



THE PRESIDENT
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

12 March 2019

Excellency,

I refer to my letter dated 11 February 2019 on the High-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the one-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and interactive dialogue on the future of work, to be convened in accordance with resolution 73/127 of 15 January 2019. The meeting will be held at the level of Heads of State and Government at the United Nations Headquarters, in New York, on Wednesday, 10 April 2019, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. (General Assembly Hall) and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Trusteeship Council Chamber).

In line with the decision of the General Assembly on the format of such meetings, Member States are encouraged to deliver regional statements during this High-level commemorative plenary meeting. Other Member States interested in delivering a statement during the commemorative plenary meeting are invited to inscribe with the General Assembly Affairs Branch using the e-deleGATE portal at <https://delegate.un.int>. Delegations are encouraged to observe the time limits of three minutes for statements by individual Member States and five minutes for delegations speaking on behalf of a group of States.

To mark this historic occasion, all statements delivered in the plenary meeting will be included in a commemorative publication after the meeting.

It is my honour to share with you the provisional concept note and draft programme of the high-level commemorative meeting and interactive dialogue. The final programme will be made available on the website of the seventy-third session of the General Assembly in due course.

For any inquiry, your office may contact my Senior Adviser Mr. Jonathan Viera (henry.vierasalazar@un.org) or the Team Leader, Ms. Toni-Shae Freckleton (toni-shae.freckleton@un.org).

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "M. FERNANDA ESPINOSA GARCÉS".

María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés

All Permanent Representatives and
Permanent Observers to the United Nations
New York

High Level Event of the 73rd General Assembly on The Future of Work with Decent Work

*Organized on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the
International Labour Organization – ILO*

10 April 2019

Background

The year 2019 represents an important milestone for the United Nations as its first specialized agency, the International Labour Organization, marks its one-hundredth anniversary. The ILO was founded on the realization that clear rules were needed to ensure that economic progress went hand in hand with social justice, prosperity and peace for all. Such principles remain fundamental today as new forces driven by technological advancements, structural transformations, changing demographics, globalization and climate change rapidly reshape the world of work.

The future of work presents countless opportunities to reverse long-term decent work deficits, but it also presents serious challenges that could increase inequalities and joblessness if not well managed. How well countries adapt to such changes will be a major determinant in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As was the case in 1919 when the ILO was founded, decisive action is needed from all stakeholders in order to forge a positive development path that unlocks new opportunities for the future of work while mitigating growing inequalities and other uncertainties.

The onset of new technological advances – artificial intelligence, automation and robotics – are already creating vast opportunities for new jobs. Yet, those who lose their jobs as result of new technologies may be less equipped to seize new opportunities and may be added to the ranks of the long-term unemployed. Global dependence on technology means that the skills in demand today will not match the jobs of tomorrow. Skills acquisition and lifelong learning will be required for workers to remain agile and employable. The greening of economies holds the potential to create millions of new decent jobs as sustainable practices and clean technologies are adopted. Coherent policies are needed to provide a just transition for workers as existing jobs, working methods and skills are redefined. Changes in demographics with growing youth populations in some parts of the world and ageing populations in others place pressures on labour markets and social security systems. Yet, demographic shifts also mean new possibilities to transform more inclusive societies.

Over the last decade, there has been a rise in part-time employment, especially among women and youth. In the majority of countries with available information, part-time jobs outpaced gains in full-time jobs between 2009 and 2015. In some cases, non-standard forms of work can be the entry door to the job market. However, these emerging trends can also lead to widespread insecurity.

In order to achieve the goal of decent work for all, increased efforts are necessary to ensure the full and equal participation of women in the labour market. Globally, women are paid less and are more likely to work in vulnerable categories of work, such as domestic workers. In the majority of countries, women in the informal economy live in households that are poor. Women also continue to bear the brunt of unpaid care and domestic work.

With more than 64 million unemployed youth worldwide and 145 million young workers living in poverty, youth employment remains a global challenge. Investing in lifelong learning mechanism in particular digital skills, in entrepreneurship and sectoral strategies that expand decent jobs and address the vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged should be among the top policy priorities. Developing countries are experiencing additional challenges with high levels of informality and the need to transition these workers to formal employment which can help increase protection as well as enhance revenue for governments to improve and expand the provision of social protection measures, make investments in education and infrastructure. Additionally, many countries face the challenge of diversifying their economies away from low-productivity agriculture to higher value sectors like banking and finance, service provision, mobile and digital technologies, communications and manufacturing.

