



Nordic Council
of Ministers



Nordic Future of Work Conference

Towards the ILO Centenary

Reykjavik

4

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Björn Lindahl, Guðrún Helga Sigurðardóttir and Gunhild Wallin

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Foreword

It all started with a letter from Guy Ryder, Director-General, at the International Labour Organisation, ILO, back in December 2015. With the centenary for the ILO coming up in June 1919, he wrote to the governments of the organisation's 187 member states. He wanted them to think about and discuss a few topics concerning changes in economics and working life, like job creation – including for people with weak connections to the labour market – the influence of new technology and changes in relations between employers and employees.

In February 2016 he got an answer from the Nordic governments, announcing a project in coordination with the office of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the ILO and the social partners. The themes that Guy Ryder wanted the membership states to discuss would be the topics for annual conferences and a big research project: The Future of Work, which would gather researchers from all the Nordic countries on different topics. It was also said that the project would follow the chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The first annual conference was held in Helsinki in 2016, the next one in Oslo in 2017 and the third in Stockholm in 2018.

Iceland hosted the fourth conference, which concluded the Nordic conference series on the Future of Work, in Reykjavik 2019.

All these conferences established that there is no doubt that labour markets are going through big and rapid changes. There have been discussions about new technologies, demographic changes, migration, gender equality and new forms of relations in the labour markets, like platform workers and new contracts. Many of the discussions at the conferences have been about how the Nordic model, with its tripartite basis, will be influenced by these changes. Will it survive and adapt?

Summing up the knowledge and the atmosphere on the concluding conference the answer is yes, here illustrated by a quote by Guy Ryder at ILO:

“One thing I have learned through observing and working with my Nordic friends for decades now, is that the Nordic Model is not a static model, not something invented in the 50s or 60s. It has its firm building blocks, but continues to change.”

This report is from the conference “Nordic Conference on Future of work”, held in Reykjavik on 4 and 5 April 2019. It is written by some of the journalists at Arbeidsliv i Norden/Nordic Labour Journal.

Björn Lindahl
Guðrún Helga Sigurðardóttir
Gunhild Wallin

Oslo, Reykjavik, 11 June 2019

DAY 1

1. Introduction to Day 1

1.1 “A Common Path”

The theme of Iceland’s Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers has been “A Common Path”, inspired by the Old Norse poem *Hávamál* which says a path shared with a true friend is always easy to tread. This was also the spirit at the opening day of the “Nordic Conference on the Future of Work: Towards the ILO Centenary”. It was felt during lectures and in the general atmosphere of friendship between the ILO, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the NGOs present in Reykjavik.

“The Nordic countries have been key players, and have contributed with energy, resources and hard work. But to be honest, the most important contribution has been the good examples. What you do at home has turned out to give fantastic results,” said Guy Ryder, Director-General of the ILO.

Paula Lehtomäki, Secretary General of the Nordic Council of Ministers, underlined the importance of their friendship with the ILO, and what it means for inspiration and knowledge.

“The Nordic countries and the ILO have gone through a lot. Social dialogue has provided us with a remarkable success which benefits our people. Today we can see in front of us an era of significant changes. It brings us many challenges, but also many opportunities. It is therefore very important to have a dialogue to find common solutions. I am confident that the Nordic countries, together with the ILO, can find sustainable paths forwards. The Nordic Council of Ministers looks forward to continuing our strong cooperation with the ILO also in the coming 100 years,” she said.

Two reports set the tone for the discussions on the first day of the conference, which was the fourth and final in the “The Future of Work” series: “The Nordic Vision of the Future” and “The Report of the Global Commission: Work for a Brighter Future”. The latter is described as a human-centred agenda for the future of work and for growth and development.

“The idea is a very simple and obvious one. It is to put people right at the centre of economic and social policies,” said Guy Ryder.

The participants – government ministers, high-level NGO representatives, researchers and representatives from the social partners alike – all seemed to agree the challenges to the labour market include rapid technological development, demographic changes, climate change and migration. For the Nordic countries, a key question is whether the Nordic model can adapt to all this. That issue is being closely studied by 30 researchers from all of the Nordic countries, who are working together to identify how best to face these challenges.

Despite the many threats, much hope was also expressed at the conference. Many projects are already underway, aiming to tackle the challenges and to gain knowledge and inspiration from each other.

And, as it was pointed out, the Nordic model has been through tough times and big challenges before.

“I have learned that the Nordic model is not static. It has some basic building blocks, but its adaptability to change is its most important character,” said Guy Ryder.

1.2 Address

H.E. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson,
President of Iceland.

In his address the President of Iceland, Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, thanked the Icelandic government, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the ILO for convening the Future of Work Conference. He said he was particularly happy that the conference had a focus on gender equality. Icelanders boast of having come a long way on the issue, he said, but there is still a lot of work to do. A concerted effort is needed, and that is why he wanted to highlight the good work already done by the ILO, the OECD and by UN Women to empower women.

Guðni Th. Jóhannesson said that during the conference the delegates would listen to many experts. He hoped the audience would have a healthy respect for experts and expertise. A scientific method, knowledge, a common foundation and a respect for undisputable facts, is important, he stressed.

But at the same time, we do not need experts claiming we know better than you, he said.

“We need the self-confidence that comes with knowledge and experience but coupled with a willingness to engage in a dialogue and modesty; a willingness to listen to the other side,” said the President.

Guðni Th. Jóhannesson reminded the audience that a 100 years ago, when ILO was founded, one of the first issues was to work less. The year after Iceland got its first law regulating the working hours for trawler fishermen.

“We also need to think about that aspect, when we think of the future of work: too much work involves too much stress and the risk of burnout.”

1.3 Opening address

Ásmundur Einar Daðason,
Minister for Social Affairs and Children
and the Chairman of the Nordic Council of Labour Ministers.

Ásmundur Einar Daðason opened the conference by describing how the ILO was formed:

In the years 1914–1918, humankind went through the great massacre that was the First World War. In all, some 60 million soldiers fought in what was called the war to end all wars. When all was said and done, nine million soldiers and six million civilians had fallen victim to the conflict. In the last months of the war, the Spanish Flu broke out. 50 to 100 million humans succumbed to it.

“Icelanders did not escape the cataclysm. Their descendants in Canada were amongst the Allied armies. Importing life’s necessities to Iceland was difficult due to the war on the European continent. The Spanish Flu took its toll in Iceland as it did elsewhere,” said Ásmundur Einar Daðason.

The Great War ended on 11 November 1918. A peace treaty was signed at Versailles on 28 June 1919. The treaty was made by various committees and councils, but one of them was special. That one committee had been formed at the request of organised labour in several states to talk about labour law. It did not just contain representatives of governments, but also spokesmen of employers and workers, fifteen people in all.

After ten weeks of work, the labour commission issued a document, which on 11 April 1919 became Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles. That document planned the founding of an organisation that would have the role of trying to improve the social

problems which all states face, and which only could be solved by the collective effort of nations. The chapter says that a peace will only be durable if it rests on social justice within societies. The seeds of conflict between nations, the document says, are found in the social injustice which millions of people across the various countries suffer. With the aim of uprooting it, the organisation was to gather data on the state of labour and social affairs, decide on minimum requirements and adjust them to each country's needs. Part XIII of the Treaty of Versailles is the core of ILO charter. Since it was written, a century has passed.

"The Nordic Countries have shown great interest in the International Labour Organisation. They supported its work in various ways. Denmark, Norway and Sweden were among the founding countries. Even though Finland wasn't in that group, a Finnish delegation took part in the first International Labour Conference, which was held in Washington at the end of October 1919."

Woodrow Wilson, a great champion of the League of Nations and the ILO, had just died of a heart attack a month earlier, which cast a shadow over the proceedings. With the strong support of Mrs Wilson and a young fellow named Franklin D. Roosevelt, the congress was held to great success.

International cooperation by the Icelandic government in social and labour affairs has expanded a lot since the country's independence. Cooperation with Nordic countries, and with member states of the Council of Europe, which started in the 1950s, has been the most significant factor. A decade earlier, Iceland began its work on social affairs on the international stage, when Iceland's application to join the ILO was accepted at the International Labour Conference in Paris in 1945. The ILO was among the very first international organisations that Iceland joined after the country gained independence in 1944.

"I want to seize the opportunity to warmly welcome the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Guy Ryder, to our conference. He is in fact the first Director-General of the organisation to visit Iceland," said Ásmundur Einar Daðason.

In December 2015, with the centenary of the ILO coming up, the governments of member countries received a letter from the Director-General, Guy Ryder. The letter asked the member states to start discussions on a few topics. These could provide input for policies that would guide the ILO's work. The topics were changes in the economy and society, job creation – also for those in a weak position in the labour market – changes to methods of work due to new technologies and to the relations between

employers and workers, changes in rights and duties as well as in the forms of regulations and other things in social and labour affairs.

The Nordic governments responded to the letter in February 2016, by announcing a project, in coordination with the office of the Nordic Council of Ministers, the ILO and the social partners. The project would include annual conferences on the topics mentioned in the letter. They would follow the chairmanship of the Nordic Council of Ministers. The first conference was held in Finland in 2016, the second in Norway in 2017, and the third in Sweden in 2018.

“Now we are in the final chapter of the project, this conference, here in Reykjavík. Our task will be to analyse the reports which have been made in recent months,” said Ásmundur Einar Daðason.

He highlighted some of the reports, starting with the Global Commission of the ILO. There is also a progress report on a research project which the Nordic Council of Ministers commissioned in 2017, as well as a report from a commission in the Danish government and a report from a commission on behalf of the Icelandic Prime Minister.

“On the second day of the conference we will look at the state of the genders in the labour market and learn about methods to reach wage equality and to combat gender inequality in the economy.”

Even though Iceland is well placed in the state and progress of gender equality, it has not reached its goals for all levels of society, Ásmundur Einar Daðason emphasised.

“This is not least the case in the labour market. According to the World Economic Forum, equality will only be achieved in sixty years in the Nordic countries, even though they are the frontrunners in that area.”

Research shows that it is not only a matter of human rights, but it is also of great importance for the national economy to increase equality in the labour market and in economic life. The greatest achievements which have brought Iceland to where it is in terms of equal rights and equal status of men and women have, in many cases, been the results of governmental intervention, often in cooperation with the social partners.

"In the Icelandic government's manifesto, we emphasise gender equality, and our aim is to make Iceland a role-model in this policy field. We have made progress on equality, but we still have a long way to go.

I also want to mention that while this conference takes place, we will ratify the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention. The Swedish Minister of Labour will also ratify the Domestic Workers Convention.

Dear guests, we have a splendid agenda ahead of us, and the conference aims to emphasise factors which we think are important for the policies of the ILO in the next years. Yesterday, there was a discussion between the Nordic ministers of labour and the Director-General of the ILO about how our contribution can best be brought forward. The conclusion was that this will be done at the upcoming conference of the organisation in June. It is a worthy task for us here, to prepare ourselves and our representatives for the centenary conference of the ILO.

I hereby declare this conference open."

1.4 The Nordic Vision on the Future of Work and The Report of The ILO Global Commission.

Paula Lehtomäki,
Secretary General at the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Paula Lehtomäki first took the opportunity to congratulate the ILO on its one hundred anniversary and its important and significant role in improving working conditions, rights and regulations on the labour market and to reduce inequality in general. When ILO started there were urgent needs for reforms.

"The ILO really took this responsibility and still takes it. The organisation has been at the forefront in the struggle for decent work, a social chapter and equality", she said.

Paula Lehtomäki stressed the friendship between the Nordic countries and ILO, not least when it comes to emphasising the importance of tripartite cooperation and gender equality in the labour market. In 2016, the Nordic Councils of Ministers and the ILO together hosted a dialogue on key reforms, an initiative to achieve gender equality in the world of work. This dialogue provided, what Paula Lehtomäki describes as "an invaluable foundation" for the Nordic prime ministers' flagship project, called "The Nordic gender effect at work", which states that gender equality is a prerequisite for decent work in the global arena.

"The ILO has often pointed to the Nordic model. The features of this model where rights and duties are negotiated by the tripartite dialogue, has contributed significantly to the Nordic welfare," said Paula Lehtomäki.

She also pointed out that ILO has played an important part in setting standards and new goals also for the Nordics, crucial to avoid stagnation and to promote further development. One such example is how the ILO challenged the Nordic Council of Ministers to engage in, and prioritise, topics related to the future of work. Since 2016 the Nordic Council of Ministers has arranged annual Future of Work conferences leading up to this year's anniversary, bringing together politicians, experts, officials and NGO representatives, to create a platform for dialogue on the possibilities and challenges on the labour market in the years to come.

The Nordic Future of Work project is studying the effects of the ongoing transformations of production and labour markets. It is led by Norwegian research institute Fafo, and 30 researchers from all of the Nordic countries are analysing how the development of digitalisation, demographic change and new forms of employment, will influence the future of work in the Nordic countries.

Paula Lehtomäki pointed out that "The Future of Work" agenda has influenced many areas within the Nordic cooperation. The Nordic Council of Ministers work with several cross-sector strategies and priorities, which relate to this agenda. One such cross sector area is gender equality, which is embedded in many other sectors.

"Gender equality is something the Nordic countries are traditionally very strong at. Technological development gives us new opportunities to improve gender equality, but it also creates new challenges. One example of these challenges is that at the same time we expect the number of jobs to grow in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The proportion of girls and women in this field is very low," said Paula Lehtomäki.

She said that the employment ministers from the Nordic countries, who met the day before the conference, decided to launch a new project. It will investigate how the Nordic countries can succeed in bringing more girls and women to educations and the jobs within those profession and these technological fields.

Another important Nordic agenda point is mobility. A common Nordic labour market agreement was made already in 1954, described as a backbone in the Nordic cooperation, by Paula Lehtomäki, who also stated that she thinks that technological innovation in the world of work will further strengthen the Nordic labour market cooperation.

The Future of Work project investigates how technological development challenges the protection of the workforce in the Nordic countries. The first report from this project was published last November and identifies the main drivers and trends that influence future changes to working life.

The first main driver is *demographic change*. The workforce will be reduced in the Nordic Countries and at the same time the working age population is growing in regions outside Europe.

“This is likely to maintain the pressure of migration to Europe,” said Paula Lehtomäki.

The second driver is *climate change*, which will lead to extreme weather conditions and higher uncertainty of economic prospects. Another part of this megatrend is to find a strategy to turn towards greener economies, which leads to an increase of that sort of jobs.

“*Globalisation* is a driver and has long been taken for granted. But this megatrend is now facing some backlash, illustrated by Brexit and protectionism in different corners in the world. Development in these areas will influence open Nordic economies,” said Paula Lehtomäki.

Technological change is probably the most discussed driver for the future of work. Robotics and artificial intelligence will influence most jobs. The jobs will be transformed and there will be job losses, but how much is not known yet.

“Most scholars will agree that technological change and the digital shift is likely to challenge the Nordic Model and the Nordic welfare model,” she said.

The Future of Work project lays some preconditions for a successful Nordic journey into the future of work.

In the light of technological change and a shift to a greener economy we are likely to face an intensive reconstruction of economy and working life. This emphasises the need to take action on challenges concerning lifelong learning and skills.

“It seems clear that there will be a need to strengthen lifelong learning. Huge efforts will be required in occupational training and reskilling to prevent growing mismatches, wage gaps and exclusion in the labour market. This also means that people in the middle of their careers will have to adjust to a new situation, where they will be required to obtain new skills. This development will hit me and you, the labour force of today, not only the younger generation,” said Paula Lehtomäki.

She also pointed out that it is quite clear the institutions for learning will have to reorganise to meet the increased need for lifelong learning. How to organise a system for learning that meets the labour market’s future needs of skills and competence, will be a very important

topic for debate in the coming days and years. The development of a platform economy is also challenging the Nordic labour model. There are signs of a fragmentation of employment relations, driven by digitalisation and new business concepts.

“The roles of employers and employees are changing as we see more and more people who sell services through a platform, rather than being employed in a traditional way. That will challenge more than one of the features of the Nordic labour model,” said Paula Lehtomäki.

She gave examples of important questions to be addressed together: How can Nordic countries adapt their system of social insurance and labour protection to the needs of those not employed in the traditional Nordic wage model? How can we secure and develop the role of the tripartite system when the role of the employer and the employers are not as recognisable as before?

At the end of her speech Paula Lehtomäki again stressed the friendship between the Nordic countries and the valuable cooperation with the ILO.

“The Nordic countries and the ILO have gone through a lot. Social dialogue has provided us with a remarkable success which benefits our people. Today we can see in front of us an era of significant changes. It brings us a lot of challenges, but also very many opportunities. It is therefore very important to have a dialogue to find common solutions. I have confidence that the Nordic countries together, and together with the ILO, can find sustainable paths forwards. The Nordic Council of Ministers look forward to continuing the strong cooperation with the ILO also in the coming 100 years,” said Paula Lehtomäki.

1.5 ILO 100 years towards social justice and the report from the Global Commission

Guy Ryder,
Director-General at ILO.

In June this year the International Labour Organisation celebrates its centenary. However, the ILO is not looking back, but forward. The big theme for the celebration is the future of work, and the ILO has worked together with the Nordic Council of Ministers on the topic, a cooperation very much praised by Guy Ryder.

"I would say that the major contribution of our Nordic member states to our organisation is leading by example. It is what you do at home that provides inspiration and encouragement to our organisation," said Guy Ryder.

He described a long history of cooperation between the Nordic countries and the ILO. Already from the beginning back in 1919, the Nordic countries were key actors in the ILO, and have, according to Guy Ryder, put in a lot of energy, effort and resources.

"But most important is that you demonstrate by what you do, the principles that the ILO stands for, that the methods you promote are actually applicable and guess what – they produce fantastic results," said Mr Ryder.

Guy Ryder referred to *Hávamál*, a collection of Old Norse poems from the Viking age. According to *Hávamál* it is important to understand how to choose the right path in life, the right path forward, which should be guided by ethical values and clear objectives.

"I think that is a pretty good way of looking on the future of work. *Hávamál* says that we should travel with friends, and I feel in this room that we very much are with Nordic friends," said Guy Ryder.

However, the ILO has more friends than the Nordic countries. He reminded the audience that the ILO's group of friends is all the 187 member states. ILO cannot just think of Nordic friends when it considers the world of work, but also Africa, South Asia and all other regions. That makes the ILO's ambition high and its work difficult. But I think there are some principles that apply to us all.

"One thing I have learned through observing and working with my Nordic friends for decades now, is that the Nordic model is not a static model, not something invented in the 50s or 60s. It has its firm building blocks but continues to change," said Guy Ryder.

He quoted the Icelandic minister, who opened the conference by saying that *fleeing from the future is not an option*. Guy Ryder felt this to be correct. 50 years ago, one of his predecessors said something similar when receiving the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the ILO.

"The ILO has never seen and never will see its role as that of a defender of the status quo. It will continue to seek to promote social evolution by peaceful means to identify urgent social needs and problems and threats to social peace. It's absolutely a key thought as we address the future of work. This is the spirit in which ILO's Global Commission on the Future of Work published the report: *Work for a Brighter Future*, in January this year."

The commission started its work in October 2017. It has been co-chaired by Stefan Löfven, Prime Minister of Sweden and Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa. Together with a diverse group of 27 thinkers, they have identified challenges and formulated strategies for the future of work. Guy Ryder emphasised that the aim of the report was to make it accessible, strategic and action-oriented, rather than lengthy and technical.

“It’s a political report, something that will have an impact, something that will lead to changes and policy directions. I think they have succeeded in these ambitions.”

Guy Ryder also stressed how impressed he was with the research program “The Future of Work” and he found very close echoes of the ILO’s Global commission report. There were many issues that could develop together.

The report is a human-centred agenda for the future of work and for growth and development.

“The idea is a very simple and obvious one, it is to put people right at the centre of the economic and social policies,” said Guy Ryder.

The report has ten concrete recommendations, grouped under three focus areas. These are:

Investing in people’s capabilities, where the first is a creation of a universal entitlement of lifelong learning.

“Entitlement is important, it means a right to lifelong learning. Everybody I talk to in the world of work agree that lifelong learning is a good thing. Most of us understand that the rate of change of work today is so fast that the skills we learn at the beginning of our lives won’t be good enough, however good they are. They will not last for the entirety of working life,” he said.

Education and work are intertwined, and they must remain so in the future as well. The problem is who is responsible, who will deliver and who should finance the lifelong learning? Is it the state, the businesses, the employer or the individual worker? Or a combination of all four?

The Commission’s report also wants to move to a new stage in the fight against gender inequality. The Commission proposes a transformative agenda for gender equality.

“To come to the Nordic countries and start talking to you about gender equality, is like taking coals to Newcastle in my country. It is to give you something you already have a lot of,” said Guy Ryder.

When the ILO was founded in 1919, one of the founding principles stated there should be “equal pay for work of equal value”. 60 years later, the ILO convention said: “equal pay and non-discrimination.”

“We still haven’t got there, not even in the best countries of the world, and I think we probably are in the best countries. It seems to me just carrying on, doing the same things, is probably not good enough. We must look for innovative and transformative instruments for gender equality.”

He praised Iceland’s work on gender quality and mentioned the transparency surrounding pay gaps in companies’ reporting. The same was just about to happen for the biggest companies in Great Britain.

Another area of investment, recommended in the Global report, is social protection. “Not a new story,” commented Guy Ryder. He described comprehensive social protection as a fundament of welfare in societies. It is not a brake on changes and adaptation, but a facilitator for change.

“Yet we are a very long way from where we need to be. 75% of the workers in the world do not have anything like adequate social protection,” Guy Ryder said.

The Global report also recommend investments in labour market institutions.

Labour is not a commodity to be traded on the market like cod or whatever else, as Guy Ryder expressed it. And it is labour market institutions’ role to prevent labour from becoming that. This makes it necessary to look at those institutions and see to what extent they need to be updated and adapted to today’s needs. The Global report presents some very basic propositions.

