



Twelfth sitting

Friday, 11 June 2004, 10.00 a.m.

President: Mr. Ray Guevara, Mr. Maatough

REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION (CONT.)

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT (Mr. Ray GUEVARA)

I give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference for an announcement.

RATIFICATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION BY MAURITIUS

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

It is a pleasure for me to announce to the Conference that on 9 June 2004, Mauritius deposited the ratification instrument of the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), a Convention which was adopted by the Conference in 1983.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

Before resuming our discussion, I would like to give a brief summary of the discussion of the Global Report which took place yesterday. In fact, we devoted two entire plenary sessions to the discussion of the Report.

Yesterday, Thursday, 10 June 2004, the International Labour Conference held two plenary sittings in which it examined the Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The aim of these sittings was to stimulate an interactive debate that would enable an exchange of information and ideas to be used in the development of an action plan. More than 60 speakers took the floor to stress unanimously the crucial importance of the principles of trade union freedoms, freedom of association and the actual recognition of collective bargaining to guarantee social justice. Those principles are the foundations of a state governed by the rule of law.

While there is still a long way to go to ensure full application of these rights, delegations provided information on progress achieved and recognized the need to accompany economic growth with the guarantee of social rights; indeed, they all agreed this was fundamental.

Export processing zones, agriculture, domestic workers, migrants and those who work in the public sector are all sectors and groups where we really need to redouble our efforts. Because it is precisely in those areas where there are the greatest deficiencies when it comes to the application of these principles.

Collective bargaining and social dialogue have been confirmed as embodying the ultimate expression of trade union freedom and the right of association. They must therefore be adjusted to the latest developments in economic progress and social reality and address not only the usual issues but also equality, productivity and the use of new technologies.

All the efforts and measures taken by governments, workers and employers are remarkable but it is quite clear that much still remains to be done. To complete the process, there needs to be a framework of international solidarity in order to achieve the social justice to which we all aspired.

In addition to respecting the commitments under the Declaration, it is clear that the wealthier countries should support those who ask for their cooperation to disseminate rights and experiences that will allow them to apply these principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining. This is my summary of the discussions that we held yesterday on the Global Report.

We shall now resume all discussions of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General.

Original Spanish: Mr. MARIUS (representative, Latin American Central of Workers)

I would like to join in congratulating the President of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference, not only because it behoves me to do so, but also with much affection and we wish him every success.

The Latin American Central of Workers, which is 50 years old and which is getting ready to hold its 12th Congress in Brazilia, would like to reiterate its thoughts on the role, standard-setting process, and mission of the ILO from the perspective of Latin American workers.

First we must note, as did the Latin American Commission for the Rights And Freedoms of Workers and the Peoples in its 12th Annual Report that in our region, living and working conditions are steadily deteriorating. There is a marked continuous increase in precarious employment and structural employment, unfair distribution of wealth, a constant weakening of the welfare and social security systems and generalized, systematic violations of the rights and freedoms enshrined in our national constitutions, international agreements, and in ILO agreements.

Latin America, because of its heritage of biological diversity and natural resources, should certainly not be called the poorest continent, but the antiso-

cial wheeling-dealing of economic and political forces and the big multinational companies make it the most unfair continent on the planet, where the gap between the opulent lifestyle of a rich minority and the poverty, misery and desperation of the vast majority of our peoples is widening with everyday that passes. For this reason, the Director-General's Report seeks well thought out alternatives.

Secondly, this civilization faces the United Nations' system with a huge challenge. I am talking about the task of universal coverage, but in this situation the ILO must play a decisive role. That is what workers around the world are demanding. The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization is not just an important initiative; despite certain gaps and some rather general statements, it has made an interesting contribution. We in Latin America believe that the only way to consolidate democracy with social justice is to provide an alternative development model, quite different from the single track and exclusive mind set that is being foisted upon us.

The ILO must carry much more weight within the multilateral system, essentially in the financial, economic and trade bodies, whose policies and decisions are still making millions of people in our continent poorer.

The ILO cannot allow its role to be reduced to simply being a place for protesting or letting off steam about poverty, misery and social exclusion; on the contrary, it should with greater institutional fortitude adopt a global strategic agenda, so that on the basis of its reading of history it can participate in the fora where every day the new world power structures take the big decisions.

We visualize an instrument which, with the help of the world of work, helps to overcome the anachronistic incoherence, which makes social considerations of secondary importance and where individuals and peoples are at the mercy of financial geopolitics and the new functioning of open markets commanded by the interests of minority sectors.

Thirdly, this remodelling of the ILO involves a management analysis which would call into question the effectiveness of our regulatory and legislative system, analyse irregularities, check on coherence and compare actual results with those of other bodies within the United Nations system. I am not talking about the content of norms, but of their application and development and of the tripartite follow-up to Conventions.

We are talking about, asymmetry or inequality of conditions when faced with a boss who sacks a trade union leader thereby violating The Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and it is the worker who ends up paying the price for all the time that passes until the national courts go into action or an appeal is heard by international legal bodies.

On the other hand as far as our standard-setting activities are concerned, the text of the Governing Body contains some concerns, some wake-up calls, and makes some suggestions and recommendations to governments, while the World Trade Organization applies drastic sanctions to any States that violate trade agreements.

Just three days ago, Rigoberto Dueñas from Guatemala, completed the first year of a prison sentence imposed on him because he denounced corruption at the Guatemala Social Security Institute. The authorities refuse to release him. Since 1992, no more

than 15 trade union leaders have been murdered, but no investigation have been carried out and no one has been punished. In Cuba, nine leaders of a trade union were sentenced to 20-25 years in prison for the "crime" of belonging to our Latin American Central of Workers. In Colombia there is clearly a policy of conditioning violence and repression against the trade union movement, and more than 100 trade union leaders were murdered in 2003. This is an extremely grave situation, the Committee on the Application of Standards has not been able to agree on even one observation and conciliation mission to Colombia.

The ILO needs our full commitment in order to move forward, a global strategic agenda enabling it to consolidate its historic role and to fund more forceful answers to the problems of our civilization. The international social drama demands that we break traditional moulds and make the voice of this institution heard in multilateral bodies. The Latin American Central of Workers is prepared to give its support to meeting this challenge, as this is what Latin America workers are demanding.

Original Russian: Mr. KOZIK (Workers' delegate, Belarus)

The Workers' delegation of Belarus has attentively studied the Reports presented for examination at this session, and we have noted that these Reports fairly reflect the important role of the ILO in defending and implementing fundamental principles and rights at work.

Yes, much work has been done in order to fulfil the strategic objectives defined in the ILO programme. We share the view of the Director-General and of his proposals which are contained in the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, that it is absolutely necessary to concentrate the efforts of the ILO on the social aspects of globalization.

It is absolutely necessary for us to make the process of globalization – one which is fair, democratic and manageable and one which opens equal opportunities for all countries and peoples. It is opportune that the Commission has prepared this report in a timely manner, when we still have the chance to match the processes of economic globalization with the development of political and social institutions which, as correctly noted in the report, are local, national or, preferably regional in nature.

The ILO must continue to provide analysis of the processes of globalization and to formulate codes of behaviour both for governments and workers' organizations. At the same time, I should like to focus on an important element.

Today, the international workers' movement has no united international centre. Certainly, the trade union movement is united in various conferences and federations which are extremely important and play a positive role but, at the same time, each such enterprise follows its own goals, and the information coming from these enterprises is sometimes distorted.

I believe that a group of workers could usefully examine this issue. As a first step, a decision could be taken by these international associations to be open to membership for all without any exclusion. Faced with the rapid development of globalization, workers risk remaining without a clear centre. This idea is partially reflected in one of the reports presented here which notes a positive trend in the trade union struggle to increase their numbers, their links

with other trade unions, and their size at the national and international levels.

It is difficult not to agree with this. It is, in fact, a necessary condition for dialogue and equality between the social partners and for giving them the opportunities they require. In fact, only strong trade unions with highly developed structures and financial independence can truly maintain and represent the interest of workers in carrying out negotiations with social partners.

At the same time, we support the ILO initiative and the necessity of carrying out a comprehensive approach to the implementation of programmes based on strategic objectives and having one goal – decent work.

The goal-oriented nature of these programmes and consensus achieved by their effective implementation allows us to study all aspects in order to achieve the best results. The Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus continues to be in favour with the strict compliance of international standards as this will guarantee their implementation in the world of work.

The Republic of Belarus has ratified all of the core ILO Conventions. However, we do have some remaining problems. There is a small amount of unemployment – 3 per cent – and wage levels remain insufficient for workers. We are required to stand up for social guarantees of workers and must regularly remind the Government and employers that only a socially healthy society can achieve economic progress.

Nevertheless, in the last two years, there have been a number of positive steps made in Belarus. We can already talk about fully-fledged social dialogue on a tripartite basis. The ILO has provided technical assistance to the development of tripartite cooperation in Belarus. We consider it absolutely necessary that the ILO resume implementation of its technical assistance programmes in Belarus with the participation of the largest trade union centres.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for the wonderful Reports that you have presented for our examination at this session.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL ANSARI (Employers' delegate, Qatar)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! We would like to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference, and to wish him every success.

It is an honour for me to have the opportunity to take part in this annual Conference held by the ILO, which this year, is examining subjects which are of particular interest to the constituents – Governments, Employers and Workers. The Conference is the *raison d'être* of this Organization and its chief importance lies in the subjects for discussion which, in turn, give rise to recommendations and decisions that enable us to strengthen the relationship between the social partners.

It is an honour for me to express my appreciation and thanks to the International Labour Organization, which has constantly strengthened complementary relations between governments, employers and workers.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my conviction that the human factor is at the heart of our work. The human factor accounts for 60 per cent of production and it is this conviction which should prompt us to create an enabling envi-

ronment conducive to strengthening workers' productivity and innovative ability.

Qatar is complying with its international commitments and provides workers, be they nationals or residents, with an enabling environment conducive to work, through its legislation, governing relations between employers and workers, and coordination between employers and the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Housing. In the framework of labour administration, this Ministry ensures that decent housing and medical services are provided to all workers without any discrimination.

In addition, an Emiri Decree approving a new Labour Code has recently been promulgated, affording workers new rights and advantages. Thus, workers now enjoy rights which are guaranteed by the legislation, with compliance being supervised by the difference organizations and trade unions. The new Labour Code regulates dialogue between employers and workers by means of negotiations, collective agreements and joint committees, thus strengthening the relationship between the two parties. All of this furthers the improvement of working conditions and the development of the national economy.

As we speak of workers' rights and an improvement in working conditions, we cannot close our eyes to the situation in Palestine and in the occupied Arab territories, and the measures taken by the Israeli occupation authorities. We therefore urge you to help Palestinian workers and employers in Palestine and in the occupied Arab territories.

Original Russian: Mr. NAGHIYEV (Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Azerbaijan)

Allow me first of all to express my appreciation for the Report that has been presented and the issues discussed at this forum, which once again confirm that the ILO's activities are characterized not just by its sphere of competence but also, and most importantly, by the clear ideal of ensuring social justice around the world.

The Director-General's Report once again demonstrates that the gravity of the current socio-economic situation of the world forces us to search for new approaches and take new decisions with the aim of realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work.

Since the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference, institutional reforms in Azerbaijan have progressed even further, and there is now better recognition that social issues must be an integral part of the transformation process. This is reflected in a number of decrees issued by the President of Azerbaijan as well as in the Government programmes adopted with the aim of reducing poverty and increasing the socio-economic development of the regions. This has allowed us to further strengthen observance of human rights in the area of work and social organization, and to develop social progress in our country.

International institutions such as the United Nations, the ILO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others are taking an ever greater role in resolving social problems in the Azerbaijani Republic. This cooperation provides a mechanism for us to join forces and take an integrated approach to the development of social policies in our country.

I would like to take this opportunity to express particular thanks to the ILO for having provided us with the necessary consultations, as well as for carrying out seminars to prepare our national employ-

ment strategy and to develop systems for safe and secure work and to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, as well as to develop the role of the social partners in formulating employment policy. Azerbaijan is one of the ten countries championing the development of a network of youth employment and has begun working, with the support of the ILO, on an action plan for youth employment, which will become an integral part of a national action plan for implementation of employment strategy.

We, in Azerbaijan, are actively carrying out legislative reform and are paying close attention to international standards. It should be emphasized that Azerbaijan has ratified 55 ILO Conventions, including all those concerning social dialogue and all eight core Conventions.

At the same time, it should be noted that violence and the occupation by Armenia of more than 20 per cent of Azerbaijani territory and the presence of a large number of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the problems of a transitional period, make it more difficult to apply Conventions. It is also obvious that globalization significantly influences our capacity to implement our own socio-economic policies.

The main aims of the Conference arising out of the Report presented are to overcome existing tensions in the development of social dialogue and to ensure the realization of fundamental rights and principles at work. No country can successfully carry out its economic and social policies without developing tripartism. The development and democratization of social labour relations in our country presupposes the active partnership of all the social partners: the State, the trade unions and the employers. The entry into force on 1 July 1999 of the new Labour Code of the Republic of Azerbaijan was an important step in that direction.

Since 2001, social dialogue at the national level has been carried out on a tripartite basis when concluding general collective agreements. Experience shows that Azerbaijan is moving slowly towards further democratization of labour relations; each of the participants in collective labour relations is becoming increasingly aware of the need for cooperation in resolving social labour issues.

Given the results achieved in the context of the development of further cooperation between Azerbaijan and the ILO, we believe that it would be useful to implement joint projects at the national level to develop social dialogue in the following areas:

First, the establishment of the ILO Decent Work Agenda in the Azerbaijani Republic has focused significant attention on creating healthy and safe working conditions, employment protection, the establishment of a national system of management in accordance with international standards and the enhancement of national pay mechanisms in the state sector.

Secondly, the implementation, following the ratification by the Azerbaijani Republic of Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and the organization in that connection of a programme for the monitoring of child labour and the preparation of a national plan of action.

Thirdly, in the framework of the joint initiative by the ILO, the United Nations and the World Bank to create a network for youth employment, and the

organization in Azerbaijan of a we have a national centre for the promotion of youth employment, which will help the young people of our country to find employment, and will make it a priority to help refugees, internally displaced persons, women and other vulnerable groups.

I believe that the consensus that we have achieved in this forum regarding future action will allow us to achieve even greater results in developing social justice.

Mr. BARIMAH (*Minister of Manpower Development and Employment, Ghana*)

The Report of the Director-General, *ILO programme implementation 2002-03*, and the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization reflect this Organization's determination to use its huge potential and influence to effectively tackle the multifaceted problems facing the world of work through its international standards-related activities.

In that regard, Ghana, as a coastal state, is satisfied that the first discussion on the fishing sector at this Conference is aimed at revising the seven standards on fishing. This should lead to effective measures to promote, among other things, health and safety standards for the benefit of the industry, its employees and consumers.

In the same vein, we are extremely happy with the inclusion of migrant workers on this year's agenda. Migration has become an issue of huge international importance. Hence, it is being discussed in various international forums to ensure that the phenomenon benefits all countries involved, as well as the migrant workers and members of their families.

Ghana received close to US\$1 billion in 2003 in remittances that came into the country from Ghanaian migrants. However, it is also true that Ghana's health delivery system has been seriously devastated by migration of skilled health workers, mainly to Europe and America. This clearly shows the need for properly managed migration to ensure a win-win situation for all countries as well as for the migrants themselves.

The migration issue is part of the globalization process. Indeed, there cannot be free movement of goods, services and capital without a corresponding free movement of peoples in a globalized world. The Ghana delegation therefore endorses the World Commission's concerns that the extent and intensity of globalization has not resulted in net gains for all countries. Every effort must, therefore, be made to reverse the negative impact of globalization on the economies of developing countries, which have been losers in this process. We do hope that the recommendations of the World Commission could be translated into concrete programmes and comprehensive action to enhance the standard of living of all workers through relevant standard setting under ILO Conventions.

Ghana is grateful to the ILO and supporting donors for the various capacity-building interventions from which the country has benefited in the past. These include global employment and the Decent Work Agenda, ILO/IPEC projects and the new Child Labour Unit of the Labour Department of Ghana, which is working effectively to combat child labour and the worst forms of child exploitation. I am happy to inform you that victims of child labour and trafficking are being liberated and reunited with their families and being given opportu-

nities for education. Funds are also being provided to their parents to invest in alternative means of livelihood.

To meet international standards on fundamental principles and rights at work, Ghana has now enacted a new labour act. It is the Government's determination to apply the act diligently. The act has been drafted in collaboration with the ILO, to meet the developmental objectives of the country and enhance conditions of employment for Ghanaian workers and attract further investment for more employment opportunities. We hope for further support in operationalizing, the new labour commission created under the act and in sensitizing the social partners on its operation provisions. Similarly, the ILO was involved in our joint programme called Skills Training and Employment Placement (STEP), which aims at poverty reduction through the provision of skills training for self-employment in the different communities in the country.

The Government of Ghana and its social partners, are grateful to the ILO for other interventions, which include the guarantee of social security and protection for workers, worker-friendly policies on HIV/AIDS in places of work, employment-intensive investments, enterprise development and social dialogue. These activities have contributed immensely to the spirit of tripartite cooperation and industrial harmony in Ghana.

Finally, Ghana pledges its determination to continue to cooperate with the Organization to formulate appropriate social policies that will ensure equity and improved living standards for our people.

Ms. NGINDINWA (*Deputy Minister of Labour, Namibia*)

It is my distinct honour and privilege to address this 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government and people of Namibia.

I want to thank the Director-General, the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the International Labour Office for the comprehensive reports and documents that have been made available to us for committee discussions and policy debates. In particular, I should like to focus my attention on the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization entitled *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*, and the Report of the Director-General entitled *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*.

I would also like to congratulate the ILO for having shown the courage and foresight to establish the World Commission and for drawing the membership of this Commission from both developed and developing countries, in order to ensure a balanced representation.

The Commission investigated the impact of globalization on our workers, employers, Governments and societies as a whole, but, even more importantly, the Commission proposed that concerted efforts should be made to manage and drive globalization, not just for the benefit of a few, but ultimately change it for the benefit of countries, societies and people that up to now have been marginalized in the process.

Globalization is not an end in itself, but rather a process, phenomenon or institution. It affects us all, whether employed or unemployed, young or old, rich or poor. Globalization is here to stay and the only choice we have is to decide whether we want to change in order to be part of the institutional

mechanisms that manage the process. That is why I am particularly pleased and, at the same time, excited to see the role that the ILO has started to play and intends to playing in shifting the focus of globalization from the privileged few to a wider people-centred focus.

My delegation, therefore, supports the views of the World Commission when it calls for: a focus on people and respect for their rights and cultural identity, decent work and empowerment of their communities; a democratic and effective State to manage integration into the global economy; sustainable development and environmental protection; productive and equitable markets to promote opportunity and enterprise; fair rules for the global economy, to offer equitable opportunities and access for all countries while recognizing the diversity in national capacities and developmental needs; globalization with solidarity to overcome inequality within and between countries and to contribute to the elimination of poverty; greater accountability by public and private actors for the policies they pursue and the actions they take; and an effective United Nations system to create a democratic, legitimate and coherent framework for globalization. These are, to say the very least, far-reaching and all-encompassing objectives that we should aspire to.

It is clear that Governments, employers and workers have to commit themselves to achieving a fairer globalization process.

While acknowledging this, we will inevitably look to the ILO to lead the way. I am happy to note in the Report of the Director-General that the ILO seems more than willing to rise to the challenges laid down for it in the proposals contained in the Report of the World Commission. I would like to assure the Director-General of our support during the process of the ILO implementation of the recommendations in the report. The ILO represents an enormous and unique constituency base and it should consequently use this to its advantage when engaging other international institutions to address the social dimensions of globalization and work towards an equitable and fair social development.

There are two specific issues from the report of the World Commission that I would like to raise.

The first one is empowering people at the local and community levels. It is a well-known fact that, in developing countries in particular, there are large informal economies that are continuously growing and where most of the workforce is employed. The reasons for the expansion of the informal economy are not clear, but its growth might partly be a by-product of globalization. This sector still lacks the recognition and support that the formal economy is receiving. Most workers in this sector do not enjoy any form of social protection, and hence are plagued by low levels of productivity, while being confined to restricted markets. Governments, employers, workers and the ILO, therefore, have a role to play in positively addressing the abovementioned factors in this expanding sector of the economy.

The second issue is the cross-border movement of people. The report recognizes that the migration of workers is a phenomenon that is increasing and that this can, in part be attributed to increasing globalization.

The World Commission proposes that a multilateral framework should be developed to govern international migration and that a global forum be

established for a regular exchange of views on the issue.

The proposed new multilateral framework has, as one of its objectives, to facilitate mutually beneficial ways of increasing migration opportunities. I, however, think that more emphasis should be placed on the Recommendations that promote measures to eliminate trafficking and the abuse of vulnerable groups such as women and children; to make the process predictable and legal; and to ensure full protection for the rights of migrant workers and facilitate their local integration, pursuant to the Decent Work Agenda of the ILO.

It is my belief that, when we look at the recognition of rights of workers and their dependants, we should, at the same time, look at the other side of the coin.

The one central message that is expressed in both the Report of the World Commission and the Director-General's Report, is one of consultative communication. Namibia has used its substantial resources to build and establish institutions for the management of our people in the economic, social and labour spheres.

Mr. TABANI (*Employers' delegate, Pakistan*)

In the name of God, the most Beneficent, the most Merciful! I bring you greetings from the Employers of Pakistan who join me in congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents on their unanimous election. With their experience and wisdom, we are confident they will guide this session of the Conference to a successful conclusion.

The Report of the Director-General is very comprehensive and gives a detailed account of the work done by the ILO for the promotion of decent work. The ILO assistance to workers in the occupied territories of Palestine is also commendable.

The ILO Area Office in Pakistan has been instrumental in getting the subject of employment included in the Pakistani Government's Poverty Reduction Programme. It has also recently completed a national tripartite consultation process on the decent work programme for Pakistan.

The World Commission, consisting of intellectuals and experts, represented a variety of diverse views and perspectives. Arriving at a final set of conclusions and recommendations could not have been an easy task, and I want to commend the two co-Chairs, President Mkapa and President Halonen, all of the members of the Commission, the Director-General and indeed the secretariat for their achievements.

