
INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION
Sectoral Activities Programme

Note on the Proceedings

**Tripartite Meeting on Employment,
Employability and Equal Opportunities
in the Postal and Telecommunications
Services**

Geneva, 13-17 May 2002



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Introduction

The Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services was held at the ILO in Geneva from 13 to 17 May 2002.

The Office had prepared a report¹ issued in English, French and Spanish to serve as a basis for the Meeting's deliberations. It highlighted the following topics, addressing the postal and telecommunications services in separate chapters: Global trends (especially information and communication technologies, globalization, liberalization and the changing business environment); Employment (main drivers of job creation and of job losses, future employment prospects); Employability (training for employability, new skills requirements, training initiatives by governments, employers and trade unions, training and reskilling for restructuring, privatization or M&A-related change); Equal opportunities (occupational segregation, equal opportunities – age, gender and other factors, and the impact of structural and technological change on female employment); Social dialogue (new trends in consultation, collective bargaining, agreements, social dialogue to address safety and health issues and to promote training, and ways to promote sectoral social dialogue); and the relevance of ILO standards and decent work to postal and telecommunications services.

The Governing Body had designated Mr. A. Pierides, Employer member of the Governing Body to represent it and to chair the Meeting. The three Vice-Chairpersons elected by the Meeting were: Mr. Clark (Canada) from the Government group; Mr. Maranan from the Employers' group; and Mr. Tsuda from the Workers' group.

The Meeting was attended by Government representatives from: Canada, China, India, Japan, Kenya, Republic of Korea, Morocco, Slovakia, Spain and Switzerland, as well as 22 Employer and Worker representatives. A representative of the Government of Nigeria was also present at the sittings.

Observers from the World Trade Organization and the Universal Postal Union attended the Meeting and representatives from the following non-governmental international organizations also attended as observers: the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the International Federation of Employees in Public Services, the International Organization of Employers, Union Network International, the World Confederation of Labour, the World Federation of Trade Unions and Zonta International.

The three groups elected their Officers as follows:

Government group:

Chairperson: Mr. Samant (India)

Employers' group:

Chairperson: Ms. Leeming

¹ ILO, Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services, Geneva 2002: *Employment, employability and equal opportunities in the postal and telecommunications services*, Geneva 2002: xi + 144 pp.

Vice-Chairperson: Ms. Pérez Gutiérrez

Secretary: Mr. Dejardin

Workers' group:

Chairperson: Mr. Baulk

Vice-Chairperson: Mr. Tsuda

Secretaries: Mr. Anderson
Mr. Pedersen

The Secretary-General of the Meeting was Mr. O. de Vries Reilingh, Director of the Sectoral Activities Department. The Deputy Secretary-General was Ms. C. Doumbia-Henry of the same Department. The Executive Secretary was Mr. J. Myers. The Clerk of the Meeting was Ms. S. Maybud of the Management Services Unit of the Social Dialogue Sector. The experts were: Mr. B. Essenberg, Ms. C. Ortiz, Mr. J.-P. Sajhau, Mr. J. Sendanyoye, Ms. S. Tomoda and Ms. G. Ullrich.

The Meeting held six plenary sittings.

Mr. A. Pierides, Chairperson of the Meeting, noted that many of the issues raised in the last Tripartite Meeting for Postal and Telecommunications Services in April 1998 – which was on the human resources dimension of structural and regulatory changes and globalization in postal and telecommunications services – remained relevant for this Meeting. Until mid-2000, the development of information and communication technologies, networks and services, together with trade liberalization and globalization, had promoted further restructuring and a trend towards further privatization, industrial consolidation and a more integrated communications industry. The Internet and mobile phone boom had allowed the general downward trend in employment in telecommunications services to continue fairly gradually. However, the huge investments in corporate expansion and preparations for third-generation mobile phones and other developments in recent years had not lived up to expectations. This had left many telecommunications services companies heavily indebted, causing a much faster pace of job cuts and some bankruptcies. Meanwhile, postal services in many countries had undergone major structural and regulatory changes, with moves towards corporatization or privatization in some of them, as well as diversification into commerce, financial services, freight and logistics.

He felt that several issues lent themselves to discussion on how to ensure that these industries play their full role in enhancing employment, employability and equal opportunities. First, the effects of information and communications technology, restructuring and globalization were unevenly felt among different sections of the workforce and in different countries around the world. Women were more frequently affected by redundancy and other cost-cutting measures, older workers had less access to employability training, and many developing country firms were being left behind in these processes. Second, the universal service in the postal and telecommunications sector was proving difficult to maintain, owing to budgetary limitations and fierce competition. In some cases the universal postal service was heavily subsidized, but there were also reductions in its coverage or frequency. Privatization, currently being contemplated in postal services, also tended to lead to declining employment, because the objectives of private companies might run counter to the priorities of public postal operators. Third, social dialogue could have a key role to play in a sector in which collective bargaining had often been relatively confrontational.

The Secretary-General (Mr. O. de Vries Reilingh, Director, Sectoral Activities Department, ILO) observed that employment, employability and equal opportunities were key features in the ability of employees and enterprises in postal and telecommunications services to adapt to the changes currently under way in market conditions, technology, globalization, privatization and deregulation. There had been substantial fluctuations in employment, as the above changes were sometimes accompanied by job losses, a shift towards part-time rather than full-time employment, and the erosion or disappearance of civil-servant status; however, there had also been simultaneous growth in employment, investment and opportunities, to cover market expansion, the proliferation of new high-value services and so on. Meanwhile, equal opportunities policies and initiatives on training for employability in postal and telecommunications enterprises had significantly affected realities and attitudes among employers and workers alike in many countries.

In a world of increasing trade in goods and services, the quality of the postal and telecommunications networks was an important factor in the competitiveness of national economies. Communications sector workers were, along with those in other parts of the information economy, a driving force of globalization and the expansion of the service sector. In restructuring postal and telecommunications operators, opening up their capital, privatizing them and promoting competition, governments should have a basic policy concern – beyond immediate budgetary objectives – that more jobs were created in the long term in the economy than those that were lost in the process.

Computers, digital telephone networks and modems, along with many other hardware and software innovations and services, had shaped “the information society” and transformed the way many men and women work. Ever-increasing ownership and capabilities of personal computers, mobile phones and other devices had been central to the communications revolution, in which telecommunications services had been heavily involved, and postal services to a lesser extent. The technological revolution and changes in life and work styles and working conditions, had blurred the frontiers between postal and telecommunications services and sectors such as financial services, freight and the media. This industrial reconfiguration had significantly altered the employment outlook for communications workers.

This new economic environment for post and telecommunications had been encouraged by the trend towards an integrated information and communications industry, partly driven by major developments in technology, towards “convergence” based on innovations in microelectronics, computers and telecommunications. Directly linked to these changes, a wide range of new services and new sources of productivity were spreading around the world. Postal and telecommunications enterprises – strongly affected by the development of the Internet, email, mobile phone technologies and other innovations – represented a substantial contribution to employment, GDP and revenues worldwide.

In conclusion, he considered that this Meeting could be an excellent example of social dialogue, and the agenda item was at the centre of the ILO’s strategic objectives and its two cross-cutting themes of gender mainstreaming and development that guided the ILO’s strategic thinking and action.

Part 1

Consideration of the agenda item

Report of the discussion ¹

Introduction

1. The Meeting met to examine the item on the agenda. In accordance with the provisions of article 7 of the *Standing Orders for sectoral meetings*, the Officers presided over the discussion.
2. The spokesperson for the Employers' group was Mr. Howard and the spokesperson for the Workers' group was Mr. Baulk.
3. The Meeting held five sittings devoted to the discussion of the agenda item.

Composition of the Working Party

4. At its fifth plenary sitting, in accordance with the provisions of article 13, paragraph 2, of the *Standing Orders*, the Meeting set up a Working Party to draw up draft conclusions reflecting the views expressed in the course of the Meeting's discussion of the report. The Working Party, presided over by the Government Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Clark, was composed of the following members:

Government members

Canada:	Mr. Clark
India:	Mr. Samant
Kenya:	Ms. Limo
Morocco:	Mr. El Maliki
Slovakia:	Mr. Májek

Employer members

Mr. Howard
Mr. Linton
Ms. Pérez Gutiérrez
Ms. Stoeldt
Ms. Traversy

Worker members

Mr. Baldwin
Mr. Baulk
Ms. Easterling
Mr. Gueye
Ms. Somplei

¹ Adopted unanimously.

Presentation of the report and general discussion

5. The report that had been prepared for the Meeting by the International Labour Office was introduced by the Executive Secretary. He thanked those who had contributed to its preparation, including those who had prepared background papers or supplied information, especially the International Telecommunication Union and the Universal Postal Union, ILO member States, employers' and workers' organizations and enterprises that had provided very useful information. The background report was long, as it treated the postal and telecommunications services industries separately; looked at countries with public telecommunications and postal services and those that had made or were making the transition towards private ownership; and examined equal opportunities, employability and employment in distinct chapters. In the six months or so since the report was sent for publication, many things had changed. There had been a further slide in the stock market valuations of telecommunications services firms around the world and gloomier forecasts for the future of that industry, that had proved costly for employers and workers in the telecommunications services industry.
6. Profound structural changes in posts and telecommunications had curtailed public monopolies and led to the appearance and expansion of new private operators, and this had increasingly affected employment, working conditions and labour relations. Spectacular technological progress, globalization and significant developments in the regulatory framework at the national, regional and world levels accompanied those changes. Structural and regulatory change in the telecommunications sector came earlier and was more rapid than in postal services. Because of their public-interest functions, communications services had been subject to special regulations on providing a universal service, maintaining a range of services and infrastructure, and observing rules on human resources management and working conditions.
7. The universal service in postal and telecommunications services remained important, and, according to a conclusion of the 1998 postal and telecommunications meeting, "should be periodically reviewed to take account of new services".
8. Women and men working in postal and telecommunications services were usually public employees in 1990. However, since then their status had often been altered, tending towards being aligned with the private sector. The liberalization of postal and telecommunications markets had reduced or eliminated exceptions to labour law.
9. The nature and scope of these changes had profoundly affected employment, employability and equal opportunities in these industries. Similar to many other economic sectors, employment creation had been accompanied by the destruction of other jobs, but at a particularly rapid pace in telecommunications. The telecoms boom of the late 1990s had quickly turned into a sharp recession as enthusiasm for third-generation telephony and for e-commerce waned while telecommunications firms' debts grew, exacerbated by an economic downturn and events in late 2001.
10. The Chairperson proposed, and the Meeting agreed, to the Office's suggestion to omit point 9 and group the remaining suggested points for discussion into four clusters.
11. An observer, the General Secretary of Union Network International (UNI), felt that these two troubled sectors of the global economy were strategic and fundamental to every nation's infrastructure. They were keys to the future and to the ability to compete internationally; but these keys to essential services seemed to have been thrown away. Universal service, universal access and uniform low prices were crucial components of these sectors, but there were major threats to these aspects around the world – in the

previous week, for example, the Japanese Government had proposed two bills on postal reform to the Diet.

12. Privatization, corporatization and deregulation were leading to outsourcing, carving up of the postal business, selling off profitable areas and then describing the unprofitable areas as a “burden”, often under the influence of World Bank advice; however, the often brutal effects of these changes on employment and on services had not been subject to sufficient scrutiny in terms of the impact on workers and on customers.
13. Telecommunications services had experienced a roller-coaster ride in the past few years, booming in the ICT revolution before entering a financial meltdown in the past two years, with paper financial losses of US\$500 billion. Less than 10 per cent of the much-hyped fibre-optic cables were in use, companies were saddled with debt, and the stock market had been pressing for shareholder value and returns above all else – the end result was that no telecommunications services firms had been spared the sad consequences of all this, in the shape of redundancies, bankruptcies, and spinning off of profitable parts of the business.
14. The human dimension had been catastrophic, with half a million job losses in two years in telecommunications and related business, and tens of thousands of redundancies in postal services through liberalization. He questioned the strategy, the quality of decisions taken, and the fact that executive pay had risen while payrolls diminished.
15. He trusted that consensus might be found on six points. *Decent work* in postal and telecommunications services required that there be no compulsory redundancies, and that lifelong learning should be the key to avoiding skill shortages, along with good wages in this highly skilled, hi-tech industry. *Decent rights* for working people could be ensured by respecting the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, especially the right to organize and negotiate (which tended to be weaker in private than in public enterprises), whether in call centres, mobile phone companies, logistics firms or ICT and Internet enterprises. *A commitment to equality* was essential for breaking through the glass ceiling, and he was pleased to note that his federation had a woman president, and that the Canadian Union of Postal Workers had just elected Ms. Deborah Bourque as President. ILO instruments on equality must be applied in this sector, especially for women in precarious employment, and there was a need to mainstream gender issues. *Deregulation* was being examined by the ILO and the WTO in terms of its social impact, and it was important to ensure that social dialogue should bring in the regulators of postal and telecommunications services, and these regulatory authorities needed to be accountable. *Global social dialogue* was required, building on work within the ILO, and bringing in the UPU, the ITU and the World Bank, but it should occur more frequently than once every four years – in this regard, the establishment of a flexible working group should be examined. *Corporate social responsibility* could be encouraged through global framework agreements such as those already achieved with *Telefónica* (Spain) and *OTE* (Greece), as well as through a wider use of the ILO’s Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy of 1977 as well as the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up of 1998. He wished for a successful Meeting that could find human and social solutions to the problems, achieving decent work through social dialogue in this strategic sector.
16. The Employer spokesperson congratulated the author on the report, which presented a fine and balanced summary of the situation. The issues it highlighted were important. Many changes, such as the impact of recent developments on employment, were perceived as negative. But there had also been positive changes, such as new jobs being created, particularly in telecommunications which had seen an overall growth in employment. The Employers’ view was that the current environment should be seen as an opportunity and a challenge. Sometimes work was outsourced and such new practices would continue as new

customers demanded it. But changes could be prepared for by enhancing internal training. And while schools were not providing the number and kind of skills required by the industry, the vocational technical schools were an excellent place to find new skills. The industry sought diversity and there was constant competition for the best people. Future success would be judged, at both individual and enterprise level, by competency in the market place. This was a difficult challenge but it had to be accepted.