“The establishment of a Universal Labour Guarantee is the most controversial. It means there are certain numbers of guarantees, a certain number of protections, that every worker in every working situation should enjoy,” he said.

A universal guarantee should state the fundamental rights of workers, an adequate living wage, maximum working hours and the right to rest. Every worker should also have the right to a healthy and safe workplace.

“These should be guaranteed to all worker as a matter of rights. All these guarantees have existed in the ILO constitution for the last 100 years. The ideas are not new, but applications we are working with. Let me underline the recommendation of the Global Commission: health and safety at work should become a human right,”

said Guy Ryder and reminded the audience that every year 2.7 million people lose their lives because of work they do or have done.

When Guy Ryder came to the recommendations about working time, he admitted that there is a complex debate about the issue. It is not just about working hours but also about the organisation of work and who controls working time in real working situations. The fourth industrial revolution enables work to be undertaken anywhere and anytime. That has extraordinary potential to make working life more human, to balance work and private responsibility. Yet it is a double-edged sword. More and more people find it difficult to disconnect from work, working tasks differ and workers find themselves in situations where working hours are unpredictable and sometimes extremely difficult to manage.

“To increase working time sovereignty is an important object for us to work towards,” said Guy Ryder.

Another important topic is that union membership is under pressure. ILO wants to see effective, strong representation of worker and employer interests.

“The mechanism of tripartite cooperation is something very valuable in our societies. Not just strong unions for workers and strong organisations for employers, but the notion that a strong instrument for social dialogue is something that is in the public’s interest. Something that produces a good outcome for society.”

Tripartite cooperation will be judged for the result it brings and the results can already be seen in the Nordic countries.

“Without flattering you, the best advertisement for that proposition is to be found in this part of the world. But I think you are all aware that in many parts of the world, this basic, very Nordic proposition is not accepted. It has been weakened. There are many who see social dialogue and tripartite cooperation as a conspiracy against good decision making, a brake on decisions that need to be made. We have a fight on our hands, gentlemen, to protect this notion of dialogue and tripartite cooperation.”

The Global report gives no details on the technological development. How many jobs will be destroyed and how many new will be created? The truth is that no one knows. There are lots of predictions going around, but Guy Ryder thought there is a danger in these predictions. They lead us to believe that technology will decide the future for us.

"In fact, the employment outcome of technological innovation depends on what we decide to do. Our report makes that point and strongly urge that we need a 'human in control'- attitude towards technology and that we have the capacity to govern and make the best of technological innovation," Guy Ryder said.

The third area of investment, recommended by the Global Report, is investing in the future. The most important areas, according to the ILO and Guy Ryder, are the green economy and the care economy, both of which are considered crucial for equality and work/life balance and the rural economy. A lot of people still work in the rural sector, and it needs investments and focus on infrastructure, for example.

In his speech Guy Ryder also talked about the importance of the success of enterprises, the private business sector. Without their success all other ambitions will fail. That makes it important to consider business incentives, and to go behind GDP measurements.

Guy Ryder summed up with three thoughts:

1. The future is not decided for us, not written in the stars. The future is what people decide to make it; that is the lesson of the Nordic model;
2. The report also shows that current developments put the Nordic model under strain, and we even see cracks emerging. We must work hard to maintain what we have achieved and not take it for granted. This is also extremely important – it is not an ideal world;
3. It is about values. It is about egalitarian justice, values, leaving nobody behind. We must decide. What future world do we want? And then set about working with these tasks in a pragmatic, practical way which you do when constructing the future.

2. Session I

2.1 The Future of Work: Opportunities and challenges for the Nordic models

Jon Erik Dølvik,
Researcher at Fafo and a project leader.

Jon Erik Dølvik described the research project he leads as a child of the ILO centenary and its Future of Work process.

“The purpose is to develop and disseminate action and policy-oriented knowledge, spur dialogue and exchange and learn across the boundaries,” he said.

The work is organised in seven pillars.

“Now we are very much in pillar two to four, which is empirical work.”

The first assignment was tracing out what the debate about the Future of Work really is about. What are the megatrends?

“One point made very clear by the Global commission, is that there is a risk of accelerating inequality. But we refrain, in a Nordic context, to taking that as a given megatrend. It is up to the institutions, the actors and the responses we can develop, in meeting these trends,” said Jon Erik Dølvik.

The Nordic model is an important reference point. To better understand the future, we must take account the immense structural changes over the past hundred years, and how the Nordic models have evolved in response to this.

“The Nordic models are a product of a hundred years of handling change. That is assuring in many ways. But do they they still have their capacity for flexible adjustment and getting everybody on board in the transitions? In the final report we will go through what avenues we see for renewing and making the models fit for these changing futures.”

The foundations in the Nordics, compared to the rest of the world, are still strong, but there is an erosion on the margins.

Jon Erik Dølvik showed a diagram of the collective bargaining coverage in the private sector and overall union density in the Nordic countries between 1995 and 2015, with staples being the highest for Sweden, Finland and Iceland, and slightly lower for Denmark and Norway. But compared to Germany, there is still a very high union density.

“We see a steady, downward trend. There are differences also among the Nordic countries, but a common trait is that the decline in protection, organisation and bargaining power is most salient in the areas where the most vulnerable, least skilled workers are found in the labour markets. That is worrisome.”

“We are not in a perfect state, today, ready for the future. We have been struggling in the Nordic countries for a long time with a lot of unresolved problems. Employment rates, especially for young men, have gone down. We see inclusion problems; exclusion; we see unions declining in certain areas of the labour market. Combined with a mobility across frontiers in Europe this has contributed to growing inequality. The megatrends of the future come on top of what we are struggling with in our everyday lives.”

The challenge for policymakers is to link future-oriented adjustment with resolutions of the present problems. In some cases, they also provide opportunities.

“The first driverless buses are soon starting up, even in Oslo. For me that was a wake-up, oh, it’s real! At the same time, we note the discussion about if the future will eradicate jobs.”

Jon Erik Dølvik was sceptical:

“After a few years with stagnant employment, the employment is increasing again. Quite substantially in the Nordic countries over the last three years. It is far too early to draw firm conclusions on that.”

Jon Erik Dølvik said that there are two main theories of how new technology impacts work. One is that it enhances the productivity and demand for highly skilled and educated labour. It is a skilled-biased change, leading to an upgrading of jobs, causing concern for those with little education.

The other theory is that technology increasingly replaces routine work tasks, so that routine work in the middle of the occupational structure risks being hollowed out. This is the area where unions and collective bargaining has been most strongly anchored. If that is the case, there will be a polarisation of the workforce.

The prospect of rationalisation is lower in the labour-intensive services that depend on immediate exchanges with the customer. If demand increases, there may be a

growth in the simple low-skilled work in the lower end, adding to the polarisation of the overall employment structure, he said.

“We have looked at this by dividing jobs into five categories: From low-wage, low-skilled to high-wage, high-skilled and see if employment is growing or declining? We now see the first results.”

Jon Erik Dølvik showed a graph of how the five categories in Denmark, Norway and Sweden have evolved when comparing 2011 to 2015. For Norway and Sweden, the graph showed an upskilling, as in theory one, while Denmark had more of a polarisation. Finland and Iceland will be studied at a later stage.

“Why do we see such differences among such similar countries? It is certainly not only because of technology, since all the countries have the same access. But the three countries have gone through very different cyclical processes. Denmark post-crisis, Sweden strong up-turn, Norway from a very strong boom to an oil-price related contraction”.

Looking at another time period, 2000–2010, Norway showed a more polarised pattern, but with a strong growth in the middle. Both Sweden and Denmark had a polarised pattern of upgrading.

The picture becomes even more varied when looking at which occupations have declined or grown, but generally the development fits well with the two hypotheses about skills-biased technological change, promoting job growth in the top, and shrinking or stagnation in the middle.

“Denmark had some surprising changes in the occupations, which clearly tells us that this has more to do with economic policies. There was a decline in public teachers, personnel in kindergartens and so on, after the financial crisis. This had to do with austerity, not technology. So, we must keep a multidimensional view on all these things. In the next stage of the project we will try to make longer-term analyses, to control for cyclical differences.”

Jon Erik Dølvik then described a study being done about what happens in the manufacturing industry, which he called the backbone of the Nordic model.

The employment in the industry has been steadily declining since 1980 in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The decline has been around 40% all in all. But at the same time the value of production has increased more than 50%. In other words, there has been an immense productivity growth, thanks to technological rationalisation and innovation.

“As Stefan Löfven, said when he was IF Metal leader: We don’t fear new technology, we only fear old technology.”

The same attitude was found when the researchers talked to key people in the manufacturing industry and the unions there. Manufacturing now only employs around 10% of the entire workforce in the Nordics. For 40 years, the growth has come in services, human related services.

The researchers also looked at the changes to occupational structures within manufacturing. There is very much the same picture, but even stronger. Growth in the top, shrinking in the bottom and hollowing out in the middle.

The only exception is Denmark, who sees a growth even in the bottom, implying a more polarised picture that might relate to the food industry where low skilled, low payed jobs might be growing.

“What is a puzzle, given that digital technology will revolutionise the productivity, is that productivity growth has flattened, quite markedly. It tells us that we must look at this in a much longer time perspective.”

The manufacturing plants the researchers have studied belong to big, advanced machinery companies in the Nordic countries.

“For them, new digital technology is nothing new. They have worked with this since the 80’s and 90’s: CNC-machines, automation and ICT-processes.”

The objectives in the industries are very clear: To enhance innovation and the competitiveness of their products and save costs, not only on labour, but on the utilisation time of machinery.

“The companies say that what is needed is more teamwork, more responsibility and autonomy among the blue-collar workers. More upskilling altogether. The boundaries between the blue-collar workers and the engineers – the white-collar workers – are being blurred.”

Both sides, unions and management emphasize the need for a broad bottom up involvement of shop floor workers and their organised representatives. Several industries told about failed technological projects. The reason given for failing was because the projects were done with a top down approach, which gave a lack of involvement.

Jon Erik Dølvik then turned to pillar three: Non-standard work, independent work and casual work.

“These are types of work many people expect will flourish. But what we see by the work done by Anna Ilsøe and her colleagues, is that the share of standard full-time work in Nordic countries is remarkably stable, around 70%.”

There is more fixed-term work in Sweden, there is more part-time in Norway and Denmark and there is more independent work in Finland and Iceland, having to do with the primary sectors.

“Anna and her colleagues however warn that even if it is calm on the surface, things might be happening underneath, changing the nature and character of these jobs. There might be new patterns of dualization, partial exclusion and people being locked in into the lower segments with poor protection. These are the people with low skills, there is an overrepresentation of women, youth, immigrants and those who have failed in school.”

Moving on to pillar four, platform work, several policy briefs have been coordinated by Kristin Jesnes at Fafo.

“There is not much sign yet that this is really thriving. Uber has had a tough ride in the Nordics. Very few people answer in surveys that they work for platforms. In cooperation with the Oxford University we have made an online labour index measuring to see how many Nordic companies are posting tasks to be performed online. Demand since 2017 has been flat.”

Interestingly, quite a few of these platforms have started experimenting with contracts linking up to the Nordic model. These are pilot agreements, trying to offer employee contracts instead of freelance contracts.

“But it is hard to tell if these are the odd benevolent, deviant cases, or if it is a sign that the Global commission’s call for an international governance system for digital labour is emerging. All three sides of the platform relations realise the need for predictability, and trust.”

Jon Erik Dølvik concluded that the Nordics are in the lead of all rankings when it comes to digital infrastructure.

“But if we don’t invest more in training and life-long learning among those groups that are least participating in it, we will face growing skills mismatches and inequality.”

“Maybe the Nordics can move ahead in realising the call from the ILO commission for a renewed employment insurance system. But it is also indisputable that the Nordic model is in for a period where its once admired capacity for institutional strength will be challenged.”

2.2 The Nordic Contribution to the ILO's Centenary

Panel debate chaired by Heinz Koller, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia.

Anniken Hauglie, Minister of Labour and Social Inclusion in Norway.

Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister of Social Affairs and Children in Iceland.

Ylva Johansson, Minister of Employment in Sweden.

Roberto Suarez Santos, Secretary General of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

Sharan Burrow, President of the International Trade Unions Confederation.

Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Office.

Heinz Koller started by saying that the ILO has organised national and regional dialogues as an input to the work of the Global Commission. ILO is grateful to the Nordic Council of Ministers for the four conferences it has organised. Now we are in a downstream process to launch the International Labour conference, he said, and asked the panellists to comment on the recommendations of the General Council.

Anniken Hauglie said that it seems to be a consensus in the Global Council report that the main drivers for the transformation of work are new and advanced technologies, demography and increased demands for skills and different kinds of competence.

"There is no reason to believe that Nordic countries will be less affected than other countries, even though we have a competent and educated population, and also a culture of adaptability in business and public sector," she said.

A characteristic feature of the Nordic model is the combination of collective risk sharing, with an openness to globalisation. The balance between the public welfare and the values created by the private enterprises represents a core of the so-called social contract. Competitiveness for business and a high rate of labour force participation are indispensable parts of the Nordic model, according to Anniken Hauglie.

"The human-centred agenda presented by the Global Commission is significant. Above all, the individual workers need a meaningful job and the possibility to be staying in work during his or her career, as participation in work leads to economically independent citizens."

Anniken Hauglie underlined the importance of inclusion in working life as a key part of the social contract between the authorities and the citizen.

"In Norway the government has just launched a nationwide effort to promote inclusion and to get more people into work. Too many people are standing outside of the labour market today. In the future we need to create more jobs and more people need to be given the skills to fill them. In Norway we have set up a committee on skill needs, together with the social partners. It is an arena for dialogue to develop a common evidence-based understanding of our future skill needed."

The committee has pointed out that there will be a shortage of qualified workers in sectors like healthcare, elementary education, ICT workers and skilled workers in the construction industry.

"The government has also launched a reform of lifelong learning. A major objective is to establish a more flexible model of further education and to increase tripartite cooperation on qualifying workers. Digitalization and new technology represent a potential for greater flexibility, both for the enterprises and workers, making the work-life balance easier for large groups of employees."

Recently new regulation has been introduced to stop some contracts for temporary agency workers which do not provide enough security or information about when work may be offered.

"We are now planning to appoint a tripartite committee looking closer at the consequences for workers and employers for new forms of organising work. Generally, the tripartite cooperation and the involvement of the social partners is a core element in our approach to all policy issues concerning work life."

In Norway a nationwide tripartite future work strategy will consist of several ongoing initiatives. Today there are more than 25 different arenas serving as forums for social dialogues at the national level, and a lot more at the regional and local level as well. The tripartite dialogue is an effective way to address difficult questions and to provide fair and legitimate answers, which if perfect for nobody, still acceptable for all, Anniken Hauglie said.

Ásmundur Einar Daðason excused himself for not being a specialist and the youngest minister present.

“But I will try to tell you what the vision of my government is. We can work together with the specialists to put the future of work on the agenda. We mentioned gender equality earlier. In Iceland we have achieved amazing things in gender equality by putting it on the agenda. By working close with the social partners and being ready to act by changing legislation and by pushing the future to come. We have done that through maternity leave and recently, the equal pay standard which has been invented here in Iceland.

There is a new law that all companies must pay equal to men and women, but when it comes to future of work all the specialist sitting here in the room are telling us that the future is coming faster than we thought. The most important thing is that the politicians put it on the agenda. In Iceland we set up a special working committee which was given the mandate to come up with a strategy how to implement a mechanism how to tackle the future of work.”

The committee was established in cooperation with the social partners and Statistics Iceland. In a follow-up a steering committee was established, with representatives from the social partners, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education and the Prime Minister.

“Later today you will hear about the report, ‘Iceland and the fourth industrial revolution’. By putting things on the agenda, the work of the politicians is to connect the specialist in the room and make the path so we can go faster into the future, because we want to do that. The future is coming, and it is coming fast and if we are not ready to react on it, we will be left behind. The Nordic model will be left behind, as well,” warned Ásmundur Einar Daðason.

“We also must think of our social protection system and growing inequality that the future in work will lead us to. We see it in the statistics that is beginning to come. And it’s not socialism, but we have to see the changes that are happening and to be ready to look at the social systems we have, the welfare system as a whole, to support this change.

I want Iceland to be a country where we not only have gender equality. We should have equality when it comes to salaries as well. What frightens me is that the changes that will happen in the future in the labour market will be hard to tackle unless we change our social system as well.”

Ásmundur Einar Daðason said the Icelandic government works closely with the social partners. It signed a wage agreement the day before the conference started which included a big package of measures made in cooperation between the government and the social partners.

“The next step is to work even closer with the social partners. We need to think of the future of work that we are not going to do it with a mind-set that is reactive but being proactive. That way we can go faster.”

Ylva Johansson said that we are talking about the future of work, but we also must realise that the world of work is a part of society and is interacting with the rest of society. Social cohesion is important; to have a social model with small gaps between different groups and between men and women; to have an inclusive society. It is also important with strong and independent social partners. She said the future of work is not predetermined. What will happen with artificial intelligence, digitalization and globalisation is something we can decide. We can shape the future. She wanted to reflect on two things.

“The first is the new challenges, but also to be able to form the new jobs. We need to be a part of what is coming, not just adapting to what somebody else has decided. We need realistic opportunities. We have to make it financially and economically possible for people to go into lifelong learning and upskilling. We must make it practically possible.

But I think also about how we regard people. I will share an experience with you. In the middle of the 90's, when Sweden had a huge economic crisis, I was in the government as Minister for Education. The government decided on a lot of austerity measures, but also to invest heavily in adult education. I went up north, meeting a lot of unemployed. I think they were mining workers, big men; traditional workers. And I was a young female who said: 'We are going to invest. You are going to have the opportunity to go into education'.

And one big man rose up and said: 'Are you threatening us?' [Ylva Johansson mimicked his deep voice, getting laughter from the audience.]

I learnt something from that. What he heard me say was: 'You are not good enough. The job you are currently doing is not important enough. You must transform into somebody else to fit into the labour market'.

This is not true, and this is not what people like to hear. We must show people that the work they are doing just now is important – that's why they have to transform, so they can be part of forming the future.”

Ylva Johansson emphasised that how lifelong learning is implemented is an important aspect. It is also important that one should be able to have training on the workplace. So that is part of your ordinary work.

The other aspect she wanted to comment on was the gender perspective.

“We have looked a lot at statistics. And you know statistics is a woman's best friend. We must not be gender blind, when it comes to the future of work. It is so important that we see that there are different opportunities for men and women. In Sweden there is a gender pay gap of four percentage points of unexplainable differences between men and women. We often talk about that.

But every month there is a difference of more than 20% of income when salary comes, between men and women. And that is explainable. That is really something we can do something about. Men

are spending more time at the workplace than women. Women are working part-time more than men. It's a huge difference. Women are taking more responsibility for the family and for the children. They are away from work, taking more parental leave than men. Women are on sick leave more than men, probably because they have two jobs to do; at home and at the workplace. We need the gender statistics, so we can see how different kinds of efforts affect men and women differently."

Roberto Suarez Santos said that he represents the employers, but also the South, since he is Spanish. His main duty is to look at the overall picture for business and how business is developing. The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) has been working intensively with the ILO on how its business model has been developed.

"Not being an expert in the Nordic model I have been reading the report on the Nordic model. I found four or five elements that I like," he said.

"What we see in your model is that you have been building your macroeconomic policies within a kind of responsible attitude to a much more productive macroeconomic scenario. Where you are now is really the result of the policy which is not the result of a discretionary approach. More importantly, we talk about the centralised system of collective bargaining in many of your countries.

What we admire in your model is the level of maturity, the social partners and in the social dialogue, which is the consequence of trust and a high degree of autonomy. You have been able to give and provide. That is for all your countries. We also identify that your social protection system and your insurance system have in many cases been able to become an efficient element to promote transition, compared to other countries.

Employers like to talk about flexibility, and that is an area where we always have some discussions. But when this flexibility is agreed between the worker and employer, which is more often the case within your model than in other countries, this makes a huge difference. When you discuss other elements like productivity and skills and not only wages and working times, that is really advancing the agenda of the future of work."

Roberto Suarez Santos said that his organisation has been pushing hard for skills in the agenda of the ILO.

"Sharan Burrow also knows that," he said, looking at the president of the ITUC.

"She wants me to repeat in front of you all: Universal..."

"Universal Labour Guarantee," *Sharan Burrow* filled in.

"And I always say, if we are going to guarantee, what is the cost of that?" quipped *Roberto Suarez Santos*.

“We can talk about the skills; we can talk about rights; we can talk about formal recognition of skills and life-long learning. But where I would like to focus more is on efficient partnerships. Still in many countries the relationship between educational institutions and the practical world of work, is far away. We have to do much better on that. The reality is that learning is becoming very informal.”

Roberto Suarez Santos said that digital learning is becoming more important and it is not formal. A question is the validation of competences acquired through informal learning.

“To learn new things is a revolution. The social skills are becoming a crucial driver of success and I am not sure we are doing enough within the workforce.”

Another issue he commented on was social protection.

“We still don’t have the overall picture, yet. Once we have that, perhaps we must rethink our social protections schemes, what they should cover or not cover. But there is also a sustainability issue, which often is forgotten. The schemes have to be sustainable.”

Finally, Roberto Suarez Santos talked about institutional innovation, as described in the Nordic context.

“The social model as we have designed it in Europe, is one thing. If you go to Africa or Asia – sorry, it is far away from there. We must rethink what are the roles of employers and worker’s organisations.”

While not denying the strength of tripartite negotiations, he said there is a need to re-invigorate the social dialogue.

“From there we could really start discussing these productivity challenges that will make a difference. The skill challenges that would make a difference for the workers.”

“Finally, my key message: there is no decent work without a proper business environment. We have to digest that. It is not easy sometimes to push the agenda of decent work in countries where there are issues of fundamental rights.”

