

## RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

**International Labour Conference – 113th Session, Geneva, 2025**

**Date: 12 June 2025**

## FORUM OF THE GLOBAL COALITION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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### Opening of the Forum

- Address by Mr Gilbert F. Houngbo, ILO Director-General, Co-Chair of the Coordinating Group
- Address by Mr Luiz Marinho, Minister of Labor of Brazil, Co-Chair of the Coordinating Group
- Address by Mr Roberto Suarez Santos, Secretary General, International Organization of Employers
- Address by Mr Luc Triangle, General Secretary, International Trade Union Confederation
- Address by H. E. Mr. Luis Rodolfo Abinader Corona, Constitutional President of the Dominican Republic

Video link to the session: [ILO Live - Opening session of the Annual Forum](#)

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**The President of the Conference** opened the Annual Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice by welcoming distinguished guests and participants. The Forum was a pivotal moment for advancing social justice globally, marking a new phase of the Coalition as a platform for action, dialogue, and concrete partner-led interventions. He emphasized the importance of partner engagement, thematic dialogues, and contributions from over 350 partners, noting that the forum would feature panel discussions and partner-led conversations moderated by renowned figures. He also underlined the inclusive nature of the Forum, gathering Coalition partners and ILC tripartite delegates and invited wide participation.

The President invited the audience to watch a video on the Coalition: [Annual Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice | Global Coalition for Social Justice](#)

**Mr. Hounghbo** welcomed participants and expressed appreciation for the growing energy and commitment behind the Coalition. He acknowledged the gender imbalance on the podium as a reminder that much remains to be done to advance social justice, which was shared responsibility, particularly in ensuring women's full participation. Reflecting on the Coalition's evolution since its launch in 2023, he noted that it has grown rapidly in both size and substance. With around 350 partners now engaged, the Coalition represents a broad consensus on the urgency of advancing social justice in a time of global uncertainty. He stressed that the Coalition must go beyond advocacy to deliver results, and that this Forum was about how we move from discussion into action. He shared several concrete examples of progress. In India, a regional forum on responsible business practices has produced ten case studies. In Congo, a pilot under the Centre of Excellence on Inequalities has brought together social partners and UN agencies to deliver coherent and aligned actions. Eighteen countries have made strong commitments to scale up investments in jobs and social protection through the Global Accelerator. He thanked countries such as Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Finland, Japan, and France for their financial and technical support, noting that such contributions have enabled work on key areas like productivity, living wages, and operational support for the Coalition's secretariat. He also acknowledged the leadership of Brazil and Minister Marinho, and the efforts of the Coalition's coordinating group in setting direction and sustaining momentum. Looking ahead, he emphasized the need to strengthen the Coalition's focus on priority areas, particularly the impact of artificial intelligence. He cited the ILO's latest report on generative AI, noting that 25% of jobs—disproportionately held by women—are at risk, reinforcing that social justice includes and expands beyond the world of work. He called for urgent adaptation to the challenges and opportunities presented by new technologies. He emphasized that social justice extends beyond the world of work and requires collective effort. He called for mutual learning and self-reflection, particularly in the lead-up to the World Summit on Social Development and the Financing for Development meeting in Seville, to help shape a better world.

**Mr Marinho** welcomed participants to the second Annual Forum of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, expressing pride in Brazil's role as co-chair of the Coalition's Coordinating Group. He recalled that the Coalition, launched by President Lula in the same room the previous year, was created to place social justice at the heart of sustainable development—not as a complement, but as a central pillar of the global agenda. He outlined four core principles that guide Brazil's engagement: reforming economic governance to prioritize inclusive and sustainable growth; ensuring inclusive participation through joint solution-building; aligning climate and labour transitions with decent job creation; and reaffirming social dialogue as essential for building consensus and legitimacy. These principles guide Brazil's approach as the Coalition transitions from ambition to action in 2025, with implementation advancing at national, regional, and global levels through the Coalition's key interventions. He highlighted the active participation of over 500 stakeholders in recent Coalition meetings as evidence of broad commitment. The approach is deliberately inclusive and flexible, and he encouraged all partners to contribute—through expertise, financing, advocacy, or sharing of experiences. He announced that Brazil's two largest public banks, Caixa Econômica Federal and Banco do Brasil, have joined the Coalition, reinforcing the government's focus on delivering tangible results for people and communities. Membership in the Coalition, he emphasized, is a voluntary but meaningful commitment to mutual support and collective action. He praised the ILO Director-General's leadership in mobilizing hundreds of partners in pursuit of the ILO's founding vision: peace through social justice and decent work. Turning to decent wages, he noted that while real wage gains have been made, especially in developing countries, too many workers still struggle with inadequate pay. Decent wages are not only a matter of justice, he said, but a key driver of development. Brazil, under President Lula's leadership, is advancing policies to strengthen purchasing power and reduce poverty and inequality. He closed by reaffirming Brazil's commitment to multilateralism and wishing participants a productive Forum.

**Mr Suárez Santos**, reaffirmed employers' strong support for multilateralism, effective international institutions, and modernised partnerships, explaining that this commitment to practical cooperation is what led the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) to join the Coalition. In a time of widespread uncertainty, technological transformation, and declining trust in institutions, he emphasized the need for responsive, agile structures that stay close to real people and their needs. He expressed sincere appreciation to the ILO Director-General and his team—particularly the Deputy Director-General—for translating a campaign ambition into a dynamic initiative with growing momentum. Although employers had initial reservations, he acknowledged the Coalition's evolution into a more professional and ambitious platform, praising the contributions of the Coordination Group, including IOE's Malaysian member as co-chair. He underscored the need to clearly demonstrate the Coalition's value to the business community, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, and outlined three key priorities. First, he welcomed the 14 key interventions, identifying skills development—especially in relation to AI and digital transformation—as a top priority. Second, he stressed the importance of a productivity agenda that can help lift workers out of informality. Third, he called for stronger efforts to advance equal opportunities, improve access to finance, and ensure sustainable social protection systems. He reaffirmed the centrality of social dialogue, emphasizing the need to strengthen the institutional capacities of employers' and workers' organisations to ensure meaningful participation. He also pointed to the ongoing challenges that businesses face in many countries due to weak institutions and regulatory burdens, arguing that enabling environments are essential for innovation, growth, and job creation. Stressing that sustainable enterprises are indispensable for decent work, he called for more support for entrepreneurship and the development of MSMEs. Reiterating the IOE's readiness to contribute concrete proposals, he highlighted employer engagement in initiatives such as living wages and responsible business practices. The Coalition, he insisted, is not a negotiating table but a platform for collaboration and delivery. With the right ambition and commitment, it can offer company-level solutions to global challenges.

**Mr Triangle** expressed strong and principled support for the Coalition, describing it as a necessary and urgent response to today's interconnected crises—armed conflict, climate emergency, geopolitical instability, and rising inequality. He commended the ILO Director-General, President Lula, Minister Marinho, and all partners for launching the initiative and underscored that social justice and peace are not optional but foundational to sustainable development and shared prosperity. Against the backdrop of economic disparity, food insecurity, shrinking democratic space, and rising threats to human and labour rights—especially for women, children, and marginalized communities—he stressed the need for ambitious, coordinated global action. He reaffirmed the global trade union movement's full commitment to the Coalition and outlined three priority interventions the ITUC is co-leading: (1) advancing a human rights economy, (2) securing living wages for all, and (3) strengthening social dialogue for effective governance. On the human rights economy, he stressed the need to put labour rights at the centre of economic policy and called for reforming global trade, investment, and financial systems to move beyond austerity and invest in public services, decent work, and social cohesion. He pointed to the upcoming Financing for Development Summit in Seville and the Second World Summit for Social Development as key moments to build momentum. On social dialogue, he cautioned against the erosion of labour rights due to digitalisation and algorithmic control and emphasized the need to safeguard collective bargaining and worker representation. Social dialogue, he insisted, must be embraced as a pillar of democratic and effective governance. Regarding living wages, he welcomed global efforts and underscored the need for alignment with ILO standards, rooted in collective bargaining, cost-of-living benchmarks, and wage convergence to avoid fragmented approaches. He urged governments and employers to expand minimum wage coverage and ensure decent wages for all. In closing, he highlighted the Coalition as a renewed commitment to multilateralism and a just response to global insecurity and inequality. He affirmed that the trade union movement stands ready to work with all partners to uphold democracy, advance social justice, and deliver real change through collective action.

**H. E. Mr Abinader Corona**, reaffirmed his government's strong and practical commitment to social justice as the foundation for sustainable development, peace, and democratic legitimacy. Representing a country that places human dignity and inclusion at the core of its public policies, he emphasized that social justice must not remain an abstract principle but be translated into tangible outcomes: decent wages, safe and healthy working conditions, and universal access to social protection, quality education, and opportunity. He stressed that the right to work is more than an economic concern—it is a question of dignity, identity, and collective progress. He called for unity, dialogue, and mutual respect as the basis for building social cohesion. He pointed to recent wage reforms in the Dominican Republic, noting that the minimum wage has risen by over 60% in nominal terms and nearly 25% in real terms, now covering a significant share of a basic basket of goods. He highlighted further achievements toward inclusive development: formal employment has reached a record 5.1 million, with 46.6% of jobs in the formal sector—the highest in the country's history—and, for the first time, women now represent more than half of formal workers. He explained that formalization is being promoted with supportive incentives, in line with a vision of the state as a facilitator. He underscored the government's broader social policy agenda, including universal health coverage now reaching 97% of the population and major investments in education and vocational training. The expansion of technical training institutions, university campuses, and polytechnics is enhancing employability and future opportunities. These combined efforts have helped lift nearly half the population into the middle class and bring poverty and extreme poverty to historic lows. The Dominican Republic supports the Coalition's core priorities, including strengthening social dialogue, ensuring a just transition to sustainable economies, promoting responsible business conduct, and embedding human rights in economic policy frameworks. As a sign of the country's strong regional engagement, he will be hosting the next ILO Regional Meeting for the Americas. He concluded by framing social justice not only as a political and ethical imperative but as a strategic investment in lasting peace, democratic legitimacy, and shared prosperity. He stated that there is no better economic policy than a people in work, calling on all partners to work together to ensure access to opportunity, rights, and a dignified life for all.

