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for Coordination

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Summary of deliberations

Addendum

United Nations system strategy on the future of work

I. Introduction

1.   Following the feedback of the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-fifth, thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions and the guidance and final endorsement by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) at its first regular session of 2019, the present paper provides a summary on the system-wide strategy on the future of work undertaken to support Member States in addressing transformative changes affecting the landscape of work. The strategy is currently based on the outline of the system-wide strategy that was discussed and approved by the High-level Committee on Programmes and on further contributions of Committee members, in particular with regard to the operationalization and implementation of key strategic principles. The fully developed strategy will reflect the information and recommendations contained in the report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work, entitled *Work for a Brighter Future*, which was released in January 2019, and will also reflect the outcome of the centenary conference of the International Labour Organization (ILO), to be held in June 2019.

A. Context

2.   Although progress has been made globally in the world of work in recent years in terms of creating jobs, including raising female labour force participation in some parts of the world, reducing working poverty, expanding social protection, improving occupational health and safety and increasing recognition of core ILO labour standards, the gains have not been shared equally and the most vulnerable have benefited least of all. There are still more than 172 million jobless people around the world, representing a global unemployment rate of 5.0 per cent,[1] with young people between 15 and 24 years of age and women most affected. Globally, more than 2 in 5

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[1] International Labour Organization, *World Economic and Social Outlook, Trends, 2019* (Geneva, 2018).

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workers are in vulnerable forms of employment, with women greatly dominating the group of unpaid contributing family workers. In developing and emerging countries, 70 per cent of workers are in informal employment and more than one quarter live in moderate to extreme poverty. Women and young people have a higher likelihood of being informally employed or working poor, or both. The global gap in labour force participation rates between men and women remains wide at 27 percentage points.

3.   Moreover, the world of work is undergoing extensive and profound changes, which pose both opportunities and challenges for achieving decent work for all. In particular, there are significant obstacles ahead for policymakers in confronting existing decent work deficits. Concerns that the global technological revolution will cause labour market disruptions are compounded by strong demographic, environmental and economic trends. In many emerging and developing countries, a large share of the population is young and entering the labour market. If that young cohort is met with an economy that offers opportunities for decent work, it will be able to contribute to the development of societies. Limited economic prospects, on the other hand, are leading to high rates of youth migration to urban areas or other countries, with ensuing humanitarian risks. At the same time, in developed countries, population ageing is increasing the impact of older cohorts on labour markets. Environmental degradation will affect already vulnerable groups, including those displaced from their homes as a result of climate disasters; indigenous and tribal peoples; persons with disabilities; and the poor. Globalization through the internationalization of business, finance, trade and migration is met with growing scepticism among many groups of people for whom gains are not shared more broadly. Most recently, deglobalization has raised concerns, and there is a fear of immature deindustrialization in some middle-income countries.

4.   Much of the debate over the future of work is focused on technology and its impact on jobs. While technology is a major driver of growth and development,[2] it is also associated with labour market disruption. Past waves of technological change resulted in short-term job destruction that were followed by the creation of new and better jobs. The current wave of technological change based on digital connectivity, the growth of artificial intelligence and greater robotization, among others, differs from those of previous generations by its unprecedented speed, scope and potential to affect work in various ways. According to some estimates, 90 per cent of jobs in the future will require digital skills, which means that responses must be formulated at a similar pace, with policies that leverage the potential gains in productivity and job quality offered by technology and the millions of jobs created for people with digital skills while addressing the distributional consequences of technological change. That includes helping workers to make the transition in industrial countries, assisting smallholder farmers in developing and emerging economies to take advantage of new technologies and making the all-important policy links to the transition to a green economy and the transformation of the care economy. Part of the solution to address such changes lies in digital inclusion and accessible information and communications technology (ICT), so that all people, including women, persons with disabilities and older persons, will have the opportunity to participate fully in the digital economy without discrimination, by better anticipating future skills demands, creating a talent pool needed for inclusive and sustainable growth through life-long learning approaches,[3] mitigating job losses and supporting people through

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[2] Global Commission on the Future of Work, *Work for a Brighter Future* (Geneva, 2019), table 1, p. 19.

[3] Life-long learning needs to be understood as the provision or use of both formal and informal learning opportunities throughout people's lives in order to foster the continuous development and improvement of the knowledge and skills needed for employment and personal fulfilment. The concept of life-long learning recognizes that learning is not confined to childhood or the classroom but takes place throughout life and in a range of situations.

transitions, ensuring the promotion of formal employment in certain sectors or regions, in particular rural areas, and defining an acceptable parameter for new and hidden forms of work.

5. Most of those challenges, notably climate change, migration and displacement, are likely to have a particularly negative impact on rural development, affecting all aspects of rural people's lives, businesses and jobs. The inclusive transformation of rural areas – encompassing productive and decent work in agriculture and food systems and based on supporting the roles and capacities of rural stakeholders – can contribute to the creation of decent work in agrifood systems, which remain a major employer in many developing, as well as developed, countries.