Sharan Burrow congratulated the Nordic Council of Ministers for their leadership to find the megatrends and determining how to handle them.

She said that it is not so much that the work you do changes, as the business models.

“Often you are an energy worker, a nurse, a teacher, you are a transport worker, it is not as if your work is that different, although it changes with technology and might do so more dramatically. It is the emerging business models that we are not talking about enough, and what the impact is for everybody involved.”

She described the vision of the tripartite partners after World War 1 as real leadership.

“The challenge is: Can we do it today?”

“The challenges we face are more severe in many ways. We at least understood the world then. Now you have a world which is so disparate. 60% of the workers are outside the social contracts, which was the settlement a hundred years ago. They are in informal jobs. The inequality differences are at historical levels, often generated by the very nature of the globalised trading environment.”

Even if ITUC is committed to globalisation, Sharan Burrow said that unless we deal with the negative sides, inequality will grow with technology.

“Disruption from technology will segregate and fracture our societies more,” she warned.

Instead we should build on the consensus model, Sharan Burrow said, congratulating the Icelandic social partners and the government for the agreement made the night before, calling it an inspiration in the way that everybody should be included.

“The secret a hundred years ago was tripartite commitment. Can we do it again? Because the breakdown in trust is serious. In the face of all the challenges we can name, it not only beholds us to take responsibility, we also must recognise that the breakdown in trust extends to our democracies themselves. I never thought I would see a day where democracy is again contestable. Yet for many people that is the case.”

She described the contract generated a hundred years ago as a social contract where economics, business and social agenda walked hand in hand.

“If that started to break down in the 1980’s. What do we need to put it back together?”

Sharan Burrow said the Commission’s report is a great framework to make a start. ITUC supports Guy Ryder’s ambitions for an ILO declaration, which would carry on the vision of the constitution in Philadelphia.

“If we don’t have a reaffirmation and a mandate of the independence of the tripartite nature of the ILO, then we will not start from the strength of the basis we built then. We want a new social contract. It’s that simple. We want a new social contract with a floor of a labour guarantee. It’s a universal labour guarantee, recognised in the constitution.

I’m trying to convince the employers, that this is nothing to be frightened of.”

The social contract is about minimum living wages, working time arrangements and a workplace democracy to manage this.

“A recognition of occupational health and fundamental rights are absolutely the heart of the social agenda. And I would add: Let’s put universal social protection into the universal labour guarantee. Then that is the floor for all workers, informal workers, platform workers, whatever the model of work is. We might still want to clean some of that up in a formal sense. But if that’s the guarantee, we start with the promise of dignity at work, that has been in our DNA, in the ILO, in our institutions, for generations.”

Sharan Burrow described the new social contract as a “snow dome”, a concept she thought Icelanders would be familiar with.

There are foundations like the social dialogue, a strengthening of collective bargaining, the freedom of association that is at the heart of democracies, and there is a universal commitment to business and human rights; how we clean up our supply chains.

“But if we have a floor, the snow at the bottom of the dome is the universal labour guarantee for all workers. Let’s work out what that means. How it doesn’t frighten business. How it gives them a basic productivity guarantee as well. Then what is in the rest of the dome? There are things like a commitment to just transition for climate and for technology shifts. There is a recognition of the global disruption of digitalization and the need of new standards for emerging forms of work. In particular, contracting across platform business.

We have to break the constraints of competition policies to be able to bargain for platform workers collectively.

We want the ILO to make a big footprint in the next century. We want them to be the place the rest of the Bretton Woods and multilateral system look to, not for an economical but for an economic and social outlook.”

Sharan Burrow quoted the preamble of the ILO constitution: “the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries.”

“We have to rebuild a global environment with solidarity, with justice, with fundamental rights and shared prosperity. That is the new social contract we want.”

Guy Ryder said there were three points he had been struck by in the conversation.

“I think for the first time in a long time there is a major focus internationally on work. On work. You could say that this has something to do with my own narrow vision of the ILO centenary. Work has come back centre stage in national politics. This is something very important. Because

I have had the impression many times in recent years that labour market policies was a residual of a focus on other things.

When you have sorted out financial policies, when the European Union's targets for surpluses has been sorted out, then you could think about work. When you have worked out trading rules and all that, then you can think about work. So, I worry that work in many cases has been relegated to 'residual issues' in policymaking. I think we have to construct a project for the future of work. It is a conscious project about what the future of work should look like, and what we intend to do. This implies a re-centring of our focus on work, and when you say re-centring on work, by definition you mean re-centring on people, because people are so intimately involved with the work they do and they identify with the work that they do.

The second point is inspired by the Swedish minister's comments about the mineworker. We can all see that encounter and we can all understand it. I think it's important to just pick up the message which was given there. When you tell somebody 'we can make you something else, or we can help you find a different life', inadvertently you run the risk of devaluing that person, telling the person it doesn't matter. Or there is no place for them. I think that leads me to the thought, I think more than perhaps has been the case in the past, people look to the future, despite the opportunities which are out there, with a great deal of insecurity verging on fear. When we talk about constructing, and we all enthusiastically agree, a human-centred agenda the future of work, those humans have not only to be the objects of that agenda, they have to be the architects of that agenda. It's by and with them, not for them. That's one of the reasons that social dialogue is so important."

Guy Ryder related an experience where he visited Portugal shortly after a general election and saw a graffiti on the wall: "No to flexicurity – we are not Danish."

"I was sort of offended on your behalf. That leads me to the third point. But it reminded me that the world looks different from where you are," Guy Ryder said.

"The Nordics have an extraordinary amount of capital to invest in the future of work. The capital is not only your prosperity and everything that makes your societies work so well. It is these notions of confidence in each other's intentions, trust and confidence. You do have a high level of trade unions and organisation, you do have high levels of collective bargaining, but these are the exceptions in the world. Let's remember that not all of the 187 member states of the ILO have that capital.

We must live in the world as it is and construct it as we want it to be. The best advertisement for the Nordic model is quite simply the results. I mean it is a result that it produces, and the results are for all to see. Just let me conclude my remark by saying one of these things we know about the Nordic model is its gone hand in hand with a consistent and remarkable commitment to multilateralism.

Partly it is because the model depends on an open global economic and trading environment, but there is also a very basic commitment to international cooperation.

Multinational institutions are not in a good shape. They are not in good shape for several reasons. We have a tough job on our hands in two regards.

One is to have the multinational system itself fully appreciate the importance of work issues. A decision was taken in 1919, by the World Trade Organisation, to basically not talk about labour issues in their trade negotiations. It was a conscious decision. A barrier was built between our two organisations, down a street in Geneva, where they are on one side and we are on the other.

But something strange is happening. If you look at trade negotiations today, the WTO has great difficulties concluding any trade agreement. Multinational trade agreements have run into the sand. Where trade agreements are concluded it's on bilateral, regional or sub-regional levels.

75%–80% of the trade agreements negotiated at that level contained labour clauses. Look at Nafta-2. Look at the recent US, Canada, Mexico trade agreement: There is an extraordinary chapter about labour issues, all of them referring to ILO's standards.

It seems to me that this situation is taking us back to a logical understanding of how the global economy works. It makes no sense to think we can deal with labour here, trade there, environment there, finance there. We somehow have to synthesize and get greater coherence in these things.

To make the multinational system work again, we need to revisit these issues, in ways which are non-threatening, because these issues make some people scared in the world. But in a way that could help to move forward the Future of Work agenda, rather than obstruct it."

3. Session II

The Governance of Work and the Future of the Nordic Model. The Legislative Framework: Key Challenges in the Nordic context.

3.1 Introductory Lectures

3.1.1 *Labour law and new actors: Needs and Potential for renewal*

Marianne Hotvedt,
University of Oslo.

Marianne Hotvedt said that the first and second industrial revolution changed the labour market and the legal framework and made it obvious that labour markets need legal regulations to function.

“Freedom of contract and mass production did not go well together. It created poverty and exploitation, but it led in turn to the recognition of the need of a specific labour law, allowing collective bargaining and restricting of contractual freedom, in order to protect individual and societal needs.”

She is taking part in the pillar six within the Future of Work-studies, which concentrate on labour law in the Nordic countries in times when the labour market is changing, not least when it comes to new kinds of contracts on the labour market.

“The question now, after a third, and facing the fourth industrial revolution, is if the labour law is fit for the future of work, or is there is a need to update labour law to the current trends?”

Marianne Hotvedt called the changes in labour relations a key issue. It is about the prevalence and characteristics, as well as new actors and new types of relations emerging.

“Will self-employment be more relevant and traditional labour law less relevant in the future, due to technology and perhaps a higher demand for independence and flexibility? Or, are flexible contracts, such as platform work and zero-hours work rather a threat to employment protection? Is it perhaps a part of a general tendency towards precarity? Is there a risk that we are going backwards into the future?”

In the project, the researchers try to see how the changes in labour relations will affect Nordic labour law in the future. Based on a legal analysis they ask: Is there, or will there be a need for legal development and reforms?

The focus is changes in labour relations, and the work will build on the empirical research on self-employment, independent work and flexible contracts (pillar three in the Future of Work-research project), and the study of digital platforms (pillar four).

“These kinds of change can represent a fundamental challenge to labour law and to other parts of the legal framework,” she said.

Marianne Hotvedt described what she calls a “binary divide” deeply entrenched in the legal system. The legal framework for on one specific type of labour relations – the employment contract of dependent work – is fundamentally different from the legal framework of independent work, or self-employment. Labour law governs employment contracts, while independent contracts are mainly a matter of regular contract law, and with it comes also competition law, restricting the possibility of collective initiatives.

Other parts of the legal system, like social security law, tax law and tort law, also build on this binary divide.

An employment contract is a personal contract for work in the service of another. It is a relation of dependency and subordination.

“The main function and purpose of labour law is to balance the unequal power in this relation. So, the concepts defining the relation, the concept of the employer and the concept of the employee, are main building blocks for labour law. They define the responsible party and the scope of protection. Therefore these concepts represent the structure of labour law,” she explained.

The legal concept for an employment contract does not necessarily correspond with the formal classification. A contract can say “independent work” and the person can appear as self-employed in statistics and even consider themselves to be self-employed. But they might still, in legal terms, be an employee. The reason is that these legal concepts require us to go beyond the formal arrangements and consider whether in reality there is a relation of dependency and subordination.

“On the one hand that is a challenge, it makes the concept a bit vague. It can make the legal assessment difficult. But on the other hand, it is essential that these concepts are not carved in stone in order for labour law to fulfil its power balancing function in the real world. So therefore, the key questions are whether these concepts are equipped to handle power imbalances and the need for protection in new situations, in future labour relations? If not, that is a grave and fundamental challenge to the legal framework.”

Marianne Hotvedt described the work done in the labour law pillar of the Future of Work program as groundwork in two parts:

1. They study the interplay between key concepts and labour relations in each of the Nordic countries. Do the key concepts apply, so that labour law applies? Or do new relations fall outside of the scope of labour law? Are the distinctions clear, or are there difficulties and legal uncertainties? Will there be a growing number of people with an unclear employment status in the future?
2. They also take a close look at the implications of an unclear unemployment status in the different Nordic countries.

“First, we look at the weaknesses and the cracks, in the legal framework, and then we look at the legal consequences, or the risks, related to such weaknesses. The findings will be analysed by comparing the situation in the Nordic countries and we will discuss possibilities for development and reform and how to prevent or remedy the cracks.”

In part one the researchers will study how changing labour relations affect the interpretation and application of the key concepts. Some of the challenging new concepts are:

- Sham self-employment (contracts disguised as self-employment)
- Grey area contracts (that have features of both dependent and independent work)
- Fragmented/empty/marginal contracts (like gig work, zero-hours contracts etc.)

“Gig work and zero-hours contracts illustrate the challenge, because it varies from country to country whether such contracts are employment contracts or not.”

- The triparty structure found in agency work and in platform work, is also a challenge. Both when it comes to deciding on the employment status, and when allocating the responsibility of who is the employer.
- Artificial employment contracts, or “self-employed”, are a final challenge. These are formally employment contracts, but where the employer only undertakes some administrative functions and not the important duty of providing work and pay.

Some of the research questions in the work ahead will be:

- Are the legal concepts understood in light of the purpose to counteract power imbalance and provide protection? And if so, would that mean that they are adaptable?
- How does case law strike down on attempts to circumvent legal responsibilities? It is important to know to what extent the realities override the formal arrangements. Is economic dependency enough to make you an employee? Can decisive influence make you an employer?
- And furthermore – how do the different Nordic countries classify the different types of contract like gig work, zero hours work, agency work and so on?

“The focus in this part of the study is whether the key concepts make labour law adaptable or if they leave loopholes.

Depending of what we will find, we will be able to form an opinion on whether labour law is a sustainable legal framework, or if it will be under threat in the future of work. It probably will be a matter of identifying weaknesses of a certain degree and finding cracks.”

In part two of the work, the researchers ask how an unclear and unresolved employment status affects the legal protection of the worker.

This is done by concentrating on a few key elements, and then comparing the two traditional categories, the employee and the self-employed, with a platform-worker who has a very unclear employment status and who gets work by accessing a digital platform. The Uber driver is the typical example, but there are several similar models evolving in the Nordic countries.

When deciding the key element of labour protection, they will focus on the Nordic model of labour law and social policy and try to pinpoint the norms which are essential to uphold this model.

- The Nordic countries have a high productivity, which depends on a healthy workforce, which is closely related to the legal regulations.
- The Nordic countries also have high levels of social equality. The labour market partners play a vital role in balancing power, distributing wealth and collective bargaining.
- Social equality is closely related to strong social security systems, and the idea of a basic security for all, with benefits when out of work, maternity pay and sick leave.

“We will focus on legal norms that underpin these values that enjoy broad support in the Nordic countries and protect both the individual and societal interests. How do these norms apply to people with uncertain employment status?”

Marianne Hotvedt called what the researchers were doing a kind of litmus test – how do the key concepts of the Nordic model work when tested against the platform worker?

“By doing this, we think we will get a clearer picture of the legal consequences of unclear employment status, both for the protection of the individual and for important societal interests in the Nordic countries. What happens to those who fall into the crack in the systems?”

This will show us what is at risk in the Nordic system if the cracks in the legal framework grow wider in the future, and there is a growing number of persons with unclear employment status.”

Legal change can come as regulatory efforts and reforms, but it does not have to.

“Labour law, thus far, has proven to be quite adaptable to the change that is happening in the real world and still fulfil its power balancing function. I’m hopeful that it will be possible to prevent and remedy the cracks that will appear.”

3.1.2 *Occupational health – consequences and challenges for the psychosocial working environment*

Jolien Vleeshouwers,
post-doctoral researcher,
National Institutional of Occupational Health in Norway, STAMI.

Jolien Vleeshouwers is involved with pillar five in Fafo's Future of Work project. The project she is working on is a cooperation with The National Research Center for Work Environment in Denmark (NFA).

She said that the aim of pillar five is to study observed and potential implications on occupational health factors from the emerging and future forms of work. It builds on the work in pillar two (digitalisation of traditional forms of work) and pillar four (new labour market agents, platforms and crowds as mediators, managers and undertakers of work). Special attention will be paid to psychosocial work factors.

The pillar has been divided into three major parts:

Part one is a literature study. Part two is a Delphi study. Part three is the final report, which will be presented in 2020.

Jolien Vleeshouwers reminded the audience that stress effects are natural and healthy.

"I am currently stressed, my heart rate is raised, I am nervous and shaking," she said.

"But stress can also have physical consequences to health that are negative. Many studies have documented that high levels of psychosocial demands and certain work factors can increase the risk for poor health."

On the other hand, high levels of control over work, as well as social support from colleagues, can help reduce the health risks, like psychological problems, coronary heart disease and muscular-skeletal complaints.

When working life changes, a logical consequence is that the work environment changes too.

The challenge is to predict what these changes will do to working life.

"We know that stress affects employee health and wellbeing, so it is important to define what these stressors might be in the future work life".

When discussing work related stress, people often refer to the amount of work and time pressures they might face.

“There is no reason to believe that these traditional pressures will be any less in the future.”

The content of work is also changing, which means that there might be new forms of stressors in the future. Or existing demands might increase in their importance. The effects they may have on the employee’s health and wellbeing may increase, too.

Jolien Vleeshouwers gave emotional demands as an example:

“When manual labour tasks get redistributed and replaced, the amount of people working in the service sector jobs will increase, resulting in more and more people working for, or with other people, such as in the health care industry.

More and more employees will have to deal with people’s emotions and might have to hide their own emotions at times, something which has been proven in the long run to have negative health effects.”

When technological developments increase quickly, employees have to relate to something new all the time: New technology is often complicated. Employees will need to learn new tools and programs in order to do their job. This might result in more time spent on education and less time spent on other things, including those they themselves defines as their central work task.

“There is a new term: techno stress. It is a term to describe the problems people encounter when everyone is trying to adapt to new technologies”.

While technological developments are aimed at improving processes and making life easier, this is not always as it is experienced. When techno stress involves our work, it might be quite a stressor and therefore have health consequences.

Job insecurity is also a logical consequence of digitalisation and new technologies. Many studies have found that employees experiencing this kind of job insecurity, are at an increased risk of developing health complaints.

“It is one thing worrying about if I will lose my job. Another aspect of job insecurity is to worry about whether the content of your job will change. Will the job in the future be the same as I am doing now?

Quantitative job insecurity (if I lose my job) has been studied a lot. As digitalisation and automation is becoming more common, we should also learn more about the second, lesser studied type of work insecurity, qualitative insecurity”.

According to McKinsey, over half of our daily tasks can be automated with the technologies available today. However, only five percent of jobs can become completely automated.

Jolien Vleeshouwers described how far the research project has come. The first part was to conduct a comprehensive literature overview on existing work on the subject.

“The goal is to separate the dramatized and frightening speculations from what documented research actually has to say on the matter,” she said and showed some headlines from newspapers, one which claimed that “Remote work can be just as bad to you as smoking.”

“Does remote work and lack of human contact at work, due to digitalisation, lead to illness and poor health? Are new technologies really causing us to live a lifestyle where we are so little in touch with other humans, that this affects our health?

In the same light – what are the health effects of the information age, information anxiety.

When we get headlines as these, do we become so anxious of what could and may happen, that it is actually this anxiety which is causing the health complaints?”

The abstracts of 6 171 articles has been read. 224 articles have been read fully and thoroughly, and 43 articles were included in the report.

“Since so many articles were excluded from the review, the main conclusion was that there is too little research on the topic.”

The second part of pillar five is a Delphi study, which is a technique to forecast future trends. The method assumes that group judgements are more valid than individual judgements. It is a structured method which relies on a panel of experts.

The experts receive a questionnaire. When the first questionnaire has been answered and analysed, the results are sent back to the experts as feedback.

“They can then see what the group has answered. The process is repeated, and the experts are encouraged to change their answers based on the feedback of the previous round.

It is important that this whole process is done in anonymity, so that the experts reply to what has been said, rather than who said it.

In short we can say that this method effectively moves from wild speculation to more qualified speculation. Fafo and NFA invited 27 experts in Norway and 32 in Denmark, from the partners in the labour market, the inspectorates, researchers, leaders, managers and consultants”.

3.1.3 *Report from the Danish Disruption Council.*

Bente Sorgenfrey,
Vice President of the Danish Trade Union Confederation.

In February this year, the Danish Disruption Council released a report that analyses, discusses and makes suggestions for how to ensure that Denmark will continue to be strong in the world of the fourth industrial revolution and that all Danes take part in the development.

“Many of the challenges we have discussed are the same as we have seen in the ILO report from the Global Commission,” said Bente Sorgenfrey, herself a member of the Disruption Council, along with 29 people from all over the country. They come from business, social partners and they are experts and politicians. Young people and representatives from different cultures have also been taking part. Eight ministers have joined the council, which was led by the Prime Minister.

“The council is illustrating the Danish way to work with the industry and social partners,” said Bente Sorgenfrey.

The council’s purpose was to discuss the consequences of the technological development, for Danish citizens and for Danish society. The Government’s ambition is that all Danes should get well into the future and benefit from the new technology and to stay tuned on the labour market. At the same time the government wishes for Denmark to remain one of the most prosperous countries in the world.

The Council has been visiting all of Denmark’s regions. Every meeting started with a day to gain knowledge about the region. They met for example businesspeople and representatives of educational institutions. On the second day of the visit, the Council had internal discussions, which were confidential. The Council also presented their thoughts and discussions in a press conference in each place. The confidential meetings were very important, said Bente Sorgenfrey.

“In this way we got a forum where the government could present unfinished papers and the council could contribute to the debate. It was a good way of working.”

The topics have been new technologies and business models, future competencies, free trade and foreign labour, flexible and favourable framework for business and flexicurity 4.0.

There was also much discussion about inequality and gender balance.

“The government cannot solve all of the problems by itself. Companies and the social partners are also responsible and must contribute in shaping the future,” said Bente Sorgenfrey.

She used the responsibility for education as an example.

“Should I as an employee have a responsibility for my own education or should I expect the government to put money into it? It is very crucial that we all take part of it.”

There were many discussions on these topics, not least about how to prepare the labour force for the future skills need.

“We don’t tell people to change. We should help them to make good working conditions in the new workplace. To find necessary education and provide a lot of education on the working place.”

The Danish labour market is characterised by the flexicurity model. Basically, the idea is to ensure a flexible workforce by establishing a safety net for employees. On one hand helping the unemployed maintain a high level of security but also by training and education, partly financed by the government. On the other hand, Denmark has rules that are very flexible for the employers when it comes to hiring and firing.

“Therefore, Denmark has managed to have one of the highest employment frequencies in the OECD,” said Bente Sorgenfrey.

However, new technologies might challenge the Danish model and that is why the disruption Council has discussed how flexibility and well-regulated working conditions can continue to characterise the Danish labour market. New employment forms, for example the platforms, where worker change from employees to freelancers is also an important question. What then about taxes, pensions, holidays and so on?

