Committee Chair Report

ILO – International Labor Organization

Chair: Nicole Rysanek
Deputy Chair: Karun Gauthaman
Personal Statements:

Chair – Nicole Rysanek:

Hello everybody, my name is Nicole Rysanek, I am Canadian, and I am a tenth-grade student at ACS Hillingdon, in London, England. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to be your Head Chair for this committee, alongside my Deputy Chair, Karun. This will be my fifth conference, and my first time attending MUNISS – a

May I welcome you to the ILO committee – The International Labour Organization, set to discuss our three topics surrounding workers rights, economics, and labour conditions, in order to advance social and economic justice. This is an Intermediate Committee, and therefore a fruitful debate is highly anticipated throughout the conference, beginner delegates included! This is an amazing opportunity, and an equally important experience – a good tip is to make the most out of lobbying, don't spend it sitting in a corner!

Good luck, and always have fun!

Deputy Chair – Karun Gauthaman:

Hello everyone, my name is Karun Gauthaman, and I am 14 years old. I have been to some MUN conferences before, and have been a delegate twice so far. I am a student at this school, - ISS and I'm excited to participate as a deputy chair in this year's MUNISS. This is my first time chairing as a deputy chair, and I will be supporting the head chair - Nicole.

MUNISS is an annual conference that we host, and this year you all will be part of the International Labour Council otherwise known as the ILO. We will be discussing and debating on several topics, and end up with a final resolution for each of the topics.

Hope you all have fun in this conference/committee, and good luck debating!

Introduction:

Introduction of the International Labor Council (ILO):

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is part of the United Nations and focuses on making sure people everywhere have good working conditions. It was created in 1919, and now has 183 countries as members. The ILO helps set rules for work and checks if countries are following them, though it can't punish governments.

Glossary

- International Labour Organization (ILO): A UN agency that sets global labor standards and protects workers' rights.

- Decent Work: Fair and safe employment conditions that provide opportunities for growth and protect workers' rights.

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer systems performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, like learning and problem-solving.

- Ethical AI: AI systems which are developed with respect to human rights, promoting fairness and transparency, with the overall aspect of minimizing harm to individuals and society.

- Worker Rights: Entitlements and protections afforded to employees by law or collective bargaining agreements, covering aspects such as fair wages, safe working conditions, non-discrimination, freedom of association, and the right to collective bargaining.

- Reskilling: The process of learning new, or adapting skills in order to fit the evolving labour market.

Issue Explanation

Present Situation and Problems:

The 21st century is one of vast technological advancements, quicker than ever seen before. As much as we reap the many benefits of a society now gifted with Artificial Intelligence, the effects must be carefully considered, as many of these developments are actively disrupting industries in terms of decent work.

A society highly ruled by AI 'will begin taking jobs away from people, millions of jobs – as drivers, radiologists, insurance adjusters' (Talty and Julien). AI has already headed down this path, with the prospective 'goal' of taking over 300 million jobs (Cecchi and Danise). The jobs in which AI threatens to take over, are those that involve repetitive tasks, customer service, manufacturing, data entry, and overall jobs which AI has the potential to overtake and pursue at an equivalent (or potentially better) level of performance.

Therefore, this issue is not linear – some jobs may be better off replaced by AI as it may contribute to a more productive workforce – however, on the other side of the 'decent work' scale, should AI really put 300 million people out of work? Hence, this topic must be of discussion within this International Labour Organization Committee, and there must be solutions proposed to combat the increasing number of decent work offences committed within and around this issue.

Potential solutions which would be great to see in the conference, are those incorporating both the present situation, but also issues which may arise in the future. It is important to recognize that AI is a developing mechanism, which makes advances each day. Therefore, whether it is through laws, programs, etc, it is necessary to prepare and control AI in the workplace, preparing for jobs not to be unethically overtaken, but rather put to use in the areas where most effective, and the least amount of proposed harm caused.

History of the Topic:

Evolution of Artificial Intelligence

To understand this topic, it is necessary to understand Artificial Intelligence as a concept itself, primarily through its evolution. We have seen and experienced AI in different forms decades ago, not just in the form of ChatGPT. A Harvard blog from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences claims that generally, society was first introduced and familiarized with AI through robots in the first half of the 20th century, with the example of the 'heartless Tin Man from Wizard of Oz' (Anyoha). As time and education progressed, AI was becoming more frequently discussed in lecture rooms, especially those at the most prestigious universities in the world.