B. Policy issues

6. As indicated above, there are a number of key issues confronting policymakers in addressing the challenges posed by digitalization, automation, artificial intelligence and other disruptive or emerging technologies, which need to be considered in the broader context of the aforementioned demographic, environmental and economic megatrends. They include, in particular, labour market disruption, distributional impacts, skills mismatch, the technological divide between developed and developing countries, the growing diversity of forms of employment, the role of social protection systems and governance and norms.

1. Mitigating labour market disruption

7. Whether or not technological changes reduce overall employment volume, the transition will be disruptive for many workers. Two significant risks are job polarization, with shrinking middle-class employment, and labour market exclusion. Studies on robotization show that displacement is high for routine tasks, including in many services sectors in which digitalization and artificial intelligence have been increasingly adopted. In the absence of effective transition policies, including adequate opportunities to acquire relevant new skills, many of those who lose jobs may be forced to accept lower-skilled and lower-paying jobs.[4]

8. Ensuring that technological gains, or technological dividends, are shared broadly in terms of jobs and income has also become a pressing issue. Such distributional concerns reflect the experience of the previous wave of technological changes, such as automation and computerization, in which technological gains were distributed in favour of capital owners and skilled workers. The large economies of scale that exist in digital industries have encouraged oligopolistic structures, in which a few players have come to dominate large shares of the market. A similar concern is raised about the economic benefits of big data platforms that are able to amass extraordinary amounts of information on consumer behaviour and preferences.[5] Public debates are needed about whether such productivity gains are benefiting societies or being captured by a small number of dominant firms. They are related to a more fundamental question of ownership of big data.

2. Improving skills through the life course

9. Technological change and current shifts in occupational patterns are transforming the need for skills, and such changes are constantly affecting workers at

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[4] International Labour Organization, "The impact of technology on the quality and quantity of jobs", Issue Brief No. 6, prepared for the 2nd meeting of the Global Commission on the Future of Work (Geneva, 2018).

[5] Ibid.

different stages of their working lives.[6] It is important to ask what skills workers will need and how they will acquire them. Cognitive abilities and complex problem-solving skills are becoming increasingly important compared with physical strength or even technical skills. The shift away from job-specific skills towards a more adaptive set of competencies requires well-tuned training and educational institutions that allow for the continuous upgrading of skills and competencies across the occupational spectrum and across age groups. However, shifts in the employment relationship towards more temporary, less secure jobs risk placing a greater burden on individual workers to acquire the right skills and competences at their own expense.

3. Bridging the technological divide

10. Another area of critical importance is the technological divide between developed and developing countries.[7] Access to the Internet is one clear indicator in that regard: in Europe, 80 per cent of people have access, compared with 24 per cent in Africa. The potential for new technologies to boost economic growth and development is strong in developing countries, but large-scale investment and effective policies will be needed to realize it. For instance, the automation of production processes and the increased deployment of robots require significant investments. In agriculture, in which automation and artificial intelligence can enhance productivity, such as through smart farming, such technology remains underutilized and is not yet an option for many poor countries with large agricultural sectors, in which labour costs are relatively low, and therefore investments in such technologies may still be infeasible and unprofitable. Even if such changes occur, they may cause disruption for rural livelihoods, including the risk that the poorest will not reap the benefits.

11. Experience shows that countries that have already developed the collective capabilities to innovate are successful in adopting robot technologies and developing robot-intensive industries. Such capabilities are embodied in the knowledge base of a society, including the composition and diversity of various technical skills and knowledge acquired by the labour force, as well as by the socially shared values and beliefs that shape expectations, choices and behaviour.

12. There is a need to strengthen national innovation systems and develop creative sectors within economies that seek to create new industries and jobs by combining existing available productive capacities. In developed countries, the creative sectors may take the form of formal research and development or innovative start-ups, but in poorer countries they are usually associated with larger firms and entrepreneurs that are willing and able to take the risk to emulate existing production in other nations and diversify economies. A national innovation system must be promoted through a pro-growth and pro-employment macroeconomic environment.

13. Furthermore, technological gaps between groups within societies need to be overcome in order to foster social inclusion. The potential of new technologies should be used to overcome barriers to employment, such as by detecting and removing biases and enabling persons with disabilities to participate in the workforce. New technologies need to be the driver of social inclusion and decent work creation,

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[6] In recognition of this, the High-level Committee on Programmes is pursuing, in parallel, an interlinked initiative to develop a system-wide strategy on the future of learning and education, with a focus on life-long learning.

[7] In recognition of this, the High-level Committee on Programmes is pursuing, in parallel, an interlinked initiative to develop a system-wide strategy on artificial intelligence capacity building for developing countries.

including safer and healthier workplaces, and ensure that all working people can live a life in dignity and security.

