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High-Level Section

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DRAFT MINUTES

High-Level Section

Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization

First item on the agenda

Decent work for sustainable development ([GB.329/HL/1](#))

1. *The Chairperson* recalled that the purpose of the discussion was to prepare the ILO's contribution to the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), whose theme for 2017 was "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". He welcomed His Excellency Frederick Makamure Shava, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to the United Nations in New York and current President of ECOSOC.
2. *The President of ECOSOC* recalled his past role representing Zimbabwe on the Government benches at the ILO, which had enabled him to witness first-hand the Organization's strength in devising effective normative frameworks to address challenges in the world of work. As a standard-setting body, the ILO would play an important oversight role in ensuring respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The annual HLPF was the central platform for tracking progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where national, regional and thematic review processes converged.
3. Effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda would require the ILO to focus on the four pillars – employment, social protection, social dialogue and rights at work – of the Decent Work Agenda at the global and country levels. The ILO would be expected to provide expertise in a number of areas, including global unemployment, vulnerable employment, extreme poverty, social protection coverage and migration. It was essential to promote the Decent Work Agenda and strengthen tripartite social dialogue, particularly in view of decent

work deficits, including child labour, and economic disparities between the North and the South, between middle-income countries and others, and within vulnerable countries, such as landlocked developing countries, least developed countries and small island developing States. As only 13 years remained for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, implementation must continue apace.

4. The 2030 Agenda provided countries with the option of conducting voluntary national reviews with a view to tracking progress and sharing lessons learned. The doubling in the number of countries that had registered to undertake a national review demonstrated widespread support for the HLPF. Countries should be able to carry out a review at least twice before 2030. In addition, regional reviews would provide the HLPF with an overview of progress and policy issues in each region. The 2017 HLPF would also conduct the first in-depth review of specific SDG clusters.
5. The ILO had incorporated the 2030 Agenda into its initiatives by mainstreaming the SDGs in its strategic planning and programme mechanisms. It was encouraging that the Governing Body had dedicated its March sessions to annual reviews of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; the tripartite nature of the discussion would provide a unique perspective and useful input for the HLPF.
6. The ILO had a central role to play in six main areas. First, it was essential to take an integrated approach to implementation of the Goals and to design cross-cutting and cross-sectoral development plans. In addition to the ILO's central role on Goal 8, Goal 1 on poverty, Goal 5 on gender equality and Goal 10 on reducing inequality were also highly relevant to its mandate. A multidimensional approach would affirm the universality of the SDGs and the important links with the Decent Work Agenda. Changing traditional mindsets on development and devising innovative approaches would require more coherent work within the UN system and with UN country teams, as well as country-level efforts. Programmes such as social insurance for people unable to work had an impact not only on poverty reduction, but on other important development objectives such as health, gender equality and inclusive growth.
7. Second, the 2030 Agenda stressed the importance of high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data so that governments could evaluate their current situations, establish baselines, develop effective policies, review progress and make policy adjustments. Data collection and analysis remained a major challenge in many countries and the ILO could support national statistics offices by building their capacities to conduct labour market surveys and analyse data.
8. Third, the aim of leaving no one behind required increased support from the ILO and the broader UN system for groups of countries in special circumstances, as the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and countries in or emerging from conflict situations faced unique challenges and constraints. Many of them lacked the capacity, available statistics and resources to conduct the voluntary reviews or required assistance in identifying interlinkages for policy impacts within and among the SDGs.
9. Fourth, achieving change would require addressing informality. The vast informal economy, particularly in developing countries, made it difficult to reach those in need and to mobilize domestic resources. The implementation of the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), would benefit governments, workers and employers, consolidate progress towards all of the SDGs, ensure that no one was left behind and encourage public sector investment.