Alan Turing, a British polymath, has significant importance in the history of AI. In fact, not only in 1940 was he able to break parts of the Enigma Code using a machine he developed with a group of mathematicians (which has been looked back at and very often linked to AI) (Yoshida), but he also released a logical framework in 1950 titled 'Computer Machinery and Intelligence', advancing the evolution of AI significantly.

Presently, AI has evolved to be incorporated into daily life, easily accessible by a simple Google search. The recent release of ChatGPT has progressed and begun what many experts are beginning to refer to as the 'AI era' (2022-2024). Within this era, consequences have arisen, and actions have been made, whether on a national, corporate or even individual level.

The Historical Effect of AI in Workplaces

The incorporation of artificial intelligence into the workplace has not always been a problem. Originally in the 1950s, AI was introduced to provide efficiencies in the workplace, overtaking routine tasks through early computing systems. However, even in its early days, concerns over potential job displacement and the need for safeguarding workers' rights within industries became relevant. Along with the gradual evolution of AI systems, the effect also gradually became more pressing.

Now, as AI exists in workplaces in the form of highly complex computer systems, it takes over much more than just the 'mundane' tasks, but rather further complex tasks such as healthcare diagnostics. The National Institute of Health Research in the UK highlighted a specific role that AI prepares to overtake: reading patient scans. As this is a 'slow, skill-intensive process' alongside 'a growing shortage of radiologists in the UK', AI would seem like a viable solution to this (NHS). However, as mentioned before, this isn't a linear problem. On the other hand, a director at India's Apollo stated that 'AI won't replace the doctors, but those doctors will be replaced who don't use AI' ("AI replace doctors: Will AI substitute doctors in healthcare industry?"). The overall point of discussing this within the conference is to find viable solutions to create equilibrium within this issue.

Main Solutions Proposed

This new coming age of artificial intelligence means that solutions are being proposed day by day. Many of these solutions cover the same aspects: upskilling and reskilling. Upskilling means developing new, additional skills as an employee in the same profession, whereas reskilling means acquiring new skills to transition into another profession. As AI overtakes many jobs, upskilling and reskilling programs have been set in place to work as a 'safety net' for employees, allowing them to be highly qualified, or qualify for another role. Yet, the disadvantage to this highly proposed solution is the sustainability of it. Can this solution be used in the long term? This is a prevalent question, as eventually upskilling and reskilling entire industries to avoid an 'AI takeover' does not fit the definition of decent work.

Any Previous Attempts

- California's Assembly Bill 5 (AB5)
    - Passed in 2019 to address the classification of gig workers, this bill, granting employees access to benefits and protections, overall highlights the need to adapt labour laws to fit the changing nature of work, as industries become increasingly driven by AI.

- UNI Top 10 Principles for Ethical Artificial Intelligence
    - UNI Global Union is a federation of labour unions. The top 10 principles were a set of guidelines to navigate AI in the workplace, placing a focus on worker participation in AI deployment decisions, access to training opportunities in order to mitigate job displacement, and other factors,

- ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work
    - Established in 2019, the commission 'has produced an independent report on how to achieve a future of work that provides decent and sustainable work for all' (International Labour Organization).

Involved Parties

This section highlights the involved parties in this committee, specifically at the MUNISS 2024 conference.
Primarily involved nations:
- United States
- United Kingdom
- Canada
- China
- Australia
- India

Involved NGOs, aid organizations, and UN agencies:
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
    - Dedicated to promoting sustainable development and improving living standards, including labor rights and working conditions, including topics such as AI in the workplace.
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
    - UNESCO has explored the interconnected topics of AI and ethics, useful towards the development of decent working conditions in this new age.
- International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
    - A global trade union federation which represents workers' rights worldwide, advocating, and holding the potential to advocate for policies and regulations in order to protect decent work in this new age of AI.

Media Contribution:

In addressing the impact of AI on the workforce, media coverage often includes a range of perspectives. On one hand, there are those who emphasize the potential for AI to create new opportunities and enhance productivity. They argue that with proper regulation and adaptation, AI can lead to more efficient workplaces and better job prospects. On the other hand, there are concerns about the potential displacement of workers and the need to ensure that AI deployment doesn't exacerbate inequalities or undermine workers' rights. These concerns are often highlighted in stories featuring interviews with workers who fear losing their jobs to automation or facing precarious employment conditions in an AI-driven economy.

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