## Key interventions Spotlight - Living wages: A driver of social and economic development

**Moderator** : Ms Sharanjit Leyl

### Panellists

- Mr Firmin Ayessa, Minister of State, Minister of Public Services, Labour and Social Security, Republic of Congo
- Ms Yolanda Díaz Pérez, Second Vice-President of Spain, Minister for Work and Social Economy
- Ms Sonya Mohamed Abdulla Janahi, Vice President for Asia, International Organization of Employers (IOE)
- Mr Anselme Amoussou, Secretary General, Confédération des Syndicats Autonomes du Bénin
- Dr Jeremy Farrar, Executive Director, Chief Scientist, World Health Organization (WHO)
- Ms Bettina Schaller, Group Senior Vice President, Director of Group Public Affairs, The Adecco Group

Video link to the session: [ILO Live - Key interventions Spotlight - Living wages: A driver of social and economic development](#)

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**The moderator** opened the panel by welcoming participants and introducing the discussion as part of the Coalition's Annual Forum. She framed the topic of living wages as one of the Coalition's 14 key interventions, underscoring its significance for inclusive development and fair globalization. She highlighted that the session would showcase partner-led efforts in implementing living wages and serve as an example of the Coalition's cross-sectoral and practical focus.

**Mr Ayessa** highlighted Congo's selection as a pilot country in Africa for the Coalition's key intervention related to Inequalities. He emphasized that Congo is actively contributing by finalizing a national action plan focused on social justice, with initial steps including raising the minimum wage and narrowing the wage gap. Low-wage sectors are identified through data collection and surveys, to guide reforms aimed at promoting wage equity and social justice. Recent legislative reforms include the adoption of a revised labour code and an updated public sector wage scale, both aligned with real-life worker conditions. The plan's next phase focuses on reducing inequality in access to jobs and entrepreneurship by strengthening social dialogue and enhancing institutional capacity, especially within the labour inspectorate. The strategy rests on two key pillars. First, improving public policies and programmes promoting decent work and fair wages in the public and private sectors. Second, extending social protection to all workers, especially the more than 85% of the workforce in the informal economy. Meaningful reform depends on inclusive governance, and the engagement of all stakeholders. In Congo, decisions are made through genuine tripartite dialogue involving government, employers, and workers, with additional input from civil society and development partners. This approach is now being expanded to a broader "tripartite-plus" model. He credited the Coalition as a vital platform -technical, institutional, and diplomatic—to support national social justice agendas. It played an invaluable role in facilitating peer learning and connecting with international and financial partners. His two takeaways for Congo's ongoing efforts: the critical importance of wage data and the need to index salaries to the cost of living, despite the challenges. Concluding he called to act boldly in the face of difficulty, reaffirming Congo's commitment to advancing social justice through cooperation, ambition, and collective resolve.

**Ms Díaz Pérez** emphasized that Spain's experience shows how progressive labour policies, anchored in tripartite social dialogue, can reduce inequality and promote social justice. She stated that defending decent work is essential to building more egalitarian societies, especially amid rising

inequality. Spain's decision to raise the statutory minimum wage by 61% over five years was a key policy that contributed to reduced inequality, record employment levels—including for women—and greater social inclusion. The minimum wage proved to be a powerful tool to combat in-work poverty, stimulate the economy, and lift wages more broadly. She explained that this strategy, along with labour reforms promoting stable employment and protective crisis measures, has supported Spain's strong economic growth and social cohesion. The results included a 22% reduction in the gender pay gap, wage increases for low earners, and particular gains for young workers. She described the minimum wage as Spain's most effective feminist policy, since women—more concentrated in lower-paid sectors—benefit most. Spain has also implemented transparency rules, mandatory equality plans at the company level, and a public tool to assess job value and identify unjustified pay gaps. She called for better training in collective bargaining and urged employers and unions to tackle the systemic undervaluation of jobs typically held by women, especially in care and social sectors—work that is essential yet persistently underpaid. She outlined four additional measures. First, Spain insists that no job should create poverty—decent work must lift people out of it. Second, an expert committee supports minimum wage decisions with evidence-based input. Third, company profit margins are now shared at over 5,000 bargaining tables to support informed wage negotiations. Fourth, Spain is reforming legislation to permanently link the minimum wage to 60% of the median wage. She concluded by affirming that reducing inequality is a political choice and a question of rights, praising the Coalition as a key platform for building fairer, more inclusive societies where no one is poor while working. **Mr Amoussou** emphasized that the ongoing global debate on minimum, decent, and living wages reflects a core, unresolved issue in labour markets—particularly acute in the African context. Many African workers remain in poverty despite being employed, while trade unions often lack basic recognition and the freedom of association, severely limiting their ability to advocate for wage justice. He stressed that empowering trade unions is essential, noting that they must be supported in building alliances with civil society to act as a real counterbalance to political and economic power. While wage increases are important, he argued they are not sufficient if inflation outpaces earnings. He called for a broader approach that includes social protection, health insurance, and other benefits that improve living standards and reduce wage dependency. He also highlighted the need for reliable data on wage structures, often unavailable or suppressed when it reveals uncomfortable truths, such as gender pay gaps. Inclusive and sincere social dialogue, rooted in mutual respect and adapted to national realities, is necessary. He cautioned against “cut-and-paste” solutions that overlook local challenges, such as the risk of low-skilled workers being displaced by automation. He concluded that wage justice demands structural transformation, stronger social indicators, and expanded social protection, especially in regions dominated by informal employment. Social justice, he emphasized, must be viewed not just in income terms but as a matter of dignity, inclusion, and equitable opportunity. He urged the Coalition partners to take a leading role in strengthening cooperation, amplifying workers' voices, and rebalancing power in tripartite dialogue through respectful, data-driven, and accountable engagement.

**Ms Janahi**, speaking on behalf of the IOE, expressed strong support for the tripartite agreement on living wages reached in February 2024 with ILO support. This consensus was an important step forward by clarifying two essential principles: living wages must meet the needs of workers and their families, and wage policies must ensure business sustainability by accounting for productivity and economic conditions. For employers, implementing living wages is complex and must be grounded in social dialogue, accurate data, and practical feasibility. Also of concern is the calculation of living wages linked to productivity, and applied without threatening the survival of businesses—especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up over 90% of businesses globally. She underscored the need for the ILO to play a key role in creating a credible, transparent, and consensus-based framework for living wages, and called for the establishment of a wage data hub to provide national-level information on wage structures, costs of living, and economic realities. This is crucial to avoid a “one-size-fits-all” approach and to develop country-specific, inclusive solutions. She further stressed that harmonization and coherence are vital: companies are already overwhelmed by



fragmented standards and compliance burdens. Any new living wage standards should add value, not duplicate efforts or overburden businesses—particularly SMEs. The living wage agenda should not become a compliance tool but rather a collaborative platform that supports dialogue, cooperation, and balanced outcomes for all. Finally, she insisted that productivity must grow alongside wages. Raising wages without tackling underlying issues—such as informality, productivity gaps, or lack of transparency—will undermine the goal of decent work. The path forward, she concluded, lies in sustained social dialogue, mutual understanding, and realistic, data-informed policymaking that respects the diversity of national contexts and business capacities.

**Dr Farrar** emphasized the urgent need for cross-sectoral collaboration to achieve social justice, noting that sectors like health, education, legal systems, human rights, and gender equality have amplifying effects on societal cohesion. He stressed that health is central to social justice, particularly in light of the pandemic, which exposed deep inequalities within and between countries. He highlighted the burden of healthcare costs, especially out-of-pocket expenses and the undervalued contributions of informal, often unpaid caregivers—mostly women—whose roles must be recognized and supported. He warned that the world is undergoing intense disruption, including geopolitical shifts, demographic changes, climate impacts, and technological transformations, which challenge existing economic and social models. These disruptions demand anticipatory, not reactive, policymaking. He also called attention to a growing mistrust in institutions and the need for organizations like the WHO and ILO to re-examine their roles and act with honesty and humility. He further urged the ILO to convene a coalition of amplifying sectors—including health and education—to co-create a renewed social contract. Social justice must be at the heart of development strategies, with science and data should inform action. Concluding, he called on all participants to move from warm words to concrete commitments over the next 12 months and reaffirmed WHO's readiness to collaborate under the Coalition to advance this agenda.

**Ms Schaller**, emphasized her company's deep commitment to fair and decent wages, noting it pays nearly 2 million workers across 60 countries and considers remuneration and the value of work as central to its mission. She welcomed the growing attention to living wages across not only policy circles but also boardrooms, supply chains, and among consumers. She highlighted the significance of the ILO tripartite agreement, especially its clear definition of living wage that considers both workers' needs and business sustainability, allowing companies like Adecco to begin building consistent internal models. She noted that wage structures are often shaped by collective labour agreements, making it essential to understand local realities. Furthermore, companies The Adecco Group is looking to the ILO for a credible, unified reference to guide implementation. She called for strong data systems, including an ILO-led global wage data hub and improved national-level statistics, with a mechanism to reflect company-level data. Expectations must be realistic, especially for SMEs, and any global living wage initiative must be inclusive, non-prescriptive, and supportive of business sustainability. She underlined the importance of social dialogue as the primary tool to ensure balanced outcomes. Living wages are now a strategic priority for the Adecco Group, and the company is fully committed to moving forward in collaboration with its sector federation (the World Employment Confederation), the International Organisation of Employers, and social partners. She concluded by reaffirming Adecco's engagement in the Coalition, calling the current moment a key milestone in a long-term journey.

