Mr. Chair,

The ILO welcomes the Secretary-General’s report on the Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) (A/68/183), which highlights a number of opportunities and challenges towards the achievement of “Full employment and decent work for all”

As pointed out in the ILO statement delivered to this Committee yesterday, global unemployment is expected to reach 202 million in 2013, 73 million of whom are young women and men. Looking ahead post 2015, the world faces the challenge to create around 600 million new jobs in the next fifteen years to keep up with the growth of the labour force and close the jobs gap. The reality of the numbers and people’s voices captured by various global surveys show that addressing the jobs challenge of full employment and decent work for all is definitely one of the core concerns of the sustainable development agenda. In this respect the lessons learned in the discussions of the Second Decade can be an important platform to inform the sustainable development discussions.

Mr Chair, please allow me to highlight some core messages in this discussion.

First, decent work is the most sustainable route out of poverty. Having a job is no guarantee of escaping from poverty—870 million workers are working poor and live on less than US$ 2 a day, while 400 million live in extreme poverty. In addition, around 660 million workers live at or near the poverty line and are extremely vulnerable to economic shocks. Special attention is needed to ensure the quality as well as the quantity of jobs is simultaneously pursued. Recent experience shows that countries that have been successful in creating equitable and inclusive growth have pursued ambitious labour and social policies, such as minimum wage increases, employment formalization, social dialogue and collective bargaining, occupational safety and health, skills development and social protection.
Second, we must avoid the risk of losing a generation. Particular attention should be given to the nearly 1.2 billion young people on the planet between the ages of 15 and 24 who make up roughly 17 per cent of the world’s population. While no single indicator or prescription can capture the complex, multidimensional reality of their situation, the ILO Call for Action paints a detailed picture of what is truly a youth employment crisis, and provides a series of guiding principles and an expansive policy portfolio of tried and tested measures to help make decent work a reality for young people. The Call for Action provides a useful supplement to the system-wide Plan of Action undertaken during this Second Decade.

Third, the extension of social protection floors is fundamental to ensure that no one will be left behind in the sustainable development framework. During the General Assembly deliberations, many acknowledged that the aspiration to “leave no one behind” should be one of the major transformative shifts of the post-2015 agenda. The ILO defends that the implementation of sustainable and effective social protection floors should be part of the solution to make this aspiration a reality. The ILO Recommendation No. 202 on nationally-defined social protection floors can be a powerful tool to devise policies geared towards eradicating poverty, empowering people and fulfilling the aim of the Second Decade, as well as supporting the implementation of development commitments.

Mr. Chair,

The ILO has been actively engaged in the implementation of the UN system-wide plan of action on the Second Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and is looking forward to continuing the debate about the Decade’s theme “full employment and decent work for all” in the special session of the General Assembly dedicated to the Second Decade on 19 November. We stand ready to keep working together with governments, unions, business and civil society, as well as with our colleagues of the multilateral system to make decent work a reality for all.

I thank you.