4. Protecting all forms of employment

14.   All forms of work need to be recognized by society and addressed in legal frameworks. Technological change, digitalization and other drivers are creating new job opportunities and leading to a growing diversity of employment forms. In addition to creating jobs, such diverse forms of employment can bring additional benefits, including helping individuals to balance work and family responsibilities. However, in some cases new forms of invisible work are being created, such as virtual labour or digital labour, which involve work being done outside an employer's premises and are often characterized by precariousness and blurred boundaries between work and non-work and between production and consumption. That has, in some cases, shifted the economic risks from businesses to workers, resulting in reductions in unit labour costs and secular declines in labour income shares. In other cases, contracts become less permanent and more precarious and lack social protection, such as in the gig economy. Access to a variety of work opportunities, including volunteer work, can also contribute to improved well-being, beyond addressing material needs through employment. At the same time, other forms of human activity with economic and social value that are overwhelmingly performed by women, including unpaid care and household activities and voluntary work that ensure the maintenance and reproduction of people and societies, are still not properly recognized as work and remain invisible. Many current data-gathering tools fail to capture such forms of work as employment, thus exacerbating their invisibility.[8] A social debate is required in order to define an acceptable parameter for such new forms of work, as well as for work in the informal economy, and those workers need to be included in the dialogue.

5. Strengthening social protection systems

15.   In order to ensure that no one is left behind, social protection systems need to be an important vehicle to overcome the gap between those who have a decent job and those who do not. Despite the fact that they may work very hard, it may be in the informal sector or invisibly as caregivers in the family, which is the reality for many women around the world. Too often, social protection systems are strained by the greater incidence of non-standard employment. There remain considerable gaps in social protection coverage and adequacy, in particular when workers do not have a formal standard employment relationship. Furthermore, there is a growing and open debate on whether delinking social protection from employment can be a solution. The principle of a social protection floor, which includes non-contributory payments for maternity and child health, access to essential medical services and old-age pensions, addresses these concerns. New innovations in social protection, however, will need to be complemented by other labour market institutions and policies to better address the demands of the contemporary world of work, including training systems, working hours and leave policies. The challenges linked to social protection systems and their capacity to help to bridge gaps in decent work are considerably larger in developing countries, especially the least developed countries. Owing to the very low coverage rates in such countries, the establishment of a social protection floor for all, in order to ensure that no one is left behind, will be a longer-term goal.

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[8] The International Conference of Labour Statisticians constantly works on closing measurement gaps. For details, see the resolutions and guidelines issued in 2013 (available at www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/19/lang--en/index.htm) and 2018 (available at www.ilo.org/global/statistics-and-databases/meetings-and-events/international-conference-of-labour-statisticians/20/WCMS_647338/lang--en/index.htm).

6. Making governance and norms more effective

16. Since the onset of globalization, production and distribution within the contemporary business enterprise have become increasingly fragmented. That has had profound consequences on the world's economy, businesses and workers, in particular across global supply chains. Within the framework of the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, endorsed by the General Assembly, while Governments have the obligation to remedy violations of labour rights within their borders, mechanisms are largely lacking to address decent work issues that cross borders.

17. Governance occupies a central role in the world of work, ensuring a fair playing field for business to create sustainable enterprises and employment and guaranteeing the protection of workers' rights and health and safety at work. However, to achieve those aims, it must also keep pace with the technological changes under way. Governance of the world of work takes place through the implementation of labour market regulations, the regulation of employment contracts, the application of voluntarily concluded collective agreements[9] and the voluntary efforts of private actors to reflect universally agreed principles in their own policies. The tools of governance include laws, labour market policies, tripartite social pacts, collective agreements and soft law, such as private codes of conduct and other voluntary private initiatives. International labour standards provide a normative framework for the development of governance tools.

18. Across the world, States and actors within an economy, including employers' organizations and trade unions, face pressure to change. The pressures differ, but they all create strains on the model of governance that has prevailed for over a century. With declining membership, especially of workers' organizations, the effectiveness and legitimacy of social dialogue in the governance of work will depend on the capacity of the key players to elicit participation, or a voice, in the generation and sharing of the fruits of economic progress and to credibly represent the interests of employers or workers. Governments also face many varying challenges in the adequate governance of work, ranging from resource and democratic deficits to a lack of political will. The rapid changes under way add further complexity. At the global level, some international labour standards are outdated and in need of revision in order to prevent conflict with national legislation. Meanwhile, labour standards, in particular core labour standards – forced and child labour, non-discrimination, equal pay, freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining – are often referenced in systems of private governance, such as corporate codes of conduct, many of which have emerged with the evolution and growth of global supply chains. This is accompanied by the proliferation of non-judicial complaint and redress mechanisms. The coexistence and occasional interaction between the private and public governance of labour conditions give rise to many questions about the effectiveness of such dual systems.

C. Future of work and the United Nations system

19. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Member States reaffirmed the responsibility of all States and the international community to ensure that no one is left behind. In reviewing the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, participants of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development issued a ministerial declaration in which they acknowledged the transformative and disruptive potential of new technologies, in particular advances in automation, on

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[9] Global Commission, *Work for a Brighter Future*, pp. 41–42.

labour markets and on the jobs of the future and sought to prepare societies and economies for such effects.