10. Fifth, the achievement of the 2030 Agenda would require forging partnerships in order to unlock additional resources and intensify collaboration among governments, the social partners, the UN system and other stakeholders by pooling knowledge, expertise and financial resources. ILO expertise and research on the virtuous cycle of employment and social protection to expand growth and fiscal space would assist governments' planning efforts. In addition, new and innovative cross-sectoral partnerships, both financial and non-financial, were needed, particularly those that sought to address inequalities by promoting women's economic empowerment and managing employment challenges. As a partnership agency by design, the ILO was well equipped to pursue new and innovative partnerships, and the UN system relied on its full engagement.
11. Sixth, the achievement of all of the SDGs would require effective, accountable and inclusive institutions that were strong, well resourced and fully engaged in setting national development priorities and adapting the SDG targets to national realities. Once again, the ILO was well placed to strengthen labour market institutions by continuing to provide capacity development to the social partners at the country level.
12. Since decent work featured prominently in the 2030 Agenda, the ILO Governing Body and ECOSOC had a common responsibility to oversee its implementation, follow-up and review. The Governing Body discussion would provide important institutional input to the HLPF discussion in July 2017.
13. *The Employer spokesperson* said that it was necessary to focus on economic growth and job creation in order to eradicate poverty. That required an enabling environment for business, investment and sustainable enterprises. The goals of eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world must be tackled together, because a balanced and integrated approach was needed to transform economies and make them sustainable. The aim should therefore be to accelerate the pace of creating decent and productive jobs.
14. Given the standard- and policy-setting mandate of the ILO, its role was to foster a policy environment that created conditions for poverty eradication and sustainable development, taking account of national circumstances. As the global economy was struggling with recovery, cyclical and structural rigidities, including labour market rigidities, must be considered. Ways of encouraging enterprise development and private investment, both of which were key to improving employment, especially for marginalized groups, should be discussed.
15. The ILO should prioritize providing targeted capacity-building programmes for constituents, in collaboration with its International Training Centre, to enable them to participate in national strategies for sustainable development. The Office should also give priority to helping countries in the transition to the formal economy, and therefore more and better jobs, through improved, comprehensive legal and policy frameworks and cooperation with employers' organizations and business. It should continue with its action plan to follow up on Recommendation No. 204, especially in agriculture, where it was critical to ensure decent and productive work, particularly through productive transformation for rural employment and employment-intensive investment. That would lead to an increased number of women and men in work, higher incomes and sustainable livelihoods, all of which would contribute to the achievement of SDG 1 on poverty eradication and SDG 2 on ending hunger.
16. The Office should apply a realistic approach to building sustainable social protection floors, which were not only a means of assisting people living in poverty, but also a means of maintaining and promoting employability. Social protection expenditure should be viewed as an investment in building and expanding productive capacity while supporting incomes and domestic demand. Nationally defined social protection floors should take account of

fiscal space, self-financing capacity, sustainability and, where appropriate, the reform of social security schemes.

17. A further objective should be to create productive and decent work through competitive industries. The Office should look at how governments could create conditions where businesses could operate productively. Skills development was also an important part of strategies for industry, as a skilled labour force made it easier to adjust to changing conditions in global markets and to access new markets. Innovation, investment, technological change, enterprise development, economic diversification and competitiveness should be encouraged as means of accelerating job creation and thus improving social cohesion.
18. Overall, in its contribution to the HLPF review, the Office should maintain a practical approach by reviewing steps taken towards the achievement of the SDGs, ascertaining gaps in implementation and identifying lessons learned. Lastly, the Office should emphasize the importance of partnerships, including public–private partnerships.
19. *The Worker spokesperson* said that the goal of social justice enshrined in the ILO Constitution remained crucial to eradicating poverty. The ILO, on account of its unique tripartite structure and standards mandate, could make a strategic contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda through the realization of decent work. The message of the ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization that the four pillars of decent work had to be pursued in an integrated way was highly relevant to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, the Office’s policy approaches to poverty reduction should refer more explicitly to the contribution of social dialogue and rights.
20. The ILO must also apply an integrated approach in its partnerships. Furthermore, respect for freedom of association and collective bargaining, which had not been included with child and forced labour in SDG 8.7, must be considered in ILO SDG work because, as enabling rights, they allowed workers to pursue their own economic development and to realize other rights.
21. National measures to implement decent work must be backed up by coherent policy from all international organizations in the multilateral system to give effect to the 2030 Agenda. The ILO had a constitutional mandate to ensure that decent work was mainstreamed in most UN agencies. At the national level, all social partners and labour ministries should be involved in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The ILO should dedicate resources to strengthening the capacity of workers’ organizations to participate in national SDG implementation and in the review process.
22. In order to eradicate poverty, combating inequality must be prioritized. As stagnating wages and the delinking of wages from productivity growth were leading to a reduction in aggregate demand, the Office should help revert the decline in the wage share of output. As comprehensive collective bargaining had a positive impact on economic growth, employment and investment and income inequality, its value in reducing poverty should feature prominently in the ILO’s contribution to the HLPF.
23. The importance given to promoting industrialization was welcome, since a shift from agriculture to higher-value-added manufacturing would greatly contribute to poverty reduction. The ILO should promote industry-wide collective bargaining to ensure that associated gains were widely shared and people were lifted out of poverty. At the same time, it was necessary to address the poor working conditions, low wages and violations of trade union rights in particular sectors in order to contribute to SDG 9. It was essential that the Office provide advice and technical assistance in connection with industrial policies.

