at the core of our democracy. The Italian Government has made inclusivity one of its priorities by promoting, consistent with European Union goals and policies, people-centred reforms that aim at eradicating poverty and social marginalization. The strategy being

implemented is based on three pillars and fits well the issue of multi-stage working lives.

The first pillar is a basic income scheme that will support people in need during non-employment spells or when revenue is not adequate to ensure a decent life. To make that benefit effective, the system of active policies will also be strengthened and integrated with social services. Furthermore, employability will be enhanced through lifelong learning policies. The ultimate objective is to ensure, through the adaptation of our labour welfare and social protection policies, a fair transition for workers in sectors that are progressively ousted from the market due to changes in the work system. The second pillar is to effectively address the gender pay gap and to further advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace.

Finally, Italy is committed to international cooperation. In order to better adapt to the new dynamics and achieve Sustainable Development Goal 8 globally, we need more international cooperation in terms of exchanging good practices, improving standards and strengthening capacity-building and technical assistance. Governments, international institutions and non-governmental stakeholders need to collectively steer these rapidly evolving dynamics towards balanced, productive and sustainable solutions.

In that context, the 100-year-old mandate of the ILO "to advance social justice and promote decent work by setting international labour standards" is more relevant than ever before and can help us to adapt to the new reality while keeping a strong rights-based approach to our labour policies. Italy, as one of the nine founders of the ILO and original drafters of its Constitution, is a steadfast supporter of the organization. We are particularly proud to host, in the city of Turin, the ILO International Training Centre, a centre of excellence in the field of skills development and capacity-building, especially for developing countries, in the area of labour, jobs creation, social policies and employment. We will also continue to be actively engaged in a discussion on the future of work at the United Nations. In this period, we look forward to the next high-level political forum in July, and particularly to the related review of SDG 8.

Mr. Skoknic Tapia (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We greet Member States and representatives of the various sectors of civil society, and especially representatives of the International Labour Organization (ILO) here

with us today, as we commemorate the centenary of its founding.

Chile aligns itself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean States.

One distinctive feature of the ILO that, in our view, constitutes the way forward in terms of building a fairer and more peaceful society is its tripartite approach. That approach brings together the various stakeholders of the world of work in social dialogue with a view to building agreements for the common good of society. There is no doubt that the labour market is changing, and the commemoration of this anniversary is a momentous opportunity to reflect on what lies ahead of us globally in the world of work. We cannot consider these issues to be local matters; rather, they are global issues that operate in a context that cuts across various dimensions of our lives.

The ILO has established the groundwork for building a new form of governance through its initiatives and major debates on issues such as gender, employment, building a green economy, and the future of work, alongside all of the major challenges and uncertainties to which they give rise. In that vein, we are proud to recall and highlight on this occasion the work carried out by our compatriot Ambassador Juan Somavía, who served as Director-General of the ILO from 1999 to 2012, when many of the elements and concepts that today distinguish and characterize the ILO and its future agenda were consolidated. As a way of continuing to reaffirm our historic commitment to the ILO, this year we are a member of the ILO Governing Body, and in January we organized in Chile an international seminar on decent work and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Government of President Sebastián Piñera Echeñique has been promoting a variety of draft legislation intended to tackle the current changes we are seeing in today's labour market, preparing it for the future and trying to open the doors of work to traditionally marginalized segments of the population, making the reconciliation of work and personal and family life a reality, while simultaneously respecting and promoting the rights of workers and sustainable development. That draft legislation is geared towards making sure that we have a future of work that is fair, equitable, inclusive, environmentally friendly and linked to telecommuting, special contracts for youth

and students, universal day care and independent workers, among others.

Chile looks forward to the forthcoming High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, where we will present our second voluntary national review. That will give us a chance to share with various countries the progress we have made and the challenges we have experienced with respect to the agenda. As part of our presentation, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 will take priority. We believe that it is a particularly important SDG as its targets clearly include the three dimensions of sustainable development, touching on economic productivity, creating decent work and entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and the strengthening of financial distribution networks, among others.

In conclusion, with those ideas and goals, Chile will continue to participate in the Governing Body of the ILO, and we wish the ILO every success in the first year of its second centenary of activities.

Mr. Roscoe (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom would like to thank the President for convening this important high-level meeting.

The United Kingdom aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

I join previous speakers in recognizing and celebrating the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO). The United Kingdom is proud of its role in the history of the ILO. Harold Butler, a British civil servant, participated in the work leading to its creation and became its second Director-General in 1932. The Declaration of Philadelphia was co-drafted by a British lawyer, C. Wilfred Jenks, who went on to become its sixth Director-General in 1970. And, of course, we have an excellent British Director-General today. We therefore have a close and proud association with the ILO.

The ILO plays a critical role in promoting social justice. It has established standards on priority areas, such as forced labour, working times and safety. It has put in place protection for the most vulnerable groups, including women and children. But this centenary is an opportunity to look forward. We welcome the ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work. The world of work is changing, which presents significant challenges and opportunities, such as the unprecedented number

of young people entering the workforce and the impact of technology on work.

In order to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we need sustainable, jobs-rich growth, which will help to reduce inequality, support gender equality and contribute to poverty eradication. The United Kingdom supports a wide range of initiatives that contribute to generating decent work and more inclusive economic growth, including by providing technical assistance to increase trade, enhancing domestic-resource mobilization and running women's economic empowerment programmes. Furthermore, the United Kingdom's development finance institution, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, has invested in companies that directly support three quarters of a million jobs. Those companies pay \$3.5 billion in taxes to their local Governments and provide vital financial services to 45 million people.

Given the review of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July and the United Kingdom's upcoming voluntary national review, we urge accelerated progress on tackling forced and child labour, with the aim of eradicating modern slavery and achieving target 8.7 of the SDGs. In that context, we call for the timely implementation of the the ILO programme of action on decent work in global supply chains.

Once again, we thank the President for convening this event and for the fruitful interactive panel discussions yesterday.

Mr. Rai (Nepal): At the outset, I thank the President for organizing this high-level commemorative meeting. In its 100 years of operation, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has built a strong legacy of labour standards, fundamental principles and rights at work. My delegation appreciates the role of ILO in promoting the decent work agenda globally.

The world of work has undergone quite a transformation. Women's participation has increased significantly. Countries have seen unprecedented demographic shifts. In this age of rapid technological revolution, those who catch up with the rapidity of change may reap the benefits of the fourth industrial revolution, but those on the lower rung of development lag further behind. Such a plight is not only morally hollow but economically unproductive.

Against that reality, the ILO has an important role to play in ensuring the dignity and worth of human labour. The looming divergence as a result of technological change demands that we invest in lifelong education and digital literacy. The principle of decent work has therefore become more relevant today. Labour migration should be a matter of choice, not compulsion, for workers.

Similarly, the rights of migrant workers must be respected and ensured. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 8, on decent work and economic growth, depends on enhancing human capabilities and ensuring inclusivity in the labour market. Countries in special situations, including the least developed countries, landlocked least developed countries and small island developing States, need stronger international cooperation to create gainful employment opportunities.

Let me briefly share Nepal's initiatives. The Government of Nepal has created labour laws to implement the constitutional provision of the right to employment. The minimum wage has been enforced in all sectors. Flagship programmes, such as the Prime Minister's employment programme and the President's entrepreneurship programme, will create additional jobs. In addition, Nepal recently introduced a contribution-based social-security system for all workers.

Finally, I would like to stress two points. The centennial commemoration of the ILO, the oldest specialized agency of the United Nations, is a fitting answer to the sceptics of the achievement of multilateralism. The locus of economic activities is increasingly shifting towards robots, artificial intelligence and codes, but our focus must remain on the human being. The ideals of the ILO continue to be the guidepost in that regard.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Government of Mexico welcomes the holding of this meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), an organization that has set the standard for broadening labour rights, productivity and social dialogue.

The international standards of the ILO have enabled progress on the protection of guarantees for all workers. On the occasion of its centenary, Mexico reiterates its commitment to labour rights, and it is with

great pleasure that I reaffirm my country's commitment to the Organization's eight fundamental Conventions, with the entry into force in November of the Convention concerning the Application of the Principles of the Right to Organise and to Bargain Collectively.

With regard to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the broad scope of the ILO's normative framework and recommendations provides a solid foundation for advancing the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and its vision for achieving inclusive economic development by creating decent jobs through an enabling environment and providing layers of universal social protection to address the inequalities and needs of the most vulnerable social groups.