The disruption council presented a report in February this year. Each chapter summarised the main challenges, including new and numerous initiatives by the government.

There have also been discussions, not least about the financing of the education and the education systems, she said.

When Danes were asked about the future, seven out of ten expect that digitalisation will impact their work in the coming five years. Three out of four expect the impact to be positive.

In the future the Disruption Council will have two annual meetings.

“I hope the new government will continue this work, for it is so important to have this discussion.”

3.1.4 *Report on Iceland and the fourth industrial revolution*

Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson,
partner at Aton Consulting.

The Prime Minister's office in Iceland released a report on the fourth industrial revolution in February. The aim was to gather knowledge about the big technological changes and to stimulate the debate on the opportunities and threats inherent in it. Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson was the chairman of the committee writing the report.

Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson started with the main aim of the report which was to explain what the fourth industrial revolution is. He focused on two things:

- Technological infrastructure
- Social infrastructure

When the committee started looking at the fourth industrial evolution, some of the questions were: How did Iceland cope with other industrial revolutions? How was the technological infrastructure in Iceland? Can that be used as an indicator that Iceland might do well or bad in the upcoming fourth industrial revolution?

The committee looked at various indicators and technological readiness. It could quickly see that there is a huge technology divide in the world.

"When we talk about the fourth industrial revolution, many countries have not implemented the previous industrial revolutions yet," Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson said, and pointed out that Iceland was in a good place when it comes to technological infrastructure.

The committee used some indicators to measure the technological readiness, like mobile cellular subscriptions, internet bandwidth and fixed broadband subscriptions – all pretty much technology from the third industrial revolution. Iceland is on par with the Nordic countries "which was welcoming to us," he said.

When looking at other indicators like innovation and technology, research institutions, research in development, quality of scientific institutions, Iceland was a little bit behind, but still able to catch up with the other Nordic countries.

Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson explained that the committee wanted to see what would happen when the automation risk by job type, as estimated by the OECD, was fed into Icelandic reality. Iceland was not a part of the countries that were studied by the OECD.

He showed a table with the title “Wage against the machine” from the Economist based on the OECD report. The picture shows how countries fare differently. The Nordic countries all face rather low risks associated with automation in jobs compared to other countries.

“It was interesting to see that Iceland is in a similar place. It is between Sweden and Norway. That was one of our findings,” he said.

Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson explained that 28% of jobs in Iceland have a high likelihood of changing considerably because of increased automation. This is a little bit lower than in other countries. 58% of jobs are likely to change to some degree. 14% of jobs will undergo little or no change.

The committee looked at education, gender and automation. There is an increased risk of automation among people with lower education. In Iceland, males with low education levels have the highest risk of automation (59% for men compared to 43% for women). “That was a surprise,” he said. But with increased education the risk of automation is not as high. With groups that have university education, the risk of automation is considerably lower (high risk 7% male and 6% female).

There is a huge age divide. 15–24 year-olds have a higher likelihood (50% men and 43% women, again higher with the men). The risk is not as high among the age group 25–54. “Iceland has a lot of young people who go early into the jobs market without finishing school, so this was quite a find for us,” he said.

There is a bigger risk in rural areas. Many jobs have been lost in the fishing villages all around Iceland, but instead there are new jobs in high-tech companies in the seafood sector. They are developing fishing gear, for instance. These jobs are in Reykjavik, not around the country. Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson believes this is one of the challenges that Iceland will face.

There is a huge difference between those who have Icelandic citizenship and those who have foreign citizenship. Of those with an Icelandic citizenship, 26% have a high risk of automation, while among those with other citizenships 59% are in the high-risk group.

The main aim of the study was to use it as basis for analysis. “Now we want to discuss how to tackle the challenges. We have seen groups that are likely to be more affected by the technological change and need to respond. We have to adapt to the pace of the change,” he said.

How do we assist people in improving their skills in order to adapt to this change? he asked. That is one of the challenges society faces when looking at social disruption.

He argued that governments have a responsibility, but it is important for the trade unions and businesses to assist.

“Although the technological aspects are important, I want to conclude that from the Icelandic point of view we want to use the Nordic model to guide us through the fourth industrial revolution. And then I think it will be a happy affair,” he said.

3.1.5 *How will the new and emerging technologies affect us?*

Panel Debate moderated by Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson.

Manuela Tomei, Director, Conditions of Work and Equality Department at ILO,
Sigurður Hannesson, Director, Federation of Icelandic Industries,
Drífa Snædal, President of the Icelandic Confederation of Labour,
Kristinn Tómasson, Director at the Administration of Occupational Safety and Health,
Anna Ilsøe, Researcher at FAOS, University of Copenhagen.

The debate opened up with questions to each of the participants. *Anna Ilsøe*, researcher at the Employment Relations Research Centre (FAOS) at the University of Copenhagen, has worked with the digitalisation of the labour market the last 2–3 years.

She said that digitalisation is often a very centralised and top-down process. How do we ensure the bottom-up processes, especially for those workers who are on the margins of our labour markets?

“This is a core question, especially in the Nordics because of their voluntarist models of organisation of their labour markets. People have to organise and perhaps strike and fight for their rights. If the digitalisation primarily affects those on the margins, they are also the ones with less power to use this voluntarist model.”

She had four points:

1. About the atypical employment models:
“When we just look at the aggregate statistics at the national level, we miss what is going on in the single sectors. How do we ensure representation of these groups in our voluntarist models? Workers who are in completely new working contracts, like zero hours contracts.”

2. About why there are so many failed automation projects:
“It is very expensive to digitalise. Therefore the projects have often been centralised. That includes the decision making. How can we involve local workers and managers in the development of digital solutions, as well as the implementation of them, to ensure that they are successful?”
3. About which skills will be needed in the future:
“Many of the discussions on the macro level focus a lot on the STEM competencies, for good reasons. Many of the companies find it hard to recruit people. However, if you visit the workplaces and interview people who are implementing digital solutions, they also have an increasing need of soft skills around digital processes. How can we involve workers and managers in the design of digital solutions as well as implementation skills, so that they are successful?”
4. About the national statistics:
“We now see developments in the digital economy that is not covered in our statistics: These are new types of work, like platform work, zero hours contracts, but it’s also at the company level. For example Airbnb is lacking in tourism statistics. We need to include new kinds of data to look at these frontier developments. It could be digital data from companies, it could be interviews with these new kinds of workers. It is important to be able to capture these new trends.”

Kristinn Tómasson, Director of the Administration of Occupational Health and Safety, was worried that focusing on digitalisation will make us forget some of the classical long-standing threats.

“The biggest threat for many people worldwide is salary theft. They don’t get payed correctly at the time they should receive the pay.

A key health factor is that if you are involved in serious accidents at work, it is extremely bad for your mental health as well.

Those who are not well-off need assistance from different partners of society. So, one of the key issues I want to see from the Future of Work report, is how we retain the focus on the people who are working in the worst conditions in our current societies. From the experience of the last 20–30 years, we know many of the good ways for how to tackle this.”

The moderator turned to *Drifa Snædal*, President of the Icelandic Confederation, who had just concluded a big deal in the wage negotiations for the private sector in Iceland.

What can be learned from that deal when we discuss the societal changes of the fourth industrial revolution?

“There are many lessons both from the agreement itself and from the tone of the negotiation, as well. It comes down to two things: security and equality,” she said.

“The agreement is historical since the government came in with a huge package with different solutions to make it happen. We are now introducing a more progressive taxing system, we put a lot of emphasis on the battle against social dumping as well as the question of housing, in this tripartite agreement.

This is also how we will tackle the future of work in an insecure environment. Where you have precarious work, you don't have structured contracts between the workers and employees. That results in more sick days. When you can't plan your future, it becomes worse for the whole society.

The challenge for the labour unions is to be able to service people with precarious work situations in the gig economy,” Drifa Snædal said.

Equality was the other important issue during the negotiations.

“In Iceland the question is not just about wages, it's about a more equal distribution of the wealth,” she said and listed some of the ways this was an issue: how the workload is divided, the tax system, the infrastructure of health care, and the relation between rural areas and Reykjavik.

We have been very focussed on gender equality. And we must pursue that of course. But there is also another pay gap that worries us increasingly, and that is the pay gap between people who are born here locally and people who come from abroad.”

Sigurður Hannesson, Director of the Federation of Icelandic Industries, was asked how the industry is preparing for the coming changes.

He said that Iceland was late in adopting new technology, initially. The first industrial revolution came to Iceland in the late 19th century.

“But when we started, we adapted quickly. The Icelandic labour market adapts well to change. We have seen that in the past in the compositions of sectors, with more focus on sectors driven by technology rather than natural resources, so this is a good sign.

But the fourth industrial revolution is happening at a much, much faster pace than we have seen earlier. It will disrupt almost every industry, also in Iceland. We are well prepared when it comes to technology, but it is very important that the government will facilitate those changes to be able to take full advantage of the new technology.”

The Federation of Icelandic Industries has written two reports on the subject. The first on the Iceland's competitiveness, where the focus was on skills and innovation. The second report was on industrial strategy.

"We looked at Iceland in 2050, imagining how everything will be. The main societal challenge will be the aging of the population and climate change. Innovation not only drives growth, but it also solves challenges like that. We have been focussing on many issues but skills are what we focus most on."

Manuela Tomei, Director for the Conditions of Work and Equality Department at ILO, said that even if it appears that the ratio between standard employment and atypical work remains relatively stable in the Nordic countries, the latter type of contracts has a very high incidence of women, of migrant workers, and young people.

"I would like to give some tips for possible ways of reducing somehow the insecurity and the volatility associated with atypical work.

I think the issue is to overcome the binary distinction between dependent work, like employees and self-employed work, where you are a kind of independent contractor.

"There are a number of countries that have tried to make it more expensive in order to discourage reliance on the type of contracts for independent contractors, whenever they are used for purposes they were not devised for in the first time. Other countries are trying to find a third kind of contractual arrangement.

The third possible option is the universal work guarantee, proposed by the ILO. The whole purpose is to try to ensure that all workers, irrespective of the contract in which they are engaged, should be afforded some basic, minimum protection in terms of occupational health, in terms of an adequate wage and in connection with the right to collective bargaining. This fits very well within the Nordic model where there is a long tradition of collective bargaining. It allows for greater adaptability and the specific circumstances of these sector or workers involved.

One last point: When it comes to the digital platforms, how can we afford social protection to these workers who are independent contractors? How can we ensure that there is greater stability in terms of income?

It is very important to bear in mind that right now, the work in digital platforms is performed according to the terms determined by the platforms. Each platform has its own terms of services, which creates a competition among the different platforms.

This further contributes to an arbitrariness and a lack of consistency in terms of what some of the guarantees that these workers should have. They should not be denied a fair payment for the work performed, but the terms of rejection are also very high. There is absolutely no sharing of information about that. The worker may be disconnected from one day to another with absolutely no indication of the reasons for that."

A question from the audience was put to the panel: Should we expect a future with less work and jobs? The moderator passed the question to Drifa Snædal: Should we in the fourth industrial revolution put forward some other aims than just increasing production? Like working less? In the wage negotiations there was also a demand to shorten the working week. Why?

“That was by popular demand! People want to work less!

Ten years after the crisis here in Iceland, we are seeing increasing burn-out, we are seeing increasing sickness. People have been working too hard, for too long. We have had fewer people on the labour market than we need, as well, even with help from workers from abroad who also work hard. The unemployment rate is only 2%.

It is also a global question. The ILO and many unions are asking for more work to be created. But what kind of work? We need secure work. We need good work; work that can provide you with a living standard. The quality of work is becoming increasingly important.”

The moderator turned to Kristinn Tómasson. This question of burn-out and people working too much, doesn't technology also play a role here? I found my mobile phone a very handy tool but now I hate it because it is constantly sending me e-mails so I get constantly agitated. Do we have to work less?

“I think the issue is not working less or more,” answered Kristinn Tómasson.

“Generally work is very good for health. The biggest risk to health is not having a job. If you have appropriate tasks it is the best thing you can do for your own health. There is, however, a fine balance between the hours of work and your ability to function at those tasks and the demands that work gives you. The workers need to have a sufficient autonomy to say yes and no to the task that is being proposed. If you get messages every minute 24/7 you will burn out. However, if you don't get any messages 24/7 you will also burn out, because it's extremely distressing when no one sends you messages. We have to ensure that people have appropriate tasks that can be completed within a reasonable amount of time.”

Anna Ilsøe also commented the discussion about a jobless future.

“I think that it started out with Michael A. Osborn predicting that 50% of all jobs would disappear. But if you look at the percentage in other studies over time, the percentage falls. In some of the latest McKinsey reports in Denmark there are even estimates that there will be more jobs as a result of digitalisation.

I don't think it is realistic that there will be a jobless future. On the other hand, you have the quest for less work. I think that in the Nordics, we should have a very thorough discussion about that.

What is the alternative to an income, be it in a job or as a self-employed? In some of the Anglo-Saxon countries there is a discussion of a basic income, that people could step out of the labour market and they would receive a basic income. If you look at the Nordic level, I think it will be very, very expensive to operate a basic income and perhaps even impossible. So, I think the aim of having people not working is not realistic on a large scale anyway."

Another question from the audience was about skills. Sigurður Tómasson was asked what responsibility industries have when it comes to securing that people have the correct skills.

"28% of the Icelandic labour market will change significantly, so it will be an issue. But we have seen greater changes during the last century. I'm quite optimistic about that. But what the industry can do is to help people to take continuing education," said Sigurður Tómasson.

The education system also has to adapt. This is where the government and the local municipalities too will have to lead the way to a different future, more focussed on STEM, Science, Engineering and Math, but also on soft skills, like communication and hand-on industrial knowledge."

"The educational system needs to be flexible. The fact is that a lot of jobs are going to be rendered obsolete, because of digitalisation, but at the same time completely new jobs will be created."

Another question from the audience was put to Manuela Tomei about how insecurity can be reduced.

"There are attempts across the world to try to reduce the insecurity. What the report on The Future of Work has put forward is to try to move beyond a type of silo approach in which we are talking and dealing with skills development separate from social and labour protection. When we are talking about life-long learning it is a sort of reconfiguration of education policies of vocational training policies and all the related institutions," she said.

"When we are talking of STEM, we have to start from very early childhood. Many countries are introducing exercises with the view to stimulate the ability of boys and girls to acquire cognitive skills. Talking about life-long learning, it means that you need to provide time and money for people to engage in constant training.

So, who is going to finance it? It requires thinking about public and private partnership to make the resources available. This also has implications for gender quality. When you make the resources available you need to account for the unequal care responsibility. Women shoulder the burden of domestic chores and care responsibilities. They should also be allowed to benefit from this constant education.

We have to envision a complete revolution of the different institutions governing the labour market."

Finally, Drífa Snædal was asked about the role of the social partners in the fourth industrial revolution.

“The key word here is inclusive. We must be much more inclusive in various forms of work, we have to welcome everyone, whether they are in standard or precarious work. We have to be inclusive of people from different origins. The labour unions should oversee their structure as well, meeting the challenges of the future. But the tripartite system and the collective agreement system that have remained for several decades, will be a key factor in the future of work as well,” she said.

Huginn Freyr Þorsteinsson tried to sum up the debate in one sentence:

“In order to deal with automation and artificial intelligence the solution is that we have to be more human.”

DAY 2

4. Introduction to Day 2

4.1 Is the last mile the longest?

“Is the last mile the longest?” asked by Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland, as she opened the second day of the conference with the theme “Future at work and gender equality”.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir spoke not only as the Prime Minister, she also recently combined this with being Minister for Gender Equality, a way of acknowledging that gender equality cuts through all different government ministries.

A message repeated through the conference was that more equal and inclusive societies result in stronger economies and better businesses. That is also the key message in the flagship project initiated by the Nordic Council of Ministers: *The Nordic Gender Effect at Work*, where other countries and international organisations have been invited to a dialogue about what investments in gender equality can give societies.

“The Nordic welfare reforms have set the example for how strong social protection can lead to gender equality. Affordable childcare services, accessible reproductive health services and equal division of parental leave have been essential for women's participation in the labour market, their wellbeing and bargaining power in the household. The Nordic region has demonstrated how gender equality can lead to increased GDP,” said Lopa Banerjee, Director of the Civil Society Division, UN Women.

She, and other speakers with an international perspective, gave alarming examples of women's situation in many countries' labour markets.

“Gender stereotypes and unchanged unequal power relations between women and men, hold women and girls captive and they still spend 2.5 times more time on unpaid, domestic and care work. This remains one of the biggest barriers to women's opportunities in paid employment in the formal sector, and one of the key reasons for the gender pay gap,” she said.

Shauna Olney, Chief of ILO's branch for Gender, Equality and Diversity, added:

"We estimate that with the present rate it will take 209 years to close the time gap in time spent in unpaid care work."

One of the reports coming out from *The Nordic Gender Effect at Work*, conducted by the OECD, is called "Is the last mile the longest?"

And yes, it seems to be. Because even if the Nordic countries have come a long way in gender equality, the goal is still far away.

There are still gender pay gaps in the Nordics, and the Swedish Minister for Employment Ylva Johansson reminded the audience that statistics are a woman's best friend. Using Sweden as an example, much attention is given to the unexplained gender pay gap of 4% between men and women. But at the same time the real difference, if you look at monthly salaries, is 20%. That also affects pensions and social security benefits.

"These are differences that can be explained – so we can do something about them," said Ylva Johansson.

5. Session III

5.1 Opening address: Gender Equality in Work and Leadership

Katrín Jakobsdóttir,
Prime Minister of Iceland and Chair of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir welcomed the participants to the second day of the conference. She said she was speaking in the capacity of the Prime Minister of Iceland, but also – and in this context more importantly – as the minister for gender equality. Gender equality was recently added to her portfolio to further strengthen the government’s commitment, acknowledging that gender equality cuts through all different government ministries.

“For almost 45 years, the Nordic collaboration has served as both an inspiration and an encouragement to walk the extra mile to progress. Through the Nordic Prime Minister Initiative – The Nordic gender effect at work – we have promoted gender equality at the international level, not only as the right thing to do, but also as the smart thing to do,” she said.

It has been repeatedly confirmed that more equal and inclusive societies result in stronger economies and better businesses. The Nordic gender effect at work has invited other countries and international organisations to a dialogue on these opportunities. She thanked the ILO, the OECD and UN Women for the close cooperation over the past three years and for realising the idea of the Knowledge hub on the Nordic Gender Effect.

One product of this close cooperation is the report produced by the OECD in 2018 under the headline: *Is the last Mile the Longest?* The report looks at how women’s paid employment has contributed to economic growth in our region. On average, across the Nordic countries almost three in every four working-age women are in paid employment. This study shows – as so many others – that the rise in women’s employment leads directly to economic growth.

“But still, we have not reached full parity in employment and more women than men work part-time, reflecting on women’s large share in unpaid work. Women are also much more likely than men to leave work and rely on early retirement, rehabilitation or disability benefits,” Katrín Jakobsdóttir said.

This is not least true for women who work in care and in education; jobs that are both emotionally and physically difficult and are becoming more complex by the day. This has negative implications for women’s income, career development and future pensions. These gendered trends need to be included in our analysis. Care work, as an example, has been defined as one of the areas that artificial intelligence will struggle to take over, not least the emotional labour associated with both paid and unpaid care.

“It is not a goal for women to work as long hours or as many years as men – we would probably all benefit from working a bit less. Yet, gender balance in employment is essential to women’s financial independence and therefore a key element in ending gender inequalities, including violence against women.”

But for women to take part in the labour market, the conditions under which women can do so need to be created. The Nordic countries have done a remarkable job on this front, Katrín Jakobsdóttir emphasised. She thought two public policies particularly worth mentioning: universal childcare and well-funded shared parental leave – with a use-it-or-lose-it proportion for fathers.

“These policies can have the potential to transform the makeup of our societies, in both our public and private lives, and have contributed greatly to the economic prosperity in the Nordic countries. Flexible work arrangements and gender equality in leadership have also helped form a more inclusive labour market. This infrastructure enables women to take part in public life and be represented in decision-making, as I myself am an example of,” she said.

Yet, the gender pay gap remains far too sturdy across the globe. She was proud that Iceland is among the countries that initiated the co-operation leading up the Equal Pay International Coalition and that her Ministry hosted a two days technical seminar prior to the conference on ways to ensure equal pay.

The unadjusted pay gap can partly be attributed to the gender segregation in the labour market and the undervaluation of traditional women’s jobs as compared to traditional men’s jobs. In Iceland, this pay gap – and the fact that women are more likely to work part-time – contributes to pension inequality as pensions are directly linked to previous earnings.

“As for the principle of equal pay for work of equal value – we have set the target of closing the adjusted gender pay gap by 2022. We are currently in the process of implementing the 2018 Law on Equal Pay Certification.”

The law builds on the adoption of an equal pay standard which was developed in a close collaboration between the government and the social partners and requires companies and institutions of 25 or more employees to undergo an equal pay audit. The Standard transfers the responsibility of equal pay from the individual employee over to the employer. It is the obligation of the employer to ensure, by means of a certification, that there is no wage discrimination within their company or institution.

As the law is still under its first phase of implementation, there is no impact assessment yet – but we know that the benefits have outweighed the costs.

Katrín Jakobsdóttir concluded by highlighting the impact of the #metoo movement, which exposed systematic harassment, violence and everyday sexism that women across various layers of our societies are subjected to.

“Here in Iceland, thousands of women spoke out and the movement revealed the multiple discrimination suffered by migrant women in a country that has throughout history been relatively ethnically homogenous. We may all have known that harassment and violence existed, but #metoo has helped us understand the scale of the problem and the structural nature of violence against women and girls. And structural problems require structural solutions.”

