



**Statement Delivered by H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN in New York at the High-Level Event on the Future of Work to commemorate ILO Centenary (New York, 10-11 April 2019)**

Madam President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

1. At the outset, my delegation warmly congratulates the International Labor Organization (ILO) on its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and we thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting under the theme “The Future of Work”.
2. I would like to align with the statement made by the State of Palestine on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
3. Universal and lasting peace can be achieved only if social justice is established. We recognize the commitment of ILO to promote social justice through its efforts across the world and highlight the importance of materializing decent work and promoting labour rights.
4. “Full and productive employment and decent work for all” is a critical driver to enhance inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. It is not only a stand-alone goal in the 2030 Agenda but is also featured as a cross-cutting theme across other SDGs. In this respect, ILO’s support would be significant for the international community to implement the SDGs when it has been relentlessly pursuing social justice and the centrality of decent work and productive employment.
5. An exploitation-free, discrimination-free and socially just Bangladesh was envisioned by our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and our national labour policies reflect that principle. ILO has been a trusted partner of Bangladesh in its pursuit to establish social justice and uphold labour rights. I would like to take the opportunity to express our appreciation for ILO particularly for its support to make our ready-made garments factories compliant with international labour standards.
6. In Bangladesh, two million people are entering the job market every year. Climate change impacts are threatening our developmental achievements including the agriculture sector which is our largest employment generating sector. Nevertheless,

Bangladesh is on the path of graduation from the LDC category and at this critical juncture, the Government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has stressed on achieving decent work for all as a vital factor to empower people and ensure inclusiveness and equality. Her vision for 'Digital Bangladesh' is a step to the future of work. Our development plans, policies and initiatives are aimed at reducing informality, making work places safer, and provide better wages and social protection. One hundred new Special Economic Zones are being set up to create a hundred million jobs by 2030. The implementation of the national labour policies is being strictly monitored. The Government has been regularly revising the minimum wage for our largest export item, that is ready made garments, producing workers. Government has also taken transformative initiatives to make more job opportunities for women, people with disabilities and backward and vulnerable communities. The promotion of SMEs is also a thrust area of the Government for creating decent job opportunities particularly for the youth and women.

Madam President,

7. Technological progress remains driver of economic growth and this should ensure social justice. However, now we see an apprehension that the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) may result massive automation of manufacturing and services and could pave the way to unprecedented job loss and more inequality in society. It is likely to benefit the high-skilled workers while shrink the space for the low and medium skilled workers significantly. Artificial Intelligence, automation and other rapid technological advancements will no doubt affect the countries with young population such as Bangladesh. Technologies developed by big Tech Giants seem to be disrupting jobs in weak economies and countries undergoing structural transformation.
8. The disruptive nature of these Rapid Technological innovations must be contained. Given the concerns arising out of the current technological advancements, we need to focus on policy measures aiming at, on one hand, development, adaptation and diffusion of new technologies commensurate with country contexts, and on the other hand, skill development and capacity building of the new generation of workers. ILO can carry out broad consultations with the Governments, employers, trade-unions and leading tech-firms to come up with a roadmap on how to manage technology as a great enabler of development while ensuring a just society.

Thank you