## Partners conversation - Fostering a just transition through social dialogue

### Facilitators / Introduction

- Ms Celeste Drake, Deputy Director General, ILO
- Mr Colin Jordan, Minister of Labour, Social Security and Third Sector, Barbados
- Ms Sheena Mayers-Granville, Chief Executive Officer, Barbados Employers' Confederation
- Mr Antonio Lisboa, International Relations Secretary, Central Única Dos Trabalhadores, Brazil (CUT BRAZIL)

### Speakers

- Mr Luiz Marinho, Minister of Labour and Employment, Brazil
- Ms Sandra Hassan, Deputy Minister of Labour, Canada
- Mr Andrés Romero Rodríguez, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Costa Rica
- Mr Yiannis Panayiotou, Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus
- Mr Muhammadu Maigari Dingyadi, Minister of Labour and Employment, Nigeria
- Mr Chaudhary Nadeem Aslam, Federal Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Pakistan
- Mr Daniel Maurate Romero, Minister of Labour and Employment Promotion, Peru
- Mr Bienvenido E Laguesma, Secretary of Labor and Employment, Philippines
- Mr Issam Lahmar, Minister of Social Affairs, Tunisia
- Mr Mohammad Ali Mohseni Bandpei, Deputy Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Iran
- Mr Andy Ellul, Parliamentary Secretary for Social Dialogue, Malta
- Mr Burak Akçapar, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of the Republic of Türkiye to the UN Office at Geneva
- Mr Oliver Röpke, President, European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- Ms Miloushka Sboui-Racamy, Senior Advisor, Economic and Social Council of Curaçao and member of the Presiding Council of the International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions (AICESIS)
- Ms Linda Kromjong, President, amfori
- Mr Giovanni Pagani, Head of Inclusive Climate Leadership, C40 Cities
- Mr Ed Pomfret, Advocacy and Campaigns Director, Oxfam

Video link to the session: [ILO Live - Partners conversation - Fostering a just transition through social dialogue](#)

**Ms Drake** introduced the Partners' Conversation as a critical step in the operationalization of the Global Coalition for Social Justice, stressing that the initiative had moved from design to implementation. She underscored that just transition processes must prioritize people and rights, ensuring they are inclusive and rooted in decent work, equality, and social protection. She recalled that the Coalition was created to support concrete action and encouraged partners to use the platform to articulate specific contributions. She emphasized the centrality of social dialogue in managing transitions effectively and fairly, noting that the theme of the session — the human rights economy — reflects the need to place rights at the heart of economic decision-making. She invited partners to lead by example and shape the future direction of the Coalition through practical commitments and collaboration.

**Mr Jordan** highlighted the centrality of just transition to its national development, given its status as a small island developing state with an open economy, heavy reliance on tourism, and acute exposure to climate-related risks due to its location in the Atlantic hurricane belt. The country frames just transition not only through the lens of the climate crisis, which it considers an existential threat, but also in response to the rapid pace of technological advancement. Both challenges, seen as deeply



interconnected, have major implications for work, livelihoods, and social stability. To respond, Barbados launched the “Declaration of Mission Barbados,” a nationally defined framework aimed at transforming the country into a sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive society. This declaration sets out six missions, of which two were emphasized: one addressing environmental degradation—framed as a response to an “unhealthy planet in crisis”—and another targeting the challenge of digital inequality and technological lag. The government described the country as trying to “run an analog Barbados in a digital 21st-century world,” underscoring the urgency of digital inclusion. These missions were developed collectively through a vibrant and longstanding culture of social dialogue. Although not mandated by legislation, the social partnership between government, employers, and workers is a deeply embedded practice in Barbados. All social partners were involved in identifying national challenges and designing the missions, culminating in a joint signing of the declaration on May Day 2024. He emphasized that neither climate action nor technological transformation can succeed without broad public engagement, trust, and honest, inclusive dialogue. He further stressed that the social partnership model has enabled Barbados to mobilize its population and align national efforts with the principles of a just transition. In conclusion, he reaffirmed Barbados’s full commitment to the Coalition and its intention to continue contributing actively with other partners to address shared global challenges and uphold the goal of social justice for all.

**Ms Mayers-Granville** emphasized that transitioning to environmentally sustainable economies is both a defining challenge and a critical opportunity. She reaffirmed the central role of social dialogue in just transition, stating it is not optional but a prerequisite for inclusive governance, trust, and practical outcomes that support both workers and enterprises. She highlighted the Coalition as a key platform for accelerating SDG progress in response to global challenges like poverty and informality, stressing that climate action must go hand in hand with social justice and sustainable business development. From the employer's perspective, successful transition requires policy clarity, realistic timelines, investment in innovation and infrastructure, and the active involvement of social partners at every stage. She drew attention to gaps in inclusive governance, particularly in national climate dialogues and financing, where employers and workers are often left out. She urged that both must be part of discussions on nationally determined contributions (NDCs) and just energy transition partnerships. Focusing on small island developing states like Barbados, she underscored the heightened risks they face from climate shocks and limited fiscal space. In such contexts, transitions must not burden already stretched micro and small enterprises. Instead, they must be enabling and inclusive, supported by tailored solutions and public-private collaboration. Finally, she stressed the importance of the skills agenda in green and digital transitions. Employers are ready to support reskilling efforts but need strong national strategies and educational partnerships to align with future labor market needs. She concluded by calling for inclusive frameworks that empower employers and workers and ensure no one is left behind.

**Mr Lisboa** emphasized that the world is facing profound instability—from armed conflicts to escalating climate change—and it is the most vulnerable workers, especially in the Global South, who are the first to suffer. In this context, he stressed that just transition must be central to global climate decisions and grounded in three interconnected pillars: decent work, a fair energy transition, and the right to sustainable development. He called for a break from extractive economic models in the Global South that rely on deforestation and the export of raw materials, including renewables, without benefiting local populations. Too often, the shift to cleaner energy is occurring at the expense of workers’ rights and union strength, particularly in agriculture. He argued that energy must be treated as a human right to ensure universal access, with redistributed production models that bring supply closer to demand. He also emphasized the need to tackle informality, strengthen trade unions, and ensure that national energy plans clearly reflect commitments to just transition. This requires effective social dialogue and robust, accessible financing—especially for vulnerable countries—to turn policy

into practice. Reaffirming the centrality of decent work in climate governance, he called on all countries to transform political commitments into concrete action. The world is at a crossroads, he concluded: either we act boldly to address climate and social risks now, or we allow future generations to suffer the consequences.

**Mr Marinho** emphasized that the shift to local, sustainable economies presents a historic opportunity to create green jobs, upskill the workforce, and promote a more inclusive and resilient development model. Under President Lula's leadership, Brazil is committed to ensuring that this transition is just—meaning that no worker, especially those in high-emission sectors, is left behind. To this end, Brazil is strengthening public policies focused on reskilling and redeploying workers through partnerships with universities and research centres. Efforts include training in renewable energy, reforestation, sustainable agriculture, and sanitation—sectors with strong green job potential. He also stressed Brazil's commitment to advancing social dialogue among governments, workers, and employers as a foundation for an inclusive energy transition. Occupational safety and health (OSH) is a key priority, especially in the face of rising climate-related risks such as extreme heat and pollution and standards are being updated to better protect workers in the most exposed sectors. He highlighted the dual challenge of climate change and digital transformation, both of which require inclusive, rapid policy responses. He proposed four key actions: (1) mapping the employment and income impacts of climate change on vulnerable groups; (2) developing national social justice policies centred on reskilling and green jobs; (3) building partnerships to finance green economy initiatives; and (4) strengthening OSH in climate-affected sectors through international technical cooperation. The Coalition is a vital platform to lead a global, socially just response to climate change where Brazil has decided to actively contribute. In this regard, he reiterated his invitation to all partners to attend COP30 in Belém, Brazil, as a key opportunity to advance dialogue and action on just transition and climate finance.

**Ms Hassan** emphasized the importance of collective efforts and underscored that long-term economic success depends on decent working conditions and cooperation among workers, unions, and employers. Canada has established a consultative group led by unions to support workers—particularly those in declining sectors—in acquiring new skills aligned with labour market demands and transitioning into quality jobs in a low-carbon economy. She noted that Canada's approach prioritizes underrepresented groups, including women, in fields with labour shortages. Lifelong learning and foundational skills are essential to building a resilient workforce. Climate change considerations are now embedded in labour policies, exemplified by the Canadian Sustainable Jobs Act, which aims for a fair, inclusive, and sustainable transformation of all economic sectors. She highlighted Canada's investments in skills training and commitment to safe and healthy workplaces, including improved protections against heat and cold stress and better-fitting protective gear to ensure inclusivity. She concluded by stressing the role of authentic, inclusive social dialogue in shaping a just and decent future of work, and reaffirmed Canada's support for improving workers' lives through global cooperation.

**Mr Laguesma** stated that in the Philippines, social dialogue is a matter of state policy enshrined in the constitution and laws, implemented through national, regional, and sectoral tripartite mechanisms. As a country vulnerable to natural disasters, he described just transition as integral to development and social justice, addressing not only climate impacts but also economic restructuring and green technology shifts. He highlighted the 2016 Green Jobs Act and its accompanying human resource development plan, aligned with the ILO's just transition framework and embedded in national development and labour strategies. He outlined a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, engaging employers, workers, civil society, and government agencies. The Philippines, a Pathfinder under the UN Global Accelerator, has implemented just transition measures including

adjustment support for MSMEs, emergency employment and livelihood assistance, and active labour market programmes. He affirmed the country's strong commitment and contribution to the Coalition.

**Mr Romero Rodríguez** highlighted the diversity of experiences within the Coalition and its role in fostering shared learning and action, as a vital platform for promoting initiatives that align with national priorities and global social justice. With 6% of global biodiversity, Costa Rica is committed to preserving its natural resources while advancing democracy, peace, and social inclusion. Despite shared global challenges, he stressed the obligation of public institutions to promote inclusive development, environmental protection, and social peace. He outlined how Costa Rica, through the Labour Council, is implementing an ambitious Decent Work Programme focused on job creation, skills development, labour inspection, and reducing informality. The country is pursuing a human talent strategy and national employment policy grounded in tripartism. He pointed to just transition efforts, including green jobs, clean energy, and sustainable construction, as well as efforts to incorporate AI in a way that supports human work, notably labour inspection and employment programmes. He concluded by reaffirming Costa Rica's commitment to the Coalition and its willingness to contribute, emphasizing the importance of maintaining strong social dialogue to reach agreements that deliver high-quality, accessible services and improve living conditions for all.