“It is the responsibility of every one of us to do everything in our power to ensure that the reality exposed by #metoo soon belongs to history. My government has undertaken a thorough review of our role as an employer. Different ministers have initiated various projects to learn from the #metoo movement and find ways to prevent further discrimination,” Katrín Jakobsdóttir said.

The Minister for Education, Science and Culture has put forward a specific bill to address harassment and abuse in sports. A large study on the scope of harassment in the Icelandic labour market is being conducted under the auspices of the Minister of Social Affairs and Children and the results will be translated to immediate action in close collaboration with the social partners. And this autumn the Icelandic government – as a part of its presidency in the Nordic Council of Ministers – is gathering world leaders, experts and activists in this area to explore the impact of the #metoo movement, the policy responses to it and the way forward. This will include a discussion on the impact of harassment and violence on gender equality at work.

This year marks the 150 year anniversary of John Stuart Mill's famous essay, *The Subjection of Women*. In his essay, Mill described the most deep-rooted inequalities of that time: the legal subordination of one sex to the other – and the urgency of moving away from this form of social relations and towards the principle of perfect equality.

"I don't know how Mill would analyse the 21st century, we have certainly moved away from legal inequality in most corners of the world. But it remains frustrating how far we are still from achieving the full liberation of women. While our conversation today might feel repetitive and, in some instances, technical, it is extremely important for the continuation of our work to end gender inequalities at work and in society at large."

5.2 Introductory lectures

5.2.1 *Keys to Gender Equality at Work and Economic Growth Global perspectives on what we need from the Nordics*

Ms. Lopa Banerjee,
Director of Civil Society Division, UN Women.

Lopa Banerjee started by bringing warm greetings from the Executive Director of UN Women, Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka to the conference.

"The world of work is changing – rapidly and irrevocably. This is not new – the world of work has been changing over the past and will continue to do so... but what is new is the increasing fragility, insecurity and inequality and the fact that technology is not going to be an enabler unless we intentionally make it so," Lopa Banerjee said.

She mentioned some of the megatrends today: the digital economy, demographic dynamics – ageing populations in some countries and youth populations in others, global warming and climate change and its effects on migration and the overall impact of globalisation. The trends are deepening inequality and widening wage and income gaps.

"The role of political leadership and political will to address these 'megatrends' has never been more salient," she said.

"Globalisation and technology are transforming the pace, nature and scale of work around the world."

When viewed in a context of continued financial instability, the undermining of the multilateral, international global governance and cooperation model, the digital divides that are increasing, not reducing inequality – what is needed is a strengthening and reinforcing of multilateral cooperation and regulation of the international economy.

“The future of work presents promise and opportunity, but only if the future of work works for everyone.”

She said that there has been progress in the last two decades to enable women’s participation in the workplace; but the pace has been so slow that today:

- Women and girls still spend 2.5 times more time on unpaid, domestic and care work. This remains one of the biggest barriers to women’s opportunities in paid employment in the formal sector and one of the key reasons for the gender pay gap;
- Discriminatory laws – 155 out of 173 economies include at least one gender based legal restriction on women’s employment. Only 67 countries have laws against gender discrimination in hiring practice. Husbands can legally prevent their wives from working in 18 countries;
- Even as globalisation has enabled millions of women to enter the workforce in recent years, it has restricted women’s work in industry and occupational sectors that remain segregated and are characterised by low incomes, fragile, insecure and informal working conditions, and with limited access to social protections;
- Violence against women remains one of the most stubborn expressions of gender inequality. It is estimated that violence against women costs the global economy USD 12 trillion annually;
- In 59 countries, women are not legally protected from workplace sexual harassment. This potentially affects over 500 million women around the globe.

“Political agenda setting has to be about transforming the world of work, dismantling the structural inequality that breeds gender discriminatory practices, and to rebuild it on values of equality that serve all of humanity,” Lopa Banerjee, said, and emphasised that we must:

- Recognise, reduce and redistribute the disproportionate share of unpaid care and domestic work by promoting the equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women, and by prioritising social protection policies and infrastructure development;
- Invest in decent and sustainable work with widespread social protection and security;

- Strengthen women’s voice and representation in leadership and decision-making roles;
- Ensure that women and girls have a vital role to play in the Fourth Industrial revolution, shaping the policies, services and infrastructure that impact their lives;
- Address the widening gender digital divide – with 250 million fewer women online than men. Women are consistently underrepresented in STEM related fields;
- “UN Women is working to strengthen women’s participation in the workforce, so that they remain in the workforce and thrive in the workforce including in leadership positions.”

One way that UN Women engages is through the:

- Women’s Empowerment Principles. These principles offer companies concrete guidance on empowering women in the workplace, marketplace and community. UN Women calls upon all companies to sign and implement these principles to galvanise change including by achieving gender parity at all levels of their company;
- HeforShe Global Champions is a platform of visionary leaders who are taking action for gender equality and driving change from the top. The Champions in the Nordic countries are the Presidents of Iceland and Finland and the Prime Minister of Sweden;
- The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) is a platform that brings together key stakeholders across all sectors to share best practices of achieving equal pay for work of equal value and bridging the gender pay gap;
- African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI). The initiative invites girls between 17–20 years of age to coding camps where they receive digital literacy, coding, leadership and development skill training. It mainstreams ICT, coding and gender into national curricula;
- Promoting women in innovation incubators – UN Women has established Global Innovation Centres to promote women entrepreneurs and innovators by addressing the barriers they face, particularly with respect to accessing finance;
- The Global Innovation Coalition for Change is a partnership with the private sector, integrating gender awareness at all levels of the innovation process.

2020 will mark 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 5 year review of the Sustainable Development Goals.

“We need bold leadership from the Nordic countries to continue to be strong voices for equality and to remove the structural barriers that stand between women and their full and equal participation in the workforce,” Lopa Banerjee said.

The Nordic welfare reforms have set the example for how strong social protections can achieve gender equality. Their affordable childcare services, accessible reproductive health services and equal division of parental leave have been essential for women’s participation in the labour market, their wellbeing and bargaining power in the household. The Nordic regions have demonstrated how gender equality can lead to increased GDP.

However, there is still a disparity in male and female participation in different education pathways in the Nordic countries. There is also segregation in the labour market so more work is needed to challenge norms and stereotypes.

“We are looking to the Nordics to keep gender equality at the core of the agenda for the future world of work; to create enabling work environments for women by supporting efforts to create decent jobs and redistribute the burdens of domestic work; to reshape gender based stereotypes that prevent women’s equal participation in the labour force; to eliminate violence against women in the workplace; and to invest in the education and learning of women.

Women are not simply consumers of prescribed solutions – they also design solutions for the whole of society. And they are equipped to address the issues that affect their lives especially. We cannot accept that it will take more than 200 years for us to achieve gender equality. But without intentional action, this continued slow pace is a real risk.

We must make the make the giant leaps that the 21st century urges us to do. And intentional political leadership together with women’s mobilising can achieve that.”

5.2.2 *Picking the low-hanging fruits to accelerate change*

Sharan Burrow,
Secretary General, International Trade Union Confederation, ITUC.

Sharan Burrow started her introductory lecture by addressing all the women in the big conference hall.

“Good morning sisters. I have two key words for us: determination and solidarity! Yes? Yes!”
For this she got a warm applause. Her message was that there is no time to lose.

“I’m going to say right up front that it’s an end for trade-offs for women. No more ‘we’ll get to it’. No more ‘women will be next’. It’s now. The equal participation of women can no longer be a trade-off. It must be a future of work where women are genuinely equal. And it is just a matter of political will.”

She pointed out that the facts speak for themselves.

“You know that on every indicator, women deliver. Education for women results in better pay and job opportunities, in higher health standards for families and in higher family income.

Employment of women is one of the fastest and most sustainable ways to productivity,” she summed up.

As the first ever female Secretary General of ITUC, Sharan Burrow gave a world-wide perspective of gender inequality. She told about the female face of migration, about women contributing both to their host country and to their home country through remittances. She told about the unpaid care work done by women, which is more than two times as much as the paid care work.

“The unpaid work has an economic value of 11 trillion US dollars a year, and keeps our communities, families and societies going. So why is violence against women escalating? Why is equal pay still an issue and why is equal numbers of women in leadership still a dream? It is absolutely a matter of discrimination, but also about algorithms, building in inequality in recruitment profiles. It’s also a question about patriarchal systems,” she said.

“The good news is that we can fix it.”

The first thing to do is to name the problem, then agree to the solutions and finally to deliver. Looking at the global economy, the problems could be an endless list, but Sharan Burrow focused on what can be solved.

Today women are overrepresented in the most negative of the decent work deficits. The global workforce is incredibly vulnerable, she stated, with around three billion people of whom 60 percent are working in the shadows of the informal sectors in all our economies.

"It's a sector of desperation, with no rights, no minimum wages, no social protections and no rule of law. And women dominate in numbers. More than 30 million of our brothers and sisters are trapped in modern slavery, with sadly too many women in unregulated domestic work, which is often simply modern slavery."

Even in the formal sector, the women came worse out than men. Only 55% of working age women are formally employed, compared to 77% of men. And the pay gap is still 23%, a mere 3 percentage point decrease in the last 20 years.

"That is not serious progress," she concluded, and gave examples from the supply chain in the global economy, describing the dehumanising treatment of women. She told the story about Reina, a textile worker and a single mother from the Philippines, who can never tell her 12-year-old son when she will be home at night to cook a meal and say good night, because she is forced to work extra shifts. She works in one-month contracts and can't say no to extra shifts because then she would lose her job. And she can be forced to work until ten, twelve, or four in the morning, without even a meal.

"It is not decent work and it is not necessary, yet governments allow it. That is exploitation of their own citizens," said Sharan Burrow.

She had several more stories to tell, about Rosa, who can't afford to buy baby formula for her children with her wages, and Aisha who earns 20 dollars a month. And on top of that is the bullying, harassment and violence that women still face at work, as well as the domestic violence, which is still a plague in modern society.

"But for all this and more we have solutions. We just need to agree on them."

Sharan Burrow said that women see a universal social protections system and a minimum living wage as the solution.

"When 85% of people say that the minimum wage is not enough to live on, we have a problem."

She praised Iceland for being in the lead again with the collective agreement, which was signed the day before, and which is as an example of solidarity, increasing the minimum wage and reducing the tax burden for the lowest paid.

"Your law on equal pay standards, also, is a world leader in this regard."

She said that the world needs the voices of women in the Nordic countries because there is more to do; because there are still women excluded from mainstream equal treatment.

“So, don’t give up. Keep going!”

For labour, part of the new social contract we discussed yesterday is about wages. Our global wages campaign is first and foremost for minimum living wages. What is needed is as little as 50 dollars a month in Asia and Africa.

Then there is care, the breakdown in formal care, not so much in Europe yet but I can tell you in the US, every day women are going to work with no protections and guarantees of basic standards at all”.

To get more women into the formal workforce the answer is care.

“The Nordics know this. It’s care, it’s parental leave, it is investment in the security, that allows women into the economy.”

It is also a great jobs multiplier. Having childcare means women can join the workforce, and that creates good jobs for teachers and childcare workers, as well, she pointed out, summing up some of the policies needed:

- We need just transition for technology
- We need to narrow the pay gap
- We need investments in care, to allow women into the economy

“But we also need to look at barriers like violence.”

She stressed the importance of getting support for a convention for the elimination of violence against both women and men in the world of work.

“We need you to help us to get a new declaration, which has all of those elements of a new social contract – a universal labour guarantee, which puts a minimum wage, puts the security of work, the health and safety, gives fundamental rights, and indeed a universal social protection for all kinds of workers, as well as some time sovereignty for all kinds of workers.

It’s not that hard to formalise work and give everyone those guarantees. But if we are going to do this, first let’s get the rule of law. Global standards, national due diligence that ends that obscurity of the dehumanising work in the supply chains I talked about. But also, let’s make sure we have the implementation strategies. That is the key.”

5.2.3 *Fast Forward to Gender Equality*

Tatyana Teplova,
Head of Gender, Justice and Inclusiveness Unit,
Public Governance Directorate, OECD.

Tatyana Teplova said that the OECD has placed gender equality at the core of its policy advice. For the OECD, the gender equality agenda is a keystone of a prosperous and modern economy that provides sustainable inclusive growth.

“Indeed, our analysis shows that in OECD countries, a 50% decrease in the gender gap in labour force participation rates can help boost GDP by 6% by 2030 (and by another 6% if the female employment rate fully converges with that of men). So, in total we could expect a gain of 12% of the GDP,” Tatyana Teplova said.

When it comes to the Nordics, cutting the gender gap in both employment rates and working hours by 2040 could help boost future GDP per capita growth by as much as 15–30%.

Yet gender inequality persists – to varying degrees – in education, employment, entrepreneurship and public life and hinders opportunities for all. While the female employment rate has increased by an average of almost 3 percentage points since 2012 across OECD countries, it remains at around 63% on average (as compared to 74% of the male employment rate). Even in central government, the representation of women in top management positions continues to lag, as they occupy on average only 30.5% of top management positions. Women are also over-represented in both lower job categories and part-time work and make up 75% of total part-time workers in OECD countries. And at the senior level, only 2% of male senior managers have part-time positions against 16.5% of female ones.

In this context, many OECD countries look up to their Nordic peers to learn from their experience. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden actively promote gender equality at home, work and in public life, which has contributed to prosperous economic growth. As shown by the OECD report: “Is the last mile the longest?”, in 2016, female employment ranged from 67.6% in Finland to 83.4% in Iceland, well above the OECD average. The report showed that gender gaps in labour force participation in the Nordic countries are among the OECD’s lowest at about 4 percentage points – while the OECD average rests at 12 percentage points.

The Nordic countries also lead by example when it comes to women’s representation in top jobs. As shown by the OECD report *Fast Forward to Gender Equality: Mainstreaming, Leadership and Implementation*, in Iceland the share of women in senior management positions in central government increased from 41% in 2010, to 54% in 2015, marking a significant increase. In Norway, three women are

collectively leading the government as the Prime Minister, Minister for Finance and Minister for Foreign Affairs, challenging gender stereotypes and cultural norms.

Such results can be largely attributed to the Nordic policy approach: on one hand, this approach provides a continuum of support to families consisting of paid leave, subsidised and high-quality early childhood education and care. On the other hand, it encourages both women and men to fully participate in paid work.

“Yet the Nordic countries do not rest on their laurels. They recognise that there is still work to do to achieve full equality, as also shown in the work of the World Economic Forum and the OECD,” said Tatyana Teplova.

Icelandic and Swedish fathers still use less than one third of all paid leave days. Many women continue to be underrepresented in management positions, including in the public sector, and gender pay gaps as well as occupational segregation continue to persist. Indeed, despite countries’ efforts to foster pay equality, wage gaps only decreased slightly from 2005 to 2017. In Finland, for instance, women in the public sector earned on average 81.9% of the men’s wage in 2005, and on average 86.8% in 2017; in Denmark, the gender pay gap stands at 6%.

As in most OECD countries, girls continue to be underrepresented in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). It is a common challenge to make the study of STEM equally inclusive and attractive for both boys and girls and encourage women who have completed STEM studies to pursue professional careers in these areas.

“And importantly, we know from our statistics that women in the Nordic countries are also less likely to be entrepreneurs than in other OECD countries.”

Against this backdrop, Nordic countries continue to take active steps to be among the leading countries in closing the remaining gender gaps.

Tatyana Teplova highlighted a few of those:

As recognised in “Fast Forward to Gender Equality” report, equal pay is critical to increase women’s participation in the labour market. While the introduction of pay equality initiatives is advancing, only a few countries reported measuring and disclosing gender wage gaps.

“I would like to congratulate Iceland, which in 2017 became the first country in the world to make equal pay mandatory for both private and public employers: under the new law, all agencies must document how education, experience and other factors are valued and incorporated in the pay system, which is subject to an audit, which will in turn be published,” she said.

Another critical measure is building an appropriate workplace culture that tackles discrimination and harassment and promotes equality, while leaving both men and women free from the burden of stereotypes. Indeed, we saw it around the world in the past year that we need to find effective responses to realities exposed by the #Metoo movement and again many countries are looking up to the Nordics to find the appropriate solutions.

“And there are some excellent examples, such as the establishment of the Gender Equality Group in the Swedish parliament, which aims to address the issue of sexual abuse through an internal survey on the culture in parliament. In 2018, Iceland in turn passed a landmark legislation on equal treatment in the labour market, which forbids and sanctions all forms of workplace discrimination.”

At the same time, our Report shows that there is scope to do more and underlines the importance of innovative and transformative approaches that can help deconstruct deeply rooted gender norms. It highlights the value of new thinking such as behavioural insights in responding to the underlying attitudes that influence gender inequalities in the workplace. For example, in Australia, a recent trial by the New South Wales government’s Behavioural Insights Unit used behavioural economics to try to nudge people to shift the unwritten rules of workplaces. They seem very simple, – such as changing the default setting on outlook calendars to limit the hours for meetings, by using entry card data to show to managers how their teams mimicked their starting and leaving behaviour and by organising an inter-team competition to promote the uptake of flexible working – yet they had a measurable impact which was sustained over time.

“The final measure I would like to highlight is the continued engagement of men in the fight against gender inequalities,” Tatyana Teplova said.

Due to customs and norms and as part of societal expectations, men are often led to perpetuate gender inequalities. These stereotyped gender attitudes also box men into gender roles, affecting their career and life choices.

“The Icelandic Barbershop initiative is an impressive example of a measure to engage men in discussing and countering stereotypes.

“In this spirit, parental leave and flexible working should be real options for fathers too. But simply introducing a right to parental leave for fathers is not enough. For example, in Iceland and Sweden, the ‘daddy quota’ has led to a doubling in the number of parental leave days taken by men. It’s also important to ensure that parental and paternity leaves make sense financially for households and are not frowned upon.”

The OECD stands ready to support countries in closing the gender gaps to allow for more inclusive labour markets and societies at large. The 2013 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality on Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship, in combination with the 2015 Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life, aim to support countries to strengthen women's access to decision-making and opportunities, while promoting better working conditions, work-life balance and more gender-sensitive workplaces, Tatyana Teplova concluded.

5.2.4 *Keys to transforming future work with gender equality*

Panel debate moderated by journalist and professional moderator Femi Oke.

Golnaz Hashemzadeh Bonde, founding member of Inkludera.

Lopa Banerjee, Director, Civil Society Division at UN Women.

Manuela Tomei, Director, ILO Conditions of Work and Equality Department.

Ragnhildur Arnljotsdóttir, Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's office in Iceland.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation.

Panel moderator Femi Oke started out by asking each of the panellist to share a personal story that highlighted the challenges women have faced in the workplace.

Ragnhildur Arnljotsdóttir, Permanent Secretary at the Prime Minister's office in Iceland, told a story from 15 years ago.

"I had been appointed Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Social Affairs and was also responsible for gender. An Icelandic newspaper asked me whether genders matter, and whether it mattered that I was a woman.

And I said 'No, it doesn't matter.' If I gave an interview today, my answer would be different."

To applause from the audience and her fellow panellist, Arnljotsdottir said that she now thinks she can call herself a feminist, and that there are still situations in which she feels disadvantaged because of her gender.

"And every day I meet attitude – mostly from men, but sometimes from women. Sometimes, in meetings, the men don't hear what I say. But when a man says something, they not only hear it – they repeat it. So, it's a constant battle, every day."

Golnaz Bonde is a founding member of Inkludera, a Swedish non-profit organisation fighting marginalisation in society by backing social entrepreneurs who have developed pragmatic solutions to social challenges.

She told the audience her presence on the panel was very much thanks to the Nordic model.

“My 13 months-old baby is at home with his dad right now. My five-year-old enjoys her day care. I have a very flexible work situation. I work certain days a week, I take care of my boy on other days. I bring him to meetings.

I was interviewing someone for a position at Inkludera the other day, and I had to bring him. He had just learned to walk and was all over the place. The interviewee, a lady in her 50s from the UK, handled it really well. She said ‘When I started my career, I wouldn’t mention my kids. If I was late for work because my kid was sick, I would say my car broke down.’”

That, Bonde said, was why she was so grateful for the Nordic model. Born in Iran, she moved to Sweden as a three-year-old, and still does not take any of the privileges she enjoys as a Swedish citizen for granted.

“But we do have a lot of work to do,” she pointed out, and shared her story from when she was a student at the Stockholm School of Economics.

“15 years ago, I was elected as the first ‘non-Swede’ president of the student body. I was the sixth woman in the school’s 100-year history. We worked hard to attract people of different minorities to apply for a place.

By August we actually had quite a good influx of people from different backgrounds, and I was very happy. But then these students would come to me and ask: ‘how do you do this; how do you stand it?’ And I was shocked.

Female students would tell me about professors who wouldn’t look at them when they had a question. Or students with darker skin would tell me about how they would feel the activities of the student union were excluding them.”

Bonde experienced seeing some of these students leave the university. Some would become doctors or engineers instead; others would go on to question their role in society.

“And this is the pattern I’ve seen for the past 15 years in other areas. When we put diversity and equality on the table, we think about recruiting. But how do you make people stay? That’s the big job,” she said.

Manuela Tomei, Director for the ILO Conditions of Work and Equality Department, spent most of her childhood in Peru. Her story centred on how she very early on in life realised the world she was living in was divided into two.

“White families with beautiful houses who sent their kids to private school – like me – and the other side of society that comprised families with darker skin, who lived in very dusty neighbourhood.”

Tomei got to know that other half through Carmen, her family’s domestic worker. She had two children whom she only saw twice a month, because her job meant she had to live in Tomei’s family’s house, while her sister looked after her children.

“Carmen was the mother and the father for her kids. The fathers had left her soon after the births of the children. One day she told us very proudly that her oldest son was going to high school. She was a very courageous and dignified woman.”

This story, she said, had come back to her as she started work at the ILO with improving the conditions for domestic workers, culminating in the ILO Convention No. 189 on Domestic Workers.