24. The extension of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of social protection was likewise key to eradicating working poverty. It was vital to promote a global employment strategy to secure universal health coverage, to address the global shortage of healthcare workers and to guarantee decent working conditions in the health sector. ILO Recommendation No. 204 was another important tool for poverty reduction.
25. Achieving gender equality was likewise of key importance, because women were overrepresented in own-account, informal and unpaid family work and also in precarious jobs. The ILO should use its participation in the HLPF to disseminate the conclusions of the Meeting of Experts on Non-Standard Forms of Employment with a view to ensuring that such employment arrangements were not misused by employers to circumvent their obligations, and that all workers, irrespective of their contractual arrangements, enjoyed decent working conditions.
26. To ensure the right policy measures were applied to address gender employment gaps, the Office should provide disaggregated data to identify the gaps affecting particular groups of women. The gender pay gap had to be addressed by promoting equal pay for work of equal value. Adequate and inclusive minimum wages, stronger collective bargaining and the extension of social protection to all workers played an important role. Urgent measures were needed to address the growing gender pension gap, as was a comprehensive framework on balancing work and family responsibilities. The Office's references to maternity protection and parental leave and the focus on decent jobs in the care economy were particularly welcome. The Workers supported the drafting of a Convention to combat violence and harassment at work. Lastly, when discussing policy approaches at the HLPF, the Office should refer to the most relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations.
27. *Speaking on behalf of the Africa group*, a Government representative of Algeria noted the huge numbers of people worldwide living below the moderate and extreme poverty lines, which showed the need to create decent jobs on a wide scale and distribute income to ensure that workers had decent living conditions, especially in rural areas characterized by informal employment. The promotion of job creation and formal employment and the reduction of inequality and poverty were challenges that required a concerted effort from all of the international community as a means of reducing poverty. It was therefore gratifying to note that the ILO's efforts had culminated in recognition of the importance of productive employment and decent work for sustainable development.
28. A genuine North–South partnership for development and a dynamic South–South partnership were more necessary than ever in order to contend with the multiple crises throughout the world. The fact that the 2030 Agenda paid so much attention to the Decent Work Agenda within the framework of SDG 8 and other targets strengthened the ILO's role in the UN system.
29. The reduction of informal employment was an essential step towards poverty eradication; Recommendation No. 204 and the action plan for follow-up were important tools for countries. Decent work also contributed to promoting global peace and security by preserving social cohesion and rebuilding the social fabric in fragile post-conflict societies. The revision of the Employment (Transition from War to Peace) Recommendation, 1944 (No. 71), would guide constituents in formulating programmes to promote employment and decent work and in strengthening their capacity to resist crises. Against that background, African countries were increasing their efforts to tie their economies in with the world economy through measures aimed at attracting direct foreign investment and economic diversification. However, those and similar efforts required support through real and effective international cooperation. It was vital that donor countries honoured their pledge to commit 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) to official development assistance (ODA).