**Mr Panayiotou** commended the ILO for uniting diverse stakeholders in a Global Coalition to advance social justice. He highlighted Cyprus's strong tradition of tripartite social dialogue and presented a recent success story: for the first time since independence, Cyprus achieved an 80% employment rate and reduced unemployment to below 5%, reaching conditions of full employment. He attributed these results to targeted reskilling and upskilling efforts, particularly in green and digital skills, where participation in learning initiatives increased by 742% over two years. These outcomes were made possible through effective tripartite collaboration via the Human Resource Development Authority, whose board includes state, employer, and employee representatives. This institutionalized dialogue enabled real-time collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and shared planning. He emphasized the importance of maintaining commitment to the Coalition's values and principles and expressed optimism about addressing future challenges through strengthened social dialogue. He indicated that his government is ready to contribute to the Coalition's key intervention on Social dialogue.

**Mr Maigari Dingyadi** described Nigeria's dual approach to the energy transition: gradually shifting away from fossil fuels while expanding renewable energy for diversification. As the energy sector is Nigeria's largest source of emissions, the 2021 Energy Transition Plan sets a data-driven path to net-zero by 2060, with targeted reductions in power, cooking, transport, and industrial sectors. Recognizing the social implications, he stressed the importance of ensuring a just transition for workers and communities affected by this shift. He outlined partnerships with the ILO, UNDP, and UNIDO to develop a Just Transition Action Plan, with the ILO also integrating just transition into Nigeria's revised NDCs. He highlighted projections that power generation policies could create 12 million net new jobs between 2020 and 2035, alongside job opportunities in off-grid solar systems, clean cooking, and methane reduction. Skills training centres are already equipping workers—particularly youth—with renewable energy skills and self-employment support. He emphasized the need to embed youth in climate action, with over 60% of the population under 25. He concluded by noting that Nigeria's new national employment policy and NDCs underscore a just transition rooted in social dialogue and a whole-of-society approach, in line with the objectives of the Coalition. This marked Nigeria's commitment to making a strong contribution to the Coalition's key initiative on just transition.

**Mr Aslam** shared Pakistan's experience in managing a just energy transition, explaining that during the 2010–2013 power crisis, the country relied on fossil fuel plants due to technological and cost

limitations of renewables. As conditions improved, Pakistan adopted a renewable energy policy, launched its first solar power plant, and introduced a net metering scheme to support rooftop solar installations. This approach led to 5,000 megawatts of solar capacity, mostly from households and industries. Hydropower was expanded with care for communities through negotiated land settlements and compensation. Public ownership of most fossil plants allowed for a gradual phase-out, with workers retrained and redeployed. He emphasized Pakistan's commitment to its climate goals and affirmed strong support for the Coalition, highlighting the country's readiness to actively contribute by sharing its experience and ensuring that communities remain central to the transition.

**Mr Maurate Romero** framed just transition as a challenge of inclusion—particularly for workers in poverty, informality, or self-employment. He presented the national registry of informal workers as a key tool for strengthening data-driven policy and targeting interventions to extend social protection. He mentioned the existence of 98 social dialogue bodies and acknowledged the need to strengthen the institutional mandate and capacity of the national tripartite council. He called for the ILO to establish minimum conditions to enable effective social dialogue, emphasizing the need to strengthen its institutionalization, and echoed calls to ensure topics like self-employment and dialogue feature centrally in global discussions to support formality and consensus-building. He highlighted the important contribution of the Government of Peru to the Coalition: the organization of an international conference that brought together a wide range of partners and resulted in the adoption of a Ministerial Declaration on Social Justice, signed by four ministers.

**Mr Lahmar** explained that Tunisia places great importance on social dialogue as a foundation for social peace, development, and social justice. He recalled that social dialogue has been a professional practice since 1936 in Tunisia, covering both public and private sectors, leading to wage increases and improved working conditions. The 2013 social contract institutionalized dialogue, and since 2017, a structured mechanism manages consultations on social and economic issues to support stability. He noted that Tunisia uses social justice indicators to guide policy and, as a contribution to the Coalition's agenda, has launched a new pilot initiative to improve measurable outcomes. This project adopts a citizen-focused, qualitative approach grounded in four pillars: universal human rights, equitable redistribution, social justice, and just transition. He emphasized that the just transition pillar addresses the impacts of major global changes—such as globalization, technology, and climate—on people's well-being. A pilot team involving ILO, government departments, social partners, and civil society has been created to carry this work forward. He stressed that these efforts depend on responsible, inclusive social dialogue.

**Mr Mohseni Bandpei** expressed appreciation to the ILO and partners of the Coalition for creating a platform that promotes collaboration on the 2030 Agenda and the Decent Work Agenda. He emphasized that Iran aligns its national priorities with the goals of the Coalition, focusing on reducing inequality, recognizing labour rights as human rights, and expanding access to sustainable employment. He described national efforts to combat discrimination, close wage gaps, and extend social protection to vulnerable groups, including women, youth, and rural populations. He highlighted the development of a national welfare database that improves the targeting of social services and promotes equal access, helping to reduce social disparities. He reported progress in human development, including an increase in life expectancy, universal health care (including for migrants), and enhanced food security. He reaffirmed Iran's commitment to just transition policies based on ILO guidelines, emphasizing the importance of social dialogue, inclusive development, and renewed social contracts that ensure access to public services. He cautioned that unjust sanctions and unilateral coercive measures have intensified inequality by restricting access to development and decent work. He called on the ILO and Global Coalition partners to assess and address the impact of these measures

and support equitable opportunities. He concluded by advocating for a shared future grounded in equality, dignity, and inclusive prosperity.

**Mr Ellul** stated that in Malta, social dialogue is not treated as a formality but as a driver of meaningful and lasting change. He affirmed that no sustainable ecological, digital, or economic transition can succeed without the equal involvement of workers, employers, and civil society, and that a just transition must prioritize the most vulnerable. He shared national examples, including the legal reform introducing a rebuttable presumption of employment for platform workers—achieved through structured dialogue—which extended protection to previously excluded workers. He also highlighted Malta's new national family policy aimed at promoting work-life balance and supporting families, as well as the broader Malta Vision 2050, which places human well-being at the heart of sustainable development. He emphasized that prosperity must be measured by dignity, equity, and opportunity, and that a truly just transition must protect all people, including children in fragile and conflict-affected settings. He concluded by affirming Malta's full commitment to the Coalition and to advancing inclusive, people-centred policies through genuine social dialogue.

**Mr Akçapar** commended the Coalition for its leadership in promoting a fair and inclusive global response to the challenges of climate change. For Türkiye, just transition is a strategic priority and represents a transformative pathway where social justice, economic rationality, and environmental responsibility converge. He outlined concrete national measures, including the Employment Strategy 2025–2028, which places just transition at the heart of inclusive and sustainable growth through green skills development, vocational training, and strengthened labour protections. Türkiye is finalizing its first national just transition strategy, with the ILO and partners, which will include legal, institutional, and financial support for workers and enterprises, especially in vulnerable sectors and regions. Türkiye is also updating its NDCs to reflect stronger employment and equity elements, ensuring climate ambition aligned with decent work, with the aim to create not only more jobs, but better ones—rooted in dignity, security, and sustainability. As a member of the Coalition's coordination group, Türkiye has expressed interest in joining the International Advisory Board for its key intervention on just transition. Stating that inclusive employment strategies and institutionalized tripartite dialogue are essential to the success of climate policies, he reaffirmed Türkiye's readiness to collaborate in building a transition grounded in solidarity and social dialogue, leaving no one behind.

**Mr Röpke** explained that the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) joined the Coalition to reinforce its commitment to decent work and just transitions. He emphasized that just transition is not only an environmental necessity but a social imperative and called for its integration into all policies—from industry to agriculture and digitalization. He warned that without meaningful social dialogue, national climate strategies risk losing legitimacy and effectiveness. He called for the establishment of just transition commissions and a comprehensive EU financing strategy to support transformative change. In concluding, he urged for inclusive, multi-level governance and reaffirmed the EESC's commitment to cooperation within the Coalition to ensure rights-based and socially owned transitions.

**Ms Sboui-Racamy** emphasized that climate policies excluding those most affected—workers, communities, and small enterprises—lack legitimacy and undermine the promise of a just transition. She stressed that social dialogue must be institutionalized, not merely encouraged, with proper legal mandates, resources, and capacity. Under the current presidency, the association committed to three actions: integrating social dialogue into national climate frameworks, strengthening capacity through tailored programmes and ILO partnership, and establishing regional hubs for tripartite coordination on social protection, reskilling, and job creation. She concluded by calling for inclusive, dignified transitions that leave no one behind.



**Ms Kromjong** emphasized the need to translate social dialogue into practical action, particularly in global supply chains. Representing amfori, she explained that its Codes of Conduct on social and environmental standards—aligned with ILO principles—guide over 100,000 suppliers in more than 120 countries toward responsible business conduct. Capacity building is central, with free training offered to help suppliers understand and implement these standards. She highlighted that social dialogue at the company level, though challenging, leads to greater business resilience and improved outcomes for workers and communities. Acknowledging that issues arise, she stressed the importance of collaborative solutions through employer–worker and buyer–supplier dialogue. She concluded by reaffirming amfori’s commitment to the Coalition, advocating for practical, shared solutions and a collaborative approach to sustainable trade.

**Mr Pagani** expressed appreciation on behalf of C40 Cities for joining the Coalition and emphasized that effective climate action must be grounded in social justice and robust social dialogue. He highlighted the critical role of cities in delivering inclusive solutions, given their proximity to communities and ability to turn global challenges into local action. He shared examples from Ekurhuleni, Los Angeles, and Accra, where local just transition initiatives engage workers, businesses, and marginalized communities, expanding protections and creating quality green jobs. He underscored the importance of coordination with national governments and expressed C40’s commitment to supporting the Coalition by advancing inclusive, locally driven just transition strategies and multilevel collaboration.

