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Edward Phelan Lecture 2017



Women at Work: the Role of the ILO

Mary E. Daly

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**Women at Work:
the Role of the ILO**

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Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland,
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CHANCELLOR: OPENING REMARKS

Maurice Manning



The National University of Ireland is delighted to collaborate with the International Labour Organization in organising this the third Edward Phelan lecture. We are greatly honoured that Professor Mary Daly has agreed to give the 2017 lecture. This lecture series was established by NUI and ILO to honour a most distinguished Irishman. While qualifying for inclusion in the Dictionary of Irish Biography, the name of Edward J. Phelan is less well remembered in his native country than his lifetime achievements would suggest it deserves to be.

The National University of Ireland recognised Edward Phelan's distinction during his lifetime, conferring an honorary LL.D. on him in 1944. The award acknowledged Phelan's achievement in safeguarding the International Labour Organization during the difficult years of World War Two and establishing a basis for the continuing role of the organisation thereafter.

NUI has continuing reason to honour Edward Phelan who, with his wife Fernande, left a generous bequest to the University. Among other things, this funds the prestigious NUI E. J. Phelan Fellowship in International Law.

NUI seeks to contribute to society by promoting dialogue and enabling a critique of social issues both within and outside of the immediate sphere of higher education. The topic this evening 'Women at Work: the Role of the ILO' presents us with one such opportunity. Professor Daly's address, with the responses from Guy Ryder, ILO, Pat Breen, Minister of State, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Patricia King, ICTU, and Maeve McElwee, Ibec, can be expected to provide serious analysis with insights and perspectives for future reflection.



Maurice Manning, Chancellor NUI, Mary Daly, President RIA, Pat Breen TD, Guy Ryder, ILO, Patricia King, ICTU, Maeve McElwee, Ibec and Attracta Halpin, Registrar NUI

Patricia King, ICTU, Guy Ryder, ILO, Maurice Manning, Chancellor NUI, Pat Breen TD, Mary Daly, President RIA, Jack O'Connor, SIPTU and Maeve McElwee, Ibec



Mary Daly, President RIA, Maurice Manning, Chancellor NUI, Guy Ryder, ILO, Pat Breen TD, Patricia King, ICTU and Maeve McElwee, Ibec.



WOMEN AT WORK: THE ROLE OF THE ILO

Mary E. Daly



Thank you very much Maurice for that very generous introduction. And I really want to thank Guy Rider, Director-General of the ILO, Patricia O'Donovan, and NUI Registrar Attracta Halpin, it is a great privilege to address you on this topic here tonight. What I've particularly enjoyed is reengaging with the ILO and its work. I haven't really looked at ILO material for about twenty odd years so it was nice to become reacquainted. The topic tonight is women at work but I want to give a few preliminary remarks before I get into that.

The ILO is almost identical in age to the Irish Free State. It was founded in 1919, and they are about to embark on major centenarian celebrations. Ireland, despite its troubled beginnings, can claim to be the most successful new nation to emerge in the aftermath of the First World War, we have enjoyed almost a century of democratic government, and an absence of war and invasion. In Ireland we are in the midst of our own decade of centenaries – so it is fitting to remember the ILO – another near centenarian, especially because the ILO was the first international organisation to admit the Irish Free State as a member in 1923.

In this talk I want to reflect on the role of the ILO, and other international organisations in advancing the position of women in the labour force. The end of the Great War saw women in many western countries, including Ireland, become eligible to vote and stand for parliament. Feminism – in its complex forms was part of the political and ideological mix at that time. My paper focuses primarily, though not exclusively on Ireland. It is timely to reflect on the role of international agencies such as the ILO and their determination to make the world a better and fairer place, given the major challenges at present to the values of internationalism.

To begin, I want to recall the importance of the ILO and the League of Nations in enabling the Irish Free State to assert its standing as an independent country, and particularly the contribution made by Edward Phelan. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, which led to the foundation of the Irish Free State, gave Ireland Dominion status, similar to that of Canada. At that time, however, Dominion Status was poorly defined, and it was by no means automatic that Ireland would be admitted as a member of the ILO or the League – or that Ireland, if admitted would have an independent voice, and would not simply be seen as part of the Commonwealth bloc, in terms of election committees and all the rest of it.

In the early 1920s Edward Phelan, whose name is honoured in this lecture, was Chief of the Diplomatic Division of the ILO – Michael Kennedy has described him as ‘the *éminence grise* of Free State League policy’. Phelan played a critical role advising the Irish delegation as they sought to join the League in 1923, and he continued to advise inexperienced Irish ministers and civil servants during the early years of Irish membership. In October 1923 for example, he alerted the Irish Government to the fact that an amendment to the Treaty of Versailles, relating to the composition of the Governing Body of the ILO, had been ratified by the British, ostensibly on behalf of the British Empire (including Ireland); Phelan pushed Dublin to ratify it separately – otherwise there was a danger of a precedent being established that would have adverse consequences for the Irish Free State’s wish to be regarded as an independent country. He contacted W.T. Cosgrave some months later to issue a further warning against accepting Britain’s Empire-wide ratification because, if it became known ‘it will amount to an official intimation to all the Members of the League that our independence and sovereignty are non-existent’. What’s obvious is that Phelan, a former British civil servant, shared the Irish Free State’s aspiration to maximise its independence, and to be seen as distinct from Britain or other Commonwealth countries.

The ILO was important for other reasons. ILO meetings brought together Irish delegates or attending experts – civil servants, trade unionists, employers, into contact with delegates and experts from other member states. By the late 1920s the ILO had 55 members, who were drawn from across Europe and North and South America. In 1934 the USA became a member – a decision taken by Frances Perkins, Secretary for Labour in Roosevelt’s government. That was significant because the USA never joined the League of Nations.

Geneva – home of the League and the ILO, was arguably the most important international space for Irish ministers and civil servants in the 1920s and 1930s – the city where the fledgling Irish Free State came into contact with more nations than anywhere else. Geneva and the ILO are important for another reason because, according to the distinguished historian Mark Mazower, the most significant contribution made by the League, and the ILO was as ‘a source of expertise’; the secretariats were arguably the first modern international bureaucracy, the forerunners of what we know as the EU, the UN, and many other international organisations. The secretariats provided what Mazower has described as an ‘internationalism of technical, intellectual and scientific specialism, [that] proved its value through what it did’. In other words you have really dedicated, high quality civil servants who are collecting information across the world and assembling it, and these are in the days before the internet where it would be very difficult to do that kind of thing. The ILO over the past century, has become a very important and trusted source of information – comparative statistics, comparative legislation on matters to do with labour and protection – providing evidence that can be used by those seeking to change attitudes, seeking to draft legislation, in their own country.

The establishment of the ILO in the immediate aftermath of the Great War reflected a determination to create a better world. It can also be seen as a thank-you to the labour movement for its co-operation in the war effort – working long hours, opening up skilled jobs to hitherto excluded workers, such as women in munitions and engineering factories. The foundation of the ILO was also prompted by fears of social revolution, following the Russian Revolution and revolutionary episodes in 1918-1921 in Germany, Britain and elsewhere. So, there are elements of making a better future, and also turning the clock back in the pre-1914 world. The ILO priority in its early years was to remedy the ills of industrial society. There appears to have been little recognition of the conditions experienced by many agricultural workers or by those working in a family economy – yet countless children, women, and men – young, middle-aged, and old – were exploited in such circumstances – as any close scrutiny of rural Ireland in the early twentieth century would tell you.

Another interesting feature of the ILO is that it was and remains a tripartite organisation, that draws members from labour, employers and government; a very innovative model at the time, but one that anticipates the corporate, social partnership arrangements that became common in determining economic and social policy in many countries in Western Europe in the aftermath of World War II. Ireland developed its own form of social partnership – though somewhat later than elsewhere. The other point worth noting is that the ILO lacks any power to enforce its conventions: it cannot apply sanctions to member states who fail to comply. When thinking about this I was reminded of Conor Cruise O’Brien’s book of the United Nations: *Sacred Dramas*, where he drew an analogy between the authority of the United Nations and the Vatican. You all know how many legions have the Pope, yet to say the Vatican is powerless would be very simplistic indeed. So, it is worth reflecting on how an organisation that lacks any enforcement powers to enforce can be effective.