We must recognize that, within the framework of this celebration, the ILO does not invite us to reflect on its achievements, but rather urges us to conceive of what the future of the work we want can look like at the global level. We know that the world of work is undergoing a significant process of change as a result of technological advances, automation, artificial intelligence and robotization, as well as demographic evolution and new dynamics in labour relations and forms of employment. Those challenges do not necessarily represent a threat to employment stability, but they do present great opportunities. Understanding the key elements that transform labour markets will allow us to understand their impact on society and thereby trace a road map to address this transformation that will pave the way for sustainable development.

Between one third and one half of all jobs currently available are likely to be replaced by automation in the next 25 years. Today's skills will not match tomorrow's jobs, and the new skills that are being acquired could soon become obsolete. Against that backdrop, it is important to create an alternative that focuses on people, propose solutions and new proposals for labour policies that include the active participation of social agents, and consider the reality of the world economy, new labour relations and the possible negative impacts of technology development.

The future of work is under construction. Its success will depend on our ability to better identify challenges and address more precisely and effectively the solutions to the problems that affect and will affect the world of work. Mexico is certain that the support of the ILO will be key in these times of profound transformation and

that its global vision will enrich the perspectives of the labour policies that will shape the future of the work that we want.

Mrs. Moldoisaeva (Kyrgyzstan): First of all, I would like to congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its centenary. We encourage the organization to continue carrying out its mission of promoting the principles of social justice all over the world.

As the members of the General Assembly know, labour is one of the main factors that define the level and quality of life and establish the necessary living conditions for our nationals. Those issues are at the heart of Kyrgyzstan's policy. In that regard, decent, safe and productive labour, an earned and fair reward for it and just access to public education and health care are cornerstones of the State's social and economic policy.

By decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, a national sustainable development strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2018-2040 has been adopted. The strategy, above all, is aimed at establishing an environment for human development, realizing the potential of every person living in our country and guaranteeing our people's wealth. Within the framework of that strategy, the promotion of decent work for everyone who can and wishes to work is one of the main priorities.

Basic citizens' rights and the principles of relations in the sphere of work are determined and guaranteed by the current Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic. The labour code, adopted in 2004, defines the basic rights of workers, in accordance with ratified conventions.

Currently, the legal basis of the social partnership system within labour relations has established and includes the labour code of the Kyrgyz Republic, including laws on professional unions, employers' unions, collective treaties and social partnerships in the sphere of labour relations in the Kyrgyz Republic. Since 1997, trilateral general treaties among the Government, unions and employers have been reached. Annually, the Kyrgyz Republic accepts new legal decrees or makes necessary amendments to current labour legislation.

I would like to emphasize that, at the initiative of the Kyrgyz Republic, the World Day of Social Justice has been celebrated since 2009. Since Kyrgyzstan's accession to membership in 1992, the International Labour Organization has significantly supported my country in that dimension. Together with the ILO,

we are planning to develop and implement a new programme on decent work for the next mid-term period. We believe that it is necessary to take into account the challenges that are mentioned in report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work within the framework of that programme.

Once again, I sincerely congratulate the ILO on its centenary.

Mr. Flynn (Ireland): The history of independent Ireland and the history of the International Labour Organization (ILO) are closely intertwined. On 21 January 1919, the Dáil Éireann, Ireland's Parliament, sat for the first time and adopted a Declaration of Independence and sent a message to the free nations of the world. One of the first decisions taken was to send Irish delegates to the Paris Peace Conference, at which the foundations of the ILO were laid.

While those envoys sent to Versailles failed to secure recognition from the international community, another Irishman, Edward Phelan, then working for the British civil service, was part of a small group of people who laid the basis for the ILO at the Paris Peace Conference. Mr. Phelan became the ILO's first official and was one of the principal authors of the organization's Constitution. The unique tripartite structure was Mr. Phelan's concept. He served as the ILO's Director-General from 1941 to 1948, during which time he was the architect of the agreement that made the ILO the first specialized agency of the United Nations, as well as a key author of the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia.

The ILO was the first international organization that the newly established Irish Free State joined in 1923. It is therefore fitting that in this centenary year, Ireland holds a seat on the ILO Governing Body — our first term on the Body since we joined the organization. We are delighted that we will mark the ILO centenary in Dublin in September with a tripartite conference on the future of work and the delivery of the Edward Phelan lecture at the National University of Ireland by Kailash Satyarthi, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for his work to end child labour.

In the words of the Declaration of Philadelphia, labour is not a commodity. As we grapple with the changing world of work, persistent inequality, including gender inequality, and the galloping pace of technological advances, the Declaration is as relevant today as it was then. The work of the ILO over the

past 100 years has been to bring to life that philosophy rooted in the dignity of work and the promotion of social justice. Of all the institutions established by the international community after the First World War, only one has endured to this day — the ILO. As President of Ireland Michael Daniel Higgins cited in his address to the ILO in 2018, the fact that it has done so is testament to the moral vision and indomitable hope that is contained within the preamble to its Constitution, that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice.

As we mark this important anniversary, we need to look ahead with the same sense of ambition and purpose that drove those who founded the organization 100 years ago. Ireland is ready to continue to play its role in supporting the ILO's vital task of ensuring that the future of work is one that ensures decent and sustainable work on the basis of equality for all.

Mr. Bin Momen (Bangladesh): At the outset, my delegation warmly congratulates the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its 100th anniversary and thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the theme "The future of work".

I would like to align myself with the statement made by the observer of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Universal and lasting peace can be achieved only if social justice is established. We recognize the commitment of the ILO to promoting social justice through its efforts across the world and highlight the importance of ensuring decent work and promoting labour rights. Full and productive employment and decent work for all are a critical driver to enhance inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. That is not only a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but is also featured as a cross-cutting theme across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In that respect, ILO support will be significant to the international community in implementing the SDGs as it has been relentlessly pursuing social justice and the centrality of decent work and productive employment.

An exploitation- and discrimination-free and socially just Bangladesh was envisioned by the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and our national labour policies reflect that principle. The ILO has been a trusted partner of Bangladesh in

its effort to establish social justice and uphold labour rights. I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the ILO, particularly for its support to make our ready-made garments factories compliant with international labour standards. In Bangladesh, 2 million people enter the job market every year. Climate change impacts are threatening our development achievements, including in the agriculture sector, which is our largest employment-generating sector.

Nevertheless, Bangladesh is on the path of graduation from the category of least developed countries, and at this critical juncture the Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed achieving decent work for all as a vital factor to empower people and ensure inclusiveness and equality. Her vision of a digital Bangladesh is a step forward in the future of work. Our development plans, policies and initiatives are aimed at reducing informality, making workplaces safer and providing better wages and social protection. One hundred new special economic zones are being set up to create 100 million jobs by 2030. The implementation of the national labour policies is being strictly monitored. The Government has been regularly revising the minimum wage for workers producing our largest export item — ready-made garments. The Government has also taken transformative initiatives to create more job opportunities for women, people with disabilities and backward and vulnerable communities. The promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises is also a thrust area of the Government for creating decent job opportunities, particularly for young people and women.

Technological progress remains a major driver of economic growth, and that should ensure social justice. However, we now see an apprehension that the fourth industrial revolution might result in the massive automation of manufacturing and services and pave the way to unprecedented job loss and increased inequality in society. It is likely to benefit high-skilled workers while significantly shrinking the space for low- and medium skilled workers. Artificial intelligence, automation and other rapid technological advances will undoubtedly affect countries with young populations, such as Bangladesh. Technologies developed by the big tech giants seem to be disrupting jobs in weak economies and countries undergoing structural transformation.

The disruptive nature of those rapid technological innovations must be contained. Given the concerns arising from current technological advancements, we

need to focus on policy measures aimed at, on the one hand, the development, adaptation and diffusion of new technologies commensurate with country contexts, and, on the other, skill development and capacity-building for the new generation of workers. The ILO can carry out broad consultations with Governments, employers, trade unions and, most importantly, leading tech firms to come up with a road map on how to manage technology as a great enabler of development, while ensuring a just society.

Ms. Goebel (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the Group of Western European and other States.

Decent work has been one of the key guiding principles of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for its 100-year history. The provision of decent work is a challenge today more than ever. What does decent work mean in times of digitized work spaces? What norms for decent employment are needed in a world based on networking structures? The mandate of the International Labour Organization, with its normative and standard-setting role, continues to be of extraordinary relevance and importance to the world of work. Its overarching efforts to ensure the quality of working conditions benefit us all. We should be proud of the ILO's existence more than ever and wish it a happy 100th anniversary.