- 17.** The Worker spokesperson said that the report provided a good understanding of changes in the industries and welcomed the opportunity to address issues of employment, employability and equal opportunity. There were concerns over job losses in telecommunications. While there had also been growth, much of it had been in areas where conditions of employment were poor, such as in call centres. The growth of call centres was not always based on considerations of cost or quality but could be specifically designed to undermine the trade union movement. Still the Workers came to the Meeting with some optimism, believing that with good will on both sides they could leave with a good outcome. However, the importance of the telecommunications industry to every country was such that the dialogue had to be ongoing. Consultations must also be meaningful rather than token gestures. There was a need to restate the basic rights of freedom of association and collective bargaining; equal opportunities should be interpreted broadly; and codes of conduct were needed for multinationals. The agreement with *Telefónica* could be used as a model in this respect. It had also to be recognized that, beside the traditional social partners, there were other players in the industry, such as regulators, who were not accountable and could change the rules to the detriment of the workers.
- 18.** The representative of the Government of China agreed that there were great challenges facing the industry, particularly in terms of employment. In China the sector had developed a wide network with 330 million users and was regarded as a strategic sector. But it faced major challenges. These were associated with the transition from a planned to a market economy, labour market reforms and China's entry into the World Trade Organization which opened up the sector to international competition. In 1998 the Government had introduced changes which involved the separation of postal and telecommunications services, following which there had been a rapid growth in business and several new companies established. By 2001 there were 506,000 employees in postal services and more than 1 million in telecommunications. But they faced three major problems: a lack of balance in the human resource structure, with a shortage of skilled workers; increased automation in response to market competition, which reduced the demand for labour; and competition from foreign companies for skilled workers, causing a brain drain from domestic enterprises. These problems were being addressed through close cooperation between government and enterprises in the introduction of human resource development strategies and training programmes to enhance employability.
- 19.** An observer, the Secretary-General of the International Federation of Employees in Public Services (INFEDOP), pointed out that the old state monopolies were now facing competition and many new enterprises were offering new services. These changes were having a big impact on employment and employability. He proposed that "the best line of defence is attack" and that those in the forefront of reform had a better opportunity of contributing than those overrun by change. Social dialogue was an important tool to channel and guide these developments.
- 20.** The representative of the Government of Morocco noted the changes taking place in the posts and telecommunications industries worldwide, which could be described as a "revolution". Morocco was in favour of change and had to ensure that the new technologies would lead to further development. The Government had brought about significant change and restructuring in the sector. The process could be divided into three

phases, starting in 1984 and leading up to the 1998 reform, implementation of which was still ongoing. The main principle behind the reform was the separation of the two industries, privatization and opening up to competition, particularly of telecommunications. Social dialogue had been part of the process of restructuring and had been successful due to strong trade unions, transparency and good management of the process. The reform of the sector was expected to result in expansion and employment was increasing. However the private sector favoured the contractual to the statutory system of employment relations, and while the quality of services was improving there had not so far been an improvement in working conditions. The Government was also concerned with the lack of stability of employment. The speaker hoped that the conclusions of the Meeting would be transmitted to the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference to be held in Marrakesh, Morocco from 23 September to 18 October.

- 21.** The representative of the Government of Slovakia commended the Office for a good and detailed report. Real liberalization of the sector in his country had followed privatization of Slovak Telecommunications and its acquisition by Deutsche Telekom. The new company had put great efforts in attenuating the negative effects of subsequent restructuring, including the redeployment of retrenched workers, and assisting them to obtain other employment through outplacement services. In addition, up to 1,800 new technology jobs had been created by the new Slovak Telecom in the context of the restructuring process, especially in mobile telephony and new services made possible by deregulation. Liberalization in postal services was also necessary but as yet incomplete. Social dialogue in posts and telecommunications was based on a cooperation agreement covering economic and social partnerships, renewed every year. Tripartite negotiations at the sectoral level took place at least thrice annually, or in accordance with the wishes of the parties. The sector was undergoing comprehensive change, and it was hoped its liberalization would bring not only technological progress but also improvement in staff wages.
- 22.** The representative of the Government of Kenya commended the Office for preparing a very clear and focused report. For a developing country like Kenya, an efficient and modern communication network was conducive to an export-oriented industrial complex. It stimulated economic growth, while promoting public administration, environmental protection and social mobilization. It was necessary to provide these services on a cost recovery basis under a commercially oriented management. Estimates indicated that in Kenya the sector employed 83,400 workers, 24,000 of whom were employed by the Postal Corporation of Kenya and Telkom (Kenya) Ltd. The Union of Post and Telecommunication of Kenya represents some 16,000 employees of the two organizations. The ongoing public sector reform programmes foresaw the progressive reduction of the public sector. The Government had, in this connection, already decided on the sale of 49 per cent of Telecom Kenya to a strategic partner. There was an overwhelming subscription for mobile telephone services since two other operators had been licensed, triggering a significant reduction in connectivity and utility tariffs. The Postal Corporation of Kenya had only been marginally affected by global trends even though other service providers, such as DHL, Securicor, UPS and FedEx, had existed for some time. On employability in the telecommunications services, the challenge continued to be to ensure enough workforce with the skills to meet the needs of the industry. Her delegation urged ratification and full implementation of ILO instruments relevant to promoting decent work in the sector. Social dialogue should be promoted as an effective way of addressing workplace issues, such as occupational safety and health and training. Governments should ensure frameworks for effective social dialogue.

Cluster-by-cluster discussion

Cluster 1: Employment impact in telecommunications services

- 23.** The Employer spokesperson underlined the unique situations existing around the world with regard to this issue. Regulation, competition, technology, globalization and, more than anything else, customers were driving permanent changes in telecommunications. He drew attention to the positive impacts from the growth and expansion of telecommunications highlighted by the representatives of China and Slovakia. In future, people and organizations would need to be more flexible, and a one-size-fits-all approach could not address the problems local and multinational companies faced around the world. While telecommunications was a global business, there was a need to act locally according to the laws, cultures and traditions of the country or region in which each company operated, even with respect to a single multinational company.
- 24.** A Worker member (Japan) drew attention to the extremely severe loss of jobs in pre-existing enterprises due to the promotion of increased competition. While increased competition led to the emergence of new firms, especially in mobile communications, generating new jobs, the overall effect was of a net loss in employment. It was clear that the employment impact of greater competition had neither been properly considered nor catered for. Moreover, the employment and working conditions of the jobs that were newly created were largely of less quality than previous ones. Trade unions were most concerned about the role of regulators in this process: competition-enhancing measures they were introducing were leading to a deterioration in the financial health of enterprises in the posts and telecommunications sector of developed countries, and their ability to continue to provide a universal service. Tripartite consultation, bringing together regulators, employers and trade unions was required in order to balance job-creation requirements with the promotion of competition. Governments must take a more active role in social dialogue if the objectives of employability, employment, and equal opportunity in postal and telecommunications services were to be preserved.
- 25.** A Worker member (Russian Federation) reported job losses of about 8 per cent from reorganization and privatization of the telecommunications industry in his country. Trade unions should always insist that governments establish and provide financial support for employment protection programmes for workers in all industries undergoing restructuring. Restructuring should also be reviewed to ensure a social orientation, which avoided throwing workers into the street. As an example of what social dialogue and consultations could achieve in the context of restructuring, he highlighted a recent agreement with a telecommunications company which avoided dismissals of up to 40,000 workers from the telecommunications industry. The fast growth in mobile telephony in the Russian Federation and throughout Eastern Europe was having a positive effect in job creation and skills development. It was deplorable, however, that enterprises in the sector – including multinationals with excellent relations with trade unions in their own home countries – continued to actively oppose trade union organization in the Russian Federation as well as other countries of the former Soviet Union. This was a violation of freedom of association and collective bargaining principles, and a breach of a number of ILO Conventions. The Meeting should condemn such double standards in these countries, and reaffirm the universality of fundamental international labour standards.
- 26.** Another Worker member (United States) felt that the notion of universal service should be extended to the Internet, if the digital divide was to be bridged both within rich countries and between them and developing countries. World Bank information highlighted the seriousness of the problem, which not only inhibited economic development but prevented the use of technology in bringing education, skills training, lifelong learning and health benefits to millions of people. The ILO Director-General should establish small tripartite

consultation groups to meet regularly and as often as possible between the quadrennial sectoral meetings to address the digital divide issue.

- 27.** A Worker member (Senegal) reported adverse employment effects in his country, due to globalization, liberalization and privatization. In Africa, World Bank and IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programmes, including the privatization of postal and telecommunications services, had resulted in the dismantling of public services in many countries. Measures taken had thrown a lot of workers into the street, without any redeployment programme, and for those still with jobs, there was a pronounced trend towards precarious employment and subcontracting with replacement of public operators by multinational companies which refused to recognize union rights. Rare were the countries in Africa where strikes were not on the increase due to lack of social dialogue.
- 28.** Another Worker member (India) observed similar effects in his country, in spite of an average annual growth in telecommunications services of about 22 per cent. Since 1997, fixed telephones had risen from 15 to 40 million, while mobile ones had grown from 300,000 to 5 million, without generating any additional jobs for the sector. Among the reasons for this was the emergence of private telecom operators in the country and the former public monopoly engaging subcontractors for services even of a permanent nature. While the private operators were luring away staff of the public operator through substantial salary inducements, the majority of their workers were on temporary and precarious employment contracts that were liable to be terminated as the employer saw fit. Although the telecom sector had ample growth opportunities given the present telephone density of just 4 per cent and government plans to increase that to 12 per cent by 2007, such growth would be meaningless if it did not have social development as a target, including the creation of more and better jobs.
- 29.** An Employer member (Venezuela) underlined the positive, economy-wide employment impact of telecommunications liberalization in her country. Direct and indirect jobs had been generated, and demand for specialized skills had created opportunities for telecommunications engineers and increased the demand for those with the requisite skills. A market for prepaid cards and the emergence of call centres with Internet access had opened up opportunities. In poorer areas, offices had been set up to teach new technology-based skills and increase access to job opportunities. An effort was being made to ensure broad access to the Internet, which would require both specialization in the field of telecommunications and workers with the open-mindedness and agility to take on different types of work.
- 30.** An Employer member (Germany) observed that if, at the time of the establishment of the ILO in 1919, the aim had been to simply maintain jobs as they then existed, it would have been necessary to keep 80 per cent of the world's labour force in agriculture. Technological progress had brought productivity gains and price reductions for consumers, of whom workers were a part. Despite the fall in the fixed telephone network, he noted that the mobile telephony, Internet and other telecommunications branches were booming, and this was generating jobs in other sectors as well. Privatization often coincided with major technological changes, making it possible to do the same job with fewer workers. This, in turn, enabled companies to pass on cost-savings to their customers.
- 31.** A Worker member (United Kingdom) drew attention to the reality behind the figures in the report: consequences for people from the changes in working conditions, temporary contracts, outsourcing and other arrangements. He emphasized the need for more secure employment and better working conditions based on the ILO decent work concept. Workers had responded positively to the flexibility required by employers in the last decades. He mentioned the tremendous growth in the number of call centres worldwide where wages were generally lower and workers could be replaced more easily. In the

United Kingdom, for example, the turnover rate in some call centres was over 30 per cent. Better pay and improved working conditions could create more employee loyalty which would be beneficial for all parties. He reiterated the need to look at the regulators whose insistence on lower prices prevented improvement in working conditions. Experience had shown that the global rush to restructuring would not necessarily deliver what was promised. Replacing a public with a private monopoly was no answer to the industry's problems.

- 32.** The representative of the Government of Kenya stated that the impact of liberalization on employment had been well recognized in her country. The ICT sector was a dynamic growth sector (4 per cent in 2001) in terms of employment, productivity and incomes. The Government had adopted a policy for infrastructure investment in ICT and for increased competition in the telecommunications sector. In 1999, Telkom (Kenya) Ltd., the partly privatized telephone company, had 21,000 employees. Following the restructuring of the organization, some employees moved to new service providers for employment. Recruitment was frozen and retraining of existing staff was used to fill internal vacancies. The adoption of new technologies may lead to further staff reductions and employees need to adapt to the new equipment and new work methods.

Employment impact in postal services

- 33.** An Employer member (Canada), addressing the issue on behalf of her group, noted a variety of experiences in different countries as the report had illustrated. Several countries had seen little change in employment or had recorded employment growth in new markets, with the creation of jobs in new companies where new skills were required. The result was that the number of employees had not changed as dramatically as had been predicted. The employment impact was not only negative because the changed environment offered opportunities for younger workers to reposition their careers and to meet demand for part-time work. In many countries, the unions had been involved in the restructuring process and job security agreements had been signed, including provisions for early retirement and voluntary departures. Training for future challenges and the importance of working with the unions on restructures to minimize the negative consequences was underlined.
- 34.** The Worker spokesperson emphasized the high respect postal services enjoyed and the reliance made on it worldwide, which, in his opinion, implied a healthy future with many opportunities in new fields. Contrary to the telecommunications industry, technology was assisting rather than being the main driver of the change process in the postal sector. He appreciated the employers' expressed willingness to negotiate. Post-deregulation trends towards deficits made it difficult for the traditional companies to maintain the universal service obligation, while in some countries substantial regulation had created problems. Although their decisions could have great impact on employment, regulators were not accountable to the social partners. In accordance with a recommendation of the 1998 Meeting that the ILO and UPU conduct regional activities on social dialogue, a meeting had been successfully organized in Bangkok; other regional workshops should be organized soon. The Workers welcomed Governments' positive comments on social dialogue and recognized the Employers' view on the reality of constant change.
- 35.** The representative of the Government of India noted that the postal service in his country was still part of the civil service. This vital sector needed to be efficient and effective for the economic growth. Due to technological advances there would be changes in the sector, and jobs could not be maintained in the old format. The issue was how to control the pace of change to take account of the concerns of all relevant parties. Government had to ensure that employees were given a good deal. The question was whether job losses resulted from the general economic situation or were the result of job transition to other economic sectors. Government was committed to protection of employee interests.

