

Opening remarks
HE Ambassador François Delattre
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations
Exhibition Opening “Behind the barcode”
Tuesday June, 16th
UNHQ, Level 1 (CB, corridor between CR2 & CR3)

Dear Ambassadors,

Dear Director, Ms. Stewart,

Dear Director, Ms. Combemale,

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's my pleasure to welcome you today for this important exhibition for us. And first of all, I would like to thank you Martine, and Human Resources without Borders for this wonderful work you have done with those artists.

I would like to thank in addition, ILO's director in NY, Ms. Jane Stewart to be here tonight with us for this opening and each and every one of you to being here tonight with us.

It was such a great idea Martine, to have organized a drawing competition on forced labor.

Drawings could advocate for catching attention on difficult reality and also for a better implementation of the ILO's Convention on forced labor and its additional protocol adopted last June in Geneva.

Unfortunately, forced labor it's still a serious concern nowadays. And in this global word and global economy, we need to be really cautious on this.

Indeed, more than eighty years after the adoption of the Convention concerning forced labor by the International Labor Conference, and despite its near-universal ratification, this unacceptable practice is unfortunately still commonplace today.

According to ILO estimates, **about 21 million men, women and children would be victims of forced labor worldwide**. This reality covers a variety of cases, from trafficking for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation to the domestic sphere of

unscrupulous individuals, to abuses in “traditional” economic sectors such as agriculture, construction or the informal sector, usually under the pretext of excessive debt.

Today, it is no longer the traditional form of forced labor that came from a government or a state-like organization such as in the early twentieth century. Modern practices of this phenomenon have taken on a more scattered aspect and affect vulnerable populations, mostly women and children, who often have no personal identity documents. An isolated person, whatever is the reason why she is in such situation, is always one of the most vulnerable one. We have to improve our legal tools for responding to this challenge, for protect them and to access mechanisms of justice when their rights are violated.

To better fight these new forms of forced labor, the international community developed its tools with a protocol adopted in Geneva last June, by requiring States to take measures to prevent forced labor (Art 2) and ensure access to redress mechanisms and compensation for victims (Art 4).

What could be a more universal language than drawings to illustrate these awful situations in all their diversity, and emphasize the urgent need for action in favor of victims?

This exhibition is really timely for us. As you may know, our President, Mr. François Hollande, just attended the 104th Session of the International Labor Conference, last week in Geneva.

In his statement, he announced the nearly ratification on forced labor Convention (N°29). This text will be examined by our Council of Ministers in July in order to present it for ratification in French Parliament just after.

Dear Jane, I would take this opportunity to recall here France’s commitment to support ILO’s work.

Our President recall last week, that France is proud to be one of the States which has ratified the largest number of ILO’s Conventions, at this day 125.

It’s important for us to let know here than we’ll implanting faster as possible, convention France has signed. It’s only at this condition that we will we be in a good position to promote effectiveness for those intentions and rights.

ILO is one of the organization which helped it most to promote human and social rights, social protection for all, social dialogue, occupational safety and health, decent work for all. It’s for this reason than our President announce a new partnership with ILO, in all intergovernmental negotiations such as climate change, post-2015 agenda or financing for development. We know that we could count on you for helping us in these important discussions.

To be honest, we'll all know that we have to face huge challenges on this. Today, only three out of ten workers have a decent work, with social protection; more than two million of people died every year due to bad working conditions, still 170 million of children are still enforced to work, against all rules and treaties, sometimes by one member of their own family. This is the huge task that lies ahead to make effective these international rules and standards and pursue promotion of decent work for all.

At the same time, we have more than 200 million of people without job and we are to face to new demographic challenges, the most important generation of youth than earth has never known, more than 2 billion and important migration due to conflicts and poverty as well. Promoting human rights and social protection is always a tough task.

I know we are all prepared to face this challenge and I would take this opportunity to thanks all my colleagues of the Group of friends of decent work in their hard work for this purpose and for being, each and every one of you, a consistent champion in this field.

I'm also aware than a delegation of Human resources directors of important companies planned to visit this exhibition in the same time they will attend global compact meeting next week. We all know how it's important their decisions in subcontracting and in monitoring rules and standards along the supply and value chain. It's important to let them know, caricaturist, civil society follow very carefully their decisions and monitoring processes, in this respect.

We all remembered the Rana Plaza drama in 2013 in Bangladesh. Under the aegis of the ILO, more than 150 production and distribution companies are signed an agreement on safety in textile factories in Bangladesh, with an independent inspection program on these safety rules. It shows it could be possible to really control the supply chain when you want to do so and this goes in the right direction.

This exhibition and this book aim to reinforce the linkages between human rights, freedom of expression and artistic expression. France will always support this, especially after terrorist acts last January in Paris.

These drawings are really inspiring for our work here and recall us the final aim for our paper fights: human rights for all, without discrimination and especially for the most vulnerable.

So, today, it is a very great honor for me to support this cause alongside those who create this book and day after day, act against the drama of forced labor.