The report is wide-ranging in its recommendations and proposals. In many respects, not all is new in this report – many of the ideas have been debated previously. But this report has a certain credibility since it has been filtered through a wide range of actors and been the subject of extensive dialogues. Perhaps its most significant aspect is the recognition by such diverse individuals and groups that in spite of perceptions to the contrary, that globalization has generated many significant benefits throughout the world and more importantly has the potential to lift people out of poverty. This is a new and commendable conclusion.

The report has done well to try to separate facts from perceptions. The focus of our discussions should now be on the ILO's specific role within the follow-up to this report. It is clear that the ILO is

currently well-positioned to give effect to many of the recommendations.

The ILO is a unique organization that has operated in a unique way for over 85 years. I do not think that anyone wants to change this uniqueness, its comparative advantage, or its place and role within the international institutions. Therefore, any recommendations of the report should complement existing activities and should not change the direction of the ILO and its current activities.

The report gives some focus to the current multilateral system, and offers recommendations in this regard. Importantly, while realizing that the multilateral trading system should substantially reduce unfair barriers to market access of goods in which developing countries have comparative advantage, the report places an emphasis on responsibility and the fact that globalization starts at home. Individual governments need to face up to their responsibilities and create the conditions to be able to benefit from globalization.

One of the main recommendations in the report is the call for greater policy coherence and coordination amongst international organizations. Employers welcome the call for greater policy coordination across the international system and see the ILO's role in such policy coordination while operating within its traditional mandate and through the Governing Body.

All institutions would need to engage in such a process in an even-handed manner, cognizant of each others' mandates and responsibilities. Employers want to see the current work of the ILO reinforced and supported without competition with other institutions, for instance, in the sphere of macroeconomic policies.

The ILO is focusing on the promotion of employment as a central route to eliminate poverty. This is a very positive development and one that employers support. Job creation is at the heart of poverty alleviation. Employers would like to see greater policy coherence as regards the role of the private sector in terms of poverty alleviation. A major partner in this respect could be the UNDP and the recent report produced by the Commission on the Private Sector and Development, *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor*, should be utilized.

The road map given to us by the Director-General in the four challenges are worth repeating here: first, making decent work a global goal; second, making the ILO a global player; third, mobilizing tripartism for global action; fourth, global action with the ILO, with the Organization as a whole becoming a global team along with its constituents – the employers and workers.

To conclude, let me say that if properly implemented, with a strong focus on utilizing social dialogue and tripartism, this report and some of its recommendations could help deliver many more people from poverty. That is something we all want.

Ms. STO. TOMAS (*Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines*)

There are two subjects in this year's discussion that are of interest to us in the developing world, the Philippines included. I am talking about globalization and migration.

In a sense, migration and globalization are two sides of the same coin. While one may not cause the other, they go back to the same primal instinct.

They go back to the time when we were all one world. In the beginning there was only one world. While we may have been separated by oceans and mountains, we were not separate countries or states – we were just one world.

There were differences of course, some of us were bigger, some of us were faster, some of us were better off and because of these differences we decided to trade. That was how we found out how the other half lives. Somewhere in the world somebody wanted fabric in exchange for spice, or somebody wanted gold in exchange for goods or guns or pottery or people. Somebody's surplus was somebody else's shortage. Later on this would be called comparative advantage; more benevolently, this would be called complementation.

Out of this wealth of transactions would come rules. Progress after all requires rules in order to bring about civility, and civility would require fairness.

This is how our institutions evolved and this is why we are here today in this 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference, to ensure that even if there are those among us who are bigger, fairer and faster, rules and civility would prevail. That comparative advantage would not be used to gain undue advantage.

Globalization seeks the unhampered movement of goods, capital and services. The logic is that, where this flow is allowed to take its natural course, all of us would benefit. For is not globalization the tide that would raise all boats? Well, not always. Not when the rules do not promote civility and fairness. Globalization has of late taken a human face. In the last 20 years we have seen an unprecedented movement of people. In fact this movement has grown faster than the global birth rate. People move towards perceived better opportunities, or away from war, persecution or poverty. Helped by faster and improved communications, people come by air, sea and land in search of a better world than the one which they were born into. People migrate.

I realize that the world is held together by laws and rules. These imposed regimes for reasonable conduct and appropriate behaviour assure us that not only the fleetest or the mightiest will survive. What nature and genetics did not allow us, the goodness of man will hopefully alleviate through the norms that he creates.

This morning I will not bore you with statistics. You know them, I know them. They are the realities of our everyday existence as ministers, workers and employers.

I will only tell you that on 23 April 2004, we signed an agreement with the Republic of Korea that proposes to hire Filipinos under terms and conditions similar to their Korean counterparts. Last year during the SARS crisis, Singapore took care of our workers in the same way they took care of their own. In Israel and Saudi Arabia when our people are caught in the crossfire of conflicts they do not understand, they are given the care and attention previously reserved only for their own nationals. We have not acquired rights that come from citizenship. These countries, among others, have taken responsibility for the strangers in their midst. They all give us reason to hope and the world is richer and better for it.

I look at this all today and tell myself there is probably not one country in this room that does not host at least one of my countrymen. We have our

own diaspora, and I do not propose to engage today in a negotiation for the rights that they may hopefully enjoy in your territory. Right now, my framework is not right-based, it is based on responsibility.

We have a responsibility for the people who leave our shores, even when they leave irregularly we take responsibility for them and we will take them back if it becomes necessary. We shall ensure that they are healthy, skilled and properly oriented. That is our responsibility to them, and even when they are not any of this, we take responsibility for them too. We hope that for the short time that they may be with you in your countries, you will take responsibility for them as well.

They are not apples, coal, wheat or oil. They may not represent insurance services or banks. They may not be what is contemplated under this wonderful concept called globalization, which I call one world. They are human beings and they are our shared responsibility. Whilst we ask them to take responsibility for their personal decisions, the countries of origin and destination who profit from their brain and brawn share in that responsibility as well. The international community which provides the rules that preserve civility are equally responsible for them. We are all responsible for the strangers among us, we are after all brothers and sisters at heart.

We congratulate the President and his Vice-Presidents on their well-deserved election during this session of the Conference. We congratulate the ILO for giving us these background materials that document so well the conditions of migrants and the need for globalization that is fair. Through your leadership, Mr. President, we are optimistic that we will eventually deserve the one world that is our right and everybody's collective responsibility.

Original Spanish: Mr. SOLARI SAAVEDRA (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Chile)

First of all I would like to express my warmest greetings to all delegates attending the assembly, and to congratulate my friend, Mr. Ray Guevara, on his election.

This meeting is taking place at a particularly challenging time for humanity – a time when the ability of international organizations to promote peace and cooperation is once more being put to the test. For Latin American democracies, this new-world stage requires us to work harder for peace, rights and non-discrimination. This means further challenges for the labour world, the economy, employment and social security.

As the only tripartite world organization, the ILO can contribute a great deal to the search for understanding. The 85 years since the Organization was founded, and in particular the 35 years since it was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, prove its ability to muster the will and to reconcile different positions to work towards concordance and equality of opportunity for all.

This year we are discussing the report on globalization, which is yet another ILO contribution to a fairer, more cohesive world and a better future for the world's inhabitants. As the Director-General said in his inaugural speech to the Conference, fairer globalization is essential if we are to achieve world stability. Pushing for a new type of globalization is a challenge for our countries and for the ILO.

We must promote labour policies which guarantee, in accordance with the conditions in each country, individual and collective regulations ensuring

that the fundamental rights of workers – as established by the ILO, and which are an integral part of the new concept of decent work developed internationally in recent years are complied with.

It is this new concept that has led my country to negotiate bilateral trade agreements, allowing us to increase economic links with our main business partners and to open up new opportunities for enterprise and employment for our citizens.

In the free trade agreements that we have signed with Canada, the United States, and particularly the European Union, the contracting countries are committed to ensuring the full respect of internationally recognized labour rights, which can not be diminished under the pretext of improving their commercial position. In the same way, in the regional courts we have always promoted the inclusion of labour and social issues, particularly those regarding compliance with the law and promotion of basic standards to ensure labour rights.

We have adopted this approach because we want a free trade process without protection and with a stronger and stronger social dimension, based on the shared universal values outlined by the ILO. Incorporating the social dimension of labour into trade agreements ensures that there will be a form of globalization which is more inclusive, governed more democratically and which provides people with more opportunities and tangible benefits.

Inextricably linked to globalization, this year the Conference has discussed the situation of migrant workers and the need to provide social protection for those who, in order to improve their pay and quality of life, leave their native lands in search of work in another country. Naturally, labour mobility across borders increases with commercial expansion, higher investment, the reduction of transport costs, the widening of the wage gap between developing and developed countries, and the segmentation of the labour markets. For Chile, this is an ever-increasing reality; immigration has increased almost sixfold in the last 15 years. Our domestic policies need to be strengthened to ensure that foreign workers have the same labour rights as nationals of our countries, whatever their legal status in Chile. In the same way, it is becoming essential to create innovative ways of ensuring the social protection of these people, so that their contribution to the country does not involve any loss of social security cover should they want to return to their country of origin. Therefore, as part of our international social security agreement policy, we are entering a new phase, allowing workers to transfer their social security contributions if they return home. We are implementing this with Peru, the country of origin for one of the largest immigrant communities in Chile. I urge this Conference to look very carefully at the subject of social security cover for workers when studying migration and the need to better safeguard migrant workers.

Finally, I would like to mention briefly some of the work that we have been doing in Chile on labour and social issues; in particular regarding training and human resources development, something that has also been debated in this session. We have worked determinedly to increase the level of education and skills of our workers because this is the only way that they can get higher quality, and better remunerated employment and for the country to become more competitive, which is necessary for it to complete successfully on a global level.

These are some of the steps we have taken in the last year, which enable us to look to the future with more confidence.

I am certain that, once again, everybody's contribution to this Conference will translate into conclusions and action which will lead to visible improvements in the world of work.

Mr. TROGEN (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Sweden*)

I make these comments not only on behalf of myself, as Swedish Employers' delegate, but also on behalf of the Employers of the other Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway.

The ILO has a unique and important role to play in the further discussions of the challenges that the global society has to meet in the world of work.

The Nordic employers see the recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization as an opportunity for the ILO, an opportunity to raise its visibility and also its relevance within the multilateral system. Herewith, countries that are currently excluded from globalization can also benefit. The Nordic employers strongly believe that the ILO has a very important niche within the multilateral system and that its unique structure is its comparative advantage. At the same time, we underline that the recommendations of the World Commission are not the policy of the ILO, nor is the report addressed solely to the ILO. It is the responsibility of the Conference and the Governing Body to draw those parts from the recommendations they find relevant to the mandate of the ILO and then propose how the ILO should respond.

It is very important that the ILO constituents are involved as the follow up goes forward. Any engagement by the ILO within civil society must also be transparent and based on a clear understanding between the Governing Body and the Office.

Thus, our message is: stick to the mandate and to the ILO's current strategic strengths and objectives and cooperate, but do not interfere with the mandates of other multilateral agencies. We would not support turning the ILO into a house of macroeconomic analysis and operations at the expense of the needs of its constituents and the focus on the world of work.

The World Commission's report gives prominence to the creation of employment and calls for greater policy coherence on this within the multilateral system. We support this focus because this is where the ILO's real advantage lies. The Global Employment Agenda developed by the ILO and the poverty reduction strategy process are the means to engage with the United Nations. We are looking forward to working with the Director-General on this key area of employment as he has, in the house, the real actors and specialists in the world of work. It is in this area that the ILO can make the best contribution to what is called "a fair globalization".

The report also reinforces our call for the ILO to engage in a follow up to the ILO Conference discussion on the informal economy. It also underlines the need for promoting youth employment activities and activities related to small and medium-sized enterprises, which we have equally been calling for. The UNDP report entitled *Unleashing entrepreneurship: Making business work for the poor* is a good example of how the ILO could work with another sister United Nations agency.

Regarding national policies to address globalization, the Nordic employers support the need to focus on good governance, the rule of law, recognition of domestic property rights and fighting corruption, among other issues. Without good governance at the domestic level, business cannot play its proper role and contribute to economic and social development.

We consider that the ILO should address national weaknesses, more through social dialogue and less through standard-setting, with the recognition of the differences that exist as to economic and social development. This also reinforces the employers' support for ongoing reforms of the ILO standards-related activities system to ensure that it is able to address the realities of the modern world of work.

To conclude, the further process going forward needs to protect that which the ILO does well, amend or stop things which are not working well and carefully consider what issues should be on the agenda of the ILO. Working life is changing and it is different in many countries. Those changes and their implications need to be discussed. The discussion must fully engage constituents and continue to focus on issues where the ILO can be the most effective – and that is in the world of work.

Ms. MENKERIOS (*Minister of Labour and Human Welfare, Eritrea*)

First, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the ILO, for his comprehensive Report on *ILO programme implementation and activities for 2002-03* and the Global Report: *Organizing for social justice*, which deals with the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

The Director-General's Report provides a basis for shaping the future strategy of the Organization in terms of addressing key problems. It articulates that the plight of workers and their families is part of the organization's overall long-term strategy.

The Government of Eritrea is committed to the implementation of the seven core human rights Conventions which it has ratified. It is in the process of ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Tripartite consultations and social dialogue are the guiding principles that have led to the sound labour relations that currently exist between the social partners in Eritrea. Protection of women, young people and persons with disability is explicitly provided for in our labour law. On social protection and human welfare, the Government is working to guarantee and provide essential socio-economic services and to meet the basic requirements of every citizen.

Our top priority is to ensure food security for all, which entails the complete eradication and conquest of hunger, poverty and dependence on food hand-outs. In order to achieve this, different concerned ministries are working together to set up programmes. In the undertaking of all of these tasks, labour is a decisive element. Necessary training is required to increase productivity and to ensure comprehensive economic emancipation in all sectors.

Fighting against unemployment by improving knowledge and skills, maintaining social protection, promoting occupational health and safety, and the application of productive employment are Eritrea's greatest challenges. The Government has placed

these issues at the top of its development agenda. A primary tool for realizing these priorities is active labour market policies that are designed on the basis of up-to-date labour market information, which is not available in our case. To this end, the Government has taken steps to carry out the country's first comprehensive labour force survey to use as benchmark information. The results of the survey are expected to answer basic labour market questions. The data from the survey will be used for designing and revising labour policies for setting employment targets and for monitoring and evaluating the development plan and the comprehensive employment plan.

The Government of Eritrea, with its own limited capacity, is determined to increase the productive capacity of its people through increased access to quality education, training and health services. It recognizes that quality education and good health will not only enable the population to participate in the economy to their fullest potential, but will also enrich their social, cultural and political life. Thus, a steadfast commitment to develop our human resources is the hallmark of our development planning. It is also recognized that it is a major challenge for a new nation like Eritrea to develop trained human resources on its own. Therefore, there is a need to support the design, funding and implementation of modern education and training policies to attain development and economic growth.

To minimize occupational accidents and the spread of diseases and HIV/AIDS at work, we have launched an information, education and communication programme to create deep-rooted awareness among both social partners. To safeguard safety and health in the workplace, efforts are being made by the Government to train inspectors and to familiarize them with occupational safety and health equipment.

Furthermore, a national health and safety regulation has been drafted in consultation with the social partners, concerned ministries and institutions and has been forwarded to our Minister of Justice for approval. To improve overall conditions of work and to protect the rights of seafarers, including the fishing sector, a new law has been drafted and is under discussion. To make provision for the maintenance of workers in their old age and for disability and survivors' benefits, a national pension scheme has been in force since January 2004.

Peace is pertinent to development and to the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. The Government of Eritrea is working hard to resolve its problems peacefully, yet the international community has a duty and a responsibility to pressurize the Government of Ethiopia to enforce implementation of the Boundary Commission's ruling.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to request the ILO advisory mission on labour force surveys to render its technical support to conduct the intended labour force survey and develop Eritrea's human capacity through training at different levels and in all labour-related areas.

Original Spanish: Mr. TOMADA (Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security, Argentina)

I would like to congratulate the President, as a representative of our region, on his appointment to preside over the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference and I thank the Director-

General for his Report. His analysis of the report of the Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization is especially helpful when he observes that we are called on to “promote a coherent integration of economic and social policies which focus on the well-being and quality of life of people”. We agree with this. The social dimension is not just an optional-extra, based on whether or not the economy is doing well, but an essential condition for a new growth model.

Our country has been recovering from the most serious political, economic and social crisis in its history and we have begun a new phase which is driven by social, institutional, fiscal and international responsibility. More than half of our population were living in unacceptable levels of poverty which had never been seen before. The Government’s priority has been to concentrate on the most needy, creating employment and revitalizing the national economy. But growth alone is not enough for us. Argentina has decided to grow through employment. Currently, every growth point in our national product creates twice as many jobs as it did ten years ago. Over the last few years, Argentina has been able to create more than a million genuine new jobs and I would like to take this opportunity, speaking from this podium, to thank the ILO and all donor countries who have contributed to specific programmes in that regard.

Secondly, institutional responsibility involves improving legal certainty and trust in the legal system, giving priority to fighting corruption and impunity, at the same time as creating an improved atmosphere to promote direct national and foreign investment. Among other national policies in this context, President Kirchner has taken steps to reform the system of appointment of judges.

Thirdly, the Government has adopted a position based on fiscal responsibility because there have been macroeconomic policies that have been unwise and poorly managed, and this led to an increase in public debt which lit the touch paper of our economic collapse.

Finally, Argentina has assumed its international responsibility by giving priority to regional solidarity and by fully complying with its international commitments. Our country will meet its financial commitments by seeking solutions which provide economic, institutional and social sustainability. In order to pay its bills, Argentina needs to grow. So to achieve this growth, we are making great efforts to promote job creation, since employment is a vehicle for economic and social growth. This represents a turn around compared to the policies which have dominated our national scene for the last 30 years.

Unemployment, underemployment and uncontrolled growth of the informal economy are the main problems in our country. The Decent Work Agenda proposed by the Director-General is a constant source of inspiration for government action. Policies of the past based on more flexibility, deregulation and stripping workers of protection, failed spectacularly and triggered the decline of the employment structure in countries in the region. To regularize the situation we need and will continue to need a great deal of creativity, effort, courage and, above all, tough political decisions.

Employment for Argentine and foreign workers is not a by-product, as far as our Government is concerned, of economic decisions that happen to be right. Economic decisions will only be right if they

create jobs, quality jobs and productive jobs. This links up with our belief, born of experience, that not just any type of growth creates employment and social integration. Growth with employment goes hand-in-hand with fair distribution of wealth. For the first time in more than ten years, the minimum wage has increased. The Government now respects international labour Conventions as ratified promotes collective bargaining, and is sanctioning a balanced draft labour law which enjoys unprecedented levels of social and parliamentary support. We are trying to develop not only our domestic markets but also exports and the public-sector work. A vocational training bill is going to be put to Parliament. These basic policies designed for growth are as important as promoting investment. I would go further and say that they are a prerequisite for long-term, sustainable, integrated development.

We believe that, by achieving a fair society which is directed towards economic development, which respects human rights, which has industrial and technological policies stimulating all types of productivity and with responsible and representative participation by workers and employers providing better distribution of results, we will create the user-friendly environment which investors demand. The other option that of reducing labour costs, deregulation and dismantling the State, is something that we have tried in the past and the consequences are the social debt that we still owe our citizens today. We are not promoting a State which sweeps away the free operation of the social partners. What we support is a State which guarantees solidarity in the general interest.

In summary, democratic stability implies that economic growth is guaranteed in order to eradicate poverty and that there is full respect for social and labour rights. Argentina, wants to build labour-based societies and we know that we have the support of the ILO and the tripartite structure in this regard. In tune with the ILO message, which calls for more consistency between economic and socio-labour policies, we support the idea of building a society based on labour as a prerequisite for fostering the basic social cohesion on which open and pluralist democracies are funded. We promote the same principles in building a social dimension in our regional body, MERCOSUR, through the joint efforts of our Ministries of Labour, Economy, Planning and Education. We have recovered our dignity as Argentines; now, let us extend that dignity to labour and productivity.

Original Spanish: Mr. ROSS LEAL (Workers’ adviser and substitute delegate, Cuba)

To promote decent work so that employment can lead us out of poverty and to achieve what he terms a fair globalization – this is what we have been called on to do by the Director-General.

Spiralling unemployment, which is even affecting the developed countries, is one of the most serious problems facing this Organization. Almost 1 billion individuals of working age do not have stable jobs. The neo-liberal nature of a globalization process managed by the major world powers has led to greater poverty, chronic unemployment and social exclusion for the peoples of the world. We need to fight to make radical changes in the current economic, political and financial order, which only serves the interests of those who control financial institutions and international trade bodies such as

the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization.

Only 50 years from now the world's population will reach 10 billion, and if we fail to find solutions to these and other problems, how will our children and grandchildren live just in four or five decades' time?

Hunger is still a scourge for millions of people. HIV/AIDS is spreading at an inconceivable rate, and many peoples in Africa are now threatened with extinction. The political will is lacking to address this serious problem. Four years ago. Cuba informed the United Nations of its willingness to contribute 5,000 medical staff for a programme to control and treat HIV/AIDS, if rich countries were to contribute the necessary funding for medicines and infrastructure. We have not received a single reply to that offer, and now we put the G8, who are going to discuss Africa's problems, on notice that they need to address this problem with deeds rather than words.

As regards Cuba, you are certainly aware of the new programme put in place by the greatest superpower in history to bring down our Government, as announced by its President on 6 May. This is a further attempt to kill off our people through hunger and disease, through a programme that strengthens the criminal blockade which has been imposed for more than 40 years and applies new and cruel measures to strangle our economy, while bringing enormous pressure to bear on governments and businesses around the world to prevent them from investing in or trading with Cuba.

It is also aimed at discrediting Cuba vis à vis world public opinion, so as to justify an attack on our country. We all know very well how these justifications are produced. The war in Iraq is a good example. We express our solidarity with the Iraqi people and all those who are suffering war, occupation and genocide, such as the Palestinian people and the African and Arab peoples. In total disregard for the organizations of the United Nations and the international community in general. For example, there has been an attempt to use the ILO and, trade union organizations acting with the stated goal of destroying the Cuban Revolution. They devote millions of dollars to creating virtual trade unions in Cuba labour centres and with the support of their Interests Section in Havana, whom they serve as mercenaries. We hope that Governments and workers' and employers' organizations will never join this imperial plan that is attempting to destroy such a generous endeavour in social justice.

We are grateful for the many messages of solidarity we have received from the ILO and trade union organizations in order to share the noble aspiration of building a world of peace, solidarity and justice.

