STATEMENT

68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly - Third Committee

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9 October 2013

STATEMENT BY

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68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly - Third Committee
Agenda Item 27: Social Development

Madame Chair,

The International Labour Organization (ILO) firmly believes that “development happens through jobs.”

This simple statement sums up the enduring reality that work is the most effective and sustainable way out of poverty for poor households and that the expansion of productive and decent employment is the way economies grow and diversify.

For countries at all levels of development, an adequate supply of jobs is the foundation of sustained and growing prosperity, inclusion and social cohesion. Where jobs are scarce or available livelihoods leave households in poverty, there is less growth, less security and less human and economic development.

With worldwide unemployment at 202 million, and the need to create 470 million new jobs by 2030 to keep pace with the rising global labour force, the challenges and urgency of the task ahead cannot be understated.

The global economic crisis, subsequent adjustment measures and the slowdown in growth continues to impact labour markets and social security systems, creating new challenges and adding to some longer term structural problems. These challenges include the youth employment crisis, growing inequalities, an increasingly uncertain environment for enterprises, increasing demand for social protection and the weakening of social dialogue.

As the international community discusses the future development agenda, we are at a crossroad of policy decisions on how best to address the global economic and employment situation. Encouragingly, there are positive steps being taken to address these major and complex economic, social and environmental challenges.
The ILO welcomed the UN’s Commission for Social Development priority theme “Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all.” From our perspective, there was a broad acknowledgement among the participants that the creation of full employment and decent work for all should be at the centre of a policy framework for poverty eradication and social integration.

It was also recognized that universal access to basic social protection and social services is an important instrument for empowering people. The ILO is enhancing its ability and stands ready to support countries and help build their capacity in developing and implementing appropriate social protection floors.

In regard to improving labour market data collection and dissemination, the ILO is working with the World Bank in developing a common workplan for joint research, country-level collaboration and cooperation on the post-2015 development agenda.

The ILO and the IMF have held a series of high-level meetings to review cooperation and discuss action to promote recovery as well as further joint work on research, social protection and national social dialogue.

Through our updated research activities, the ILO is developing evidence-based comparative policy analysis of short- and medium-term policies, programmes and other measures to address the acute youth employment crisis, straddling supply and demand sides of the labour market, including apprenticeships, dual training schemes and entrepreneurship.

The ILO also participates in the G20 process which, under the Russian Federation presidency, convened for the first time a meeting of G20 Finance Ministers with G20 Employment and Labour Ministers recognizing the need to coordinate macroeconomic and employment policies in order to achieve the goals of stronger and sustainable growth.

At their Summit in September, the G20 Leaders endorsed the Ministers’ recommendations and agreed “to mobilize, coordinate and integrate, our national policies to promote the creation of quality jobs while increasing productivity with full respect for Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work....”

Madam Chair,

I wish to inform the Committee that the ILO’s agenda for next years’ International Labour Conference will include two important standard setting processes on economic and social development.

The first is supplementing the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), to address implementation gaps to advance prevention, protection and compensation measures to effectively achieve the elimination of forced labour.
A new ILO standard on forced labour can make an important contribution by providing additional guidance to member States on policies for the effective prevention of forced labour and the improvement of protection and assistance for all victims of forced labour, including bonded labourers and victims of slave labour and trafficking.

The second issue to be addressed by the International Labour Conference is the transition from the informal to the formal economy. This standard-setting item will address the context of high unemployment, underemployment, poverty, gender inequality and precarious work that characterises the informal economy.

In regard to the ILO’s work on tackling youth employment, I extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Permanent Mission of Germany and the Permanent Mission of Tunisia for their support in promoting the ILO’s 2012 Call for Action on youth employment as contained in General Assembly document (A/67/796).

The Call for Action is a portfolio of tried and tested measures in five areas: macro-economic policies, employability, labour market policies, youth entrepreneurship and rights. It underscores the need for balance, coherence and complementarity across policy measures and addresses the urgency for immediate and targeted interventions to tackle the youth employment crisis affecting countries across all regions.

In closing, we recognise the enormity of the challenge in creating adequate decent work for all and providing support and protection for women and men who are suffering from the myriad effects of joblessness, inadequate social protection, growing inequalities and social exclusion. The ILO has the expertise and experience to support efforts in translating sound policy options into concrete action at the country level and to support greater coordination at the international level.

Thank you.