30. The Africa group agreed that social protection played a leading role in promoting sustainable development and reducing social exclusion; hence it was vital that concrete action should be taken on the 2010 Yaoundé Tripartite Declaration on the implementation of the social protection floor in order to eliminate extreme poverty, achieve gender equality and ensure social inclusion and universal access to healthcare.
31. *Speaking on behalf of the group of Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC)*, a Government representative of Panama said that at the HLPF, the Office should explore synergies between the efforts of UN agencies to implement the 2030 Agenda. The ILO's particular focus on social justice and its knowledge of the world of work meant that it was well placed to participate in the global macroeconomic dialogue, particularly with a view to eradicating poverty. Measures to encourage the formalization of employment, strengthen social protection systems, support the formulation of integrated action plans, and promote policies targeting the most vulnerable sections of the population were likewise vital to SDG 1.
32. Under SDG 2, initiatives to promote decent work in agriculture were essential, especially support for organizations of rural workers, small farmers and cooperatives. The transformation of rural work to offer sustainable livelihoods called for coherent, integrated policies at the international and national levels and the full involvement of the social partners. The ILO should seek to derive maximum benefit from its collaboration with other UN agencies.
33. With reference to SDG 5, the ILO-Gallup poll on women at work was commendable, since overcoming gender inequality was crucial to achieving the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda. As for SDG 3, the joint efforts of the ILO and other UN agencies to contribute to health and well-being were welcome, as was the strategy to achieve universal health coverage. The Office should strengthen its efforts on the interrelated targets.
34. Since cooperation was vital to achieving the SDGs, the ILO should pursue its cooperation activities in consultation with national governments, in order to ensure that initiatives took account of local priorities and challenges, on the basis of reliable indicators. South-South and triangular cooperation was particularly important. Developed countries were encouraged to honour their pledge to commit 0.7 per cent of their GNP to ODA. The ILO, as a specialized agency with the technical capacity and the unique legitimacy of its tripartite system, should maintain and deepen its participation in the global dialogue on the achievement of all Goals of the 2030 Agenda.
35. *Speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its Member States*, a representative of the Permanent Delegation of the EU to the UN in Geneva said that the following countries aligned themselves with the statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.
36. The ILO should assist member States and social partners to implement the SDGs within its mandate in collaboration with other UN organizations and stakeholders, particularly by promoting decent work and increased recognition of social dialogue as a crucial mechanism for job creation and inclusive growth. At the country level, Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) should be the primary tool for achieving the SDGs.
37. As to the ILO's role at the HLPF, the Office should provide guidance on contributing to the eradication of poverty by tackling unemployment, with special attention to youth and long-term unemployment. Furthermore, the ILO's mandate to ensure decent work was crucial, as poverty was often linked to decent work deficits. The promotion of core ILO Conventions and specific country programmes contributed to reducing decent work deficits,

and therefore poverty and hunger, especially in rural areas. Also crucial to ensuring decent living and working conditions for all were the ILO's promotion of minimum wage policies and collective bargaining, the establishment of social protection floors, and giving workers a voice through trade unions and promoting social dialogue. It was to be hoped that the ILO's programme of action concerning decent work in global supply chains would help to achieve decent work. The initiative on formalizing the informal economy was essential to the realization of several SDGs, including industrialization and the eradication of poverty; in that regard, domestic workers were particularly vulnerable.

38. The ILO also had a mandate to support governments in designing and implementing policies aimed at eradicating child labour, which might result from poverty, conflict and crises. The revision of Recommendation No. 71 should provide a solid framework for action in the context of crisis recovery, including for refugees. In the light of SDG 5, the gender perspective should be mainstreamed into all the aforementioned actions and policies. Women were still subject to various forms of discrimination, violence and harassment in the workplace. The ILO's activities to promote decent work would contribute to enhancing their rights and productivity and that in turn would help to eradicate poverty and hunger.
39. *Speaking on behalf of the BRICS countries (Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa)*, a Government representative of China said that the promotion of decent work would require a wide range of policy approaches to address working poverty and strengthen labour market institutions in rural areas. Moving people out of informal employment also required parallel policy approaches to promote employment and social protection, achieve gender equality at work with equal pay for work of equal value, and create decent work through industrialization. The equal participation of women in the economy was crucial to making progress across all the SDGs and targets. Given the large concentration of women in informal and unpaid economic activities, the ILO should establish a database of those activities and design focused action to assist women's transition to decent work.
40. With regard to eradicating large-scale poverty, quality employment was the most effective and sustainable solution. The ILO should work with governments to design employment policies as part of the overall strategy of economic development. In view of the continually changing nature of the world of work, the ILO should further study and disseminate policy approaches and best practices for eradicating poverty through decent work. The importance of development cooperation in that respect could not be overemphasized. Moreover, developed countries were called upon to honour their pledge of devoting 0.7 per cent of their GNP to ODA. Lastly, the international community as a whole should give priority to eradicating child and forced labour and to integrating young people into the labour market.
41. *Speaking on behalf of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP)*, a Government representative of Angola said that, in order to support its efforts to achieve the SDGs on time, the ILO should increase its development cooperation efforts, including through South–South and triangular cooperation, and strengthen its activities to foster social transformation, particularly in the areas of education and training, occupational health, technology transfer and innovation, and the promotion of gender equality. The promotion of decent work would have a widespread impact on the agriculture sector, as would actions to formalize employment and combat precarious work. Women's empowerment was a crucial cross-cutting theme. Overall, the ILO's top priority at the HLPF should be strengthening the mainstreaming of decent work in the achievement of all SDGs.
42. *A Government representative of Ghana* said that achieving sustainable development would entail recognizing the elimination of inequalities and higher productivity. The *Global Wage Report 2016/17* underscored the need to implement sustainable wage policies, but the challenge of creating decent jobs was daunting. More attention should be paid to the rural economy, which showed great potential for job creation, and the transition from the informal

