

Honourable Director-General, excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

We've learned that change is a constant feature of the world of work. The 100 years since ILO was established, have witnessed remarkable developments. Nowadays game-changing inventions - like industrial robots, 3D printing, drones, internet of things, genomics – are evolving.

In 2025 caregiver robots will come to the everyday market.

In 2027 artificial intelligence will be daily used for diagnosing patients.

In 2033 self-driving cars will be allowed to drive on Estonian roads.

But it doesn't stop there. Future isn't a fixed destination.

Digital change has an enormous impact on our labour markets. The cost of new technologies is falling and we'll see digital transformation breaking the supply chains in near future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the authors and especially the Swedish Prime Minister Mr Stefan Löfven and the president of South Africa Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa for the ILO latest report „Work for a Brighter Future“.

ILO has always stood for social justice and provides a very appropriate forum for discussing the topic and sharing experiences.

Estonia is a small state with 1.3 million people, decreasing working age population and rather small administration. This has pushed us to look for smart solutions. We have experienced that through the smart use of technology, small can become powerful.

We have designed several digital solutions to provide fair working conditions and social protection for workers in all forms of work.

Firstly, it is an enormous challenge to ensure **equal and sustainable access to social protection**. All workers should be covered by social protection and should personally contribute to it, but if the mechanism is expensive and not easily accessible, people may give up.

We need to change the way of thinking. The employment contract exclusively can not remain the centerpiece of social protection. The outcome of such a rigid linkage distorts the labour market and increases precarious work and inequality. We need to focus on the worker when shaping the future of social protection systems.

Accordingly, we need **simple and transparent tax systems**.

Our tax services are digital and accessible 24/7 as most customers don't care for office visits. Moreover, ride-sharing and crowd-funding platforms collaborate closely with Estonian Tax and Customs Board, so that data on income goes automatically to the tax authority.

One possibility to enlarge the social protection coverage is **an Entrepreneur Account** that Estonia has recently created. It is the best choice when one natural person pays another natural person for services or goods that they have provided. The person has no financial accounting obligation and calculation of taxes and payment to the Tax Board is automatic.

The most important register, when working is concerned, is **the universal employment register**. All natural and legal persons providing work are required to register persons employed by them in the system. All workers irrespective of the type of contract must

be recorded before the worker starts to work, also persons working on a voluntary or self-employed basis. Registration is easy and quick through using the e-Tax Board or by calling or sending an SMS. The worker has digital access to his or her account to check whether he or she is properly registered and whether all the taxes have been paid by the work provider.

Moreover, ideas of **holistic personalised ID tax-account for ensuring worker's risks against flexible work arrangements, skills mismatch, unemployment and old age** would be worth considering. As average life expectancy is increasing and people are becoming more involved in their work life decisions, personalised tax-account could become complementary to the solidarity based social protection system.

Secondly, we need to keep in mind that the digital transformation poses risks to **health and safety of workers**. By creating the Estonian **digital work-life information system**, where all employers and workers in Estonia will soon have accounts, we provide a simple way to manage and develop occupational health and safety at work.

Employers will have an easy access to information, tools and consultants to make work environment safer. Workers will have access to information about relevant safety instructions and work environment risks. The system is equipped with automatic control function that will help Labour Inspectorate to identify companies with high-risk work environment.

This is a good example of how new knowledge can be created when automatically combining information from many digital registries. These interoperability gains are extra valuable when time-critical issues, such as undeclared work and work related abuse are inspected and prevented.

Estonian experience has proven, that **a pledge of success is not always about creating new technologies**, but implementation of those solutions in a smart, fast and systematic way.

I do believe that smart e-solutions with transparent and simple legal environment provide preconditions for creating a future-proof human-centred agenda for the work.

Last but not least. Effective solutions can be achieved jointly and together with social partners. I value highly our cooperation with Estonian Trade Unions and Employers and hope that our ongoing discussion on policy responses to the impact of labor market's digital transformation continue as constructively as until now.

Dear colleagues,

To conclude, with new and flexible working forms emerging, harassment and violence unfortunately have not disappeared.

Let me express my gratitude that at this conference we are discussing the subject at the highest possible level. This is the momentum for approving the convention and recommendation. The future of work must be without violence. I hope that at the end of this conference we will have two new ILO instruments and I can propose to our government and social partners to start the work for ratifying the convention.

As a newly elected member of the UN Security Council, I assure, that we will also stand for the equality at the work place and justice in the world of work!

Thank you.