In the words of José Martí, the apostle of Cuban independence, night's darkest hour is just before the dawn. We will win every battle, until victory is ours.

Original Japanese: Mr. TOGARI (Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan)

It is my honour to address the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Japanese Government.

First of all, I would like to give my full support to the ILO's basic policy of "decent work for all", and I would like to pay my sincere respects to the efforts

made to achieve this goal by the ILO, Workers, Employers and its member States.

Japan appreciates the ILO's activities over the last two years, described in *ILO programme implementation 2002-03*, specifically its strategically implemented programmes based on the ILO's four objectives for decent work. At the same time, in view of the massive demands on the ILO, and Japan's severe financial situation, I would like to invite the ILO secretariat to implement its activities more efficiently and to make further efforts to reduce personnel costs.

One of the most significant agenda items of the current session will be the discussion of the final report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the Director-General's Report entitled *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*.

I highly appreciate the efforts of the World Commission in addressing the difficult issue of the social dimension of globalization. I share the view of the report that "We seek a more inclusive process which is fair and brings benefit and real opportunities to more people." I believe approaching the issue of globalization through the eyes of the people, and proceeding with fair, human-centred developments, is of vital importance in the world of today.

In this regard, the strategy in the opening of the Director-General's Report "Making decent work a global goal", is crucial. In the past, the effects of globalization have been measured by such economic values as efficiency and high added value. On the contrary, this strategy reveals decent work as a concrete goal from the human perspective, and values integration between economic policy and social policy.

Two points need to be taken into account in carrying this strategy forward. First, individual autonomy, based on the situation in each country, should be respected. Second, also important is the economic and social role that the private sector and enterprises are playing, and will play.

Japan is willing to conduct positive activities in cooperation with the ILO. We would like to contribute, in particular, to the fields of employment creation, human resources development, occupational safety and health and social dialogue. We attach great importance to, and continue to support, Asia and the Pacific region. We wish to contribute to achieving decent work in this region, where people have been most affected by the rapid wave of globalization.

As part of our contribution, we are planning to hold an international symposium in December 2004, with the ILO's participation, on youth employment and human resources development that is increasingly gaining international attention. We would like to discuss new initiatives and policies at the symposium so that young people can open the way to a bright and hopeful future in an environment that is changing due to globalization. We hope high-ranking participants from Asian countries will attend.

Concerning Japan's civil service reform, the Japanese Government recognizes that it is important, in the first place, to have earnest negotiations and consultations between the Government and the parties concerned. Meetings at various levels between the Government side and the labour side were promoted after the International Labour Conference last year. On 13 May 2004, the relevant ministers

started to meet with labour representatives concerning the civil service reform. I would like to invite the ILO to look patiently at the development of dialogue between the Government and labour sides.

Globalization will progress in every corner of the world. International institutions like the ILO will have a greater role to play in this globalization context. Japan expects a lot from the ILO's role, and is willing to take an active part in the ILO's activities in collaboration with the member countries, workers and employers.

(Mr. Maatough takes the Chair.)

Original Arabic: Mr. HACHED (Vice-Secretary-General, League of Arab States)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! I would like to congratulate Mr. Ray Guevara on his election as President of the Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Officers of the Conference. It is an honour for me to speak from this rostrum on behalf of the League of Arab States, and to transmit the greetings of the Secretary-General of the Arab League, who wishes the Conference every success. I have already had the great honour of addressing the International Labour Conference back in 1985.

The League of Arab States appreciates the constant cooperation between the International Labour Organization and the League. We also greatly appreciate the role performed by governments, employers' organizations and trade unions, which is aimed at strengthening ILO activity. This 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference is of particular importance. Indeed, it addresses issues that are complex, topical and form part of the mandate of the International Labour Office, which is to constantly improve the situation of workers and citizens in general. These values are embodied in the Declaration of Philadelphia, according to which poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. We would like to focus on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. We have read carefully the report on this subject. One has only to read it carefully in order to detect that the real problem is not an economic one, but expansionist aims that are destroying trees, houses and Arab lands. The Israeli authorities continue to build this wall, which is paralysing the free movement of Palestinians. You have been witnesses to the recent actions of the Israeli authorities in the camps in Rafah. This is a flagrant violation of international and humanitarian law, and the international community must firmly condemn these acts. It is necessary to contain the evil at its root: we have to end the Israeli occupation. The only way to remedy the drama besetting the Palestinians is to put an end to the Israeli occupation of their land.

It is also necessary to mention Iraq at this point. The situation in Iraq is serious. There cannot be a return to economic prosperity for all workers and employers unless power is transferred to the Iraqis. This transfer of power will guarantee stability and security in this country, which is dear to us all, and which must embark on reconstruction.

The situation of migrant workers is a subject which has been addressed by this Session of the International Labour Conference, and it is necessary to find solutions to improve the lot of migrant workers. We have noted attentively, the report on migrant workers and their role in the global econ-

omy, and we endorse the statement of the Secretary-General that migration should be at the heart of our discussions.

Migration gives people the opportunity to meet one another, to get to know one another better, and to enhance solidarity among all human beings. We have also paid particular attention to Arab migrants. In this regard, we have set up a committee, which is presided over by an eminent Arab public figure and which looks at the economic and social situation of migrants.

It is necessary for the ILO to achieve its objectives in this area. We have attentively read the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and we endorse its recommendations. Globalization has to be fair, inclusive and based on democracy and equal opportunity.

The Arab Summit at Tunis decided to put in place an Arab strategy to combat poverty, based on the studies provided by the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs. We must improve the lot of all poor people. In this respect, we are trying to coordinate our efforts with all the interested parties. It is necessary for the whole world to be able to benefit from justice, fraternity, solidarity and equality in order to ensure a better future for everybody.

Ms. SINJELA (Government adviser and substitute delegate, Zambia)

On behalf of the Minister of Labour and Social Security, who could not be with us today, on behalf of the Zambian delegation, and indeed, on my own behalf, I wish to convey to the President our warm and hearty congratulations on his unanimous and deserving election to preside over the deliberations at this session of this important Conference. The Zambian delegation wishes to commend most sincerely the Director-General for his detailed and illuminating Report on the activities undertaken by the International Labour Organization during the period under review, 2002-03.

I must place on record my country's appreciation for the progress made with regard to implementing the Decent Work Agenda. We note with satisfaction that the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework for 2002-05, which was set out in November 2000, is on the right course and is bearing fruit.

It is gratifying to note that the Report highlights that encouraging and satisfactory progress has been made with regard to strategic objectives against performance targets established in the Programme and Budget for 2002-03.

My Government is impressed with the practical efforts that the ILO is making to bring about full implementation of the programme outlined in the Director-General's Report.

Zambia admires and steadfastly supports the promotion and practical implementation of the strategic objectives set out in the Director-General's Report. The ratification by my Government of all the ILO core Conventions dealing with fundamental human rights and its review of labour laws are a clear endorsement of our serious commitment to the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

Let me assure this great Conference of my Government's enthusiastic determination to fight social injustice in all forms, particularly in respect of youth and women in the world of work.

To this end, the Zambian Government has formulated a national gender policy which is being used as an effective tool to address gender imbalance and

to create equal opportunities for all in the field of employment and other spheres of life. Freedom of association is enshrined in the Republican Constitution and also in industrial labour relations acts.

The people of Zambia are very grateful indeed to the ILO for the material and technical support rendered through the Area Office in Lusaka. This support has facilitated the successful implementation of various programmes and projects undertaken in the country.

Currently, Zambia is a recipient of financial and technical support in the fight against the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, strengthening labour administration through capacity building of relevant institutions and business promotion and development.

I wish to solicit the ILO's further support in future programmes and projects. The fight against HIV/AIDS, which is a threat to labour – a very important factor for economic development – has been intensified in the country as a whole, and at the workplace in particular, and the ILO is doing a commendable job in supporting the crusade. The Government's NGOs and civil society, through the National AIDS Council, are painstakingly working in concert to put efforts in place to deal effectively with this scourge in communities.

This year's debate is, for us, greatly appreciated and we are pleased to actively participate in the deliberations. I wish, on behalf of my delegation, to assure the Director-General of Zambia's continued cooperation and support in the execution of his duties.

Original Arabic: Mr. LOUH (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Algeria)

As my time is limited, I will concentrate on only a few of the ideas I planned to speak about. However, my text has been distributed in all three languages.

On behalf of the Algerian delegation and on my own behalf, allow me, at the outset, to congratulate the President on his appointment to preside over this session of the Conference. We would also like to thank the Director-General for the quality of the Report that has been submitted to us.

Very few countries have seen a trade unionist become a minister of labour. I myself was once a trade unionist.

The ILO is proceeding with a timely consideration of the major issues of our time and of the strategies to be adopted. My country wishes to contribute to this reflection. Globalization is indeed a fact, but the counter-current to it is also a reality. These two trends are concomitant and often contradictory, but constantly interactive. The positive reflection on development may be able to reconcile these two trends without any dilemma or confrontation. Development is human, and development activities are carried out at work.

It is worth recognizing that a State whose institutions function democratically in consultation with social partners will, in actual fact, stand as the most secure guarantor for national solidarity, social justice, health and public security. Indeed, we must adapt our responses to the requirements of globalization to national realities, as otherwise they will be rejected by the very people who are experiencing the problems to which globalization claims to offer solutions.

I draw your attention to the reaction of those who defend local cultures, environment and human

rights in general. Existing imbalances have in fact been widened here. The Global Report calls for a harmonization of programmes and a concerted effort by the United Nations institutions.

In my country, the political condition of democracy for social justice has been fulfilled. All the observers, experts or not, Algerians or foreigners, trade unionists, employers, workers and all the social partners, have recognized that the recent elections took place transparently and in accordance with international laws.

Algeria has considered the implementation of the recommendations of the World Commission, notably the recommendation that all actors and in particular all States, should be held accountable.

The five-year programme that has just been adopted by the Algerian Government provides for the continuation of the legal reform process by completing the revision of legislative provisions in order to bring them into line with contemporary requirements and international standards.

Both the missions and organizations of the State are also in the process of being reformed. Furthermore, human resources in the field of justice are being improved. The qualification and status of Government employees has been improved.

The 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up will continue to receive all the attention it needs for its effective implementation.

My country is strongly attached to the principle of collective bargaining, which is considered to be the most appropriate way of regulating labour relations. The fundamental rights enshrined in the ILO Conventions are reflected in the Algerian Constitution and in national legislation. Since 1990, Algeria has made substantial progress in the field of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

Algerian legislation becomes involved only in order to set out the rules of democratic functioning and ensure representatives and transparency in trade unions and internal inspection of bodies belonging to them.

The fisheries sector is extremely important for us. It is a part of the restructuring which is being undertaken to encourage investment, particularly through the support of economic operators and young people.

The issue of the situation of migrant workers has great importance in today's world and there is a great tendency towards globalization. Migrant workers, who were once a source of wealth and work in our world, have today become a source of difficulty and economic and social problems; problems that are often linked to employment restrictions and an increase of unemployment in the host countries.

This situation frequently exposes them to discriminatory treatment that is contrary to the principles of our Organization. The ILO should focus on the current debate on a global strategy and an adaptation and revision of ILO instruments, which would entail notable modifications and changes, provide appropriate protection to migrant workers and their families and develop new mechanisms for international solidarity between host and emigration countries.

Among the many situations in which workers find themselves that are of concern to the ILO, there is one that should be firmly and unreservedly condemned. Migrant Palestinian workers in the occu-

ped Arab territories are prevented from moving freely for work. They are prevented from doing as they wish with what they have earned. The result is extreme poverty and the destruction of their quality of life.

The consequences of this situation are utterly, utterly deplorable.

The Director-General has, quite rightly, said that “we at the ILO have a duty to do what we can to contribute to a peace settlement”.

Mr. VALERIO (*Workers' delegate, Philippines*)

The world moves forward, yet things seem to remain the same.

The economies of the world prosper, yet the situation of workers and their families for most of the world remains stagnant, at best.

The Conference presents another opportunity for the ILO and its tripartite constituents to strengthen actions for the improvement of work and the lives of working people around the world.

We will consider what has been done and what needs to be done in certain things, all in the name of improving living and working standards and eradicating, or minimizing, poverty. The ILO, with its tripartite structure, demonstrates to the world at large the value of involving all sectors in the attainment of social justice and equity.

The Global Report under the Follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work shows that a startling group of the world's workers remain unprotected by 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). These core Conventions have not been ratified by many, including some large countries. Without this appreciation and without commitment to these Conventions, governments and employers in many countries violate the Conventions with impunity. Others have ratified these Conventions, but have not given much effect to ratification, through implementation.

Continued threats to workers seeking to organize workers' organizations, including killings, detention and violence, persist. Our mother organization, the ICFTU, has time and again called the attention of the world to the most dangerous places for workers exercising these rights, including Colombia.

In other countries, violations are not as prevalent, but are, nevertheless, deadly. We deplore the recent killings of labour leaders in certain countries. Trade unionism has become the most dangerous profession in the world.

In the Philippines, we have not seen as many killings as before, but they are there. Threats, intimidation, harassment and alternative arrangements continue. We have made many strides in labour law and practice over the years, especially with the administration of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. But more needs to be done. Many employers, multinational or otherwise, inside or outside the export-processing zones and industrial parks, may set up active and repressive measures against organizing unions in their enterprises.

The application of the principles of the Conventions remains a daunting challenge for workers, employers and governments.

The leading role of the ILO in promoting decent work for all has impressed on us that decent work has to become a global goal. Decent work is the

basic demand of all working people. And we encourage more meaningful joint work with governments and employers for the implementation of decent work at various levels, including international, national, industry, community and enterprise levels.

The work of the tripartite partners in the Philippines in this respect is going in the right direction. A Decent Work Agenda, while not perfect, has been promulgated, but serious implementation needs to be accelerated. This has to be done to secure the moral high ground against those who would seek to further destabilize the economy and society while exploiting parliamentary processes for their hidden agenda.

Decent work is necessary for globalization to be fair. There are a number of interesting recommendations in the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. These should be quickly translated into practical action. It is only right that the ILO should take a leading role in globalization. The ILO's strength in its structure would facilitate the mainstreaming of fairness in the governance of the global economy and in moderating or alleviating the negative effects of globalization.

The second discussion and a new Recommendation on human resources development and training should focus on new approaches to lifelong learning.

The world, and the employment world, and therefore employment requirements have changed. Millions of jobs have disappeared or been replaced by others. In most cases, those who have lost their jobs have not found comparable decent work.

Provisions for the development and implementation of education and training policies, frameworks for the recognition and certification of skills, should reflect skills, employability and active citizenship.

Original Spanish: Mr. MARTÍNEZ MOLINA (*Workers' delegate, Chile*)

I bring you warmest wishes from the workers of Chile.

The Director-General has invited us to consider the social dimension of globalization. More specifically, the issue here is how to put a human face on a world order which has until now only had an economic dimension. In fact, globalization, as it exists today, lacks ethical values, because one group ends up with the whole of the cake that we have all baked together. In future, the ILO needs to be part of any debate on major policies designed to put in place a new order which is beneficial to everyone and which involves a fair distribution.

Most countries have signed the ILO Conventions, particularly 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). Many of these countries have incorporated these agreements into their national legislation, but that is not enough to guarantee that they are applied. In Chile, the reality is that there is a great shortfall, both in trade union rights and collective bargaining. The implicit wish of the new entrepreneurial class in the service economy is to break-up trade union organizations and deny us our fundamental rights to collective bargaining.

In Latin America there is a low level of unionisation of workers, particularly in Chile, and this is connected with the high level of persecution of

trade union organizations by employers. It is also to do with the fragility of States in their ability to monitor and apply legislation which is theoretically in force. Since collective bargaining is a mechanism which leads to the distribution of wealth in countries such as Chile, which has seen sustained economic growth for three decades, we do not have genuine collective bargaining. While, theoretically, 3.6 million workers could take part in collective bargaining, in reality only 160,000 do so and the quality of collective bargaining is also affected by domestic legislation, which establishes negotiating groups in parallel to trade unions, and this flies in the face of the most basic trade union practices. There is also a restriction in the legislation which makes it possible to replace workers and remove them during strike action.

Officials working for the judiciary are excluded from collective bargaining, as are those working for the National Congress, workers in public sector companies and, indeed, in private sector companies where the State is involved.

The Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), which Chile ratified over three years ago, still does not apply to public sector workers in the State administration. In the case of workers in municipal authorities, there is an attempt to bring in legislation which would undermine their rights to collective bargaining, obliging them to conduct decentralized negotiations in each of the more than 300 different municipalities.

Chile has seen sustained growth over the last three decades. However, it is one of the countries with the worst distribution of wealth. We are the second largest exporter of salmon in the world, we produce copper, wine and fruit and these products are available in many markets around the world, in many countries, but it is in these particular areas of production that trade union and collective bargaining rights are most seriously undermined. This is also true in the major commercial chains, almost all multinational, where workers' rights and the concept of decent work, as envisaged by the ILO, are undermined and violated. Investigations and monitoring processes that have taken place in these sectors have shown that just one branch of a chain of stores had 152 different contracts for the workers who work there and many of those employed in the store did not even know who their employer was.

The time has come to act with responsibility and to make sure that globalization leads to a better life for all. Otherwise, in the future, we will only be bemoaning the erosion of democracy because democracy means rights and not just choice.

Peace for our peoples is based on social justice and decent work. If we want peace we must be prepared for justice.

Mr. OKUDA (*Employers' delegate, Japan*)

Economic globalization presents us with a host of issues. The report of the World Commission has shed valuable light on the importance of the social dimension. Most notably, it has reaffirmed the importance of meaningful employment to people everywhere. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation to the members of the Commission.

The focus now shifts to translating the proposals and recommendations of the Commission's report into action. In this spirit, the Director-General has made several proactive and ambitious suggestions.

An especially noteworthy suggestion pertains to stepping up efforts to promote enterprise growth and job creation. We have learned that the interface with corporate activity is crucially important in sharing the benefits of globalization.

In dealing with labour issues, the ILO has so far concentrated on the ways in which work is provided. The time has come for the ILO to promote better understanding of corporate activity, which is the source of work.

The activity of companies large and small is a matter of creating added value, of creating wealth. Employees and other company stakeholders participate in creating wealth. They share in that wealth through wages earned, through dividend pay-outs, through tax payments, and in other ways.

Multinational companies further contribute to the local economies through human resources development, through technology transfers, through the cultivation of supporting industries, and in other ways. For companies to create more wealth and generate more jobs, they need to deploy resources optimally. They need to undertake suitable research and development and capital spending from a long-term perspective.

Fostering decent work depends on focusing attention on this process of creating wealth and supporting companies in their activities, and that should be an important part of the future role of the ILO.

Last December, leaders of employers' associations in the Asia-Pacific region came together under the auspices of the ILO. We debated a full range of global issues. Globalization highlights the weaknesses of nations and of companies. But we agreed that the challenge of overcoming those weaknesses is a golden opportunity for positive change.

We also agreed that companies are an integral part of society, that the central responsibility of business is to perform well, to be the primary source of prosperity and of well-being, and that, in addition to this, they need to fulfil their social and environmental responsibilities.

Of course, corporate social responsibility is for all companies, regardless of geographical scope. Small companies are especially close to their host communities and are important actors in fulfilling social responsibility.

Based on this understanding, the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Employers (CAPE) aims to be a platform for shaping a business-friendly environment and for promoting a sound balance in economic growth and social progress.

We at Nippon Keidanren are also encouraging our member companies to step up their voluntary initiative on corporate social responsibility by providing a renewed Charter of Corporate Behaviour as guiding principles to link the growth of business to social development.

Fulfilling social responsibility means fulfilling the expectations of consumers, shareholders, employees, customers and partners, and the community at large. Therefore our approach to social responsibility needs to evolve in accordance with the values of our stakeholders.

Sounder globalization depends on the development of social values and sensitivities of members of society, and the ILO can contribute greatly in shaping these values and this awareness.

In corporate management, optimizing resource allocation is a core issue. Companies need to identify

their strengths and allocate resources to reinforcing those strengths on a priority basis.

The Director-General has suggested promising activities for the ILO to undertake. Although every suggestion defines an activity of importance, in the spirit of optimal resource allocation, and in the light of meeting current needs, I suggest concentrating on priority issues, such as supporting governments in strengthening their capabilities to promote job creation, encouraging business development, and fostering human resources.

This is a pivotal time in the progress of globalization. I count on the Governing Body to consider the options thoroughly and to make a careful choice.

Original Arabic: Mr. DJILANI (Employers' delegate, Tunisia)

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! On behalf of the Tunisian employers, I would like to express to the President my greatest esteem and my congratulations on his election; we wish him every success. I would also like to congratulate Mr. Juan Somavia and thank him for the Report which he has produced and which we are considering at this 92nd Session of the Conference.

The promotion of human resources is a key issue. It is important to focus attention on human resources because this makes all companies more competitive. The success of a company is very closely related to the capacity of its human resources to adapt to requirements, to adapt to the technological revolution that we are experiencing.

For years, Tunisia has been making great efforts in this direction. That is why our President, Mr. Ben Ali, has made employment a core priority. We, as employers, are aware of the enormity of this challenge, and that is why we are trying, in collaboration with the dominant forces in our country, to take up this challenge in order to ensure the stability and progress of our country. Maintaining employment and creating new jobs will enable us to strengthen the competitiveness of our human resources, which will have to adapt to change. We therefore have to concentrate on training, on highly qualified workforce, which will enable us to strengthen the complementarity between education on the one hand, and vocational training schemes on the other. It is essential to strengthen this link, indeed it is vital. That is why today we have to join forces and redouble our efforts to change peoples' mindsets in order to convince each and every person that vocational training is of primary importance, and is not just a stopgap for people who have left school early.

What is more, attracting foreign investment, as developing countries are particularly keen to do, depends on a competent and highly qualified workforce. That is why many industrialized countries have focused their attention on human resources in order to attract investment.

In Tunisia we have put in place a national programme, which is enabling us to improve and promote the industrial sector. We, as employers, are trying to draw attention to the importance of this programme. We are also striving to put in place, with the competent authorities, a national vocational training system. This system tries to match supply and demand in terms of vocational training. This system is a guarantee of technical and educational quality. We are also endeavouring to increase sandwich training courses, and to foster partnership between companies and higher education institutions, in accordance with demand.