to the formal economy must be accelerated. The eradication of poverty among vulnerable groups could only be achieved through greater social protection coverage, which was non-existent in many developing countries and was relatively low in Ghana. Moreover, decent work required gender equality, which entailed better access to education for girls, equal pay for equal work and the empowerment of women.

43. *A Government representative of Colombia* said that, as part of the institutional framework for giving effect to the peace agreements in Colombia, his Government was undertaking a comprehensive rural reform and implementing a progressive social protection plan. The ILO had a contribution to make in developing labour-intensive programmes, particularly in regions with weak institutions and weak local markets for goods and services, in assisting countries to establish social protection floors that took account of local conditions, in structuring solidarity-driven, social economy processes, and in promoting green jobs.
44. *A Government representative of Thailand* said that economic growth did not necessarily generate more or better jobs; the eradication of poverty was therefore not only a question of generating economic growth and employment opportunities but also of ensuring decent work. In order to implement the Decent Work Agenda, the Ministry of Labour had undertaken a labour reform which, inter alia, encouraged innovative human resources, improved working conditions in the informal economy, promoted the integration of information and communications technologies in the workplace, enhanced workplace safety and combated trafficking in persons.
45. *A Government representative of the Russian Federation* said that implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was under way in her country. The Russian Federation included social goals in its macroeconomic policy. Despite the fact that unemployment figures were stable and below the global average, spending on social policy had accordingly increased over the previous five years, focused on groups at highest risk of poverty, including families with children, the elderly and persons of working age without regular employment. Other priorities were to reduce youth unemployment and promote the employment of persons with disabilities. The minimum wage had been increased and pay ratios had been reduced. Social support was being targeted on the most vulnerable individuals, with the active involvement of non-governmental organizations.
46. *A Government representative of Zimbabwe* said that the ILO was central to achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Her Government looked forward to the ILO scaling up its activities to promote decent work in the rural economy. The ILO's efforts to formalize the informal economy presented vast opportunities to improve the working conditions and welfare of many workers. The ILO should also offer practical, tangible support to small and medium-sized enterprises and to cooperatives. The tripartism of the ILO should be extended to embrace the discourse on the SDGs, including at national level.
47. *A Government representative of Turkey* said that his Government fully supported the ILO's efforts to promote the formalization of the informal economy, as well as its Women at Work Initiative. Combating poverty and ensuring a decent quality of life for everyone were among the top priorities of Turkey, whose development aid had increased from US\$85 million in 2002 to US\$3.5 billion in 2015. Turkey also attached great importance to social protection and had made significant progress in eradicating extreme poverty, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, and achieving universal health coverage.
48. *A Government representative of Bangladesh* said that ensuring that no one was left behind was at the core of the 2030 Agenda. Issues such as youth employment, gender mainstreaming, inclusion of persons with disabilities and protection of the rights of migrant workers must have a prominent place in promoting the Decent Work Agenda. The global initiative on decent jobs for youth was a clarion call for providing young people with quality

apprenticeships and digital skills and fostering their entrepreneurship. His Government encouraged the capacity-building efforts undertaken by the ILO to ensure decent working conditions for migrant workers. Decent work was a universal notion, but such universality did not denote uniformity; the promotion of decent work must take into account the respective socio-economic context of each country.