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36. A Worker member (Canada) highlighted the denial of postal workers' right to collective bargaining and freedom of association in many countries, giving the example of 6,000 Canadian rural postal workers who did not share the right of their 65,000 colleagues to full bargaining rights. The idea of a universal service was threatened by the WTO's General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA): UPS had filed a suit against Canada's Post monopoly, whose profits in urban centres subsidized the loss-making rural services. Universal service had to be protected in countries with large land masses.
 37. The representative of the Government of Canada stated that his Government was aware of the concerns expressed by the Worker representative from Canada. Dialogue had taken place between the rural route couriers and the Minister of Labour, who had conveyed these concerns to the Minister responsible for Crown Corporations. There was currently a Private Member's Bill before the Parliament of Canada which addressed this issue.
 38. An Employer member (Canada) underlined the growing challenge of providing a universal service in rural areas with declining populations.
 39. A Worker adviser (Japan) reported the submission to the Japanese Parliament of a postal corporatization bill, which provided for the establishment of the Japan Postal Corporation in 2003. Some courier services were urging for the privatization of postal services. Should the bill be enacted, private companies, which will naturally concentrate on the more profitable urban centres, would be able to enter the market resulting in the loss of rural services. This would be detrimental to the interests of elderly people who rely on the services of rural post offices. Many of the new jobs were part time or temporary, and Japanese unions would fight hard to protect the universal service.
 40. The representative of the Government of Morocco considered all problems to be a function of the very nature of service provision in rural areas. In his country, there was a pilot project with *cyber cafes* which provided all services: telecommunications and postal. Government had revised legislation to protect the universal service with the necessary funds to finance the service, including for the retraining of postal workers for new jobs and skills.
 41. A Worker member (France) drew attention to the report's reference to the prevalence of gender segregation. Women still held precarious jobs, including part-time and temporary ones. Unions needed to be critical of the selection criteria because they were often personalized, for example, excluding women over 50: the glass ceiling continued to exist. These factors had unfair effects on women's wages and salaries, which were on average 25 per cent lower than those for men. It was necessary to implement the principle of equality of treatment in line with the various ILO Conventions.
 42. An Employer adviser (Germany) stated that people had different views on regulatory frameworks, often based on the economic framework of the country concerned. It was important to look at change in a positive manner: new jobs could be created in different areas such as direct marketing. The fact that 48 per cent of Deutsche Post's staff were women was possible because of the flexibility agreed upon by the social partners. The same agreement provided for other special conditions such as employee share ownership plans.
 43. A Worker member (Republic of Korea) stressed the importance of tripartism and social dialogue. The 1997 financial crisis in his country had resulted in hardship for postal and telecom workers, many of whom had lost jobs. More recently, the unions had reached agreement with the Government to suspend the restructuring of the postal services which

would have led to further retrenchments. This agreement demonstrated the importance of social dialogue. He pleaded for the maintenance of the universal service principle.

44. Another Worker member (Central African Republic) discussed the situation of the postal services in Africa. Because of the socio-political and economic situation, many postal services did not function properly, lacking the means to introduce or to adapt to new technologies. They also suffered from competition by multinational courier services. Unions must be involved in restructuring decisions, and more training and retraining was needed so that employees could meet the challenges of new technologies and the expected job losses.
45. A Worker member (Chile) emphasized the need for reskilling and multiskilling. In his view, the social partners had to trust each other and become “strategic associates”. He felt that the agreements between the European Union (EU) and Chile would provide support for social dialogue in Chile. Referring to the conclusions of the 2001 UPU Conference in China, he wondered which strategy would be appropriate for their implementation, and rejected the idea of a totally free market.
46. An Employer member (New Zealand) reported on experience in her country. Because of increasing losses in the 1980s, the Government had to restructure the postal services, including reducing staff from 14,000 to 9,000. The transition was managed in consultation with the social partners to minimize the social impact. Universality was maintained and currently there were more outlets in rural areas (franchises) than there had been in 1985. Jobs had since increased albeit in different areas. It was important to look at the future with confidence and a willingness to adapt, and to recognize that the personnel required will have to be different.
47. The Worker spokesperson rejected the notion that workers wanted to turn back the clock; as had been recognized by some speakers, unions had participated in decisions leading to change processes. Unions were also not opposed to flexibility as such but rather insisted on quality jobs, an issue that was crucial to their members’ interests.
48. The representative of the Government of Kenya reported that the telecom and the postal services were split in 1999, the Government had charged the Post Corporation of Kenya to maintain the universal service. To meet the costs of this new obligation, the company embarked aggressively on marketing new services such as the administration of government retiree pensions in towns and rural areas. The profits from such services will help subsidize any losses from its obligations to provide universal service. The corporation has ensured that retained staff are retrained in order that its workforce acquires skills needed to compete with private international courier services.
49. The representative of the Government of India stated that his Government was committed to the principle of the universal service. It remained to be seen, however, how this commitment could be financed in the longer term.

Cluster 2: Enhancing employability and retraining opportunities

50. The Employer spokesperson felt technological advances had raised workers’ skills requirements, with the impact on postal workers particularly pronounced. Maintenance work was now performed remotely by computer technicians from their terminals. Today, multitasking required workers to undergo lifelong learning, and to this end enterprises were investing huge sums, including for assistance on education and training in primary, secondary and vocational schools as well as in universities. Lifelong learning was replacing the traditional company-based training, although employers continued to shoulder the financial burden. Although employers and workers had to cooperate in raising

the skills levels of the industry, individual workers were responsible for acquiring new skills.

- 51.** A Worker member (France) agreed on the importance of training and retraining for individual workers to adapt to new jobs in the same sector or in new sectors, but stressed the importance of allocating sufficient budgets for training and retraining. She also touched on the “brain drain” problem or the “competency drain” that some countries were experiencing against the backdrop of technological development, and noted negative repercussions illustrated in the lack of professional competency in the postal sector in those countries. Investing more on training was therefore a wise course for the industry to take. She expressed concern at the increasing levels of stress imposed on workers through pressure of greater output expectations. Worker dignity should be respected, and workloads evenly distributed.
- 52.** An Employer member (Canada) recounted labour-management cooperation in her company, the Canada Post, where training programmes, including apprenticeship, were being implemented under a framework established with the trade union. Training and retraining were being provided with employment flexibility in mind where changes in career directions were included as options for employability. In addition, both sides were in agreement to work cooperatively and act reasonably and to keep the training cost reasonable to ensure that training and retraining would be effective and successful.
- 53.** The representative of the Government of Canada reported on initiatives by his Government through an organization called the Sectors Studies Group, with the aim of involving the social partners in cooperative work to look at problems and challenges concerning employability in the context of structural changes. The study conducted six years previously had served its intended purpose, but needed to be updated in view of recent changes and developments. Efforts were under way to bring unions and managements of telecommunications companies together to review these developments.
- 54.** A Worker member (United Kingdom) felt that training involved two levels: training within the industry to improve the skill levels of the workforce; and lifelong learning which was not necessarily work-related, but aimed at improving the quality and potential of individual workers inside or outside their companies. Overcoming the “digital divide” could be dealt with through improving access to Internet. Social dialogue in the postal sector in the European Union was quite satisfactory; there had been four workshops in 2001 to share lifelong learning experiences, culminating with a round-table meeting, after which best practice had been fostered and promoted among some trade unions.
- 55.** An Employer member (New Zealand) stressed the responsibility of the social partners for organizing successful programmes on employability, that could lead to real career development opportunities. Employees were becoming very selective of such opportunities and thus individuals had to be willing to learn. She also pointed out the responsibility that the government must take in bearing training costs, particularly with regard to the training of adults with limited as well as redundant skills. Governments should ensure that adults, especially women, were allowed to re-enter formal educational institutions for second-chance training and retraining.
- 56.** The representative of the Government of Kenya expressed the need of his country to keep abreast with the rest of the world in technological change, as it was difficult to be functional without computerization. His Government therefore stressed and encouraged educational providers in the country to enhance employability by creating divisions focused on new technology in some educational institutions. Insufficient funds and other situations such as frequent power failures were a problem, but the country was coping with them to the best of its ability.

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- 57.** An Employer member (Germany) said that in his company training was being given to its own people to meet the company needs, and such training included overseas training. However, a diploma was defined differently from one country to another, making it difficult to compare skill levels after training. There should be standardized certification throughout the European Union, equivalent to the European IT driver's licence, for instance, to ensure portability and mobility of skills. This would also close loopholes to sub-optimal training providers as everybody should have equal access to quality training regardless of the country of origin. Sectoral social dialogue on the issue in the European Union was satisfactory as workers were well organized, but additional work was needed on such subjects as the establishment of criteria on IT qualifications.
- 58.** A Worker member (Germany) considered that the challenge of dealing with the needs of a large number of laid-off workers remained an important issue, and therefore training for employability was essential. Employability could be improved by providing satisfactory working conditions and complete freedom of choice in training or by enshrining the principle of labour-management consultation on training in the collective bargaining process. The Lisbon Declaration of March 2000, based on a joint contribution of telecom employers and trade unions was a good example of the positive fruits of social dialogue. Among other things, the Declaration called for essential ICT training for all employees, the development of the ICT certification mechanism for portability of skills across Europe, the use of Internet for ICT training and the development of Europe-wide guidelines on telework. Investment in Internet facilities was needed to reduce the so-called digital divide. Social dialogue should be strongly promoted at the ILO level through the establishment of appropriate mechanisms, including small tripartite consultative groups to meet regularly to address issues of special interests to the employers and workers.
- 59.** An Employer member (Philippines) considered training and continuous learning an imperative, given the rapid rate of obsolescence in telecommunications and postal services, the need to ensure customer satisfaction and to retain their loyalty.
- 60.** Another Employer member (Spain) reiterated enterprises' and governments' responsibility on the issue of employability, noting, however, that all the partners had a role. All the parties needed to fully recognize their respective responsibilities and the necessity of working together, while understanding each other's differing priorities. For governments the overriding priority was probably unemployed workers and budding workers who were still at school, while enterprises attached most importance to their own workers. There was a frequent misconception that new technologies were primarily high-level technologies; they could, in fact, be medium or low-level technologies. Efforts bringing together government, universities and a number of telecommunications companies were under way in Spain to establish different levels of skills requirements. Not surprisingly for telecommunications companies, progress had also been made in using e-learning as a training tool, with a commitment for constant updates of content. Government role included ensuring recognition of skills and qualifications, while trade unions should share in the design of training and learning programmes.
- 61.** An Employer adviser (Germany) believed enterprises would feel greater responsibility if the areas covered by lifelong learning programmes were enterprise-relevant. Equally, where individuals' own lives benefited most from lifelong learning, they needed to demonstrate commensurate commitment. Excellent work had been achieved in the framework of European social dialogue on this subject. From the point of view of enterprises, lifelong learning had to fit a holistic strategy balancing affordability and the competitive requirements.
- 62.** The representative of the Government of Morocco considered basic initial training to be the responsibility of governments. However, that for lifelong learning programmes aimed

at employability, especially in the postal sector, should be shared between governments and private operators. Furthermore, lifelong learning and reskilling must accompany liberalization given the fact that before these processes the retraining needs did not arise.

- 63.** The Worker spokesperson noted, with appreciation, the valuable contributions from all sides on the common goal of providing skills through retraining for people facing significant change or who had already gone through that change. His group wished to restate its position on the six aspects it considered important in this respect. First was the fundamental principle for consultation and social dialogue between all the social partners on the issues of employability and retraining. Second was the need to respect the principle of equal opportunity on all these changes, while the third referred to the need for skills and training to be standardized, adaptable and portable so that qualifications would enjoy universal recognition. The fourth area concerned Internet access for all, to ensure maximum training and retraining opportunities, notwithstanding the fact that in some countries, in different regions, access to the Internet was very low. The fifth issue related to a reaffirmation of the primary role of governments to provide for retraining. Workers supported the Employers' view that responsibility for retraining was shared among all the parties, but also believed that both governments and employers must recognize their obligations to ensure funding to upgrade skills or retrain in line with changes in industry. Last was the need for a commitment from employers and governments to ensure instructors and programmes were in place so that workers had access to affordable lifelong learning.
- 64.** The Employer spokesperson welcomed the clear agreement on the importance of ensuring a skilled, competent, productive, and mobile workforce, which benefited employers, unions and countries. There was opportunity for real cooperation and support from the social partners in this area.
- 65.** Another Employer member (Benin) noted that training in the telecommunications sector was not driven solely by liberalization, but also by technological advances. The proper maintenance of equipment required staff training, and contracts for the purchase of new equipment always provided for training of operating staff. With regard to social partnerships in this area, his company had a human resource management council, which formulated and adopted the company's training programme, and on which the trade union was actively represented.