In order to promote human resources, it is also necessary to strengthen information technology, and I hope that the World Summit on the Information Society, the second phase of which Tunisia will have the honour of hosting in November 2005, will enable us to reduce the digital divide. I also hope that this will be an opportunity for developing countries to start to take advantage of these tremendous technological advances. As for the number of managerial staff in companies, this is an essential issue. We are trying to increase the employability of new graduates through adequate training programmes.

I would like to draw your attention to the Palestinian cause and to the rights that Palestinian workers and citizens have under international law. I therefore urge the international community to give priority to dialogue and negotiation in this respect.

Lastly, I would like to reiterate my gratitude to the ILO, which has worked constantly to strengthen dialogue among the three social partners in order to tackle the issues before us, for the benefit of all.

Mr. MAMMADOV (Employers' delegate, Azerbaijan)

On behalf of the Azerbaijan Employers' delegation, I express my gratitude to the organizers of the 92nd Session who have made it possible for us to participate in this Conference, and I wish success to the session.

The Azerbaijan Employers' delegation to the International Labour Conference would like also to convey its warm greetings and best wishes to all delegations.

The Azerbaijan employers have read with keen interest, the Director-General's Global Report on freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining which provides an opportunity to get a better understanding of the importance of freedom of association and collective bargaining and is the basic right in the world of work and the most important element of economic and political process.

This Report has provided the analysis of legal and practical obstacles and progress in achieving freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining. The employers of Azerbaijan recognize the positive effort of collective bargaining on economic development promoting productivity, adjustment measures and industrial peace and enabling the conditions for efficient functioning of social dialogue.

The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan provides the right of association and ensures the freedom of activity for all associations. The Labour Code stipulates collective bargaining at the level of the enterprise, institute or organization, sector and region and signing of a general collective agreement. Following the labour policy, the current tripartite general collective agreement has been concluded for the years of 2001-03 and signed for the years of 2003-05. The general collective agreement harbours a set of issues as implementation of economic policy in the country, the development of the non-oil sector, labour payment, increase of income or population and improvement of living standards.

In the reporting period, the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation joined a number of ILO projects on women's enterprise development and gender equality, social dialogue and employment, including the employment of youth and women, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, tripartite

declaration on principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy. Besides the above-mentioned activity, the employers face particular difficulties.

Firstly, one of the problems impeding their signing of collective agreements is their loss of 300,000 workplaces and the emergence of one million refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of Armenian occupation of 20 per cent of Azerbaijan territory.

Secondly, since 2001, a general collective agreement has been signed at a national level but no collective agreements are being signed at sectoral and regional levels.

Multinational enterprises operating in Azerbaijan do not always have standards for industrial relations and do not affiliate with employers' organizations and allow employees' committees to establish themselves in the enterprises. The draft law on employers' associations has been discussed in the Parliament of Azerbaijan but not approved yet.

Then, it is high time to establish a national, social council to take responsibility to regulate their collective bargaining in labour and economic disputes amongst social partners and develop social dialogue in Azerbaijan.

With the purpose of enhancing the role of employers in poverty reduction processes, economic roles and industrial relations, I would like to submit to the ILO suggestions from the Azerbaijan Employers Confederation, which I represent here.

Firstly, technical assistance through all ILO projects for strengthening the capacity of employers and other social partners to promote and realize freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining: awareness raising and training.

Secondly, seminars for the employers organizations of Azerbaijan, and other countries for the regional framework of employers and training for employers. Seminars on the implementation of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy in the field of collective bargaining and freedom of association and study of the experience of such companies in their home countries, and its application in Azerbaijan.

To conclude, I want to stress again the importance of collective negotiations in economic, social and political processes and that the role of employers should be enhanced in this regard.

Mr. PEET (*Minister of Labour and Immigration, Bahamas*)

First, I wish to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election, and to pledge our support as we work together to successfully complete the agenda.

Allow me, on behalf of all CARICOM member States, to express our heartfelt sympathy to this body and the entire African family on the passing of the late Honourable Michael Christopher Wamalwa, Vice-President and Minister of Labour of Kenya and Chairman of the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference. He was indeed a "gentle warrior" who championed the cause of the tripartite social partners; he will be truly missed.

I am indeed honoured to have the opportunity to address this august body on behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

We in the Bahamas applaud the progressive work of the International Labour Organization and pledge

our unwavering commitment to work with you as one cohesive unit to improve the world of work, as we together advance our tripartite labour agenda.

I take this opportunity first to thank the ILO for its assistance with the most comprehensive occupational health and safety audit that was carried out at our ship repair facility on the Island of Grand Bahama, with the assistance of technical experts and the quick action of Mrs. Grace Strachan of the Caribbean Office and Mrs. Cleo Doumbia-Henry of the Geneva Office.

I am happy to report that we have already begun to put the recommendations in motion, and the workers of our ship repair facility are now able to work in a safer and more secure environment.

I should also wish to congratulate the ILO on the occasion of its 85th anniversary and the 35th anniversary of receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, as it continues to illuminate the path towards decent work, poverty elimination and global stability.

I should like to commend the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization which culminated in the most inspiring and comprehensive report. I am sure that the implementation of the recommendations made will go a long way in assisting governments, workers and employers to respond to the needs of their respective constituents as we collectively seek to address the issues and concerns associated with the unprecedented changes already affecting our lives and the lives of our families and societies.

The Bahamas, like our global economy, has undergone, and is presently undergoing, a metamorphosis that is being fuelled by the flexibility and competitiveness of integrating labour markets, increased competition, global political and social changes, and advances in information technology. As a result, the world of work as we know it today is rapidly changing.

The Government of the Bahamas has renewed its commitment to provide employment opportunities not only for Bahamians, but also for those who legally reside within our borders. In our effort to do so, we in the Bahamas, under the dynamic leadership of our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Perry G. Christie, have established partnerships with a number of foreign investors since May of last year to provide meaningful employment opportunities for approximately 3,000 Bahamians. An additional 3,000 Bahamians are expected to be employed at Kerzner International Resort on Paradise Island, Bahamas, following the completion of its US\$1 billion Phase III development. These are exciting times for our country and its people as we endeavour to make available an opportunity to secure decent work for all who are eligible to work throughout the Bahamas.

Secondly, in keeping with the sworn duty of the Government of the Bahamas to provide job security for all its workers, we have gone to great lengths to ensure that workers' fundamental rights and privileges are protected by law and best practices in our efforts to reduce poverty and promote social and economic justice. We have accepted, and are committed to fulfilling the principles of, the Declaration of Nuevo Leon which seek to advance the labour agenda in our region and, by extension, the global community.

This commitment includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that a safe and healthy work environment exists for our people. In light of the increasing

number of issues and incidents regarding occupational safety and health, the Government of the Bahamas has embarked upon an intense training programme for labour inspectors. They, along with others, will be our ears, eyes, hands and feet, all in an effort to reduce violations of health and safety rules, regulations and procedures in the workplace.

In keeping with the ILO Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150), and its accompanying Recommendation No. 158, we also expect in the immediate future to secure the services of occupational safety and health experts to assist us in the reduction of incidents that threaten the well-being of workers.

Furthermore, the Government is committed to amending the Health and Safety Act with a view to making it a more effective mechanism to better meet the health and safety needs of our people. An occupational health and safety workshop is planned for September of this year for all social partners.

The labour-friendly Government of the Bahamas realizes the vital role that employers, workers and trade unions play in sustaining a safe and secure work environment, as well as a safe, secure and democratic society. Education and training also play a significant role in this regard. Collectively, we will take action to deal with this issue.

My Government, within months, will launch an intensive training programme for workers throughout the Bahamas and in this vein, we will use the College of the Bahamas to do so. I am further pleased to report that many of our employers have "bought into" this programme.

I am also happy to report that my Government's consensus-based approach to industrial relations and my proactive stand as Minister of Labour have resulted in the successful negotiation and execution of 28 industrial agreements over a period of 24 months. Such willingness by employers and unionists to agree augurs well for the future.

Finally, the Government of the Bahamas has, along with our social partners, in addition to the aforementioned, spearheaded the first in a series of labour/management workshops with a view to securing and analysing the protocols and national agreements of two of our sister Caribbean countries, namely Barbados and Jamaica.

In closing, let me reaffirm my Government's commitment to working with and assisting the International Labour Organization in our collective resolve to promote decent work for all, while addressing the social ills that have the potential to adversely affect this and other labour-related goals. This is truly the way forward. Let us therefore, as a distinguished body, do all we can to improve the lot of all who work and invest in our respective countries.

Mr. PAIVA (*representative, International Organization for Migration*)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) wishes to express its appreciation and support to the ILO for focusing on the situation of migrant workers this year.

The broad issue of migration is now increasingly being addressed at national, regional and international levels. Migration for work is an important part of this equation. More and more, it is recognized that migration is a natural, essential and potentially beneficial phenomenon for migrants and

societies alike. The challenge is to manage it properly so that all involved may reap its benefits.

While states retain the right and responsibility to determine which non-nationals may enter and under what conditions, it is now clear that migration requires collaborative approaches to manage it effectively. Moreover, most States are no longer simply countries of origin, transit or destination, but rather a combination of all three. These evolving trends open up new possibilities not only for greater understanding and cooperation between States, but also for strengthened partnerships among all the key migration stakeholders.

Today, migration is a cornerstone of the global economy. Out of the approximately 175 million migrants worldwide, nearly half, some 86 million persons, are economically active workers. But the economic implications of migration are far broader than even these figures suggest. In 2003, migrants sent home some US\$90 billion in official remittances. When United Nations official transfers are included, the total is likely to be double that amount. These financial resources, as well as the skills and other invaluable human capital brought back by returning migrants, are potentially crucial support for the development of countries of origin. But much more needs to be done to understand the critical links between migration and development. In early 2005, in collaboration with the World Bank, IOM will be organizing a two-day workshop on just this topic as part of its ongoing international dialogue on migration.

That policy dialogue, launched in 2001, brings together more than 130 States and partner organizations who participate in the IOM Council. Its objective is to foster better understanding and cooperation in the management of the full range of migration issues. It does so by identifying and sharing effective practices. IOM strongly believes that open dialogue, in an inclusive non-negotiating environment, can build greater understanding and confidence amongst the various stakeholders. This, in turn, can stimulate the identification of creative win-win approaches to migration challenges. In the past year, this has meant focusing on themes such as migration data management and trade and migration with the active participation of partner organizations like the ILO contributing their specialized knowledge.

An important cross-cutting element in all of these migration discussions has been the protection of migrants' rights, including those of migrant workers. The ILO's input has been especially valuable. IOM also works in collaboration with the ILO and other partners in the Steering Committee for the Ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. More broadly, IOM is strengthening its activities in the field of international migration law as part of comprehensive management systems.

Our work at the migration policy level is accompanied by operational programmes carried out in over 150 country missions worldwide. These are designed to provide practical support and assistance to governments and migrants. Programmes cover the entire migration spectrum including emergencies and post-conflict situations, trafficking, voluntary returns, technical cooperation and labour migration. In the increasingly important labour migration field, activities have grown rapidly in response

to the requests of governments. They focus on capacity building, orderly migration, integration of migrants and enhancing the development impact of labour migration.

A safe, orderly, humane and fair system for the movement of people worldwide is a vision that we share with other stakeholders at the national, regional and global levels. Ensuring a fair deal for migrant workers, as called for by the ILO, is an important component of this and one which IOM supports. In a similar vein, the Berne Initiative, a Swiss-sponsored consultative inter-governmental process, is working throughout this year to develop a comprehensive, non-binding policy framework for the international management of migration. IOM serves as the secretariat of the Berne Initiative and counts on the continued support and contribution of the ILO and other members of the steering group in their areas of expertise.

We have followed with interest the discussions in the Committee on Migrant Workers on how best to achieve progress toward a fair deal for migrant workers. We particularly welcome the special contribution that the ILO, through its expertise, in the protection of migrant workers' rights and the promotion of standards for labour migration, can continue to make to the effect of broader management of international migration. We look forward to strengthening our institutional partnership, including as fellow members of the Geneva Migration Group, in the interest of making sure that international migration can indeed be of benefit to all.

Mr. VAN VUUREN (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, South Africa*)

It is indeed a great honour for me once again to address this most august body. On behalf of the South African employers, I would like to congratulate the President on his election.

This is the first year that South African employers are participating in the Conference as representatives of Business Unity South Africa. As the name implies, this new federation of employers and business organizations has unified employers and business people in a new broad-based and unified organization.

Once again, we have an opportunity to reflect on the comprehensive and well-presented Reports of the Director-General. In doing so, I will focus on only a few pertinent points.

This year, we are celebrating ten years of peaceful democracy in South Africa. This is indeed a significant landmark and can surely stand as evidence to the world of the successful application of social dialogue. As employers, we are fully committed to the principles of social dialogue, as promoted by the ILO and enshrined in its Constitution, and we urge social partners throughout the world to embrace these principles in resolving conflict. It is sad to regularly attend a conference of this nature and to hear many countries express a commitment to using established and accepted dialogue principles, to resolve their conflict, only to return the following year to find that this was merely words without action.

In particular, I wish to refer to the Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. Having been part of the process in South Africa, where we moved from an apartheid era to a democracy, we can now appreciate and attest to the

importance of the application of social dialogue involving all social partners.

The ILO has been instrumental in the establishment of the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection. This Fund focuses on three core programmes: community infrastructure development, enterprise development and human resources development. In this regard, we urge that employers be closely associated with the design and implementation of these programmes, as it is through entrepreneurship and enterprise development that the issues of unemployment and poverty can start to be addressed.

There is also a need to focus on the education and skill building of young people, so as to prevent deterioration in capacity in the territories. Besides entrenching the principles of democracy in our Constitution, including social dialogue, the biggest challenge that faces South Africa is the education of its people. Should we get this right, then we will have gone a long way in addressing many of our other challenges such as poverty alleviation.

Notwithstanding all the elements contained in the Report, the most important factor that will act as a catalyst for resolving the conflict is the need to recognize the importance of social dialogue as a tool to assist in resolving the pressing issues in the territories.

South African employers are keenly aware from their own experience of the fundamental importance of international labour standards and their role in the promotion and maintenance of democracy. ILO standards have provided the basis of South African labour legislation and inspired the labour rights reflected in our Constitution. However, the implementation and the supervision of standards requires coherent structures through which serious breaches can be identified and dealt with in an expeditious and efficient manner. We support the recent review of standards and their supervision and we support the ongoing assessment of the roles and working methods of the various committees that make up the supervisory machinery.

It is disconcerting to note that many failures in society are currently being attributed to globalization. Indeed, globalization can lead to certain challenges and hardship, but at the same time, it must be said that globalization also can lead to positive outcomes. Giving effect to some of the recommendations of the report on globalization will help raise the relevance of the mandate of the ILO by applying its unique role to promote the creation of an environment that will enable more countries to benefit therefrom.

The ILO is increasingly focusing on the promotion of employment as a central route from poverty. This is strongly supported, as job creation is at the heart of poverty alleviation. Employers would, however, like to see greater policy coherence with regard to the role of the private sector in terms of poverty alleviation.

When considering *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*, the ILO needs to consider particular factors pertaining to developing economies; ours is one in case. This will encourage the principle of self-empowerment and create an enabling climate that will attract direct foreign investment. This would include, inter alia, focusing on: (1) developing appropriate national environments for job creation, entrepreneurship and SME development, in particular, and in both the formal and informal

economies; (2) creating an enabling environment at national and international levels for increased economic integration; and (3) building governance structures that are transparent, free of corruption, democratic and, above all, that genuinely serve the public interest.

Business Unity South Africa will pursue these goals both in a national context and in cooperation with our colleagues in the Southern African Development Community and the African Union.

Original Spanish: Mr. PALACIO BETANCOURT (Minister of Social Protection, Colombia)

On behalf of the Colombian Government and on my own behalf, I should like to congratulate the President on his election to preside the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to say that he has shown a great deal of skill in steering the assembly and that is a good sign for all participants. His approach ensures that major conclusions will emerge from this meeting for the development of the ILO and, in general, for all workers around the world.

The Director-General has put to us for consideration a Report outlining the outcome of ILO programme implementation in 2002-03. What is striking is that this Report does not just set out activities undertaken, but also lists some aspects that in its view should be improved if we are to ensure that the Organization works more effectively for all its Members.

Colombia, without any doubt, has received a great deal of help from the ILO. We recognize, and indeed we have experienced, some of the difficulties mentioned in the Reports. But at the same time, and I should stress this, Colombia, and more particularly the Colombian people, have enjoyed the cooperation of the ILO through the special technical cooperation programme. We note with satisfaction the various references made by the Director-General in the Report to progress made in Colombia. However, the success of the programmes and the progress made is not just due to the readiness of the ILO to participate, but also to the magnanimity and generosity of the employers and the trade union movement of Colombia throughout the term of office of this Government. Both sectors have made themselves available, have acted intelligently and have participated fully and this has been vital in order to progress and develop through the technical cooperation programme. You have all made an important and a determined contribution to help our country make progress. Joint work with the social partners, the figures and the overall results demonstrate this, and I think we can say unequivocally that we are now on the right track and the outline of a better future for our children is beginning to take shape.

However, Colombia does have difficulties and we have recognized this fact on many occasions. We, the people of Colombia, believe strongly in our country and it is our conviction that with the work we are doing and with the support various organizations are giving us, our country will make great strides forward. It is not yet time to cry victory, and certainly not to lower our guard. On the contrary, we need to redouble our efforts, increase social dialogue, eliminate child labour, create decent employment and thus produce a stronger democracy and greater well-being for all of us in Colombia.

Colombia, as I have told the Director-General, shares the motivation of the Organization to address

the subject of migrant workers. A globalized economy requires the whole world to move forward on this issue. My country has many thousands of migrants working outside its borders. They represent a reality that exists and their vulnerability means that organizations like this one need to pay them special attention.

In the same vein, while on the subject of globalization, I also wish to say that we need to recognize and appreciate the efforts made by the Director-General to promote and realize the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The results obtained and the fact that the matter has been put on the agenda for national and international discussion is a huge step forward.

Another subject which is part of the ILO's objectives is the concept of equal social protection for all. In this field, the Colombian Government believes that important progress has been made. It is time that there have been difficulties, but the Colombian Government is pulling out all the stops to create a system of social protection in which both formal and informal sector workers are taken into account.

It is a system in which we are not just considering pensioners and the retired, we are also bearing in mind that in Colombia about 80 per cent of those over the age of 65 have no pension entitlements whatsoever. It is not just those in the formal sector who need training; in fact there are many working in the informal sector and many of the unemployed who need a system of protection to help them become more competitive and take up various employment opportunities. The challenge of creating this social protection system is part of an ongoing objective of our Government.

I could speak at length and share many experiences with you of efforts made and results obtained despite the huge difficulties that arise in our country each day. However, today I just want to make one point clear, and that is our firm conviction that Colombia is working as hard as it can to overcome these difficulties. Evidence of this is the ongoing work of the Government, the maturity and professionalism of the employers and the trade union movement and the way they deal with their differences, and the support of the majority of public opinion. The result has been tripartite work and joint efforts within a framework of social dialogue and détente.

Allow me now to express warmest wishes to Carlos Rodríguez, Apécibes Alvis and Julio Roberto Gómez, as well as our sincere gratitude, because despite the real difficulties they faced in doing their work in Colombia, they demonstrated professionalism and determination to strengthen and support the social development of our country. To them and to the Colombian delegation, I want to say thank you for being there with us and let us remember that the commitment that we have to bear in mind most of all is the commitment to our children, even more so than that to our citizens and the international community. They deserve and need a better future. Our generation has not seen a single day of peace in Colombia and I sincerely hope that our children will not have to say the same thing. It is only our coordinated and efficiently implemented work that will allow us, despite any differences, to be able to pass on a better country than Colombia is at present.

On behalf of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), it is a great honour for me to address the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

In previous years, ISSA representatives have taken this opportunity to speak with you about the need to ensure strength in our social security systems and to bring you up to date on the work of the ISSA. This year, I will follow a similar path, but with an increased emphasis on the outcomes of a major ISSA project, called "the Initiative".

I focus on this important ISSA project, because its outcomes support the conclusions contained in the final report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. They also reflect the paramount importance of working towards making decent work a global goal, as outlined by the Director-General of the ILO in his Report on the World Commission – a Report for which I congratulate the Director-General and which I fully endorse.

As you are aware, the objective of the ISSA is to cooperate, at the regional and international levels, in the promotion and development of social security throughout the world, in order to advance the social and economic conditions of the population on the basis of social justice.

In order to meet these objectives, the ISSA will continue to serve its members in their quest to improve the technical and administrative functions of social security programmes. However, the ISSA believes that it should also strengthen its capacity to contribute to broader global policy debates, by defending social security programming and by promoting the economic benefits achieved through social programmes.

These moves have been fuelled largely by the outcomes of the ISSA Initiative – a public outreach programme whose activities have provided the foundation for ISSA policy work in the next triennium and beyond and that will come to a close at our General Assembly meeting in Beijing this September.

The ISSA Initiative began in 1999, after a decade of debate about the costs and financing of social security – a debate that had been dominated by the assumption that trade-offs were necessary between economic and social development. The ISSA was concerned that the debate was not based on facts and that the broader benefits of social security were being ignored.

At the same time, it appeared that social security coverage, in terms of both absolute numbers and adequacy, was shrinking. There were concerns about people's rights to social security and whether these rights were being respected, particularly by privately managed schemes. There were also questions about the public's sense of security, as there appeared to be no direct link between the level of social security in a country and the public's confidence in it.

The ISSA Initiative evolved into a nearly five-year conversation on the meaning of the word "security" in social security. Now that the Initiative is completed, what has been learned?

First, social and economic development occur hand in hand. As countries expand their social security coverage, they are likely to experience positive economic impacts.

Second, sustainable economic development is not possible without sustainable social development. Equally, sustainable social development requires sustainable economic development.

Third, Governments must develop integrated strategies to achieve both social and economic development; for example, the implementation of well-designed health insurance schemes will ensure a healthy and therefore productive workforce.

As I mentioned at the outset, in some countries, social security protection, both in terms of coverage and adequacy of benefits, has actually decreased in recent years. The decreases have been due to several factors. Prominent among them have been economic shifts, often related to globalization, that have seen large numbers of persons move from the formal sector to the informal sector. This shift not only leaves a large number of people potentially without any coverage at all, it also provides a difficult starting point for any Government seeking to increase social protection through contributions or general tax revenues.

It must be borne in mind that decisions to increase social protection are often not easy to make. Many countries are coping with limited resources. Globalization has not achieved the desired goals that we had anticipated – it has not provided for a more equitable distribution of global resources, and it has not created much-needed jobs in those regions of the world struggling with severe poverty.