“It was ratified yesterday by the Swedish government – tack Sweden! – and is absolutely crucial. It has given voice and dignity to an army of women who work across the world, very often migrant workers, and who indeed allow us all to continue to work and look after our families.”

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, told the audience how she had been the first person in her Australian working-class family to go to university.

“Then at university we’re in the middle of the third wave of feminist struggle. We had mothers and grandmothers who had fought for the right to vote, and we had mothers who’d fought for the right to work. We were fighting for what we thought was equal treatment in the workplace. With all the laws in place, laws against sexual harassment and so on.”

Burrow was convinced things would start to change, and that they were in the vanguard of a great gender equality shift. Yet things did not change. She then had somewhat of an epiphany when she read Australian author Ann Summers.

"She showed why we have to shift the perception of the gender blindness – she called it 'Damned Whores or God's Police'. That's what you were, you were a woman who was either a sexual object, and therefore still beholden on men, or you were God's police and kept men in order, because you were the mother of the show. Not a lot has changed in some ways, when you hear those stories of gender blindness."

Burrow said Australia lags behind the Nordics in terms of making society and the labour market fairer for people in precarious situations.

"The solidarity we saw here this week – for the lower paid, those for whom the tax burden is too heavy – that doesn't exist in my country right now. We have to fix this society so that our children and grandchildren don't say 'what did they do?'"

Lopa Banerjee, Director for the Civil Society Division at UN Women, said she has been an activist for as long as she can remember, but that she did not at first quite understand why.

"I didn't quite know what was not right, but I felt that things weren't quite right. I started working, yet it took a long time before I understood – and then my agitation had a name, there was a Cause.

In my early working days, I just thought 'this is the way the world is'. I was grateful that I had the opportunity to have a paid profession, when many among my peers did not. I was called upon to constantly prove myself. I never questioned that, while always feeling angry about it. It took such a long time before that anger found a way of expressing itself into actions."

Sweden is one of the most gender equal societies in the world. But there too things typically change at a certain point in most people's lives.

"The big change comes when women become mothers. Even in Sweden, where fathers take parental leave, it's different when a mother takes leave," said Golnaz Bonde.

Research has repeatedly shown that when parental leave can be shared voluntarily between fathers and mothers, women end up taking the lion's share of it. Bonde said she had even felt she was somehow to blame for that situation – for not choosing to take less leave when she could.

"Because it's also a choice you start making, and then that becomes a system." Sharan Burrow agreed women still felt an ingrained sense of guilt when it comes to having children.

"I couldn't believe it when one of my star staff members came to me a few months ago and actually sat in my office and said, 'I'm so sorry, but I'm pregnant'. I said we were going to celebrate, and she was shocked that her boss was so happy that she was going to have her first child. And this is 2019."

Yet pregnancy should not be an obstacle to work at all, pointed out Manuela Tomei.

"I have never been as productive as I was when I was pregnant. It's another stereotype, that pregnancy is a hindrance to ability or productivity."

Moderator Femi Oke went on to take some questions from the audience:

#metoo has shed a light on gender-based violence as part of everyday life for women and social norms. What kind of methods can we use to change it?

Manuela Tomei agreed that #metoo has been a real turning point. Women now talk openly about these issues, and it has become socially acceptable to say that this is a problem, while men in her organisation are also keen to condemn sexual harassment.

Lopa Banerjee agreed but added that she believed what #metoo really was about, was giving a voice to women all over the world.

"What #metoo did was to shine a light on the impunity, the utter lack of accountability. Men talking about it also is really about them taking responsibility. Their coming forward to acknowledge the fact that this has been years and years of impunity, that accountability matters, and it is their responsibility to take back accountability – that is what leads to solidarity."

Moderator Femi Oke returned to the theme of the panel, which was to look at the future of work for the Nordics in the light of gender equality.

She asked Ragnhildur Arnjotsdóttir how she would explain the fact that Iceland, with its high level of gender equality, generous parental leave provisions and the world's first equal pay standard, was still facing serious challenges?

Arnjotsdottir said she believed much of the answer to those challenges lay in the future generation of men, and that fathers staying at home to bring up boys could contribute a lot to change the current environment. She sensed there was a new kind of openness among men when it came to sensitive issues.

"I asked a colleague who started just before Christmas him how his first weeks had been. He said, 'I have been feeling physically very tired, and it's been quite difficult for me'. And I thought wow, this is a young, male lawyer telling me that he is tired. I thought he'd be competitive and tell me about all the cases he had solved and so on. So, I think there is hope there," said Arnjotsdottir.

Golnaz Bonde interjected that it was important for the Nordics not to think they know it all, even though they are leading the way when it comes to gender equality.

"I feel very passionately about this. We are not at all close to perfect. A very well educated, male Swedish friend said 'I don't know what you guys are complaining about, you've gained so much the last 100 years. You have it so much better than many women around the world, why isn't that enough?'

For the Nordic model to progress we need to think about the knowledge gaps and how to close them. There is a lot of initiative from the civic sector, but we need the government to make sure education in these issues is even stronger. You should start very early; I want my girl in kindergarten to learn where the boundaries are." Manuela Tomei agreed.

"The Nordic countries have achieved so much, but they are lagging behind in terms of the share of women in management positions, particularly in the corporate world. We always talk of the Nordic model as an extremely important reference. But there is unfinished business here."

Lopa Banerjee believed the two main barriers that remain before achieving full gender equality in the Nordics are ending violence and the gender pay gap.

"In the women's movement we talk about how the fundamental expressions for gender equality are autonomy over body and autonomy over labour. The violence continues because of the ways in which norms and stereotypes continue. And the gender pay gap continues for exactly the same reasons.

There really now needs to be an investment and knowledge development in culture education, in breaking stereotypes and we need a gender responsive educational curriculum," said Banerjee.

6. Session IV

Decent Work and Inclusive Nordic Labour Market Policies.

6.1 Introductory lectures

6.1.1 *Equal Rights to Earn and Care – Fathers on Parental Leave*

Ingólfur V. Gíslason,

Associate Professor in Sociology, the University of Iceland.

The lecture was mainly based on an ongoing research project called “Labour market participation and care for children under 3,” initiated by Professor Guðný Björg Eydal. Two doctoral students have been working with them – Ásdís A. Arnalds and Íris Dögg Lárusdóttir – as well as some master students.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the system of parental leave in Iceland was heavily criticised and demands for change came from many organisations, not least the labour movement and different women’s movements. There were five main points of criticism:

1. The leave was too short. It was only 6 months long;
2. The economic compensation was too low, it was below minimum wages;
3. There was no flexibility in the system;
4. The system was only for women;
5. Vastly different rights in the public and private labour markets.

In the spring of 2000 a bill was presented to the Icelandic parliament initiating radical changes in the parental leave. The main components of the new law were:

1. Parental leave was extended from six to nine months to be used within 18 months;
2. Iceland moved from a low flat rate economic compensation to 80% of salaries;
3. There was a protection of employment;
4. You continue to accumulate of social rights in the same way as if you were working;
5. 3 months were earmarked for the mother, three for the father and three months to share as they liked, financed by an insurance levy paid by employers.

“Nothing has done more in recent decades both to increase men’s participation in child-care and in domestic life as well as increasing women’s possibilities in the labour market,” Ingólfur V. Gíslason said.

The division of labour between the mother and the father has often resulted in the father being deprived of opportunities to be with his child. Research shows that fathers want to spend more time with their children. Equal participation of parents in the labour market calls for equal rights when it comes to balancing family and work responsibilities.

The bill was adopted unanimously by the parliament. A great majority of the population was in favour. Surprisingly enough, almost 74% of employers were positive to fathers taking parental leave. That figure had increased to 81% by 2012.

There was no economic ceiling. You received 80% of your salary regardless of how high it was, but there was a floor. In 2004 a ceiling was introduced affecting 2.6% of the fathers and 0.4% of mothers. The Icelandic financial system crashed in autumn of 2008 and the ceiling was lowered. It affected almost half of the fathers and fifth of the mothers.

Prior to 1997 only women used the parental leave. In 1996 fathers got two weeks paternity leave with a very low economic compensation. Around a third used it. With the new law in 2000, 80–90% of fathers used their leave. Following the economic crash in 2008 and severe compensation cuts, fewer fathers took the leave – yet the drop was not as pronounced as feared. Now fathers use their rights again.

Fathers use the days only they can use. Mothers use the three months that only they can use and the three shareable months. This confirms the experience from other countries, a period that is shareable becomes a period for the mother.

Parents have been asked about how they divide the care of their first child from birth until the child is three years old. For children born in 1997, the mother is the main

caregiver in 60% of the families. For children born in 2003, major changes can be seen. When the children are three, the caregiving is equally divided in 60% of the families. With children born in 2009 and then in 2014, the trend continues. When children born in 2014 turn three, 7% of the share is equal.

It is fully accepted by society that fathers take the paternity leave.

The main drawback is that there is a clear gap from the end of parental leave until children can find a space in preschool. Iceland is the only Nordic country that leaves it to parents to bridge this gap, which can easily be six to nine months. Mothers bridge the gap to a far higher degree than fathers, by either taking on a part-time work (21% of mothers and 9% of fathers) or extending the leave.

The paternity leave has been a success story. Ingólfur V. Gíslason elaborated saying that the law has strengthened the labour market position of women. They return earlier to the labour market and reach similar working hours sooner than they did before this change. Fathers have reduced their working hours. They are more active in taking care of their children during and after parental leave. Young men now incorporate caring fatherhood into their images of masculinity.

“Nothing has done more in recent decades both to increase men’s participation in child-care and in domestic life as well as increasing women’s possibilities in the labour market,” Ingólfur V. Gíslason said.

He also got a question from the audience: What are the effects of the father taking more paternal leave, both for the family as a whole and for society?

“It creates a better understanding between the genders. Men experience how much work it is to take care of a child. But they also get the men’s joy that follows taking care of young children. Society pushes mothers towards making as much use of parental leave as possible. They are told directly and indirectly that they are not good mothers because good mothers spend as much time with the children as possible,” he replied.

6.1.2 Women’s Work Environment – A Gender Conscious OSH Management for a sustainable Work life

Minke Wersäll,
Project Manager at the Swedish Work Environment Authority.

Experiences from a project assigned by the Swedish government to the Swedish Work Environment Authority.

Preparation and planning were needed. The staff got information about what the project was to contain. Minke Wersäll explained that the data gathering was challenging. They had to develop methods, mainly for inspections, because the work environment authority is an inspecting authority. The inspectors need to be trained as they usually do not focus on gender. Information about the project was sent out to relevant actors.

Women report more work-related disorders than men. Close to 70% of all reports by women were caused by Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) or organisational and social factors at work. Close to 60% reported by men were caused by MSDs or organisational and social factors. There are more MSDs than organisational and social factors. Invisible risks are common in both cases.

"If you compare this to accidents and the prevention of accidents, you will usually be able to see when there is a risk of an accident, so that makes OSH management easier in a way. There is also a longer tradition," Minke Wersäll said.

She showed a photo with men and women after the first two weeks of sick leave. It showed a big gap between sick leave for men and sick leave for women. They made an index showing a 93% difference, with women being more on sick leave than men. The sick leave budgeting figure is almost double for women compared to the one for men.

Why do women suffer from MSDs to a larger extent than men? Minke Wersäll explained that women and men can have the same profession, but they are still doing different jobs. When they have the same job they have different tasks. The workplaces are designed for men. They are not individually adapted but when workplaces are individually adapted, then the work situation for men and women can be compared. Different biology can also be an explanatory fact. But these differences cannot explain the difference in reported MSDs. Men and women react differently; women report sickness, men don't, she explained.

Minke Wersäll also pointed out that the doctor usually asks the woman first how her family life is, her children, old parents and so on, while a man is asked about the job.

There were two inspection projects: One about the ergonomics where the inspectorate figured out ways to make risks for MSD visible. The inspectorate doesn't do risk assessments but started to find methods to make risks visible looking at manual handling, repetitive work and patient transfers.

The inspectorate used methods from Germany and Netherlands. The inspectors used the methods in a pedagogical way having discussions with employers and the

employees and workplace representatives to get them to start acting and thinking about this. The risk assessment was to be handled just like risk assessments in general.

The other project was about gender at work. Researchers recommended that a comparison should be made.

“We compared genders within one organisation, the work environment for home services with the work environment for technical services in the same municipality, so it was the same organisation but still we wanted to see where the prerequisites were similar,” she said.

The inspectorate went to 65 municipalities with 7,000 inhabitants up to 310,000 inhabitants. Parallel inspections were done of two operations in the same way and there was a gender perspective. Close to 70 inspectors participated, usually one person familiar with inspecting technical work and industries and another inspector used to inspecting social organisations. There was also an internal gender perspective. 900 inspections were done.

Employees in social home care had a very low degree of self-monitoring and job decision latitude while in technical services this was varying. Minke Wersäll explained that in technical services they usually had quite a big latitude and possibility to organise their own jobs. Many people in social home care were complaining about difficulties in managing the high workload, while in the technical services they could manage the work load they had. The technical staff was not very stressed, contrary to how it was in social home services. The workload, the staffing and other resources were completely different to how it was in technical services.

The comparison within the same organisations showed mainly women working in social services. 73% or more of managers were responsible for more than 30 employees, while 10% of managers in technical services had that many employees to be responsible for. In the social services there were time constraints, a high administrative workload – the managers even had to switch tires on company cars – which gave them a great workload and big amount of administrative work. At the technical part of the organisation the managers had a special person doing different things with a lot more staff beneath them. In short, these were some of the differences in the two parts of the same municipalities:

- It is important that the employer has knowledge of what the role gender has in the organisation to make structures visible which can lead to good or ill health;

- Women and men are working within different sectors and the prerequisites really differ as well. Different health and safety risks must be accounted for and has to be worked with on an organisational level;
- Physical and emotional strain are negative effects of working conditions. It is not about women and men; it is about how exposed you are;
- Measures should be taken at a central level, not an individual level;
- Engagement of social partners is also needed. Networking has been a success factor.

6.1.3 *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*

Shauna Olney,
Chief of ILO's Gender, Equality and Diversity Branch.

Shauna Olney said the ILO has delivered several reports in the context of its Women at Work Centenary initiative. The aim was to better understand what is happening to women in the world of work, why progress is so slow and what can be done about that. She talked mostly about two reports: The Job and Caretaking report, and The Quantum Leap for Gender Equality report.

"Before turning to the future of care work and care jobs, I'd like to take you back 100 years. We have been talking about the ILO centenary, so 100 ago the Treaty of Versailles was signed, and in it was a chapter that contained the constitution of the ILO. A very exciting moment.

After that constitution was drafted, a few months later there was the first international labour conference in Washington in 1919. Only men were on the commission that drafted the ILO constitution. Only men had voting rights at the first international labour conference. That doesn't mean that women didn't have their voices heard.

Women, being very innovative, had their own conference. So, none of the 40 countries that were represented at the first international labour conference appointed women with voting competence. But the women had another conference; they had the international congress of working women."

Over 200 women got together in Washington, from 19 countries, including Sweden and Norway. They looked at research, they looked at evidence, and they adopted their own resolutions with the view of influencing the "formal" ILO conference, which was going to happen the following week. And they did influence it. They influenced it profoundly.

One of the first conventions of the ILO is on maternity protection. These women helped to shape that convention. They advocated not just for leave, but for paid maternity leave.

“Paid leave is important in terms of linking the leave, the benefit and the labour force participation. We saw it with men. And it’s the same with women. If you don’t have paid maternity leave, it doesn’t really help you in terms of the paid-unpaid work conundrum.”

These women recognised the importance of unpaid care work that motherhood involves, and the link with employment.

“Now, 100 years after the first ILO convention on maternity protection, over 800 million working women still do not have maternity pay and benefits. From the most recent figures, men still far outnumber women in payed jobs. They are about 26% more likely to have a job than women are. This has barely changed in the last 30 years. Progress is stagnating. We should be very concerned about that.

Now, the objective of the Women at Work initiative was to understand why those gaps were so stubborn. Why is the number not moving? This really helps us in terms of policy responses. One of the things I hear, and I hear it a lot, is that *women don’t want to work in paid jobs. They want to stay home*. Choice is important. But choices are often constrained as well. We must keep that in mind.”

The ILO asked the women. What do you want? Do you want to work at home? Do you want to work in a paid job, or do you want to do both? It went to 142 countries and territories and a representative sample of people were consulted.

“And guess what? The majority of women in every region want to work in paid jobs.”

“The Nordic countries had a very high preference of women working. Women in Nordic countries want to be in paid jobs, even more than in most other regions. In Iceland it’s 97%. It’s huge.”

The ILO also asked what the biggest challenge was for women in paid work.

“And guess what? It’s work-family balance. That may not surprise anybody in this room. But let’s look at everything that has happened in the Nordic countries. Let’s look at how far these leaders have come. In every country in the Nordic region, work-family balance is still one of the top challenges that women themselves identified.”

Care responsibilities played the biggest role in holding women back in the labour market.

“This is not surprising when we look at the space unpaid care work used to take in women’s lives. If paid and un-paid work are combined, women work longer days than men. We estimate that with the present rate it will take 209 years to close the time gap in time spent in unpaid care work.”

600 million women, compared to 40 million men, declared themselves unavailable for employment or not seeking a job due to unpaid job responsibilities in 2018.

“We are losing 600 million women in the labour force. And over 16 billion hours – we have calculated – are spent on unpaid care work every day. This is equivalent to two billion people working eight hours a day for free. Over 76% of these are women.”

There are impressive measures happening in the Nordic region, and these are extremely important, because then we can quantify where some of the transformations need to happen for the rest of the world, according to Shauna Olney.

“We looked at maternity, paternity and parental leave. These are extremely important. Paid parental leave, that is sufficiently long, and which is an individual right for the man, is key. Men will only take the amount of time they are required to take. We saw that in Norway, when they reduced the length of the mandatory period for men, the time that men took, was also reduced.

So, that ‘use it or lose it’, I think the Prime Minister called it, is extremely important.”

But there is still a gender gap in the Nordic labour markets, there is still a motherhood gap in the Nordic countries. Mothers here, as in the rest of the world, are less likely to be in employment than non-mothers.

Mothers are less likely to be in leadership positions, than women without children. Mothers are likely to have a bigger wage gap than women without children.

“Another thing we see as absolutely transformative, is the high share of the GDP that is invested in pre-primary education in the Nordic countries. This has made an enormous difference. We can see particularly that there is evidence that the employment rates of women with children are higher in countries with a higher rate of enrolment of children in pre-primary education.”

Shauna Olney then moved to talk about care jobs.

“The paid care work is also done primarily by women, about 73% of jobs in education, health, social work and domestic work are done by women. This is also true in the Nordic countries, which have a very strongly gender segregated labour market.

Let’s look at Norway. 84% of nursing and childcare services are carried out by women. If we look at Iceland, only 2% of nurses are men. We need more women in STEM, yes, but we also need more men in the caring professions. That will also help break down the stereotypes.

The quality of the jobs in care services tends to be quite low. They tend to be difficult jobs; they tend to be low-paid and they tend to be undervalued. So, unless we take a high road to care, we get decent jobs in the care economy, we are going to have a care crisis. We found there is a direct correlation between the quality of education, the quality of care, and the way you pay and treat the care workers.

So, if you want your aging parents to be looked after properly, if you want your children to be looked after properly, if you want your children to have a good education, you have to pay those people properly and give them good conditions of work.

If we want to take the high road to care, we estimate that we need to increase investment in care services by 6% of global GDP by 2030. This could lead to 120 million new jobs in the care economy, and almost 150 million indirect jobs.

The jobs of the future are care jobs. For both women and men.”

6.1.4 Vocational Rehabilitation in Cooperation with Labour Market Parties in Iceland

Vigdís Jónsdóttir,

Director at VIRK, the Icelandic Vocational Rehabilitation Fund.

Vigdís Jónsdóttir started her speech with background information explaining that VIRK – The Vocational Rehabilitation Fund – is responsible for financing and organising work rehabilitation in all of Iceland. The word “VIRK” means “active” in English. It is a non-profit institution working on a national level providing services all around Iceland. VIRK is a private foundation of which all the major unions and employers in the labour market in Iceland are members. It was founded in 2008 through a tripartite agreement between the social partners and the government. It was confirmed by law in June 2012 and is financed by employers, pension funds and the state.

The emphasis of the service is early intervention.

“We want people to come in early because that gives the best results,” Vigdís Jónsdóttir said.

Vocational rehabilitation and early intervention take place in cooperation with the social partners. In Iceland, they play a significant role in building up and driving parts of the welfare system. Most of the payments to individuals with reduced work capacity during the first year is coming from employers, union sickness funds and pension funds. Vigdís Jónsdóttir believed that is different from other Nordic countries.

1.2% of the total labour force in Iceland is using VIRK's services now. In the past 10 years, about 7.6% of the total labour force has attended the service. VIRK has specialised vocational rehabilitation counsellors in the labour market union offices all around Iceland, as well as many service providers with close to 560 different kinds of service that fit every individual.

VIRK cooperates with many different employers who are willing to give individuals with reduced work ability opportunities in the labour market. Extra services have recently been added involving employment counsellors who assist individuals to re-enter the labour market and maintain good cooperation with employers.

VIRK's services are for all individuals that cannot participate in the labour market due to an illness (physical or mental) or an accident. It is free of charge and individualised. It is very complex, and it is provided in cooperation with unions, employers, pension funds, physicians and other health care professionals, and different organisations within the welfare system.

The length of service varies from weeks to years but on average it is around 16 months.

70% of the individuals using the service are women and 30% men. More women than men are seeking assistance in vocational rehabilitation. More women than men have a disability pension in Iceland, like in other countries. Vigdís Jónsdóttir wondered about the reasons:

Are women more willing to seek help than men? Do women live more complicated and difficult lives than men? Do they still have more responsibilities at home? Are their workplaces and work environment somehow more difficult than men's?