Cluster 3: Promoting equal opportunities for staff at all levels

- 66.** A Worker member (France) recalled all the hard work put into developing and adopting an ILO Convention (Convention No. 183) on maternity protection in 2000. The worldwide effort made by the social partners on this task had resulted in a Convention with a wide scope of application, covering all types of workers, including those in atypical forms of employment. It also offered the best protection in terms of leave, benefits and discrimination. Unfortunately, few countries had yet to ratify and adopt the Convention. The Convention was relevant to women in postal and telecommunications services, who would acquire better protection for themselves and their children. The ILO should urge member States to ratify and implement the Convention without further delay.
- 67.** The representative of the Government of India stated that his Government recognized its responsibility on the related issues of employability and equal opportunities. Technological advances in the postal and telecommunications sectors had transformed jobs to an extent requiring multiskilling, and thus the need for retraining of existing personnel if they were to remain employable. His Government also recognized the need to give equal opportunities to both men and women from all the regions, different social strata and caste. It had as a result a considerable pool of technically skilled people so that employability

was assured. A motivational problem had been identified related to the complex nature of multiskilling, and employee representatives had been urged to help in motivating staff to take up the opportunities aimed at enhancing their own employability.

- 68.** The Employer spokesperson recounted the long experience in the United States of America with equal opportunity efforts, starting with the passage of Title 7 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Equal opportunities as mandated by the Act had eventually developed into affirmative action, requiring employers to ensure workforces representative of the diversity of the various gender and ethnic groups in their areas of operation. It was difficult for any one of the social partners to work on the problem. Achievement of equal opportunity objectives represented a tremendous and lengthy cultural and attitudinal change on the part of everybody from senior management to the lowest levels of the workforce. A one-size-fits-all approach was inappropriate, because success required transformations covering wide-ranging religious, ethnic and gender issues, and one needed to consider the difficulty of legislating for social behaviour. Despite such problems, after 38 years the United States had managed substantial improvement in the mix not only of men and women, but also the total spectrum of the population within the country. In the end, however, the most important point was that with skills shortages in the technology industries, it was no longer possible to avoid creating workplaces that were diverse in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, and ideas, and to capitalize on all that diversity for success.
- 69.** An Employer member (New Zealand) noted that her country had a tradition of equality going back to being the first country to give women the vote. Speaking as a member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee to her country's Minister of Labour, her experience was that the objectives of equal opportunities were never achieved. Inequalities in her country persisted with regard to women, with the disabled, and in an area which concerned her in particular, with new immigrants. There were ongoing issues that always mitigated against complete equality, and while unions' fear of workforce casualization was appreciated, it was equally important to remember that the move towards part-time and contract work had allowed opportunities, or what might be called a foot-in-the-door, to people who might otherwise be denied access to full-time work. Such entry opportunities could be developed into access to full-time work.
- 70.** The representative of the Government of Morocco viewed equal opportunity problems not only from a gender perspective. If equality of opportunity in employment, including between men and women, enshrined in the constitutions of different countries was to be achieved, then a solution needed to incorporate transparent human resource management practices. Where Morocco was concerned, the country had now embarked on a process aimed at achieving equality not only in postal services but in other sectors as well.
- 71.** The Worker spokesperson believed there were a number of principles that should be highlighted in the area of equal opportunities for staff at all levels. Legislation could not change things in the very short term, but it should not be entirely ruled out. There was a need to constantly strive for equal opportunity and dignity at work. Collective agreements negotiated between his union and Australia Post incorporated provisions for balancing work and family, and recognition of diversity in the workplace. The make-up of the Australia Post workforce was diverse, largely reflecting the immigration policies of the governments of different eras. Despite their inclusion in the collective agreements, the processes aimed at ensuring equal opportunity are sometimes obstructed by constraints placed on local level management. Women in the postal and telecommunications workforce continued to be concentrated at the lower levels, as mentioned in the report for the 1998 Tripartite Meeting in this sector. It was clear only a small step forward had been achieved. Despite the complexity of the issue and the difficulty of changing cultures and attitudes, it was important for all the parties to strive for equal opportunities objectives. Unions recognized the contribution towards diverse workplaces facilitated by different

work arrangements, and have negotiated such part-time arrangements to enable workers to balance work and family. But there needed to be a much wider focus on other ways and means of doing this and providing equal opportunity within the workplace. Furthermore, equal opportunities and equal treatment should be extended to part-time workers who should similarly be allowed to join unions, and have pension rights in accordance with ILO Convention No. 175. He underlined the role that the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up of 1998, as well as the Decent Work Agenda, could play in promoting rights at work. Workers fully supported the primary goal of the ILO to promote equal opportunities for women and men.

72. An Employer adviser (Germany) noted the seriousness with which both employers and workers regarded the issue of equal opportunities. It would be inappropriate for enterprises not to take this issue into account, and a lot had been done in the area. She felt a special responsibility for this subject as a member of a working group that had looked at the subject at the European social dialogue level.
73. An Employer member (Pakistan) agreed with previous speakers on the important question of equal opportunities. The concept, however, meant different things to people from different countries. As a concept, equal opportunity flowed from democracy, which in turn, flowed from education. Equal opportunity meant little as long as many countries did not have democracy and their level of education was poor or low.
74. The representative of the Government of China agreed with different speakers from both the Employer and Worker groups who considered equal opportunity to be very important. His Government had established priority policies to address problems in this regard. China Post had also established a policy requiring all employees to follow multi-level, multi-form training every two years, with training programmes specifically designed in accordance with the individual situation of each employee. It was hoped that better trained workers would be better able to deal with new post-restructuring situations.

Cluster 4: Social dialogue and the role of the ILO

75. The Employer spokesperson suggested that social dialogue could be interpreted in different ways. In some countries and regions social dialogue was part of the social fabric. There were many positive examples within the European Union. Post-apartheid South Africa also had tripartism and social dialogue embedded within its cultural tradition. But in other parts of the world the process was not so formalized. Social dialogue was a positive and valuable part of the process of free enterprise provided it was: (1) meaningful and conducted with transparency and without preconceived agendas; (2) a product of the local culture and tradition and not imposed from outside; (3) recognized that each partner was an independent body with its own constituents and objectives; and (4) understood that people in enterprises were employees first and focused on providing customers with high-quality services. The speaker suggested that consideration be given to the inclusion of the regulators as a further partner in social dialogue in the sector.
76. A Worker member (Senegal) said it was important to recognize that only ten years ago the main employer in this sector was the State, which had a monopoly. Monopoly had been replaced by competition and then by global competition. The new employers were the multinationals who had a different approach to sharing information. Multinational enterprises must be open to different cultures, workers and partners. Social dialogue must be ongoing and embedded in the enterprise. Many enterprises were setting up global agreements, and negotiation at the global level was the only way to meet the challenges of the third millennium.

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77. A Worker member (Germany), referring to the telecommunications industry, noted that since liberalization companies were expanding and becoming global players. The social partners had to create appropriate forums to discuss the consequences of globalization for companies and employees. This need had been recognized in Europe when the European Commission approved the Directive on information and consultation for companies with more than 1,000 employees. Some positive developments could be seen in the sector including initiatives that went beyond the European Directive, with other countries invited to participate in European works councils. The speaker expressed a desire to see such developments at global level. Codes of conduct were also needed, such as that of *Telefónica* and more recent agreements in companies in Greece, Sweden and France. The speaker called on the ILO and the Meeting to take steps to establish consultative arrangements with major multinationals that would assist in the further development and negotiation of global agreements and codes of conduct.
78. The representative of the Government of India said that the sector was in transition in India. The telecommunications industry was moving out of the public sector. Adequate and effective social dialogue was needed to smooth the transition. The Government was aware of its responsibilities in protecting the basic interests of the workers and ensuring growth of the sector. The ILO had a role to play in stimulating social dialogue and concepts such as the “decent work” approach, and part-time work Conventions were very relevant for the transitional stage in these industries.
79. An Employer adviser (Spain) commented on the *Telefónica* agreement which had already been referred to several times. His company believed in social dialogue and had signed the agreement with UNI undertaking to respect and guarantee a series of workers’ rights in countries where it operated. These rights, enshrined in various ILO Conventions, were already being respected by the company, so the agreement merely gave expression to what was already happening. The agreement could not replace the will of governments who retain responsibility for ratifying and implementing ILO Conventions. While the company was very happy with the agreement, it also understood that not all countries had the same cultural context or the same level of development in their labour and trade union relations.
80. A Worker member (Russian Federation) expressed support for the ILO’s Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and for codes of conduct, but he condemned double standards in the practice of multinational corporations. Many companies recognized workers’ organizations in their own countries and carried out constructive dialogue with them. But the same companies behaved differently when operating in other countries. In the Russian Federation they had no relations with the workers’ organizations and no social dialogue, even though union density in the sector was around 80 per cent. The code of conduct for multinational enterprises was violated when they applied one standard in their country of origin and another elsewhere. The conclusions of the Meeting must reflect that standards should be applied equally in all countries.
81. An Employer member (New Zealand) commented on requests for the application of the same standards worldwide, branding such expectations unrealistic. Countries had different cultures and were at different levels of development. Social dialogue should be supported but it should remain voluntary and it had to be constrained by national and social expectations of citizens in each country.
82. A Worker member (China) said that industry in general in her country had experienced rapid development in recent years. Much had been learned from more developed countries in terms of management practices as well as technology. Foreign enterprises placed emphasis on the free and fruitful development of the individual whereas Chinese workers’ organizations tended to promote the collective spirit. Social relations were stable in China

which allowed for the development of tripartite dialogue and collective bargaining in line with international practice. Machinery had been established for tripartite consultation at national and regional levels and extended to collective bargaining in the major companies. However, since tripartite dialogue started relatively late in her country, China had less experience than other countries. The Government was trying to promote economic development, and enterprises were trying to raise their productivity. At the same time workers' rights had still to be respected and this had created a difficult situation.

- 83.** An Employer member (Germany) reported that the telecommunications industry in his country observed various ILO Conventions and implemented their principles. Trade unions and works councils in Germany were strong and Deutsche Telekom respected trade unions rights and national legislation. A works council was soon to be established at the European level which would be extended to the new entrants to the European Union. But it was not an obligation on employers to set up or to help workers' organizations to develop. Some workers might not wish to join a trade union and this right had also to be recognized. Multinational enterprises could not take the experience of one country and extend it to all. Deutsche Telekom recognized and actively supported workers' rights but everything else was the responsibility of national organizations.
- 84.** The Worker spokesperson raised three separate issues. First, he commented on the UPU and its activities. UPU operated under the Charter of the United Nations and comprised the postal administrations of the member States. UNI had a good relationship with the UPU at both the global level and in the European context. But there were marked differences in the level of dialogue at regional levels. An agreement had been reached between the African regional body of the UPU and UNI's postal African representatives, with a similar agreement in the American region. But there was very little dialogue between the two organizations in the Asia-Pacific region. Such dialogue was seen as essential and UNI would continue to push for representation in UPU forums. The second issue concerned social dialogue in the less developed countries, particularly in Africa. Postal services in African countries were still operated as an essentially manual process. But this was bound to change, with significant job losses, which would serve to compound existing problems in the continent. Representatives of the workers would have to sit down with the employers to address the problems arising from technological change. To do this they needed access to the same skills as the other social partners. The ILO had a role to play in bringing this about through workshops on social dialogue in the regions. A successful workshop for the Asia region had been held in Bangkok in 2000. Further regional activities in Africa, as well as in Latin America, were now urgently needed so that the significant issues facing developing countries in these regions could be addressed.
- 85.** The third issue concerned the multinationals. The Workers welcomed the inclusion of regulators in the process of social dialogue. But they had never maintained that the conditions of employment in developing countries should be the same as those of developed countries. The *Telefónica* agreement was described in detail to illustrate the point. This agreement, like many others, was based on ILO Conventions. It required companies to respect the fundamental rights and principles embodied in these Conventions. It also required them to respect national regulations and agreements and abide by the minimum standards of the country concerned. But there was no suggestion in any agreement that wages and conditions of work should be the same in all countries. The speaker emphasized five issues on multinationals: (1) the need to fully support the principle and practices in the ILO's Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, which applied also to public sector enterprises working in other countries; (2) that the globalization process had contributed to increased prosperity but it had also led to inequalities – the ILO should work with the social partners to promote its Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and assist the social partners to engage in dialogue to resolve the inequalities; (3) the ILO should put consultative

arrangements in place with the multinational enterprises to promote global agreements and codes of conduct; (4) the ILO should investigate ways to ensure such agreements and codes could be monitored and enforced; and (5) given the large number of multinationals in the sector there was also a need to promote the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, particularly those principles enshrined in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

- 86.** The spokesperson for the Employers' group emphasized that social dialogue implied a "win-win" discussion and outcome. There were many different ways to achieve this, including through labour negotiations, which was nevertheless distinct from social dialogue in many cases. Many companies operated successfully without trade unions in an environment of declining trade union membership, not necessarily from company opposition to unions but because people had the right to choose not to belong to a union, a belief to which most companies adhered. The UNI-*Telefónica* Code of Conduct cited by the Workers' group sounded like a statement of principles of his company which was founded more than 80 years ago when there were no international conventions or codes of practice on the subject. Indeed, many companies operated very well without imposed codes of conduct or international standards. In a win-win situation, dialogue could enable companies and employees to work profitably together for the benefit of customers and communities.
- 87.** The representative of the Government of Slovakia declared that social dialogue was essential for industrial peace. This was in turn the basis for prosperity, the main objective.
- 88.** The representative of the Government of Kenya considered that social dialogue principles were well established and respected in the postal and telecommunications sector of Kenya. Social dialogue could be bipartite or tripartite based on provisions of the country's labour laws and established industrial practice. The many multinational enterprises operating in Kenya were not above the law – they were expected to apply the minimum standards on terms and conditions of employment statutorily set out in labour legislation without exception. However, many large companies such as DHL actually had labour standards higher than those negotiated by the social partners. The ILO had a particular responsibility for monitoring through regular surveys the implementation of its Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and the Declaration on Fundamental Rights and Principles at Work. Their implementation by all member States would help avoid a "race to the bottom" in the form of low labour standards in the postal and telecommunications sector.
- 89.** An Employer adviser (Germany) noted that social dialogue was very important and highly respected in the European region despite different views on its form. Win-win situations should benefit everyone in the enterprise. Social dialogue had different components and operational levels, and was most easily understood the closer it was to the workforce. In Germany, collective bargaining autonomy prevailed. Some issues were dealt with by the social partners – employers and workers – whereas other questions, more to do with macroeconomic and broader issues, were the subject of tripartite dialogue. A judgement could not be made as to whether this kind of social dialogue framework was valid throughout the world.
- 90.** An Employer member (Philippines) stated that social dialogue was imperative. Yet, it proceeded parallel to constant external changes which required enterprises' agility in their operations so as to meet customers' needs. The win-win concept was very important as a guide to forward-looking change, though it could not prescribe a uniform approach which ignored cultural diversity. A spirit of transparency among all sectors was also vital to drive dialogue, as it helped to create a sense of togetherness and sharing, both in good and in bad

times. Not everything subject to social dialogue needed to be in writing. If there was a climate of trust, dialogue, agreement and working together could encompass many unforeseen subjects.