49. *A Government representative of Mali* said that her Government had signed a transitional DWCP for the period 2016–18 with a view to promoting social dialogue, extending social protection, and ensuring full and productive employment and decent work for young people, in the context of moves to achieve SDG 8 and to implement the African Union’s Agenda 2063. In cooperation with the social partners, the Government had revised the Labour Code and had increased wages, reduced income tax rates and raised the guaranteed minimum wage. It had also adopted legislation on the prevention and treatment of occupational accidents and diseases, and a universal health insurance scheme was expected to be in place by 2018. National action plans on vocational training and employment had been adopted in 2015, and two major projects targeting young people, particularly in rural areas, were being implemented.
50. *A Government representative of the United Republic of Tanzania* said that the Government’s national employment policy was currently being reviewed in order to prioritize the creation of more decent jobs, the formalization of the informal economy and the strengthening of labour market information, as well as labour migration, skills development, labour productivity and the fundamental principles and rights at work. Furthermore, the Government had established a community health fund, and its social security policy was under review with a view to extending coverage, as was its national action plan for the elimination of child labour. He suggested that green jobs, enhanced occupational safety and health services, and skills development for employability and industrialization should be emphasized in the ILO’s contribution to the HLPF.
51. *A Government representative of Bulgaria* said that her Government had adopted a national strategy to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion, a national policy to gradually increase the minimum wage, and gender equality legislation to reduce the gender pay gap and bring its national laws into line with EU standards and international instruments. The ILO’s contribution to the forthcoming HLPF should highlight the prevention and eradication of all forms of child labour. Child labour severely violated the rights of children, it was both an effect and a cause of poverty, and it impeded the achievement of economic growth and sustainable development.
52. *A Government representative of India* said that her Government believed that employment generation and greater gender equality were key to ensuring that the benefits of economic growth were shared by all. Her Government was working on legislative amendments to provide for a statutory minimum wage for all employment. The ILO should enhance its research on poverty alleviation and, based on its findings, offer constituents guidance on how to formulate effective strategies. The ILO was requested to prepare a comprehensive policy framework to increase social security coverage in member States. The ILO should also undertake specific capacity-building programmes to support its constituents in their transition from informality to formality and, in the context of the DWCP in India, build employers’ capacity to implement decent working conditions in their establishments.
53. *A Government representative of South Africa* said that his Government firmly believed that sustainable employment was the optimal and most viable road out of poverty. He reiterated the importance of introducing a rights-based approach to decent work in agriculture and the rural economy. The Government remained fully committed to Recommendation No. 204 and continued to discuss the transition from the informal to the formal economy with its social partners. It had also agreed on a national minimum wage in consultation with the

social partners. Social dialogue should remain a sacrosanct principle for ILO engagements with member States and partners.

- 54.** *A Government representative of France* said that her Government supported an approach to sustainable development that was as inclusive and cross-cutting as possible and which fully integrated the social dimension in the 2030 Agenda. In June 2015, France had requested the discussion of decent work during climate talks and, as a result, a reference to decent work had been included in the preamble of the Paris Agreement. The country's energy transition law and its environmental initiatives were forecast to result in the creation of 100,000 jobs in three years. Lastly, the Government wished to reiterate the importance of gender equity at work and the need to reduce gender gaps in employment rates.
- 55.** *A Government representative of Kenya* said that her Government supported the proposals to improve livelihoods through agriculture and other rural industries and to develop socio-economic policies that promoted decent and productive work. To that end, the capacity of labour market institutions, including labour inspection, must be strengthened, as must skills development, occupational safety and health, and social dialogue in all sectors of the economy. The Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection, launched in September 2016, was to be applauded. In Kenya, the Government had strengthened labour market institutions dealing with social protection and was taking steps to attract young people to the agricultural sector, which accounted for roughly 30 per cent of GDP and had the potential to absorb more than 80 per cent of the unemployed youth.
- 56.** *A Government representative of the Republic of Korea* said that gender equality for and at work was key to sustainable development because it enhanced economic efficiency and promoted social justice. The ILO should continue to make concerted efforts to address the challenges of increasing the participation of women in the labour market and eliminating discrimination. A social protection system contributed to achieving stable economic development, including for vulnerable people, and the ILO and others should support member States in developing and maintaining national social protection systems. The ILO should take a leading role in implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly through capacity building and knowledge provision.
- 57.** *A Government representative of Argentina* said that it was essential to monitor the achievements of the 2030 Agenda. Statistics on poverty were alarming, and the creation of decent jobs and the eradication of child labour were crucial. Social protection floors helped to combat economic instability and social exclusion, and were thus fundamental elements in eliminating hunger. Universal health coverage, especially in developing countries, was necessary to keep a population fit for work, and would only be achieved through continued and effective collaboration with other relevant international bodies. Gender-based violence against women and girls resulted from gender inequality in many areas, including in the world of work; discrimination, sectoral segregation and stereotyping should therefore be eliminated. The industrial sector, with high levels of productivity and potential growth, was best placed to create quality jobs, and sectoral experience of job creation should be shared. Cooperation between States, international organizations and sectors was essential to make progress towards the SDGs. The ILO should be proactive in contributing to the efforts of member States, carrying out research in various fundamental areas and promoting intergovernmental and inter-organizational collaboration. A greater emphasis on proposals and solutions in specific cases could serve as a model for other similar situations. The concerns that had been raised regarding statistics and action plans were areas being tackled in Argentina.
- 58.** *A Government representative of Ethiopia* said that full and productive employment could be promoted if areas such as poverty, gender, industrialization and migration were addressed. Creating decent jobs would reduce poverty and hunger and promote gender parity.