Women and women’s work were core interests of the ILO from its foundation. As I mentioned earlier the ILO was founded at a time when the first-wave of feminist activism was probably at its peak. In March 1919 representatives of international women’s organisations presented the ILO with a list of demands, which were based on the principle of gender equality. They included equal pay, equal employment opportunities, the suppression of night work where this could be achieved without discriminating against men, and the demand that women be represented in ILO delegations, especially when the agenda related to women. And I would suspect that the first Irish women who travelled as official delegates for their country would have gone to ILO meetings. The ILO draft articles incorporated the demand for women delegates, plus a commitment to recruit women to the ILO staff. Article 427 in the founding documents actually included a commitment in principle to equal pay for men and women, but this counted for little, given that the ILO Constitution stated that its aims would include the protection of children, young persons, and women with no mention of equality. The focus on protective legislation reflected continuity with pre-1914 international labour conferences. These conferences, which were dominated by trade union leaders, who generally represented skilled artisans, favoured the male breadwinner model, and the belief that a woman’s place was as homemaker. The international labour congress in Berne in 1906 had passed resolutions that included a ban on night-work by women or children. The ILO agenda also reflected continuity with national protective legislation regulating working conditions – most of

this legislation was directed at women, children, and young people. There was an unstated assumption at the time, that men were grown up, and that men's working conditions could be regulated and improved through bilateral negotiation and collective bargaining between employers and workers, whereas women and children – who were invariably bracketed together – required legislative protection, and there was a secondary assumption that admitting women to certain trades or grades of employment or places of work, would undermine the pay of male workers and that women would ultimately lose because women in the home would be poorer as a consequence.

This ban on women working at night was seriously eroded during World War One, as women substituted for men, and working hours were extended. The surviving evidence from Britain, where detailed studies were carried out of the health of women in war industries, does not suggest that night work had a significant impact on maternal or infant health and welfare – the highest infant mortality for many decades was in coalmining areas where few women worked outside the home; long working hours by comparison were damaging to health. But irrespective of the evidence, social attitudes strongly objected to women working at night, or indeed late into the evening, and moral arguments such as danger of rape or sexual assault, were commonly brought to bear in support of protective legislation. By 1919 when the ILO was founded there were strong pressures from trade unions, and many politicians to restore pre-WWI working arrangements – sending women back, if not into the home, out of war industries and out of night-time working. The inaugural ILO conference in Washington DC in 1920 prioritised protective legislation, including a draft convention prohibiting night work by women, and women working immediately before or after childbirth, or in 'unhealthy processes'. My view is that if a process is unhealthy, it's unhealthy for men as well as women. Even before Ireland became independent, the UK Parliament enacted the Employment of Women, Young Persons', and Children act – giving effect to those conventions, which automatically extended to Ireland.

Women's employment was a core interest within the ILO during the first two decades of its existence; Albert Thomas the first Director-General was a former French trade union leader, who had served as Minister for Munitions during WWI. At the time, because of a very low population, France was probably the country in western Europe with the highest proportion of women in industrial employment, and in the early 1930s, shortly before his death, Thomas

established a special ILO section focusing on women, which was headed by a French colleague Marguerite Thibert. The necessity for protective legislation applying to pregnancy and child birth or to children and young people was not in question; but its extension to all adult women proved much more divisive. The US Department of Labor's Women's Bureau favoured protective legislation, as did Catholic trade unionists. Many trade union leaders from socialist backgrounds were also in favour and the small numbers of women trade unionists were generally unwilling to clash with their male counterparts on this issue. Some, including leading Irish figures such as Louie Bennett, subscribed to the traditional male breadwinner model; that women were better at home supported by a family wage. Equal-rights feminists such as the British Open Door Council, who were often dismissed as elite women out of touch with ordinary workers, and the US National Women's Party (headed by Alice Paul, who intriguingly had met and corresponded with de Valera on quite amical terms), saw protective legislation targeting women as damaging women's equality.

The ILO focus on industrial employment reinforced images of dark satanic mills, and the evils of the industrial revolution – a message that accorded well with opinion in the new Irish state, which had a decidedly negative attitude towards factory employment, especially for women. They wanted factories scattered, there's a great phrase by Father Finlay in the 1920s, 'one Belfast is enough' meaning you don't want the mills and shipyards of Belfast in the Free State. In the 1920s the Irish Free State had few industrial jobs for women; there was Jacobs' biscuit factory, sewing workshops attached to the large department stores larger laundries. Most women worked in small businesses in the family economy or as domestic servants, which was by far the largest employer. This changed during the 1930s when a drive for self-sufficiency, supported by tariffs and quotas, resulted in the creation of many factories concentrating on light industries – clothing, textiles, food processing, cosmetics and packaging – where a majority of jobs were filled by women and young persons. Trade unions objected strongly to this, they wanted jobs for men and not for women, and they had the considerable support of Catholic social teaching, and the sympathies of leading politicians. De Valera – whose mother had been forced to earn her living and was unable to combine this with caring for her child – was utterly opposed to women's factory employment. He had books on the evils of women and children in the industrial revolution among his collection. Hence the 1936 Conditions of Employment Act – incorporating

many ILO recommendations in Ireland – a 48 hour working week for adults, no work after 8pm except in special circumstances; restrictions on overtime and on shift work, except in industries that required continuous production; one week's holiday with pay, plus 6 public holidays – there was a lengthy debate as to whether these should be church holidays or bank holidays. Wage agreements could be registered and made legally enforceable; employment of young people under 14 was forbidden; working hours were restricted for those under 18, and young workers could be banned from specific industries. Many of these provisions were admirable, the *Economist* described it as 'an industrial code far ahead of that in force in any other country'. The legislation is really only remembered today because of the restrictions on women. Women and young people were banned from night work, and women could be banned from working in certain industries, or gender quotas set (not to advance women but to restrict!).

Irish employers were supportive; they believed that it would prevent cut-price, 'back-room factories'. Significantly when the bill was going through Dáil Éireann it was described as fully in accord with ILO decrees, and this was recognised in 1937 when Seán Lemass became president of the ILO. The Act was widely welcomed, though some female trade unionists expressed mild criticism. Although no restrictions were ever imposed on women working in a particular industry – despite repeated requests from at least one female trade union leader that women should be barred from quite a long list of industries – the legislation almost certainly acted as a constraint on employers if they wanted to set up a factory employing females only. In this instance the ILO was invoked to justify the case for legislation that reinforced and reflected Irish opinion.

ILO directive 4 banning women's night work was widely implemented by member states, though by the 1930s opposition was emerging from small cohorts of women who had begun to gain entry into non-traditional careers – BBC engineers; in Ireland women chemistry graduates who were excluded from well-paid jobs in the state-owned beet sugar factories, and more generally women in supervisory roles, and in the print industry. But the climate of the 1930s was not favourable to expanding the rights of working women. Bear in mind this is a decade of mass unemployment and depression. During the Depression women were frequently scape-goated as the cause of male unemployment. Many countries, including Ireland,

introduced regulations banning married women from public sector jobs. No ILO directives or recommendations were issued opposing these marriage bans. This is not surprising – ILO directives emerged through a process of compromise and debate among delegates from member states, supported by evidence assembled by the secretariat. A recent history of the ILO describes the early directives relating to women as ‘conferring international legitimacy on women’s economic straitjacket that it took decades to unfasten’. Despite this unpromising environment the ILO and the League were venues for heated debates on women’s equality during inter-war years. In 1935 Belgian labour expert and academic Ernest Mahaim, who ranks among the founding fathers of the ILO, recalled that in 1919 ‘the propaganda of extreme feminism had not... reached the pitch where it is today’. Pressure from equal-rights feminists were not entirely ineffective; the directive on night-work was amended to exempt women in supervisory posts and in 1939 a conference in Havana of American states who were members of the ILO passed a resolution in favour of the right to work of married women.

World War II yet again disrupted traditional patterns of employment, bringing women into jobs from which they were otherwise excluded and easing marriage bars, though not in neutral Ireland where the same labour force pressures did not exist. Once again, the end of the war brought a new vision for a better future, with the founding of the United Nations, and the reinvigoration of the ILO – which had miraculously survived to become an associate of the United Nations. Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights specified the right to equal pay for equal work. The UN’s emphasis on equality was echoed in the ILO’s 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia –

...all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, or economic security and equal opportunity.

The Philadelphia Declaration embraced goals such as full employment; guaranteed training; the right of workers to migrate for employment; equal opportunities in education and vocational training – and much more. In 1951 the ILO enacted Convention No 100 – the Equal Remuneration Convention, and set out clearly how it should be applied – widespread consultation; measures to ensure its application at all levels throughout the public sector; the need to establish methods of objective appraisal, so that work of equal value could be determined.