Forging a new path requires commitment and action from all stakeholders but particularly from governments and employers' and workers' organizations who will play a key role in devising human-centred policies that benefit economies and people. Social dialogue is key to developing effective policy responses that can help shape the future of work to achieve the best possible outcome for societies rather than technology determining our futures. Skills development, social protection, social dialogue, equal opportunity, occupation safety and health and adequate labour market regulations are essential components of the policy response to shape a future of work with sustained and sustainable economic growth and decent work for all.

Mandate

On 15 January 2019, Resolution A/RES/73/127 decided to devote one day, during its seventy-third session, to the commemoration, within existing resources, of the one-hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the International Labour Organization under the theme "The future of work" and to convene a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly, to be held on 10 April 2019.

Objective

The overarching objective of the meeting is to share best practices, concrete solutions and ambitious recommendations for shaping the future of work with decent work for all.

Participants

UN Members States and Permanent Observers at highest political level, including Heads of State and Government and ministers

UN System Principals and Multi-stakeholders including representatives from the private sector, workers' organisations, employers' organisations, youth representatives, academia and civil society

Format

The high-level meeting will be structured with an opening session followed by a commemorative plenary in the General Assembly Hall from 10:00a.m.-1:00p.m. The Afternoon session will be comprised of two interactive panels from 3:00pm. – 6:00p.m. in the Trusteeship Council Chamber.

The themes of the two afternoon panels will focus on:

1. Addressing Unfinished Commitments to Achieve Decent Work for All

New forces that are transforming the world of work come on the back of existing challenges which they threaten to exacerbate. Unemployment remains unacceptably high and billions of workers are in informal employment. 344 million jobs are needed by 2030, in addition to the 190 million jobs needed to address unemployment. Conditions of work need to be improved for the roughly 300 million working poor who live on \$1.90 a day. Millions of men, women and children are victims of modern slavery. Too many still work excessively long hours and millions still die of work-related accidents every year. Wage growth has not kept pace with productivity growth and the share of national income going to workers has declined. Inequalities remain persistent around the world. Women continue to earn around 20 per cent less than men. Even as growth has lessened inequality between countries, many of our societies are becoming more unequal. Millions of workers remain disenfranchised, deprived of fundamental rights and unable to make their voices heard.

2. Shaping the Future of Work

The transitions in the world of work driven by rapid changes in technology, demography and climate change will require decisive action. Extraordinary opportunities to improve the quality of working lives will come together with important challenges. A reinvigorated social contract is needed to make economic growth more inclusive and sustainable and provide working people with a fair share of economic development. A new set of regulations and policies should be designed to address non-standard forms of employment, social protection and employment relations, new business models and collective bargaining.

Outcome

The President of the General Assembly will prepare a summary of the High-level event which will be transmitted to the High-Level Political Forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, to be held in July 2019 as well as an input to the SDGs Summit to be held in September 2019. The summary will also be transmitted as an input to the deliberations of the 108th International Labour Conference in June 2019.

Guiding Questions

- Is the world on track to fulfil the SDG8 promise to achieve full employment and decent work for all by 2030? Is full employment still an attainable objective? What measures can be taken to overcome decent work deficits and accelerate the progress on the SDGs?
- How can developing countries and those furthest behind harness new technologies and opportunities to move people to more productive, better paid jobs that also promote environmental sustainability? What concrete solutions and best practises could be proposed to address these issues?
- What can be done to close the gender gaps in the labour market, empower women and promote gender equality? What are the opportunities and challenges to overcome inequalities?

- What are the skills needed to meet the future of work needs? How can comprehensive lifelong learning systems be built to enable people to acquire skills, reskill and up skill? What measures are needed to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and facilitate school to work transition?
- How can the social protection systems and floors be extended and evolve with the future of work to provide universal and sustainable protection from birth to old age in form of basic income guarantee and social services? What would be the most appropriate financing mechanisms and sources?
- What are the jobs of the future and how will the terms of employment differ? What are the types of regulations and policies needed to guarantee the respect of fundamental worker's rights and adequate living wage to all workers, including in the gig economy, regardless of their contractual arrangement or employment status? What should be done to address the non-standard forms of work?
- How could workers' and employers' organizations strengthen their representative legitimacy through innovative organizing techniques that reach those who are engaged in new business models, including through the use of technology?

10:00am-10:50am	Opening Segment
10:50am-1:00 pm	Commemorative Plenary <i>Statements from chairs of the regional groups</i> <i>Heads of State/Government</i> <i>Ministers</i>
3:00pm-4:20 pm	Panel 1 - Addressing Unfinished Commitments to Achieve Decent Work for All TBC
4:20pm- 5:45 pm	Panel 2 - Shaping the Future of Work TBC
5:45pm-6:00pm	Closing Segment