Vigdís Jónsdóttir pointed out that it can be complex to evaluate the result of VIRK's vocational rehabilitation service since the picture without VIRK's service doesn't exist. VIRK however tries to measure its achievements using the data system. VIRK's results are impressive, both financially and socially. Here are some results:

- 74% of the individuals are discharged from VIRK with the ability to enter the labour market. That is a high percentage;

- Individuals are asked to evaluate their self-image, work ability, physical and mental health at the beginning and end of the service. Regular result surveys comparing the beginning and end of VIRK's service show a big change for these individuals. They are increasing their work ability and feel that their life is better. They have a better quality of life.

VIRK has asked an external party, Talnakönnun, to evaluate the financial yields of VIRK's services. The company uses moderate criteria in their calculations, and the estimated financial yield of VIRK's operation is more than five times the cost of the operation.

Vigdís Jónsdóttir asked: How would we like our future VIRK to be?

The work is already showing good results, but there is still a long way to go to reach the goal. She explained that a culture that focuses on activation and mutual obligation of all partners is needed. By all partners she means the employees themselves, the employers and the society.

Even if individuals do not have full capacity to work, it does not mean that they cannot work at all.

"It is our responsibility to create opportunities so all members in our society can contribute in accordance to their abilities and qualifications. We need a disability benefit system with a flexible solution that encourages individuals to participate in the labour market. And we need to be able to provide the right service for the right people, the right way at the right time. It is very complicated, but it is our responsibility to do so. It is essential to build up collaboration and coordination between all parties in the system. And we at VIRK are willing to do our best to ensure strong cooperation between all partners in vocational rehabilitation," she said.

Here is an important thought from Vigdís Jónsdóttir: It is dangerous to even think that we have all the answers. We must learn and modify our methods along the way. Let's be humble and open-minded towards other people, other ideas and additional solutions.

Vigdís Jónsdóttir finished with showing a picture from Winnie-the-Pooh by A. A. Milne, quoting his text:

"Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping for a moment and think of it."

Her message was: Let's stop bumping – start thinking and finding new solutions!

6.1.5 *How to improve the transformative policies in the Nordic model.*

Panel debate moderated by Femi Oke

Guðbjörg Pálsdóttir, Northern Nurses Federation in Iceland.

Ingólfur V. Gíslason, Associate Professor in Sociology, Department of Social Sciences at the University of Iceland.

Margrét Sanders, member of the Management Committee and the Board of Directors, SA Confederation of Icelandic Enterprise.

Sissel Trygstad, Head of Research at Fafo Research Foundation in Norway.

Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir, Chairman of Efling Trade Union in Iceland.

Femi Oke said that the panel debate would be about some of the transformative policies that are already in the Nordic model and how they could be better and the improvements that might be needed.

Guðbjörg Pálsdóttir and the rest of the panellists were asked by Femi Oke which of the presentations on the second day of the conference that “jumped out” at them.

“It was the one about the care crisis. She was talking about the relation between what kind of an education you have and how much you are payed. That is in a nutshell what we are dealing with now within the nurse association. 98% of nurses in Iceland are women, which is a unique thing, I think, globally. And 100% of the midwives. Is this 2019? Not for me. When you are talking about this care profession – all care professions – I think should be reflexing the population that we are caring for, and it’s definitely not 98% women we are caring for!”

Sissel Trygstad:

“One message that was optimistic was from Iceland. It showed that politics actually matter, when it comes to parental leave, for example. I also think it was interesting to see how occupational health differs among men and women.”

Margrét Sanders:

“I think I was most shocked at how much women take care of children after maternity leave, by working part-time or taking unpaid leave after the maternity leave. I think it’s a cultural thing. We need to talk about things in a different way and not only talk about women as victims.”

Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir:

"I was not shocked by anything; I spent a decade as a low-income worker at one of the pre-schools of Reykjavik. I know for a fact that care-work is under-paid and there is no economic justice when resources are allocated to care work. These are women's jobs that through the ages have been done unpaid within the home, so it is built into our perception this unspoken "truth" that if it has been done for free, why should society allocate more resources than it needs to? If we don't tackle the economic justice, we will be stuck in this economic model. To me that is unacceptable. To have the ambition to do a good job, but still have the insult every month that you are paid money that will never be enough to secure your independence.

I have worked with women from all over the world, who were forced to have a second job. I was in that position myself, only to be able to provide for my children and to have a roof over my head."

Ingólfur V. Gíslason: "What surprised me was the big the difference in labour market experience of women, regarding their physical and mental health."

Femi Oke then asked the panellists how they personally felt they were related to the topics discussed.

Margrét Sanders:

"I was thinking of care work at home. When I took the position to be the chief operating officer of Deloitte here in Iceland, which I don't longer have, then my husband started to work at home and take care of the kids. When my son went to school with an unfinished assignment, the teacher looked him into the eyes and asked: 'Is your mother too busy to help you because of her career?' She said it in front of everybody. That's what I mean about culture. We all need to be part of the change. If you want a revolution, Sólveig Anna, we all need to be party of this."

Femi Oke: "Sissel, I want you to ask Sólveig Anna a question!"

Sissel Trygstad: "I will do that! In Norway immigrants have quite a large part of the care works, but we see that after some years they exit the labour market. I wonder if it is the same in Iceland?"

Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir: "I cannot answer that, but what I do know is that there is a high turnover in these jobs. But I think that most of them are going from one job to the next, I'm not sure if they are exiting the labour market."

Sissel Trygstad: "I have to be a bit more precise: Not all the immigrants are exiting, but a higher share than the rest. (Turning to Guðbjörg Pálsdóttir) What about you?"

Guðbjörg Pálsdóttir:

"We have seen an increase of foreign nurses working here in Iceland, especially the last couple of years. The number of licenses handed out was tripled, last year compared to the year before. But we have a different system from the rest of the Nordics. Nurses who are licensed are automatically part of our union, so we can follow-up. But we are dealing with a huge care crisis, with a shortage of nurses. We need to educate even more nurses. The average age of a nurse today is 46 years."

Margrét Sanders:

"I want to address the question about immigrants. I live in a place where we have 25% immigrants. I think that is a huge question. When we are talking about the law of equal pay for men and women, I don't agree that that is the only issue. We need to treat the people who are coming to this country fairly."

Ingólfur V. Gíslason: "I think it's good that we start discussing how we treat our immigrants. Studies show that they are heavily discriminated in the labour market."

Femi Oke: "Can you give us some examples of what the care crisis means?"

Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir:

"I think it's two-fold. I look at who is taking care of the children in the society, almost all of them are women, a big percentage are working for wages that are not enough to survive on. That creates a huge amount of stress. You are never free from it. Even if you are happy and you are enjoying your life, you are having a vacation, even, this pain of not having enough is always there.

These are the people who take care of our children. To me that is unacceptable, because for me that is the most important job. Here in Iceland almost all the children go to pre-schools. I am always a little bit shocked at the hypocrisy, where we are extremely proud and focus on our gender equality, but there is this weird refusal to look at these troubles that are playing out every single day. The burden of home care is very much the responsibility for women, also when it comes to taking care of the old. The crisis is at both these places: both at work and at home. We are burdened both by capitalism in the workplace and the work at home and this makes us sick, sad and depressed."

Margrét Sanders:

"The base salary in Iceland is higher than in other places, but something is wrong in the labour market. In Iceland there is such a large incentive to work overtime. Men work a lot overtime. Then the caretaking is left to the women. The overtime pay is 80% higher than the base salary. So, the base salary needs to be higher and the overtime salary needs to be lower, because it's pushing people to work more and more."

Guðbjörg Pálsdóttir:

"Here I step in! There is a shortage of nurses in all the Nordic countries. The percentage of overtime in Norway, in their budget, is 0–4%. Do you know what it is in Iceland? It is 16%. The budget for the basic salary of a nurse in Iceland is 61%. Then we have the nurses working extra shifts, wanting over-time. That is an extra 20%.

What we could do is just to raise the basic salary. If we compare the wage of a nurse with other professions with a similar education and responsibilities, we are still 20% under other professions within the public sector. The ILO is 100 years this year. So is the Nurses Federation in Iceland. We have been working for a hundred years, but we are not worth to have a wage according to our education! It's as simple as that."

Sissel Trygstad:

"Of course, the wage level is important also in Norway, but we see that among some professions involuntary part-time is high. In cleaning, half of them work part-time, and a third work short party-time. Living hours is an essential concept in Norway. Living hours and living wages, you have to have both. So, it's very important to focus on groups in the margins of the labour market."

Sólveig Anna Jónsdóttir:

"We have just been through wage negotiations where one of our main demands was to have a base salary that maybe was just enough to make ends meet. As we all know that was met with complete hysteria from those who control who gets what in this society. We went on strikes and these were led by low-income women, and we were harassed and attacked constantly in the media, we were made out to be enemies of society. I don't see how we will be able to achieve a higher base income when there is so little will among those we are negotiating with to meet our demands."

7. Session V

Equal Pay for Equal Work or Work of Equal Value. How to make policies work for Gender Equal Outcomes? Session co-hosted by EPIC, The Equal Pay International Coalition.

7.1 Introductory lectures:

7.1.1 *What lies behind the gender pay gap?*

Kjersti Misje Østbakken,
Senior Research Fellow, CORE Norway.

Key message: The gender pay gap will not be closed unless something is done with the wage differences between men and women at the top of the wage distribution.

Kjersti Misje Østbakken reminded the audience that women are still paid less than men in virtually all countries in the world. The global gender gap is estimated to be around 23%. The gap varies between countries, but it also varies within a country.

Analysing the gender pay gap, it tends to differ because the way the wage is measured differs. The gap tends to be higher when one looks at annual wages, a bit lower when one looks at monthly wages, and further a bit lower, when one looks at hourly wages.

The difference in the amounts of working hours between men and women also feeds into the aggregated gender gap measures. Eurostat reports a gender gap in Norway, for instance, of 14.3% for 2017. Statistics Norway at the same time reports a gap of nearly 13%.

Kjersti Misje Østbakken said she would further add to the confusion by giving yet another measure for Norway:

“It is 12%, or for every 100 kroner a man earns on average per hour, a woman earns 88 kroner,” she said.

She found it relevant to eliminate the differences in the number of working hours and instead look at the difference for every hour of work put into the labour market. In

Norway, the wage gap is then 12%. The numbers were a little old, from 2014. Extrapolating the numbers from the rate of decline during the last 20 years would however not close the gap. The gap is probably nearer 12% than zero today, she thought.

Another way of thinking of the consequences of the gender pay gap, is to look at the wages for women in 2014 and ask the question: When did men earn that level of wages?

In the measurements done at CORE, men's wages were at that level in 2007.

"So, there is a seven-year lag. This is relevant when you look at how long it will take for women to reach the same level as men."

CORE has calculated its measurement by putting every employed man and every employed woman into the calculation.

"We have CEOs, we have everything from surgeons to hair-dressers in this calculation. Clearly differences in the skills and competencies required feed into the wage differences across groups.

Historically, skill differences, if you think of them as formal education, were important as a determinant of the wage gap. But now, as women's employment and labour force participation is much more equal to men over the life cycle and as women have outnumbered men in higher education, formal education is no longer an important explanation for the gender pay gap in Norway," Kjersti Misje Østbakken said.

What is still important, however, is the segregated labour market. The fact that men and women work in different kinds of occupations, sectors and industries, with different pay levels, explains 45% of the gender pay gap.

"Men work in industries and jobs that on average pays better. A higher share of men are CEOs for example, while a higher share of women are hair-dressers."

In the analysis all relevant economic variabilities available in the statistics have been included. Still we are left with a so-called unexplained gap which is 55% of the overall gap – an adjusted pay gap of 6.5%.

"So, when we compare men and women of equal age and similar education, working similar hours per week, in the same sector and in the same industry having the same occupation, women still earn 6,5% less than men on average".

Kjersti Misje Østbakken cautioned that average differences may be sensitive to very low and very high wages. The men having the highest wages, and the women having very low wages, are two forces pulling at the average difference.

She therefore also presented statistics for the distribution of the wages for Norway. Starting at the bottom of the wage distribution, there is a gender difference of 6%, which is half of the average gender gap:

“This means that wage setting institutions in Norway are protecting both men and women at the lower level. It’s not usual that someone falls below this floor”.

In the middle of the wage distribution, or the median person, there is a gender gap of 8%, which is 75% of the average level. At the top of the wage distribution the wage gap is the largest. This level represents the 20% best payed persons in the labour market. The pay gap at this level is 20%. Men have the best payed jobs and the wages are highest in the private sector.

A key word, according to Østbakken, is wage structure. She showed a graph of the highest payed workers in four categories: Men in private sectors, men in public sectors, women in private sector and women in public sector.

Women in the public sector earn less than women in the private sector, who earn less than men in the public sector. Men rule the top, no matter which sector they are in.

On the other hand, low payed women in the public sector do quite well compared to men. The wage structure in the public sector is quite compressed, at least in Norway. This also contributes to the sustained gender pay gap.

“Why is the wage gap declining so slowly? What can we do? How can we go about reducing the pay gap?” Kjersti Misje Østbakken asked rhetorically.

The answer for the slow decline of the wage gap in Norway, at least, has been that the wage growth among men at the top of the distribution has been higher than for women at the top of the wage distribution. The decline in the gender pay on average has been quite slow, but the decline in the median has been a bit faster. It is the highest payed men at the top that slow down the closing of the pay gap.

Her take-home message to the audience was: There are many good reasons to increase the wages of low paid men and women. But it cannot be the only focus if the aim is to close the gender pay gap.

“Unless we can tackle the gender pay gap at the top of the distribution, the pay gap won’t be eliminated,” said Kjersti Misje Østbakken.

7.1.2 *Equal Pay for work of Equal Value - The implementation of ILO's Convention 100 in Icelandic Law*

Maj-Britt Hjördís Briem,
Division of Human Resources, Reykjavik City Hall.

"The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is a recognised human right, subsequent to the principles of equality and non-discrimination," Maj-Britt Hjördís Briem said at the beginning of her speech.

In international law, the most prominent human rights instruments promoting equal pay for work of equal value are found in the ILO's Convention, No. 100, and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). On a regional level, the principles of equality and non-discrimination are also a fundamental principle, the same as in European law.

The Icelandic Constitution states that men and women have equal rights in every respect. Iceland has a special law to ensure equality between women and men. There is legislation promoting equal pay but the gender pay gap still stays alive. Maj-Britt Hjördís Briem asked whether this perhaps is because of a lack of implementation and effective enforcement of these rules.

The Icelandic labour market is gender segregated with extreme feminisation in certain occupations. Pay is lower in female dominated sectors than in male dominated sectors. This undervaluation of women's work contrasts with the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. The Icelandic legislation does not come to terms this problem.

Maj-Britt Hjördís Briem speculated that perhaps the lack of implementation and therefore ineffective enforcement has something to do with it.

She did some history review going back to the time after World War II when women had replaced men in the labour market and the emphasis on equal pay between men and women increased. The ILO Convention 100 from 1951 stipulates the principle of equal pay for work of equal value and is the first international instrument on this issue.

The Convention is gender-explicit, seeking to ensure that women and men receive equal pay for work of equal value. States may accomplish this through legislation, introduction of a system for wage determination and/or collective bargaining agreements. States must ensure equal pay between men and women in the public sector and promote the principle in the private sector.

Iceland ratified the convention in 1958, and shortly after the act no. 60/1961 about equal pay for women's work was adopted. When the legislation was adopted it was suggested to include: "equal pay for work of equal value" in compliance with the convention. The legislation emphasised "equal pay for equal work". It was soon clear that this legislation was not enough. Act no. 37/1973 was supposed to follow up on violation and the scope of equal pay principle was widened, now applying to all work performed by women no matter in what profession or with which employer stating: "Equal work for work of equal value and comparable work". The drafters claimed the legislation was in compliance with the ILOs Convention No. 100. However, there is no stipulation in the Convention that the work had to be of equal value and comparable.

The first complete equality legislation was then adopted in 1976, emphasising the principle of equal pay and banning discrimination. People were optimistic that this legislation would put an end to inequality in the labour market. But we know better, still battling the gender pay gap more than 40 years later.

The Icelandic equality legislation has been reviewed four times between 1976 and 2008. During that time, the principle of equal pay stipulated that the work had to be of equal value and comparable. When Iceland became a party to EEA-agreement, the principle of equal pay was amended in compliance with the EEA agreement obligation. The principle of equal pay still consisted of "work of equal value and comparable work". In 2008 the principle was included in Article 19 (1) of the Equality Act no. 10/2008 and stated:

"Women and men working for the same employer shall be paid equal wages and enjoy equal terms of employment for the same jobs or jobs of equal value."

The wording of the provision is now, on this matter, in compliance with the Convention.

So, what does this mean? In Maj-Britt Hjördís Briem's opinion, the unclear wording and the lack of understanding of the concept of work of equal value in the provision in Icelandic legislation until 2008 led to inconsistency in its application and increased the probability of people not understanding their rights and obligations and also making it difficult for the courts to ensure those rights and obligations. A clear understanding of the concept of work of equal value is needed for effective enforcement.

The Icelandic provision promoting the principle of equal pay stipulates that the work in question must be for the same employer. That condition isn't found in EU law or ILO Convention No. 100.

The criteria of “same employer” in Icelandic legislation limits the scope in equal pay cases to the same employer. Even though the European Court of Justice seems to have narrowed the scope of the principle to the criteria of a “single source” it does not limit the scope of comparison when comparing work within the public sector. States that have ratified the convention must ensure equal pay between men and women in the public sector. So, the Icelandic provision on equal pay is thus not in compliance with the ILO convention No. 100.

The scope of the principle has a great impact on how successful the enforcement of the principle is. The criteria of the same employer hinder its effective enforcement, especially in a gender segregated labour market. A large majority of women are working in the public sector. Ensuring a broad scope of comparison is essential for the application of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. “Female jobs” are undervalued in comparison with those of men who are performing different work and using different skills, when determining wage rates.

To answer the question why the implementation is important, the answer is linked to the enforcement. The wider the scope of the principle, the more effectively the enforcement is helping us closing the gender pay gap.

7.1.3 Gender Pay Gap – Different statistical perspectives

Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir,
leading statistician in wage statistics, Statistics Iceland.

What is the gender pay gap? Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir started with pointing out that definitions matter. Is it the gender pay gap difference in the income from work, hourly/monthly earnings of men and women? Is it the equal pay for the same work or equal pay for work of equal value? What is equal value? How is equal value defined? Is it the difference in remuneration after correcting for some “objective” variables like education and occupation? What is objective? Or is it mapping the variables that have an effect on the pay gap? These are different questions, and different measures are needed to address them.

In Iceland the difference in income between men and women has been declining slightly from 2008 to 2017. The difference is smallest in the youngest age groups. The total activity rate on the labour market is over 80%. 85% of men work, compared to 78% of women. Women work more part-time than men.

The distribution of total earnings is close to equal, but still women are paid a little bit less than men. Eurostat has a measure for the unadjusted gender pay gap. The numbers for Iceland are:

Table 1: Unadjusted gender pay gap

Year	%
2008	20.5%
2011	17.5%
2014	16.4%
2017	15.3%

The gap is narrowing. Eurostat looks at regular monthly earnings and they include overtime. There is a strong culture for working overtime in Iceland. The 2014 Eurostat's Structure of Earnings Survey showed 7.5% of paid hours in Iceland were overtime hours.

10 percentage points of the paid hours were overtime hours for men and 5 percentage points were overtime for women. The distribution in the private sector versus the public sector was:

Table 2: Unadjusted gender pay gap by sector

Year	Private	Public
2008	22.4%	21.2%
2011	17.6%	16.5%
2014	16.3%	13.9%
2017	15.3%	15.9

The overtime premium is 80%. So, the easiest way to lower the unadjusted gender pay gap is to lower the overtime and the overtime premium.

Is there a simple solution? Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir asked. Looking to the social partners and collective agreements in the private sector, she highlights the public sector in the table above. Her statistics show a fall in October 2014 and a rise again in 2017. There are two explanations.

- The collective agreement came in at different times and may have affected the measurement;
- Big municipalities went through an equal job evaluation at that time.

“We will see what happens when we get the equal pay standard into full action and what happens with these numbers,” Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir, said.

The whole story is not told yet. There was an interest in Iceland to capture better what lies behind the gender pay gap. First in a cooperation with the Confederation of Employers and the Icelandic Confederation of Labour. Then a survey was conducted for the private sector between 2000 and 2007. Since then, the research has been done twice on request of the Ministry of Welfare, for both the public and private sectors 2008–2013, and for the public and private sectors 2008–2016. The newest data is from 2008–2016.

The study’s aim was to capture the effect of different variables on men and women. Statistics Iceland has a very strong culture of records. There is a detailed data set on wages, monthly repeated records or measurements, from the year 2000 onwards, enabling the researchers to do long-time surveys (longitudinal surveys) on wages. In the datasets there are many variables present, both individual variables like education and occupation but also family status. Then there are work-related variables, e.g. the economic sector of a company, the size of the company and variables on earnings.

The variables that were included in the analysis were variables that other research has shown to influence the wage composition of men and women.

Some variables do not have different effects on men and women. In the analysis, education or educational levels do not seem to have different effects on men and women. The effect of motherhood or having children is relatively small. There is a positive effect on men and a small negative effect on women, but this is on a marginal level. Overtime is excluded in this.

Despite including a lot of variables, the model can explain only half of the gender pay gap, which is 12–13% for the wage concept. The model with all the variables can explain about half of it. The remaining half is not explained by the model. Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir says that it is sometimes being interpreted as being the effect of gender but says it’s not necessarily that –some omitted variables or unmeasurable variables might be contributing.

The researchers also ran a model with fewer variables, and that model explains about the third of the difference, so about 8 percentage points is left when the variables are fewer. The main contributing variables that are explaining the difference are the variables of occupation, the sector and economic activity of the company. Working in the private sector has a considerably bigger effect on wages of men than women.

