



68th Session of the General Assembly

**High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Inaugural meeting**

**Statement delivered by Mr. Guy Ryder
Director-General, International Labour Organization
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Mr President, Excellencies,

The Rio +20 Summit has spelled out an ambitious vision for the future we want. Turning it into reality will require the effective integration of environmental, social and economic policies. Our new High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development creates the meeting place where the world's leaders can make that happen.

There is a risk that sustainability in environmental terms may be seen to require a trade off against economic or social goals. There will be difficult choices to make but we must put our focus to the trade ins – that is through policies that are mutually supportive in all three dimensions.

This is the approach of the ILO because we can see great potential for the generation of decent work opportunities and thus poverty reduction in the transformations needed to ensure our economies are environmentally sustainable.

The key is the design of policy frameworks that anticipate and prepare business and workers for change. The infrastructure investment needed to run a cleaner and greener global economy can generate many decent jobs, especially for young people who so badly need them.

Yes there will be difficult transitions for some industries and the communities that have come to depend on them. The political sustainability of our strategy depends on making sure those transitions are done in a socially just manner. Social protection floors as called for in Rio are therefore a key component of the new policy framework.

I am pleased to report to you that this June our International Labour Conference reached tripartite agreement on the principles and framework for a just transition to sustainable development.

Social dialogue between workers and employers organizations and governments is also vital to build trust and cooperation in the management of far-reaching change.

To conclude, one of the main findings of the year-long consultation process the UN has led on a post 2015 framework is that jobs are a high priority virtually everywhere in the world. And as has been reinforced by many of the statements we have heard today, this creates an



opportunity for us to connect directly to the peoples of the United Nations, because a key driver of any new sustainable development framework must be the attainment of full and productive employment and decent work for all.