This anniversary is a great opportunity to take a look back at the transition that took place in the years 1918 and 1919 — a time marked by the revolutionary upheavals following the First World War in Europe. At that time, States aspired to find solutions at Versailles for a peaceful post-war world order. They reflected upon the issues of war debt and possible reparations, as well as new demarcations. However, the Treaty of Versailles also elaborated upon another, almost revolutionary idea that humane labour standards should be integrated into the international legal system. That represents the moment when the ILO was born. Let me recall that that was 100 years ago. The Preamble to its Constitution reads, “[U]niversal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”. A century later, the statement remains just as crucial, underlining the relevance of the ILO mandate for a just and social world of work.

The report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, published in January, examines how

to achieve a better future of work for all at a time of significant changes and exceptional challenges. The report suggests approaches that would seize the opportunities presented by transformative changes, such as in artificial intelligence, automation and robotics, on the one hand, and those that help to cope with challenges, such as demographic change, on the other. Green economies will create millions of jobs as we adopt sustainable practices and clean technologies, while other jobs will disappear as countries scale back their carbon- and resource-intensive industries. Expanding youth populations in some parts of the world and ageing populations in others may challenge the labour markets and social security systems. Yet it is those transformations that could enable us to move forward towards an inclusive, active society.

In that regard, the ILO functions as a platform that illustrates the variety of opportunities and challenges that every one of its 187 member States faces. One main concept presented in the Global Commission's centenary report concerns the need to increase investments in people. That should include education efforts through increased investment in lifelong learning, active labour market policies and good working conditions. We need to make those investments well in advance to prepare people for the labour market of the future.

The ILO has achieved great merits in its 100 years of history. Fifty years ago the organization received the highest international award — the Nobel Peace Prize. At the time, the encomium mentioned the fact that few organizations other than the ILO have understood how to put the moral objective of creating peace, while maintaining justice, into action. I think that there is nothing more to add to that appraisal. Let us celebrate the anniversary of this extraordinary organization with the entire United Nations family.

Mr. Gad (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt endorses the statement made by the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

Today we commemorate the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the oldest in the United Nations system, founded in 1919, before the creation of the United Nations itself. It was the only organization that was part of the international system that existed between the wars to survive the Second World War. The historic evolution of the ILO

reflects its importance to the international community. Despite the changes we have seen in various political situations, the international community has never failed to acknowledge the ILO's importance for improving business relations and labour conditions in the face of notable imbalances between them. The ILO has always based its work on the unchanging principle that peace cannot prevail in the world without social harmony at both the international and national levels. One of its unique features is its tripartite composition of Governments and employers' and workers' organizations, making it the oldest organization to include all stakeholders in its activities while serving the interests of individuals and Governments alike.

Egypt's relationship to the ILO has been developing for many years, since an ILO mission first visited us in 1932 to offer technical advice even before Egypt joined the organization, in 1936. Since then we have been a State member of the ILO, participating in all its activities, particularly in the areas of research and advice relating to work, human resources, social protection, social security, occupational health, labour relations and labour statistics, which are all areas of great importance for Egypt. Furthermore, in the past few years our Government has worked to develop labour legislation guaranteeing workers' rights and has also developed a system of social protection for workers through our Takafol Wakarama and Aman programmes aimed at protecting temporary and seasonal workers, who form the most vulnerable labour groups.

Egypt believes in the importance of developing the concept of work, especially given the growing numbers of young people around the world and in Africa's developing countries in particular. It will be important to use this active human resource to achieve economic growth with a view to achieving the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union's Agenda 2063. We should also keep in mind Sustainable Development Goal 8, which pertains to ensuring lasting global economic growth and providing decent labour opportunities for all, and which will be reviewed during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in July.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the ILO's latest activities, particularly the report entitled "Work for a Brighter Future", which focuses on the challenges that the labour market faces related to today's technological progress and encourages us to focus on building and developing human resources, especially

in developing countries, in order to make them better suited to participation in today's labour market. Egypt is working on updating and developing its national policies for training young people so that they enter today's labour market with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

Mr. Biang (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): The delegation of Gabon is pleased to be participating in this high-level meeting on the future of work.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Rwanda, on behalf of the Group of African States, and the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Decent work is the bedrock of the global agenda of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and is an essential element in achieving social justice. It is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through Sustainable Development Goal 8, which demonstrates the ILO's ability to reinvent itself to fit the aspirations of the peoples of the world. The ILO deserves our commendation and gratitude for its achievements. It was in that spirit that my country ratified 42 legal instruments adopted under the auspices of the ILO in testament to the importance that Gabon attaches to this valuable partner in ensuring the best working conditions for its people.

Decent work occupies a prime place in the plans for society of President Ali Bongo Ondimba of Gabon aimed at making Gabon an emerging country by 2025. The project is of course based on empowering women and employing young people, combined with ensuring quality education, with a view to transforming Gabon into a centre of excellence for high-value-added services and a pioneer of the digital revolution, among other things. It is understood that the emergence of new high-value-added services related to the digital economy will offer new job opportunities for thousands of young Gabonese in years to come. Similarly, the revitalization of the agricultural sector, one of the central concerns of our Emerging Gabon programme, has already borne fruit in its environmental, service and agro-industrial components.

With the support of the ILO, in 2013 the Gabonese Government of Gabon launched a country programme for decent work, covering the period from 2013 to 2016, with the aim of promoting men and women's access to decent, productive work in an atmosphere of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. To ensure workplace

ownership and commitment to its implementation, the programme was based on the direct involvement of the tripartite constituents — Government, employers' and workers' organizations — and other stakeholders, such as associations for young people and women. Our country programme benefited from the collaboration of specialists from the Decent Work Technical Support Team for Central Africa from the International Labour Office in Yaoundé and the ILO country office in Kinshasa. In that regard, I should point out that a national tripartite workshop to develop a decent-work country programme for the period from 2019 to 2022 was recently held in Libreville. Those various interactions highlight the exemplary nature of our partnership with the ILO and Gabon's ownership of the virtues of decent work in the service of the development and well-being of its population.

Within the framework of our policy of equal opportunity, social justice, which is the chief element in the Government of Gabon's road map, remains the cornerstone for all our actions and initiatives, including in the fight against inequalities and unfair privileges. While we are committed to an economic recovery plan that must respond to the international situation, the protection of workers' rights, especially the most vulnerable groups, is central to the Government's concerns. It has therefore continued to maintain our health insurance systems and social security for all workers, including economically disadvantaged populations. For Gabon there is no question that the future of work inevitably depends on empowering those populations, especially women, and on investing in the valuable demographic dividend represented by our young people.

In conclusion, as we celebrate the ILO's centenary, we hope that it will continue to support us in our efforts to achieve inclusive growth, poverty reduction, the expansion of social protection, and the promotion of international labour standards and social dialogue, while taking into account the realities and orientations of national policies aimed at promoting decent work. We believe that a strengthened partnership with the ILO is vital to ensuring sustainable development and a more just, prosperous and peaceful world for present and future generations.

Ms. Rodríguez Abascal (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the observer of Palestine and the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

and the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, respectively. We would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting on the occasion of the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

We congratulate the ILO and recognize its work in establishing labour standards, formulating policies and developing programmes promoting decent work for all. Proof of this are the many conventions and recommendations prepared by ILO's constituents — Governments, employers and workers. We are marking the ILO's centenary in the shadow of great challenges in the world of work. According to its *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2019* report, the number of workers living in extreme poverty is expected to remain above 114 million for the next few years, and by 2020 174 million people will be unemployed. The gender gap in labour-force participation remains large. Three of every five of the 3.5 billion people in the global labour force in 2018 were men. Eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the world's greatest challenge and one that we must deal with. Increasing inequality between and within countries, illiteracy, lack of access to basic rights such as health, education, food, among other elements of the prevailing unjust international economic order, are enormous obstacles to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Cuba was one of the nine member countries of the Labour Committee that drafted the ILO Constitution in 1919, and has participated actively in its work ever since. My country has ratified 90 conventions, including the organization's eight fundamental conventions. We will continue to support the important work of the International Labour Organization on full and productive employment and decent work for all. Cuba is firmly committed to the quest for a just, equitable and inclusive world in which the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and its Sustainable Development Goal 8 in particular, is a reality rather than a chimera.

Mrs. Azucena (Philippines): The Philippines thanks the President of the General Assembly for convening this high-level event and extends its warmest congratulations to the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its centenary.