Consideration and adoption of the draft report and the draft conclusions by the Meeting

- 91.** The Working Party on Conclusions submitted its draft conclusions to the Meeting at the latter's sixth sitting.
- 92.** At the same sitting, the Meeting adopted the present report and the draft conclusions.

Geneva, 17 May 2002.

(Signed) Mr. A. Pierides,
Chairperson.

Conclusions on employment, employability and equal opportunities in the postal and telecommunications services ¹

The Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services,

Having met in Geneva from 13 to 17 May 2002,

Adopts this seventeenth day of May 2002 the following conclusions:

General considerations

1. Postal and telecommunications services have experienced rapid change and wide fluctuations in growth, profitability and employment in recent years. They have, in turn, promoted economic growth and stimulated changes in cultural, social and political life around the world. Structural reforms in posts and telecommunications have curtailed public monopolies and led to the appearance and expansion of private operators, and this has increasingly affected employment, working conditions and labour relations. Spectacular technological progress, globalization, changing customer requirements and significant developments in the regulatory framework at the national, regional and world levels have accompanied those changes.
2. The nature and scope of those changes had profound negative and positive effects on employment, employability and equal opportunities in these industries. As in many other economic sectors, employment creation in some areas has been accompanied by job losses elsewhere, but at a particularly rapid pace in telecommunications. The telecoms boom of the late 1990s gave way to a sharp recession in this sector, as enthusiasm for third-generation telephony and for e-commerce waned while telecommunications firms' debts grew, exacerbated by an economic downturn and events in late 2001. However, new jobs are being created that need to be meaningful and quality jobs, which can be viewed as an opportunity and a challenge for employers' and workers' organizations and governments.
3. These two industries have a fundamental and strategic role in contributing to the economic growth of other sectors and to national and social cohesion. Changes in the economy around the world are directly linked to the development of new postal and telecommunications services, and to the blurring of frontiers between these activities and other sectors such as freight, financial services, and the media sector as a whole. There is strong and continuing commitment to the principle of the universal service in postal services and telecommunications, albeit in various forms, including for example Internet access, at affordable prices, coupled with a need to identify how this can be financed in the longer term, especially as regards remote or rural areas.
4. Regulatory and structural changes have continued in postal and telecommunications services since the 1998 ILO Tripartite Meeting on Postal and Telecommunications Services, including for example the General Agreement on Trade in Services of the WTO and the allocation and pricing of wireless licences. These changes have had a major impact on both industries in many countries. Where monopolies existed, they have, in some cases,

¹ Adopted unanimously.

gradually been opened up to competition through the liberalization of telecommunications and, more recently, of postal services. Such changes and, in particular, the full or partial privatization of public operators, have had substantial impact on employment, employability and equal opportunities. Although there is no “one size fits all” approach, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work provides a good foundation to employment, employability and equal opportunities issues in postal and telecommunications services.

Employment

5. It is difficult to assess whether the creation of employment opportunities in new postal and telecommunications services has compensated for job losses resulting either from technological, structural and regulatory changes or from management policies in enterprises. It is important to consider the quality as well as the quantity of jobs when discussing change in employment levels, and to recall that employment statistics represent real people and their families. The best results in managing the change process are likely to be achieved through appropriate strategic planning and effective social dialogue. Whether contemplating job creation or employment reductions, the social partners and governments should endeavour to respect the principles of fundamental rights at work, social protection, equal treatment and social dialogue.
6. In this period of rapid change, it is difficult to forecast the level of employment, re-emphasizing the need for proper human resource planning and for effective social dialogue. This should take into account the need to provide new services to satisfy consumer demand, thereby creating new job opportunities.

Employability

7. For employers and workers in postal and telecommunications services, these profound changes are having a major impact on training, whether workers stay with their current employer or move to another one. Successful business is dependent upon current skills which are key to employability and better work. Governments, workers and employers and their organizations recognize that many skills are becoming obsolete. All share the responsibility to develop significant, future-oriented skills. They should cooperate in a positive approach towards training for employability and change. Multiskilling, multitasking and lifelong learning should become the norm in these industries.
8. Lifelong learning should be the key to avoiding skills shortages, improving job quality and satisfaction, enhancing job opportunities, benefiting from technical progress, meeting consumers' requirements and enhancing the quality of service. It requires commitments to ensure adequate funding by employers and governments and commitment by workers to their own skill development, labour-management cooperation, and suitable trainers, facilities and learning materials.
9. Internet access for purposes of training, upskilling and e-learning should be promoted for postal and telecommunications workers, and efforts should be made to bridge the digital divide within the workforce. In addition it is recognized that all parties should make efforts to bridge the digital divide in regions and among groups in society that have insufficient access.
10. Respect for equal opportunities with regard to training is crucial to the success of efforts in employability, employment creation and equal treatment in general.

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11. Education is the responsibility of governments, whereas employability training can benefit from inputs from governments, employers and workers' organizations as regards the curriculum and the general orientation of skills development. Universities and schools may not provide all types of skills required by this sector, whereas vocational technical schools are often much more effective in meeting their needs. Greater efforts are needed on the part of governments, academic institutions, employers and workers' organizations to make education and training more relevant and useful in fulfilling the needs of students and potential employers. Constructive dialogue among the social partners on training issues has been very productive, as illustrated by examples provided in this Meeting and should therefore be encouraged.
 12. Governments, educational institutions and the social partners should work towards portability of skills, through recognized skill certification schemes (for example, the IT drivers' licence in Europe) that would allow greater mobility for workers.

Equal opportunities

13. A commitment to equality on the part of workers and employers and their organizations in postal and telecommunications enterprises can assist them to reflect and benefit from diversity in the workforce. ILO instruments on equality should be applied in this sector, in particular the principles of non-discrimination on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, age, disability, national extraction or social origin.
14. Progress towards equal opportunities varies widely in these industries in different countries, and it is important to ensure that equal opportunities can open the way towards greater equality of treatment. Education, training, retraining and career development should be open to all workers. Second-chance education could be of special importance to disadvantaged groups.
15. Measures should be implemented to enhance equal opportunities. This would include facilitating opening up career development opportunities, particularly for women and disadvantaged groups. An important objective should be to allow employees to reconcile their work and family responsibilities while continuing to meet business and customer requirements. The social partners should seek to develop these measures through social dialogue processes as appropriate. Opportunities for part-time, short-term and other flexible working arrangements can provide access for those trying to enter or re-enter the workforce. Access to longer term or full-time employment by those wanting to progress should also be encouraged.
16. Governments and the social partners should promote and observe the ILO concept of decent work, the principles and rights in the Conventions referred to in the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy, and those enshrined in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, as instruments to ensure equality of opportunities.
17. The achievement of equal opportunities is a goal for which we should strive constantly. Its pursuit has represented a major cultural and attitudinal change at the workplace. Progress has been made on equal opportunities in the postal and telecommunications sectors but there is still a need for greater equality of opportunity in career advancement and equality of treatment in pay and benefit structures.

Social dialogue

- 18.** Good labour relations are essential in the postal and telecommunications sector. Workers should have the right to organize collectively and to be represented by free and independent workers' organizations in accordance with international labour standards concerning freedom of association and the right to organize and collective bargaining.
- 19.** Many examples of effective social dialogue in postal and telecommunications services have been identified during the Meeting, from various parts of the world. The experience is more meaningful and mutually beneficial when it is genuine, transparent and freely entered into, and based on openness and sharing of information. European works councils exist in several postal and telecommunications enterprises. Global framework agreements have already been concluded by Telefónica (Spain) and OTE (Greece) with workers' organizations on labour and employment issues, taking into account international labour standards. Such arrangements can facilitate efforts by the social partners to work together in the process of sectoral change, and to find solutions to shared problems.
- 20.** In accordance with national law and practice, workers and their representatives in postal and telecommunications enterprises should be consulted on a timely basis on human resources implications of the strategic decisions of operators. Wherever possible, they should be involved at all appropriate levels of the restructuring process if the reforms are to fully achieve their objectives of efficient and quality service. The process of restructuring should not undermine existing collective bargaining.
- 21.** Social dialogue should include the regulators of postal and telecommunications services.

Role of the ILO

- 22.** The ILO has an important role in promoting good labour relations and decent work in this sector, in conjunction with other international agencies. The ILO should study and disseminate to member States best practices in employment, employability and equal opportunities in this sector.
- 23.** Several ILO instruments are particularly relevant to employment, equal opportunities, employability and the new structural and regulatory developments in postal and telecommunications services. An important aspect of the ILO's work is to promote the application of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up.
- 24.** The ILO should organize or support, at the regional or subregional levels, tripartite seminars or workshops in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean with the participation of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Bank to consider structural and regulatory changes in the postal and telecommunications services of the regions or subregions concerned and to propose measures in the light of ILO standards, including measures to improve labour relations.

Part 2

Resolutions

Consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the draft resolutions

At its fourth plenary sitting, the Meeting set up a Working Party on Resolutions, in accordance with article 13, paragraph 1, of the Standing Orders.

The Working Party, presided over by the Chairperson of the Meeting, consisted of the Officers of the Meeting and three representatives from each of the groups. The members of the Working Party were:

Officers of the Meeting:

Mr. Pierides (Chairperson)
Mr. Clark (Government Vice-Chairperson)
Mr. Maranan (Employer Vice-Chairperson)
Mr. Tsuda (Worker Vice-Chairperson)

Government members:

India: Mr. Samant
Kenya: Ms. Tabu
Morocco: Mr. El Maliki

Employer members:

Mr. Kjaergaard
Ms. Leeming
Ms. Traversy

Worker members:

Mr. Nazeikin
Mr. Baulk
Ms. Bourque

The Working Party had before it four draft resolutions submitted by the Workers' group. The draft resolution concerning the establishment of a tripartite forum for consultation concerning employment and working conditions in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.1), the draft resolution concerning codes of conduct for multinational enterprises in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.2), the draft resolution concerning freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.3); and the draft resolution concerning improving equality and non-discrimination in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.4) were discussed.

The texts of draft resolutions WPR/D.1, WPR/D.2 and WPR/D.3 were declared receivable.

In accordance with paragraph 2 of article 14, the Working Party decided that draft resolution concerning improving equality and non-discrimination in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.4) related to the agenda item, and its substance was subsequently incorporated in the conclusions on that section of the agenda item.

The draft resolution concerning the establishment of a tripartite forum for consultation concerning employment and working conditions in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.1) and the draft resolution concerning freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.3) were amended on the basis of proposals made by members of the three groups.

On WPR/D.1, no full consensus could be reached by the Working Party, and the amended text was adopted by a vote of 8 in favour and 4 against.

After lengthy discussions, the draft resolution concerning codes of conduct for multinational enterprises in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (WPR/D.2) was withdrawn by the Workers' group, as its members did not understand why the draft resolution in its original version was not accepted by the other groups in the Working Party when its contents had been generally accepted in a wider tripartite context.

WPR/D.3, as amended, was adopted by consensus.

At the Meeting's sixth plenary sitting, the Chairperson, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Working Party on Resolutions and in accordance with article 14, paragraph 8, of the Standing Orders, submitted the recommendation of the Working Party on Resolutions regarding the two draft resolutions before the Meeting. Ms. Leeming (Employer, New Zealand) observed that the Employers' group could not support the draft resolution concerning tripartite consultation on employment and working conditions in the postal and telecommunications services sectors (TMPTS/2002/8) because they felt it would dilute the democratic process of sectoral meetings, pose financial problems and pre-empt the ongoing sectoral activities review being undertaken by the Governing Body. The Workers' spokesperson (Mr. Baulk) observed that considerable time had been expended on discussing and then adopting drafting changes in the Working Party on Resolutions, and was disappointed that the Employers could no longer support that wording. The draft resolution was then carried, with 24 votes in favour (17 Worker members, 7 Government members) and 19 (Employer members) against.

The draft resolution concerning fundamental principles and rights at work in postal and telecommunications services (TMPTS/2002/9) was adopted unanimously.

Resolution concerning tripartite consultation on employment and working conditions in the postal and telecommunications services sector

The Meeting adopted the resolution by majority vote.

Resolution concerning fundamental principles and rights at work in postal and telecommunications services

The Meeting unanimously adopted the resolution.

