

Abu Dhabi Dialogue
Fifth Ministerial Consultation
Dubai, 16 - 17 October 2019

Opening Session

Keynote address by Ruba Jaradat, Regional Director for Arab States, ILO

Your Excellencies ministers of Abu Dhabi Dialogue member states,

Esteemed colleagues and partners,

Ladies and Gentleman,

- On behalf of the ILO Director-General, Guy Ryder, I would like to thank the ADD Chair-in-Office (Sri Lanka) for inviting the ILO, in its observer capacity, to contribute to the 5th Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD).
- The ADD space continues to witness significant labour migration and mobility, particularly between Asia and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. ILO estimates from 2017 show that, the Arab States (including GCC countries) hosted 23 million (or 14 per cent) of the world's 164 million migrant workers. Most migrant workers in the Arab States came from South and Southeast Asia. While the majority were men (19 million), there were also 4 million women migrant workers.
- The ADD therefore is a key interregional forum on labour mobility, and also an important testing-ground for policy innovation.
- In this regard, I wish to congratulate the UAE on its continuing support and commitment to dialogues on migration, through its assumption of the next ADD Chair and the Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2020.
- The agenda for this 5th Ministerial Consultation focuses on many issues of interest and concern to the ILO. The ADD agenda's inclusion of the **Future of Work** this year is timely. This year the ILO celebrated its 100th anniversary, and the "Future of Work initiative" has in fact been the main ILO centenary initiative and a cornerstone of much of our recent work. As a first step, more than 110 countries initiated national tripartite dialogues on this matter. The ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work was then established, and has **produced an independent report** on how to achieve a future of work that provides decent and sustainable work opportunities for all. A Universal Labour Guarantee, social protection from birth to old age, and an entitlement to lifelong learning are among the 10 recommendations provided in this report.
- The work of the Global Commission also helped craft the **ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work**, which was adopted this June at the 108th Session of the International Labour Conference. The declaration looks at the major challenges and opportunities for the future of work, and provides guidance for addressing these pressing issues. The declaration is structured around three pillars: 1) investing in people's capabilities, 2) investing in the institutions of work, and 3) investing in decent and sustainable work.

- In the ADD member states, **investing in skills development and skills recognition** in particular is of great importance, and can lead to improved and more effective labour migration and mobility. Enhanced skills and lifelong learning can help workers and economies take advantage of opportunities in the future, act as an important enabler of transition, and address some of the associated costs.
- In April 2019, here in Dubai, the ILO facilitated a **high-level symposium on the future of work** for ADD Senior Officials, during which a range of ILO experts presented the findings of the ILO Global Commission Report on the Future of Work. They also outlined potential ways of integrating the report's three pillars of investment into national policies. Based on a request by the ADD Secretariat to compile a technical report of good practices relating to the incorporation of Future of Work initiatives into national employment policies and other strategies, the ILO has prepared a report for this 5th Ministerial Consultation, which will be presented and discussed tomorrow.
- We also welcome the inclusion of **domestic work** on the ADD agenda given that the GCC hosts a significant population of domestic workers. According to the report on the **Future of Domestic Work in the GCC**, submitted to the ADD last year, in 2016 GCC countries hosted 3.77 million domestic workers. Of these 1.65 million - or 44 per cent - were women. Domestic workers also make an increasing contribution to **care economies** in GCC countries. The initiative to develop demand-driven competency standards for several domestic worker occupations in the UAE is therefore an important step in recognizing domestic work as a valued profession, which will also enhance decent work for this particular category of workers.
- The ILO is working with governments and social partners across the region to promote decent working and living conditions for domestic workers, in accordance with international labour standards as reflected in the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and its accompanying Recommendation No. 203.
- The continued inclusion of **fair and ethical recruitment and skills certification and recognition** on the ADD agenda is also welcome. These topics resonate closely with important aspects of the ILO's current work on labour migration and mobility, not least in the promotion and implementation of the ILO General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment and the Definition of Recruitment Fees and Related Costs. These topics also tie in with the ILO's participation in the **Global Skills Partnership on Migration** - together with other UN agencies, the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). This partnership aims to mobilize technical expertise of the organizations involved towards supporting governments, employers, workers, educational institutions and training providers, and other stakeholders **to develop and recognize the skills of migrant workers** with a particular focus on women and youth. As such, it is well aligned with the Future of Work investment in skills development and skills recognition that I mentioned earlier.
- We at the ILO support the initiative to hold a dedicated discussion on **inter-regional cooperation**, and to invite representatives of global and regional consultative processes (RCPs) to discuss the opportunities and challenges of collaboration on human mobility. The aim is also to make such dialogue processes more effective and impactful for the benefit of all stakeholders - namely countries of destination and origin, as well as migrants and their families.

- The ILO's very essence – its tripartite nature which brings together governments and worker and employer representatives - reflects the principles of social dialogue (and collaboration) in the world of work, including in the context of migration and mobility for employment across borders.
- In this context, the ILO is also planning to organize an inter-regional meeting on “Labour Mobility between Asia and the Arab States: Sharing of Experiences and Progress under the Bali Declaration with specific focus on women migrant workers”. This meeting will be held in Bangkok on 3-4 December and will build on the discussions at the inter-regional meeting held in Beirut in 2017. It will bring together a wide range of stakeholders (governments, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society and academic experts) from Asia, the Arab States, as well as from Africa.
- The ILO delegation is looking forward to fruitful discussions during this Ministerial Consultation, and we stand ready to assist the ADD incoming Chair (UAE) and ADD participating states, as well as other stakeholders present at this Consultation, in follow-up action.
- Thank you.