We commend the ILO for the comprehensive report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, *Work for a Brighter Future*, which highlights the new forces that are transforming the world of work, such as technological advances, climate change and demographic shifts, all of which call for decisive action, including strategies that increase the participation of women, young people and other vulnerable groups in the labour market. This is in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which the Philippines is committed to achieving. My country's initiatives in addressing the fresh challenges in the world of work are focused on promoting decent work while at the same time protecting the rights and welfare of Filipino workers at home and overseas.

With regard to strengthening social protection, the Philippine Government recently enacted several laws that bolster its commitment to the right of every Filipino to a dignified, secure life. They include, first, the Green Jobs Act of 2016, a policy framework for fostering low-carbon, resilient sustainable growth and decent-job creation by providing incentives to enterprises generating green jobs; secondly, an act that institutionalizes telecommuting, the work arrangement that allows an employee to work from an alternative workplace with the use of telecommunication or computer technologies, as an alternative work arrangement for employees in the private sector; thirdly, an expanded maternity-leave law that grants 105 days of paid maternity-leave credits — with seven days transferable to fathers, and an additional 15 days of paid leave for single mothers — to all working mothers in the Government and private sector; and, fourthly, the Handbook for Overseas Filipino Workers Act of 2018, which requires the Government to publish and distribute handbooks for overseas Filipino workers on their rights, privileges and responsibilities.

With regard to human capital development, we are convinced that young people are one of the driving forces of economic growth. Our 10-year basic education programme has been modified to provide our students with an additional two years of learning to better prepare them to join the workforce. Aside from improving literacy and numeracy skills, the programme's technical-vocational livelihood track and its specializations focus on teaching the technical skills necessary to help young people find productive employment that responds to the community's needs.

Our law on universal access to quality tertiary education provides free tuition and other school fees in State and local universities and colleges and State-run technical-vocational institutions.

At the regional level, we welcome the initiatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) setting up labour-market information systems and the TRIANGLE in ASEAN, which delivers technical assistance and support to Governments, social partners, civil society and regional bodies for the purpose of maximizing the contribution of labour migration to stable, equitable and inclusive growth and development in ASEAN.

In conclusion, as part of the ILO centenary initiatives, the Philippines has adopted a seven-year decent-work country programme for the period from 2018 to 2024, built on promoting employment for women, young people and other vulnerable sectors, extending social protection to all, fostering collaborative tripartism and social dialogue and promoting rights at work. The Philippines remains committed to strengthening international cooperation in adapting to the changing trends in the world of work.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): In taking the floor on behalf of Equatorial Guinea, I would first like to convey the heartfelt congratulations of the Head of State and Government of my country, His Excellency Mr. Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, to all the members of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the successful work that it has been doing in putting into practice the adage that work gives human beings dignity, by promoting labour rights and sources of decent work through the establishment of broad standards at the international level and the development of programmes to address the problems facing us today in the social and labour arena.

In Equatorial Guinea's traditional solidarity with the other peoples of our continent, we associate ourselves with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Rwanda on behalf of the Group of African States.

In keeping with our belief in the importance of events such as this centenary, we want to highlight the achievements of the ILO and reflect on its future challenges and the role that it plays in the world of work. If we listed those achievements, however, we would exceed the time allotted for our statement, and we will therefore limit ourselves to saying that the

ILO is increasingly needed in the world, thanks to its cross-cutting complementarity with all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the maintenance of international peace. For when there is work for everyone, social conflicts decrease, and when there is a lack of employment we see the unrest that can lead to conflict increase.

We would like to share our country's situation with the Assembly and make some observations based on it. The right to decent work is a fundamental and inalienable right, which our country's Constitution recognizes. Our Government has therefore outlined policies aimed at ensuring the people's full enjoyment of that right and preventing its infringement by any social or political actor. That is not easy to achieve. We are currently facing various challenges, the most worrisome of which is perhaps the increase in unemployment owing to the fall in the price of crude oil — our main source of income — and, above all, to the completion of work on various modern infrastructure projects, such as roads, official buildings, housing and so forth. Those most affected by this are young people, who made up the majority of the labour force involved in completing the construction projects. To meet that challenge, the Government is currently working on diversifying the economy, the main topic of our upcoming third national economic conference, in order to expand employment for the entire country's residents, as well as many expatriates, and to diversify their sources of income.

I therefore echo our Minister of Labour's words during the 107th ILO Conference, held in Geneva last year, when he said that in order to meet all those challenges, Equatorial Guinea, as an ILO member since 1981, had decided to strengthen its relations with it not only to have its support in this difficult task, but also in terms of meeting its international obligations and goals. He pointed out that representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security had met with the ILO authorities on several occasions last year to work on formulating and implementing a decent-work country programme, for which activities are now being duly developed. The three priority areas that the decent-work programme for Equatorial Guinea will focus on have already been identified — employment for young people and women, social protection and labour standards. Through its decent-work programme, the Government of Equatorial Guinea intends to reduce the scope of the informal economy, improve the protection of women and young people and encourage

self-employment, among other things. We are seeking a specific way to help establish a structure that enables social actors to participate in ensuring a direct, realistic and sincere social dialogue.

The Government is firmly determined to see workers represented. To that end, it has amended the current law regulating freedom of association, which was enacted more than 26 years ago, which makes reforming it essential if we are to adapt to modern times and improve workers' participation in social dialogue. We are aware that such dialogue is key to developing effective political responses that can help shape the future of work.

We are quite certain that cooperation with the ILO and its support for us will help promote sustainable economic growth and full, productive and decent employment for all, thereby ensuring human dignity. In that regard, and in response to the issue of creating jobs in the future, we believe that it is important to increase investment in human capacities and provide mechanisms for continuous training. We must invest in human capital to close all the gaps created by technological advances. Similarly, in order to achieve the goal of decent work for all, it will be essential to make a greater effort to ensure women's full and equal participation in the labour market. We would like to point out that in Equatorial Guinea, men and women earn equal pay for the same work, a goal that some developed countries have yet to meet.

In conclusion, I would once again like to congratulate the International Labour Organization on its centenary. We wish it every success and hope to see its increased involvement in improving the employment situation of the most vulnerable sectors of all the world's countries through the establishment of various assistance programmes. In that regard, we want to take this opportunity to especially thank the ILO Office in Yaoundé for the technical support it is providing to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Ms. Thompson (Barbados): Barbados is honoured to join the General Assembly in celebrating the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

We associate ourselves with the statements made by the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Barbados's robust trade unions date back to 1941 and are integral to our economic growth and national development strategies, whose objective is to offer decent work and a good quality of life to every citizen. In that regard, our unions have contributed significantly to Barbados's high placement on the Human Development Index. In the early 1990s, Barbados established a tripartite committee or social partnership, made up of trade unions, the private sector and Government, aimed at ensuring socioeconomic stability, a competitive economy, decent work, a productive labour force, a thriving business sector, enhanced governance and institutions, and building social capital and cohesion as well as increased and improved communication among stakeholders with competing interests.

In Barbados we will continue to engage with our trade unions to build out our blue and green economy, characterized by ensuring new jobs and decent work; provide access to capital for women and youth to promote entrepreneurship and innovation; improve the terms and conditions for the national labour force, as well as its productivity and competitiveness; support training and skill improvement to give workers the agility that the new marketplace demands; increase the deployment of appropriate technologies for our country's socioeconomic growth and development without compromising our citizens' centrality to our national character and well-being; and aim for an improved work-life balance.

Today at the global level we are discussing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), but are we on track to achieve SDG 8 in a global climate increasingly hostile to trade unions and the labour movement? We live in a world where poverty predominantly has a female face, where women are the majority of the underemployed, unemployed, unpaid and underpaid, or are sexual prey, where constricting job markets and rapid technological change cause young people the world over to fear for their futures, where job security is no longer a feature of the labour market and the very nature of work and the workplace is changing, and changing rapidly, where temporary workers and independent contractors are replacing employees, where children are forced into labour and machines are replacing humans. Barbados strongly believes that in such an environment the ILO and the labour movement are critical to the realization of a global development model that puts people before profit. It is our view that the ILO must continue to advocate economic growth

built on a smaller carbon footprint that will generate decent work across the globe and ensure the survival of small island developing States now under threat from climate change.

So today Barbados joins with the United Nations family in celebrating the centenary of the ILO. We applaud it for its efforts to create a world where all members of the human family live in dignity, and we celebrate with it, look forward to its future endeavours and wish it continued success.

