

## Annual Forum on Business and Human Rights 2019

### Intervention by Director General Guy Ryder

#### Session on “Helping States promote responsible business - toward greater coherence at the multilateral level?”

(Tuesday 26 November)

Thank you, Danté.

High Commissioner, Ladies and Gentlemen, it's a pleasure to be back at the Forum.

This year's theme invites us to approach the underlying issues of the UN Guiding Principles from an innovative angle, emphasizing the role of states in particular.

What is highly valuable in the UNGPs is its attribution of responsibilities to states and to businesses. In recent years – while our organization is very much based on an inter-state model oriented to standards – attention has focused on the business side.

But we shouldn't forget the role of states. This year in the ILO, we have focused on the efforts of member States on international labour standards, through a campaign whereby we are inviting governments, trade unions and employers' organizations from our members to take action to ensure that their country ratifies at least one international labour Convention or Protocol during 2019. Based on ratifications so far this year we expect there to be some 70 of them.

We have this year at our Centenary ILC adopted an important new standard which is Convention 190, a new International Labour Standard on Eliminating Violence and Harassment in the world of work.

The Centenary ILC adopted a Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work. The Centenary Declaration lays out a human-centred approach to the future of work. This means investing in jobs, skills and social protection, and supporting gender equality. It means investing in people and their capacities in a rapidly changing world of work. It's about investing in the institutions of the labour market. And it is about investment in the jobs of the future – in particular, the green economy, the care economy, infrastructure and development.

We are working with governments and social partners in our member States to establish the right environment for businesses to act responsibly. And within that – very much going with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – we are working with business, government, unions and civil society on certain key issues. I would like to highlight today **Alliance 8.7**. This is a Global Alliance created to promote SDG target 8.7. It calls for the eradication of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour.

Alliance 8.7 is currently chaired by France, following Australia, and the ILO hosts its Secretariat. 15 states have already committed to become 'pathfinder countries' in elimination of these abuses and, in so doing, to speed up progress on eradicating human rights violations at the national level, and to bring together many different actors – getting from the global to the local and achieving concrete action.

Other examples of our work include the Global Deal for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth, referred to also by the Governments of France and Sweden yesterday.

Finally I would like to refer again to the ILO Centenary Declaration, in its call for “intensifying engagement and cooperation within the multilateral system” and for the ILO to develop, and I quote, “institutional arrangements with other organizations to promote policy coherence in pursuit of its human-centred approach to the future of work, recognizing the strong, complex and crucial links between social, trade, financial, economic and environmental policies”.

In my estimation of where we are today, my impression is that notwithstanding the 2030 Agenda and our responsibilities within that, our action tends to be not systematic enough. We have to step up, and turn our good intentions into something much more systematic. And when our Declaration talks about developing institutional arrangements, that is what is implied.

Thank you.

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