This new focus on equality relating to women is evident over the following decades. In 1956 the ILO passed a resolution prohibiting sex as grounds for discrimination on pay; ILO staff carried out extensive research into the working condition of women with family responsibilities, and a detailed study began in 1959 of restrictions/discrimination against married women across all member countries – covering not just employment and promotion, but pensions, unemployment benefit and welfare entitlements. This research provided a basis for ILO recommendation 123 of 1965, a detailed document covering the integration of women with family responsibilities in employment on a footing of equality, the kind of issues that we all face so much today, including specific provisions relating to education; child care and retraining. ILO research underpinned the work of the UN Economic and Social Council, which was also focussing attention on women's rights in the 1960s, culminating in the UN 1966 International Covenant on Economic Cultural and Social Rights and the 1967 Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against women.

How does this impact on Ireland? The answer very simply is not immediately. Ireland ratified a revised 1951 ILO convention on night work for women shortly after it was adopted – there was no question of Ireland of the early 1950s ratifying the Equal Numeration Convention. Banning night work fit with the Irish culture and Irish social attitudes, but equal pay regardless of gender certainly did not. But by the early 1970s Ireland had yet to sign up to ILO 100, or ILO 3 – one of the original conventions passed in 1919 that protected the employment of women before and after childbirth. In the introverted Ireland of the early 1950s the failure to sign up to these conventions, or the publication of international comparisons by the ILO relating to married women in public service, which really showed Ireland sticking out as an outlier, mattered little as nobody was terribly concerned as to how Ireland was perceived internationally. But once Ireland joined the UN in 1956, and began taking a more active role in

the Council of Europe, and the OEEC/OECD, and once Ireland began aspiring to EEC membership, international and ILO conventions become much more important and we began to wonder how do others see us. By the early 1960s there are increasing references in government files to international directives, relating to maternity leave, equal pay and related matters, and growing pressures to sign up to the Council of Europe's European Social Charter – which Ireland does in the 1960s but only having derogated from 2 key clauses – the clause protecting women from being dismissed from work because of childbirth, and the clause about adequate time off for breastfeeding mothers. On that occasion Ireland claimed – rather dubiously – that sick pay available to all workers in insured employment constituted paid maternity leave. In 1968 Ireland signed the UN resolution on the elimination of discrimination against women, but on this occasion, it had to reserve its position on equal pay, and didn't support that particular aspect of the resolution, and it also reserved its position again on the marriage bar, and declaring rather brazenly that not calling women for jury service did not constitute discrimination. But one can detect a growing sense of embarrassment at these evasions and there were debates between ministers and officials as to whether signing an international convention – while derogating from key clauses – was more likely to draw attention to Ireland's position than failing to ratify the convention.

While this push for gender equality occurred throughout several international organisations, the ILO was to the fore with respect to declarations/regulations relating to working and social conditions. Article 119 of the Treaty of Rome provided for equal pay for men and women, yet ILO article 100 became the benchmark for EEC member states because it referred to 'equal remuneration for work of equal value' and 'objective appraisal of jobs' – wording that offered potential for comparisons of pensions, and other non-pay forms of remuneration and comparisons between different occupations. In 1967 the Irish civil service set up a committee to examine the introduction of equal pay – as part of its preparation for EEC membership, and the ratification of ILO 100 was central to that discussion. Ireland finally ratified it in December 1974 following the enactment of the 1974 anti-discrimination pay act.

Independent of Ireland's wish to join the EEC and appear as a good international citizen, by the 1960s there were growing internal pressures to implement equal remuneration and remove the bar on married women in public service employment – which was matched by an informal but almost

universal marriage bar for non-manual workers throughout the private sector. The economy was growing; more couples were marrying and at an earlier age and reports were emerging of shortages of women workers. Women's trade union membership was rising, especially in public-service employment. National pay agreements with different minimum increases for women and men highlighted gender discrimination. There was a pay agreement in 1964 where men got a pound a week minimum pay increase and women got three quarters of that. Equally important these national agreements destroyed the Irish government's standard argument against enacting ILO 100 – the argument was that remuneration was a matter for collective bargaining, not official directives, but then how do you have these minimum pay increases. Irish trade unions began to pass pro-forma resolutions demanding equal pay, but statistics tell another story – there was no noticeable narrowing of the gap between male and female earnings in Ireland until the 1970s. Few women worked in identical positions as men. Employment paths for women in banking and the civil service where gender streamed; in other words, men and women had different roles and were kept apart so you couldn't do the comparisons. A ban on married women ensured synthetic turnover, reducing the pressure for promotion positions open to women. Where men and women did identical jobs – as teachers, or some civil service grades, married and single pay grades were common; Irish officials argued that they did not constitute sex discrimination, but as only married men could work, only men would get the pay grade.

Although the domestic environment was a factor, international forces were more important in bringing about change. Ireland was determined to present an international image as a modern progressive nation, and thus sign up to the directives to which other modern western nations subscribed. For trade unionists and more especially women's organisations, the ILO and the UN provided both evidence and an agenda for change that they could push domestically; ILO 100 provided a tested and widely-accepted instrument that was seen as furthering equal remunerations – how effective it proved in practice in its early years is a matter for further research. It was widely cited as a goal/recommendation, most notably in the Commission on the Status of Women reports in 1970 and 72, the first was about equal pay. The existence of international conventions, almost certainly ensured the introduction of more equal working and welfare conditions for women at an earlier date than might otherwise have been expected. A survey carried out by the ESRI in 1968 showed that 79% of men believed that single men should have a higher

basic wage than a single woman, and only 5% supported the concept of a single pay scale, regardless of gender or marital status. International pressures counteracted a complete lack of political will and popular support for equal pay, notably when the EEC intervened to prevent the Irish government from postponing the introduction of equal pay in 1975.

The story after the 1970s is of progress, but continuing frustrations. The number of women at work in Ireland rose by over 40% between 1971 and 1992; the number of men at work declined. The removal of the ban on married women in the public service and the more informal ban in the private service; the 1975 Anti-Discrimination Pay Act and the 1977 Employment Equality Act have been credited with bringing about this increase in the numbers of women in paid employment, which coincided with a period of low economic growth, when total numbers at work fell. The gap between female and male earnings narrowed somewhat – females earned 48.4% of male earnings in 1971, 59.7% in 1991 – though most of the convergence happened in the 1970s when the equal pay directive was introduced. More equal entitlement to welfare benefits was a major factor in encouraging women to remain in paid employment, and the legislation prevented any consideration of 1930s style restrictions on women's employment during a time of economic recession.

The international picture is not dissimilar: significant increases in the numbers of women in paid employment; expansion and diversification in the range of jobs; improved welfare benefits for those living and working in countries that had embraced a welfare state; a reduction in gender pay gap, though it remained substantial, and the persistence of significant imbalances in terms of women in senior positions. The 1981 ILO Convention relating to Workers with Family Responsibilities highlighted the need to integrate the domestic sphere and paid work; this has been described as 'an instrument that can and has been used by women's movement to promote gender equality'. Many recommendations from this Convention were included in the *Second Commission on the Status of Women* – which reported in 1993, just as the Irish economy entered an unprecedented growth spurt.

By the eve of the millennium Irish women's participation rate had risen to 44%, compared with 36% in 1991, though this was still significantly below EU average. By 2005 however the employment rate of Irish women was slightly above the EU average; the 2015 figure is almost identical at 62.6%. The major change has been the substantial rise in the number of mothers

of young children in the labour-force in Ireland. This has occurred despite inadequate and expensive child-care, and more remarkably Ireland remains an outlier to Europe's plummeting birth rate. The post-2008 recession had a much greater impact on male jobs in Ireland, because of the collapse of the construction sector; male employment rate fell by 12%; women's by 2% and for a brief period women constituted a majority of PAYE workers. The recession increased the number of households where women were the primary earners – not necessarily an index of improvement. ILO 100 remains relevant today; in 2015 the gap in male and female earnings in Ireland was 14% – highest at the most senior levels – but the approach towards equal pay in the mid-twentieth century now seems charmingly naïve, I don't think anyone realised how complicated it would be to achieve it. Research into the persistence of pay and promotional imbalances has revealed the complex issues that shape women's employment – educational choices; child and family care responsibilities; atypical employment profiles, social attitudes, lack of role models. There is a growing awareness of the need to adopt a more holistic approach to work, viewing it in the context of family; social and cultural attitudes, education choices, not just for women but for men.

