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This conference focuses on the interface of environmental and social issues.

Key messages:

- 1) Addressing environmental sustainably and social deficits must go hand-in-hand
- 2) Working on the basis of the right narrative
- 3) The involvement of governments and social partners is indispensable

1. **Addressing environmental sustainably and social deficits must go hand-in-hand**
 - Around **1.2 billion jobs** (or 40 per cent of world employment in 2014), depend directly on ecosystem services.
 - At the same time, **lack of decent work and income opportunities, or search for business profit** may lead to the overexploitation of natural resources.
 - This has been the case sometimes in both developed and developing economies, **when short-term individual and corporate gains prevail over long-term and sustainable benefits of society.**
 - But ultimately, **environmental degradation will compromise livelihoods, business prospects and magnify inequality.**
 - We must work around these **highly interconnected challenges** to devise workable solutions in specific country contexts.
 - The current patterns, scale and intensity of environmental damage has **profound social consequences.**
 - I would like to highlight two issues of critical importance: **human loss and productivity losses.**

- **Human loss:** between the years 2000 and 2015, 23 million working-life years were lost annually as a result of environment-related hazards caused or enhanced by human activity.
- **Productivity loss:** At the ILO, we have measured that with continued global warming, by 2030, two per cent of total hours of work could be lost. Such losses in productivity is equivalent to **72 million full-time jobs**.
- ILO analysis shows that countries that managed to **decouple economic growth from environmental degradation** also achieved **social gains**.
- We found that countries that decoupled growth and GHG emissions between 1995 and 2014 **reduced working poverty** by an annual average of **4.6%**.
- On the opposite, countries in which **growth was coupled with a rise in GHG emissions** reduced working poverty **by a lower average of 3.7% annually**.

[Source: ILO calculations based on World Development Indicators, Global Footprint Network 2017 National Footprint Accounts, Penn World Tables and ILOStat]

2. Working on the basis of the right narrative

- Central to our debate is the essential need to set clearly the **right narrative** that environmental sustainability, jobs creation and income generation can go hand-in-hand.
- Some people still consider that we must **choose between** economic growth, jobs and poverty reduction on the one hand, and sustainability on the other.
- We know that is **not the case. It is not action** against climate change, biodiversity loss, and the decreasing availability of natural resources - **but rather inaction** - that will destroy jobs.
- The ILO's World Employment and Social Outlook: Greening with Jobs 2018 suggests that action to limit global warming to 2°C, and focusing on energy transitions, will create **a net 18 million jobs gains by 2030**.

- [This includes +2 million jobs in Europe, +3 million jobs in the Americas, and +14 million jobs in Asia and the Pacific.]
- [In terms of sector +6 million jobs in construction, +4 million jobs in manufacturing, and +2 million jobs in renewables.]
- A sustained **5% annual increase in recycling rates** for plastics, glass, wood pulp, metals and minerals can generate **6 million additional jobs**.
- The **Global Commission on the Future of Work** - a highly prominent group of experts and leaders in various fields chaired by the President of South Africa and the Prime Minister of Sweden – just released its report last month.
- It clearly indicates that climate change will have transformative impacts that come with **both job creation and job destruction**. But it notes that there are more gains than losses if the right actions are taken.

3. The involvement of governments and social partners is indispensable

- An effective response to environmental challenges and social deficits of our time requires **coherent policy frameworks** and the **involvement of all actors**.
- Governments must work closely with employers' and workers' organizations and other actors in society to build **strong social consensus that is indispensable for transformative change**.
- This is the reason why in 2015 ILO constituents formulated **tripartite Guidelines** for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all.
- The Guidelines offer a **guiding framework** and a practical tool upon which countries can build on to establish policies and processes required in their national contexts.
- The **ILO tripartite structure** puts the ILO in a unique position to do that. It can bring together representatives of governments, workers and employers' organizations to forge consensus.

- In effect, to address working poverty, sustainability and job creation demands **consideration of many fundamentals of our economies and societies**.
- What do about taxation and redistribution of wealth?
- How to ensure social protection floors and protect workers and enterprises that might be negatively impacted?
- The Report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work proposes new and ambitious proposals and concepts such as “**establishing a universal labour guarantee**”, “**expanding time sovereignty**”, “**shifting incentives: towards human-centred**”, “**reinvigorating the social contract**”, to name a few.
- These are all fundamental to our debate here. But they **require deeper social dialogue** within Europe, within countries, and within communities to enable such transformative change.
- **Europe has a long standing history** and a vast experience with social dialogue to manage transitions.
- Recent examples include the **Netherlands' energy agreement for sustainable growth** signed in 2013 by representatives from business, trade unions, regional and local administrations, NGOs and the financial sectors through a large-scale forum.
- Another is the **Belgian 'eco-cheque' system**, designed to encourage environmentally friendly consumption, taking advantage of collective bargaining and agreements.
- **Spain's** recently launched EUR 250 million ***Plan del Carbón*** is a Just Transition deal meant to replace subsidies to the coal industry with a sustainable development plan that lays the ground for an inclusive process to structural change.
- The ILO looks forward to enhancing partnership with the EU and its Member States and institutions, to advance a just transition for all in the greening of economies and societies.
- You can count on us as a partner sharing common values, goals and aspirations for social justice, lasting peace and sustainability, to tackle

environmental challenges and promote decent work and social inclusion for all.

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