

Media Update

23 January 2019

United Nations Secretary-General Message

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION 24 January 2019

Today we celebrate the first International Day of Education.

Education transforms lives. As United Nations Messenger of Peace Malala Yousafzai once said: “one child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world”. Nelson Mandela rightly called education “the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

Long before I served at the United Nations or held public office in my own country, I was a teacher. In the slums of Lisbon, I saw that education is an engine for poverty eradication and a force for peace.

Today, education is at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We need education to reduce inequalities and improve health.

We need education to achieve gender equality and eliminate child marriage.

We need education to protect our planet’s resources.

And we need education to fight hate speech, xenophobia and intolerance, and to nurture global citizenship.

Yet at least 262 million children, adolescents and youth are out of school, most of them girls. Millions more who attend school are not mastering the basics.

This is a violation of their human right to education. The world cannot afford a generation of children and young people who lack the skills they need to



compete in the 21st century economy, nor can we afford to leave behind half of humanity.

We must do far more to advance Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Education can also break and reverse cycles of intergenerational poverty. Studies show that if all girls and boys complete secondary education, 420 million people could be lifted out of poverty.

Let us prioritize education as a public good; support it with cooperation, partnerships and funding; and recognize that leaving no one behind starts with education.

ILO

Op-Ed

Working for a brighter future

by Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa and Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden, co-chairs of the Global Commission on the Future of Work.

We stand at a crossroads as seismic shifts take place in the world of work.

Technological advances are changing the nature of many jobs, and leading to the need for new skills. The urgently required greening of economies to meet the challenge of climate change should bring further employment possibilities. Expanding youth populations in some parts of the world, ageing populations in others, may affect labour markets and social security systems.

On one path, countless opportunities lie ahead, not only to create jobs but also to improve the quality of our working lives. This requires that we



reinvigorate the social contract that gives all partners a fair stake in the global economy.

On the other path, if we fail to prepare adequately for the coming challenges, we could be heading into a world that widens inequalities and leads to greater uncertainty.

The issues are complex. As co-chairs of the Global Commission on the Future of Work we, and our fellow members of the Commission - leading figures from business and labour, think tanks, government and non-governmental organizations - have been examining the choices we need to make if we are to meet the challenges resulting from these transformations in the world of work and achieve social justice.

We call for a new, human-centred approach that allows everyone to thrive in a carbon neutral, digital age and affords them dignity, security, and equal opportunity. It must also meet the changing needs and challenges facing businesses and secure sustainable economic growth.

The opportunities are there to improve working lives, expand choice, close the gender gap and reverse the damage that has been wreaked by global inequality.

But it will need committed action on the part of governments and social partners to turn those opportunities into reality.

So how do we achieve this? Three areas of increased investment are needed:

First, we have to invest more in people's capabilities: This means establishing an effective lifelong learning system that enables people to skill, reskill and upskill – a system that spans early childhood and basic education through to adult learning. It also means investing in the institutions that will support people as they go through transitions in their working lives – from school leavers to older workers. Making gender equality a reality and providing social protection from birth to old age are also critical. These social investments will not only increase productivity. They will also allow for a more inclusive growth, where informal workers and business can both benefit from and contribute to a sound formal economy.

Second, we must invest more in the institutions of work—including the establishment and implementation of a Universal Labour Guarantee. This will

ensure that all workers enjoy fundamental rights, an “adequate living wage”, limits on their hours of work and safe and healthy workplaces. Linked to this, people need to have more control over their working time – while meeting the needs of enterprises – so that they can fulfill the full range of their responsibilities and develop their capabilities. Collective representation through social dialogue between workers and employers needs to be actively promoted.

Workers in the informal economy have often improved their working conditions by organizing. Unions need to expand membership to informal workers, whether they work in the rural economy, on the city streets of an emerging economy or on a digital platform. This is a critical step towards formalization and a tool for inclusion.

We’re also calling for governance systems for digital labour platforms that will require these platforms and their clients to respect certain minimum standards.

Finally, we need to invest more in decent and sustainable work. This includes incentives to promote investments in key areas, such as the care economy, the green economy, and the rural economy, as well as high-quality physical and digital infrastructure. We must also reshape private sector incentive structures to encourage a long-term, human-centred approach to business. That includes fair tax policies and improved corporate accounting standards. We need to explore new measures of country progress to track important aspects of economic and social advancement.

Beyond these critical investments, there is a further opportunity: to place discussions about the future of work at the heart of the economic and social debates taking place at the high table of international policy-making. This could revitalize the multilateral system at a time when many are questioning its legitimacy and effectiveness.

Yet none of this will happen by itself. If change is the opportunity, we must seize the moment to renew the social contract and create a brighter future by delivering economic security, equal opportunity and social justice - and ultimately reinforce the fabric of our societies.

The Global Commission on the Future of Work is an independent body set up in 2017 by the International Labour Organization to undertake an in-depth examination of the future of work. Its report is being launched on 22nd January 2019 to mark the start of the Centenary year of the ILO.