

The ILO: What it is, What it does

Valérie Van Goethem
Labour Law Officer
Labour Law and Reform Unit
Governance and Tripartism Department

Origins of the ILO

- The ILO was created by the 1919 Peace Conference that followed World War I as an autonomous organization associated with the League of Nations.
- The ILO Constitution (part of the Treaty of Versailles) and 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia

“Universal, lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice”

“Labour is not a commodity”



Overview

- The only tripartite organization in the UN family
 - Employers' and Workers' representatives have an equal voice with that of Governments
- Created 1919 - Became first UN specialized agency in 1946
 - Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland
 - 187 Member States
 - 2700 staff at HQ and 40 field offices
 - International Training Centre in Turin, Italy
- Nobel Peace Prize in 1969

What the ILO does...

- Formulates international policies and programmes to promote basic human rights, improve working and living conditions, and enhance employment opportunities.
- Establishes international labour standards to serve as guidelines for national authorities.

189 Conventions – 205 Recommendations – 5 Protocols

- Implements technical cooperation projects to assist countries in making these policies effective in practice.
- Conducts training, education, research and publishing activities to help advance all of these initiatives.

ILO Decent Work Agenda

Four strategic objectives guiding programme & budget:

- **Rights at work:** Promote and realize international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work
- **Employment:** Create greater opportunities for women and men to decent employment and income
- **Social protection:** Enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all
- **Social dialogue:** Strengthen tripartism and social dialogue

ILO Governing Body

- **Functions**
 - Meets three times a year in Geneva
 - Determines the agenda of the ILC
 - Prepares and adopts the programme and budget
 - Elects the Director General (5 year term)
 - Sets up priorities in ILO programmes
 - Supervises the implementation of ILO activities
- **56 members**
 - 28 governments – of which 10 permanent seats (Brazil, China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States)
 - 14 workers
 - 14 employers

International Labour Conference

- “International Labour Parliament” - Meets every year in Geneva in June
- 2 G delegates, 1 W delegate and 1 E delegate, plus advisers
- Employer and worker delegates may express themselves and vote independently of their governments.



107th Session of the ILC, June 2018

Some Items on the Agenda of the 107th Session

- General Survey concerning working-time instruments – *Ensuring decent working time for the future*
- *Ending violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work* – Report V → *Standard-setting item*
- Recurrent Discussion – *Social Dialogue and Tripartism* – Report VI
- Committee on the Application of Standards (incl. Standards Review Mechanism)

All documents are available at:

