

Republic of Korea



Kang Kyung-wha

Candidate for Director-General of the International Labour Organization



CURRICULUM VITAE

Kyung-wha (given name) Kang (surname) served as the 38th and the first female Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea from June 2017 to February 2021. Throughout her career in Seoul, Geneva, and New York, she has been a steadfast advocate for human rights and women's advancement. Her footprints demonstrate her suitability for the position of Director-General of the ILO, which requires a clear vision on the importance of ensuring human-centered approach and respecting diversity and human rights in the World of Work.

During her ministerial tenure, Dr. Kang effectively steered a structural reform of the Ministry under the Organization-wide Innovation Plan to strengthen the diplomatic capacity, while promoting efficiency and inclusion in the policy-making process. During her tenure, she also actively participated in various multilateral discussions on universal human rights, including labour rights.

Also, as a member of the Cabinet, Dr. Kang took part in the formation and implementation of the government's policies for income-led growth, which was modeled after the ILO's work in wage-led growth. She successfully collaborated with the relevant Ministers and members of the National Assembly for the ratification of three core ILO conventions amidst the pandemic crisis.

Joining the Foreign Ministry in 1998, Dr. Kang specialized in UN affairs. She consequently served as Deputy Director-General for International Organizations, and was dispatched to the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the UN in New York in 2001.

Later, serving as Director-General for International Organizations in 2005-2006, Dr. Kang tirelessly engaged in negotiations at the UN General Assembly on various issues including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Furthermore, Dr. Kang played a crucial role in successfully convening the 14th Asian Regional Meeting of the ILO in 2006, which aimed to shape an agenda to address a wide range of employment and workplaces issues in the region. In early 2007, Dr. Kang joined the UN following her appointment in late 2006 to the post of Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan. For over six years in the position, she supported and complemented the leadership of High Commissioners Louise Arbour and Navi Pillay on human rights issues.

In April 2013, Dr. Kang was appointed by then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to the post of Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator (DERC) and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. Supporting and complementing the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Dr. Kang continued to give focused attention to vulnerable people and sought to advance their presence and voice in the humanitarian and human rights sector.

After resigning from the DERC post in October 2016, Dr. Kang served as Chief of the Transition Team of the Secretary-General-Elect. Then, as Senior Advisor on Policy to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, she spearheaded his initiative to realize gender parity in his appointments and facilitated discussion on the restructuring of the peace architecture in the Secretariat.

Dr. Kang graduated from Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science and diplomacy. She received MA and PhD degrees from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in the United States. Her doctorate work was in the field of international/intercultural communication. Dr. Kang is fluent in Korean and English, and speaks basic-level French. She is married with two daughters and one son.



VISION

1

Introduction



Concerted recovery efforts to protect the world of work by the constituents of Member States and international entities have mitigated the social and economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the hope is growing for a return to everyday life that is a Better New Normal.

Countries around the world have confronted the pandemic in their own ways, and we have managed to endure the hardship while relying on the hard work of one another. However, socioeconomic challenges in the wake of the crisis persist, and nationalistic tendencies in the response and recovery efforts have heightened concerns over widening inequalities among as well as within countries.

In order to achieve full-fledged recovery of the world of work and ensure its better future, collective immunity against the virus must be achieved around the world so as to reinstate the free movement of labour and goods across borders and normalize global supply chains. At the same time, only when an equitable recovery ensures that no one, no country is left behind, can we create decent jobs and reduce inequalities at home and abroad.

Thus, this is a decisive moment for multilateral cooperation, and the ILO must take center stage in setting the agenda and leading the efforts towards a Better New Normal. This is also a historic moment for the ILO to demonstrate the century-long wisdom of tripartism and social dialogue in navigating through difficult times and building a better society for all.

