

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

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Statement delivered by

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(IOE)**

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- Madam President of the General Assembly, Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the United Nations family, Ladies and Gentleman,
- It is a great honour and pleasure for me as President of the International Organisation of Employers, the IOE, to speak on this very special occasion, commemorating the one-hundred anniversary of the International Labour Organization.
- IOE represents more than 50 million companies through our independent and representative member organisations in 147 countries. *These companies are leaders/major contributors in shaping national policies and regulations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.* More broadly, 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's centenary is a milestone of global importance and a celebration of human dignity. IOE is honoured to be one of the ILO's longest-serving partners, helping the organisation to push boundaries, expand opportunity and improve lives worldwide.
- The Director-General said last year that ILO's 100 years of achievement is due to its tripartite governance. I could not agree more with him! The engagement of the social partners in the governance structures of the ILO is its biggest asset.
- The social partners bring the voices of the real actors in the 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 between the UN, 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 IOE and employers in particular? Employers believe in a fair playing field for business. Labor should not be a commodity. We share ILO's belief that a skilled workforce is the backbone to our success. We also share their commitment to promoting social dialogue as a means to guarantee stability and protect peace.
- We believe that 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.

Excellencies,

- 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 breath-taking pace of change today is making these 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-centered and person-enabling?

- The private sector is answering that question with a resounding "yes."
- At IOE we believe that to achieve a human-centered 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.

[Pause]

Excellencies,

- We are experiencing historical change. It is up to each of us to build a safe and prosperous future.
- Employers want to be part of the solution, offering input on shaping a future with human dignity at its heart. This goes beyond helping companies and workers adapt to new technologies. It is about transforming attitudes towards work and business.

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- Governments, employers and workers have a shared responsibility to shape the future of work. To achieve this balanced dialogue, employers and workers' organizations must be more connected and listened to at the UN. The link between UN decisions and their impact on the workplace must be better understood and strengthened. It is for this reason, we **are advocating for a permanent UN observer status together with the International Trade Union.**
- At the same time, IOE will continue to contribute to ILO's reassertion of its leading role in the UN as an expert in labour rights, social protection and social dialogue. IOE wants to contribute to a robust ILO that leads on finding solutions to sustainable social progress and economic development. IOE wants to be part of the ILO's next 100 years and collaborate with our tripartite partners to advocate for prosperity and dignity for all.
- Thank you Chair.