Mr. Moussa (Djibouti) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to say how pleased I am to be speaking on behalf of my delegation on this historic day of the centenary celebration of the International Labour Organization (ILO).

Djibouti aligns itself with the statements made by the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representative of Rwanda, on behalf of the Group of African States.

Through its existence and action, the ILO has left an indelible mark on the United Nations multilateral system that is being felt more strongly than ever. Over the years and through countless conventions and recommendations, it has contributed enormously to the promotion of international labour law, social justice and decent work in almost every country. Its longevity testifies to our firm commitment to developing and implementing international standards on working conditions and integrating them into national legislation. That longevity also reflects our diligent efforts to find ways to address problems related to unemployment, bringing young people into the workplace and the growing precariousness of work, among other things, which are major causes of the socioeconomic inequalities in the world, particularly in Africa. Without social justice, there can be no universal peace.

Djibouti commends the ILO on the long journey it has made, and we hope that it will be able to continue to work to fulfil its mandate and therefore enable us to make progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and especially SDG 8. In Djibouti, we have implemented several major programmes to address employment issues have been implemented through our national employment policy and its action plan. They are fully integrated into our strategy for accelerated growth and the promotion

of employment. We have also undertaken a number of actions to improve women and young people's employability. In Djibouti, employment continues to be a cross-cutting problem that depends on the level and quality of our economic growth.

Since this is a special anniversary, I would like to highlight two main trends that we can discern in the ILO as it has evolved. We should first recognize that it has constantly reaffirmed its relevance and importance by adapting to the context of each era, and by adapting its methods of action, analysis, study and expertise to every global reality it has faced. As a result, it has developed the capacity as it has evolved to enable it to take better advantage of the richness and complexity of work around the world. Secondly, we should emphasize the development of the technical cooperation that the ILO provides, which has been an important source for establishing regulatory standards for labour. This cooperation is a core part of the ILO and has encouraged many countries to adopt labour standards and norms that mitigate the effects produced when labour is regulated solely by the market.

Celebrating this centenary also means looking to the future and renewing our commitments for the next century. The future of the ILO is linked to the future of work in the world, and today that future is at stake. Although much has been done, much remains to be done. The task will not be easy, because despite all the progress that has been made, we can see that it has been uneven and is still incomplete in a number of regions of the world. This is therefore the direction that we should take. At best, ensuring a broader application and enforcement of labour standards will inhibit the factors that have led to the precariousness of work, informality and forced child labour. But they may also enable public policies to develop more promising models in order to connect businesses, industries and workers, on one side, with public education, vocational training, international trade and international financial institutions, on the other. The ILO's most recent report on the future of work covers several constructive directions in that regard, including the three central pillars of action — investment in human potential, labour institutions and decent and sustainable work. For those investments to be successful, Governments, together with their social partners, will have to work in concert early on to ensure that demographic, technological and climatic changes affecting the nature and conditions of work do not become problems, and

thereby avoid the risks and social costs that could otherwise result. That would be a good start for the ILO as it enters its second century. Djibouti believes firmly that through greater international labour cooperation, the international community must spare no effort to undertake those investments as soon as possible.

On this historic day, I would like to reiterate my delegation's full readiness to work closely with the International Labour Organization.

Mr. Almanzlawiy (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank everyone for organizing this important meeting to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), which has continued to enjoy success despite the challenges it has encountered, and has contributed to developing labour concepts and trends. Today's meeting is important, coming as it does ahead of the scheduled review of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8 on decent work and economic growth during the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, to be held in July, which we look forward to as an opportunity for exchanging ideas and achieving our desired goals.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's vision for 2030 is in line with the ILO's objectives of promoting decent work. We are restructuring and transforming the Saudi economy to make it diverse and inclusive. For that reason, my country is working to create more jobs and reduce unemployment so as to give Saudi youth greater opportunities and promote the participation of women in the labour market. We are also working to support business owners in the private and non-profit sectors in creating sustainable opportunities and developing the necessary workforce skills for the labour market. In line with the ILO's call to reduce the gender wage gap and ensure justice and equality, my country has adopted several regulations aimed at ending discrimination between the salaries of female and male workers, thereby becoming a major actor among countries promoting equality and women's economic empowerment, as part of its vision for 2030.

In conclusion, as the ILO is gearing up for its second century, my country would like to wish it a successful future as a key supporter of development and the achievement of SDG 8.

Mr. Madriz Fornos (Nicaragua) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would especially like to thank and congratulate the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its

centenary, and we thank the President for convening this meeting on the theme of the future of work.

Nicaragua associates itself with the statements made by the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

Over the past 100 years, the International Labour Organization has been committed to helping developing countries promote social justice and internationally recognized labour rights. Its role in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be key, particularly in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 8 to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. The eradication of poverty, which is a priority of the 2030 Agenda, requires that we create decent jobs to deal with the growing numbers of unemployed people around the world. Full and productive employment and decent work for all are key elements in our peoples' welfare, and international cooperation will therefore be essential in that regard if we are to fulfil the 2030 Agenda. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goal for decent work, it is urgent that we ensure the elimination of unilateral economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion of developing countries. They have a negative effect on our peoples' sustainable development, create greater social tension in the countries that are targeted and reduce business activity and investment, which leads to further unemployment. This year, we will review Sustainable Development Goal 8 at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, which will be a good opportunity to address the issues facing our young people that arise from modernization and technology, including those related to informal work and migrants.

In 2010, the International Labour Organization opened an office in Nicaragua through the Better Work programme, whose aim is strengthening workers' capacity by exchanging experiences and developing the training processes they need to increase their work capabilities. In that regard, the ILO has commended the work done by the Nicaraguan Government to genuinely promote gender equality at work and within the family. Through its programmes Nicaragua promotes an economy that is open to all and in which all can participate on an equal footing, developing the potential of all stakeholders, especially young people.

The joint cooperation of the International Labour Organization and developing countries will be crucial in eradicating poverty and achieving full and decent employment by 2030.

Mrs. Theofili (Greece): As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO), created just after the First World War, we can still relate to the principles that were established at the time. The ILO's areas of action are still relevant today, affecting the lives of billions worldwide. The establishment of the Global Commission on the Future of Work is an important step in an age when fears are being raised about the role of new technologies and artificial intelligence in labour markets all over the world, and when inequalities are more acute than ever.

Greece was a founding member of the ILO in 1919. The centenary celebrations coincide with the reinstatement in our country of the effective functioning of free collective bargaining and an increase in the statutory minimum wage. Promoting full employment and decent work for all, enhancing social cohesion and strengthening employment constitute one of the top priorities of Greece's national policies. Among other things, our national growth strategy is aimed at achieving full employment and decent work for all, including for the most vulnerable, who are women and young people. Our Government is working to accelerate the rate of our net employment growth and the creation of quality and sustainable jobs through a strategic framework for redesigning active employment policies.

These policies and programmes, designed and implemented with the technical assistance of the ILO, have already shown some positive results in terms of addressing the new realities of the world of labour and the challenges connected with the future of work. The programmes being implemented are based on broad horizontal partnerships between the public sector and social partners. New job-guarantee programmes in the private sector have also been implemented with a view to creating new jobs and providing incentives to induce businesses to hire people who are out of work, targeting specific groups, the long-term unemployed and those aged over 50 and under 30.

One of my Government's horizontal strategic priorities is developing the social and solidarity economy, which can contribute to economic development while simultaneously combating unemployment and social exclusion and deepening democracy in production

and work. We have therefore developed an action plan in that regard for the period from 2017 to 2023, expanding the concept of doing business with social value, establishing rules and developing a constructive environment for a social economy that addresses all citizens and productive activities. It emphasizes the creation of collective and social benefits by social enterprises, as well as supporting self-managing productive projects and collective social enterprises.

Last but not least, protecting labour rights and ensuring a safe and healthy working environment are key features of our national policies in this area that contribute to the promotion of economic development and employment by ensuring quality and productivity at work, as well as socioeconomic welfare and progress in general.

Mr. Al Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to thank the President for organizing this high-level meeting to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO). As a founding member of the ILO, the Islamic Republic of Iran joins other Member States in congratulating the ILO on its centenary.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representative of Turkey, on behalf of the Group of Asia-Pacific States.

The establishment of the ILO 100 years ago, in the wake of a destructive war, was one of the first visionary initiatives undertaken in response to matters of immense significance, such as social justice and decent work. Today we live in an era of considerable uncertainty in the face of rapid changes in the world of work. Rapid technological developments, including in the field of biotechnology and artificial intelligence, as well as climate change, demographic shifts and globalization, are the defining forces in shaping the future of work across the globe. We are witnessing transformations in the world of work at an unprecedented speed and on an unprecedented scale. Those transformations pose both enormous challenges and opportunities for our societies, which mean that we must come up with innovative policies and measures in setting a human-centred agenda for the future of work.