As a means to address these growing concerns, I welcome the final report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which challenges nations, and the international community, in the context of social protection to undertake to create a minimum level of protection for all. I applaud this move; moreover, I must congratulate the Director-General of the ILO for his recent move to ensure that in the coming years, the ILO will continue to work with nations and international agencies to support the creation and expansion of social protection.

As many of you know, the ISSA has a long and cherished tradition with the ILO. And to this day, we continue to seek the shared objective of social security for all. Together, this partnership will continue to work with governments, multilateral organizations, and social partners to enhance the social protection of all populations.

Delegates, it is up to us, all of us, to decide what kind of a social security system we want and need; this is not an issue for governments alone, or social security administrators alone, or the social partners alone. Our social security systems lie at the heart of the kind of society we want to have, and our values as a people. The social security system also lies at the heart of our social and economic development as a country and in the world. None of us can afford to sit back and let others determine what our level of social security should be, or can be; we all owe it to the other members of society, and to our children and families, to take an active part in the debate on the future of social security.

As I conclude, this debate will continue. As ministers, social security administrators and social partners gather in Beijing in September for the ISSA General Assembly, I want to encourage you, ladies and gentleman, to take active part in this evolving debate.

Education International welcomes the debate on “a fair globalization”. Globalization is a reality, but for many millions of men, women and children, it has come to mean exploitation and injustice.

It is our fundamental belief that one of the keys to global progress is quality education for all; and this is one of the Millennium Development Goals that must be achieved. I want to stress the importance of education of women and girls, and of the ILO’s work to stop child labour and let exploited children go to school. There is a great consensus on the importance of education across all of the ILO’s constituency – governments, employers and workers – which is reflected in the important work at this session to revise the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150).

I have three words of warning, however. First, there is the question of who pays. There is a consensus that governments must bear the prime responsibility for general education, but governments – and employers – must also recognize the long-term benefits of investment in higher education, vocational training and lifelong learning. The current trend to shift costs to individuals is short-sighted, counter-productive and inequitable.

Second, the related trend towards privatization and commercialization of higher and vocational education and training will aggravate inequities and social injustice. Education is a growing market, but if governments fail to live up to their responsibilities, education will not be an instrument for global progress, but rather just the opposite – an instrument of deepening inequity and greater social division.

Third, education is one key, but it is not the only one. Education cannot solve all the problems of society; education helps create conditions for progress when other conditions, including sound economic policy and fair labour laws, are in place.

We expect the ILO to address seriously the conditions of employees in education. Our Education International represents 26 million of them in 156 countries, and the number is growing.

The report of the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) is responsible for monitoring the Recommendation could not be clearer. Over three decades conditions of teachers have diminished to the point that a major crisis is now upon us. As older teachers retire, they are not being replaced by young people, and

the industrialized countries are trying desperately to recruit qualified people from the developing countries, at a time when those countries need to increase their teaching forces to achieve education for all.

We welcome and support the new ILO sectoral programme dealing with this problem. The crisis can only be confronted successfully by a joint effort. Education International and its national affiliates are ready to join with governments and the wider community, including parents and business, to find effective, workable solutions, but if governments try to go it alone or to confront education unions, all I can say is that, this will be a recipe for serious social unrest.

As the CEART report before you says, “social dialogue in education remains extremely fragile [...] Without full involvement of teachers and their organizations [...] education systems cannot hope to achieve quality education for all”.

In general, social dialogue at the ILO must mean *tripartite* cooperation and negotiations among the three main economic and social actors of society – governments, employers and the workforce. We have a lot of experience of working with other actors of civil society, especially NGOs committed to social justice, but neither we nor our partners in the global trade union movement believe that the ILO should confuse that cooperation with tripartism.

In the same vein, I want to make the case for renewed vigilance to maintain and strengthen the ILO’s role in defence of standards. A fair globalization requires a stronger, not a diluted or weakened, ILO role in defence of fundamental standards. Take our cases before the Committee on Freedom of Association on Colombia and on Ethiopia: in Colombia our members are among the most affected by the ongoing murders. We call on the Government to respond to the ILO’s recommendations. The killing, the impunity, cannot be allowed to go on.

Time does not permit me to address the issue of migration and its impact on education, or our work on HIV/AIDS.

To conclude, education unions are among the most organized in each national society. We are ready to play our role towards global progress, but there should be no illusion about the need for public resources and the need to strengthen the rules of the global community. Only respect for those standards will make “fair globalization” more than just a slogan.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.15 p.m.)

Thirteenth sitting

Friday, 11 June 2004, 3.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Attigbe

REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION (CONT.)

Original French: The PRESIDENT (Mr. ATTIGBE)

We shall now resume our discussions of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-RIZAIQI (*Workers' adviser, Oman*)

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! May peace, God's mercy and blessing be upon you.

It is indeed my pleasure to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to the presidency of this Conference. Their vast experience, wisdom and deep knowledge will undoubtedly help us achieve our goals and the desired results, results that will positively affect our endeavours to achieve the noble mission of this Organization.

It is my honour and privilege to address this august body on behalf of the representative committees in the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman. These committees have been set up as intersectoral bodies under the new Labour Code of Oman, promulgated by Decree No. 35/2003, a Decree that is in total harmony with international and Arab labour standards and conforms to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work adopted in 1998.

We, the workers of Oman, are proud of these representative committees, which are the result of the commitment of our Sultan, Qabus, may God protect him, protecting workers and respecting their rights as enshrined in international labour law.

These committees act on behalf of workers in all matters relating to them in such a manner that they enjoy stability in their workplace. They help to enforce international labour standards and strengthen dialogue and cooperation between employers and workers which positively affects productivity and allows all stakeholders to participate in social dialogue, furthering the development effort in its humanitarian, economic and social aspects.

This Conference meets at a time when our world faces considerable challenges, in particular the information and communications revolution, and the accelerated pace of developments in production technology. Our agenda is replete with important issues which reflect the leading role of the ILO, based on its experience and accumulated expertise.

The aim is to impart social justice in the process of economic growth and to give development a human face so as to allow a balanced relationship between social partners, and ensure our countries a sustainable development leading to growth and progress.

The Report of the Director-General under the Follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, entitled *Organizing for social justice*, stresses the importance of freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining, as the basis for democratic development and a contributing factor in reducing poverty and ensuring decent work. It makes it incumbent upon us all to strengthen institutional systems in order to build a society which is fair, free and productive.

The development of human resources is one of the main pillars of global development, and, the cornerstone of its sustainability. The situation of Arab workers in Palestine, in Iraq and the other occupied Arab territories behoves the social partners participating in this session of the Conference to offer them every assistance to allow this Organization to implement its plan of action to build their capacities and create job opportunities for all those who suffer under the yoke of occupation, its arbitrary practices and its ceaseless violations of their fundamental rights to work and to freedom.

It is my sincere wish that this session of the Conference be successful. May peace and God's mercy and blessing be upon you.

Original Portuguese: Mr. VACCARI NETO (*Workers' delegate, Brazil*)

This session of the Conference will surely go down in history of the ILO for the importance it has given to the debate on globalization. Globalization has been characterized by a growing deficit of decent jobs and increasing social exclusion. The people who have suffered most from this are the workers of all countries, particularly those in the developing countries.

This Organization has a relevant role in the process of globalization if governments and social actors here undertake the leading role in dealing with the challenges we face. Since the ILO was established, the international labour standards it formulates have formed the framework for social dialogue. This is the great contribution that its tripartite structure has made in the international arena since its foundation.

The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization has indicated the social exclusion and the growing loss of legitimacy of the process of globalization. The ILO must play a

proactive role here, and I would like to suggest a few examples.

First of all, the ILO must be a firm defender of the tripartite system. This must begin “at home”, by ensuring tripartism in the debates on the report of the World Commission through the Governing Body, as an effective tripartite action of this body in conjunction with the staff of the International Labour Office.

The second fundamental aspect which must be observed is for the ILO to have a proactive role in the regional process of integration. The European Union and MERCOSUR are examples of regional integration processes which have established tripartite institutional mechanisms to monitor and promote the rights of workers.

The role of the ILO must be to stimulate the setting up of regional mechanisms to apply international labour standards which are formulated by the ILO, particularly the eight core Conventions which are the basis of the Declaration of 1998, in the search for a fairer and more equitable system of international governance.

The third aspect which I would like to highlight is foreign trade. The Director-General has already pointed out, in his Report in 2001, that the Declaration of 1998, which followed the Singapore Ministerial Conference, symbolizes the effort to strengthen the central role which this Organization must play in the global debate on labour and the social consequences of globalization. It is therefore unavoidable that we will have to face the issue of the relationship between labour and international trade.

The need to guarantee compliance with the fundamental labour standards in international trade leads us to consider the international instruments we have available to us for this purpose. One of the natural routes to follow is to strengthen our internal control bodies. These bodies share the tripartite structure, thereby ensuring that efforts will be made to establish socially acceptable relations through dialogue. This is the great advantage, from the point of view of a fair globalization, that the ILO has compared with the WTO. To forget the relevance and importance of this system would be to weaken the ILO itself.

The fourth fundamental point to be borne in mind by the ILO is that we are never going to achieve international governance of the globalization process which can create fairer societies if we have international economic relations determined by international trade and based on standards which do not guarantee domestic markets in industrialized countries which are open to agricultural and industrial products from developing countries. How, then, are we going to establish a virtuous cycle to create decent jobs without a guarantee of international trade with fair and equitable rules? This is something else we must confront in discussing globalization.

These issues are fundamental to the ILO's proactive role on the international stage in the follow-up to the Report of the World Commission.

Ms. PONCINI (*representative, International Federation of University Women*)

On behalf of the organization that I represent, the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), and as president of the Geneva-based NGO Committee on the Status of Women of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations, I

warmly congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election.

We congratulate and thank the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, for his foresight, dedication and perseverance to push the envelope of gender equality as a fundamental concept for the new social order and economic justice.

We also congratulate the ILO for its initiative to create the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, an independent body which focuses on people and gender equality as essential elements in the process of globalization. Indeed, fair globalization cannot be attained if we neglect over half of the population – women of all ages.

Women are entering the labour market and are estimated to have reached over 50 per cent of workers in certain countries; also they tend to remain active beyond retirement age, often as care-givers. Women are also living longer than men, and this ageing population will increasingly be in developing countries. Girls continue to be deprived of education, in favour of boys, and, consequently, of their right to develop as the future generation of citizens with decent work. Women from the majority of the informal sector, whose contribution to value added is not included in national accounts, and lacks recognition and protection under formal and legal regulatory frameworks. The spread of HIV/AIDS is affecting more women than men, with up to 58 per cent of those infected in sub-Saharan Africa being women. Poverty is increasingly feminized, as is migration. Human trafficking, particularly of women, has become widespread and is estimated by the International Organization of Migration to affect some 700,000 to 2 million women and children per year. The digital divide of information technology is also feminized.

We are convinced that no amount of social dialogue would have positive effects on globalization unless the root causes of inequalities are addressed. In many societies, women do not enjoy the same opportunities as men. While progress has been achieved in opening doors to education and health protection, political and economic opportunities remain limited.

In this context, one of the fundamental problems is the present socio-economic order and cultural norms, as well as political ideological platforms predominantly based on the male paradigm. Men are still considered the main breadwinners, even in double-income households, which implies that they have priority access to better-paying jobs, market and financial resources, training and upgrading, and also to new information and communications technologies. Men continue to hold economic power because of their rights to credit (women receive less than 10 per cent), to land (women own only 2 per cent worldwide), to property and to inheritance, which many women, notably in developing countries, do not have because of a patriarchal society. Patriarchy also dominates the customs, traditions and religions of almost all countries, which creates gender imbalances and maintains the subordinate reproductive role of women; it also leads to violence against them.

To shift the paradigm, a systematic gender-impact assessment and analysis are essential processes for removing policy biases.

Another method would be through gender budgeting, which would examine the differential impact of macroeconomic policy on women and men, notably

through its effect on employment and the provisions of public services. However, the most effective approach is to have a systematic gender balance, especially in decision- and policy-making processes and bodies to increase the cross-fertilization of ideas with a gender lens.

IFUW's theme and resolutions for its Triennial Conference in Perth, Australia, from 4 to 10 August this year, coincidentally is on "Humanizing globalization: Empowering women." Our resolutions include advocating women in decision-making positions in world financial institutions; women occupy only two out of 24 seats on the Board of the IMF; no woman occupies a seat on the Board of the World Bank, and only 5.5 per cent of the governors are women; at the WTO, only 12 among 159 experts are women.

In this regard, I wish to remind this august body, once again, that article 3, paragraph 2, second sentence, of the ILO Constitution is a discriminatory clause against women and I quote: "When questions specially affecting women are to be considered by the Conference, one at least of the advisers should be a woman." This means placing a limit on the presence of women at the Conference. Considering that the ILO has now institutionalised gender equality in its programme and budget, we urge that this clause of the Constitution be amended accordingly.

Mr. GEORGETTI (*Workers' adviser, Canada*)

On behalf of the Canadian Labour Congress and Canadian working women and men, I want to begin by welcoming the important work provided in the report of the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. It presents a balanced and candid account of the current state of globalization and highlights both its hopeful potential and its severe shortcomings. I also want to commend the Report of the Director-General to this Conference. We must take up the challenges that the Director-General puts to all of us. But how can we talk about the fundamental principles and rights at work? How can we seriously implement the ILO's Decent Work Agenda when the results of globalization to date, for the vast majority, has made life more difficult and made us poorer?

Today, working women and men in Canada are forced to fight and go out on strike to protect what we have already achieved over decades of collective bargaining. A few weeks ago the Government of my home province, British Columbia, stripped collective bargaining rights and job security from collective agreements between them and their own citizens and cut the wages of the lowest paid by 15 per cent. Across Canada, from British Columbia to Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, working people, in particular those who work in the public sector, are being asked to carry the burden, while these governments deliberately disregard our fundamental rights. In our private sector, we are regularly being forced to deal with an ultimatum to make major concessions on wages, pensions and working conditions, or face plant closure due to globalization.

At the same time, though, in Canada, the 1 per cent of Canadians making more than \$170,000 a year, now receive 14 per cent of all before-tax income, compared to the 9 per cent they earned just ten years earlier. This means that the rest of Canadians, the other 99 per cent of us, now have a 5 per

cent smaller share of all income than we did at the beginning of the last decade.

One in four Canadian workers makes less than \$10 per hour. A salary of less than \$18,000 a year merely keeps a single person working full time for a whole year below our poverty line. These low-wage jobs are the main reason why too many young working and single-parent families, mostly led by women, can barely make ends meet, let alone contribute to the growth of our domestic economy.

Let us look at some of the results of globalization. Since 1960, the revenue of the richest nations was 37 times larger than that of the poorest. It is now 74 times larger. The situation has reached such extremes that the assets of the three wealthiest persons in the world amount to the GDP of the 48 poorest countries combined. No less than 11 million children under the age of five perish every year from preventable causes, including 500,000 who die from a lack of vitamin A – that is a glass of apple juice a day.

Economic and industrial policies towards development have become subordinated to free trade agreements, resulting in a loss of decent jobs everywhere. That is why we maintain that human development, not trade, must be the centre of international economic agreements.

Another important consequence of these agreements and institutions is that they limit the scope for consensus decision-making by the social partners in shaping countries' economic futures.

The fact that billions of the world's citizens still do not have access to decent work and pay is indeed a human tragedy. It also represents a huge economic waste and the failed promise of the global economic order. We agree, therefore, fully with the suggestion of the Commission that the persistent and growing income gap within and between countries puts the prevailing economic order at political risk.

It is important to look at income growth for poor people and poor countries as opening up opportunities for greater prosperity for all. Economic growth should not be viewed as a competitive game in which the gains for some result in losses for others.

The Commission's strong message that the benefits of globalization must be broadly based cannot, in our view, be stated too strongly, but it does not supplant the real test, which are the results.

Based on the tangible results experienced by the vast majority of the world's citizens, both in the developed and developing world, is it any wonder that we resist, protest, and even fight against the expansion of this selective, elitist and selfish agenda called globalization?

Until the mid-1980s, the citizens of my country shared the benefits and wealth generated by expanding trade. Sadly, the last 20 years have made them at best cynical and more often than not hostile to the suggestions of further trade expansion. This has given trade a bad name and it should not be that way.

The Director General's Report offers some clear opportunities for governments and for us to begin to develop the coherence required within the international system which will help deliver a fair globalization for all.

The ILO is uniquely placed to lead and deliver tangible results if the political will is here. We are ready!

Let me begin by congratulating the President and Vice-Presidents on being elected to chair this session.

We are gathered here amidst a myriad of new and rapidly changing circumstances on the social, economic and political fronts. Despite active democratic processes, we still hear about the suppression of civil rights, violent interrogations and torture of prisoners by occupying military forces, and a more than overwhelming set of human rights abuses, including workers' rights such as freedom of association and freedom of speech. The gross human rights violations in Iraq and Palestine have shown no signs of abating since last year's session. Many innocent civilians have been killed and grievously injured, and their houses have been demolished by the aggressors. The people are living in constant fear, and are expecting the United Nations to intervene and bring about sustainable peace in the region. The much-touted road map in Palestine, that we deliberated last year, when I was also one of the speakers, now seems to lead nowhere. It is, at best, a set of unfulfilled promises. What we actually see in the affected region is an increase in child labour and further exploitation of those who are already socially marginalized. On behalf of the Workers' group, I will continue to speak on this issue until the State of Palestine has been recognized and is formed by the people of Palestine through democratic processes.

The Director-General in his Report, *ILO programme implementation 2002-03*, has stated that "our commitment as an Organization to decent work as a unifying concept has responded to a widely felt concern, and is helping us to have a greater impact on the global agenda".

Never in the annals of the world of work has decent work ever been more relevant to the global agenda than it is today, in the midst of the political, social and economic uncertainties that the world is confronted with. The Report, while re-emphasizing the importance of rights-based social development strategies, also calls for the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda on the basis of results-based management.

The Workers' group strongly believes that the eventual success of results-based management is largely reliant on the development of tripartite key performance indicators in ILO member States, and this objective can be effectively achieved by all ILO member States ratifying and implementing the ILO Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

The rapid globalization of trade and services has exacted a heavy toll on job security everywhere in the world and on job predictability, equitable remuneration and trade union rights. Contrary to the impressive statements made by government leaders during ministerial meetings and summits, workers have witnessed, with growing frustration and disappointment, that the jobs reportedly created by globalization are lost, often due to stock market crashes, even before these leaders have left their speech podiums. Such is the speed at which globalization has hurt social stability and eroded public confidence in the ability of the State to sustain political harmony in a highly volatile world of work.

The Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization calls for the institu-

tionalization of the globalization process and it has focused on people, establishing democratic and effective States, ensuring sustainable development, operating productive and equitable markets, promoting globalization based on solidarity, ensuring greater accountability to the people, forging deeper partnerships and bringing about an effective United Nations. The Workers' group fully supports these strategic objectives, to be dovetailed with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, which includes employment creation, core labour standards, social protection and social dialogue. They should become a global mission statement for sustainable development and be adopted by the tripartite dialogue partnership without fear, favour, hesitation, let or hindrance. In conclusion, in a rapidly globalizing world of work, the way forward is through equitable gain-sharing between the tripartite dialogue partners and certainly not through military aggression and oppression of human rights. We call upon nation States to spend less on military hardware and to channel more funds into rights-based development. We want a globalization with a human face, and not a globalization which places material profit above humanity. As stated in the Director-General's Report, it is only through global peace that we can attain sustainable development, in which job creation, core labour standards, social protection and social dialogue are the key constituents. Let us replace the bombs and bullets with more bread and books.

Mr. LE (*Deputy Minister of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam*)

Four years have elapsed, and this year the International Labour Conference is witnessing the advent of the second Global Report on freedom of association and collective bargaining under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We are happy to share with the Conference the results and plans that the Government of Viet Nam, jointly with social partners, has achieved in pursuit of the goals enshrined in the Declaration.

In the first place, from the legal perspective, amending and supplementing the Labour Code of Viet Nam in 2002 has enhanced self-determination with regard to the rights and responsibilities of the two parties to industrial relations through collective bargaining and social dialogue applicable to all types of businesses. The Government only exercises its state administration and engages in social dialogue at national and local levels. The draft Decree on tripartite consultation has been submitted to the Government for approval. At present, the governmental agencies concerned are working with the social partners in considering the ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

Together with the social partners, the state labour administration agencies are encouraging and assisting enterprises in promoting social dialogue and entering into collective labour agreements, which are on the increase. At present, a project on industrial relations is being implemented in 70 enterprises in seven target provinces by the social partners in Viet Nam, with technical support from the ILO. It is our hope that this project will introduce models of social dialogue that work well in the Vietnamese context and could be replicated in other localities and enterprises.

Regarding other principles of the Declaration, we are pleased to inform you that Viet Nam is actively collaborating with the ILO to expedite a National Plan of Action on Eliminating Child Labour, with six action programmes implemented in partnership with the Vietnamese agencies and organizations concerned. As regards forced labour, we have established a National Task Force comprising 21 specialists representing agencies of the legislative, executive and judiciary branches, employers' and workers' associations, and ILO specialists who have embarked on studying, assessing and comparing the existing national legislation of Viet Nam with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). It is planned that the Task Force will deliver a report to the competent authorities concerned with considering the possibility of ratifying Conventions Nos. 29 and 105 by early 2005.

We appreciate the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. We advocate the position that the international community should make a concerted effort to make globalization work for all, and should never accept factors that deepen and widen gaps in opportunity, income, and living standards. By reaching consensus with the social partners, the Government of Viet Nam has brought to the fore the elimination of hunger and poverty reduction, assigning it the highest priority in the Comprehensive Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy (CPRGS). In addition, the Government has turned its attention to the poorest of the poor in remote, far-flung areas where ethnic minorities live, with appropriate and supportive policies aimed at narrowing the gaps in income and standards of living among different groups and localities.

We appreciate the choice of issues to be discussed at this session of the Conference, including human resource development, the fishing sector and migrant workers. Regarding the latter, Vietnamese nationals are now working in over 40 countries and territories. We therefore accord special attention to this issue and would like to see solid international cooperation in protecting migrant workers.