2

ILO Leadership for Human- Centered Recovery, People- Centered Economy




I believe that the work of the ILO in recent years has been stronger and more visible than ever. In response to the unprecedented job crisis, the constituents of Member States moved quickly to adopt the Global Call to Action for Human-Centered Recovery in June 2021, while reaffirming the human-centered approach, the fundamental of the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, and the importance of coexistence and solidarity. The ILO has also been strengthening its collaboration with other multilateral organizations including the UN agencies to accelerate global actions in jobs and social protection for a safe, secure and prosperous future for humanity.

My vision for the ILO is built on this widely shared belief that our efforts for a better future of work must be guided by the “human-centered” approach, which would help us in the search for collective, comprehensive and integrated solutions. This is made all the more pressing by the combined effects of the public health and economic downturns triggered by the pandemic, as most acutely manifested in the deepening humanitarian crises in the most vulnerable countries and communities around the world.

Greater effectiveness in the cooperation and comprehensive response among global and regional bodies would also be critical, as highlighted at the recent SDG Moment at the UNGA. We have seen during the UNGA how the ILO can facilitate globally-coordinated actions on job-rich growth, social protection and a just transition. The ILO must continue to strengthen collaboration with UN agencies in pursuit of Agenda 2030 to achieve the SDGs and arrest climate change.

All along the process, the ILO has faithfully reflected its core value of Tripartism and represented the equal and diverse voices of the constituents. This unique strength of the organization should be taken to new heights for human-centered inclusive recovery towards a Better New Normal.

As Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea (Jul. 2017- Feb. 2021), I endeavored to strengthen our contributions to multilateralism



and international organizations. In particular, we were steadfast in solidifying the country's transformation from a poor, recipient country of humanitarian and development assistance to a sizable donor by expanding and deepening the government's overseas development portfolio.


While juggling the many geopolitical and security issues of a divided country, the Ministry under my leadership spearheaded the efforts to put substance to the 3Ps (people, peace, prosperity) in the government's New Southern Policy and the New Northern Policy.

As a Member of the State Council chaired by the President or the Prime Minister, I took part in the shaping and implementation of government policies for inclusive income-led growth. I have worked successfully with the related Ministries and the National Assembly for the ratification of three fundamental ILO conventions amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

My experience as a senior manager in the UN for over ten years in the field of human rights and humanitarian assistance informed my leadership of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As Foreign Minister, I made steady and unrelenting efforts to eliminate sexual harassment and abusive management practices and introduce innovative changes in the organization so as to realize gender equality and work-life balance. My management style was firmly based on respect for diversity and the dignity of every staff member. I am particularly proud that the Union of administrative staff working at diplomatic missions overseas was established during my tenure for the first time in the Ministry's history.

Building upon these credentials and aspiring to lead in opening a new chapter in the world of work and placing the ILO at the center of the multilateral order, as Director-General, I will prioritize:

- Ensuring that the human-centered approach in the process of recovery is universally accepted and upheld in the UN and other multilateral fora;
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- Achieving the SDGs and creating decent jobs and protecting workers' rights within the multilateral development cooperation community;
 - Bringing tripartism and its values of solidarity, cooperation, sharing and inclusiveness to bear upon socio-economic developments at global, regional and country levels;
 - Shaping a model of people-centered economy for the post-COVID era and strengthening technical support for ILO constituents.

3

Active Response to Issues of Future of Work




For the ILO to lead in bringing about the changes needed to realize inclusive and resilient world of work, the following issues are highly relevant:

First, we must formulate a new integrated framework which aims to create more and better jobs, particularly for vulnerable groups of workers, in a sustainable manner. Such a framework must be guided by the international labour standards, and should be carefully designed to support workers in the global supply chains.

As Director-General, I will continue to support vigorous tripartite discussion so that the organization can provide a new direction, drawing upon the capacity and voices of tripartite constituents and actively engage in strengthening the Office's support activities for research, forum, and social dialogue.

Secondly, it is important to actively support efforts to expand universal social protection for all.