If Ireland presents a picture of undoubted gains, plus a growing awareness that inequalities persist, the position world-wide is infinitely more complex. In its early years the ILO concentrated on paid employment in industry/services, later extending its attention to paid employment in agriculture. In many parts of the world women's work – and the work of men and children – takes place within a family economy, or within a shadowy world that is not readily amenable to regulation or inspection. ILO norms, drawn up with developed western economies in mind, were often seen as inappropriate to the needs of third-world countries – whether they concerned child labour or gender discrimination and enforcing them has become more difficult given the changes in the global economy. An economy consisting of large firms manufacturing designated products in a single country was much easier to police than the current economic model of globally-mobile companies that subcontract manufacturing to lesser-known companies across the globe. A world where companies move freely and many workers are employed in a black or grey economy of sub-contracts, franchise – where protecting entitlement to pensions or occupational welfare is extremely problematic, likewise efforts to introduce minimum wages or regulations on working hours. Reflecting the changing environment, in the 1990s the ILO decided to move away from

its traditional emphasis on conventions with specific obligations, to focus on core principles and drive those principles as a model throughout the world. Through its Decent Work Agenda – the ILO commits ‘to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity’ – admirable goals, that must be reiterated – how they can be achieved is the question. A recent report shows only marginal improvements globally since the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 (Beijing); there have, over the past twenty odd years, been significant advances in women’s education but these have not translated into comparable improvement in work; sectoral segregation persists, and women failed to benefit proportionately from rising employment in many developing countries; indeed female unemployment is emerging as a serious issue in some parts of the world; gender gaps in employment have risen in southeast Asia. The 2016 report concludes gloomily that at current trends it will take 70 years to close the gender wage gap.

Some of the greatest challenges relate to male employment – the loss not just of traditional male jobs, but the associated resentments associated with such losses, and the dangers that this poses for women’s equality. What is also evident is that while issues relating to women and work are undoubtedly influenced by the local economic political and cultural context, they were also global issues that demand a comparative and global analysis and action. So, at a time when some of the ugliest aspects of nationalism are raising their head, let us recognise the importance of international organisations, such as the ILO, in monitoring national and international work practices, and setting standards to which nations and employers should aspire. But if ILO’s Decent Work Agenda is to succeed, this will require advocates at national level, and in other trans-national networks such as the EU.

Thank you very much.

RESPONSE

**Guy Ryder,
Director-General, ILO**



Well thank you very much good evening everybody. Before I try to respond to the magnificent lecture that we've just listened to, let me begin with some thanks. Firstly, thanks to you Chancellor of course for again co-organising and so generously hosting this third Phelan Lecture, it's an event that we've become very attached to at the ILO. We'll have to make sure this lecture proceeds in the future.

This lecture is particularly timely because it comes at a time where it's the eve of a moment when the government of Ireland will take up for the first time, a seat on the ILO's governing body as a titular member. I was surprised to learn that this will be the first time since entry in 1923 that Ireland has occupied a seat on the governing body, it leads me to the conclusion that Ireland has been waiting for that seat longer than Mayo has been waiting for an all Ireland final victory, and it illustrates that patience is rewarded. Professor Daly let me thank you for your lecture, it was thought provoking, it was full of information, and I'm truly going to reply to what you've said to us by sharing with the audience tonight some of the thoughts you provoked in me as I listened to you.

The first thing I want to talk about perhaps relates to the first part of your lecture where you spoke about Edward Phelan's role in the early days of the International Labour Organisation. It strikes me, listening to you again, and other things I've read about Phelan, that those are the years from 1919 when Phelan became the first international civil servant, he has that label, from 1923 when the newly fledged Irish Free State joined the ILO. Geneva became a very important place because it was in Geneva in the inter action between Irish representatives coming to the ILO, coming to the League of Nations, the interaction between Ireland and those international institutions.

And indeed, Edward Phelan was something of a crucible. If it's true that Phelan was an *éminence grise* of Free State League Policy, and I'm not sure it's appropriate that he would have been, but it's very interesting, then I think it's an illustration of the interaction between national and international life and international organisations. And it's a two-way street, that is to say it seems to me indisputable from the historical record, that Ireland's interaction with the ILO from 1923, with the United Nations from 1956, with Europe from 1973, that interaction had very important affects on the developments of Ireland. Which go beyond the immediate economic effects of trade agreements or market integration, it's about a flow of ideas, it's about an osmosis of thinking. And I think that those open windows between Ireland and the international community have been very important for Ireland and I'm absolutely sure they've been very important for the international community and for Europe. I think those are thoughts worth bearing in mind as we face, and you said at the end of your lecture Professor, the moment when some of the more ugly facets of nationalism are on the rise, perhaps the merits of internationalism, the value of multilateralism, are called into question. I think you ought to look at the record of history and take these very positive thoughts from that record.

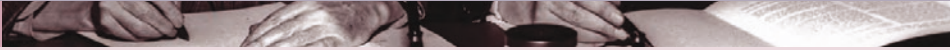
The second thought again from the early part of your lecture about Phelan has to do with the role of civil servants. Phelan was the first international civil servant; he did as you say, set up perhaps the very first international organisation bureaucracy. Because it worked, and because it provided the machinery of international corporation, it showed its worth. Phelan straddled the early part of the ILO's history and its entry into modernity. He was there in 1919 but he was also the author, and it was him, of the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944 which if you like, is a document which launched the ILO into its post second world war modern trajectory. And I can't help to draw the parallel with the work of another great Irish civil servant T. K. Whitaker, formally a Chancellor of the NUI. If Phelan wrote the Declaration of Philadelphia in 1944, the birth of ILO modernity, T. K. Whitaker can be credited, in his 1957 document on the Irish economy and, at least some of the paternity of modernism in Ireland. Civil servants and the role of effective administration government, I think, are other thoughts that we need to keep in mind in today's rather troubled circumstances.

Now turning to the subject, I'll do this rather more quickly than I've started off, of the lecture, of the role of the ILO in respect to promoting the role of women at work. I listened with great interest and a little bit of worry at some points to the historic record because, and I hope you'll excuse my paraphrasing what you said Professor, the portrait that you paint, and I think it's an accurate one, is a slow evolution in the ILO from an initial preoccupation with a protective attitude, something of a paternalistic attitude, towards women at work and a sort of a gradual move from those origins through to today's commitment to promotion of equality at work. And certainly, it's difficult to argue with that characterisation of ILO's work, we see in the original constitution of the ILO this grouping of women with young people and children, people to be protected from the evils of the industrial state, it seems to me. And the early conventions of the ILO are also redolent with this protective attitude. That's true, but two things. These are not unambiguous or sort of gradualistic changes from one thing, one pole, to another. The equality reflex was out at the beginning, interestingly in the Treaty of Versailles, the treaty that gave birth to the ILO, one of nine principles, which were headed as being a special and urgent need was that men and women should receive equal remuneration for work of equal value. An interesting precursor to Convention 100, which came over thirty years later. So that equalities reflex was there at the beginning, and I would have to say that today, the protective reflex is still with us, and very much with us. I would not be telling you the truth but if I go to a number of countries the first thing I hear from ministers, the first thing I often hear from trade unionists, and indeed from employers, is sometimes, we have to protect women. And whether you take that at face value or as a pretext for exclusion from labour markets, I would leave it for you to decide.

