On 1 November 2023, the Republic of Rwanda deposited the instrument of ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) with the Director-General of the ILO. By submitting the instrument of ratification, Rwanda becomes the 36th country in the world, and the 9th in Africa, to ratify this Convention.

Convention No. 190 is a landmark instrument. It is the first international labour standard to address violence and harassment in the world of work. Together with Recommendation No. 206, it provides a common framework for action and a unique opportunity to shape a future of work based on dignity and respect. These instruments will be key to achieve the objectives set by the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work , adopted in 2019, that clearly commits to a world of work free from violence and harassment, the ILO's Global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient , and to the Director-General recent call for a Coalition for greater Social Justice globally .

The Convention affirms that everyone has the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment. It also provides for the first internationally agreed definition of violence and harassment in the world of work, including of gender-based violence, understood as "a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices" that "aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm". This definition protects everyone in the world of work, including interns or apprentices, and persons who exercise the duties or authority of an employer, and covers the public and private sectors, the formal and informal economies, as well as urban and rural areas.

The Convention also requires ratifying Member States to adopt, in consultation with representative employers' and workers' organizations, an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach to preventing and eliminating violence and harassment, through prevention, protection and enforcement measures and remedies, as well as guidance, training and awareness-raising. It also recognizes the different and complementary roles and functions of governments, employers and workers and their respective organizations, taking into account the varying nature and extent of their responsibilities. The Convention and its accompanying Recommendation are tangible evidence of the enduring value and strength of social dialogue and tripartism, which have shaped them and will be essential in implementing them at national level.

Depositing the official instrument of ratification at the ceremony held at the ILO in Geneva, the Honourable Prof. Jeannette BAYISENGE, Rwanda's Minister for Public service and Labour, said: "It is my great pleasure to be here today to deposit, on behalf of the Government of Rwanda, the instrument of ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). Ratification of Convention No. 190 by Rwanda is a testament to Rwanda's firm commitment to eliminating any forms of violence and harassment in and beyond the world of work. In this regard, Rwanda has put in place a robust policy, legal and institutional framework. The right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment must be respected, protected and fulfilled. We will continue to work closely with employees and workers as well as our various stakeholders to achieve this".

In receiving the instrument of ratification of Convention No. 190, ILO Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo, highlighted the commitment and efforts of Rwanda, which by ratifying Convention No. 190, strongly reaffirms its determination to protect and respect human rights and social justice for all, and to achieve a world of work free from violence and harassment.

To date, the Republic of Rwanda has ratified 35 Conventions (of which 31 are in force).