Over the past few years, the Government of Viet Nam, along with its social partners, has been endeavouring to attain the goals enshrined in the Decent Work Agenda through stepping up the amendment of labour legislation; drafting the insurance law, which pursues broader coverage and introduces more schemes; establishing the Bureau of Occupational Safety to further improve occupational safety and health; maintaining and enhancing the quality of programmes and activities pertaining to the National Week on Occupational Health and Safety, and eliminating Fire and Explosions; and dealing with retrenchments resulting from the restructuring of state-owned enterprises.

On behalf of the Government delegation of Viet Nam, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to express our gratitude to the ILO for its support and assistance to Viet Nam over the past years, and I do hope that this will be strengthened in the years to come. In the future, we will prioritize policies on labour market development including establishing labour market information systems, training and retraining the labour force so as to meet market demands, further strengthening labour legislation for promoting social dialogue, and improving occupational health and safety.

Original Spanish: Mr. ORTEGA NADAL (Employers' delegate, Dominican Republic)

The Employers' delegation of the Dominican Republic is proud to be able to congratulate the President of this 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference, our fellow Dominican, Mr. Ray Guevara, on his election. We wish him every success. We also welcome the Report of the Director-General, which is a valuable account of *ILO programme implementation 2002-03*.

Let me also take this opportunity to greet all the delegations present, whose contributions here every year give a sense of direction to this unique Organization within the United Nations system.

I cannot begin discussing the Director-General's Reports without expressing our scepticism regarding the Dominican Republic's inclusion on the list of countries invited to appear before the Committee on the Application of Standards, especially considering the comments made by the Workers' representative, Sir Roy Trotman, supporting the candidature of our Labour Minister as a President of this session of the Conference. This suggests that there could be a hidden agenda here and, being new to these things, this leads us to question how these lists are drawn up and who is responsible.

In the Director-General's Report we noted that despite limited financial resources, the ILO has made a great deal of progress in implementing its Decent Work Agenda and its four fundamental pillars, through the InFocus programmes and the interdisciplinary activities of the International Training Centre in Turin, the International Institute for Labour Studies and other similar institutions, and through the implementation of the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. In a world where globalization is marching ahead at great speed, the ILO's regulatory work is becoming more important in the multilateral system and its responsibility is even greater because its tripartite structure gives its views and its contribution to the Organization's objectives greater legitimacy.

In the case of the Dominican Republic, we ratified the eight fundamental labour Conventions some years ago and ILO supervisory bodies are monitoring their application, this because our country has been questioned regarding their fulfilment. I am happy to report that we have, of course, been exonerated by the Standards Committee as we are carrying out projects in our country aiming to improve not only our labour legislation but also our judicial practice in these areas.

We are taking steps to implement the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), through the IPEC Programme; we have a tripartite HIV/AIDS prevention programme, which we presented to the ILO last December and is still awaiting implementation due to a lack of funds; we are also still trying to put in place a social security system which is financially viable in the long term and which covers occupational health and safety and social security adequately and simultaneously.

Furthermore, within the framework of technical cooperation with the ILO, the employers' sector has carried out a series of projects which have not been successful because of internal difficulties, but which are in the process of being relaunched as a strategic plan has been drawn up and approved, our organiza-

tion has been restructured, and modifications to our statutes have come into force.

This restructuring has included the implementation of various projects from different bodies, which have already led to two successful conferences on occupational hazards, and which in Phase 1 includes groups of seminars on different areas related to preventing occupational hazards, and occupational health, and in phase 2 includes prevention programmes through our partner institutions, which will strengthen our organizational and economic structure.

The events of 11 September 2001 and the ensuing wars have had an adverse effect on our country which, along with the unprecedented oil price increase and a badly handled national financial crisis, has led to economic growth being cancelled out, unemployment going up again, inflation reaching very worrying levels, and the purchasing power of our currency and that of workers and the general population being reduced to less than 50 per cent in one year. This has led us to suggest to the newly elected authorities that the issue of pay is not an isolated problem, it is part of a macroeconomic formula that should restore dynamism to our economy, and then the competitiveness and high levels of economic growth we experienced a few years ago. This should be achieved through a social pact in which we commit to pulling the country out of its current problems.

We believe that now is the time for social partners to propose the approval of an Economic and Social Council. This is something that the Employers' Confederation of the Dominican Republic (Copar-dom) has worked very hard on implementing; it is well known to all parties and it will consolidate tripartite dialogue and facilitate governability at a time when our country needs it most.

All this should be seen against the backdrop of a joint decision-making process on free trade treaties, not just in the framework of the free trade area of the Americas, but also through bilateral agreements with the United States and other countries in the region. Negotiations are also under way for a partnership agreement with ACP and EU countries in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, which will require a greater creativity if our country to improve its productivity and competitiveness.

We believe that an important job that the ILO could do is to approach the other multilateral agencies to make sure that funds are given as a priority to those who need them most so that poverty can be reduced by creating decent work, while at the same time preserving world peace and respect for human rights.

We trust that the ILO, through its high profile and through its contribution to human progress, will fulfil its role as a vehicle for social peace at times when inter-agency coordination is needed between multilateral institutions, particularly those in Bretton Woods and the World Economic Forum.

As far as we the constituents of the ILO are concerned, we must drive forward the necessary changes in our home countries and, along with the ILO and other agencies in the multilateral system, we should help the Decent Work Agenda become a reality and thus strengthen world peace and the respect for human rights, which are essential if our democratic systems are to be consolidated and disseminate a better life for all the inhabitants of this planet.

Original French: Mr. KEIRA (Minister of Employment and Civil Service, Guinea)

I would like, first of all, to take this opportunity to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents for their election to preside over the work of this session our Conference. Your personal qualities, together with the long experience you have in this matter, are a true guarantee for us to have the best results.

My delegation has noted with great interest the ideas shown in the different documents, particularly the Report of the Director-General which is dedicated to the activities of the International Labour Office for the period of 2002-03.

Before going on to the Report of the Director-General, I would like to express some views regarding technical issues which are on the agenda of this session of the Conference and which correspond to the current concerns.

Human resources and training were a subject of the first discussion at the 91st Session of our Conference. On this occasion, my country presented its comments on action regarding standards. In actual fact, during this year's sessions, texts have been adopted to guarantee qualitative and quantitative development of vocational training and life-long learning for our workers, without which there is no progress or development.

With regard to the working conditions in the fishing sector, in respect of action on standards the Republic of Guinea, which is a coastal country and has many rivers, appreciates the fact that this has been put on the agenda.

Artisanal or industrial fishing has an important role in Guinean economy because it represents the livelihood for many families. It is for this reason that we are pleased with the adoption of a standard which will enable us to improve the working and living conditions of our workers in this vital sector of our national economy.

The Report of the Director-General is dedicated to the implementation of the programme of the International Labour Office in 2002-03. It is a reaction to the commitment undertaken by the Office to report each year to the Governing Body on the activities carried out by our Organization. It is in this way that the Report of the Director-General is an assessment of all the work of our Organization: the importance of the strategic objectives and the efficiency of the means used to attain our objectives. It is an opportunity for our Organization to concentrate on the good and the less good results so as to take the correct decisions with regard to future strategies and means to be used to implement them.

The Report of the Director-General refers to the activities carried out within the framework of the four main objectives, that is to say standards, fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection, social dialogue and inter-sectoral activities.

A glance at the regions shows the amount spent per region. We see that my continent, Africa, is the region that has most benefited with the sum of about US\$89,402,373. This is the moment for us to express our very sincere thanks to the International Labour Office for this particular attention given to Africa.

The Reports by the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO are an important contribution for the qualification of the

working methods of our organization to carry out the permanent or periodic missions which are allocated to us. The activities carried out in 2002-03 show that we have a dynamic presence, but my delegation endorses the comments made by the Governing Body of the ILO about this programme during its session in March 2003 and invites the Director-General to take this into consideration for future strategy.

My delegation is also very pleased with the fact that the Director-General has dealt with the situation of workers in the Arab-occupied territories. We have taken note of all the issues at stake during the mission and while the Report was being prepared.

The pertinent standards of international law, in particular, that of the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 and The Hague Convention in 1907 have been the source of inspiration for the representatives of the Director-General of the ILO.

We would like to congratulate the International Labour Office for the quality of the Report submitted for discussion and my delegation would like to support the conclusions and recommendations of this Report.

To conclude, I have great hope because the reflections made on these important Reports will surely contribute to the expansion of future activities for the well-being of our populations in our respective countries.

Original Thai: Mr. TECHATEERAVAT (Workers' delegate, Thailand)

Once again, I am here to reflect on the overall situation in my country.

In the past, we needed a stabilized government, which was considered essential for the political stability of the democratic regime. We hoped that it would help resolve the problems in our country and lead to sustained and transparent development, with equal participation of people from all sectors. Unfortunately, at present various projects which have been introduced by the Government have not yet provided concrete assistance to the poor and disadvantaged people.

We believe that in the pursuit of our national goal, human development is a key factor which needs to be carried out in all aspects: the economy, society, politics and culture. In the development process, people in all sectors should have equal rights and participate equally, since people from all walks of life are of equal importance for the country in moving towards secured and transparent progress. Unbalanced development might lead to many and varied problems. Nevertheless, governments of developing countries often focus only on the economic aspect. Moreover, in the context of liberalization which has been promoted by the superpowers, the Government has lost its power to protect people at the grassroots level. It has rarely acknowledged how difficult it is for people in poor communities to survive. As a result of a rather monopolized market and complicated capital management, the income gap of people in the country has grown significantly.

We believe that the Government should change its attitude towards workers. Business groups must improve their behaviour with regard to wages and the search for the highest profit gains. Otherwise, government policies in different areas will never attain their goal if more and more workers are still receiving increases in minimum wages of only 1 baht,

while the Government has declared that the country has passed through the period of economic crisis and can export to the tune of millions of baht.

Today, human rights have been repeatedly violated, including trade union rights – a fundamental right of workers – and there has been no progress on the disappearance of Mr. Thanong Pho-arn, the leader of the labour confederation.

The fight against privatization is still going on, increasingly violently. The people increasingly support the fight against privatization, especially that of electricity and water supplies, which are public utilities. We believe that privatization could lead to the destabilization of workers' lives. In this regard, the increase in public service fares and costs has become a burden to poor people. Most of them are workers. The deficits resulting from privatization are evident, as can be seen from the change of certain state enterprises into public companies. Consequently, the workers of these companies will be legally exploited and will not have protection on the right to organize trade unions, which are considered as severe violations of fundamental rights.

As regards the issues of health, safety and the environment these are not of serious concern to the Government. Occupational injuries, death and disabilities still occur. We are still waiting for the establishment of an occupational safety, health and environment institute. Furthermore, nothing has been done to help improve the situation of insured persons under section 39 of the Social Security Act.

Lastly, no matter how the globalization issue is defined, investment conditions and forms of employment in the industrial sector have resulted in changes in employers' strategies towards competition and production. The use of subcontracting has become widespread. Workers are discriminated against to such an extent that they have lost their rights and benefits with regard to wages, welfare, opportunity and access to training and development, promotion and career progress, termination of employment and retirement, as well as the right to be members of trade unions. At the same time, production has shifted to households which have now become part of the informal economy. Production has also been relocated to regions with lower wages.

The abovementioned are examples of nine demands submitted to the Thai Government on Labour Day.

However, we believe in fundamental human rights in terms of freedom of association and collective bargaining. Without these rights we cannot achieve sustained progress and lasting peace in our global society. We therefore request once again that Government ratify ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98 and strictly observe their obligations.

Mr. SORIANO (Employers' delegate, Philippines)

On behalf of the Philippine employers, I would like to congratulate the President on his election and also to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive and lucid Report, *ILO programme implementation 2002-03*. We find the Report meaningful and instructive, as it analyses with precision the progress of the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework for 2002-05, whose driving force is the implementation and sustenance of the Decent Work Agenda.

It will be recalled that the Strategic Policy Framework was laid down by the Governing Body in November 2000 to put into practice the Decent

Work Agenda in order to achieve the strategic objectives within the four-year period covered.

This Report marks the mid-point of this process and is most welcome, particularly to my country, which is one of the many developing member States – which make up 80 per cent of the world's population – for the significant and practical, comparative lessons it gives us. As pointed out in the Report, its most important aspect is that it “allows the Organization to reflect on what has been most successful and least successful” in the programme implementation of the strategic objectives, “and to use that learning in decisions about future strategic directions and the means used to achieve them”.

We venture to say that our country's commitment to decent work is not only total, strengthened as it is by tripartite involvement, but also necessary in the context of our country's decent work deficits. Thus, the Decent Work Agenda serves as a unifying concept to underpin our country's democratically based, market-oriented development strategy by aiming to balance growth with equity. Nevertheless, as the Report forcefully implies, the principles as strategies of decent work have never been intended to be applied in a one-size-fits-all way but should be adaptable to the specific economic and social context of each individual country. Implementing a national action plan for decent work remains a daunting challenge in our country, where over 40 per cent of the population lives on less than US\$1 a day and where chronic unemployment and underemployment are endemic, fuelled, as it were, by an unmitigated population growth rate of 2.36 per cent per annum, which, in turn, wipes out the effects of our moderate economic growth.

In view of the magnitude of the challenge and the scarcity of resources, the tasks necessary for the reduction of the decent work deficit must be ranked in order of urgency. The most serious deficit is unemployment and the inability of the economy to create enough jobs for a burgeoning labour force. It goes without saying that lack of work is the handmaiden of poverty that can cause societies to fall apart and nations to flounder, amidst the promises of globalization and technological advances. Inasmuch as work is central to people's lives, it is also at the heart of politics. These are the issues on which people vote and elections are won or lost. Moreover, it is axiomatic that where there is no work there are no workers' rights. Indeed, it is chronic unemployment that is the root of all these deficits and which is the major – and very costly – factor for the rising incidence of poverty, which afflicts 40 per cent of the population.

At the National Employment Summit held in March 2001, the President of the Philippines placed employment at the top of the Decent Work Agenda. Accordingly, the Philippines' Medium-Term Development Plan 2001-05 includes a separate chapter on promoting full, decent and productive employment, which was formulated through multipartite consultations led by trade unions and my organization, the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines.

To sustain the momentum in addressing decent work deficits, the social partners, with the support of the ILO, launched a national action plan for decent work in May 2002. At the same time, the social partners brought about the establishment of a decent work national tripartite advisory committee to implement and monitor the action plan on a continu-

ous basis. Currently, the national action plan for decent work does not include methods and tools for measuring impact. The ILO's assistance has been requested to convene a tripartite workshop with the purpose of including a section on impact monitoring and reporting in the action plan.

The respective contributions of Government, the employers within the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), and the workers within their respective trade unions in reducing the decent work deficit are too many to enumerate here. But what I can objectively state is that the collective actions of the social partners are transforming the strategies of the national action plan for decent work into a growing reality for the benefit of the entire nation. The mere fact that the social partners, particularly workers and employers, who used to be traditional adversaries, have found a common cause in promoting and implementing the decent work action plan with synergistic effects is a triumph for social dialogue in itself.

Finally, I am pleased to say that as an active partner in the implementation of the National Action Plan for decent work, my organization, the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines, on behalf of the Philippine employers, has spared no effort and resources in addressing the country's major decent work deficit, primarily through mobilizing employers and the business community to expand opportunities as well as access to decent work. We shall endeavour to expand the outreach of our services and representation, not only to enterprises in the formal sector, but also to those in the informal economy, while at the same time leading the advocacy for the protection of workers' rights through corporate social responsibility. We hope that the success of ECOP in these endeavours, however modest, can serve as attestation to the intrinsic validity of the strategic objectives of decent work amidst relentless globalization and geo-political volatilities.

Mr. BATBAYAR (*Minister of Social Welfare and Labour, Mongolia*)

On behalf of the Government of Mongolia, I warmly congratulate the President on his election to preside over the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. I am confident that, under his leadership, the International Labour Conference will fulfil its mandate successfully. I would like to associate myself with previous speakers in their appreciation of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General presented to this Conference. These Reports highlight the most challenging issues associated with the social dimensions of globalization. The World Commission has prepared a major report in which it presents a wide range of views, encompassing global, regional and national perspectives. The collaborative way in which this report has been prepared – through numerous consultations to hear the views of national governments, workers and employers, as well as international businesses and labour and civil societies – is an example of an inclusive, mutually respectful and interactive decision-making process among member States. I am pleased to note that these Reports call for action based on dialogue and promote this as a foundation for a genuine global community.

I would also like to draw the attention of the delegates to the importance of the current discussion on

international migration issues by the Conference. In this globalized world, it is difficult to divide countries categorically into the sources and destinations of labour migrants. Instead, countries with different levels of social and economic development should strive to find a common language in the good governance of labour migration.

Mongolia continues its far-reaching social and economic reforms as it transforms into a democracy and a market economy. The country is experiencing both the positive and negative effects of globalization. Like other ILO member States, we are concerned by the fact that weakened national systems of social protection are one of the effects of globalization. Mongolia has ratified six fundamental ILO Conventions. Currently, the Government of Mongolia is preparing to ratify the Conventions on forced labour.

The Government of Mongolia is conducting a policy to strengthen tripartism in our country. In November 2003, the Cabinet adopted a social security sector development programme that should become a plan for the development of the country's social sector up to the year 2015. This programme was designed on the basis of regular consultations between the Government, trade unions and employers. This strategy paper provides for the further development of tripartite relations in the country, on the basis of a specific setting.

For the successful advancement of social dialogue in our country, the constituents have started a joint project to strengthen tripartism in Mongolia. This project is supported too by the ILO as part of its efforts to implement the relevant ILO instruments.

The Government of Mongolia, together with other social partners, is working towards the adoption of a national decent work agenda.

Mongolia's social partners have agreed that decent work, socio-economic flaws and proactive employment policies should be given high priority in the national poverty reduction strategies and in international development cooperation.

I would like to express my appreciation to the ILO for its continued support in strengthening social dialogue and in the development of the national decent work agenda.

Mongolia fully agrees that the time has come to make the social dimension, and particularly decent work for all, a global objective.

Original French: Mr. KASSEY (Minister of the Public Services and Labour, Niger)

At the outset, may I convey to the President and the other Officers of the Conference the warmest congratulations of the tripartite delegation of Niger upon their brilliant election. At the same time, I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO on the very pertinent report before us, which has the advantage of dealing with a subject the importance of which is known to everyone – globalization and its effects upon the lives of thousands of people. There is no need to demonstrate that globalization is a reality nowadays, but it will offer advantages only if it is of benefit to the whole of humanity.

In this connection I must congratulate the ILO for its very laudable initiative of setting up a World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization, whose pertinent conclusions offer hope for a better, more just world for all those who feel excluded.

I am personally convinced that if globalization is to be truly beneficial for all, it must make humanity central to its objectives and employ strategies that can trigger an improvement in the living conditions of the inhabitants of our planet.

The expert knowledge of the ILO and the values embodied in the Organization certainly make it a unique and appropriate framework for securing a just, fair globalization generating opportunities for all.

Another equally important role which falls to the ILO in this process is that of ensuring the coherence of moves by all the organizations and institutions working for economic and social progress in the world. I am convinced that the ILO must be able to fulfil this mission because of its tripartite structure – employers, workers and governments, provided the latter are aware of their importance and devote themselves to this task with the necessary energy. Such a commitment on the part of the ILO and its constituents is undoubtedly a guarantee of fair globalization based on an approach reconciling economic imperatives and social concern visualized in the Director-General's Report.

Niger, which has ratified eight fundamental Conventions and which endorses the goals of the ILO, is right behind the Organization's strategic objectives. In this regard I would like to mention, among other aspects of our agenda, a programme to combat poverty, a programme within which we are moving towards the definition of a national policy of employment creating enough high quality jobs, for all men and women of our country. This also means strengthening institutional capacity in the health sector in order to ensure better health coverage and facilitate access to care.

I cannot fail to mention the room for manoeuvre the social partners have just given themselves, by denouncing the interoccupational collective agreement, to adapt this instrument which is 34 years old, to conditions today by embarking on negotiations to establish new working conditions.

I will conclude by pointing out that there is now hope regarding the achievement of "a fair globalization", as a result of the pertinent studies made within this Organization and the determination of the ILO and its Director-General to win the battle of creating opportunities for all. It is up to all three constituents to put these findings into practice.

Mr. KAPUYA (Minister for Labour, Youth Development and Sports, United Republic of Tanzania)

I would like to start by congratulating the President and Officers of the Conference on their election, and the Governing Body for establishing a Commission to examine the social dimension of globalization in 2002. My assignment has been made easier by the fact that the two co-Chairs of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, His Excellency Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Her Excellency Ms. Tarja Halonen, President of Finland, had an opportunity to present their reports to this august assembly on 7 June 2004. The Commission has ably established a case for balancing the needs of economic efficiency with those of social efficiency, without which balance there cannot be sustainable development.

I would like also to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, for his summary of the Report to this Conference, in which he

he has succinctly indicated its relevance and challenges to the ILO and its constituents. The summary, which the Director-General has carefully entitled *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*, makes it easier for us to debate the issues, including those on the agenda of this year's session of the Conference, and to come up with implementable programmes of action.

I commend the two co-Chairs and the members of the Commission for a job well done. I am confident that their candid report will define the ILO's agenda for a long time to come.

The Commission's report clearly states that for their recommendations to be implementable, strategies should start at the national level, including the issues of proper policy formulation, institutional reform, good governance, etc., to mention only a few. In trying to realize this, my country has embarked on a process of implementing the Decent Work Agenda by initially reviewing existing policies and regulatory and institutional frameworks, and putting in place those which would enable economic growth and employment creation, while ensuring observance of labour standards and guaranteeing income security.

In this regard, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has managed, with the financial support of the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and technical support from the ILO, to complete the first phase of reform, leading to the enactment of two laws, the Employment and Labour Relations Act 2004 and the Labour Institutions Act 2004. These laws, I am glad to report, have incorporated requirements under the ILO's eight core Conventions ratified by my country, which, I hasten to add, is a necessary step in implementing the Decent Work Agenda.

The second phase of the reform, which covers employment creation, skills development, social security, workers' compensation and occupational health and safety, has commenced. In order to successfully carry out this task, we request technical and financial support from the ILO and other development partners.

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania has been reviewing the Poverty Reduction Strategy with the objective, among others, of putting more emphasis on issues that have a direct impact on the eradication of poverty. Under this review, the linkage between employment and poverty reduction has been reaffirmed, leading to mainstreaming employment creation as a key factor, and not merely a cross-cutting issue, in policies of different sector ministries.