And the second source of unease I have is it's easy to explain ILO history, or the evolution of ILO work in respect to women, from a simple, sort of I regard it as shrugging your shoulders at history and saying well 'that's what attitudes were like at that time, the ILO was just reflecting what people thought'. I take the view that the ILO, and any institution such as the ILO, needs to do a little bit better than just reflect today's realities, and I think you would agree professor. We need to be ahead of that curve and we need to be pushing things in the right direction. Now without repeating the excellent analysis that we've heard, it is true that if the ILO came out of the eruption of women into European labour markets in World War I with its protective reflexes, it came out of the eruption of women into European labour markets in World War II

with a commitment to equality which was qualitatively different from anything that had gone before. And you see Convention 100 and equal remuneration and I think a steady forward march of commitment to equality. And yet, and I think the phrase is absolutely wonderful and I agree with it, there is something charmingly naïve about the ILO's struggles over the last fifty or sixty years to achieve equality. The ILO is not often accused of being naïve, and never accused of being charming, but this is an accurate characterisation of the way we've gone forward. Now sixty years after the two key conventions on equality, the convention 100 of equal remuneration and Convention 111 on discrimination which is closely tied to it, sixty years later, what do we see in the world? A gender pay gap, which stands at the global level of twenty three percent. That's the gender pay gap between women and men. Still as segregated labour markets women's participation rates average out twenty-six percentage points lower than men across the world, and of course the segregation only accentuates that injustice. And I've taken the view, and I think many people with me, that we can no longer carry on being charmingly naïve. It strikes me that this one-dimensional approach to equality issues needs to be replaced, or augmented, or compounded with something rather more sophisticated. And here, because I cannot do better myself, I just want to quote just one sentence from what the Professor has said to us, having said that the mid-twentieth century ILO approach now seems charmingly naïve, you point to 'the need to adopt a more holistic approach to work, looking at the multiple areas which contribute to continuing inequality at work,' you mention the context of family, social and cultural attitudes, educational choices, and a great deal more. And it's that type of thinking which has led the ILO. As we approach our centenary in two years' time, this has been recalled, to have launched a centenary initiative on women at work, one of seven centenary initiatives. And this has a very simple objective, but I think it corresponds very closely with the challenge that Professor Daly has put before us. It has the objective of looking at the historical record of achievement, but also the historic record of failure, I don't think it is enough and I think ILO membership agrees with this, simply doing the same things that we have continuously done for the past fifty or sixty years and turn the volume up a little bit. We need to look inwardly; we need to identify what are perhaps the hidden reefs that keep us from advancing closer to full equality and to act upon them. And I think we have tremendous opportunity to do so.

7 ILO CENTENARY INITIATIVES



TOWARDS THE ILO CENTENARY: REALITIES, RENEWAL AND TRIPARTITE COMMITMENT

In 2019, the International Labour Organization will mark the centenary of its creation in the aftermath of World War I. While the centenary will be an occasion to celebrate its past achievements and the people who made them possible, the ILO has launched a number of key initiatives intended to equip it to take up successfully the challenges of its mandate in the future.

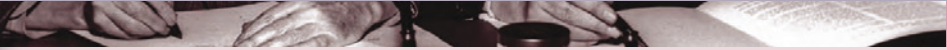
Shaping a future that works for all

The problems of unemployment, underemployment, inequality and injustice are becoming more, not less, acute.

There are calls for fairer globalization, for balanced and sustainable development and for economic growth that drives social progress. Action in the world of work is crucial to these objectives. At the same time the world of work itself is rapidly evolving.

The ILO is equipping itself to understand and respond to the changes in the world of work and to give leadership in the global challenge of ensuring Decent Work for all women and men.

In 2013 the Director-General set out the challenges facing the organization in his report *Towards the ILO centenary: Realities, renewal and tripartite commitment*, where he presented the following seven centenary initiatives:



The future of work initiative

Initiating and cultivating a global dialogue on the future of work, to build the ILO's ability to prepare and guide governments, workers and employers to better meet the world of work challenges of the next century.

The end to poverty initiative

Promoting a multidimensional response through the world of work, labour markets, and social and employment protection to eradicate global poverty.

The women at work initiative

Reviewing the place and conditions of women in the world of work and engaging workers, employers and governments in concrete action to realize equality of opportunity and treatment.

The green initiative

Scaling up the ILO's office-wide knowledge, policy advice and tools for managing a just transition to a low carbon, sustainable future.

The standards initiative

Enhancing the relevance of international labour standards through a standards review mechanism and consolidating tripartite consensus on an authoritative supervisory system.

The enterprise initiative

Establishing a platform for ILO engagement with enterprises which would contribute to their sustainability and to ILO goals.

The governance initiative

Reforming the ILO's governance structures, assessing the impact of the 2008 Declaration as set out in its final provisions, and act on its finding.

(www.ilo.org)

On the 8th of March on International Women's Day, which is quickly approaching, the ILO will be publishing a major survey that we've done with the Gallop Organisation, a survey of women's views about the world of work, what their experience of the world of work is, and where they see the problems as lying. And we hope that this will help us to act in new areas of policy innovation. We have that, and we also have the 2030 sustainable development agenda adopted by the United Nations which in one of its seventeen goals, SDG5, commits the international community to very clear gender equality goals. Let me say there, talking about the role of Irish civil servants, that the role of Ireland in bringing that agenda to reality has been absolutely extraordinary, and I would mention Ambassador Donoghue your Ambassador in New York is one of the great contributors to that agenda.

And finally, and this is my last word. We are at a time when the world of work is undergoing transformative change. Many of us worry about that change, we see the erosion of institutions, processes, certainties, which we value. But I take the view that we have to look for opportunities in transformative change. Yesterday the ILO published with the Euro Found here in Dublin, a report called 'Working Anytime, Anywhere'. Which is looking at how tele-work, remote work, is actually transforming the way people are working, and there's good news in there and bad news in there. But the point is, if we take a look at what is happening and if we decide to use it, to lever it, to achieve the goals that we think are the right goals, then we have a new opportunity, I think, to deliver an important push forward towards women's equality at work. You know it's not about how technology deciding what's going to happen to us, it's about us deciding how we're going to use technology and many other factors of change, to advance the goals that we set for ourselves. Equality at work must be high amongst them. I thank you.

RESPONSE

Pat Breen, Minister for Employment and Small Business, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation



Chancellor, Director-General, Patricia and Maeve, and of course Professor Daly and to you, the audience as well.

First of all, it is a great honour for me to be invited this evening to deliver a response to Professor Daly's learned and insightful lecture on the theme of 'Women at Work: the role of the ILO'. A great, powerful presentation from Professor Daly and I think a powerful response from Guy Ryder as well, and to the subject theme for tonight's lecture.

As already outlined, Professor Daly's lecture is the third in the series of Phelan lectures. My Department, the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, has been centrally involved in this lecture series since its inception in 2013 owing to our lead role on engagement with the ILO.

We are here this evening to honour the name of Edward Phelan. Who of course was born in Waterford in the south of Ireland. Much has already been said about his distinguished career which started in the British civil service. From there he moved on to become one of the first of the international civil servants when he joined the ILO when it was established in 1919, rising through the ranks to become Director-General in 1941. He was very much a pioneer and I think it can be said that he has inspired many generations of public servants to pursue ambitious agendas and be pioneers in their own right in the area of the civil service.

In this regard, and given that this year's lecture looks at the issue of women and work, I must mention Thekla Beere, an illustrious civil servant who had the privilege of leading Irish delegations to the ILO in the Fifties. Beere began her career in 1924 in the statistics branch of the Department of Industry and Commerce. She was born in County Westmeath.

Many years later that Department merged with the Department of Labour to become the Department of Enterprise and Employment which is today known as the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. I suppose it reflects the era we live in, the era of innovation and of course enterprise which is so important as well.

But let me say a little bit about Beere because I think it's important. She had a renowned talent and ability to ensure that she moved through the ranks, and she definitely did move through the ranks. When Beere was appointed Assistant Secretary in 1953, she assumed responsibility for the Department's labour division which sponsored many important pieces of legislation in labour history, including the 1955 Factories Act and the 1958 Offices Premises Act. In that capacity she regularly led the Irish delegation to meetings of the ILO in Geneva, and was appointed chair of the ILO's Finance Committee as well. That was a powerful position for her, back in those days to be chair of that finance committee. When Beere was appointed Secretary of the newly established Department of Transport and Power in 1959 she actually became the first woman to be Secretary of a Government Department.

Following her retirement in 1966, that was a milestone year, because it was the year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising, Beere became chair of the Commission on the Status of Women, which Professor Daly has referred to in her lecture as well. The report of that Commission, which was published in 1972, dealt with many of the issues which Professor Daly spoke about this evening; issues such as maternity leave, the elimination of the marriage bar and equal pay. The Beere report is widely acknowledged as a watershed report in the history of Irish women's rights.

Unfortunately for me the time available this evening does not permit me to look in detail at Ireland's robust suite of employment equality legislation. However, look at the degree of advancement as regards female participation in the labour force is perhaps evident in the fact that people today, I believe, would find many of the barriers which Professor Daly has detailed in her excellent historical overview of women in the labour force very difficult to understand. I had two aunts myself who were in the civil service in Dublin back in the 40s and 50s, and both of them had to retire from their jobs at the civil service and rear their families. I've said this to my own nieces and nephews, and to my son as well, they couldn't believe it. It is a fact that women had

to retire from their job because they had a family. Thekla Beere, for example, was also, and I think it's important to point out this, the sole female student in the Department of Law when she entered Trinity College Dublin back in 1919 (the year the ILO was established). Think about that, she was the first female student in the Department of Law at Trinity College. It's hard to believe it. It is impossible to imagine such a situation in 2017, when there are more female solicitors practising in Ireland than males. That has been the transformation that has taken place.

