

**ADDRESS BY SEYCHELLES MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, MRS
PATRICIA FRANCOURT, ON 12TH JUNE 2023 AT THE 111TH SESSION OF THE ILO
CONFERENCE, GENEVA**

Mr President

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a pleasure to address the 111th session of the ILO Conference and to reconvene with tripartite constituents across the world, to establish standards and resolutions that will define our actions towards the realities and developments in the world of work.

The Government and the people of Seychelles conveys its gratitude and support to the Director General of the ILO Mr Gilbert Houngbo in his vision of advancing social justice and promoting decent work. The report of the Director General entitled “Advancing social justice” puts before us the strategic directions to be taken whilst economies continue to recover following the effects of the pandemic COVID-19.

I believe the quest for social justice is justified as the conversations and if I may say, actions, aim to fulfil the aspirations of our fellow citizens and workers. Social justice renews the ILO’s centenary human-centred approach and it reaffirms our role as tripartite constituents to bring progress to our people and to uphold the constitutional obligations as member states of the ILO. It is therefore aptly appropriate that the first words of the ILO Constitution set out our ambition for the achievement of universal and lasting peace to be based on social justice.

Mr President, when striving for social justice, we should also aim for inclusiveness and resilient societies, so that we leave no one behind. I would like to reiterate that the working environment is rapidly unfolding new trends and accelerating the effects of existing challenges. Many young people still face difficulties to secure jobs in areas of their training and when they become discouraged they choose a job in a different field. Workers in informal

employment remain unprotected from basic labour protection because of the nature of their employment. Balancing work, life-long learning and family responsibilities remains a challenging task particularly to young single mothers.

These challenges call for concrete actions to address the four dimensions of social justice, as it responds to the realities that many people are living. We have a role to play to equip our labour force with the skills in demand and to provide correct labour market information and equal access to opportunities, to allow them to adapt and grow in the world of work. This is the social justice that we seek!

I am pleased to say that my country Seychelles which is a small island state, joins this global effort and cooperation. We have developed policies and skills development programmes to facilitate people's access to employment, no matter their age, their background and their vulnerable situations. We encourage those in informal employment to join formal employment whilst we progressively improve on the framework for better working conditions. Our national unemployment rate for year 2022 has been maintained to below five percent, however youth unemployment remains severe.

Seychelles also depends largely on migrant workers and in March this year, we launched the "Work in Seychelles" induction programme, to inform migrant workers of their rights and responsibilities. This was necessary in order to acknowledge and recognise their valuable contributions to our economy in addressing the skills gap given the small size of our population. Such initiative creates a good start for migrant workers to make positive input in the world of work. It reaffirms that social justice should have no borders and all workers' rights must be respected.

To conclude, Seychelles pledges its commitment to the ILO's effort of a Global coalition on social justice that serves to achieve parity in treatment for all. We believe it is the way forward to achieve just and inclusive transitions and the sustainable development goals. I thank you Mr President.