



Statement by
Hon. S.B. Nawinne
Minister of Labour

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Madam Chair and Vice Chairs to the Conference, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to greatly appreciate the report of the Director General of ILO submitted to this Conference, anticipating wider range of ideas, opinions, information and lines of thinking from the constituents on how the future of ILO work initiative would likely to be. The Government of Sri Lanka strongly believes that it is high time for us; the ILO constituents, to look back and assess what have been achieved during the past decade based on tangible results and to prepare future actions in terms of policy and strategy formulation and also the implementation of these strategies to achieve decent work for all in order to ensure social justice.

The ILO has greatly contributed to achieve its main objective - the social justice- since its inception. It has adopted 189 conventions and 203 recommendations. Technical assistance has been granted to its member countries to ratify and implement such conventions in law and in practice. However, we cannot celebrate the progress we made.

As Director General pointed out in his report, the world of work is undergoing with serious issues such as unemployment, underemployment, poverty, forced and child labour, lack of occupational safety and health, large informal sector in economies, low female participation in economic activities and many more.

I should not provide information in this regard to emphasise the gravity and intensity of such issues since the Director General has provided the same concerns in his report. Further we have to accept the fact that the world of work is changing ever than before. The prospect of a single job for a life time has become obsolete now. The short term and flexible work arrangements are increasing and direct employer employee relationship is not easily visible, because of increasing supply chain in the production process. Accordingly, the ILO instruments alone do not ensure the decent work for all and finally the social justice.

Madam Chair,

Therefore it is timely and an urgent need for us to rethink and reshape our labour policies and strategies with greater coherence as an overarching umbrella which addresses issues in the world of work towards the achievement of decent work for all. In this regard, a greater participation of different segments of the societies is required. Hence, I wish to place on record the assurance of the Government of Sri Lanka's support towards the future of work centenary initiative.

I also wish to appreciate and acknowledge the ILO support extended to Sri Lanka. The formulation of National Human Resources and Employment Policy, HIV and AIDS policy for the world of work, the National Strategy on Territory, vocational education and provision for vulnerable people in Sri Lanka, National Road Map of Youth Employment, National Migration Policy for Sri Lanka, implementation of Labour Inspection System Application (the automation of labour inspection) and the elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour through the implementation of Child Labour Free Zones are few examples for the generous assistance received by Sri Lanka from ILO. Moreover, I am happy to say that Sri Lanka has ratified 40 ILO conventions including fundamental conventions. An action has been taken to ratify the ILO Employment Policy Convention 122 and Maritime Labour Convention 2006. More importantly, under the new leadership of His Excellency the President of Sri Lanka, Maithripala Sirisena, we have taken steps to establish a National Minimum Wage for all private sector workers in Sri Lanka. All these steps are in line with the ILO objectives.

In conclusion, I reiterate the fullest support of the Government of Sri Lanka to the three stage implementation plan introduced by the ILO Director General in his report.

I thank you.