20.   The impacts of technological advances on the labour market have implications for the achievement of various Goals in an interconnected and mutually reinforcing way, in particular Goal 1 on ending poverty, Goal 3 on healthy lives and well-being for all at all ages, Goal 4 on education, Goal 5 on gender equality, Goal 8 on decent work and inclusive growth, Goal 9 on infrastructure and industrialization, Goal 10 on inequalities and Goal 17 on partnerships. A number of recent initiatives and activities have been implemented by international organizations, all of which shed light on how changes in the world of work present challenges and opportunities for the 2030 Agenda. Most recently, in September 2018, the United Nations adopted the Secretary-General's strategy on new technologies to ensure that the system supports the use of new technologies in order to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

21.   ILO, as part of its centenary initiatives, has set up the Global Commission on the Future of Work, co-chaired by the President of South Africa and the Prime Minister of Sweden, which produced a report in January 2019 containing a wide range of policy recommendations on improving the future of work. In the report, entitled *Work for a Brighter Future*, the Commission proposed a "human-centred agenda for the future work that strengthens the social contract by placing people and the work they do at the centre of economic and social policy and business practices",[10] with the following three pillars of action: increasing investment in people's capabilities; increasing investment in the institutions of work; and increasing investment in decent and sustainable work.

22.   System-wide discussion and coordination has also been strengthened in recent years. Informed by the analysis of global megatrends by the High-level Committee on Programmes at its thirty-third session, CEB identified the future of work as one of the major structural changes requiring greater examination by and mobilization of the United Nations system. Particular emphasis was given to the opportunities and challenges associated with new technologies and their potential contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda. In response, the Committee discussed the issue at its thirty-fourth session on the basis of the discussion paper prepared by ILO in collaboration with other interested Committee members.

23.   It was concluded from the discussions that ensuring that no one was left behind in the transition process was a global challenge requiring collective action, new policies and effective governance. Bearing in mind the important implications of the changes posed by such challenges for the prospect of achieving the 2030 Agenda, policy coordination and programmatic coherence within the system and across the relevant thematic areas are essential for producing the intended outcomes. It is in recognition thereof that the Committee decided to develop a system-wide strategy and pursue value-added engagement and thought leadership, while building on existing initiatives and aligning them for maximum impact.

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[10] Ibid., p. 11. The three pillars of action include 10 policy recommendations on a universal entitlement to life-long learning, supporting people in a life-long active society, a transformative agenda for gender equality, universal social protection, a universal labour guarantee, time sovereignty, collective representation and social dialogue, technology for decent work, incentives to promote investments and reshaping business incentives for longer-term investments.

II. Visions and approaches

24. Work is a central pillar in people's lives. It gives meaning, purpose and dignity and provides a platform for social interaction and integration. It also allows people to make an active contribution to society. Having a decent job ensures a life in dignity, social inclusion, and respect and rights at work and beyond, including the right to a safe and healthy environment in general and at the workplace in particular, as well as social protection during transition periods.

25. Recognizing the centrality of work, the strategy, through a human-centred approach, is aimed at achieving the future that we want, in which everyone can benefit from changes while being provided with effective protection against risks of disruptions.[11]

26. Shaping a future of work that we want is fundamental to achieving the Goals and responding to the overarching imperative to leave no one behind. Without well-defined, well-informed and well-coordinated initiatives and interventions, the risk of increasing inequality, with the bottom billion staying even further behind, will remain. Therefore, in the strategy a strong emphasis will be placed on measures to support vulnerable groups and foster social inclusion in both developed and developing countries, with special attention given to the specific needs of developing countries.

27. The future of work will depend considerably on accelerated efforts and investments in order to close digital divides and ensure digital inclusion.[12] Thus, the strategy contains calls for skills development at all levels and the promotion of accessible ICT to also allow access to digital skills education for persons with disabilities.

28. The United Nations system has a key role in assisting Member States, especially developing countries, with policies and programmes that help people to benefit from the productivity gains and life-improving promises of technological changes while ensuring that the cost is not a widening of inequalities within and among countries. New technologies can be a positive force for developing countries, in particular in making significant strides towards the achievement of the Goals.

29. The strategy should enable the United Nations system to better support Member States in developing a shared policy framework for achieving and ensuring decent jobs for all in future societies within the context of the 2030 Agenda, in particular by improving the coordination and mobilization of knowledge, expertise and capacities across the system and taking into consideration the specific realities and challenges of countries. It should provide an overarching policy framework to serve as a basis to guide United Nations country teams in the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. It should help to prompt dialogue and action at the national, regional and global levels.

30. As the changes in the world of work are fundamental, comprehensive and global and affect the daily lives of all people around the world, the responses of the United Nations need to be coordinated and consistent, making the best use of the Organization's technical and financial resources. They also require multisectoral,

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[11] In this context, in its report. the Global Commission calls for the establishment of a universal labour guarantee in which all workers, regardless of their contractual arrangement or employment status, should enjoy fundamental workers' rights, an adequate living wage, maximum limits on working hours and protection of safety and health at work, as well as fundamental principles and rights at work. Time sovereignty is also needed to give workers greater autonomy over their working time, while meeting enterprise needs.

