

**International Seminar on the Digital Revolution organized by the
International Association of Economic and Social Councils and Similar
Institutions
(AICESIS)**

**Speech by Mr. Jacob Baciú, AICESIS President
Geneva, 23 October 2018**

Dear Director-General,

Dear colleagues,

Allow me, first, to thank Mr. Guy Ryder, ILO Director-General, for honouring us with his invitation to meet here, in Geneva, at ILO Headquarters.

I see this meeting as a historical one. As a trade unionist, I have always cherished the activity of the International Labour Organization, which we regard as the most important international organization that regulates labour standards and labour relations. The conventions drawn up here, in Geneva, have often proved very useful for us in our fight for the economic, social and professional rights of the members of our trade unions.

As a representative and as President of AICESIS, I am delighted to participate in the conclusion of a new agreement between the ILO and AICESIS.

Our association is the main international organization meant to support and advocate social dialogue as the main instrument for information, consultation and negotiation among social partners.

The entire legislation drafted by the ILO in the last one hundred years has supported our efforts to build a more just and social work world.

In the late 18th century and early 19th century, the most powerful stage of labour emancipation was beginning: the age of modern technology or the Industrial Revolution laid the foundations of new labour relations.

One hundred years ago, at the beginning of the 20th century, the ILO was established, as a UN agency, and that marked the beginning of the regulation of labour relations and of the standardization of labour.

The ILO has been for a century a beacon and guide for trade unions, which have always found in the ILO their greatest support in their fight for workers' rights.

On behalf of the Democratic Trade Union Confederation of Romania and of the Economic and Social Council, I wish to express our thanks and appreciation for the ILO's activity and for all the support you have given to the trade union movement over the course of the ILO's existence.

In the two centuries since its effects became apparent, the Industrial Revolution changed the way labour was perceived and defined labour relations. New jobs have been created and people's livelihoods have been improved.

Today we witness the beginning of a new phenomenon: the Digital Revolution. Digitalisation makes itself felt in all areas of human activity.

Truly, this phenomenon has many advantages. High-performance computers and robots have proved to be remarkably effective in areas such as medicine, transportation, education, car building, infrastructure, design etc.

At the same time, however, digitalisation is used in wars, in the manipulation of human life and, generally speaking, for purposes that do not always seek human wellbeing and safety.

Those who possess the knowledge of modern computer technologies control the economic and social spheres and the access to resources and can easily influence decisions sometimes directed against human wellbeing.

Digitalisation will also leave its mark on labour and labour relations.

Traditional occupations will disappear, and new ones will emerge. Children starting school today will work in totally different occupations than their parents.

Do we, today's adults, understand that children have to be prepared for a different labour market?

Labour relations will be different, and I believe their regulation in the new digital era requires much effort from us.

In proposing the main working theme during my term as AICESIS President, I wanted to sound the alarm over the fact that digitalisation can easily get out of hand and change from being a blessing for humankind into a dangerous weapon.

I believe we need to focus on the effects produced in the future by the Digital Revolution, to anticipate and try to control them.

The Industrial Revolution is coming to an end. It represented a significant step forward for humankind.

The Digital Revolution has begun. It is our responsibility to ensure that it is put to people's advantage.

I am certain that the seminar which will take place here, and which you have kindly offered to host, will bring added value to the task of finding ways to eliminate the risks that the Digital Revolution might incur and to properly anticipate the future of work and of labour relations.

I take this opportunity to invite you to participate in the AICESIS General Assembly in Bucharest next year, when I will come to the end of my term of office as AICESIS President.

I will be honoured to welcome you and to know that you will be present on this occasion.

On behalf of my colleagues and me, I wish to thank you, Director-General, Mr. Guy Ryder, for your generosity in organizing this event and for the conclusion of a new agreement between the ILO and AICESIS.