Listening to Professor Daly's lecture here this evening I was struck by the far-reaching influence of the ILO on the gender equality policies of its member states. My Department knows at first hand that the ILO is a vast source of expertise. As Professor Daly so eloquently said, this places us in a position of being able to provide both Irish evidence and an agenda for change.

In May of this year, another important milestone for us as well, my Department will be hosting a Conference on the Future of Work. The Conference will take place in the context of the DG's Centenary Initiative at the same time. It will look at the challenges, and there are challenges out there, posed by the traditional employer/employee relationship in the new world of work, and we are talking about the new world of work, in particular technological advances etc. The output from the Conference will feed into deliberations into Geneva in the Future of Work, as Guy has said, as the ILO approaches the start of its second hundred years of existence in 2019. In preparation for the Conference in collaboration with the Social Partners, and we use that word a lot nowadays, 'collaboration,' because it's a very important word to use in the challenges that we have in industry and labour in today's world. My Department has engaged with sources of expertise not just at home nationally, not just at EU level, but also in the ILO where there is a huge wealth of expertise and talent. The co-operation which we have enjoyed with the ILO on this issue is typical of the excellent working relationship which the ILO has with its tripartite constituents.

The Irish Government also works in close partnership with the ILO through Irish Aid, the Government's programme of development assistance. Through this programme we have worked in partnership with the ILO to create greater opportunities for women and men, including people with disabilities, to secure decent work and income. The partnership, building on the experience of previous support, has recently focused on improving social protection

programmes and supporting employment intensive public investment in five of our partner countries Mozambique, Zambia, Tanzania, Malawi and Vietnam as well. I think that's an important drive as well in our obligation in the third world countries working with the ILO.

Looking to our engagement with other areas of the UN, and of course we've had a lot of engagement with the UN over the years. I would like to mention also, that beginning this year Ireland is becoming a member of the UN Council for the Status of Women. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

In conclusion, I would say that Ireland is looking forward to taking a full seat on the Governing Body of the ILO, this is the first time since 1923, in June of this year for a three-year period. And as noted already this is happening during the centenary process. This will be the first time that Ireland has been a full member of the Governing Body.

The tripartism which is at the heart of the ILO finds, I suppose, resonance in the social dialogue which we enjoy here in Ireland. The strong relationship which we have with our Social Partners will be fundamental to our ability to play an active role on the Governing Body over the next three years. Last year I attended my first International Labour Conference and I did see at first hand in the two days I was in Geneva, the enriching experience of the meeting of minds and cultures of governments, of ministers, of workers and employers from 170 countries that gathered together with the common purpose of advancing the decent work agenda. What happens in Geneva, it is a forum which facilitates and encourages the broadening of horizons and the raising of levels of ambition.

Our term as full member of the Governing Body coincides with what will be a very active and ambitious period for the ILO as it approaches its centenary year of 2019. Last year, we also celebrated a very important centenary here in Ireland in 2016, when we celebrated the centenary of the Easter Rising which led to Ireland's independence. The theme of our centenary of 1916 was to remember the past, and it is important to remember the past, to reconcile and respect all traditions of our land. Of course, over the twelve months, we presented Ireland to the world, we imagined our future, and

this is what we are doing with the ILO as well. Above all else we celebrated our achievements, and there have been great achievements. And I'm sure when the ILO celebrates their centenary of 1919 in 2019, under the stewardship of Guy Ryder, that those very same sentiments will be very much a part of those centenary celebrations, celebrating our achievements, imagining our future, and above all else, presenting ILO to the world and to its members. I congratulate Guy on his election for a second term of office as Director-General, it is a great achievement to be in a second term of office in the ILO. And we look forward, and I know you look forward Guy, to the challenges and there are many challenges that lie ahead in the difficult economic environment that we face at the moment, and not just at home, but in Europe, and the world. And those challenges will continue and that's why we have to be very active, and that's why the ILO and our partners here are extremely important. So, I'm delighted once again to have been invited to respond to the comments made by Professor Daly, and to Guy as well, and it's a wonderful evening to be here and it's a great honor for me as Minister for Employment and Small business, thank you very much.

RESPONSE

**Patricia King,
General Secretary, ICTU**



Thank you very much Chancellor and thank you Professor Daly for a very informative and thought-provoking lecture. I suppose there can be no doubt as to the importance of the work of the ILO since its inception in 1919 and I think that was very strongly supported in Professor Daly's lecture. But today we're in challenging times, and it's timely indeed to reflect on the importance of an organisation with the aims of promoting rights at work, the rights of women, encouraging decent employment opportunities, enhancing social protection, and strengthening dialogue on work related issues. Indeed, I believe we owe a debt to Edward Phelan for his guidance and support to the fledgling Irish State taking its place in the wider world. And we can but wonder, what Ireland's position would have been like, and how Ireland would've actually found itself in international terms, and established its reputation internationally and to what extent that would've happened had his work not happened, had he not supported Ireland in such a very strong way. Indeed, would we have gotten to place where we were asked to co-chair the process that led to the adoption of the Agenda 2030. In September 2016, we were engaged in that, and it's important, very important in achieving or attempting to achieve the goal of decent work and gender equality. And despite the fact, that it lacks enforcement powers of other international organisations such as the World Trade Organisation, we should acknowledge the effective manner in which it has carried out its role in the world and not least in the subject matter of tonight's lecture – the promotion of decent work for women.

Professor Daly's paper sets out, in a comprehensible and highly readable manner, some of the history of women's struggle and the unfinished journey towards decent work and the important role that the ILO has played in that struggle. Indeed, Professor, your lecture highlights the role and attitude in the

trade union movement in those early decades towards women's rights. And what today seems to be an unlikely set of allies, the Catholic Church and De Valera. And the predominate male breadwinner model is still a feature of Irish life, albeit, for some different reasons. On that very point actually, I took a look at very recent CSO figures on employment in Ireland, there are 1.06 million males at work, 893,000 females at work, nearly equal numbers of both gender in education, but the employment figures of the CSO also include a category: those engaged in home duties. And look at this for a set of figures; 10,000 males were clocked up in that category, and 435,000 females. The positive note is I then had a look at the 2014 figures and found that it was 460,000 in 2014. So slight little move in the right direction. And the OECD tell us that women in Ireland spend four times as much time on care duties and twice as much on household work. Professor Daly makes reference to the direct discriminatory practices relating to women who were forced to leave the public service or leave their employment to take up caring duties for some period of their career. The actual fact is that today in 2017, we are still making women pay for that discrimination in terms of issues, and regulations, and stipulations, relating to their pensions. We have as well, multiple discriminatory issues relating facing marginalised groups such as traveller women, women with disabilities, trans women, and migrant women. These were aired at a very public international event in Geneva this week where the Irish government was examined for the implementation of its responsibilities under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

As has been mentioned by previous speakers, we of course have the issue of the gender pay gap. I particularly and on purpose picked Morgan McKinley and the work they did and I did that or lest I be accused of using my own propaganda to make the point, I'm sure McKinley wouldn't regard me as a great spokesperson for them, so I decided to use them because in 2016 they did quite an extensive report on the gender pay gap. They reported that the average gender pay gap in Ireland stands at 20%. On average, men working in like for like professional jobs earned 12,000 euro per annual more than their female colleagues. This was based on a salary and bonus model where the salary gap was 16% and the bonus gap 50%. The point in the lecture is also made, that in earlier years, women and children were invariably, to quote Professor Daly, 'bracketed together'. And in a way, this is still the case. Women's participation in the labour market is hugely influenced by childcare provision. As we know only too well, our childcare costs here are the second

highest in the OECD for couples, and the highest for lone parents. While some small moves were made to address this issue recently, we are a long way from where we need to be. In fact, it's mind boggling actually how we still continue to be in that situation even from an economic point because it's a no brainer actually, that woman's participation should be addressed urgently. It's a proven fact, even Ibec tell us that gender balance in all levels in companies increase profits, enhance problem solving, and mitigate against the downward pressure on labour market supply via skill shortages. So, one would wonder why we're so very slow in dealing with this hugely important piece.

And if we look at low pay, a recent study commissioned by the Low Pay Commission and the ESRI carried it out, found that of the 75,000 workers who are earning the national minimum wage, two thirds of them are women. And this imbalance they found was based mainly on caring responsibilities, hours worked, and sectors they are employed in.