Conclusion: Close to half of the total wage gap can be explained with the variables and close to half in the private sector. The wage gap is bigger in the private sector. Only close to third of the wage gap in the public sector can be explained, even though the wage gap is smaller than in the private sector.

Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir reminded the audience that the measures depend on the model used. The models have a slight bias in them. It also depends on the variables used. To decide what is equal value; you must try to measure it. The measurement and the classifications used might seem objective today but not so much tomorrow.

When the ILO was formed 100 years ago, it was an objective that wages of women were lower than wages of men because men were the breadwinners.

"Today that is not the objective. But wage equality is about more than gender. It is also a question of background, like immigrants and other under-privileged groups," said Margrét Vala Gylfadóttir.

7.1.4 *The importance of EPIC in Switzerland's fight against gender pay gap*

Sylvie Durrer,
Director Federal Office for Gender Equality,
Switzerland and chair of EPIC Steering Committee.

Sylvie Durrer started by saying the word "forward" in Icelandic and in many other languages.

"Avanti! We must go forward! And I know what I am talking about, because Switzerland is a young democracy. Women have had the right to vote only since 1971, and it was not because they didn't fight about it, it was men who didn't accept to give the right to vote to their mothers, their wives, sisters and daughters," said Sylvie Durrer.

Showing some slides, she illustrated the changes. In 1848, all men in Switzerland at a certain age could vote. The result was a government consisting of seven male ministers from the same party. In 2019 there are four parties in the government and three of the seven ministers are women.

"We have achieved gender parity in our government," she said.

There have also been a lot of changes in family life. Not long ago the husband could sit at the breakfast table reading his news, being served by his wife. That is not the normal situations these days when everyone is reading news from their smartphones. "So, we have a certain kind of equality," Sylvie Durrer joked.

It is not the only change. Today women are very active in the labour market in Switzerland. 88% of the male population and 80% of the female population in working age are in the labour market.

“But, and there is a big but. Many women in Switzerland are working part-time for different reasons, often unpaid care works. Bringing more technical appliances into the home has improved the situation, but improvements in this field is still necessary,” said Sylvie Durrer.

“I think it’s important to recognise this dimension, the redistributing of unpaid care work. And it is very important, that men share the responsibilities in this field.

“One of the very important issues is inequality in the workplace. Last year there was a survey among 2 000 men and women. It was about equal gender pay, location on specific tasks, and sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. The result showed that about 40% of the women reported that they had disadvantages because of their gender as far as equal pay is concerned.

This low result might have come as a surprise to many.

“Men and women in Switzerland generally don’t consider there is a gender pay issue,” said Sylvie Durrer.

She referred to a UK poll, where men didn’t think that there is unequal pay because of gender. In Switzerland men and women have the same perspective, even if there are differences between them. But whatever people may think, eight in ten people perceive general pay inequality to be a disadvantage to women.

Last September, 20 000 women and men marched for gender pay equality. There are also very concrete actions to eliminate the gender pay discrimination going on. The Federal office for Gender equality is working with an equal pay self-test tool, “Logib”. It is free of charge.

In a few months there will also be mandatory pay equity analysis for all companies with 100 employees and more. According to the new law, the companies will be obliged to carry out and analyse the gender pay gap every four year. What is important, said Sylvie Durrer, is that the method used must be compliant with scientific and legal norms. The Federal office will provide employers with a standard analysis tool free of charge. The analysis will also have to be reviewed by an approved independent third party. The results are to be communicated to employees and shareholders. If the results are satisfactory, the analysis does not have to be repeated.

Sylvia Durrer explained how her office carried out a survey among Swiss companies, as a part of the job to prepare for the law.

"We saw that there was a strong interest for this. Out of 2 700 companies, about 48% agreed to answer. They said: 'Gender equality is important to us and equal pay belongs to it, but we have never made an equal analysis'. Among the few companies which said they had done such an analysis, half of them said: 'We saw that we have problems and we have corrected them'.

So, the idea in Switzerland is to bring as many as possible to make an analysis about gender equal pay, because we are confident, or would like to be, that if they see this in-equality they will correct it."

Switzerland has decided to be active in the Equal Pay International Coalition, EPIC, a multi- stakeholder partnership working to reduce the gender pay gap at the global, regional and national level. EPIC is currently chaired by Switzerland.

"I want to appeal to all representatives of states which are here, to join the coalition as soon as possible," said Sylvie Durrer.

Why did Switzerland join this coalition? What does it bring?

"First of all, it shows us that Switzerland is willing to fulfil its commitment, which we find in our constitution. The constitution was voted for in 1981 and is one of few in the world where the idea of equal pay for work of equal value is stated," she said.

Switzerland wants to ensure that women get equal pay both in the short and in the long term. In the short time because it is obvious. In the long term because inequalities impact the families, the women themselves, their insurances, their pensions and retirement.

"We want to contribute to fair competition between companies, both as a nation and on the global level. It is also important that companies who respect the idea and principles of equal pay and equal values are not faced with unfair competition from companies who don't."

She ended her speech by talking about the difficult last mile to reach gender equality.

"To conclude I would like to recall that the future is not decided. We can and must act, but the last mile is probably the hardest one. In order to receive the last part of the gender equality we need to walk the talk, to join our forces and to be vocal about our values and common goals. These apply to states, companies, NGOs and individuals. Again. Forward!"

7.1.5 *Equal pay in relation to atypical work and employment.*

Trine Pernille Larsen,
Associate Professor, The Employment Relations Research Centre, FAOS,
Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen.

Trine Pernille Larsen started with defining what we are talking about, referring to atypical work.

“It is important to have an equal play field in terms of what do we understand is atypical work. When you ask the social partners or governments across the Nordics, there is huge disagreement about what constitutes atypical work and employment.”

Some actors would say there is no such thing as atypical work. It is all work, all equal. Others would say:

“When we talk about atypical work, we create distance, we create workers who are considered core, others being periphery, and that is not very useful for discussion, negotiations and talking about it.”

“In our project, an atypical work is forms of employment other than the traditional full-time open-ended contract.”

The very foundation of the Nordic welfare states and their industrial model is built on the notion that everyone has full-time employment. A good example is people’s ability to full rights to unemployed benefits. To get that, you must work 1,920 hours during a period of two to three years, at least in Denmark.

If you have very few hours, it is very difficult to qualify. In Sweden you must be in employment for a certain number of months to qualify. If you are a temporary worker, it is very difficult to gain those rights to unemployment benefits. The same goes for other welfare and collective agreed standards, like rights to parental leave, paid maternity and paternity leave, at least with full wage compensations.

The term atypical work covers a wide range of work forms:

- Long part-time work, 15–29 hours a week
- Marginal part-time, less than 15 hours a week
- Zero-hours contracts
- Fixed-term contracts and temporary work
- Solo-self-employed (freelancers, external consultants, digital platform workers).

“When you ask the Danish social partners, or some of the Nordics about this, they say: No, no, we don’t have zero-hours contracts. Then you look at the collective agreements and you find groups like on-call temps, reserves, extra help and replacements.”

When the researchers looked at the contracts for these groups, they found that there were no guaranteed working hours. Workers were called in when needed, without any guarantee having a job for tomorrow.

“What is interesting here, is that there is an overrepresentation of women, migrants and young people in all these groups. That is no surprise.”

The findings also show, in this context, that marginal part-time and digital platform work represent some of the fastest growing employment forms in the Nordics.

“They are at the margin of the labour market and risk exclusion from the well-established Nordic industrial model and the welfare model,” said Trine Pernille Larsen.

Iceland is a low scorer in the number of atypical workers, with 26% of the workforce in non-standard or atypical work. Sweden is a top scorer with 32% of all employed, according to the researcher’s definition, working as atypical workers.

There are also huge differences in terms of what types of flexible work is most common. In Iceland, Finland and Sweden, there is a high proportion of temporary work, especially fixed-term contracts. In Denmark and Norway, part-time work is much more prevalent. Denmark is the top scorer among the Nordics when it comes to marginal part-time work. In Finland and Iceland solo self-employment is also quite prevalent.

“What we see when we move beyond the data, is that there are important sector variations in type or scope of non-standard employment. It is much more widespread in private services, low paid jobs, the creative sector and in agriculture in all the five Nordic countries.”

Looking across sectors and within sectors, the types and forms of nonstandard work also varies considerably. A good example is the hotel and restaurant sector. More than 30% of workers in the hotel and restaurants in Denmark are marginal part timers, people who work less than 15 hours per week. In Sweden the employers in the restaurant and hotel sector mostly draw on fixed-term and temporary agency work. In Norway and Finland there is a tendency of using part-time work, very often long part-time work.

So, what do those atypical forms of work mean for equal pay?

Trine Pernille Larsen used marginal part-time work and digital platform work as examples. They are regulated very differently. Marginal part-time is covered by EU's directive on part-time work, which includes the principles of non-discrimination. The Danish labour law also applies, including equal pay for equal work. There are various collective agreements covering the sector as well.

Marginal part-time work is a densely regulated sector, compared to digital platform work – which is very often unregulated and operates outside of the established system. This is because a lot of the workers on digital platforms are solo self-employed. They are therefore considered small businesses and not workers. There are a few exceptions in Denmark, like agreements for minimum hourly work offered in private services.

Private services is a sector with a high level of marginal part-time work and a rapid growth of digital platforms. Retail has the highest collective agreement coverage, at 57%. In the digital platform economy, having collective agreements is more the exception than the rule.

The collective agreement on hourly wages varies between young people and the adult workers in private service. In retail, you can get DKK 114 kroner per hour. But if you are a young person (younger than 25) you only receive DKK 65 kroner per hour.

"In general, one would expect that there should be equal pay for equal work, especially when you are working marginal part-time or full-time in the Danish service sector. What we do see, is that marginal part-time work often entails lower hourly wages than contracts with longer hours."

The wage gap varies considerably across the different service sectors. The collective agreements appear to secure a minimum wage floor in all sectors. Irrespective if a person is a marginal part-time worker or a full-time worker, he or she has a higher wage than the minimum collectively agreed wage. What the collective agreements struggle with is to secure equal pay between different groups.

“Who earns less than their peers in marginal work? Well, it is the usual suspects – women, young people, especially those under 18. It is unskilled or low-skilled workers and it is migrants who end up earning less than their peers.”

The institutional framework has a mixed effect. It limits, in some instances, the gender pay gap. Especially in retail, hotel and restaurants, but at the same time it leads to wider age wage gaps in the same sector.

“That makes it important to know, when we talk about equal pay, if are we talking about a gender wage gap or an age wage gap,” said Trine Pernille Larsen.

In Denmark less than 1% of the workforce is so-called platform workers. They are young people, unskilled people, migrants and unemployed and individuals who are outside the work force. The minimum hourly wages often correspond to the minimum wage standards in other collective agreements.

But digital platform workers have to compensate. Out of their hourly wage, they also must cover and shoulder many risks because they lack collectively agreed social benefits like pensions, further training, paid sick leave and paid parental leave.

Most of the platform workers earn less than DKK 25,000 kroner per year before taxes. They are often forced to combine their online income with many other income sources; like student allowances, pensions or unemployment benefit and social assistance.

To sum up:

- Atypical employment is stable across the Nordic countries. Since 2000 it has been between 26–32% of all employees in the Nordics;
- Marginal part-time work and digital platform work are some of the fastest growing employment forms in Denmark;
- Marginal part-timers are particularly at risk of lower wages and often struggle to secure living hours;
- Digital platform workers often experience risks of low earnings and supplement online income with other sources.

“The institutional framework for wage regulation and social protection seems to influence the earning penalties associated with marginal part time work and digital platform work. But the effect is not always straight forward. What helps in some sectors, such as limiting the gender wage gap, may trigger an age wage gap instead. We see dual effects that point in two directions,” said Trine Pernille Larsen.

7.1.6 *How do we close the gender pay gap?*

Panel Debate moderated by Femi Oke.

Akustina Morni, Adviser of the International Organisation of Employers and a member of the EPIC Steering Committee.

Birna Einarsdóttir, CEO at Íslandsbanki hf.

Sonja Ýr Þorbergsdóttir, Chairwoman of The Federation of State and Municipal Employees in Iceland.

Sylvie Durrer, Director Federal Office for Gender Equality, Switzerland and chair of EPIC Steering Committee.

Þorsteinn Víglundsson, Member of the Icelandic Parliament Alþingi.

Íslandsbanki was one of the first Icelandic companies to implement the idea of equal pay. The panel discussions opened with Femi Oke asking Íslandsbanki's *Birna Einarsdóttir* about why she did it and what happened.

"I was very supportive of the legislation on gender quota on company boards in Iceland. Why? Because I didn't want to wait for another 100 years for something to happen. I was equally supportive of the legislation regarding equal pay because I didn't want to wait another 100 years for that either," Birna Einarsdóttir said.

She believed things will move forward in the next few decades but wants it to happen faster. That is why Íslandsbanki has been implementing the equal pay standard for the first time under the new equal pay standard legislation.

There have been complaints in the business community that the implementation of the standard is too complicated and too expensive. She did not listen to that because implementation of legislations cost money. "This is only a small part of that," she said.

Þorsteinn Víglundsson picked up where Birna Einarsdóttir left off and asked: Why is this taking so long? And why aren't we doing something about it? We are doing the talk but not doing the work, only waiting for change to happen.

The moderator wanted to know whether he wanted legislation to force people to make the change. "Legislation sometimes helps," he said.

"We need ambition from companies. We have the trade unions. Why are we not addressing gender pay gap in centralised wage negotiations? We need to commit to really driving the change. It will cost money, but we have all the arguments in our favour in terms of economic

benefits of gender equality, both on the economy level and the company level. The question still remains: Why is this taking so long?"

Sylvie Durrer pointed out that in Switzerland the companies are working to have clear rules in order to know what they must do, in what timespan, to close the gender gap. Switzerland has a new tool, a programme called Logib where you can feed different variables into the software and get information about the pay gap in the company.

"We also have three women in our government. I think we have the momentum and we have to take it," *Sylvie* said.

Akustina Morni said that you must go beyond regulations when fighting the gender pay gap. Her organisation represents over 50 million companies in more than 140 countries, and the companies say they need tools to understand what equal pay for equal value means. They have difficulties in measuring the gender pay gap. *Akustina* referred to *Sylvie's* point about the Swiss software Logib, where the companies can use a simple platform to measure whether there is a pay gap in the company and how the situation is.

In *Sonja Ýr Þorbergsdóttir's* federation two thirds of members are women, but historically the males have been in power positions within the federation – and that is historically the situation in Iceland. She is hoping to change that:

"Hopefully some day we will see progress and clauses about equal pay for equal work in collective agreements. Action is the name of the game here. We have to provide steps for actions to be taken. The equal pay standard is one example of that," she said.

Businesses are finding it difficult to work out how to pay their workers equally, but Íslandsbanki just did it.

"If there is a will there is a way," *Birna Einarsdóttir* commented.

"It is the same thing when you want to have an equal gender ratio on all your management levels. You need to do something about it. If you are willing to do it, then it is easy to make it happen."

She pointed out that women make up a big proportion of university graduates, so there are no excuses. Despite that, there are endless excuses and endless discussions about this in the labour market. She encouraged: Look behind the reasons!

Akustina Morni asked whether it is better to pay everybody equally regardless of gender, or whether it is better to pay fairly? She used an example of two women with same competences, providing the same output within the same kind of contracts – but

one is a team player and the other one is a bully. Should these people be paid the same, or should one of them be rewarded?

The Swiss answer was that if you decide to have wage policies then it must be objective and non-discriminatory. It is difficult to take attitudes into consideration.

Sonja Ýr Þorbergsdóttir had been thinking about how the gender pay gap can be eliminated on the gender-segregated labour market. Raise the wages for the women's jobs? She mentioned a Finnish example showing that men more often become managers or superiors and get higher wages than the women. "I personally think the solution is to raise the wages of women in women's positions," she said.

Þorsteinn Víglundsson agreed. Wage agreements in Iceland are partially equal, but there are weak points in the system. The lowest paid profession is cleaning, which is dominated by females. An unskilled labourer in the male-dominated building sector earns significantly more than a cleaner. Is it a more difficult task or more challenging to work as an unskilled worker in cleaning or in construction? he asked.

The moderator commented that if Iceland pays a bigger sum then all the men will want to be nurses. Sonja Ýr Þorbergsdóttir pointed out that after the crisis in Iceland there were a lot of middle-aged men working in kindergartens. Most of them said that they had never had the opportunity before because the wages were so low, but now when they had lost their ordinary job they could do it.

There is a lot of talking about supply and demand on the business side of society. The future is based on knowledge. To have knowledge we need education. Teachers are among the lowest paid professions in society. They are predominantly women and those are also among the lowest paid in society.

"Obviously supply and demand isn't explaining the problems we are having. These are the questions that we really need to address; not just ask the questions, but also do something," Þorsteinn Víglundsson said.

The ILO, the OECD and the World Bank have been talking about the future of work. Up to two thirds of nursery-age children will work in an industry that does not exist yet. The future of work also means life-long learning, making sure that the teachers and care workers, the very foundation, must be paid fairly, said Akustina Morni.

The moderator asked whether the Nordics can use Logib. The software is free for all and they are welcome to use it, was the answer.

Pay transparency is a sensitive issue in Iceland. Birna Einarsdóttir doesn't have a strong view on it but sometimes wonders how it would be if salaries not were confidential, as it is in Iceland today.

"I am very proud of the Icelandic implementation of the equal pay standard," she said. She recommended other countries to study it, because great discipline is needed for the companies to go through the implementation and it helps them to structure the salary internally. It also helps them with the answers to the employees.

Birna Einarsdóttir also emphasised that when the implementation process is over, all departments need to be thinking about keeping the balance all the time.

Equal pay for equal work is the responsibility of employers, not employees, according to the Icelandic approach. Akustina Morni thought it should be the responsibility of both groups. She stressed the point that a strong social dialogue system is needed – both within the company, the industry and the country – because trust is needed. Employers cannot do this alone. They need feedback from the employees.

"Both employees and employers can discuss it in a fair manner, and when the governments are needed for support, I think that would be helpful. This has been shown in a lot of strong economies like Switzerland, where social partners work well together and you have a strong economy," she said.

Sylvie Durrer reminded that the employers' organisations in Switzerland were not supportive of the idea, which was a surprise.

Akustina Morni thought continuous engagement is important. If employers are only brought to the table towards the end of the process, then they feel surprised. The dialogue doesn't have to be formal. Attitudes need to be positive.

"We tried everything," said Sylvie Durrer.

Porsteinn Víglundsson explained that the central theme of the equal pay standard was reversing the responsibility from the employee to the employer. The employer has the overview of salary distribution in the company, and the tools to correct it. The employer is in no position to see if they are being discriminated.

Porsteinn Víglundsson was asked how Iceland could implement the equal pay standard in such a short time. He explained that it was the first thing brought to parliament when he was a minister.

"Discrimination in pay has been illegal in Western societies for decades, but we allowed companies to choose whether to abide by it or not. We never did that in any other regulatory framework we insist companies to work with. Why are we so timid when it comes to gender equality to actually enforce the law that we already have?" he asked.

It is thought to be too expensive, according to Sylvie Durrer.

Porsteinn Víglundsson pointed out that women are already carrying the expense.

“More than seven billion dollars are missing in women’s pay checks. This issue is difficult to speak about because it is difficult to raise the wages,” Sylvie Durrer commented.

Between 20 and 30 female employees at Íslandsbanki needed an increase because of the equal pay standard. Birna Einarsdóttir said the bank happily gave them the raise.

“It didn’t cost a lot of money, but it did cost money. That is why I say to my managers: it is so important that we keep the balance, that we don’t start creating an imbalance again,” Birna Einarsdóttir said.

Sonja Ýr Þorbergsdóttir said both employers and employees can take the initiative and lead the way to change.

The moderator wanted the panellists to leave the audience with the most important thing that came to their mind during the discussion.

Birna Einarsdóttir: There needs to be a will to change. If there is a will there is an easy way to do it.

Þorsteinn Víglundsson: Let’s put it on the top of our list of priorities. It is a human rights issue. It is an obvious benefit for society to have gender equality. Just do it!

Akustina Morni: We cannot do the same thing over and over again and expect a different result. So, we have to be more innovative in what we do.

Sonja Ýr Þorbergsdóttir: We can all make a change as individuals, so talk to your friends, family, colleagues, and just make it happen. Mobilise women and men, and just be the change.

Sylvie Durrer: Mobilise a few colleagues and go to the employer and ask him whether he made a pay analysis and what was the result. Don’t accept a simple yes as an answer! Ask for details.

Moderator: The panel has left you with an assignment: Ask for details, just do it, don’t accept the norm.

7.1.7 Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister for Social Affairs, Iceland, Closing

Ásmundur Einar Daðason ended the conference by highlighting some of the things he would remember from the conference and thanking Eva Maria Jónsdóttir for chairing the conference, as well as the conference organisers and technical staff. He also thanked the staff of the Nordic Council of Ministers and the ILO, as well as the Tripartite committee under the Ministry of Social affairs who prepared the conference.



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Nordic Future of Work Conference

In connection with the 100th anniversary of the ILO in 2019, the Nordic Council of Ministers arranged a conference to debate the future of work in the Nordics. The event was held on the 4th-5th of April in Reykjavik and was the last in a series of four annual conferences. The debates centered on the changing labour market and whether the Nordic model will be able to adapt to this.

The conference lasted two days, each with a particular theme:

- 1) Future of Work – where the future of the Nordic model was discussed
- 2) Gender Equality – where the debate revolved around the challenges and solutions regarding the inequalities between men and women on the labour market

The programme included perspectives from all the Nordic countries, as well as from international organisations such as the ILO and the OECD, international companies, Nordic labour market authorities, social partners and companies.