



Public Services International
Internationale des Services Publics
Internationale der Öffentlichen Dienste
Internationell Facklig Organisation för Offentliga Tjänster
国際公務労連

INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANISATION OF PSI

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THE FUTURE OF WORK: THE WORK THAT WE WANT NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

Final declaration of the unions affiliated to ISP Interamerica, participants in the regional seminar held in Santiago de Chile from November 5 to 7 2018

The discussion about the future of work is a priority issue for those who, like us, actively participate in debates about the world of work. Taking into account that the discussion on the future of work will be the central theme of the 2019 International Labor Conference, the so-called "Centennial Conference" of the International Labor Organization (ILO), we must prepare for this conference by analyzing the conjuncture and developing a position. Our analysis and position of the future of work must be from a public sector and trade union perspective.

First, we must be clear about what the motivation for our analysis is by asking ourselves: What exactly are we talking about when we discuss the future of work? Industrial Revolution 4.0? Artificial Intelligence? Digitalization? The answer to these questions is ambiguous: While we include discussion of all these issues, the debate is not limited to these questions.

From a union perspective, we are talking mainly about the promotion of **truly decent work** now and in the future, with full union rights and freedom of association. Above all, public sector workers need to have jobs with adequate working conditions so that we can offer **quality public services** to the entire population.

It is fundamental to state the centrality of public services as a response to citizens' access of employment and decent work. Without public services that provide the material source for realization of their fundamental human rights, there are no guarantees for integration into the labour market under equal conditions.

It is essential to emphasize that the Future of Work depends on the public services of the present and the strengthening of those services in the future. Thus, the responsibility of States can not be diminished, nor avoided in the realization of fundamental principles including universality, public financing, governance, control and the provision of public services.

As workers that provide public services, we warn that privatization and public-private partnerships are a clear threat to these guarantees. These models of service provision are undermining work in the present and are a threat to work in the future. Without quality public services which guarantee full union and labour rights and that contribute to the

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construction of equality and social and gender equity, the future work will always be a chimera.

We categorically declare that "there is no future of work without discussing the present world of work. There is no dignity at work in the future without dignity in the present. We support the immediate promotion of decent work, the effective fulfillment of the International Labor Conventions, and respect for human and labour rights at work for everyone, all over the world."

We must be clear that this is not an academic or theoretical discussion. It is a political discussion about power, its administration, global governance and the management of social conflict.

It is evident that many of the actors involved in the debate about the future of work seek to use this process of building definitions to weaken the trade union movement and to promote policies of flexibilization. Based on the supposed "needs of the market" linked to new forms of production of goods and services, these are exactly the actors that impose the intense changes using the latest generation of technology in industrial production and in services, intending to dismantle systems of rights protection and increase pressure on workers through their partnerships with neoliberal governments and International Financial Institutions.

These forces want workers to accept a narrow debate based on "technological determinism" where it would seem that there is no space for collective decision making, public policy, the redistribution of wealth or balanced governance. Of course, they do not want us to bring up and discuss the negative effects of the financialization of the economy, the guarantee of labour rights throughout value chains, the development of a fair tax system and the elimination of tax havens, fair trade, and many other issues that "determine" the future of work, as much or more than technological changes.

The employers, working together with some governments want to take us back 50 years by denying the right to strike supported by ILO Convention 87 and to proclaim the arrival of a future world of work without workers. Employers are attempting to redefine labour relations as industrial relations, and talk about workers as entrepreneurs, collaborators and service providers in efforts to separate individuals from their sense of collective belonging and class membership and awareness of the importance of collective union action.

We in the union movement do not accept this false narrative. We do not approach this global conversation from the same premise. We want to discuss the future of work based on changes to the model of development that has secure jobs and redistributive public policies. We want real employment with all rights guaranteed and strong unions.

We do not refuse to debate the effects of new technologies and their impacts in the world of work. We agree on the need to analyze future changes to work. But we are firm in our position that new technologies must be at the **service of humanity and workers**, and not at

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the service of companies who want to use them to accumulate more and more wealth, maximize surplus value while increasing poverty and inequality. That is why we demand a **just transition** in the introduction of new technology in every workplace. A just transition that includes the participation of union representatives and collective bargaining, where new technologies and adequate training for workers is discussed collectively.

The role of the State is fundamental to this debate. There is no future of work based on values of justice, equity and equality without public policies based on social dialogue to balance and curb the power of large corporations. It is not possible to debate the future of work without simultaneously debating the future of capital and the value of care work that remains invisible in the majority of the world but remains of high strategic importance for capital.

For example:

- Transnational companies don't currently pay taxes. A **global tax reform** is required to force transnationals to pay taxes order to have the resources to finance quality public services.
- Current free trade agreements that are negotiated to consolidate the power of transnational corporations to the detriment of governments and citizens. We demand the suspension of negotiations of all agreements currently under discussion until a substantive democratic review is carried out which contains an **analysis of the impacts of FTAs**.
- In addition to continuously concentrating political and economic power, corporations have a historical pattern of violating human rights at the level of the workplace. We support the creation of a binding UN treaty on transnational corporations and human rights.
- We do not want a future of work in which the personal data of workers, collected by one or more of the Big Brothers - such as Facebook or Google - are used to determine, through their previous analysis, whether a person may or may not have a job, benefits or promotions. Therefore, the prohibition of the unauthorized use of personal data and the **control of data** in public hands are fundamental priorities in order to guarantee that data is not used as a weapon against workers.
- It is understood that new technologies contribute to increases in the pace and volume of production, and consequent increases in the generation of wealth. Instead of the concentration of this wealth in the hands of very few, we want it to be distributed among the entire population. The use of new technologies must also result in new rights and better working conditions including reducing working hours without

reducing wages. We want a new generation of rights, beyond what we have today, compatible with the new realities in the labour market

In the discussion about the future of work, or the work of the future, we must also debate what role the **Global South** will play in a new digital economy that is already under development. Will the global South remain a mere exporter of raw materials, leaving the North as the holder of technological knowledge? We must discuss how global development policy will be carried out in relation to the use, management and production of new technologies.

New technologies must serve a new model of development that is globally balanced, contributes to reducing **gender gaps**, promotes **equality of opportunity** for all, regardless of race, origin, religion, sexual identity and age and that contributes to mitigating the effects of **climate change** and modifies current production processes moving towards environmentally sustainability.

As unions that represent public sector workers we must be prepared for these challenges. We must reinvent ourselves and strengthen ourselves at all times. We need strong and representative unions that can ensure a just transition, that defend decent work and that guarantee collective bargaining in every moment of transition while preserving labour and union rights.

As PSI Interamerica, **we are preparing ourselves** for these discussions at the ILO centenary. We are continuously raising the need to integrate the theme of public services as we wait to see the content of the report that the Director General of the ILO has entrusted to the Committee of Experts on the Future of the Work. We are ratifying the decisions of our American Regional Executive Committee IAMREC and preparing to go to Geneva together with our General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli to raise the voice of workers that provide public services.

In summary: **we want new technologies and the work of the future to be at the service of humanity, promoting a better life for all**