Of course, understandably, we have limited time this evening to make this response, and we could give you lots more statistics in relation to how far off we are in relation to real equality for women. But the fundamental point that we have to take on board as a nation, is that a considerable number of women in Ireland are not free to make their own choices, their own choices in their own lives. And we also have to accept, and this is a really fundamental point and it's not made to in any way denigrate or insult anybody, but the fact is that women's rights are still at the behest, by in large at the behest of male decisions and male decision makers. As long as, and until we get to a point where we can shift that imbalance, then we are going to be struggling up a very high mountain to get to the place that we need to get to. I hope that initiatives taken on board by the ILO and others, for instance the Women at Work Trends that was published in 2016, is a key contribution to the efforts as to further the central goals as Guy had said of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The report gives us a picture of where women stand today in the world of work and how they have progressed over the past twenty years. And it gives us an in-depth analysis of the gender gaps and quality of work. And I hope it will advise all of us who will take up leadership positions or in any way involved with influencing decisions, that we get a hold of the most basic points made here. I still walk into rooms, not that there's anything wrong with walking into rooms full of men, but there something very imbalanced about walking into rooms where key decisions, whether it's about companies,

whether it's about policy, whatever its about, are so gender imbalanced and that in 2017 where we have progressed to where we have progressed, we still think that's alright. We are actually rearing another generation and that generation after, who in educational terms we are on an equal male and female, on skills we're probably more in terms of females versus males. And still, and it is that this issue is surrounding access to the workplace because of caring responsibilities, certainly contributing hugely to it. And we expect men to make the decisions, or we are at the behest of men to make the decisions to change that. And so I urge to try to make that influence towards change, the future of work as the minister said is a very topical issue. But it does not need to be one without decent work for women and men.

I want to finish my contribution with a quote from our President Michael D. Higgins' contribution to the Phelan lecture in 2015. And he said the following 'let us nevertheless rejoice the small reasons we have to hope, that a new era is opening up for human work. It is essential that the ILO play a leading role in shaping this new era. Ireland faces an opportunity to face these issues more actively as in 2017 our country will for the first time, take up the titular seat on the ILO's governing body. It is my hope that all of us in Ireland and the ILO will seize upon these possibilities and take action to craft together a renewed emancipatory discourse on labour'. I think that sums up our vision. Thank you very much.

RESPONSE

**Maeve McElwee,
Director of Employer
Relations, Ibec**



Good evening. Thank you, Chancellor. And thank you to the ILO and NUI for the opportunity to address the lecture this evening. As other participants have said, thank you very much to Mary Daly for a very thought-provoking lecture. I think we, at our own time, are inclined to see change as being something quite slow; however, listening to the lecture this evening it is quite clear that significant progress has actually been made with the ILO at the heart of that progress, influencing and driving forward that change. In response to the lecture this evening, what I would like to talk about is the labour market and how we see it for women in Ireland at the current time.

Labour force participation

Female participation in the labour market has risen relatively steadily over the last number of decades and more than doubled since the early 1980s, following the removal of the marriage bar, the increase in education levels and the prevalence of dual career couples. However, it still remains at least 15 percentage points lower than male participation in the labour market in Ireland (as it does in many other countries). Challenges remain in many areas – I just intend to touch on a few.

Occupational segregation

In particular, in Ireland we continue to see a very high level of occupational segregation between women and men both vertically and horizontally in the workplace. Women dominate certain occupations like education, health and caring professions, although not in as representative numbers at the top level, while men dominate technology and engineering professions. Research finds gender stereotyping and social conditioning are a factor.

The roots of this gendered segregation lie in the education system and our culture which socialises children into an expectation of certain roles as women's work or men's work and into the roles that men and women often assume around caring responsibilities. This occupational segregation thus lends itself to a gender pay gap. There is a need to challenge occupational stereotypes by encouraging more women into male-dominated industries and investing in careers advice that provides real information and options to students. To try to support these efforts we must develop more gender balance in our work place decision-making.

Organisations are engaging in initiatives to change their culture, and as Patricia has already said Ibec, and I strongly agree, that in overcoming some of these gender balance challenges, businesses will reap very significant benefits and create a competitive advantage for the future. In particular human resource management processes that have an impact on the progression of women's careers i.e. recruitment, performance management and succession planning, are being reviewed to ensure that no unintended consequences arise or if they do, they are removed.

Ibec and the 30% Club launched a voluntary code in June 2016 for executive search firms and recruitment organisations who are involved in recruiting senior-level posts. The 25 signatories are committed to supporting and promoting gender balance and working with employers to ensure that the best candidate for the role comes from 100 percent of the talent pool.

Of course, to have the best female candidates to consider in the first-place, strong government policy on childcare/care work is a fundamental requirement. Of major European countries, Ireland has one of the lowest female-employment rates, suggesting that there is a structural issue at play. Interestingly, employment rates in Ireland are roughly equal until there is a permanent drop off in the female participation rate between the ages of 29-39, the typical child bearing years. And maternal employment rates are lower than for women as a whole.

The likelihood of female participation was found to be reduced by up to 20% for those with a pre-school child, while having a child in school years from 5 to 12 reduces the probability by 7-9 percent.¹

¹ ESRI, *A Woman's Place: Female Participation in the Irish Labour Market* (2009).

On the other hand fathers with children under 15 are much more likely to be active in the labour market than other men.² Cultural stereotypes again often influence how women rather than men are expected to reduce their working hours or exit the labour market to carry out child or elder care. This affects career choice, and means that far more women than men work flexibly or part-time and take more frequent breaks throughout their career, which can and does have a negative impact on their careers, their remuneration and pension opportunities.

Childcare costs in Ireland are among the highest in the OECD accounting for almost 54% of the average wage in Ireland, compared to an average of 27% in other OECD countries.³ Ireland has a relatively low level of State funding for childcare, but the second highest direct payments to parents of any OECD country because of child benefit. Unfortunately, child benefit reduces female labour market participation whereas affordable and available childcare services increase it. Childcare costs represent the largest additional costs associated with taking up employment, thus acting as a disincentive to work especially for second earners in dual earning couples. Second earners with no childcare costs will only lose 18 percent of their income due to participation tax rates when entering the workforce, compared to 92 percent for someone with childcare needs.

Ireland has an infrastructural deficit in terms of quality and affordable care facilities. It is apparent that we are going to need greater levels of investment to fill this deficit in order to support female participation in our labour market.

Gender pay gap

Of course, the gender pay gap continues to be a significant issue. Research on gender pay gaps shows that one of the main reasons for the gap is due to the issue of women having a lower level of human capital.⁴ While educational attainment is often higher amongst females, it does not offset the loss of work experience.

² European Commission, *Gender equality in the workforce: reconciling work, private and family life in Europe* (2014b). Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers, Brussels.

³ Ibec, *Budget 2017* (2016).

⁴ ESRI (2009). *The gender pay gap in Ireland*.

Where females are working reduced hours this ultimately equates to less experience, reduced benefits value, because obviously pensions/bonuses are usually linked as a percentage of basic salary, and therefore that creates an earnings gap that is greater than their male counterparts. This leads to disjointed careers, a depreciation of skills, loss of networks, and has a negative impact on career development and promotion opportunities. The debate needs to be focused on the real issues and employers can play a key role in eliminating unjustified pay inequalities.

Addressing the complexity of the issues contributing to the gender-pay gap requires a multifaceted approach. There are a number of initiatives which are typically advanced in this space including:

1. Increase paid parental leave
2. Publish wage surveys to tackle gender pay gaps
3. Legislate for a gender quota

But Ireland already has leave available beyond that recommended by the European Directives and what we know is that culturally and socially we don't have enough uptake by men, leaving the burden of child care still falling back on our women.

The proposed transparency and publishing wage surveys unfortunately doesn't really tell us whether there are genuine issues for that pay structure or whether there is in fact discriminatory behaviour on-going. And discussion of quotas while helpful in some degree, can simply give rise to a numbers debate.

So, what do we need to do? We would say what we need to do is:

- Schools need to encourage more girls into STEM subjects coupled with an investment in good career guidance that challenges the stereotypes that we have seen too often.
- Transparent and open recruitment processes in our businesses avoiding selection biases and groupthink.
- We need management skills to be developed to enable differentiation between actual and unconscious bias.
- 'High potential' internal programmes must have gender neutral selection criteria, free from stereotypes.