We reaffirm that social dialogue at national and international level is an essential tool in the process of achieving a fair globalization. Admittedly, though, our country, like many others, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, faces a social dialogue deficit challenge, particularly in three areas.

Firstly, our tripartite constituencies still lack adequate capacity to understand, articulate and effectively dialogue on socio-economic impacts of finance, trade and investment policies, both at national and international levels.

Secondly, there is inadequate depth and width of our tripartite and other representative institutions; they need empowering and capacity building to make them indeed a representative voice of society.

Thirdly, we observe sheer resistance from some – though not many – employers to giving room for fertile dialogue to take place.

For this reason, we acknowledge the assistance given by the ILO project on strengthening Labour Relations in East Africa (SLAREA) in this endeavour and would plead for continued assistance from the ILO and our other development partners as we strive towards the idea of achieving a fair globalization for our people.

At the centre of our country's employment creation endeavour is the critical challenge of education, training, multiskilling and lifelong learning to enable our country's human resources to be competitive and keep pace with the demands of a globalizing market.

Further, we face yet another challenge related to the issue of free movement of labour, an inevitable corollary of globalization, on which the Commission's report recommends a systematic approach which aims to extend and revitalize existing multilateral commitments on issues such as the rights and protection of migrant workers and trafficking, especially of women; to develop common approaches to major policy issues through dialogue between countries of origin and destination; and to build a global framework for an orderly and managed process in the common interest.

It is hoped that the recommendations contained in the Commission's report will go a long way towards managing the problems and guaranteeing of decent work for migrant workers.

Lastly, I would like to call upon member States and the social partners to debate the recommendations of the report and formulate implementable strategies to enable us to reap the benefits of globalization

Original French: Mr. BOISSON (Employer' delegate, France)

The work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization carried out by eminent persons who came from all walks of life, but who have an acute sense of dialogue and are remarkably good listeners, has helped to move the debate on globalization away from ideological confrontation and polemic. This is its first and biggest merit.

Employers appreciate the fact that the Report underlines the need to develop entrepreneurship because this is the basis of both wealth creation and job creation. The irreplaceable role of the market economy has been affirmed, but the criticism of its dysfunctions and of its limitation has been severe.

I would like to select two points that I think essential, and which have been highlighted in the Director-General's clear and incisive Report entitled *A fair globalization: The Role of the ILO*

First of all, action must be taken as much at the local level as at the global level. Secondly, the international labour standards system has to be strongly themed.

With regard to the first point, it is clear that the mechanisms of world governance are defective. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that the multilateral system has to be reformed. That requires two things: first of all, we need political will at the highest level. So far as France is concerned, we can be reasonably optimistic: when Mr. Somavia was received less than a month ago – in tripartite forum, actually – by President Chirac, the President said that he agreed fully with the analysis and with most of the recommendations of the World Commission.

This was confirmed before this house last Monday by Mr. Larcher, the French Minister Responsible for Labour Relations.

Then I think we have to establish closer partnership relations between the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. Each must remain within its own mandate and strengthen its core activities. This means that the economic institutions must take greater account of the social dimension, and we have a responsibility to make sure that they do so. But it also means that the ILO has to pay more attention to the constraints of the competition-based economy and competitiveness of companies.

With regard to the emphasis placed by the Commission on the need to act at the local and national level – this is just a matter of commonsense and being realistic. The traditional technical cooperation activity of the ILO has acquired a new dimension with the follow-up to the 1998 Declaration, a declaration that has led to more account being taken of the specific features of each country.

The social dimension does not mean, as is often believed, the social consequences of globalization; it also means that social conditions for adaptation to the major changes brought about by the international division of labour. By way of an example, an effective training system is one of those conditions.

Now I wish to emphasize the importance of the chapter on strengthening the international labour standards system. As spokesperson for the Employer members to the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards, I am particularly interested in this.

The Director-General has taken up the recommendation of the World Commission to integrate the strengthening of labour standards into the international development programme. That brings us really to the heart of our mandate. Our authority remains unchallenged as regards the preparation, adaptation and promotion of labour standards.

With the 1998 Declaration, which was welcomed by the World Commission as a valuable governance tool, we have taken a decisive step towards the economically and socially balanced development.

The integrated approach that makes it possible to build action plans that contain more than just legal components is innovatory. In this respect, we should note that the Declaration concern only one of our four strategic objectives, and that the integrated approach is constructed separately for each sphere of activity.

Therefore, I think that the time has come to think about dovetailing the four strategic objectives into one method that would enable us to apply them in an interdependent and simultaneous way. Isn't it this idea that is sketched out when the Director-General talks about the adoption of framework instruments to strengthen the standards dimension of decent work? I think that it would be useful for the Office to go into this issue so that we could discuss it at the next Governing Body in November, perhaps after informal tripartite consultations to shed more light on the subject.

In conclusion, the main obstacle on the road to a fair globalization lies in the great inequality of countries in the face of this phenomenon. A standard-setting policy that makes it possible to establish objectives, to offer assistance and cooperation, to measure the progress made and to assess the effectiveness of policies, especially those designed to combat exclusion from the labour market: this, to

my mind, is the significant contribution that the ILO should make towards making globalization a real opportunity for all.

Mr. EDSTRÖM (*Workers' delegate, Sweden*)

The Swedish trade unions believe that among the most important aspects of the social dimension of globalization is the proposal to establish a Global Policy Forum among all the relevant international organizations to secure, with a coherent policy, a fairer globalization focused on social justice and that, to this end, these international organizations respect and actively promote international core labour standards.

Nevertheless, the Kenyan Government reminds us that all up-to-date labour standards should be promoted by member States.

Only governments can ensure that the World Commission's report is being discussed in forums like WTO and the international financial institutions. We, nevertheless, would request the Director-General to report back to the ILO constituents on the results obtained at any such forthcoming discussions – including on the proposal that the social partners should be given a formal consultative status at these institutions and on the recognition of the ILO by these organizations, showing that they understand and respect tripartism.

In the Director-General's Report, *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*, the export processing zones are mentioned. In our view, this rapidly growing phenomenon – approximately 3,000 zones in 116 countries with 50 million workers (mainly young women) and characterized by excessive concessions to multinational enterprises (MNEs) in order to compete for foreign direct investments – constitutes a serious failure of the world trading system. When governments feel compelled to abstain from much needed tax revenues or allow foreign companies to trample on their workers' fundamental trade union rights in their own territories, then something is indeed wrong.

Why do governments from developed and developing countries not come together and agree upon minimum requirements for international investors?

The ILO's Decent Work Agenda is, of course, a national reference point. Leading developing countries have made a proposal in the WTO context concerning investments and the responsibilities of MNEs and their countries of origin. This was an excellent proposal, except for one aspect: it did not include any requirement to respect the principles of freedom of association. Could we assume that all governments in future will see to it that their own workers are able to exercise their fundamental human rights at work? In the end, no one is better off if unfair and inhuman competition is allowed to exist.

We in the Swedish trade unions give our full support to the proposed international framework for migration. But perhaps we also need to discuss once again the statement made in the Declaration of Philadelphia that labour is not a commodity.

In Sweden, our collective agreements ensure the same wages and working conditions for workers who are not members of our unions. Our aim is, of course, to ensure a minimum wage for everyone. Our hundreds of thousands of local trade union representatives check that no one is exploited – not migrant workers, not young workers or other vulnerable groups. This vital role that trade unions can

play to prevent discrimination should be fully recognized.

The Workers' group has tried unsuccessfully to have gender equality matters put on the agenda of the Conference. Fortunately, the Conference itself shouldered its responsibility. The resolution on pay equity shows that gender-based discrimination is not tolerable and, of course, does not make economic sense.

The real challenge for the ruling male-dominated societies all around the world is to ensure that the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), becomes a reality in practice.

The Director-General's *Report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories* is most welcome. The extreme hardship suffered by Palestinian workers and their families has so far regrettably not evoked a strong international response. Violent acts of terror have cost the lives of innocent people, mainly in Palestine, but also in Israel.

The ILO cannot solve this political conflict, but, as we can see, the main burden is put on working people in Palestine who now face 60 per cent unemployment.

The ILO Constitution declares that, "whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice," and this is indeed true both for Palestine and Israel.

Measures need to be taken urgently. As necessary part of a political solution, it is our view that the illegal settlements, as well as the building of a wall in Palestinian territory, are unacceptable and should be dismantled.

Original Spanish: Mr. HALKIN (Employers' delegate, Mexico)

First of all, on behalf of the employers of Mexico, I congratulate the President on his election to preside over the important work of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. This is an honour and a distinction for our region.

The Director-General has set out a number of points in the Report which are worthy of comment as regards my country. Equally, the work of this session of the conference yields important conclusions for Mexico.

There is no doubt that the work of the ILO around the world has taken on a new dynamism. There is a focus now on day-to-day problems while solutions proposed are more specific and practical in nature. The process of overhauling standards has made us look at national and international standard setting to see whether it is viable and in tune with today's changing world. Globalization has now begun to enter every possible field: labour, trade, finance, information and communications. All this forces us to open up different multinational and regional forums and, at the same time, in every country, the social partners must arrive at the necessary agreements so that our countries can integrate properly into this new environment.

In the case of Mexico I must mention and express gratitude for the important activity carried out by the Regional Office of the ILO in our country. Economic issues go hand in hand with social issues and regulation. Technical assistance ranges from labour reform and social security measures to the eradication of child labour. This openness favours the structural change which Mexico urgently needs. Our country has many free trade agreements, and that means we have to undertake the changes that

are required in order to be able to cope with the flow of trade which has begun.

Before this body, with its special and very useful tripartite structure, I would like to appeal to all workers, legislators, entrepreneurs and governors in Mexico and ask them to forget their individual or partisan interests and to complete the process of structural change which we need.

We do not have any time to lose; labour reform, energy reform, fiscal reform and social security reform cannot wait. New generations demand a change which will create more jobs and more opportunities.

We have to modernize our human resources. Migration should be regularized. The fisheries industry should be liberalized and should not be bogged down with non-trade barriers. This is a job that needs to be done quickly because, increasingly, there are more restrictions coming about which prevent us creating jobs.

It is also important to recognize progress in democracy, and I think it is worthwhile, in this important international forum, to recognize the freedom of expression which we now enjoy in Mexico, as well as the rules on transparency that bind us and which apply to employers, workers and the Government equally.

In these areas we call on all countries with which we have signed international trade agreements to fulfil all national and international commitments and to be clear that we are doing this to create the right sort of world for future generations, but also for ourselves, for our own generation.

I believe that, as countries, we should not sign international treaties and adopt agreements we do not plan to fulfil, such as non-tariff barriers which take the form of health regulations or internal security measures which actually cause irreparable damage to jobs, investment and particularly investment security and strategic alliances between countries and regions, affecting employment and specific training for particular activities. We wish to make a very strong appeal here today that everyone should realize the great damage that can be done by such actions.

I should like now to refer to two current issues that we in Mexico have to deal with in particular, and they are Mexican migration and the informal employment sector, both of great interest at both national and international levels.

Mexicans are migrating at ever-increasing rates and this is, as we all know, because of the lack of employment opportunities, which as a Government and as employers we have not been able to reduce or alleviate. We are addressing this issue, but although some positive steps are being taken, other measures are not working. On the positive side, the income from either official or informal workers abroad is about 15 billion pesos per year. However, at the other end of the scale, we are losing valuable human resources and the possibility of creating official jobs, along with the skills and talents which are going abroad.

The other very important issue I wish to mention is that of the informal employment sector. This is something else which has very serious social consequences, because, by saying "illegal" instead of informal, it becomes clear that those who are working in this sector do not receive social benefits of any kind. This creates a completely parallel sector which does not pay tax or make any other contribu-

tion to society, yet requires a great deal from the Government. These governmental obligations end up being funded by workers and employers in the formal sector.

These are the two major issues that should be a priority on our agenda and the Government, employers and workers in the official sector should create a united front which will try to generate social responsibility.

It has been an honour to be able to speak to this prestigious meeting and set out our vision for the future and tripartite participation between Government, employers and workers in Mexico.

Mr. KUSANO (*Workers' delegate, Japan*)

This year is a memorable year for the ILO: its 85th anniversary, the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia and the 35th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize. With various and serious problems in the world of work incurred by increasing globalization, it is exactly now when the ILO is examined on its *raison d'être* and role once again.

We regard some issues raised by the Organization recently as those by which the ILO fulfils its current tasks, including such issues as migration, which is of this year's Conference agenda items, poverty eradication, which was emphasized in last year's Director-General's Report and the realization of decent work, which has been a central theme of ILO activities for some years.

We should like to reaffirm that the proper function of the ILO's tripartite structure was, and is, the base upon which the Organization has built its very existence and acquired its reputation and trust from the international community.

The report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization clearly identifies the serious widening disparities and social insecurity between and within countries, which is brought about by too much hasty globalization.

In Japan as well, employment, wages and working conditions have been gravely affected by the extreme deregulation policy of the Government and the management restructuring pursued by some employers disguising the "reinforcement of international competitiveness". One typical example is the explosive increase in atypical workers, including part-time, fixed-term and dispatched workers. These workers, who occupy around 30 per cent of the total workforce, are facing serious problems, such as employment insecurity and unreasonable discrimination in wages, working conditions and social security. Their situation is also having a damaging effect on the employment and working conditions of regular workers, and has a severe negative impact on the whole life of working people.

Our attention should be on the serious situation of women. Gender equality is, therefore, the fundamental viewpoint that should be rooted commonly in all the issues.

Overcoming the negative consequences of globalization is a task of urgency for the ILO. It is imperative, therefore, to implement the recommendations of the World Commission concretely and steadily. It is a pity, however, despite favourable appreciation in general, that very few indications have been expressed to secure the funds necessary for implementation. Neither has the importance of social dialogue based on labour relations yet obtained enough recognition.

The ILO is required to reinforce its management based on the tripartite structure in order to fulfil its leading role in collaboration with other international organizations. And, we are fully convinced that the principle of freedom of association should be properly established and function as a basis of tripartism. I quote: "without freedom of association, the concept of tripartism would be meaningless".

Having said that, I would like to refer briefly to the issues of fundamental trade union rights for public service employees in Japan. The Committee on Freedom of Association twice issued reports stating that the current situation on this issue is not in accordance with the principles incorporated in Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, and that drastic reform is necessary, including legislative revision. I would like to express our sincere gratitude and respect to be representing JTUC-RENGO. In response to these recommendations, a table for consultation is now set up with three ministers concerned and also three representatives of trade unions, including myself. I would like to conclude my intervention by requesting you to watch attentively our efforts to establish a new democratic public service system compatible with ILO Conventions.

Original Spanish: Mr. GURDIÁN CASTELLÓN (Minister of Labour, Nicaragua)

At the 82nd Session of the Conference in 1995, Nicaragua was honoured to preside over this distinguished international gathering. The election of Milton Ray Guevara, the Minister of Labour of the Dominican Republic, as President of this session of the Conference is extremely significant for my country and I extend my sincere congratulations to my colleague and friend.

International organizations such as the ILO are forums that encourage the search for and formulation of procedures that are mutually beneficial in terms of cooperation and technical assistance. In this context, it is important to mention the strategy designed by the Office under which targeted programmes are used to improve coherence and integration of its activities but above all to improve the sustainability of many of the cooperation projects in our countries in the field of child labour, occupational health and safety dialogue. This is reflected in the Report of the Director-General.

From its very creation, the ILO has been developing a system of international labour standards of true historic value. The standard-setting function of the ILO has been the cornerstone of our activities, and is reflected in the many national legislations of many of our countries in the social and labour fields, and contributes to the improvement of labour standards in all of them.

I recall that, in 1998, a decisive step was taken towards sustainable social progress with the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up. This indeed was the political, solemn and renewed commitment of the ILO and its Members to respect and promote the fundamental principles and to make them a reality.

Thus, the Report of the World Commission after two arduous years of work confirms that employment is a precondition for the development of social justice and reiterates the need to articulate social and economic policy around employment. In this respect, in the last few years we have been working on the application of poverty reduction strategies which will allow us to create a significant number

of jobs. Emphasis is placed on rural development which is gradually bringing us closer to a fair and equitable growth in which: we recognize that the human factor is the most valuable resource and that it is human welfare that we are working towards; we are meeting our goals in terms of the eradication of child labour and are currently endeavouring to identify hidden forms of dangerous work, which is a permanent challenge that we are rising to with enthusiasm and determination and in consonance with human dignity; public investment is directed to the poorest strata of society, through job creation in vulnerable sectors; and emphasis is placed on strategic alliances between the Government and society, aimed at development and democratization based on governance and shared responsibility.

The Government of Nicaragua, led by President Enrique Bolaños, strengthen the private sector and to promote foreign investment. We also intend to provide employers and workers with access to effective dispute settlement mechanisms, within the framework of respect for labour rights, and to promote the exercise of these rights.

The need to create more and better jobs must be our fundamental goal at all times. It is a goal that is supported by the ILO and is crucial for the development of our people and for the welfare of those who are vulnerable.

Original Russian: Mrs. MORAVA (Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Belarus)

The past few years of the activities of the ILO are characterized by the seeking of new mechanisms which should enhance the work of the Organization in the various areas of technical cooperation in favour of its participants. Changes have been introduced to the organizational work of the secretariat in Geneva and in the regional offices and a way forward has been achieved to help bring national standards into line with international labour standards. In this regard I would like to mention the practice introduced last year of examining more topical issues at the Conference, which allowed the focus to be placed on more burning issues. This gave a fresh impetus to the activities of the ILO.

Last year, we discussed questions of occupational safety and health. Following these discussions a decision was taken to prepare a new framework Convention in this regard. At the current session we are looking at problems of labour migration. In today's world, the regulating of migratory movements is one of the priority elements in the policies of many ILO member States. However, various relevant ILO instruments have not been widely ratified or implemented. ILO standards are important; they must be implemented. We must develop a unified approach to this issue, and the ILO has already prepared a certain number of draft standards in this connection.

In spite of the different social and economic positions of the member States of the ILO, all of them need technical cooperation from the Organization. One of these forms of technical cooperation is the decent work country programmes, which help to implement the various ILO resolutions and programmes at the national level.

I believe that for the countries which are not involved in the direct implementation of global programmes or In-Focus programmes, and this includes my country, a national programme is the most effective way of collaboration. It provides for

an ongoing exchange with the Organization on the basis of the ILO's four strategic objectives.

According to the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, one of the principal elements of an effective social policy is a responsible government that is fully aware of its social and economic responsibilities and that boosts development, provides social protection and promotes gender equality and access to work for all.

In our country, we fully share this point of view. One of the aims of our Government's social policy is to promote the stable development of the economy and an equally stable social security system.

The Republic of Belarus is doing everything within its power to maintain the level of social protection it has enjoyed up until now. We have been able to maintain unemployment at less than 3 per cent which is acceptable. We have witnessed a constant growth of pensions and wages. We have practically resolved all of the problems of wage indebtedness that have characterized our region.

Our country is currently ranked fifty-third in the human development index of 175 countries in the world and is, therefore, in the group of highly developed nations. We must bear in mind, however, that social and economic processes in our Republic are influenced by the Chernobyl catastrophe.

After 17 years, our Republic is still having to spend tremendous sums of money to counteract the effects of this catastrophe. A significant part of our budget is still earmarked for Chernobyl programmes. In total, we would need the equivalent of 32 annual budgets at the 1985 level to pay for this catastrophe. The ILO should not shy away from this problem. It should devote particular attention to our needs in this area. The aftermath of Chernobyl has a negative influence upon the efforts of the State to create better working conditions and raise the level of social protection.

We are grateful to the Organization for all the help it has given us over the past years, in particular with regard to the reforms of the health care and pension systems. However, we are forced to point out that over the past three years we have been unable to sign the final agreements on a technical cooperation programme.

In this new millennium, the International Labour Organization has witnessed the emergence of a new issue, namely that of decent work for all. This is of global importance. It raises the prestige of the ILO in the world, but at the same time it increases the Organization's responsibility as a key player in the fight for a fair globalization. It is therefore necessary to guarantee a high level of social protection as well as social peace.

(Mr. Maatough takes the Chair.)

Original Azeri: Mr. MEHBALIYEV (Workers' delegate, Azerbaijan)

Globalization and the emergence of the single market have led to more intense competition and an increasing concentration of wealth and resources, which ultimately has a marked impact on wage levels and working conditions. In today's information society, with its two-tier labour market and prevailing demographic trends, the industrialized countries are facing an increasing demand for cheap labour, which they are unable to meet out of the national labour force.

At the same time a number of States, especially in the developing world, are facing economic and social problems, unemployment and poverty, resulting in the relentless growth of migration, including labour migration. Migrants make up a substantial proportion of the population and labour force and play an important part in the economy of the developed countries and countries of origin.

And yet, migration policies in many countries are beginning to shift the focus to the importance of national security, relegating problems of labour market regulation and the priorities of fundamental human and labour rights to the background. Therefore, the issue of labour migration is taking on increasing importance for the trade unions.

As a socially and politically stable country with a developing economy, Azerbaijan is pursuing integration in intergovernmental and international economic, political and social systems. Beginning in 1988, with the Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan and after the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan found itself in the midst of extremely difficult mass displacement and relocation processes, which urgently called for a solution to migration problems. Hence our interest in designing measures for the successful and productive integration of migrant workers in society, the protection of migrants and their families, and observance of their labour rights.

Despite the dynamic growth of certain sectors of the economy since the mid-1990s and macroeconomic stability achieved through social and economic reforms, migration flows from our country abroad continue, and illegal labour migration has become a common occurrence. It is these people who are hardest hit by difficulties arising out of the undefined status of labour migrants, disparities in labour legislation, lack of regulation in regard to social insurance and social security, working in a legal vacuum and in total dependence on the arbitrary will of employers when it comes to working conditions and remuneration, being in a de facto illegal situation.

The main labour migration flows in the Republic can be described as follows. The main countries of destination are the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and Germany.

According to statistics from the Russian Federation, about 2.4 million citizens of Azerbaijan live in the territory of the Russian Federation alone. According to some estimates, in the period 1998-2000 tens of thousands of Azerbaijanis migrated to Turkey and Western Europe as illegal migrant workers. Most migrants abroad are employed in individual businesses, commerce and catering sectors while in the Russian Federation 35 per cent of Azerbaijani migrants work in construction, 12 per cent in industry, 15 per cent in agriculture and 25 per cent in services and other vital sectors.

The majority of highly qualified specialists from the Republic migrate to Turkey, the United States and European countries.