Texts of resolutions adopted by the Meeting

Resolution concerning tripartite consultation on employment and working conditions in the postal and telecommunications services sectors ¹

The Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services,

Having met in Geneva from 13 to 17 May 2002,

Recognizing that for the Postal and Telecommunications Services to be able to face successfully the challenges of globalization, there is a need for an active social dialogue between employers' and workers' organizations and a dialogue between trade unions, employers and the relevant national and international public authorities;

Adopts this seventeenth day of May 2002 the following resolution:

The Tripartite Meeting on the Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office:

To request the Director-General of the ILO to examine the possibility, in line with the ongoing sectoral activities review undertaken by the Governing Body, of convening a small tripartite consultative group to meet as often as necessary between the regular quadrennial meetings of the sectors, in order to promote a constructive exchange of views on global developments in the postal and telecommunications services sectors and their implications for employment, working conditions and labour relations. Among the priority issues that should be placed on its agenda are equal opportunities issues; restructuring, privatization, mergers and acquisitions; retraining and employability skills; job creation and employment security; policies and codes of conduct on employment as well as the ILO programme of action for the two sectors.

Resolution concerning fundamental principles and rights at work in the postal and telecommunications services sectors ²

The Tripartite Meeting on Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services,

Having met in Geneva from 13 to 17 May 2002;

Adopts this seventeenth day of May 2002 the following resolution:

¹ Adopted by majority vote.

² Adopted unanimously.

The Tripartite Meeting on the Employment, Employability and Equal Opportunities in the Postal and Telecommunications Services invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Office:

To call on governments, employers' and workers' organizations³ to observe and promote the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, namely: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

³ When the term "workers' organizations" is used, it refers primarily to trade unions.

Part 3

Other proceedings

Panel discussions, presentation and round table

Regulatory and technological issues in telecommunications services

Moderator: Mr. Roberto Zachmann, Focal Point for Information and Communication Technologies, Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department, ILO, Geneva

Panellists: Mr. Oupa Magashula, Group Executive, Human Resources, Telkom South Africa, Pretoria

Mr. Andrew Bibby, Freelance writer and researcher on telecommunications and telework employment issues, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire

Ms. Barbara Easterling, Secretary-Treasurer, Communications Workers of America, Washington, DC

Ms. Easterling considered the issue of workplace surveillance to be one of the downsides of technology. The European Commission had recently carried out a study on the “Protection of workers’ personal data: The case of surveillance and monitoring”, in which the experts had stated that employees should be entitled to limited private access to data about them, and that employers’ monitoring of workers’ telephones calls and Internet activities should be limited to monitoring of overall work performance and quality control in order to prevent or detect crimes or for security reasons. It was further noted that excessive or routine monitoring was “humanly degrading”. The study questioned the employers’ right to monitor emails if they appeared to be private, and suggested that if the use of the companies’ email address were restricted, an alternative or private email address should be accessible to employees for private use. Finally, it addressed the issue of camera surveillance, stating that “generally speaking, camera surveillance should be considered to be unlawful”, and that “lawful” purposes should be “limited to protecting health and safety and the employers’ property”. Her union had negotiated on this issue in the United States, and had won restrictions on monitoring, which protected union members against the worst abuses of monitoring, and effectively banned secret monitoring. The contract provisions included prior notification, prompt feedback, the prohibition of disciplinary action solely as a result of monitoring, and limits on the number of monitored calls or monitoring sessions. She added that the European Commission study cited transparency on the purpose of monitoring, and information and consultation with workers’ representatives as being essential elements that must be addressed in surveillance policies, which had been taken into consideration in negotiations with American telecommunications services employers.

With regard to data protection, Ms. Easterling commented that regulations should be introduced that provided protection of personal data held by employers on their staff. There was an abundance of information that companies accumulated on employees – dealing with health issues, family circumstances and other relevant information – that was personal in nature and should not be available to any other outside party. Everyone should be concerned about where such information was being stored. She stated that in March 2002, the United States Attorney-General, John Ashcroft, had asked American telecommunications business leaders to support a new bill that would allow companies to share sensitive data with the Government without fearing that federal law would require

the Government to release it. An Act currently prevented the Government from collecting information on individuals without them having the right to review it. As a result of the events of 11 September 2001, the Attorney-General had also asked those leaders to support legislation in Congress that would exempt from the Freedom of Information Act any information that telecommunications companies shared with the Government about computers' or networks' vulnerabilities. Mr. Ashcroft had also urged telecommunications executives to speed up the building of surveillance capabilities into their new digital communication systems. Consumer advocates and others were calling for more oversight of the new powers given to federal law enforcers.

Ms. Easterling concluded by addressing issues relating to the digital divide within her industry, her country and between rich and poor countries. The Workers' group felt that these issues were of vital importance for the economy, communications, democracy and education in countries all around the world.

Mr. Magashula commented on the impact of technology on regulation at the enterprise level at Telkom in South Africa. He noted that technology substitution and competitive differentiation were two forces or drivers that had influenced the change process in his company. Historically, Telkom had relied on services bundled with a given technology. However, in a competitive and service environment, service innovations had to be of excellent quality and user-friendliness, and customer demands needed to be met much more effectively. Thus Telkom had been obliged to rethink the way it was doing business. For instance, in 1995, the company was a provider of wholesale connectivity, fixed access and mobile access. Since 1999, it had evolved into a retail service, content and commerce provider. There were also technological changes that had implications on human resources management. The increase in availability of broadband and converged services, combined with solution-oriented business perspectives, translated into an increasing need for skills among its workers. The importance of human capital had increased relative to network capabilities, and the demand for a highly skilled workforce had required Telkom to spend US\$230 million per year on training and retraining. It was expected that the training budget would increase to US\$600 million in order to keep up with the pace of technological developments in the industry. Consequently, it also required a change in organizational dynamics to support new skill-sets and to innovate in-service delivery. That had an impact on the way policies and procedures were designed; the company needed to be more flexible, to build trust among employees and to share information more widely.

Mr. Magashula called on tripartite leaders to be proactive in mapping out current skills to future technology, and to invest in skills straight away, so as to fully leverage opportunities afforded by technological changes. It was also imperative that all new technology purchases should come with a commitment to additional or contractual training for staff, the transfer of knowledge being the key element to remaining competitive in the marketplace. Furthermore, there was a need to focus on solution delivery, to harness the abilities provided by technological changes through engendering an innovative approach.

Mr. Magashula emphasized that the telecommunications sector in South Africa had experienced a great transformation after the post-apartheid democratic elections in 1994 and the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Telkom had been awarded a limited fixed-line monopoly at that time, valid until 2002, with the obligation to extend telecommunication density to rural areas. Since 1996, more than 2 million lines had been installed in the rural areas. In 1996, the Government introduced a mobile cellular phone duopoly, coexisting with a 100 per cent state-owned fixed-line business. The Telecommunications Amendment Act of 2001 was introduced, and the telecommunications regulatory authority was established. There were also other changes introduced, such as the liberalization of the telecommunications market, and socio-political transformations that allowed for initiatives

like the Employment Equity Law and economic empowerment of previously marginalized groups, that had led to the transformation of the telecommunications sector.

Mr. Bibby highlighted ten main assertions and counter-assertions about telecommunications, in order to stimulate the debate. The first was that the telecommunications sector was at the centre of the radical transformations which were moving societies and economies forward towards information-age, knowledge-based economies, where value resided primarily in human knowledge rather than in physical assets. However, at the same time, the process of change had happened more slowly than anticipated – despite all the upheavals of the past decade, a list of the top ten telecommunications companies worldwide remained similar to that of 1990. In other words, change had been incremental. The second proposition referred to the process of convergence of IT and the telecommunications sector into new hybrid information and communication technologies (ICTs), with telecommunication links increasingly carrying data traffic rather than voice telephony. But convergence had involved not just ICTs but also the media, entertainment and communication sector, as well as broadcasters, publishers and others who were producing the information content. Numerous examples of mergers or acquisitions reflected this broader path of convergence, and AOL-Time Warner was perhaps the most dramatic example, uniting online, publishing and broadcasting interests. However, AOL-Time Warner illustrated that convergence and the benefits it brought could be over-emphasized. There was still a distinctive telecommunications sector. Companies such as NTT, Deutsche Telekom, AT&T were still clearly telecommunications companies. Indeed, such firms were beginning to shed parts of their portfolios that seemed peripheral to the core business. The third assertion concerned technological achievement and the use of it by telecommunications companies. Firms that did not take full advantage of the opportunities offered by technological change would not survive. But those that saw themselves primarily in the technology business made a major mistake, in his opinion. Telecommunications firms needed to see themselves primarily as service companies, trying to meet as successfully as possible the needs of their customers; technology was incidental to that central mission. The next assertion dealt with technological innovation, which had created new markets for unexpected needs and, in the process, changed the way people lived and interacted at work and in their social life. But technological determinism was problematic, since it was impossible to predict whether or not the next technological breakthrough would be successful and profitable.

The fifth assertion argued that telecommunication effortlessly crossed national frontiers, and increasingly could take work away from the old geographical centres where it had formerly been concentrated, towards lower-cost regions of the world, as with the highly successful Indian software industry, or the relocation of call centres to countries where costs were lower. However, the decline in employment numbers in large companies such as NTT, Deutsche Telekom and British Telecom was only part of the story. The background report for the Meeting had mentioned new employment possibilities in developed countries, but these were often very different from the old jobs they had replaced, requiring different skills.

His sixth assertion was the need for lifelong learning, due to rapid technological change and the skills required to keep up with it. This was an issue for governments, individuals and companies, with widespread concern expressed about IT skills shortages. The problem, however, was that training remained a marginal activity for many companies, being treated as peripheral to the core business, despite all the international and national agreement on the crying need for lifelong learning. The next assertion argued for new delivery methods for training made available by technology, particularly via the Internet and company intranets. Some interesting examples of e-learning were being used by telecommunications firms, often in conjunction with trade unions, as the background report pointed out. Nevertheless, significant numbers of students failed to complete

e-learning courses, and some feedback on the quality of courses was negative. Traditional pedagogical techniques associated with instructor-led training sessions had often been carried over into the new training medium. A new pedagogy needed to be developed.

Mr. Bibby's eighth assertion saw telecommunications companies as the vanguard in the 1990s in encouraging teleworking – using ICTs to work remotely from central offices – as a harbinger of the information society. However, the reality was that the numbers of people who had opted to work full time from home had remained relatively low, although work organization was adapting to technological opportunities, and all sorts of flexible working arrangements were arising. Teleworking – more broadly defined to include other types of location-independent working – remained an important trend, in which telecommunications companies had considerable expertise. The next assertion referred to call centres as a significant new form of work organization that had arisen as a direct result of ICT, in particular the development of automated call-distribution technology, in which telecommunications companies had often led the way. At the same time, some routine functions previously undertaken by call-centre staff could be delivered in other ways, including via the Internet, thus threatening call-centre closures and thousands of job losses. The challenge for companies was to refocus call centres, to use direct contact with customers to develop opportunities for further business, to create a better working environment, so there was less staff turnover. His closing assertion covered cooperation between the social partners, since the telecommunications sector had experienced huge transformation in recent years: liberalization, competition and privatization. Its success had often been through mechanisms of social partnership in many countries, within established telecommunications firms. If the structures for social partnership were robust enough to cope with what had happened in telecommunications, there was a broader lesson for the whole process of transition from an industrial age to an information age.

Discussion

In response to the presentations, a Worker member from Argentina asked how developing countries could deal with the skills shortage problem. Mr. Bibby replied that this was a major issue that required further discussions with all the relevant parties. The European Union had reported the figure of 1.6 million IT job vacancies predicted across the EU, and at the same time there was still a significant “brain-drain” of workers from developing countries.

A Government member from Kenya asked about ways to mitigate the impact of relocation of big business from higher-wage to lower-wage countries. Mr. Bibby responded that the relocation of data processing and data input had started 20 or 30 years ago, and companies had been relocating other activities incrementally, often to regions that shared a common language with the higher-cost country. Working in different time zones could allow companies to work around the clock, increasing productivity without necessarily having to cut jobs. However, there were other reasons for relocation than cost, and information-rich products and services could not simply be shifted to another country unless logistical and other factors allowed it.

An Employer member from Spain stated that some companies relied on automated voice mail and answering systems, and he wanted the panellists' point of view on this. Ms. Easterling commented that companies which relied primarily on the recording system were not paying attention to customer service. In addition, she stated that customer service had been seriously impaired by technology.

A Worker member from India acknowledged Mr. Bibby's recent work in interviewing software engineers in private companies in his country, where he had found

that they were afraid to join trade unions. Mr. Bibby concurred with the statement and added that there was a need for the ILO to continue addressing issues of that sort.

A Government member from Kenya referred to the presentation on South Africa and asked about the procedures that Telkom South Africa had taken concerning staff reductions. Mr. Magashula replied that a lot of money had been invested in training, especially on people who were functionally illiterate, so that they could fill internal vacancies or be employable in other sectors of the economy. After that, alternative ways of avoiding redundancy such as early retirement, voluntary separation and other schemes had been introduced. Compulsory retrenchment had only involved around 1,000 or so staff members.

A Worker member from the United Kingdom commented that the telecommunications sector was going through deregulation, and that in certain cases the regulators had a direct impact on the working conditions of the staff, as well as on the pricing of services, and opening up competition in the market. Mr. Magashula spoke about his experience with the regulators in his country. He stated that regulators needed to be competent in order to successfully exercise the powers granted to them. Ms. Easterling replied to the question by relating the problems that deregulation had brought to the telecommunications industries in the United States. Mergers and acquisitions had led to severe competition that allowed new companies to emerge, but at the same time stories of bankruptcies were common in the industry, and affected product delivery and customer satisfaction. The regulators had also contributed to the demise of the monopoly in the industry, creating the same cycle described previously. Mr. Bibby noted that there was a need for regulators; a Worker member from Germany agreed, specifying that the telecommunications industry needed regulatory bodies to guide industries in the process of change and to balance market forces.

