

# *Cuba reiterates commitment to protect workers' rights at ILO Conference*

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Geneva, June 19 (RHC)-- Cuba's First Vice President Salvador Valdes Mesa is in Geneva to attend the high level segment of the 108<sup>th</sup> Conference of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Addressing the plenary of the Conference on Tuesday, Valdes Mesa acknowledged the work of the UN body, which is celebrating its centennial this year.

“Great progress has been made since the inception of the ILO in 1919, and much of the progresses achieved in terms of recognition and protection of trade union freedoms, decent work, paid leave, etc., bear the ILO’s foot print. However, this organization still has a lot to do, and should continue its efforts in the solution of long standing problems within the working context motivated by technological advances”, said the Cuban vice president.

Valdes Mesa added that it's imperative that all member countries strengthen its commitment to the ILO and its mandate, in a world where the top 26 billionaires in 2018 were as wealthy as the poorest 3.8 billion people, stressing that the current international order turns social justice, decent work and labor rights into a chimera for millions of human beings.

The Cuban leader recalled that the Caribbean island is proud to be one of the founding members of the organization and will continue strengthening its bonds of cooperation with it, and will remain committed to

the protection of workers' rights and creating a fairer world.

In another moment of his address, Valdes Mesa warned that multilateralism is being discarded as a way to solve global problems, fostering confrontation, aggressive rhetoric and impositions, and a disrespect of international law.

He noted as well that the ILO has not been exempted from punitive approaches and selective practices against developing countries and stressed that it is imperative to continue working on the improvement, transparency and working methods of the organization, leaving no room for manipulations with political purposes.

The Cuban vice president also raised the US blockade against Cuba, a coercive and unilateral measure imposed on the island for almost 60 years.

"The blockade constitutes the main obstacle to our development, and a massive, blatant, and systematic violation of the human rights of a whole people" he said.

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