**STATEMENT BY SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF TRADE UNIONS (KENYA), DR. FRANCIS ATWOLI, NOM(DZA)EBS, MBS, DURING THE 108TH SESSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE IN GENEVA SWITZERLAND, JUNE 2019**

**The President of the 108th Session of the Conference**

**Vice- Presidents of the Conference**

**ILO Director-General**

**Heads of delegations and Ministers present**

**Invited Guests**

**Ladies & Gentlemen**

* On behalf of COTU(K) and on my own behalf, we welcome the Report of the Global commission on the Future of Work entitled, Work *for a brighter future*. The report whose discussion coincides with the ILO’s centenary celebrations could not have come at a better time. It presents us with an opportunity to take stock of the organization’s achievements and challenges in the last century and ways of overcoming them as we transition into the next century.
* We are also called upon to examine the elements of the desired vision of future of work necessary if the organization has to meet its constitutional mandate of attaining universal peace and social justice.

**Mr President**,

* In its century of existence, the ILO ideals remain as relevant as they were in 1919. While a lot has been achieved, much more remains to be done. The evidence shows that significant challenges threaten to impair universal stability if urgent and decisive action is not taken.
* The Transformations in the world of work driven by technological advances, green economy initiatives and demographic changes have brought economic growth and prosperity while leaving many in poverty, exacerbating income inequality, and widening the gender gap.

**Mr President**,

* We as COTU(K) and the workers fraternity in general are gratified to note that, the report has upheld our long-standing position that the well-being of people should be the central objective of development policies at all levels and with fair and equitable outcomes which are also measurable. In other words – a human centred agenda.

**Mr President,**

* We concur that the success of the agenda rests on the commitment of ILO constituents to the ideals of tripartism and social dialogue. And this calls for the reinvigoration of the social contract that gives working people a just share of economic progress and respect for their rights and protection against risk in return for their continued contribution to the economy.

**Fellow delegates,**

* A bright future envisioned by the commission report would be a mirage without an empowered people, strong institutions of work and an investment in decent and sustainable policies. These are the three inseparable pillars of the agenda that guarantee growth, equity and sustainability for the present and future generations.
* As experience has taught us, reaching a consensus on noble ideals like this proposed by the commission is easy. However, translating them into real and concrete action at both national and international levels has been a challenge.
* And speaking from our national experience, there are concerns regarding the Government’s genuine commitment in supporting free and independently functioning labour market institutions and Social Dialogue through Tripartism arrangements.
* The unilateral attempts to amend Labour Laws and introduction of the New Curriculum in teaching profession without prior consultations with Social Partners as required under the constitution and the ILO conventions 144 does not augur well for the achievement of human centred agenda as practised by the Kenya Government and should be discouraged.

**Mr President,**

* We also want to see a coherent and coordinated policy making process between the Ministries of Labour, Trade and Finance at the national level so that the promotion of investments and trade is not done without due regard to economic and social impacts of workers.
* In this regard, we call for stronger regulations and possible stoppage of outsourcing and subcontracting business models with a view of mainstreaming decent working practices in their operations.
* In the same vein, and as we support stronger investments in the institutions of work, we strongly recommend for the proper funding of the Ministries of Labour and Employment which are the central institutions in the governance and operations of key social dialogue institutions in many countries.

**Mr President,**

* We also endorse the view that, due its tripartite nature and rights based normative mandate, the ILO remains the best placed UN Agency to provide a moral compass in the implementation of the agenda of the bright future of work.

I Thank You.