- Women need sponsors to advocate for them – more than they need mentors to provide advice.
- Flexible working practices need to be introduced more wide-spread throughout our businesses to ensure that we encourage work-life balance not just for our women, but for our men, to ensure we balance our caring uptake activities.

There remains much work to be done, but the tide is favourable and the impact of the work of ILO is very clearly visible in what has been achieved so far in our labour market. I'll leave you with one small anecdote, very recently I recorded a radio piece as it happens it was on flexible working to be played at the weekend. One of my senior female colleagues came into the office one morning and said to me that listening to it over the weekend with her daughter who was seven, she said 'just a moment Pat, I just want to hear what my boss has to say on the radio,' At the end of the very small segment, her daughter said to her 'Mommy your boss is a girl?' And my colleague said in that moment there was the dawning realisation of how far we still have to go that the question is asked by a child of seven, but also the dawning that the opportunity for her daughter, that those possibilities exist.

Thank you.

EDWARD PHELAN: 1888-1967



On the death in May 1996 of Fernande Phelan, widow of Edward J. Phelan, the National University of Ireland became entitled, through their wills, to a fractional share of their estate, which consisted mainly of a villa on the shore of Lake Geneva. This legacy was to be used to promote the study of international law by appropriate means associated with the name of Mr. Phelan – in his own words *pour promouvoir l'étude de droit international par des moyens appropriés, associés à mon nom*. It is thus a generous, as well as, enlightened benefaction which the University greatly appreciates.

Edward J. Phelan was an early promoter, later a senior administrator, and finally the head of the International Labour Organization. He was an official advocate of the project at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, became Director in 1941 and Director-General under its new constitution in 1946. He had the crucial responsibility of seeing the ILO safely through the war years when it moved its offices to Montreal to avoid falling under Axis domination and being paralysed or extinguished. He retired in 1948, but he and his wife continued to live in Geneva where his leisure interest was sailing.

When serious problems about the integrity of some UNESCO appointees arose in 1955, Edward Phelan accepted the chairmanship of a special committee which the Director-General of that body had to consult before any appointments were confirmed.

In 1940, Edward Phelan married Fernande Crousaz. Her vivacity and sparkle balanced his more serious, reflective disposition. He died in September 1967, but she lived on into her nineties. There were no children of the marriage.

An interesting feature of the wartime move to Montreal (at McGill University) is that Phelan was accompanied on his long drive from Geneva to Lisbon by an official of the ILO named RJP Mortished, who was to become the first chairman of the Irish Labour Court.

The National University of Ireland was pleased that Edward accepted an honorary doctorate (LLD) in 1944. He was similarly honoured by the Universities of Laval and Montreal. The French Government made him a Commandeur de la Légion d'honneur in 1951. Other honours included the Order of the Southern Cross (Brazil) and Grand Officier, Order of the Aztec Eagle (Mexico).

The Journal de Genève recognised Edward Phelan's special gift in an appropriate epitaph: *il a su combiner les vertus de la réflexion et les épreuves de l'action. C'est à lui plus qu'à quiconque que le BIT doit d'avoir survécu à la guerre et d'avoir sauvé la tradition du service international.* He deserves to be commemorated by the NUI and gratefully remembered in the Ireland he always cherished.

T.K. Whitaker *Chancellor of NUI*
January 1997

T.K. Whitaker, former Chancellor of NUI, died on the 9th January 2017, a month and a day after his 100th birthday.

PROFESSOR MARY E. DALY: PRESIDENT, ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY

**President,
Royal Irish Academy**



In 2014, Professor Mary E. Daly was elected as the first female President of the Royal Irish Academy in its 229-year history. Professor Daly is one of Ireland's most prominent senior historians and is a member of the government's Expert Advisory Group on Commemorations. She is emeritus professor of history at UCD and served for seven years as Principal of UCD College of Arts and Celtic Studies; she has also held visiting positions at Harvard and Boston College. She has served on the National Archives Advisory Council, the Irish Manuscripts Commission and the Higher Education Authority.

In 2015, she was appointed as a member of the commission of Inquiry into Mother and Baby Homes. Professor Daly was involved in the commemoration of the sesquicentenary of the Great Famine 1995-97, and with Dr Margaret O'Callaghan she directed a research project on the Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Rising, resulting in the publication of a major edited work: *1916 in 1966 Commemorating the Easter Rising* (2007). Over the course of her distinguished career, Professor Daly has researched widely and published prolifically, notably: *Dublin, the Deposed Capital: A Social and Economic History, 1860-1914* (1984); *Women and Work in Ireland* (1997); *The Slow Failure: Population Decline and Independent Ireland, 1920-1973* (2006); with Theo Hoppen, *Gladstone: Ireland and Beyond* (2011) and most recently *Sixties Ireland: Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957-1973* (2016). She is a graduate of UCD and Oxford University, and a member of the *Academia Europaea*.

Professor Daly is a member of the NUI Publications Committee and has made a significant contribution to the NUI in various capacities. In 2008, she gave the NUI Centennial O'Donnell Lecture published later as *The Irish State and the Diaspora*.



GUY RYDER

Guy Ryder first joined the International Labour Organization in 1998 as Director of the Bureau for Workers' Activities and, from 1999, as Director of the Office of the Director-General. In 2002, he was appointed General Secretary of the ICFTU, leading the process of global unification of the democratic international trade union movement. He was elected as first General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) when it was created in 2006. In September 2010, Guy Ryder came back to the ILO in Geneva as Executive Director, responsible for international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work.

Guy Ryder was elected as ILO Director-General by the ILO's Governing Body in May 2012 and took office on 1 October 2012. On taking office, he pledged to position the Organization as a determined actor translating principle into action and ensuring that it had the capacity to make a major difference to the working lives of people on all of the continents. Guy Ryder was re-elected as ILO Director-General by the ILO's Governing Body on 7 November 2016 with overwhelming support across the "ILO's tripartite constituency".



PAT BREEN

Pat Breen is Minister for Employment and Small Business in the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation. The Minister was first elected to Dáil Éireann in 2002 and he has successfully retained his seat in each subsequent Election, in 2007, 2011 and 2016. In the last Dáil, Minister Breen served as Chairman of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade from 22nd June 2011 to 3rd February 2016. The Minister has also served as Chairman of the Dáil Sub-Committee on Overseas development 2010-2011. Minister Breen was a member of the Council of Europe from 24th January 2005 to 24th January 2011 and Deputy Leader of the Irish Delegation. Prior to Minister Breen's election to Dáil Éireann, he was a member of Clare County Council and the Vocational Educational Committee from June 1999 to 2002.



PATRICIA KING

Patricia King is the General Secretary of ICTU. She is a former Vice-President of SIPTU and also served as one of two Vice-Presidents of Congress. A full-time official with SIPTU for over 25 years, she was the first woman to serve as a national officer of the union when she was appointed Vice-President, in May 2010. She has represented workers in all areas of the economy, in both the public and private sectors. Patricia was a lead negotiator in both the Croke Park and Haddington Road agreements and is a member of the National Oversight Body tasked with implementation of the latter agreement.

She played a leading role in the Irish Ferries dispute (2005/6) and in subsequent negotiations that saw an overhaul of employment rights law and the establishment of the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA). Patricia currently serves on the boards of the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) and the Apprenticeship Council.



MAEVE MCELWEE

Maeve McElwee is Ibec's Director of Employer Relations having worked with Ibec since 2000 holding senior positions delivering industrial relations and human resource services to members. Over the course of her career in Ibec, Maeve has held the position of Director of the North East Region and more recently the position of Head of IR/HR. Prior to joining Ibec, Maeve worked with the World Bank in Washington D.C.



Maurice Manning, Chancellor NUI, Mary Daly, RIA, Guy Ryder, Director-General, ILO, Pat Breen TD, Patricia King, ICTU and Maeve McElwee, Ibec

Maurice Manning, Chancellor NUI, Mary Daly, President RIA and Guy Ryder, Director-General ILO



Guy Ryder, ILO and Mary Daly, RIA with her daughters Elizabeth and Alice, and Pat Breen TD.



Edward Phelan Lecture 2017

Edward Phelan was Director of the ILO from 1941-1948. Born in Ireland, Edward Phelan had a distinguished career at the International Labour Organization. He was official advocate of the ILO Project at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, became its fourth Director in 1941 and Director-General under its new constitution in 1946. He was the innovator of the ILO 'tripartite' formula which forms the basis of representation at International Labour Conferences. Each country's delegation includes not only Government delegates, but also representatives of workers' and employers' organisation.



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