[12] In its report, the Global Commission identifies digital, care, green and rural economies as having the potential to create decent and sustainable work.

multidisciplinary, integrated and coherent policy approaches drawing on the expertise, convening power and capacity-building and normative functions of the United Nations system.

31.   The strategy is closely aligned with the earlier and current work of the High-level Committee on Programmes, in particular on inequalities and youth employment, for which system-wide principles and frameworks for action are already in place, and also complements and mutually supports its interlinked initiatives on the future of learning and education and on capacity-building on artificial intelligence, for which system-wide strategies are being finalized.

32.   The strategy reflects all other United Nations strategies and global coalitions already in place that have an impact on the future world of work, including the 2016 report of the High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth and the 2019 report of the Global Commission on the Future of Work. The outcome of the ILO centenary conference is particularly important in orienting and implementing the strategy and will be annexed to the strategy once available after June 2019.

33.   The strategy should be further articulated and implemented in synergy with other complementary initiatives, such as the closely related strategies on artificial intelligence capacity development and on the future of learning and education, as well as the strategy on sustainable urban development, which is currently being developed under the auspices of High-level Committee on Programmes.

34.   The visions of the strategy will also be pursued through multi-stakeholder partnerships, especially by engaging with stakeholders and world leaders in high-level policy action to improve the future of work, while scaling up context-specific interventions at the national and regional levels for systematic and coherent policy interventions.

35.   Through a time-bound approach with 2030 as the target, the actions taken under the strategy will be aimed at contributing to the achievement of the Goals.

III.   Guiding principles

36.   While recognizing the respective mandates of the various entities of the United Nations system, the strategy will be guided by the following principles:

(a)   Reducing inequalities and greater inclusion should be hallmarks of the way in which the latest wave of technological changes and other megatrends are addressed. Appropriate, human-centred, intergenerational, proactive and anticipatory policy responses are needed to confront the distributional challenges related to the disruptions they cause, and inappropriate policies need to be identified and corrected. The future of work that we want is a future that we must make in accordance with the values and preferences that we choose and through the policies that we design and implement. Governments should take a proactive leading role so as to influence such processes, with the support of the United Nations, which should establish an enabling environment;

(b)   The potential of ICT needs to be maximized.[13] It is essential to ensure digital inclusion and the promotion of accessible ICT in order to provide access to digital skills education for persons with disabilities. ITC can also enable remote work,

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[13] As proposed by the Global Commission in its report, this requires workers and managers to negotiate the design of work and adopt a human-in-command approach to artificial intelligence, an international governance system for digital labour platforms to respect certain minimum rights and protections, and the regulation of data use and algorithmic accountability in the world of work.

which can increase opportunities for people to participate in labour markets, including refugees and migrants, who face employment barriers, and others living in areas that lack job opportunities;

(c)   A universal, rights-based approach focusing on the root causes underlined in Goal 8 is fundamental to addressing the lack of access to decent work that may be created or exacerbated by new technologies, demographic shifts, climate change and globalization. The United Nations system shared framework for action on equality and non-discrimination is an important source of guidance on policies and programme support to reduce inequalities;

(d)   Given the wide-ranging but differentiated implications of the future of work for Member States at all stages of economic development, it is essential to link the strategy to related policy areas, such as education and skills, social protection, governance, health and well-being, migration, climate change and environmental sustainability. In particular, the strategy complements and mutually supports the system-wide strategy on the future of learning and education, which was developed within the framework of the High-level Committee on Programmes;

(e)   Closing gender gaps in the world of work and enabling the realization of women's rights and their economic and political empowerment are key to moving towards substantive gender equality. Substantive gender equality, grounded in the full and unfettered realization of human and labour rights, must be inseparable from the approaches to the changing world of work. Those approaches need to continuously be an integral part when addressing issues concerning the future of work. They include, for example, recognizing, reducing and redistributing unpaid care and domestic work; reducing pay gaps; improving education in the field of science, technology, engineering and mathematics; supporting women's entrepreneurship; addressing the gender digital divide; and harnessing the potential of new technologies for care work;[14]

(f)   It is critical for investments to be made in jobs and skills for youth, because young men and women continue to suffer disproportionately from insufficient job opportunities. Changing preferences and aspiration among young people are also important factors for the development of new skills and investment. The strategy should support the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth, the United Nations Youth Strategy and Generation Unlimited in its efforts to prepare young people for current and future jobs in the digital economy and other promising sectors and to promote youth entrepreneurship, quality apprenticeships and green jobs;

(g)   While large cohorts of youth should determine interventions in most developing countries, ageing societies are already, and will for many countries be, the dominant challenge. It is therefore critical for societies to assist in preparing and facing the challenge in order to make sure that, depending on the needs and desires of older people, they have the opportunity to become an asset for development. That includes addressing the digital divide affecting older persons;

• Only through an intergenerational approach that looks at people's challenges and opportunities throughout their life cycles can the hurdles of participating in labour markets for young people, the elderly and other disadvantaged groups be overcome;[15]

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[14] This principle is strongly echoed in the call by the Global Commission on the Future of Work, in its report entitled *Work for a Brighter Future*, for a transformative and measurable agenda for gender equality.

