



Speech

Plenary of the 109th session of the International Labour Conference

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Maxime Legrand, President CIC Worldwide Managers – CIC
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Dear Mr. Chairman,

It is a great pleasure and a particular honor for me to address the Plenary session of the International Labour Conference on the occasion of its 109th session in my quality as President of CIC Worldwide Managers (Confédération Internationale des Cadres).

The COVID pandemic that has hit the world over the last 18 months has been for many aspects a catalyst of many of the megatrends that have been shaping over the last decades our societies. From the need to ensure the continuity of the global supply chains to rethinking the complex interaction between the mankind and the natural environment, from the importance of global governance and the value of collective early warning systems, COVID has shown in a dramatic way the extent to which our interconnectedness can be at the same time a source of danger and a key to a shared solution.

This reflection applies entirely to the world of work, too. Underlying phenomena that have been building up for decades have erupted in all their disruptive potential in months, or weeks. For instance, telework imposing itself as a viable, reliable and structural alternative to presential work is probably the most self-evident of such tendencies; equally relevant has been the demonstration of how dependent our societies have been on so-called “low-skilled jobs”.

As a result, our societies are faced with the evidence of the social consequences of such phenomena. The feasibility of telework, for instance, risks creating new fractures between workers and puts the issue of work-life balance under a new light; the importance of reskilling for all becomes even more significant as lockdown brings prolonged economic shutdown measures. And many other new realities will appear, in parallel with the unfolding



of the longer-term economic effects of the emergency decisions adopted by governments. Now that the pandemic seems to be receding, the urgency imposed by the health situation will progressively have to leave the place to reflection and pondered policy-making.

To make this possible, a real, meaningful cooperation of all active forces of the society is necessary. Dialogue is the very foundation of this organization, the *raison d'être* of all the delegates that have preceded and will follow me, and the goal to which we are all committed. Open, transparent and free social dialogue, with equal union rights for all, can be an exceptional tool to help economies react more efficiently and fairly to crises – the many examples presented and discussed in this meeting can vouch for the effects of both robust and weak social dialogue mechanisms. Within this dialogue, managers can contribute actively to elaborate the right policy responses and bring together the different positions, views and needs in and around the workplace.

Taking complex decisions to ensure prosperity sustainably and mediating between the different economic actors is the essence of the work of a manager, in whatever sector, country or position he or she might be asked to operate. It is fundamental that governments all over the planet acknowledge this reality and ensure that managers are part of the solution to these challenges.

I thank you for your attention and wish all delegates a fruitful debate.

Maxime LEGRAND
CIC President