**Mr Pomfret** reiterated Oxfam’s strong support for the Coalition and welcomed its growing momentum. Drawing on findings from *Climate Plans for the People*, he stressed that most national climate plans still fail to meaningfully include those most affected—women, Indigenous peoples, workers, and low-income communities—making participation largely symbolic. He called for early, transparent, and inclusive engagement processes, backed by sustainable funding for civil society participation. Genuine social dialogue requires enabling conditions such as freedom of expression, union rights, and adequate public resources. He outlined four pillars of justice: recognitional, procedural, distributional, and remedies, stressing the importance of climate finance, reparations, and corporate accountability. Transition must be truly transformative, not just a shift to renewables that neglects workers and communities. He called for a rethinking of economic systems around care, equity, and sustainability, and urged global solidarity to ensure that all voices shape a just future.



## Interactive Thematic Dialogue - Empowering youth for social justice

### Key speakers

- Mr Felipe Paullier, Assistant Secretary-General for Youth Affairs, United Nations Youth Office
- Ms Mia Seppo, Assistant Director-General Jobs and Social Protection, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Ms Flora Chiper, Switzerland's Youth Representative to the UN and International Organizations
- Ms Kathryn Rowan, Executive Director, Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN Global)
- Ms Melissa Ansell-Bridges, National Secretary, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Te Kauae Kaimahi (NZCTU)
- Mr Ruben Escalante Hasbun, Geneva Representative, Global Citizen

The interactive dialogue spotlighted innovations and aimed to identify shared priorities for future action under the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth.

**Ms Seppo** opened the session by reaffirming the Coalition's vision to integrate youth voices—especially those from marginalized communities—into policy processes that shape the future of work. She called for intergenerational dialogue and concrete commitments, emphasizing that the success of the Global Initiative depends on shared ownership and tangible outcomes.

**Mr Paullier**, as co-convenor of the Coalition's key intervention on *Empowering Youth* stressed that youth must be recognized as partners and not mere beneficiaries. With 1.9 billion young people globally—most in the Global South—he underscored that youth leadership is central to realizing social justice. He also encouraged alignment with the UN Youth 2030 strategy and urged participants to translate their ideas into collective contributions to the Coalition's youth workstream.

Thematic inputs were structured around three key pillars. **Ms Chiper** opened the conversation on multi-stakeholder partnerships that highlighted the importance of inclusive collaboration with young people across sectors as well as leveraging opportunities to learn about and act upon youth perspectives and aspirations. **Ms Ansell-Bridges**, in turn addressed decent job creation and the key role of pro-employment macroeconomic policies. **Ms Rowan** highlighted the need to equip young people with future-proof skills placing emphasis on the opportunities that quality apprenticeships offer to connect young people to jobs.

During group discussions, participants emphasized that young people must be active contributors in shaping employment policies and systems. "Nothing for us without us" captured the demand and importance of meaningful youth participation to enhance ownership, relevance and communication. The discussions revealed common structural challenges, including fragmented legal frameworks, weak data systems, limited scalability of initiatives, and gaps between youth aspirations and labour market realities. Participants agreed on several shared goals: to empower vulnerable youth, train secondary-school leaders in decent work, and better align employment policies with young people's priorities. Emphasis was placed on building youth-supportive macroeconomic policies and enhancing the visibility of successful programs.

The dialogue closed with interventions from **Ms Harwood-Whitcher**, and **Mr Escalante Hasbun**. ILO constituents and youth employment practitioners were invited to (i) embed youth leadership in long-term policy planning and ensure youth-inclusive governance and social dialogue, and (ii) build on the momentum of the upcoming Global Youth Employment Forum, to be held in Korea in December 2025 as a contribution to the agenda of the Coalition, and to commit to co-creating pathways that deliver real, inclusive impact under the aegis of the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth and The UN Youth Strategy. In her closing, **Ms Seppo** urged that it is time not just to speak about youth—but to act alongside them, drawing on their energy, vision, and determination to drive social justice forward.

## Key interventions Spotlight - Responsible business for inclusive and sustainable societies

**Moderator :** Ms Sharanjit Leyl

### Panellists

- Mr Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Labour and Employment, India
- Ms Hélène Budliger Artieda, State Secretary for Economic Affairs, Switzerland
- Mr Datuk Dr. Syed Hussain Syed Husman, President, Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF)
- Ms Martha Molema, President, Botswana Federation of Trade Unions (BFTU)
- Ms Rebeca Grynspan Secretary General, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Mr Nathan Sussman, Director, Centre for Sustainable Finance, Geneva Graduate Institute
- Mr Lucas Szabo, Manager Global Public Affairs, Nestlé

Video link to the session: [ILO Live - Key interventions Spotlight - Responsible business for inclusive and sustainable societies](#)

**The moderator** introduced the session as an opportunity to deepen understanding of the Global Coalition's core themes, emphasizing that the Forum was a critical moment in the Coalition's evolution from vision to action. The session focused on responsible business conduct and sustainable investments, key interventions of the Coalition which reflected its cross-cutting and multistakeholder nature. It was designed to highlight how the Coalition helps partners align efforts and scale impact, bringing together diverse sectors under a shared commitment to social justice.

**Mr. Mandaviya** emphasized that sustainable development and social justice must be grounded in human rights and adapted to each country's specific context. Reflecting on India's path, he pointed to its immense diversity and population of 1.4 billion as both a challenge and a guiding principle. In such a setting, continuous social security and equality are essential. He highlighted the importance of skilling and upskilling low-income groups and called on industries to take responsibility for workers' well-being, including decent work and health services. As a result, he noted, India has seen increasing employability, steady economic growth of 6–7%, and rising purchasing power. Social security coverage has grown from 19% in 2015 to 60% by 2025, now reaching 994 million people—an achievement made possible by both central and state governments. While development goals are global, he stressed, each country needs its own model. India's diverse regions—with distinct climates and resources—require localized approaches. He explained that investments in labour-intensive industries naturally lead to production, development, and job creation, which he described as true sustainable investment. On technology, he acknowledged fears around artificial intelligence but said the challenge lies in how it is used. Like the IT sector, initially seen as a job threat but ultimately a source of employment and progress, AI can bring benefits if applied responsibly. He concluded by stressing that labour must be at the centre of development. It is workers' effort and dignity that build the economy. Ensuring their rights, fair pay, and well-being must be a shared goal, even as each country finds its own way forward.

**Ms. Budliger Artieda**, explained that Switzerland, as a liberal and decentralized confederation, relies on a bottom-up approach. The government expects its private sector to embrace ESG principles to future-proof business, and many Swiss multinationals have done so. This is supported by Switzerland's National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights, now in its third edition, developed in collaboration with civil society, unions, and business. As an example: Switzerland handles 50% of global coffee trade. Recognizing this responsibility, the government launched a multi-stakeholder coffee platform to support producers in origin countries. Initial public funding helped launch the initiative, but the private sector soon took the lead, allowing the government to step back. The model

is now being replicated for cacao. Switzerland, she noted, is a country of 9 million but ranks among the 20 largest economies, largely due to foreign direct investment (FDI). Swiss companies are expected to uphold Swiss standards abroad. She highlighted two FDI initiatives. First, during trade talks with India, she proposed FDI as a mutual benefit. In response, Swiss businesses pledged \$100 billion in FDI over 15 years, tied to creating 1 million quality jobs requiring skills and training—reflecting Switzerland’s strong vocational education system. The second initiative focuses on Ukraine. Alongside humanitarian aid, Switzerland is encouraging companies to invest directly to create jobs for Ukrainians, even during conflict. To support this, the government offers limited financial incentives—an unusual move for Switzerland. These jobs aim to generate income, consumption, and taxes, helping Ukraine’s recovery. She concluded by saying that expanding foreign markets benefits Switzerland too. When people prosper, they can buy Swiss products—and since Switzerland competes on quality, global prosperity is in everyone’s interest.

**Ms Molema**, affirmed that responsible business conduct begins with a commitment to human rights—stressing that workers’ rights are human rights. Decent wages, health, shelter, and secure livelihoods are essential. Trade unions are key to educating workers about their rights, which are often violated without their knowledge. She stressed that enforceable laws are needed, especially for multinational enterprises and their supply chains, which often neglect the social dimension. In Botswana, unions use a “workers’ app” to report grievances and connect workers with expert advice, helping them act without fear of intimidation. She described exploitative practices, including long hours, low wages, and piecemeal contracts that deny long-term benefits. With youth making up 70% of Southern Africa’s population, she warned against the rise of precarious employment and working poverty. Trade unions, she said, will continue pushing governments to uphold labour rights through tripartite dialogue. She stressed the need for workers to understand global frameworks like those provided by ILO, and gave the example of pension funds. These funds are workers’ money, but workers are often unaware or underrepresented in governance, and funds could be misused, including funding illicit financial flows or unsustainable ventures. Trade unions must advocate for transparency, stronger representation in fund governance, and the inclusion of social criteria—like decent wages and workplace safety—in investment decisions. ESG principles must be meaningful, not symbolic. Concluding, she called for urgent reforms to ensure justice, transparency, and accountability.

**Dr. Syed Husman**, introduced the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF), representing 70,000 employers and six million workers—40% of the workforce—giving it a seat in national policymaking bodies, including national councils on labour, vocational training, pensions, and workplace safety. He emphasized MEF’s dual function: shaping national policy and supporting the viability of small and microenterprises, which constitute the majority of Malaysia’s economy. Given their limited capacity, he stressed the importance of adapting national policies to suit different business sizes. For example, MEF successfully advocated for staggered implementation of new occupational safety regulations to ensure that SMEs and microenterprises could comply gradually. He also highlighted MEF’s investment in skills training through its dedicated academy, which helps prepare workers—particularly graduates entering small firms—for career growth and transition through the business ecosystem, from microenterprises to multinational companies. He underlined the role of national federations in voicing the needs of smaller enterprises and ensuring that they are equipped to offer decent wages, safe working environments, and sustainable operations. Finally, he commended the IOE for facilitating valuable peer learning among members. By exchanging lessons from both successes and failures, federations like MEF can apply tested approaches and technical expertise to strengthen national implementation and support inclusive economic development.