[15] As recommended by the Global Commission on the Future of Work, in its report entitled *Work for a Brighter Future*, this points to the need to step up investments in the institutions, policies and strategies that will support people through transitions concerning the future of work over the life cycle.

(h)   The opportunities and challenges of reframing investment, growth and prosperity around environmental sustainability must be addressed, as well as of linking the future of work with a fair transition towards a more sustainable economy;

(i)   Such investments in people, technology and infrastructure must also be geared towards boosting rural development, reducing informality and building peace and resilience;

(j)   Global and national economic policies, including fair competition policies, need to facilitate responses and new investment in people's capabilities and in institutions in order to support decent and sustainable work. [16] The support of macroeconomic policies in particular, such as fiscal policies, will be essential for further investment in people and social protection. In particular, universal social protection from birth to old age, based on the principles of solidarity and risk-sharing, is essential;[17]

(k)   Governance of labour migration and mobility needs to be strengthened in order to fully respect the rights of working people on the move and benefit the countries of both origin and destination;

(l)   International and regional cooperation is needed to create an environment that gives developing countries the policy space to conduct policies supporting innovation through the rapid adoption, dissemination and adaptation of technologies within sound macroeconomic frameworks supportive of growth, employment stability and sustainability;

(m)   Analytical and statistical work, in particular in the areas of the employment impacts of technology and of non-standard, new or unrecognized forms of work, need to be further strengthened in order to better coordinate evidence-based policy developments. Data and statistics are perennial issues in that regard. Technological progress should help to revolutionize the traditional method of data collection and statistical work. The disaggregation of data to identify the various impacts on different groups and thus tailor policy approaches will also be important;

(n)   There is a significant role for public-private partnership in addressing the challenges and promoting the opportunities while countries confront technological changes and shifting employment patterns, such as partnership for life-long learning. Considerable attention needs to be given to the roles of Governments and businesses in enabling wider access to the digital economy, designing and financing life-long learning systems, social protection and other measures for supporting transitions for workers. There is also a role for charities that should be integrated into addressing challenges and finding solutions;

(o)   Given the multifaceted challenges and opportunities, participatory approaches with the involvement of social partners and numerous stakeholders are important not only for creating ownership and buy-in but also for illuminating entry points and sparking a people-centred approach to innovation. Similarly, innovative approaches using new technologies, such as the Internet platform, are emerging to organize the voices of social partners and civil society.

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[16] Global Commission, *Work for a Brighter Future*, p. 49. This also requires a supportive and business climate and incentives for long-term incentives.
[17] Ibid, pp. 35–36.

IV. Key elements of implementation

37. In applying the strategic principles, a set of practical actions, including those set out below, will be undertaken, in particular to facilitate strong and effective joint work and collaboration across the system.

A. Prompting research and knowledge-sharing

38. The strategy will build on and enhance systematic collaboration between major knowledge initiatives within the United Nations system, such as the Artificial Intelligence for Good Global Summit, organized by the International Telecommunication Union, and the multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. Special efforts will also be made to develop research networks that bring together the research arms of various United Nations agencies to share their research findings and develop common analytical perspectives on major policy responses. A wide range of methods, notably those using digital technologies, should be utilized to facilitate such collaboration efforts.

40. At the same time, the creation and sharing of knowledge also need to draw on the expertise of the multilateral system. For instance, the integration of diverse policy fields relating to the future of work can be facilitated in the following ways: by the Green Growth Knowledge Platform, a major knowledge platform led by the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Global Green Growth Institute and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); by the Green Economy Academy under the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, which involves UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and ILO; and by other global platforms that include bodies outside the United Nations system, including private sector platforms.

41. Under the strategy, collaborative research and analytical work will be developed, including through foresight approaches, on core policy areas in which further research is needed. The research networks proposed above can be invited to identify relevant research themes, with particular attention given to:

(a) The impacts of the future of work on developing countries, with a focus on informal employment;

(b) The role of human capital and natural capital in relation to the need for investment in people and environments, with the main nexus between the two to be found in the areas of health and pollution;

(c) Structural transformation processes, including in the rural sector, and the role of industrial policies, especially in relation to demographic, climate-related and technological changes;

(d) Empowering women, with a focus on removing structural barriers to decent work opportunities in both urban and rural areas;

(e) Preparing young people for current and future jobs, especially in an era of permanent technological changes and ageing societies;

(f) The role of life-long learning by skilling, reskilling and up-skilling people at any point in their career, regardless of their age or economic status;

(g) Improving childhood development to better support life-long learning;

(h)   The potential of care, rural and green economies to create decent jobs that increase inclusion and equality and lead to an overall improvement in people's lives;

(i)   Macroeconomic frameworks and policies supporting investment in people and social protection to promote decent employment for men and women;

(j)   The employment and environmental implications of investment in infrastructure;

(k)   The changing landscape of work in increasingly ageing societies;

(l)   The impacts of shorter working time and increased leisure time on society and individual well-being;

(m)   Investing in jobs that benefit the bottom billion;

(n)   The role of decent work in building peace and resilience

(o)   The impacts of increased human mobility on the future of work.

