



ECOSOC Chamber, 31 January 2019, 1:15 – 2:45 pm
REPORT LAUNCH
GLOBAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURE OF WORK

Remarks by
H.E. Ambassador Inga Rhonda King
President of the Economic and Social Council

Excellencies,
Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me start by joining the President of the General Assembly in congratulating the International Labour Organization on its upcoming 100 anniversary.

The founding of the ILO is based on the idea that “universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice”. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisages a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination. It envisages a world of respect for race, ethnicity and cultural diversity; and a world of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. Social justice realized through inclusive and sustainable development can guarantee that human societies are resilient and can generate a lasting and shared improvement in living conditions.

Decent work for all has a key role to play in achieving sustainable development and the dignity of people. This is highlighted by Sustainable Development Goal 8 which aims to “promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”. The recognition that work, and not just any work but “Decent Work”, is a cornerstone of social justice and peace, continues to demonstrate its relevance in the twenty-first century, a time in which the world of work is radically changing.

Technological changes and innovation could be a driver of growth and development. But they are also transforming existing job profiles and related skill requirements. Together with

changes in demographics, globalization, climate change, economic trends, social change and environmental concerns, they will impact the world of work.

The people of today and tomorrow need an entirely different set of skills and a new system of education and learning. Our focus must be on reducing inequalities and foster greater inclusion as envisioned in the 2030 Agenda. To ensure inclusive, fair and sustainable decent work in the future, we need to respond to opportunities and the negative consequences associated with changing labour markets. The discussion we will have today on the report launch of the Global Commission on the future of work is therefore very fitting.

2019 is an important year for the ILO, not only because of its centenary, but also because the High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development will conduct an in-depth review of SDG 8. 51 countries are planning to present Voluntary National Reviews during the July session. These national reports will allow assessments of progress and identify challenges at the national, regional and global level.

The HLPF in July will also be reviewing other SDGs that have strong interlinkages with SDG8. These include SDG4 on education. They also include SDG10 on reducing inequalities, SDG13 on climate change, SDG16 on peaceful societies and robust institutions and SDG17 on means of implementation. With its redefined mandate, the ECOSOC Integration Segment will provide an opportunity to bring in the work of the ECOSOC subsidiary bodies as well as the specialized agencies to promote the balanced integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda.

The Economic and Social Council and its functional and regional commissions are an important link in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Labour issues are always an important item for these functional commissions. This year for example social protection will be addressed through the priority themes of both the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission for Social Development. Likewise, the ECOSOC Youth Forum and the STI Forum will have dedicated sessions to review the implementation of SDG 8 and the discussions around the Future of Work will certainly be at the centre of the deliberations.

The expectations are high this year—a critical year for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition to the July HLPF under the auspices of ECOSOC, we will have an HLPF Summit under the auspices of the General Assembly in September. We must sustain the momentum around the HLPF as we do need a robust follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda to ensure its implementation is on track. And we must commit to accelerating action in implementing the SDGs at the HLPF Summit.

The groundbreaking recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Work will inspire the discussions in all UN events.

As President of the Economic and Social Council, I look forward to continuing our successful collaboration with ILO to make decent work a reality for all and to achieve all the SDGs.

I wish you all a successful event and look forward to hearing your views.

Thank you for your attention.