**Ms Grynspar** noted the rapid rise of the sustainable finance market—now at \$7 trillion—as the largest financial shift in history. However, trust in the sector declined in 2023, with new flows dropping 60% due to weak compliance and accountability. She emphasized the urgent need to restore public confidence by strengthening transparency and standards. She highlighted a second concern: sustainable finance is not reaching the most vulnerable countries. Despite large global investment pools, only 2% of foreign direct investment reaches Africa. To redirect funds where they are most needed, she called for reforming the international financial architecture to better blend public and private investments. This includes improving national investment frameworks, contract negotiation, and capacities in governments, communities, and businesses. On trade, she stressed its importance for development, especially in small and vulnerable economies. She criticized tariffs that hurt countries with minimal impact on global trade deficits and pointed to inequities in global value chains—for example, coffee producers earning just 0.6% of a latte’s value, and the DRC receiving only 3% of the value of its cobalt exports. She urged support for fair trade, value addition, and economic diversification. Finally, she acknowledged the promise of financial innovations like green bonds and debt-for-environment swaps but warned these are insufficient without scaling up private investment. This requires risk-mitigation tools, guarantees, and stronger multilateral frameworks. She concluded by reaffirming that only collective, global action can mobilize the necessary resources to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

**Mr Sussman** affirmed that there is no inherent contradiction between decent work and economic growth, as shown by advanced economies that have achieved both. The challenge, he argued, lies in aligning short-term incentives—especially in the private sector—with long-term sustainability goals. Just as individuals need regulation to save for the future, markets require similar guidance to direct finance toward sustainable outcomes. He described finance as a neutral but powerful tool that must be steered by society to achieve the right ends. While ESG compliance has helped establish norms of “doing no harm,” he acknowledged concerns about greenwashing. Still, he saw ESG as a necessary first step, with the next phase being investment that creates real impact—particularly in support of decent work. He stressed that “patient” capital is essential for scaling impact investment. Pension funds, which manage \$70–80 trillion globally, present a major opportunity. Diverting even a small portion of their fees could significantly increase foreign direct investment in low- and lower-middle-income countries. Modest regulatory changes—such as allowing a small share of pension portfolios to include long-term, illiquid assets—could unlock substantial funding flows. He cited LeapFrog, a private equity firm that directs capital to sustainable causes and adheres to strict external standards, as a positive example. However, he noted such cases are rare. He concluded by calling for more blended finance models and regulatory adjustments to scale up success, with public and private actors collaborating to channel capital where it is most needed.

**Mr Czabo** highlighted the vast scale and complexity of Nestlé’s supply chain, which includes 400 manufacturing sites, 270,000 employees, 150,000 suppliers, and inputs from 5 to 6 million farms. This requires a structured and proactive approach to human rights due diligence. He explained that Nestlé’s internal framework focuses on identifying and addressing risks such as child labour, forced labour, land rights, and worker safety across 14 commodity supply chains in 20 countries, notably cocoa and coffee. To tackle these issues, he described internal action plans, grassroots programmes with partners, and advocacy efforts to improve enabling environments. He emphasized the role of strong governance: the strategy is endorsed by Nestlé’s board and CEO, supported by cross-functional committees and local leads. He stressed the importance of partnerships—with governments, the ILO, IOE, and others—as evolving due diligence legislation raises standards. While acknowledging ongoing challenges, he said Nestlé is committed to refining its systems and improving impact. On SMEs, which make up most of Nestlé’s suppliers, he emphasized the need to involve them in due diligence. Nestlé has embedded human rights clauses into supplier contracts and provides tailored support based on

supplier capacity. He described tools such as the Maturity Assessment Tool for self-evaluation and the Human Rights Palm Fund, which offers financial support to suppliers addressing gaps. He concluded by affirming Nestlé's strong commitment to supporting SMEs, recognizing their success as integral to the company's own.

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## Partners conversation - Human rights economy

### Facilitators / Introduction

- Ms Corinne Vargha, Director, International Labour Standards Department, ILO
- Ms Peggy Hicks, Director, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- Mr Marath Baruch Bolaños López, Secretary of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico
- Ms Christine Nkulikiyinka, Minister of Public Service and Labour, Rwanda
- Ms Emiko Nagasawa, Senior Advisor, Japan Business Federation (KEIDANREN)
- Ms Toni Moore, General Secretary, Barbados Workers' Union (BWU)

**Moderator:** Ms Emmanuelle St-Pierre Guilbault, Senior Officer, Global Coalition for Social Justice, ILO

### Speakers

- Mr Giorgio Boccardo Bosoni, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Chile
- Mr Shadrack Mwadime, Principal Secretary, State Department for Labour and Skills Development, Kenya
- Mr Georges Mischo, Minister of Labour, Luxembourg
- Ms Tanzila Narbaeva, Chairperson of the Senate and of the National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Decent Work of Uzbekistan, Uzbekistan
- Ms Adriana Martin, Head of Social Issues Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brazil
- Mr Khelil Ghariani, Member of the Executive Board, Tunisian Union for Industry, Trade, and Handicrafts (UTICA)
- Ms Cristina Faciabén, International Director, Workers' Commissions Trade Union (CCOO), Spain
- Ms Magdalena Sepúlveda, Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD)
- Ms Adriana Quinones, Head of Human Rights and Development, UN Women
- Ms Merita Mesiäislehto, Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL)
- Mr Santosh Kumar, Director of Legislation, International Cooperative Alliance

Video link to the session: [ILO Live - Partners conversation - Human rights economy](#)

**The moderator** opened the session by welcoming participants to the Partners' Conversation on the Human Rights Economy, highlighting it as a pivotal moment in the Coalition's development into a fully operational platform. She emphasized the shared commitment to advancing a transformative agenda rooted in human rights, dignity, and decent work, and introduced the session, which would feature contributions from co-conveners, governments, and a broad range of partners to the Coalition.

**Ms Hicks** described it as a privilege to open a discussion on designing economies that deliver not only growth but also dignity, justice, and equality—stating that this shift toward a human rights economy couldn't be timelier. She pointed to rising global inequality, widespread precarity, and the debt distress facing many low- and middle-income countries as evidence that current models were failing to protect people's rights and economic security. Millions were working low-paid, insecure jobs without social protection, fuelling social unrest and undermining trust in institutions. A new approach was needed—one that fully integrates people and their rights into economic policy. She underscored that the human rights economy is grounded in partnerships, evidence, and practice, and thanked the ILO, workers' and employers' organizations for their shared commitment. She described work with governments, civil society, and others to embed human rights—especially economic and social rights—into policies and planning. Priorities included universal access to essential services, fair taxation, stronger anti-corruption measures, and recognition of care work. Businesses must also be



held accountable through legislation aligned with UN and ILO standards. She called for redefining economic success beyond GDP, and emphasized three focus areas: supporting countries in applying human rights obligations in economic and labour policies; informing global policy debates, especially with financial institutions; and providing tools to integrate rights into budgets and planning. The Human Rights Economy is in action, with implementation advancing in a number of countries through collaborations with the governments and stakeholders of Kenya, Chile, Moldova, Honduras, Rwanda, and Ethiopia. Finally, she stressed that global financial reform was essential, and urged all stakeholders to join efforts to scale up promising practices through the Global Coalition for Social Justice and its forthcoming knowledge hub. Building a just economy, she concluded, would require joint action to place human rights and labour rights at the center of policymaking.

**Ms Vargha** underscored that international labour standards are the ILO's vital contribution to international human rights law, the promotion of social justice, and the strengthening of democracy. Recalling the ILO Director-General's report to the ILC, she emphasized the urgent need to reinforce governance across political, social, and economic dimensions. She challenged the recurring narrative that democracy hampers economic growth, pointing instead to evidence that democratic governance fosters long-term prosperity and stability. Democracies, she stressed, drive economic progress by empowering marginalized groups, fostering accountability, and creating institutions that promote equality, productivity, and opportunity—demonstrating that freedoms and economic development reinforce one another. It also strengthens social peace and economic stability by enabling independent employers' and workers' organizations. Such democratic structures, she added, foster accountability, reduce polarization, and support long-term growth through dialogue and cooperation. Businesses, in turn, benefit from the rule of law, transparency, and public goods that democracies provide. The Director-General's report is a timely reminder of the mission that unites the partners of the Coalition: to empower people, to protect their dignity from the negative impacts of economic practices, and to do so not only as a moral imperative, but also as a way of giving peace a chance in today's fractured world – which is why the ILO was created and what the Human Rights Economy initiative seeks to achieve. The ILO sees the initiative as a key opportunity to tackle inequality and global challenges, offering a vision where people and planet thrive, economies prosper, and peace is possible.

**Ms Nagasawa**, representing the International Organization of Employers (IOE), congratulated the ILO and OHCHR on launching the Human Rights Economy initiative. As a co-convener, she affirmed IOE's commitment to co-designing the agenda and identifying areas where IOE engagement can have the greatest positive impact at the local level. Representing over 50 million companies through 150 employers' federations, she stressed that IOE brings the voice of business from both the Global North and South into international debates. She emphasized that the promotion and respect of human rights is not just a policy objective but a foundational priority for IOE, closely linked to inclusive growth and sustainable enterprise. She highlighted two mutually reinforcing pillars essential to the Human Rights Economy: first, a strong human rights framework based on good governance, effective institutions, and the rule of law; and second, a solid economic foundation, recognizing that jobs, enterprises, and economic opportunities are critical to realizing human rights. She urged governments to implement their international commitments and address structural causes of decent work deficits, such as high levels of informality. She stressed that business alone cannot resolve these systemic challenges and called for a collaborative approach rooted in mutual respect. At the global level, she encouraged coordination among the ILO, OHCHR, IOE, and others to reduce informality, improve legal certainty, and foster enabling environments. At the local level, she called for national ownership of solutions and stronger cooperation between international organizations and IOE's member federations. Social dialogue plays an essential role in building trust and co-creating rights-

based and economically sound policies. She concluded by reaffirming IOE's readiness to contribute actively to this partnership and engage constructively to achieve lasting impact.