Collaborative partnerships were vital to achieving the SDGs. Despite promising economic growth and recovery from recession, levels of global unemployment and underemployment were increasing. In many developing countries, unemployment had serious consequences, including political instability. There was a need for tangible measures to place job creation and poverty reduction at the centre of economic and social policies, in line with existing regional and international instruments. The ILO should support member States in designing appropriate national policies to engage the most vulnerable populations in employment. At the upcoming meeting of the HLPF, the ILO should emphasize the importance of political will and commitment to implement the SDGs, and the need for revitalized international cooperation alongside national initiatives to create an enabling policy environment that promoted decent work.

- 59.** *A Government representative of Pakistan* said that the ILO should focus on ending unemployment and creating decent jobs, which were priorities in Pakistan, and he commended the Office's focus on policy Outcome 1 under the Programme and Budget proposals for 2018–19. Given the importance of the rural economy in his country, and the links between agriculture and textile and garment production, he expressed the hope that the Office would engage in meaningful discussion on extending the Better Work programme to Pakistan. He agreed with the proposed policy approaches to eradicating poverty; decent work in rural economies, the transition from informality, universal health coverage and employment creation were of particular importance to developing countries. The ILO should provide technical assistance to analyse existing national legal frameworks that regulated the rights and duties of workers in the agricultural sector.
- 60.** *A Government representative of China* said that the End to Poverty Initiative would be pivotal to implementing the SDGs. The ILO should use its policy, development cooperation strategy, and programme and budget to help member States draft and implement sustainable development strategies. China supported the 2030 Agenda and had launched an action plan to lift 17 million people out of poverty through measures on employment, education, poverty relief and the social protection floor. International cooperation was needed to eradicate poverty and achieve the SDGs. China stood ready to participate in South–South cooperation to promote employment.
- 61.** *A Government representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran* said that the global scale of unemployment and youth unemployment called for more and better jobs. The Office should take constituents' different needs into account when tackling youth unemployment. Given the importance of healthcare to human well-being, the Islamic Republic of Iran was proud to have achieved universal health coverage. Refugees in his country were provided with employment opportunities, education and healthcare in excess of international standards. Immediate and concerted help should be provided to countries hosting large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Failure to tackle the impact of climate change on the world of work would compromise many countries' ability to achieve the SDGs. Successful, sustainable enterprises were crucial to economic growth and job creation and would require an enabling business environment. He emphasized the role and potential of cooperatives in economies. Since inclusiveness was crucial to the success of the 2030 Agenda, all constituents' needs should be met with an effective response. The Office should further assist member States to advance South–South and triangular cooperation, in light of its impact on the achievement of the SDGs. Reliable data would be key to effectively monitoring progress towards the SDGs.
- 62.** *A representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* recalled that progress had been achieved through bilateral partnerships with the ILO in key areas, including youth employment, employment and peace-building, and social protection floors. The United Nations Development Group (UNDG), of which the UNDP and the ILO were a part, was supporting national SDG implementation through UN country teams under the

Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support platform. Rapid integrated assessment missions advised national partners on aligning policies and strategies to the SDGs, data gaps in monitoring and reporting, and possible investments and reforms to accelerate SDG implementation. Progress had also been made on developing a pooled funding mechanism for SDG implementation. Finally, the UNDP was committed to reforming the UN development system and would accordingly seek to better organize its policy, programme and operational capacities to incentivize collaboration, work collaboratively to meet countries' needs, and ensure that knowledge and expertise accumulated at the global and regional levels fed into work done at the country level.