B.   Improving coordination and collaboration on implementation and on monitoring and measuring impacts

42.   The improvement of statistical work will be essential in designing policies and monitoring their impacts. As the world of work is rapidly evolving, the importance of timely and relevant data is growing.[18]

43.   The strategy will need to be aligned with system-wide coordination on the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals, with concerted contributions to the areas in which the future of work is particularly important. Observing and assessing developments and changes in the composition of the labour force of countries is key to identifying challenges and opportunities. The strategy will support the ongoing work of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians to improve international labour statistics systems so that they better reflect labour market realities. In parallel, statistical coordination within the United Nations system will be strengthened.

44.   At the same time, the strategy will mobilize technical expertise in order to capture newly emerging issues, such as how to better measure the productivity of digital technology and opportunities for jobs related to environmental improvements. Possibly in partnership with the private sector, it will also develop ways of using big data and artificial intelligence in producing data of major policy relevance while addressing the potential risks involved. It is an area in which partnerships with the private sector are particularly important. Attention will also be given to data visualization and infographics for effective communication and engaging with stakeholders.

45.   Supported by such strategic coordination, the system will contribute to improving the capacity of national statistical offices.

46.   The results obtained by the use of foresight tools and methodologies by several United Nations agencies present a promising avenue for informing strategies and policies. The ongoing discussion by the High-level Committee on Programmes on

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[18] According to the Global Commission's report, supplementary indicators of human development and well-being would be needed to be able to measure progress regarding distributional dimensions of growth, the value of unpaid work and the externalities of economic activities, such as environmental degradation.

strategic foresight may be taken into account when developing coordination and collaboration in that regard, as well as the above-mentioned research areas.

C. Applying new technologies and seeking innovation within the system

47.   Realizing the strategy in the rapidly changing landscape of jobs would require the United Nations system to incorporate and pursue innovative approaches, including with the support of advanced technologies. Guided by the Secretary General's strategy on new technologies, the system as a whole needs to take full advantage of new technologies for better management, continued innovation and greater impacts.

48.   To crowdsource and promote innovative ways to scale up its implementation, the strategy will form a special partnership with the United Nations Innovation Network, an informal, collaborative community of innovators interested in sharing their expertise and experience with others to promote and advance innovation within the United Nations system. Similarly, it could also partner with other informal networks, such as the Young United Nations network, to bring novel ideas for ways of working. Such efforts will be informed and supported by the United Nations innovation toolkit, which is being developed under the leadership of the United Nations Innovation Network within the context of CEB.

49.   The strategy will also encourage mutual learning from good practices within the system. For instance, the Climate Technology Centre and Network, hosted by UNEP and UNIDO, promotes the accelerated transfer of environmentally sound technologies at the request of developing countries. It provides technology solutions, capacity-building and advice on policy, legal and regulatory frameworks tailored to the needs of individual countries by harnessing the expertise of a global network of technology companies and institutions.

50.   While promoting modern digital and frontier technologies, provided that they contribute to improving people's lives, efforts will promote and build on the social and environmental benefits of local and traditional innovation and knowledge, including that of indigenous peoples.

D. Improving current education and training systems, including early childhood development, and encouraging life-long learning in order to increase the adaptability of workers and facilitate their transition to new and better jobs

51.   This is a critical area of policy interventions for improving the future of work.[19] The system is well placed to create strong synergies for large and sustainable impacts through strong coordination between relevant agencies, and it is for this purpose that the High-level Committee on Programmes is pursuing, in parallel, an interlinked initiative to develop a system-wide strategy on the future of learning and education, which addresses the issue as a priority.

52.   The strategy on the future of work, in conjunction with the strategy on the future of education and learning, will enhance coordination and coherence between major initiatives, such as partnership with ILO, UNEP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund, UNITAR, UNIDO, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Bank. In

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[19] In its report, the Global Commission calls for a universal entitlement to lifelong learning.

order to raise the visibility of the issue globally, the strategy can actively use the convening power of the United Nations system to initiate a flagship project that creates a global network of life-long learning institutions associated with the system. Good policy practices will be collected and disseminated systematically.

53.   The strategy will enforce the role of the United Nations in advocating and ensuring that international and national policies and practices on ICT for education will focus first on the poorest and most marginalized. Given particular connectivity problems in some areas, the strategy recognizes the need to extend coverage and infrastructure to ensure access in such underserved areas, especially rural, remote and mountainous areas, and to address other digital divides, such as those based on gender and age and for indigenous peoples, an action duly included in the system-wide strategy on artificial intelligence capacity-building being developed within the Committee.

