

ILO Former Officials Section

Message from the Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder

As we come to the end of this very special and difficult year, I am glad to be able to address these few words to you.

You, our former colleagues, have found yourselves in a variety of situations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our thoughts go out in particular to those staying in places where movement is tightly restricted, those who may have health problems, and those with limited opportunities to see and meet up with family and friends.

After last year's centenary celebrations, this year has been historic in its own way. Unprecedented in peacetime, there was no Governing Body session in March or International Labour Conference in June. November's Governing Body session was held virtually, also for the first time. Since March, both in Geneva and in the field, staff have been teleworking to varying degrees depending on national circumstances.

It was a testing period for the Organization, which involved continuing to serve our tripartite constituents, maintaining links with them, and demonstrating that we were able to adapt while giving priority to the duty of care and protecting the health and safety of staff. With regard to staff health and safety, the administration has always endeavoured to consult staff representatives and share relevant information with them in relation to the pandemic. The Office has invariably sought the views of the ILO's Committee on Occupational Safety and Health (COSH) on issues of health and safety at work.

Feedback from constituents is generally positive, and this has required an enormous effort on the part of everyone.

Building on these positive experiences, we are now focused on implementing the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work as framed by the challenge of recovery and "building back better". This will be a difficult time for member States as they grapple with the economic, financial, social and health impacts of the pandemic.

Let us see our way forward through the glimmer of hope signalled by the advent of vaccines. I believe we have emerged stronger from this crisis as "one ILO". We look to the future with confidence; we stand more than ready to keep meeting the challenge of our centenary and playing our part in building a future of work that is both different and better.

My best wishes to all of you for a happy new year 2021.