**Ms Moore** emphasized that for workers, the human rights economy does not reject economic growth but insists that growth must have both a rate and a direction. Rather than focusing solely on value extraction, it prioritizes how markets create value through access to rights—such as quality public services, social protection, decent work and wages, and the balance between social, economic, and environmental well-being. Based on the understanding that “Barbados is more than an economy—it is a society,” to quote a former Prime Minister, social partners have developed a mission economy that integrates human rights into its 2030 vision alongside economic development. GDP is an inadequate measure of progress because it ignores well-being, equity, and fairness. Economic growth without access to jobs, healthcare, or education breeds frustration and distrust—both in national institutions and international systems. GDP also fails to account for national vulnerabilities or environmental fragility, leading Barbados and others to call for global economic reform through e.g. Bridgetown Initiative, advocating for fairer resource distribution, increased support for developing countries, and better protection from shocks. Barbados' partners with UNCTAD and the ITUC's supports the Beyond GDP initiative and the Sustainable Development Goals. Workers, she stated, are actively engaged in the Coalition and ILO discussions, with advocacy and action to ensure that rights are not only recognized but effectively implemented as one of their key contributions. She concluded by calling for fiscal, monetary, and economic decisions to be grounded in binding human rights obligations, emphasizing that delivering a true human rights economy must begin now.

**Mr Bolaños López** emphasized that Mexico's development model is rooted in dignity, equality, and social justice, part of what he described as the country's “fourth transformation” based on integrated sustainable development—linking economic growth and social welfare to advance human rights. He presented *Plan Mexico*, which aimed to create 1.5 million jobs for shared prosperity, focusing on three pillars—economic growth, social well-being, and inclusive development—and prioritizing support for marginalized groups including rural communities, indigenous peoples, women, and youth. The government seeks to guarantee fundamental rights including health, housing, and education, especially for the most vulnerable, an important contribution to the human rights agenda. He noted that 11 million people emerged from poverty between 2023 and 2024, 80% due to labour policy. He highlighted a 132% real increase in the minimum wage without triggering inflation or unemployment, with a target of covering 2.5 basic goods baskets. He also cited key labour reforms, including the ban on abusive subcontracting and protections for platform workers. Employment has risen by 12%, with 65% in the formal sector. He described *Jóvenes Construyendo el Futuro*, a government program offering young people paid training and social security, with 60% transitioning into formal work. Pension reforms now ensure up to 100% wage replacement at retirement. These measures reflect Mexico's commitment to building a fairer society and an economy that respects human rights. He concluded by reaffirming Mexico's belief that social justice is fundamental to peace and that the economy must serve collective well-being.

**Ms Nkulikiyinka** reaffirmed Rwanda's strong commitment to placing human rights, dignity, and social justice at the center of economic transformation, emphasizing that these principles are integral to the country's national development strategy. Through Vision 2050 and the second National Strategy for Transformation, Rwanda aims to create 1.25 million decent jobs by 2029, focusing on youth, women, and persons with disabilities. She stressed that economic growth without rights and protections deepens inequality, and Rwanda's policies prioritize a citizen-first approach to economic justice. To address the rise of informal and gig work, Rwanda has strengthened collaboration with the ILO and OHCHR, resulting in a joint action plan to enhance legal protections, social security, and accountability. These efforts are already shaping national planning—for example, the 2025–26 budget

process required each institution to report its job creation targets. She underscored the importance of private sector engagement to make the human rights economy a reality, noting that Rwanda works with businesses to align operations with human rights and labour standards. The national social protection system is expanding its coverage, including for workers in the informal economy. Additional initiatives include simplified taxation and support for youth- and women-led MSMEs. She highlighted Rwanda's efforts to promote gender equality and inclusion of persons with disabilities through targeted policies and accessible workplaces. The human rights economy, she said, is a practical guide that shows rights and growth are mutually reinforcing. Rwanda has maintained a 7.5% average GDP growth over the past decade, reduced poverty by over 12 percentage points, and created 1.7 million jobs, most filled by youth. She concluded by affirming Rwanda's readiness to collaborate globally and to contribute to the initiative through its experience, showing that inclusive, rights-based growth is achievable even with limited resources.

**Ms Narbaeva** affirmed strong support for the human rights economy initiative, which places dignity, equality, and justice at the heart of economic governance. She welcomed the vision of economic and social policies serving people and reaffirmed Uzbekistan's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development through its *Uzbekistan 2030* reform agenda. She outlined four national goals: achieving upper-middle-income status grounded in equality and dignity; aligning education, healthcare, and social protection with international standards; ensuring environmental sustainability; and building a just, modern state that serves its people. Key national priorities, including anti-corruption, human-centered governance, and environmental protection—all aligned with the human rights economy. She highlighted recent advances in labour rights, including full ratification of ILO conventions, constitutional and legal reforms, and enhanced protections for women, youth, and vulnerable groups. Uzbekistan, with ILO, is implementing a national strategy to expand social security coverage, strengthen services, and link social protection to labour market policies. She further called for policy measures that prioritize the care economy, education, and youth employment. She argued that economic reform and human rights reinforce each other and welcomed the Coalition's tools as valuable for countries aiming for inclusive and just development. She concluded by affirming Uzbekistan's commitment to contribute, learn, and cooperate, and called for all reforms to be guided by human rights and human interests.

**Mr Mischo** emphasized that in today's context of geopolitical tensions and overlapping crises, governments must respond to growing uncertainty by reaffirming democratic values and building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable future. He challenged the false dichotomy between the economy and human rights, arguing that economic and social rights—such as access to education, housing, healthcare, and social protection—must guide the way economies are organized. Luxembourg is strongly committed to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, highlighting the critical role of the social economy and its diverse actors in advancing justice, sustainability, and inclusion. Social entrepreneurs, he noted, promote employment for marginalized groups, offer affordable solutions in essential services, and help reduce all forms of discrimination while advancing environmental responsibility. In the lead-up to the World Summit for Social Development in November 2025, and as a concrete contribution to the social justice and human rights agenda, he highlighted Luxembourg's initiative to convene the first Summit of Governments on Social Innovation. Held in April, the event brought together representatives from around 50 countries, multilateral organizations, and private stakeholders to explore legal and strategic frameworks, financing, impact measurement, and partnerships that could strengthen the role of social innovation at the international level. The summit concluded with the adoption of the Luxembourg Declaration, which sets shared priorities for embedding social innovation in public policy and multilateral action. 17 countries have endorsed the declaration and he encouraged others to do the same to advance a human rights economy.

**Mr Bosoni** emphasized that the world of work is undergoing profound transformations—driven by rapid technological change, the climate crisis, demographic transitions, and geopolitical tensions. These shifts pose serious risks of deepening inequality but also open up new opportunities, provided they are addressed through effective policy and social dialogue. He affirmed Chile's alignment with the ILO Director-General's social justice agenda and highlighted the country's efforts to build a development model centered on decent work. He described how, through social dialogue and tripartism, Chile has enacted long-awaited labour reforms that aim to increase incomes, reduce working hours, and enhance the economic empowerment of women. He also underscored the government's care and work-life balance policy, which promotes co-responsibility by recognizing, redistributing, and reducing unpaid care work—an essential step toward integrating more women into the workforce and strengthening democracy. He stressed that gender policies are not separate from labour agendas but deeply interwoven with them, as part of a broader vision of social justice. He called for a new development model based on inclusion, human rights, and decent work. Reaffirming Chile's commitment to advancing a human rights economy, he looked ahead to the Second World Summit for Social Development as an opportunity for continued global cooperation in shaping a just and democratic future of work, an endeavour to which his country would contribute.

**Mr Mwadime**, representing Kenya as a coordinating partner, highlighted the celebrated the Coalition's impact in turning social justice from a principle into collective action, highlighting the human rights economy as a crucial tool for integrating human and labour rights into economic and social policies. He stressed that human rights are universal entitlements and that labour rights uphold dignity and fairness in the workplace—both essential to just and resilient societies. While progress has been made, he acknowledged ongoing challenges like labour exploitation, unsafe working conditions, and the exclusion of vulnerable groups from protection. Citing Kenya's constitution and its strong human rights provisions, he noted ongoing labour law reforms and Kenya's role as an Alliance 8.7 pathfinder country, with a national roadmap to eliminate child labour and related abuses which framed Kenya's contribution. He concluded with a call for continued collaboration to turn shared ideals into tangible progress.

**Ms Martin** expressed Brazil's pride in co-convening the Coalition and reaffirmed the country's commitment to placing dignity and justice at the heart of economic choices. Emphasizing that GDP should not be the sole compass for measuring progress, she welcomed the UN Secretary-General's high-level expert group on new indicators and stressed the need to redefine what success means, an ambition fully shared by Brazil. She highlighted President Lula's focus on social justice, noting that Brazil's G20 presidency prioritized inclusive growth, the right to nutrition, and the fight against poverty and hunger, important contributions to the human rights economy agenda. She emphasized the importance of ambitious policies in response to changes in the world of work, promoting sustainability through social programmes, artisanal production, and local economies. Concluding, she quoted former President Mujica to underscore the need to guide economic decisions by respect for life, freedom, and peace.

**Ms Faciaben** recalled that the Workers' Commission was among the first trade unions to join the Coalition, reflecting a strong belief in multilateralism and in the ILO's tripartite model, where social dialogue is central and the world of work is key to achieving social justice. She stressed that trade unions are essential actors in building an economy based on human rights, grounded in equity, redistribution of wealth, and people's well-being—one that rejects the treatment of work as a commodity. She argued that a true human rights economy must place decent work at its centre—not merely employment, but work with fair pay, safety, social protection, and freedom of association, including the right to strike. She pointed to Spain as proof that economic growth and workers' rights are compatible when built on social dialogue. She emphasized that only through trade union

participation can rights and environmental standards be guaranteed in global supply chains. She concluded by affirming that organized workers are ready to transform the economy and help build fairer and more democratic societies, contributing actively to the implementation of human rights and related labour rights.