54.   At the same time, the strategy will be guided by the principle of putting teachers or facilitators at the heart of most programmes on ICT for education.

55.   Through these efforts and by promoting synergy and cross-fertilization with the efforts of the interlinked strategies under the Committee, the strategy will contribute to developing common policy views within the United Nations system and thus providing system-wide coherent advice to Member States.

E.   More standardized and integrated approaches to and common tools for policy development and technical assistance

56.   The strategy will provide an overarching policy framework to serve as a basis to ensure coherent policy approaches across efforts by the United Nations system, including at the country level, especially in reducing technological gaps, expanding social protection, promoting life-long learning, boosting sustainable infrastructure investment for green jobs, promoting a care economy and creating supportive macroeconomic policies.

57.   However, a future of work that we want will not be achieved through a one-size-fits-all approach. Recognizing that it will be manifested differently in the context of each country or region, the focus of policy coordination will be on applying or translating basic principles and frameworks, as articulated in the strategy, to specific national circumstances. The strategy will contribute to developing and providing, through the United Nations Sustainable Development Group mechanisms, guidance and support for United Nations country teams and resident coordinators in integrating normative and policy elements related to the future of work into country-level assistance through common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The UNEP publication entitled *Integrated Policymaking for Sustainable Development: A Reference Manual* can inform the discussion on basic principles and frameworks, while the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, which comprises UNEP, ILO, UNITAR, UNIDO and UNDP, is a good example of a shared approach to policy engagement at the country level.

58.   Common policy responses to the evolution of the world of work need to be based on inclusive dialogue. They also need to be locally tailored and involve local institutions and groups to be able to respond to their interests and concerns.

F. Improving normative and standard settings

59.   In order to support policy coherence within the system and respond to new policy challenges, the current status of norms and standards within the system will be examined as part of the strategy.

60.   An important step will be to create an inventory of existing norms and standards, which can serve as a system-wide reference for coherent normative activities in the area of the future of work. The inventory will also provide an opportunity to review the relevance and effectiveness of major norms and standards in the light of profound new changes in the world of work. Through the review process, the strategy can identify possible areas in which additional efforts are needed. The exercise will be focused on aspects relating to work, but needs to be attentive to ethical dimensions of the new changes, especially on how to protect data and respect human rights in the digital economy. The strategy will also explore ways of developing practical guidance on ethical standards in that regard.

G. Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships, alliances, initiatives and coalitions to promote an inclusive future of work

61.   The future of work is a global concern that requires collective actions on a global scale. Building on the system-wide collaboration, the strategy will foster multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with private sector and non-government actors. That will allow it to forge a stronger consensus on policy responses and disseminate messages and ideas more broadly.

62.   The multi-stakeholder partnership is also essential in bringing people's voices to policy developments. The voice of young people in particular is of importance. The strategy will support key global multi-stakeholder initiatives, including the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. At the same time, and with societies ageing rapidly, the voices of older people also need to be heard in order to ensure a fair, intergenerational transition to the future world of work.

63.   Similarly, existing partnerships and alliances will be used effectively in other major policy areas, including the green economy, such as the Partnership for Action on Green Economy and the Green Growth Knowledge Platform; gender equality, such as the WE EMPOWER and EQUALS global partnership; and the future of skills, such as the UNIDO learning and knowledge development facility.

V. Actions and follow-up measures

64.   The implementation of the strategy will be pursued through the following actions and follow-up measures:

(a)   The strategy is endorsed by CEB, subject to the scope of the individual and separate mandates of the entities of the United Nations system and their specific legal status as international organizations.

(b)   The implementation of the strategy will be coordinated and monitored by a steering group of core entities of the United Nations system, under the continuing leadership of ILO. The group will be based on the membership of the task team of the High-level Committee on Programmes and be opened to even broader participation across the United Nations system. The group will operate in a light-touch manner, making the best use of virtual consultations.

(c)   As an immediate follow-up measure, entities will be invited to develop their individual or collaborative action plans, which will be consolidated by ILO, the lead agency, into an action plan on the future of work. In doing so, all relevant entities will identify ways in which their respective mandates might contribute to the strategy on the future of work. The action plan will form a basis to coordinate and monitor implementation of the strategy and will be overseen by the steering group.

(d)   A repository on the future of work will be developed to bring together relevant events, policy documents and statistics and will be hosted by ILO.

(e)   ILO, on behalf of the strategy, will spearhead the effort to promote the translation of the strategy into country-level guidance and action through the appropriate framework under the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

(f)   The organization of multi-stakeholder meetings or conferences in follow-up to the centenary outcome will be coordinated under the strategy.

(g)   The outcome of the ILO centenary conference on the future of work, to be held in June 2019, will further inform the United Nations system-wide strategy, towards its final sign-off and launch.

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