In order to achieve decent work, it is essential to ensure that fair and equal access to a balanced, open, rules-based international economic system, including through international cooperation, is guaranteed

for all Member States without discrimination. In that context, narrowing down the technological gap between developed and developing countries, tapping the potential of young people and providing equal job opportunities for all, including women, are the stepping stones to creating a brighter future and delivering economic security, equal opportunity and social justice. We want to emphasize the importance of multilateralism in tackling major global challenges and pressing issues. If it were respected by all, it would enable us to deliver credible responses, including in relation to the future of work, and serve to advance international peace and prosperity. In conclusion, however, we have to say that this immense potential is unfortunately under attack. Unilateral sanctions are not only threatening livelihoods, decent work and job opportunities for millions of young people both in the targeted nations and in third countries, they are also significantly undermining multilateral options for resolving global issues.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker for this morning's meeting. We will continue the meeting this afternoon at 3 p.m. in this Hall in order to hear the remaining speakers. The closing segment for the high-level meeting will be held once the list of speakers has been exhausted.

The meeting was suspended at 1.10 p.m. and resumed at 3.05 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Gertze (Namibia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Acting President: Before proceeding further, I would like to appeal to all speakers to keep their statements brief and concise in order to make maximum use of the limited time available for the high-level meeting this afternoon. To enable all speakers on the list to be heard, statements in the plenary segment should be limited to three minutes when speaking in a national capacity and five minutes when speaking on behalf of a group. Delegations with longer statements are encouraged to read a shorter version of their text and submit their full-length statements to the Secretariat for posting on the PaperSmart portal.

Mr. Park Chull-Joo (Republic of Korea): It is my pleasure and honour to take part in this significant event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and to speak on behalf of the Government of

the Republic of Korea. I would like to express my appreciation to the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and the Director-General of the ILO for their efforts in preparing for this timely event on the future of work.

The ILO marks its centenary this year and in that connection will adopt a centennial declaration at the International Labour Conference to be held in June. The Republic of Korea believes that will represent a historic milestone in shaping the future of decent work and social justice. In particular, the declaration will emphasize Member States' renewed commitment to decent work and social justice for the next 100 years. In that regard, we would like to stress the following two points with regard to the declaration.

First, we cannot overemphasize the importance of lifelong learning, as it enables people to better adapt and stay competitive at a time when technological advances are rapidly changing the workplace. It is expected that as many as 1.72 million jobs in my country will be affected by the advent of new technologies. Both employees and employers recognize the need to prepare for the impact of new technologies on the future of work. In that regard, we have been greatly expanding technical and vocational education and training in new technologies in order to help people who need jobs to find work and provide them with essential training at every stage of their lives, from adolescence to their later years. Promoting lifelong learning can help to develop human resources, create higher productivity and sustainable growth, expand people's employability and enhance their quality of life.

Secondly, it is also important to pursue a human-centred economic model, both domestically and internationally. In such a model, all economic actors must increase their contribution to upholding social values and driving economic and social inclusion by promoting decent work and gender equality, creating opportunities for vulnerable groups and investing in neglected areas of our economies. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as a major source of employment, can play a particularly important role in that regard and should be given more support and incentives and an enabling environment. In addition, social protection systems must be strengthened to ensure that all segments of society can enjoy economic security and full and meaningful participation in our economies and societies. Those issues will become especially important as developing countries

experience a surge in their youth populations and a corresponding increase in youth unemployment, while developed countries experience trends of low fertility and ageing populations.

In conclusion, I would like to affirm my Government's commitment to actively supporting and participating in the ILO's work.

Ms. Beckles (Trinidad and Tobago): At the outset, Trinidad and Tobago wishes to align itself with the statements delivered by the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the representative of Costa Rica, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

On behalf of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, I would like to express our appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to this high-level meeting. Trinidad and Tobago has been a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) since 1963. We truly appreciate and value its role in improving the quality of life of millions of workers around the globe. As States Members of the United Nations, we must ensure that our actions are strategically aligned with important international instruments, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in particular Sustainable Development Goal 8, on decent work for all and economic growth.

Recognizing that its people are its greatest asset, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago has introduced a broad spectrum of initiatives for eliminating poverty, vulnerability, inequality and discrimination in the workplace. In that regard, my Government hosted a national forum on the future of work in August 2016 that provided a platform for an exchange of ideas on issues such as the changing nature of employment and the governance of new employment relationships.

It is acknowledged that the world of work is continually undergoing major processes of change that require deep levels of understanding and thought. We must consider the landscape of our increasingly integrated world, where there are rising levels of unemployment and declining economic growth rates, and where the impact of the fourth industrial revolution, including the increased use of artificial intelligence, transforms the workplace. We must acknowledge that in dealing with those processes of change, there is a concomitant requirement to address issues of gender parity in the workplace, as well as the realities faced by the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in

society. Regarding gender equality, I would like to mention Mrs. Deborah Thomas-Felix, the first female President of Trinidad and Tobago's Industrial Court, one of a number of women in positions of leadership and influence in Trinidad and Tobago's labour force, including the first female President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the leader of the opposition and the Presiding Officer of the Tobago House of Assembly. Cognizant of those realities, our Parliament recently adopted a national workplace policy on sexual harassment. In addition, we have established a national domestic worker register, which enables labour inspectors to conduct proactive monitoring activities in order to ensure decent working conditions for domestic workers.

Trinidad and Tobago values the dignity and safety of its citizenry and strives to enhance the development of its human capital. As an ILO member State, we are committed to promoting decent work now and in the future. We must continue to commit relentlessly to inclusive growth, as characterized by the Decent Work Agenda. Trinidad and Tobago has embraced the approach of tripartism, which has allowed us to adopt a collaborative outlook on policy formulation and implementation geared to benefiting future generations and achieving a decent future of work. We recognize that tripartite cooperation and coherence are critical to addressing hazards in different spheres and to achieving sustainable development. That approach was evident in our establishment in 2016 of a national tripartite advisory council, aimed at facilitating tripartite engagement, dialogue and consultation and promoting consensus-building and democratic involvement among key stakeholders on national development issues, including occupational safety and health and disaster risk reduction.

As a small island developing State, our limited natural and human capital resources and small and open markets force us to continually think and rethink about new ways to face those challenges. Undertaking research and analysis with the input of all stakeholders remains critical to making informed recommendations and taking effective action to address decent work deficits and gaps in the enforcement of social justice in the world of work.

Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to the convening of the ILO's eleventh subregional meeting of Caribbean Ministers of Labour, which will provide

an opportunity to continue the dialogue on issues relating to the future of work in the region. Finally, I want to congratulate the ILO on reaching its centennial milestone and to reaffirm that Trinidad and Tobago remains resolute in its conviction that the future must be built on decent work.

Ms. Khyne (Myanmar): First of all, I want to thank the President for convening this commemorative high-level plenary meeting for the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO). In a century of endeavour, the ILO has achieved a great deal in the area of work around the globe. It has played a significant role in improving our societies and advancing social justice and decent work. The centenary is an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, reaffirm our commitments and reflect on the future of work, which holds myriad opportunities and a multitude of challenges.

Globalization and technological advancements, which present both immense opportunities and challenges, are shaping the world of work. Demographic shifts are having an unprecedented impact on the business climate, while climate change is posing a serious threat to employment and productive capacities. At such a time of transformative change at work, the strong leadership of the ILO remains crucial to shaping the future of work as it responds to emerging realities. We note the call in the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work for a human-centred approach that places people and the work they do at the centre of economic and social policy and business practices. We believe that such a human-centred approach will contribute significantly to delivering the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Myanmar has shared a long and eventful history with the ILO since 1948. We have remained engaged with the ILO through our successive Governments and have continued to demonstrate our strong commitment to promoting social justice and decent work. Our current Government has been carrying out a series of reforms aimed at strengthening public institutions and promoting the rule of law, with a view to creating a fair and just society. In March our Parliament approved a new occupational safety and health law, formulated in accordance with international standards and recommendations from both workers' and employers' organizations, which represents an important step towards ensuring safer and healthier workplaces in Myanmar. A number of other key labour laws have been

enacted and more are on the way. Myanmar's first ever Decent Work Country Programme, for the period from 2018 to 2021, which was signed between the Myanmar Government and the ILO in September 2018, represents a significant milestone in our engagement with the ILO. Myanmar is strongly committed to the elimination of forced labour, the promotion and protection of labour rights and social justice and the creation of decent jobs for all. We have made tangible progress to that end and are determined to overcome the challenges that remain.