**Mr Ghariani** considered the human rights economy thematic to be of fundamental importance. He emphasized that productive, decent work—as defined by the UN and the ILO—is essential to realizing those rights, and that enterprises, as engines of job creation, depend on an enabling environment shaped by effective public policies such as transportation, infrastructure, and social protection systems. The achievement of work-related rights relies not only on business productivity but also on state action, including salary policies that reflect both economic growth and inflation. He called for a new global social contract grounded in trust—especially critical in countries of the Global South—and built through public sector reforms that re-establish confidence between citizens, administrations, and enterprises. He also underscored the importance of recognizing the value of work as a convertible and measurable contribution to societal well-being, and linked this to broader goals such as education, housing, and social mobility. To deliver on these ambitions, he concluded, strong economic and social policies and efficient use of public resources are indispensable.

**Ms Sepulveda** underscored the urgency of embracing the human rights economy amid growing global crises—deepening inequality, rising poverty, surging debt, and missed climate targets. She argued that current economic structures are failing and that the belief in growth alone as a solution is a misconception. The disconnect between economic policymaking and human rights, she said, is not inevitable but the result of deliberate policy choices. A human rights economy, by contrast, centers people and the planet in all economic, fiscal, and investment decisions, grounded in states' existing human rights obligations. As a contribution she outlined five key principles that shape this model and guide her institute's work: investing in human development, tackling inequality, promoting a just and sustainable economy, supporting alternative models like the social and solidarity economy, and moving beyond GDP to focus on dignity and well-being. She also shared policy recommendations relevant for the upcoming Second World Summit on Social Development, including universal social protection, fair wages, access to essential public services, and sustainable development. A human rights economy, she concluded, is not just an alternative—it is a necessary path toward a more inclusive, resilient, and just future.

**Ms Quinones** emphasized that feminist economists and gender equality advocates have long called for embedding human rights into economic systems. However, dominant economic models have often failed to uphold dignity and gender equality, instead reinforcing exclusion, inequality, and unsustainable practices. She called for a paradigm shift to an economy grounded in gender equality and international human rights obligations, which provide powerful tools for advocacy, reform, and inclusive development. She stressed the importance of substantive equality, meaning not just legal recognition but actual redistribution of resources through rights-based policies. States must align legislation, budgets, and policies with their human rights duties, including the use of gender-responsive budgeting and countercyclical fiscal and industrial policies to foster gender-equitable growth. Failing to do so, she said, is not only bad policy but a violation of rights. She highlighted UN Women's leadership in framing gender equality through a human rights lens, citing the 2022 Buenos Aires Commitment as a landmark roadmap for care as a public good and gender-responsive development. She concluded by reaffirming UN Women's strong engagement and contribution in the Global Coalition for Social Justice, building on its partnerships with ILO and OHCHR through EPIC and the Global Accelerator.



**Ms Mesiäislehto** reaffirmed Finland's strong support for the Coalition, noting that the human rights economy aligns closely with Finland's well-being economy approach. Developed by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, this model integrates social justice and ecological sustainability into economic policymaking, going beyond GDP to focus on health, education, decent work, gender equality, and intergenerational fairness and therefore represents an interesting contribution to the human rights economy. She described national efforts to operationalize this model, including a governance framework for sustainable decision-making, new well-being indicators, and participatory budgeting at the municipal level. These tools aim to guide fair, inclusive, and future-oriented policies. She emphasized that the human rights economy reinforces this work by grounding it in legal commitments. Finland is ready to contribute to the Coalition's work and global discussions, including at the upcoming World Social Summit.

**Mr Kumar** expressed strong support for the Human Rights Economy Initiative - action-driven, aspirational, and urgently needed. Speaking on behalf of the International Cooperative Alliance and the wider social and solidarity economy (SSE), he underscored that shifting from a profit-maximization model to a human rights-based economy is essential to address inequality, exclusion, and environmental degradation. He recalled the UN Special Rapporteur's call for a post-growth transition, identifying the SSE—comprising cooperatives, mutuals, associations, and social enterprises—as a central vehicle for such a transformation. SSE values are rooted in humanity's cultural heritage and emphasized the recent recognition by the ILO and UN of SSE's role in promoting decent work, social justice, sustainability, and human rights. For the UN International Year of Cooperatives in 2025, he urged governments to invest in and enable SSE initiatives, especially in care work, the transition from informality to formality, ecological transitions, and digital inclusion. He concluded by highlighting the importance of continued partnerships and reaffirming ICA's commitment to advancing social justice and building a human rights-based economy that delivers lasting peace, and to contribute actively to the initiative.



## Interactive Thematic Dialogue – Leading change: AI for social impact

### Co-conveners

- Ms Celeste Drake, Deputy Director General, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Mr Bilel Jamoussi, Deputy to the Director, Chief of Study Groups and Policy Department, Standardization Bureau, International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

### Speakers

- Mr Younes Sekkouri, Minister of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment and Skills, Morocco
- Ms Anousheh Karvar, Government of France representative to the ILO
- Mr Arne Franke, Director, Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA)
- Mr Jesse Wilderman, Director, UNI Global Union
- Mr Nicolás Ratto, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Chile
- Mr Maximilian Schneider, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany
- Mr Marek Troszyński, National Research Institute of Poland (NASK)
- Mr Oliver Röpke, President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)
- Mr Javier Elkin, Digital Health Coordinator, International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (ICRC)

## Interactive Thematic Dialogue: Leading Change: AI for Social Impact

The thematic dialogue gathered more than 50 participants exploring how AI can be steered to support social justice and decent work, emphasizing the need for collective responsibility, ethical frameworks, and inclusive innovation.

**Ms Drake** opened the interactive dialogue by emphasizing that while concerns over job losses persist, AI is more likely to reshape tasks than eliminate roles. She urged a shift in focus toward job quality and inclusion, calling for continuous data generation, policy adaptation, and engagement across governments, workers, and employers.

**Mr Jamoussi** emphasized the role of global technical standards in building trustworthy, safe AI. He noted that inclusive progress requires equipping all stakeholders—from regulators to frontline workers—with the skills to engage meaningfully in AI development and governance.

**Ms Karvar**, Government Representative of France to the ILO, presented one of the deliverable of the Coalition's Key intervention on AI for Social Impact: the Network of Observatories on AI and Work as a new multilateral platform for aligning research, sharing data, and coordinating policy across jurisdictions and invited broader participation.

**Mr Sekkouri**, Minister of Economic Inclusion, Small Business, Employment, and Skills of Morocco, highlighted the shift AI is driving in work-life organization. He projected a rise in self-employment and agile entrepreneurship and called for legislative flexibility and global governance to ensure AI benefits developing economies and supports young workers.

During the session three expert-led thematic groups explored priority areas. The AI Solutions table featured **Mr Schneider**, **Mr Ratto**, and **Mr Elkin**. They presented AI use cases in workforce management and employment services, as part of their contribution to the Coalition. Key takeaways included the need for better peer learning infrastructure and cross-border data safeguards to prevent regulatory loopholes. The Social Dialogue group, introduced by **Mr Franke**, **Mr Wilderman** and **Mr**

**Röpke** focused on algorithmic management and the need to strengthen collective bargaining mechanisms in digital contexts. Transparency and protection for workers—particularly in supply chains—were highlighted as urgent needs. The Evidence and Impact discussion, introduced by **Mr Troszyński** and **Ms Trino**, emphasized gaps in cross-national data comparability and proposed pilot programs—like AI in education or AI for all—to promote inclusivity and iterative policy design.

Across discussions, participants called for global coordination on legal accountability, stronger knowledge-sharing channels, and investment in inclusive AI capacity-building. The session closed with a shared commitment to ensure AI serves as a driver of equitable development, grounded in social dialogue and ethical governance.

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## Official closing, chaired by the President of the International Labour Conference

- Address by Mr Gilbert F. Hounbo, ILO Director-General, Co-Chair of the Coordinating Group
- Address by Mr Luiz Marinho, Minister of Labor of Brazil, Co-Chair of the Coordinating Group

Video link to the session: [ILO Live - Closing session of the Annual Forum](#)

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**The President of the Conference** expressed appreciation for the day's rich thematic discussions and introducing the concluding reflections from key leaders. He thanked all participants for their engagement, setting the stage for a unified and forward-looking closure to the event.

**Mr Hounbo** praised the strong turnout and vibrant energy throughout the Forum as evidence of a growing global commitment to social justice. He underscored the Coalition's unique role as a unifying and action-oriented platform that brings together partners from all sectors and regions. Reflecting on national examples—from Chile's institutional reforms to Malta and Cyprus' commitments—he highlighted the Coalition's core function as a space for collective learning, and thanked the Coordinating Group for its leadership in amplifying and aligning partner actions. He stressed that the ultimate challenge lies in delivering concrete results on the ground. He reaffirmed that fighting inequality and expanding universal access to opportunity must transcend politics and remain central to sustainable growth strategies. The Coalition, he concluded, is an essential tool for connecting knowledge with action to build fairer, more inclusive societies.

**Mr Marinho** offered closing reflections grounded in gratitude and optimism. He celebrated the Coalition as a dynamic and diverse movement that has successfully mobilized over 370 partners around common priorities. He reaffirmed President Lula's vision that collective leadership is essential to achieving social transformation, emphasizing that the Forum showcased the power of cooperation—from social dialogue to human-centred economic reform. Looking to the future, Marinho committed to deepening policy alignment across the Coalition's 14 key interventions and called for greater coherence and effectiveness in partners' contributions. He highlighted two major upcoming milestones: the 2025 World Summit for Social Development in Qatar and COP30 in Brazil. Extending a formal invitation to the latter, he framed it as a unique opportunity to integrate environmental sustainability with decent work, social protection, and productive inclusion. He closed by underscoring the importance of equitable wealth distribution and the promotion of democracy as pillars of just and inclusive development.