63. *The Worker spokesperson* reiterated the potential strategic contribution of the ILO, given its tripartite structure, the standards supervisory system and the Decent Work Agenda. At the national level, the ratification and implementation of standards and cooperation between governments, workers and employers would be important to achieve the SDGs.
64. *The Employer spokesperson*, agreeing with the comments on the importance of tripartism made by the Worker spokesperson, said that it was not possible to draw only one conclusion from the foregoing discussion. It was important to accelerate the pace of job creation and improve the quality of jobs by building an enabling environment for business investment and sustainable enterprise. A second focus should be on the transition from the informal to the formal economy, as had been mentioned by many speakers.
65. *The President of ECOSOC* said the rich exchange would provide a useful background to the HLPF discussion in July 2017. The diverse views expressed underscored the need for an integrated approach to achieving the SDGs. The four pillars under the ILO's Decent Work Agenda contributed to achieving the SDGs, while the SDGs also provided an opportunity to advance decent work. There was a need to ensure greater coherence, eliminate any duplication of work and improve communication within the UN system in order to respond to needs at the country level and make efficient use of limited resources. The ILO should strengthen financial and non-financial partnerships and alliances, proactively leveraging them to support national SDG priorities. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda depended on improving data and statistics; the ILO, as the custodian of 13 indicators, had a responsibility to build institutional capacity in that regard.
66. Rising income inequality inhibited progress towards the SDGs and had long-term negative consequences on productivity and cultural development. Bridging the widening gap between rich and poor would require a greater focus on living wages, rights at work, collective bargaining and social protection. Moreover, there was a need to address the vast informal economy; the transition from informal to formal employment would boost States' tax base, facilitating national development programmes and providing increased resources for public policy. The UN system and governments would look to the ILO to provide solutions for that transition. Finally, while implementation and monitoring of the SDGs was a common responsibility, as representatives of the world of work the ILO's constituents had a fundamental role to play in assessing progress towards the work-related targets and Goals under SDG 8 and other relevant Goals.
67. *The Director-General* recalled that the Agreement between the United Nations and the International Labour Organization, which had been signed 70 years ago, had called for coherence and coordination between the two bodies. The morning's fruitful discussion had been undertaken in that spirit, with recognition by participants of the ILO's role in supporting the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.
68. As noted by the President of ECOSOC in his opening statement, an integrated approach was crucial to delivery of the 2030 Agenda. "Integration" had several meanings for the ILO: recognition of the interrelated nature of the SDGs and the ILO's contribution to each one,

rather than focusing on SDG 8 alone; cooperation between the ILO and other international organizations, while continuing to advocate for more effective inter-institutional integration; tripartism, both within the Governing Body and in the country-level delivery of the 2030 Agenda; and implementation of international and regional strategies as part of national strategies.

69. Acknowledging the importance of statistical and data capacities, he recalled the Governing Body's discussion on the Programme and Budget proposals for 2018–19, during which reference had been made to investment in the ILO's statistical capacity and that of member States. That was particularly relevant since the ILO was the custodian of 13 SDG indicators.
70. In order to ensure the means of implementation, there was a need to sustain international development assistance and South–South and triangular cooperation. However, a large part of the resources would be mobilized nationally, through successful enterprises generating employment and tax revenues by operating in the appropriate environment.
71. The transition from informal to formal employment had occupied a central position in the discussion, and Recommendation No. 204 stood at the heart of the Office's delivery efforts in that area. Other substantive issues had included the extension of social protection, the importance of the rural economy and rural development, and gender-related questions. Underlying all those important dimensions of the Office's work was the ILO's normative contribution to creating decent work. It was vital to recognize, however, that the world of work was in a period of transformation, and that there would be a necessary interaction between the ILO's Future of Work Centenary Initiative and the delivery of the 2030 Agenda.
72. Institutions, which were understood in the ILO to be not only ministries, workers' and employers' organizations but also processes of collective bargaining, consultation and minimum-wage fixing, among others, should be strengthened. The ILO had a responsibility to build strong tripartite representation and capacity in all the institutions that sought to make the world of work fairer.
73. Lastly, he took note of comments made regarding the need to focus on countries with specific needs and contexts, and agreed that the ILO should consider how to channel its regular budget, regular budget supplementary account and extra-budgetary resources in a strategic manner to areas of particular need through its development cooperation strategies. He thanked the President of ECOSOC for stimulating a very important discussion.
74. *The Chairperson* thanked the President of ECOSOC and participants for their contributions. He would present a brief report of the main points of the discussion, which would be submitted as part of the ILO's contribution to the HLPF to be held in July 2017.