With careful consideration for environment and social governance, the Government is promoting responsible investment, which is making the main contribution to the creation of decent work in Myanmar. In November 2018 we established a new Ministry of Investment and Foreign Economic Relations with a view to boosting local and international investment and making it socially and environmentally responsible. In 2017 and 2018 the largest percentage of foreign direct investment flowed to Myanmar's non-extractive and employment-intensive manufacturing sectors. If that trend continues, we will be able to pull more workers out of poverty and help them lead decent lives.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my country's sincere appreciation to the ILO for its constructive engagement and cooperation with the Government and the people of Myanmar. At this critical juncture in our democratic transformation towards building a democratic federal union, Myanmar intends to intensify its constructive and meaningful cooperation with the international community, including the United Nations and the ILO, on a basis of mutual understanding and trust, in order to advance the promotion and protection of labour rights and the creation of decent jobs for the benefit of our workers and the Myanmar people as a whole. We once again congratulate the ILO on the 100th anniversary of its engagement with the world of work and wish it continued success in its next century in serving humankind and shaping a better future for all, while leaving no one behind.

Mr. Hatem (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my pleasure to begin by thanking the President for convening this meeting to commemorate the centenary of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in advance of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to be held in July, at which Sustainable Development Goal 8 on decent work for all and economic growth will be reviewed. As the Assembly is aware, the ILO plays an important role in reforming the

labour market while protecting and promoting workers' rights around the world, which will contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8.

The report of the ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work, which was issued in January, contains several concepts and recommendations aimed at promoting a human-centred agenda by various means, perhaps the most important of which is the recommendation for increasing investments in human resources and decent work for all, which requires countries to place humans and the work they do at the centre of socioeconomic policies for strengthening the social contract.

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes firmly in the importance of enhancing decent work and has therefore undertaken a number of national projects and measures, such as its national employment programme, while maintaining the flexibility of the labour market in order to attract qualified workers. In addition, we have abolished the sponsorship system and replaced it with a system that enables workers to take other jobs without their employers' approval. We have also adopted a system designed to unite male and female workers with their families and have made the employment approval system more flexible so as to protect the rights of migrant workers. The Kingdom of Bahrain attaches great importance to women's progress in all areas, including the labour market. Our national statistics indicate that the projected income of Bahraini women has increased by nearly 90 per cent over the past 10 years, while their unemployment rate has fallen by about 7 per cent over the past three years.

In conclusion, my country hopes to see continued fruitful and constructive cooperation with the ILO with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Holy See.

Archbishop Auza (Holy See): The Holy See views the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) as an opportunity to renew the essential commitment of the international community to working together to achieve the goal of social justice for all, leaving no one behind, as we move forward into the ILO's second century. The ILO was created in the ravages of the First World War, which inspired its motto, "*Si vis pacem, cole justitiam*", that is, "If you desire peace, cultivate justice", echoing the values that

were foundational in guiding the action of the ILO, including the idea that universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice, as enshrined in the first paragraph of the preamble to its Constitution. One hundred years later, the question remains as to whether working conditions and the role of labour in society are still the cornerstones for achieving social justice and peace.

The human-centred approach of the report of the ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work encourages Governments and all stakeholders to commit to a set of measures in order to deal with the unprecedented challenges of today's world of work. Through that, the ILO recognizes work as a necessary component of human fulfilment, while reaffirming that every aspect of the human being, not just as a worker but also as a member of a family and a community, must be at the centre of inclusive and sustainable strategies for integral development. Recognizing the centrality of the person means restoring dignity to work and production processes and placing the well-being of workers ahead of the work they do, so that access to decent work for all is an essential condition for development. As Pope Francis has repeatedly underlined, it also means that decent work must therefore be firmly based on care for the welfare of our common home, the planet, rather than being based on a selfish and outdated growth model.

Rights and benefits should not be disposable. Labour should have a legal and political framework that is based on just, ethical principles with real political, legal and economic consequences. By definition, a labour contract involves a transaction between human beings and cannot therefore be considered a mere commercial relationship. As the ILO Constitution clearly states, labour is not a commodity. Above all, the activity of human labour is important for its role in the formation of a person's character and dignity. It is not consumption but the ability to create new things and relationships and to express their humanity that establishes people's vitality.

In conclusion, the path to an effective and inclusive development requires new visions and strategic investments. Prioritizing decent work ensures that economic activity remains at the service of human beings and their social relations and strengthens the ethical foundation that can help to guarantee that activity. We want to commend the ideals that guided the creation of the ILO 100 years ago, and to affirm our belief that the ILO possesses the moral compass

to direct its decisions and the values by which it must assess all changes in the world of work. Its task is to shape the emerging realities of our time so that they conform with those values, and not the reverse.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the observer of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Mr. Mehdiyev (Organization of Islamic Cooperation): It is my pleasure to join the Assembly today for this high-level event on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO). On behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), I would first like to congratulate the ILO on the auspicious occasion of its 100th anniversary. As we commend its contributions to the realization of social justice and the achievement of decent work for all, we are pleased to note that as one of the oldest international organizations, the ILO has significantly influenced the course of international cooperation and has changed the world in a very positive way over the decades. Most importantly, it has established the internationally recognized labour standards that most of us now take for granted, including the eight-hour workday, basic workplace safety standards, maternity protection and equality.

This celebration is therefore a good opportunity for us to reaffirm the ILO's fundamental values and take action to address the problems we face today in promoting social justice and achieving decent work for all. In that regard, the theme of this event, "The future of work", remains extremely relevant, especially in the context of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, whose member States still face challenges such as a shortage of job opportunities, a mismatch of skills, low productivity, macroeconomic instability, job seasonality, disconnects between employers' demands and the output of education systems, conflicts and political instability.

The OIC is actively working in the domain of labour, employment and social protection. In September 2011 in Istanbul it organized the first conference of labour ministers of OIC member States, on the margins of the nineteenth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, in order to discuss the creation of a robust cooperation framework in the labour sector at the OIC level. Three other OIC labour and employment ministers' conferences have been convened since then, in Baku in 2013, Jakarta in 2015 and Jeddah in 2018.

Those efforts have led to the adoption of a number of cooperation and institutional frameworks — the OIC Framework for Cooperation on Labour, Employment and Social Protection, the OIC Agreement on Mutual Recognition Arrangement of Skilled Workforce, the OIC Standard Bilateral Agreement on Exchange of Manpower and the OIC Labour Market Strategy.

I am also pleased to say that the OIC is now working on the establishment of an OIC labour centre, its most recent specialized institution. The centre will act as the OIC executive arm responsible for the implementation of OIC cooperation projects in the area of labour, employment and social protection. It will definitely work to mobilize national and OIC-wide responses to the challenges of unemployment and social protection in OIC countries. It will also reinforce the fundamental principles of the ILO in order to advance social justice and achieve decent work for all. Similarly, the OIC has also established the OIC Occupational Safety and Health Network, for sharing knowledge, experience and new technologies and conducting joint research and training in the field of occupational safety and health among member States. We feel justly proud that our member States are continuing to work together to strengthen our spirit of solidarity and expand cooperation in the area of labour, employment and social protection, which has become a fulcrum of the OIC's economic cooperation agenda.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that the OIC will continue to support the efforts of the ILO in the pursuit of social justice and decent work for all.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Ms. Ángel (Fund for the Development of the Indigenous People of Latin America and the Caribbean) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to begin by congratulating the International Labour Organization (ILO) on its 100th anniversary. During that long and productive period, the ILO has been a vital bulwark of international labour standards that have supported important global, regional and national processes and made it possible to construct a framework of international labour law recognizing fundamental rights for both individuals and groups that we all recognize and value today.

As part of that international framework, we would like to stress in particular the aspects related to the

rights of indigenous peoples, in particular the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention of 1989, which has now been ratified by 23 States, most of them in Latin America. The Convention represented a paradigm shift because for the first time an international treaty recognized the existence of indigenous peoples as holders of collective rights and the responsibility of Governments to protect those rights. Among other things, the Convention calls for respect for the cultures and ways of life of indigenous peoples and recognizes their rights over their lands and natural resources and their right to decide on their priorities in the development process. The fundamental principles of participation and consultation are the cornerstone of the Convention, while it also covers a wide range of issues such as employment, vocational training, education, social security, health, indigenous law, traditional forms of organization and indigenous languages.