An observer from Union Network International from the United Kingdom commented that the industry needed independent and competent regulators, "independent" meaning that they needed clear terms of reference from government so that they could exercise their power within the limits of their mandate. Mr. Bibby stated that the good regulators had an extremely difficult task: on the one hand, they had to have a close relationship with the companies, and on the other, they had to uphold regulations.

The session concluded with further discussion among participants on the role of regulators, on the impact of mergers and acquisitions in telecommunications on jobs and corporate success, and on the progress (or otherwise) towards convergence within the information and communication industries.

Deregulation and privatization in postal services: Prospects for the future

Moderator: Ms. Gabriele Ullrich, Team Leader, Public and Private Services,
Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva

Panellists: Ms. Robyn Leeming, Head of Graduate School,
Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

Mr. John Baldwin, Policy Officer,
Communications Workers' Union, London

Mr. Vantuyl Barbosa Jr., Head, Regulatory Affairs Programme,
Universal Postal Union, Bern

The moderator commented at the outset that the issues involving deregulation and privatization were complex. They had been taken up by the ILO in other service sectors and their sectoral meetings in recent years. The complexity was illustrated in different patterns of deregulation and privatization observed in different sectors, countries and regions. Particularly complex were the questions whether privatization of services in the public interest would be able to ensure universal and equal access to these services and whether it created competition or a private monopoly instead of the state monopoly. The question of who should regulate the regulators was also a pertinent issue.

Ms. Leeming observed that in an era of consumer-driven markets, it was inevitable that state monopolies, particularly in postal services where the volume of letters being handled was declining rapidly, would become less acceptable to consumers with diverse interests, needs and capacities to pay. In order for the postal service to avoid becoming a financial burden to taxpayers, it had to become efficient and profitable by broadening the range of services provided. If the scope of its service was limited, it would not be able to compete with companies that had globally integrated operations. If the postal workforce was reluctant to adapt to the changing business environment, governments had no choice but to reduce their subsidies. What was essential for the service was the reputation for security and speed of delivery, as these were increasingly being challenged by private providers. She thought that postal services had reacted to these challenges too slowly, due to limited state investment in new technology and also owing to trade unions' resistance to change.

The postal service reform implemented in 1985 in New Zealand cost some NZ\$44 million and created a state-owned enterprise, with a reduction of full-time employment from 14,000 to about 8,000. With union cooperation, work patterns had changed drastically, and part-time and casual employment had risen to cope with peak demand, making the service a profitable venture for the taxpayer in 1986, thereby ensuring its survival. Despite the decline in full-time employment, she stated that with new technology and streamlined logistics around the country, many agencies and franchises had subsequently been opened, considerably affecting the total number of people employed indirectly in postal services. Subsequent deregulation of the industry had hardly had any impact on New Zealand Post's mail volumes. Private operators found it difficult to compete with the effective nationwide infrastructure developed by the state-owned enterprise, with its solid reputation for reliability and speedy delivery at a cost lower than before.

Adaptability to change was an increasingly important requirement for postal workers. The need to achieve efficiency was fundamental to all economic systems, and industrial action might delay the inevitable, but would only risk the enterprise's survival. Too often, more emphasis had been put on the rights of the employees and on preserving their historical privileges, rather than on their obligation to the customer and on embracing learning opportunities to deliver the future. Traditionally, state postal services had relied on large numbers of relatively unskilled workers for delivering services, but the "knowledge age" required more sophisticated services by skilled and technologically literate workers. If state postal services failed in this, the private sector could step in to fill the gap. The gap between skills available and skills required to ensure the survival of state postal services was often too vast; even generous budgets would not be able to bridge the gap. Thus, unions, governments and employers had a joint responsibility to ensure that the human cost of restructuring was minimized. She thought that the best protection against the pain of redundancy was education and higher skills of employees, and warned that the private sector – with a stronger human resource base and a higher investment in technology – would outperform national postal services unless postal employees came to terms with this reality. Ms. Leeming reiterated that governments would not be able to keep protecting postal services with ever-increasing subsidies, and emphasized that deregulation was

inevitable, while privatization was not. If the service promoted universal accessibility in a secure environment, if all stakeholders were prepared to invest in the upgrading of the skills and technology required to meet market expectations, and if the service quality met or exceeded those of the private sector, then postal services would be able to survive, albeit in constantly changing forms.

Mr. Baldwin argued that the post office had originally been established for ordinary people to communicate and to send a written text from one place to another securely. It was not important whether the postal service was funded publicly or by private shareholders, but the key to the debate was whether or not it was secure and universally accessible at affordable, and possibly uniform, tariffs. He agreed with the view that the volume of letters being handled by the post office would inevitably be reduced because of many new forms of communication, but believed that it would not come down so much; otherwise, why would multinational companies wish to lobby hard for deregulation? He thought that postal employees and trade unions in the United Kingdom and the European Union had accepted the current realities surrounding the postal service, and employees had a strong sense of public service in delivering letters to recipients securely, and they themselves were consumers.

If there was a transition from a state-owned monopoly to a state-owned corporation, he felt that some subsidy was needed to keep down prices and to ensure the universal service, as letter delivery was a monopoly by nature. Competitors wishing to obtain the cream of the market were lobbying hard, but he observed that such firms did not employ people in the same way as the British postal operator did, and, once the mail service was liberalized completely, the current tariffs would surely be wiped out, as private companies would be certain to seek profits, possibly resulting in the re-monopolization of postal services. On the other hand, a national provider was the provider of universal service. Bulk mail for major companies was something that anyone could handle profitably. Mr. Baldwin felt that the danger of the debate about how to keep the postal service vibrant and competitive at reduced prices was moving away from a postal service currently available to people, and towards a service purely based on business principles; but in fact, people might eventually face a catastrophe in which no reliable postal service was left in the country.

Mr. Barbosa gave an overview of the Universal Postal Union (UPU), which was made up of 189 countries, representing more than 6 million employees. Among other things, it promoted social, cultural and commercial communications, fostered the development of a high-quality universal postal service, facilitated free circulation of postal items throughout the world and promoted technical cooperation among its members. These had to be examined in relation to evolving customer needs, globalization and liberalization, technological change, increased competition in postal markets, and postal reforms taking place across the world. At its last congress in 1999 in Beijing, the UPU reaffirmed its original principle of the universal postal service – it was a matter of human rights that anyone should be able to communicate with anyone, anywhere.

The UPU considered liberalization as a means, not a goal, towards maintaining universal services, where wider choices at lower prices with improved quality of service and benefit were available to customers in a globalized world. UPU member countries could be classified into four groups: one where operations had been liberalized; another where gradual and controlled liberalization was taking place; a third, where de facto liberalization had been taking place; and a fourth, where liberalization had been rejected. What was important was to see how practical liberalization was for the government, workers and customers, as the situation was different in each country. Moreover, deregulation often meant re-regulation. Globalization had opened up business opportunities to multinational companies that had formed new strategic alliances and

international networks, but the social impact of such postal networks was not yet very clear with regard to the principle of universal access to secure and affordable service.

Mr. Barbosa argued that as the post office was the largest single employer in many countries, its restructuring, reform or closures would affect many communities in terms of loss of jobs and services. However, the universal service was being extended in some countries such as in Brazil, for example, where a new law stipulated that the area served by the postal service would be enlarged threefold in ten years. While it would not cause a massive job increase, it would still affect employment positively. On the other hand, in a country such as Switzerland, the transport system was so good that closing some post offices might not drastically affect the universal service, although there had been recent protests in Geneva and elsewhere against imminent closure of post offices. Postal services had often been static and passive, involving largely manual work despite technological change. Thus, adding value and capacity of the employees and utilizing their knowledge would be essential in the development and reform of the service. The future role of UPU would be to foster public and private partnerships, while maintaining its intergovernmental role and commitment as a regulator.

Discussion

A Worker member from China asserted that in a vast country like hers, the postal service required a large subsidy to keep its commitment to universal service, while multinational companies were not providing such service, thus no fair competition existed in the first place. Postal employees were not paid enough, which might lead to the danger of lowering the standard of the universal service, although trade unions would not allow this. She strongly believed that governments had to provide sufficient subsidies to ensure postal services to all parts of the country.

A Worker member from Argentina shared the experience of the fully liberalized postal service in his country. In his view, the service had been opened up irresponsibly, despite the state monopoly that had been guaranteed by the Constitution. At the present day, anarchy prevailed in the postal service there, with some 850 clandestine operators operating because of the lack of regulations, but many of them were not viable. Some 15,000 jobs had been lost, and wages in private companies had also been lowered. The postal service was an essential service for the population, but it could not be maintained smoothly without universally acceptable market standards. He had accepted market deregulation and globalization as the current reality, but felt strongly that both positive and negative aspects of these had to be looked at and assessed carefully, as the experience in his country had turned out to be all negative. He asked if the UPU had envisaged certain criteria for universal standards in liberalizing the service, because if this had not been done, the public service would simply disappear, and would involve a huge price for workers and the population to pay. He also questioned who should regulate the regulators, since the regulations and the regulators should be there to protect customers, using transparent standards on competition, without which the situation would result in anarchy.

In response to the previous speaker, Mr. Barbosa reiterated his earlier view that liberalization was not an aim but a means to offer a wide variety of services that customers required. A model from Europe – where postal markets were well developed – could not be transplanted in other parts of the world as it was, and different solutions were required for different countries. It was therefore up to each country, and not for the UPU, to find the best form and process of change, and to this end the UPU had been promoting exchange of experiences. Mr. Baldwin also commented that the postal service was unique in each country and that no country should assume automatically that deregulation implemented in one country would work for another.

Another Worker member questioned how the universal postal service should be financed and if postal services should really be deregulated from the viewpoint of universal access. Ms. Leeming responded that she was not insisting on deregulation, as each country had its own circumstances, but believed that private companies had gained the upper hand in the security and speed of the services being provided. She was of the opinion that no country would have unlimited resources, and it was up to the taxpayers to decide how such resources should be allocated and to what other services. Mr. Barbosa observed that there was no magic solution as to how the universal service should be financed. In EU member countries an understanding was that it should be self-financed, but this was not envisaged in developing countries; therefore, each country had to decide according to its condition and ability. In this sense, licensing concessions should be looked at as one option.

Agreeing with previous speakers on several issues, a Worker member from Japan considered that the financial base of postal service operations should be sound, although in Japan the service had been running at a great deficit. The postal service had to be reliable in providing speed and security, so that customers would remain loyal. Japan's service now had to ensure that mail was delivered within one day of posting to anywhere in the country; in order to achieve this, the workers' civil service mentality had to be changed to that of businessmindedness. When there was a call for the privatization of the service, one should ask why and for what reasons. If a privatized company was able to provide the service cheaply and efficiently, privatization should be the way. However, private companies were not interested in the universal postal service, and it was important to think how to guarantee such a service cost effectively.

An observer from Union Network International referred to the reform in New Zealand, which, he believed, had destroyed trade unions as well as the universal service, and he challenged Ms. Leeming's view that the reform had been successful. Some countries had reformed their postal service based on making the service profitable, while some others were concerned about the universal service and affordability, rather than profitability. He thought that governments had a social obligation to counter the multinational networks that could destroy universal and affordable postal services. Finally, he argued that the reform had caused huge job losses, and he questioned the job satisfaction of those who were still employed.

Ms. Leeming responded that the postal service was available for six days per week in New Zealand, and there were more outlets operating than in 1986. She also assured participants that the level of employees' job satisfaction remained high and that the new postal trade union had been very successful, with 70 per cent union density. She reiterated that it was not the Government but the taxpayers who had decided how their postal service should be operated, and she confirmed the overall success of New Zealand's reform of its postal services.

Presentation on the Sectoral Activities Department one-stop window web site; Round table discussion on the World Summit on the Information Society

Moderator: Mr. Bill Ratteree, Education Sector Specialist,
Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva

Presenters: Ms. Anamaria Vere, Web Site Development Specialist,
Sectoral Activities Department, ILO, Geneva

Mr. Roberto Zachmann, Focal Point for Information
and Communication Technologies, Job Creation and Enterprise
Development Department, ILO, Geneva

Ms. Vere provided an outline of the new “one-stop window” conception for the Sectoral Activities Department web site, which was to be presented officially to the ILO’s Governing Body at its June 2002 session. In contrast to the previous site, the one-stop window allowed easier navigation, much better possibilities for hyperlinks to other relevant ILO and external sources of information of a sectoral nature, and a more user-friendly design. Using the postal and telecommunications services sector as an example, she demonstrated how the improvements gave a better overview of the whole range of sectoral activities across the ILO for each of the 22 sectors, and allowed access to much information and data that were previously difficult to locate. Links to occupational safety and health material on anthrax, to case studies on equal opportunities policies in telecommunications companies, to multinational enterprise data on the sector and so on were illustrated. Participants were invited to provide comments and suggestions as subsequent users of the site.

Mr. Zachmann explained the context in which the first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (10-12 December 2003) had been developed. Early work in this area had been undertaken within the OECD since 1997, and in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, which had led to the creation of an ICT Task Force in March 2001. Three preparatory committees would be held in 2002 and 2003. The first phase of the World Summit will be held in Geneva, hosted by the Government of Switzerland, while the second phase will take place in Tunis, hosted by the Government of Tunisia, in 2005. One of the subjects under discussion in these conferences was the role of civil society at the Summit. Current plans were for this to be an intergovernmental conference with some association with the private sector, civil society and NGOs. The Summit’s main objective was to facilitate the effective growth of the information society and to help bridge the digital divide. Using practical examples, he illustrated how access to information was unequal, and how improved access for poorer countries could improve their competitiveness. For the ILO, this Summit would be most effective if it could adopt conclusions about strengthening human resource development by improved access to quality education for all, reinforcement of continuous training and lifelong learning, and retraining for displaced workers. Constructive social dialogue on training and technological change should help to ensure equitable sharing of the benefits of ICTs. Governments had an important role in improving the access, quality and relevance of their own information systems.