The unprecedented changes of our times, including the digital transformation driven by technological innovation as well as the pandemic-triggered disruptions that workers have faced in their daily lives have further highlighted the importance of universal social protection system that the ILO has championed. The pandemic has not only been an attack on the physical health and wellbeing of



workers, especially the most vulnerable including informal workers, but also loaded them with additional risks associated with career breaks, unemployment, income insecurity and care burden. The gig economy, digital labour platforms and other by-products of the digitalizing economy have led to an ever-increasing number in non-standard forms of labour. Under the circumstance, the ILO must actively support the efforts of the tripartite constituents to strengthen social protection in ways that ensure the stability of workers' livelihood and mitigate against trends that deepen inequalities.

Thirdly, the ILO must support the industrial restructuring and transition to a sustainable low-carbon society as the climate change agenda demands.

The overarching ambition of the Sustainable Development Goals of “leaving no one behind” must also frame the transition to a sustainable low-carbon society. The ILO must actively promote the social dialogue among the tripartite partners at the international and domestic levels in the process, in particular in shaping the consensus on the issue of “just transition”.


4

Diversity and Protection of Universal Rights



As the first woman DG in over 100 years of ILO history and being from the Asia Pacific, I will endeavor to lead with a deep appreciation for regional, cultural, and gender diversity.

The ILO should strengthen support for the most vulnerable, particularly women who were hit hardest by COVID-19. Women have been disproportionately exposed to the risk of COVID-19 infection, as many of them are working at the front lines in the pandemic response as care or hospitality workers. The decline in employment of women has increased considerably. Furthermore, as women's unpaid domestic labour has increased, the gender disparity in pay continued to worsen. Lockdown measures have led to an increase in domestic violence, further threatening the safety



and security of women and girls. As DG, I will place greater focus in the ILO's capabilities to addressing the gender pay gap, preventing workplace sexual harassment, providing decent work for women, and strengthening their labour rights. In doing so, I will draw upon my life-long experience and involvement, both inside Korea and at the UN, in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment and rights.

I will expand the ILO's technical cooperation projects for developing countries hit hardest by the pandemic. Informed by the experience of the Republic of Korea in national development and crisis management, I will endeavor to build bridges and coordinate the views of recipient and donor countries, especially to improve the employment situations in recipient countries. In countries lacking social cohesion as they reel from disasters or conflicts, the creation of decent jobs is imperative for community recovery. To that end, I would seek to expand ILO's flagship projects, such as "Jobs for Peace and Resilience."

In addition, it is necessary to enhance ILO's visibility and relevance by strengthening cooperation with UN agencies in development cooperation and contribute to Delivering as One projects. I will endeavor to expand financing and strengthen technical assistance through closer cooperation with the IMF and World Bank.

5

Respect for Democratic, Agile and Responsive ILO



As DG, I will endeavor to ensure the principle of equality among ILO member states and fair representation of all regions in the ILO's Governing Body, as is the duty assigned to the DG by the Centenary Declaration. At the same time, I will promote equality and democracy in its operational structure.

As regards the operation of the International Labour Office, extensive efforts have been made over the years to strengthen the professional expertise in its human resources, and to increase regional and national representation and enhance diversity. In particular, the ILO has been exemplary among UN agencies in achieving gender parity in staffing. However, at the senior levels and regular positions, women are still a minority. Addressing this imbalance at HQ, as well as improving gender balance in ILO offices at the national and regional levels, will be one of my management priorities.

I will also seek to strengthen ILO's effectiveness and efficiency in the field. Communication and coordination mechanisms with field offices will be thoroughly reviewed for needed improvements. I will seek ways to forwardly deploy the workforce to regional offices where projects are actually being conducted.

Furthermore, I will continue to strengthen and improve the performance based management system in the ILO. In doing so, my aim will be to upgrade the organization to be an agile and responsive entity with limited resources that must constantly endeavor to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

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