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Intervention by Alex Campbell, International Trade Union Conferederation *on behalf of the CS FfD Mechanism during the* Multi-stakeholder round table 8: Science, technology, innovation, and capacity-building

Thank you Chair. My name is Alex Campbell from the International Trade Union Confederation, and I am speaking on behalf of the Civil Society FFD Mechanism.

Each day there's a new article about the impact of new technologies on employment and workers—often called "the future of work." But it's not in the future any longer.

- On one level, the impact is not exaggerated— platform work, artificial intelligence, and algorithmic management aren't the future, they affect workers right now, and trade unions in nearly every country are figuring out strategies to deal with it.
- Because this fundamentally isn't about whether society needs workers—that's not in question. It's about bargaining power—*about what conditions* people will work under.

Technology may present great opportunities, but we should understand its effects on workers as a warning that broader regulation is crucial. The challenges digital technology poses to workers' rights mirror the challenges it poses to development more broadly– in particular for corporate accountability, tax justice, and financial stability.

The challenges new technologies present in the workplace are old governance challenges, exacerbated by new technologies.

- Much platform work is simply disguised employment, regulatory arbitrage to try and avoid employers' obligations;
- Artificial intelligence replicates existing biases— along racial, ethnic, gender, age, or other lines—and intensifies discrimination in the workplace.
- Algorithmic management allows the next stage of dangerous speed-ups on the assembly line, rationalized to different forms of work.

Trade unions will continue to advocate at the national level for adequate regulations that promote responsible technology—but we can't can't stop there because this is a global issue. Many digital companies, for instance, operate in countries where they aren't even legal.

We need the UN to act on these issues because we need a truly global understanding of the situation and truly global governance.

- We are heartened by first steps, and eagerly engaged in the ILO's efforts to align new technologies with decent work.
- We support the establishment of a UN intergovernmental global technology assessment mechanism to fill the vacuum in the governance of digital technologies, including digital finance technologies, and assess their impacts on society, the environment and people.

Because properly regulated technology is a crucial part of development. But we can't accept more discrimination, tax evasion, precarity, speculation, and inequality because of high-tech promises. We need global action.