

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

INDIA STATEMENT

By

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Thank You Mr. President

The ILO's centenary celebration is a landmark moment and therefore I would like to start by thanking Madam PGA for convening this very special meeting.

ILO, the oldest specialized agency of the UN, has played a pivotal role through 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. India has not only been a founding member of the organization, but has also been a permanent member of its Governing Body since 1922.

Today, the ILO Country Office for India and the Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) for South Asia is a center of technical excellence, which supports all countries in South Asia to realize decent work for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

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 on the migrant labour issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Anxiety about the impact of technology on the world of work is not new.

The question of how technology shapes work and labour and how society should shape technology through choices and policies, has always fueled intense public debate.

Change has always a constant factor in the working lives of humans - from creating fire to sending a red sports car fly by planet Mars.

However, the fourth industrial revolution characterized by its convergence of the physical, digital, and the biological worlds will add the dimension of unpredictability, because this time around the speed and spread of technological advancement will be unprecedented.

If people are to have a secure future of work with dignity, economic security and equality in a carbon-neutral digital age, the broader dimensions of development, including the rights and enabling environment that widen people's opportunities and improve their well-being will need to be localized and re-examined.

Automation potential must be distinguished from automation adoption. While a high 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 skilling; legal frameworks for innovation; labour protection policies; the availability of supporting infrastructure; and the social and cultural norms that shape attitudes towards technological change and innovation.

To mark ILO's centenary, the report by the Global Commission on **The Future of Work** is an important milestone. The report calls for a **human-centred** agenda for the future of work that strengthens the social contract by placing people and the work they do at the centre of economic and social policy and business practice. We look forward to in depth discussion on its recommendations in June this year.

Mr. President

India has more than 50% of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. These demographics have made education and decent work a highly connected and key priority.

A comprehensive education program has been launched to improve effectiveness of schools and provide equal opportunities to all.

Several Government initiatives in the area of start ups, digitization, skilling and financial intermediation through specialized banks to fund the SME sector are aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, fostering creativity, innovation and encouraging inclusive business.

Mr. President

To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and the centenary celebrations of the ILO and, in a truly innovative collaboration we have got a beautiful mural created by the prominent artist Victor Ash, on the side wall of the Indian Mission.

In the mural, a gigantic weightless astronaut floats in the space and looks at earth to find that the world is a greener place than it was 20 years ago and India is amongst those countries that have contributed a significant measure to this increase. This was also corroborated by recent data from NASA satellites. A green future also offers abundant opportunities for green jobs.

On this positive note, I would like to invite all of you to come to the Indian Mission to see this beautiful mural.

I thank you.