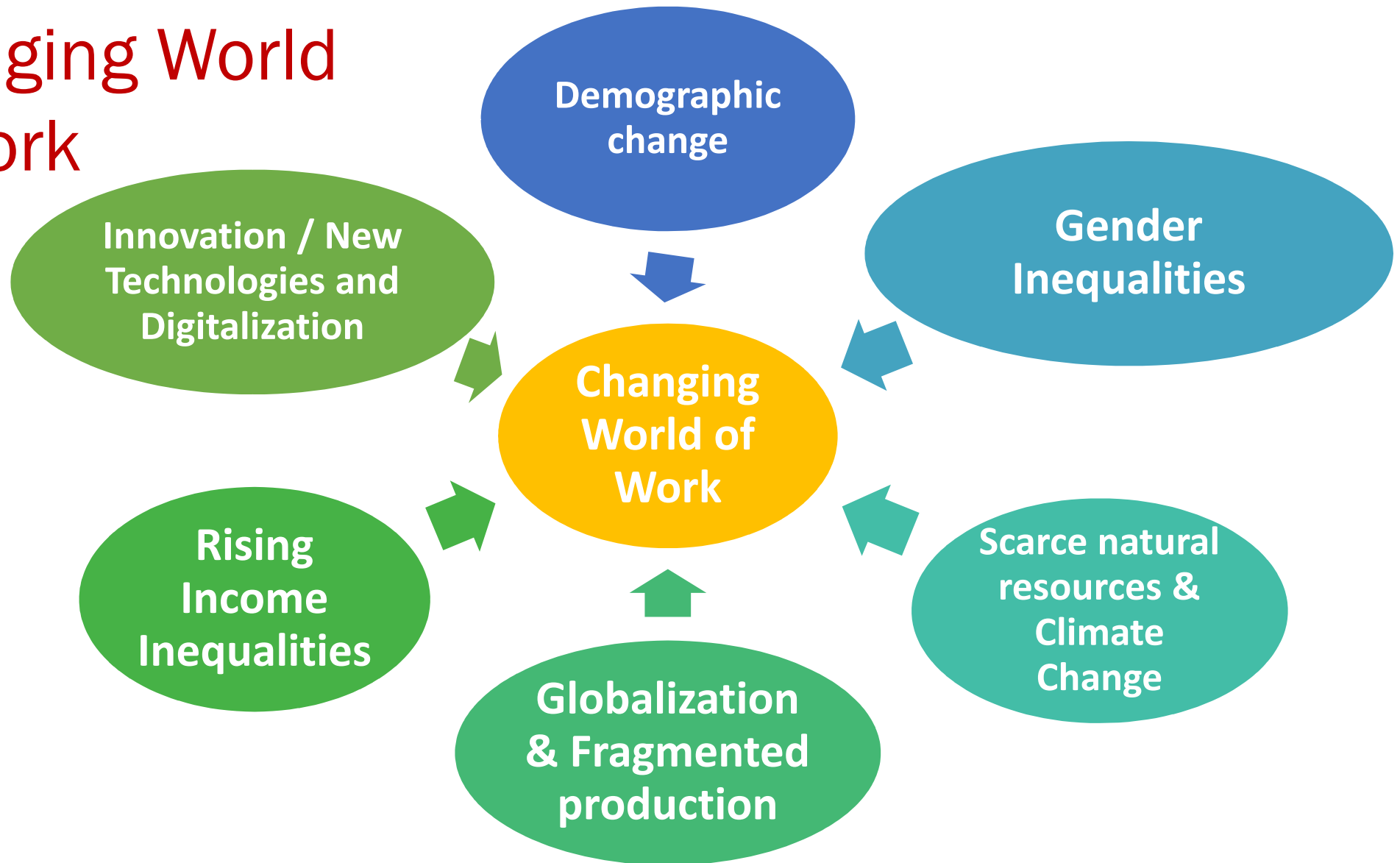
<http://www.ilo.org/ilc/ILCSessions/107/reports/reports-to-the-conference/lang-en/index.htm>

Key ILO Issues for the 21st Century

- Current demographic trends bring **40 million people** to the labour market each year, meaning that between now and the year 2030 the world economy needs to create over **600 million new jobs**.
- The gender pay gap remains over **20 per cent**, and women continue to be over-represented in both non-standard forms of work and unpaid family labour.
- The number of workers in extreme poverty has fallen substantially in recent decades, but some **319 million working women and men** still live on less than **US\$1.25** per day.
- Each year, some **2.3 million workers** lose their lives, and there is a heavy burden in terms of occupational diseases, with a high social and economic cost for workers, employers and social protection systems as a whole.
- **Universal respect for fundamental principles and rights at work** remains a distant prospect. **Half of the world's workers** are in countries that have not yet ratified the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); there are still **168 million child labourers** and **21 million victims of forced labour**; and the world of work is still affected by **deeply ingrained discrimination**, on the grounds of gender but also on other grounds, including ethnicity, religion and disability.

Source: *DG Report Future of Work Centenary Initiative*, 2015

Changing World of Work



ILO Centenary Initiative – Four Centenary Discussions

Work and Society

The attributes of work that people value

Making «invisible» work «visible»

Work and well-being
Effective social protection for 21st c.

Decent Jobs For All

What future for «full employment»

Technological changes & jobs

Potential for new jobs?

Organization of Work and Production

Informal employment in the future

Organization of work / Global Supply Chains

Diversification of the employment relationship

Labour Governance

The State, employers and workers

Innovation in governance and in labour regulation

The future of social dialogue and tripartism

Key issues: Artificial intelligence, digitalization, blurred lines work/private life, fragmented supply chains, horizontal organizational designs, big data, automation, polarization of jobs, new required labour skills, growing job demand, youth and female inclusion, non-standard forms of employment (NSFE), gig-economy, social protection reforms, increasing labour mobility...

THANK YOU

- Further information: <http://www.ilo.org/>
- ILO Jobs: <https://jobs.ilo.org/>