Discussion

A Worker member noted that information technologies, instead of bringing people closer together and encouraging integration, had tended to have the opposite effect at the global level, exacerbating the gap between rich and poor countries and reinforcing social

exclusion. Mr. Zachmann observed that new information and communication technologies in a globalized world allowed even the smallest businesses to benefit from technology.

Another Worker member insisted on the importance of getting all relevant parties involved in the World Summit on the Information Society, which was currently being dominated by governments and the United Nations bodies. In response to a question concerning the likelihood of the ILO's preoccupations being taken into account, Mr. Zachmann considered that until the present, it was clear that social and labour issues remained of secondary interest to the Summit organizers.

Closing speeches

The Secretary-General highlighted the substantial progress of women's representation at the Meeting: almost 30 per cent of delegates as compared to 20 per cent at the previous meeting for the sector four years previously. The Meeting had been an important occasion to discuss employment, employability and equal opportunities in an ILO tripartite framework for social dialogue, while the panel discussions facilitated an in-depth exchange of information and experience on recent developments in the postal and telecommunications sectors. The set of conclusions adopted by consensus and the two resolutions were the main outcome of the Meeting. Together with the Meeting report they would be submitted to the Governing Body in November for it to decide to send those documents to the member States and to the international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned. It was important that the constituents of the ILO, as well as the Organization itself, put those conclusions and resolutions into action. He looked forward to continuing to work with participants at both the national and international levels as they contributed to the achievement of the objectives set by the Meeting. He expressed the sincere thanks of the secretariat to the Chairperson of the Meeting, Mr. Pierides, for the friendly and efficient way in which he had presided over the deliberations. Thanks were similarly extended to the Vice-Chairpersons of the Meeting; the Chairpersons and spokespersons of the groups and the group secretariats; to colleagues in the secretariat as well as those from the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities; and all those staff members working behind the scenes for a job well done. The interpreters' facilitation of proper communication during the week was similarly recognized. He wished all a safe journey home.

Mr. Samant (Chairperson of the Government group) expressed his great pleasure at placing on record the gratitude of the participating governments for the meaningful discussions and clear conclusions arrived at in the Meeting. The deliberations would go a long way in stimulating effective social dialogue in the postal and telecommunications sectors, which were so vital for national economies. He also wished to record appreciation of the ILO's efforts to hold the Meeting under its auspices and for its continued involvement in these sectors.

Mr. Maranan (Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting) thanked the ILO for the excellent efforts that had made it possible for a multilingual Meeting to proceed and conclude productively. Delegates were returning to their respective countries far more learned and knowledgeable both professionally and personally. The resolutions and agreements arrived at in the Meeting would be evaluated and aligned with the respective laws of participants' countries. He called on everyone to meet the challenge, continuously learning and adapting to the rapid changes, building the lines of communication for both the present and the future. As long as communications remained open and effective, general growth would be more of a reality rather than an unreachable dream. He hailed all the workers, the governments and employers represented at the Meeting, those they represented around the world, and the ILO.

Mr. Baulk (spokesperson, Workers' group) thanked the ILO for a rewarding experience. Although the results could have been even better, the Meeting's achievements justified the optimism his group had brought to it. Workers stood ready to work with their social partners to implement the Meeting's resolutions and conclusions. He joined previous speakers in thanking the interpreters for their hard work and commended the secretariat, whose work sometimes late into the night had ensured the Meeting's success. Finally, he also thanked the Chairperson for an outstanding job in presiding over proceedings.

The Chairperson, noting the wide-ranging, interesting and constructive deliberations over the previous five days, congratulated the delegates for having focused so clearly on the suggested points for discussion and keeping within the proposed timetable. They had paid attention to the future as well as to the present and the past, providing much food for thought as to how the ILO could contribute to these important issues in the coming years. They had reached agreement in an open, cooperative and business-like manner on a substantial report and a broad set of conclusions that could provide ideas that governments, employers, workers and their respective organizations would be able to benefit from in the coming years. On the basis of long association with the ILO, he could affirm with confidence that the Meeting had proceeded in a business-like way and produced results on a very difficult and diverse subject. He had had a rewarding experience, thanks to everyone's help. He had especially appreciated the frank and patient way in which all had worked together to build a consensus, learn from each other, thereby bringing the Meeting successfully towards conclusions supplemented by two resolutions that had just been adopted. He expressed heartfelt thanks to all the participants, speakers, observers and advisers, particularly those who had taken part in the working parties and the panel discussions, mentioning, especially, Messrs. Clark, Maranan and Tsuda, as well as the moderators of the three panel discussions. In addition, he expressed sincere appreciation for the work of the Secretary-General, of the Deputy Secretary-General, and all the members of the secretariat, who had laboured behind the scenes in the preparation and successful conclusion of the Meeting. The untiring efforts of all these people, as well as the skill of the interpreters, had contributed greatly to results which would help governments and the social partners in all the ILO member States to address the challenges of employment, employability and equal opportunities in the changing environment of the postal and telecommunications services sector. He wished everyone a very safe and pleasant return journey to their home countries and declared the Meeting closed.

Evaluation questionnaire

A questionnaire seeking participants' opinions on various aspects of the Meeting was distributed before the end of the Meeting.

1. How do you rate the Meeting as regards the following?

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
The choice of agenda item (subject of the Meeting)	13	13				4.50
The points for discussion	9	16				4.36
The quality of the discussion	3	17	3			4.43
The Meeting's benefits to the sector	12	10	3			4.36
The conclusions	6	10	7	1		3.88
The resolutions	3	10	8	4		3.48
Panel discussion on regulatory and technological issues in telecommunications		15	6	1		3.64
Panel discussion on deregulation and privatization in postal services	2	10	6			3.78
Presentation	3	11	5			3.89
Round table discussion	3	10	5	1		3.84
Opportunity for networking	5	9	7			3.90

2. How do you rate the quality of the report in terms of the following?

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
Quality of analysis	11	13	2			4.52
Objectivity	11	12	1			4.42
Comprehensiveness of coverage	10	12	3			4.28
Presentation and readability	10	12	3			4.28
Amount and relevance of information	11	10	4			4.28

3. How do you consider the time allotted for discussion?

	Too much	Enough	Too little
Discussion of the report		24	2
Panel discussions		22	1
Groups		24	
Working Party on Resolutions	5	18	
Working Party on Conclusions	4	16	3

4. How do you rate the practical and administrative arrangements (secretariat, document services, translation, interpretation)?

5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
16	9	1			4.42

5. Respondents to the questionnaire

Government	Employers	Workers	Observers	Total	Response rate (%)
6	12	8	0	26	27

6. Participants at the Meeting

Government	Employers	Workers	Technical advisers	Observers	Total
10	22	19	14	30	95

7. Delegates/technical advisers

	Government	Employers	Workers	Total
Delegates	10	22	19	51
Technical advisers	8	2	4	14

8. Female participation

	Government	Employers	Workers	Total	Per cent female delegates
Delegates	3	6	6	15	29
Technical advisers	3	1	1	5	

List of participants
Liste des participants
Lista de participantes

Representative of the Governing Body
of the International Labour Office
Représentant du Conseil d'administration
du Bureau international du Travail
Representante del Consejo de Administración
de la Oficina Internacional del Trabajo

Mr. A. Pierides, Director-General, Cyprus Employers' and Industrialists' Federation, Nicosia

Members representing governments
Membres représentant les gouvernements
Miembros representantes de los gobiernos

CANADA CANADÁ

Mr. Gordon Clark, Director, Legislation, Research and Policy, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service,
Labour Program, Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa

CHINA CHINE

Mr. Zhang Junfeng, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of China in Geneva

Advisers/Conseillers techniques/Consejeros técnicos

Ms. Wang Mei, Deputy Director-General, Department of Personnel and Education, State Post Bureau, Beijing

Mr. Duan Dongwen, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of China in Geneva

Mr. Xue Yongcheng, Section Chief, Department of Personnel and Education, State Post Bureau, Beijing

INDIA INDE

Mr. Shukadev Samant, Deputy Director-General (Personnel), Department of Posts, New Delhi

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Ms. Deborah Limo Chemirmir, General Manager Human Resources, Postal Corporation of Kenya, Nairobi

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Mr. Joseph Tanui, Industrial Relations Manager, Kenyan Government – Telkom Kenya Ltd., Nairobi

Mr. Ephraim Waweru Ngare, Labour Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Kenya in Geneva

REPUBLIC OF KOREA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE REPÚBLICA DE COREA

Mr. Sung Ki-Yi, Labour Attaché, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea in Geneva

MOROCCO MAROC MARRUECOS

M. Abdelekbir El Maliki, chef de cabinet, secrétariat d'Etat auprès du Premier ministre, chargé de la poste et des technologies des télécommunications et de l'information, Rabat

SLOVAKIA SLOVAQUIE ESLOVAQUIA

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Adviser/Conseillère technique/Consejera técnica

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Membres représentant les employeurs

Miembros representantes de los empleadores

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Ms. Angela Djang-Kwashie, MOBITEL, Millicom Ghana Ltd., Head Office, Accra

Mr. Said Khalil Hamadeh, Board Member, Association of Lebanese Industrialists, Baaklene-Al-Chouf

Mr. Gary Howard, Vice-President and Corporate Director, Global Employee Advocacy and HR Legislative Affairs Motorola Inc., Schaumburg, IL.

Mr. Jamil Janjua, Chief Executive, TCS (Private) Ltd., Karachi

M. Alain Didier Kassi, vice-président, Commission sociale, Conseil national du patronat ivoirien, Abidjan

Mr. Erik Kjaergaard, Director, Confederation of Danish Industries, Copenhagen

Mr. Vladas Kusta, Director, JSC "Kauno Rysiu Statyba", Kaunas

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Ms. Mary A. Traversy, Vice President, Human Resources, Canada Post Corporation, Ottawa, Ontario

Mr. Ishak Zainuddin Bin, General Manager, Human Resources Division, Telekom Malaysia Berhad, Kuala Lumpur

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Membres représentant les travailleurs
Miembros representantes de los trabajadores

Sr. Juan Arcos Arriagada, Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Empresa de Correos de Chile (SINTECH), Santiago

Mr. John Baldwin, Head of European Affairs, Communications Workers Union (CWU), London

Mr. Brian Baulk, President, Communications Division, Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU), Carlton, South Victoria

Ms. Deborah Bourque, President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Syndicat des travailleurs/travailleuses des postes (CUPW/STTP), Ottawa, Ontario

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M. Manuel Da Silva, Secretario-General, Sindicato Democrático dos Trabalhadores das Telecomunicações e Correios (SINDETELCO), Amora

Ms. Barbara Easterling, Secretary-Treasurer, Communications Workers of America AFL-CIO, Washington, DC

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M. Gabou Gueye, Syndicat national des travailleurs des postes et télécommunications (SNTPT), Dakar

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Mr. Li Jianming, Division Chief, International Liaison Department, All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), Beijing

Mr. Jung Hyun-Young, President, Korean Postal Workers' Union (KPWU), Seoul

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Joon-Hwan Roh, Secretary, Korean Postal Workers' Union, Seoul

Mr. Milan Jukic, Member of Leadership, Croatian Trade Union of Postal Workers (HSP), Zagreb

Mr. Anatoly Nazeikin, Chairperson, Russian Communication Workers Union (RCWU), Moscow

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Ms. Olga Vinogradova, Director, UNI Moscow Office, Moscow

Mr. Luis Neves, Head of the International Department, Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft (Ver.di), Berlin

M^{me} Marie Elisabeth Okemba, présidente du Comité postal UNI-AFRICA, Syndicat autonome des postes (SYNAPOST), Bangui

M^{me} Hermanne Marcelle Somplei, trésorière adjointe, SYNDIPOSTE – Confédération Dignité, Abidjan

M^{me} Andrée Thomas, Fédération syndicaliste FO de la Communication postes et télécommunications (FOCOM), Vitry-sur-Seine

Mr. Thomas John K., President, Federation of National Telecom Organization (India), Ahmedabad

Mr. Junjiro Tsuda, President, All NTT Workers' Union of Japan, Tokyo

Others

Autres

Otros

Representatives of member States present at the sittings

Représentants d'Etats Membres présents aux séances

Representantes de Estados Miembros presentes en las sesiones

Mr. Abdullah Shehu Ahmad, Deputy Director, Labour Representative, Permanent Mission of Nigeria in Geneva

Representatives of the United Nations, specialized agencies and other official international organizations

Représentants des Nations Unies, des institutions spécialisées et d'autres organisations internationales officielles

Representantes de las Naciones Unidas, de los organismos especializados y de otras organizaciones internacionales oficiales

World Trade Organization

Organisation mondiale du commerce

Organización Mundial del Comercio

Mr. Philippe Borel, Research Assistant, Trade in Services Division, Geneva

Ms. Lee Tuthill, Senior Counsellor, Trade in Services Division, Geneva

Universal Postal Union (UPU)
Union postale universelle (UPU)
Unión Postal Universal

Ms. Won-Ja Lee, Human Resources Expert, Bern

M. Vantuyl Barbosa Jr., chef du Programme affaires réglementaires, Berne

Representatives of non-governmental international organizations
Représentants d'organisations internationales non gouvernementales
Representantes de organizaciones internacionales no gubernamentales

International Federation of Business and Professional Women
Fédération internationale des femmes de carrières libérales et commerciales
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Ms. Conchina Poncini, Coordinator, Troinex/Geneva

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Mr. Bert Van Caelenberg, Secretary-General, Brussels

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**Zonta International – International Service Organization of Executives
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