The ILO has been a pioneer in the international recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples and has served as a reference for other instruments, such as the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. However, the effective realization of its principles, by bridging the gap between the written word and reality, remains a major challenge. For that reason, as an outcome of the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples, the United Nations adopted an action plan in 2014 to promote the realization of rights that were already recognized in international instruments. When we talk about the future of work and the future of the world from the perspective of labour relations, we therefore cannot ignore the fact that advances such as those of the ILO's Indigenous Peoples Convention represent a recognition of a world in which there are many ways of viewing reality and thinking about development.

In order to achieve a future in which decent work prevails, we encourage States, workers and the private sector to adopt policies that respect cultural identity, because that is an essential basis for building an inclusive world. The future of work must also be intercultural, intergenerational and gender-neutral. The Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean will remain committed to facilitating spaces for dialogue among indigenous peoples and States in Latin America in order to advance the implementation of the ILO's Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention.

The Acting President: I give the floor to the observer of the Economic Community of Central African States.

Mrs. Byaje (Economic Community of Central African States): At the outset, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting on shaping the future of work to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the International Labour Organization (ILO). I want to take this opportunity to commend the ILO for its outstanding achievements over the years. Ensuring decent work for all is undoubtedly a prerequisite for eradicating extreme poverty and meeting all the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The statement of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is aligned with those delivered by the representative of Rwanda, on behalf of the Group of African States, and the observer of Palestine, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

While the future of work as presented in the concept note will offer countless opportunities to reverse long-standing decent-work deficits, it remains a dream that will be hard to attain in the near future for many countries in Africa, including those in our region, given the many challenges they still face. On that basis, Africa has established for itself the following core priorities to deliver for the 2030 Agenda — structural and economic transformation; inclusive sustained growth; innovation and technology transfer; human development; and financing and partnerships. Governments have established those priorities in alignment with their national development plans. In our region, however, our ability to achieve those objectives is compromised by many impediments. In that respect, I would like to flag four major points to illustrate why our region is still lagging behind in its attempt to deliver on Sustainable Development Goal 8, on ensuring decent jobs and dignity for all.

First, Africa's demographic landscape, with the fastest population growth in the world, poses new challenges to the job market that are hard to contain. The number of job seekers aged between 15 and 64 is rising and will continue to do so. It is ultimately predicted to reach 1.25 billion, more than in any other region of the world. The figures suggest that between 2010 and 2035 in sub-Saharan Africa, 450 million people will access the job market and 18 million jobs will have to be created annually in order to absorb them. Secondly,

Africa's increasing income inequality will continue to slow economic growth, because it limits poverty reduction and favours the rich at the expense of the poor. Thirdly, armed conflicts and security problems, coupled with new threats such as terrorism, extremism and the proliferation of weapons, continue to have a negative effect on people's welfare, leaving millions in a precarious situation. Finally, unemployment and climate change will continue to trigger forced migration and its corollary of exploitation and abuses inflicted on migrant workers, especially women and children, such as low wages, xenophobia, discrimination and exclusion.

In order to reverse that trend, address pressing development needs and ensure a brighter future for all, we have embraced five priority directions for action to tackle the challenges of the region. The first is investing massively in education, capacity-building, skills development and job creation in order to increase productive employment so as to respond to the growing demand of job seekers, particularly young people and women. The second is injecting targeted investment into high-growth sectors such as industry and agriculture, with a view to creating productive employment and decent jobs to boost dignity and prevent the gap between rich and poor from widening. The third is implementing reforms to ensure the stability of the global financial system, encourage stable, long-term private foreign investment and strengthen productive capacity. The fourth is initiating programmes to empower the people to become the artisans of their own development and ensure that the very ambitious, people-centred Goal 8 leaves no one behind. The fifth is addressing climate-change challenges, which undermine the agriculture sector, where the majority of our people are employed, by integrating technology and developing research on how to mitigate its adverse consequences.

The President returned to the Chair.

Despite all the measures being implemented, poverty persists owing to high productivity costs in nascent industries and agribusiness projects. In addition, the lack of infrastructure development hampers economic development, hinders market access and lessens economic competitiveness, while failing to spearhead innovation to boost economic growth because of the high cost of energy. In addition, challenges related to peace and security unfortunately cannot be separated from those of development. To mitigate that, ECCAS will strive to strengthen actions fostering prevention, with a view to ensuring the lasting peace

and security that are needed to create an environment that can help business thrive. Such measures, coupled with close partnership among all key stakeholders and the participation of civil society and the private sector, enhanced by sound tax policies and incentives, will eventually reduce investment risks and attract foreign direct investment.

In conclusion, ECCAS believes that regional integration, one of our major priorities, will progressively encourage the free movement of people and goods and facilitate labour mobility, especially with the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement. ECCAS will therefore continue to encourage Member States to prepare their policies on labour mobility so as to ensure decent work and dignity for migrant workers. ECCAS values the continued assistance of our traditional development partners, rendered in a spirit of shared prosperity.

The President: I now give the floor to the observer of the International Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Wilson (International Chamber of Commerce): It is my honour to address the General Assembly on behalf of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

The ICC is the world's largest business organization, with more than 45 million members employing more than 1.2 billion workers around the world. The ICC and the International Labour Organization (ILO) were created in the same year, and both institutions reflected a world that called for decisive action from all stakeholders to forge a positive path for development in the face of vast challenges and uncertainties. It is therefore with great joy that we celebrate the major advances that our sister organization has made in establishing global standards that respond squarely to the universal human aspiration for decent work. The ICC reiterates its commitment to supporting the work of the ILO over the next 100 years as it tackles new and unprecedented challenges in a rapidly changing world.

While the theme of this debate is the future of work, our shared objective of leaving no one behind requires that we also use this landmark event to recognize the outstanding commitments and obstacles that persist in the attainment of decent work for all. One such challenge is the scourge of modern slavery, which is far from being a vestige of history. The number of people living in slavery today is higher than at any time in recorded history. At least 40 million people are

currently trapped in slavery, some 16 million of them in the context of corporate supply chains, in every country and every industry. Although slavery is now universally prohibited, with protections for individual rights enshrined in national and international law, it continues to persist.

Earlier this year, we made a pledge to ensure that every chief executive officer in the ICC network understands the risks of modern slavery and knows how to take action, but Governments must also step up to the challenge. In that regard, we urge ILO member States to mark its centenary by signing and ratifying the 2014 Protocol to the 1930 Forced Labour Convention, so as to provide protection and appropriate remedies to victims of forced labour and punish the perpetrators of slavery. Where adopting the Protocol is not possible, we urge States to develop modern national policies and plans of action for the effective suppression of contemporary forms of slavery.

We would also like to underscore the importance of taking concerted action to ensure that women are able to claim their rightful role in the economy. The advances made in the integration of women into the workforce have been significant, but we must speed up the removal of barriers that stand in the way of women's full economic empowerment. Unlocking women's vast economic potential in the global economy will be essential if we are to meet the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We call on all Governments to utilize the policy levers available to them to achieve that goal without delay. To put it simply, there can be no excuse for inaction.

Finally, we want to thank Member States for the opportunity they have given to business and other non-party stakeholders to engage in this conversation. We firmly believe that inclusive multilateralism and meaningful partnerships are essential to achieving our shared Sustainable Development Goals.

The President: We have now heard the last speaker for this meeting.

(spoke in Spanish)

I would like to thank all participants—representatives of Member States, civil society, academia, workers' organizations and the International Organization of Employers — for their presence at this event marking the centenary of the International Labour Organization. I want to express my gratitude to the Member States, observers and all who shared their views and best practices and suggested specific ambitious solutions to give both form and content to the future of decent work for all. Their presence and enthusiasm is testimony to the relevance of the mandate of the International Labour Organization, the urgency of the issues we have discussed and, above all, the indispensable role of multilateralism.

I believe the consensus has been clear throughout these two days of discussion that Sustainable Development Goal 8, on attaining decent work for all men and women by 2030, is closely linked to the other goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially those relating to the fight against poverty and inequality. I promise to submit a summary of the rich dialogue of the past two days to the High-level Political Forum of the Economic and Social Council, whose agenda includes a review of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 8, and to the International Labour Conference to be convened in Geneva in June.

I would like to thank once again all Member States and relevant stakeholders who attended, even if they are not here this afternoon, for their commitment and active participation.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.