At the same time, according to the statistics, there are about 2,000 foreigners working in joint ventures in Azerbaijan. Overall, an estimated 25,000-30,000 foreigners work in Azerbaijan.

In addition, with its open-door policy, Azerbaijan is often used by transit migrants. According to a survey carried out by the Baku office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) carried out from May to September 2003, most of these are from the Near East, south Asia and CIS countries.

Most of the legal migrants were Russian citizens from Chechnya and most of the illegal migrants were from Afghanistan, Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As can be seen, our Republic is deeply involved in labour migration processes, hence the need to step up efforts to improve control and management both at the national and at the international level.

Clearly, further development of globalization will bring with it quite a few new aspects of this problem. This is especially true of the European Union, given the imminent accession of several East European countries. At the same time, in view of former ties as well as emerging new processes and relations among the post-Soviet States, certain specific factors will continue to have an influence. And we attach importance to regulating these processes both at the European level and with our main migration partners.

Accordingly, expressing its solidarity with the position of the EU trade union movement and the CIS trade unions, while at the same time taking into account the positive role of labour migration in ensuring employment, raising the standard of living of the population and developing the Azerbaijan economy, we advocate the following approaches to maximize the benefits of migration and minimize the problems it entails: creating the necessary conditions for the civilized use of legal migrant labour, integrating migrants into the world of work and the economy of the receiving country; combating the exploitation of illegal migrants and denial of their rights; and legalizing migrants so that social and labour laws are fully applied to them.

Given the common interest of States on the migration issue, and based on the priorities of national interests, it is necessary to improve and to continue the practice of concluding intergovernmental agreements. Guided by the standards of international law, we need to take measures to harmonize and unify laws on labour migration and the use of foreign labour. It is important to enlist the participation and coordinated action of all the social partners, including employers' organizations and trade unions. Their representative bodies must take an active part in setting out the policy principles and procedures and also in their implementation. Observance of the civil and labour rights of migrant workers by employers can be promoted through cooperation among trade union organizations and a concerted stance by the trade union movement, as well as bilateral agreements between trade union centres. It is necessary to establish monitoring systems and a common information base on migration.

Original Arabic: Mr. TRABELSI (Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Tunisia)

On behalf of Tunisian workers, the Secretary-General of the General Union of Tunisian Workers, and the members of the Executive Bureau, we would like to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of this session of the Conference. We hope that it will constitute a major step forward towards the tripartite strengthening of the role of this Organization at a time when the gulf in society is widening and international relations are characterized by hegemony and domination.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for the excellent Reports that have been submitted to us. Our union much appreciates the content of these reports, which are very thor-

ough and realistic and which contain proposals which would allow us to strengthen the standard-setting system and the capacities of the social partners to promote decent work and social dimension of globalization so as to avoid marginalization and help those whose rights are denied and violated.

In this context, I should also like to express my appreciation for the activities of the Organization over the period 2002-03 and for its Decent Work Agenda. The results of this work are contained in the Report of the Director-General who encourages, all trade unionists to participate in the dialogue in order to strengthen labour standards, respect for workers' rights and respect for their dignity. That is what we seek to do in Tunisia and we are willing to do this within the framework of a new round of collective bargaining, which has been scheduled for 2005, with a view to drawing up a new three-year agreement. This will be the sixth agreement of this kind since 1990 which is aimed at improving wages, working conditions, laws and the protection of trade union rights.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the General Union of Tunisian workers to thank the Director-General for his Report on *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. According to the Report, this situation is steadily worsening and deteriorating and we would have liked this Report to stress the fact that the occupation is the reason for this deterioration. The history of humanity has shown that any occupation is accompanied by war, falling standards of living, collective punishment and the violation of human rights. That is what is happening today in Iraq and in Palestine, where the situation strengthens our conviction that a fair and lasting peace resting on international legitimacy is the only genuine solution to the tragedy being experienced by workers in Palestine, in the Chebaa farms area and in the Golan.

We must have the courage to recognize that this much desired peace can be achieved only if the occupation of Iraq is terminated, if Israel ends its occupation of all the occupied Arab territories and if a Palestinian State is set up with its capital in Al-Quds.

I should like to thank the Governing Body for deciding to discuss the situation of migrant workers who are suffering from racism and xenophobia in many regions of the world, where attempts are made to blame them for economic crises and unemployment. This situation has become worse for Arab and Muslim immigrants since 11 September 2001. They have been subject to acts of vengeance, discrimination and racism, ever since the media and a number of politicians and intellectuals have broadcast or made speeches which have equated Muslims and Arabs with terrorists.

The ILO has an exceedingly important role to play with regard to the situation of migrants. In fact it is a vital role. It must strive to strengthen international labour standards so as to ensure that migrant workers and their families are protected and have equality with the workers of the host country. It must devise mechanisms to promote their genuine integration in society. The role of workers is becoming increasingly important as an element of cultural dialogue and a meeting of peoples in a world where, once again, certain quarters are making much of what, they call the clash of civilizations, cultures and religions.

We therefore support the proposal made by the Arab Labour Organization that an observatory should be set up for Arab and Mediterranean migration. We hope that the ILO will offer its technical and financial support to this project, because it could become a means of constantly monitoring migratory movements in the region, measuring the various consequences and observing the situation of migrant workers.

I wish you every success.

Mr. MAGAYA (*Minister of Labour and Administrative Reform, Sudan*)

It is a pleasure to extend our congratulations to the President on his election to preside over the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. No doubt his vast experience will enable us to have a successful Conference.

The Report of the Director-General entitled *ILO programme implementation 2002-03* is highly appreciated. The achievements of the ILO in the previous biennium are recognizable, though what remains to be done is enormous to help developing countries in general and African countries in particular to create employment and alleviate poverty. We think that the ILO could further assist the African countries in the following areas: undertake the development of an accurate information system with special emphasis on labour market information to assist in the drawing up of constructive employment policies and also help in drawing up effective policies for income and employment distribution; assist in the transfer of technology and increase the capacity in areas of vocational training to pave the way for a solid industrial base depending on the available natural resources; assist in building basic infrastructure; and further assist African countries in their efforts against AIDS and other endemic diseases.

I would like to stress the recommendation of the Tenth African Regional Meeting which called for the ILO to establish an InFocus Programme on HIV/AIDS at the workplace in order to have adequate interventions and activities in this area.

The Sudan is now maintaining a very good relationship with the ILO which resulted in different forms of assistance to the social partners. This assistance covers various areas:

- capacity building, which includes the organization of workshops on human resources development and conducting studies to establish new vocational training centres and the rehabilitation of existing training centres. Participation in training courses organized by the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, and in drawing up the PRSP in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance. On the same issue of poverty, the ILO conducted a workshop on employment and poverty which will definitely serve in the preparation of the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa which is planned to take place in Burkina Faso this year; and

- the Sudan ratified the Conventions on child labour – the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Government started working on them to meet its obligations. We are planning training courses and workshops for our staff to enable them to meet the requirements of the Conventions. We expect the ILO, both at the level

of headquarters and in the region, to assist the various parties in the Sudan in this area. Contact has already started with the Cairo Office. I take this opportunity to extend our thanks and gratitude to the ILO staff in Cairo and at the Turin Centre who have greatly supported us.

As for the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, it is worth mentioning that the report is balanced and acceptable. The most important aspect of globalization is that it should have a human face, as stated in the report.

Having said that, I would like to shed light on some recent developments in the Sudan. To put an end to the protracted civil war in the southern part of the Sudan that destroyed the social infrastructure and caused misery to the population by refuge and displacement, and even hampered economic and social development in the whole country, a peace agreement has been reached between the Government and the warring factions. The agreement guaranteed basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, such as the right to equal treatment irrespective of gender, race, colour, religion or origin; the right to freedom of thought and consciousness, freedom of association and assembly, freedom of movement, freedom of the press, immunity against arbitrary arrest, detention and torture; freedom of religious worship and preaching. The agreement resolved all the issues of the conflict which include power sharing, wealth distribution, security arrangements and the contested areas. It is worth mentioning that all those agreements are based on the Machakos Framework Agreement concluded early last year. There will be a transitional period of six years after which a referendum is to be conducted for the southern Sudan on self-determination.

I take this opportunity to commend the efforts of all IGAD countries and other parties who exerted efforts to assist the Sudan to reach a fair peace deal. Our sincere thanks go to the Government of Kenya, which hosted and took care of the tedious negotiations. Our thanks also go to the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and Italy which played a crucial role in the peace process. We also thank all the countries and organizations which supported the peace process in the Sudan.

We call upon the international community to support the efforts of the Government of Sudan, particularly those relating to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of southern Sudan, as well as the areas affected by the war in the Sudan. In this connection, we attach special importance to the donor countries' meeting in Oslo which is to mobilize resources to help the Sudan. The ILO is also invited to play a leading role through technical assistance.

To conclude, I would like to say a few words about the situation of Arab workers in Palestine, which is deteriorating harshly. Houses are destroyed, the people are subjected to aggressive practices as a result of the Israeli occupation, including collective punishment and the destruction of civil and productive infrastructure. The result is the loss of innocent lives, destruction and an increase in unemployment. The Sudan denounces all this and asks the international community to take firm action to restore the rights of the people of Palestine and of other occupied Arab lands.

Original Armenian: Mr. VARDANYAN (Minister of Social Security and Employment, Armenia)

On behalf of the Armenian delegation, allow me to commend the Director-General for his idea of creating a World Commission On The Social Dimension Of Globalization and the Report, *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*.

Globalization is a complicated phenomenon which has become a leading force for change in today's world and has given rise to new challenges and dangers. The last two years have had particular significance in this respect: the Ministerial Conference of the WTO at Doha culminated in the signing of a global agreement, while, even before that, the ILO had adopted its Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which has become a vital instrument in strengthening decent work.

Armenia fully supports the Decent Work Programme and the policy of stabilized mobilization and implementation of social agreements as a strategic instrument for the prevention and reduction of poverty, stimulating a process of integration in this broadening world.

Armenia supports the main recommendation in *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*. We feel that the programme of decent work is a strategic means for solving the problems of employment, intensive, constant and equitable social development and quality governance in a globalizing economy. Defending the rights of workers to work, personal safety and representation in dialogue should not be done for its own sake, but rather to promote the improvement of opportunities for the poor strata of our society. Armenia has a programme for overcoming poverty, developed by 50 independent experts alongside representatives of the trade unions and the Union of Employers. In August 2003 this programme was approved by our Parliament.

We are now developing legislative measures directed at reforming our social recommendations. These are the Labour Code and the draft laws "On a State Labour Inspectorate", and "On the Minimum Wage", which are based on ILO Conventions. Their adoption is helping us to resolve the issues of labour rights for the citizens of Armenia. We hope that the ILO will participate in the establishment of a legal framework in this field. The development of national legislation and the process of creating a new, genuine environment for labour relations and of creating the conditions for the development of forms of economic relations that are new for our country – these are leading us gradually towards being able to ratify ILO Conventions. Our approach is pragmatic, and it is based on the real conditions of fulfilling the Conventions.

Moreover, with these new labour relations, it is a priority to have real, strong partnerships with active structures that are relevant to the new situations. We intend to draw on the enormous experience of the ILO in these reforms. Over the past few days, we have been able to find mutual understanding in this regard, ensuring a base for further cooperation.

Armenia is represented in many world organizations: WTO, IMF - of which it is member – and the World Bank. At the same time, our cooperation with the ILO is an important element in involving the international community in the process of the successful implementation of our internal reform. We find it necessary to have constant consultation

with our chief partners, the employers and trade unions, in order to evaluate situations as well as possible, and to help the most vulnerable segments of the population. This will allow us to make the best decisions to attenuate the social consequences of our reforms.

Original Spanish: Mr. MONGES ESPINOLA (Minister of Justice and Labour, Paraguay)

I congratulate the Director-General on the Report before the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference where two fundamental issues are addressed: how to progress towards a fair and inclusive form of globalization which generates opportunities for all; and the role of the ILO to that end. With its critical but positive message, it proposes a vision of change that has to be brought about so that the benefits of globalization can reach more people, thereby stimulating the social dimension of the processes of integration in keeping with the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Today, the challenges in terms of human resources, labour legislation, workers' migration and social security are at the heart of the agenda of all countries and multilateral bodies.

In the Republic of Paraguay, the extremely democratic Government of Dr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, which bases itself upon the rule of law, respect for human rights and social justice, recognizes that social labour policies are major factors for economic growth and it is bent on bringing about development with social inclusion, which is centred on satisfying people's needs for work.

Just about a year ago, we were experiencing one of the most serious crises of our history which, as you know, had an impact on the labour market, which is still exhibiting high rates of unemployment and job insecurity. We are, however, smoothing the path towards a new phase. Although economic and social indicators have improved, we still have a long road ahead of us to overcome complex structural problems.

To lend impetus to the internal labour market, we are carrying out a plan of public works and housing with clear rules and effective measures to combat corruption and we are building a more effective and more honest institutional system to serve the interests of the people. Regionally, we, the Ministers of Labour of MERCOSUR, have made ourselves responsible for adopting an employment policy with a common design based on the fundamental principles and rights at work.

As the Director-General's Report proposes, we are starting at home and in this connection, I am happy to mention some progress towards compliance with fundamental labour rights, especially with regard to combating child labour whose "World Day" is being commemorated tomorrow, 12 June.

In Paraguay, 265,000 children work. To reverse this alarming trend, the Government has ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and it has recently adopted a national plan aimed at progressively eradicating child labour and improving the working conditions of young people. Presidential Decree No. 2616 of 31 May links this plan to social labour policies for children and young people. In the same context, through resolution No. 3631 of 7 June 2004, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Paraguay included 12 June the "World Day Against Child Labour" in the school calendar.

Over a five-year period, we intend to develop a database on the characteristics of child labour, to carry out awareness campaigns and develop state policies to upgrade institutions and create an appropriate framework of standards. In addition, we will endeavour to improve employment and labour possibilities. We have set ourselves the goal of improving the human capital of the country through education, training and the certification of labour skills. It is our job, to give Paraguayan workers the knowledge and skills they need to improve their employability.

We believe that we are making headway towards the legitimate aspirations of progress and social justice demanded by society. With the cooperation of the ILO, we are sure that we will achieve our goals within the framework of a fruitful participatory dialogue with employers' and workers' organizations and civil society.

Original Spanish: Mr. DAER (*Workers' delegate, Argentina*)

On behalf of the workers of Argentina, I would like to congratulate the President on his appointment and the excellent work he has done at the helm of the Conference. I agree with the Report tabled by the Director-General, *A fair globalization: The Role of the ILO*, in that this is going to be one of the key issues on the international agenda in the next decade. Reaching this objective is our joint responsibility as social partners.

The unionized workers of Argentina accept this challenge because we are aware that we have a fundamental role to play in constructing a more equitable society, in terms of distribution of wealth and opportunities for all.

Not only do we share the need to work towards a fair globalization, but we also share the ideas of the Director-General on how to move forward through strengthening dialogue and tripartism. We believe in social, tripartite and institutionalized dialogue, not just as a way of preserving and ensuring social peace but also as a key factor in national development and a fundamental driving force for economic and social policies which could end exclusion and poverty.

In my country, the responsibility of the social partners and tripartite dialogue was a major factor in overcoming the most serious times of our crisis and to avoiding further irreparable damage to society. We deplore the fact that this tripartite dialogue at the highest level is still not being implemented sufficiently or durably today, although we are optimistic that this may be achieved in the coming months.

Argentina has seen the darkest side of globalization, probably more than many other countries in the world. While the main concern of successive governments was to ensure the functioning of markets, unionized workers issued a unanimous warning about the increasing social inequalities which were being consolidated, at the same time as we denounced the spectacular increase in unemployment and exclusion.

External investors were not innocent. They were aware of the economic policies being applied in our country, and leaders and beneficiaries were aware of the social consequences which stood out starkly against the debt which was artificially bolstered to the exclusive benefit of financial institutions.

The alarming decapitalization of industry and other productive sectors, along with the transfer of genuine resources towards foreign financial centres,

were constant features which were presented as an essential part of the economic model. Our multilateral creditors were essential to this process and were jointly responsible for the irrational debt process which triggered the final collapse. That is why we strongly support the negotiation which our Government is currently undertaking with foreign creditors. This negotiation is crucial for the future of our nation, and our economic and social development depend on it. Therefore, we fully support, with total responsibility, the position of the Argentine Government.

In the toughest days of the crisis, when we seemed to have no social or political structure at all, and the representiveness of the ruling class was being seriously questioned, the social partners took the risk and shouldered the responsibility of tripartite dialogue to overcome the crisis. This House, the ILO, was witness to our concerns and needs, showing determined support and providing social dialogue which made it possible for us to offset some of the worst effects of the crisis.

We put on the table the need to redistribute wealth amongst workers and the retired, to increase social cover for the unemployed, and to have a health and food policy which would answer the basic needs of the entire population. We also shared in the launching of an ambitious and effective plan to provide social assistance for the most needy.

Today, when hope is once again reborn and society is again rallying behind a national development project, we demand a continued institutionalized process of democratic and tripartite social dialogue to guarantee decent work and a new redistribution of wealth. There can be no proper political democracy without social dialogue.

We share the objective of achieving a more inclusive and fair society; we shoulder our responsibilities and we insist on a debate on State policy. All the Government's efforts should be focused on generating decent work, with fair salaries and an equitable distribution of wealth. The trade unions have a great deal to contribute to the construction of a model based on solidarity and progress and we are ready to do this. Let us overcome our obstacles through joint action.

The construction of a fairer globalization is possible; we can also have a fairer nation. The responsibility of all of us is to find the right way forward towards those goals.

Original Arabic: Mr. DJEMAM (representative, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions)

First of all, let me congratulate the President on his election and wish him every success in conducting the work of this Conference. I would also like to thank the Director-General and his colleagues for the work that they have done preparing the reports, which address essential issues for workers and the world of work.

On behalf of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions, let me assure you that we will lend our indefatigable support to the activities carried out by the ILO as an active partner in decision-making to serve the interests of peoples. We will also support the organization in its efforts to recognize the fundamental principles and rights at work so that we can build a better future. We agree with the Director-General in his Report on the globalization that is characteristic of our time, and specifically with the idea that the social dimension of this

globalization is necessary to ensure economic peace for all peoples and to put an end to the unfair economic competition that is so harmful to many workers and makes them even more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty particularly in the countries of the third world. We support this trend to create an international forum on globalization and its harmful effects, so that we can face up to the difficulties that arise as a result of this globalization of poverty and economic disorder both at the national and international levels. We hope that this will form the basis of some very serious efforts to build a sound economic and social platform which will enable us to put an end to the marginalization of the countries of the south and guarantee decent work.

As far as migrant workers are concerned, we would stress the importance of adopting an international strategy to bring about justice and to put an end to the suffering that has been going on for too long. In this respect, we would also emphasize the need to solve the problems of migrant workers in Arab countries and to help them to achieve better living conditions. This must be done with the cooperation of all parties concerned, taking into account the interests of both the workers and those living in the host country. I feel compelled to refer to the report on the situation of workers in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories in that respect such as the Syrian Golan and the Sheba Farms in Lebanon. This report refers to the suffering of the workers and the people of Palestine who are under Israeli military occupation and who are subject to the policy of collective punishment, the establishment of military blockades, the construction of this wall of apartheid, and the restrictions that are preventing workers from moving around freely, considered to be one of the essential characteristics of the method used by the Israeli occupying forces against Arab workers, and this has led to an increase in unemployment which has now reached something like 69 per cent, and to a dreadful deterioration in their living conditions.

However, the Report did not mention the following points: Decision No. 9 taken in 1974 concerning discrimination, the violation of trade union rights and freedoms in Palestine, in the Syrian Golan and the farms of Sheba in Lebanon, occupied by Israel, which represents the essential reference text for the mission, and which was not mentioned.

The Israeli occupying authorities have not acted in accordance with international legitimacy. The Report does not mention this flagrant violation, without mentioning the expressions and terms that are not recognized by the Union Nations. The workers are described as being "a community" or sometimes as being simply inhabitants, which is ignoring their Arab identity as true citizens and owners of the land. The Report also ignores the legal status of the Arab city, Al Quds.

We therefore launch an appeal to the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO to ensure that all the necessary measures are taken in the framework of the possibilities and principles of the ILO to strengthen the ability of these Arab workers to handle the harmful effects of the occupation, which is totally in contradiction with all forms of human rights.

This will only be possible if the Israeli occupying forces withdraw from all the occupied Arab territories and a Palestinian State is created with Al-Quds as its capital.

As far as the prospects of peace, development and democracy are concerned in our region, we consider as negative the position adopted by the American Administration, which has taken the side of the Israeli occupying authorities by adopting the "Syrian Accountability Act" as it is called. How can a State pass such judgment on another and ask it to be accountable? This would mean that that State considers itself as being the Security Council, the United Nations and the world policeman.

This arrogant approach cannot serve the interests of peace in the region. Everyone knows what is happening in Iraq; we have all seen the human, social and economic tragedies that are going on daily as a result of the occupation there. The international community must mobilize seriously to put an end to this occupation so that the people of Iraq will be able to exercise their right of sovereignty, and freely use their own resources in their own interests, so that they can safeguard their territorial integrity and their national unity.

I would like to indicate the serious steps that have been taken in the area of trade union rights and freedoms in Bahrain and Qatar owing to the creation of national workers' federations, and also in Saudi Arabia and Oman. We welcome these steps and we are ready to collaborate in this area. This also applies to the United Arab Emirates.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Sudanese people on the signing of the peace agreements between the north and the south of the country, this will allow the whole country to move forward as one and to put an end to the war.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the ILO and the Regional Office for the Arab States in Beirut, which collaborates with us, to serve the objectives of this Organization and its noble mission, and we reaffirm our support for the Organization.

Mr. EVANS (*representative, Trade Union Advisory Committee to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development*)

I am glad to have the opportunity to address the Conference on behalf of the Trade Union Advisory Committee (TUAC) to the OECD. The OECD is a governmental organization grouping industrialized countries, but through the TUAC, and in cooperation with our global union partners, working people have a chance to get their voice heard in those governmental debates.

I would like to focus my remarks on the Director-General's crucially important Report on the follow-up to the Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The World Commission report has correctly pointed to the failure to manage globalization so that it serves human needs. It rightly claims that "Key international negotiations are deadlocked, and the international development commitments go largely unfulfilled".

This rings true for many workers who see globalization used as a concept to justify delocalization, reductions in wages and benefits and violations of the ILO's fundamental rights at work. It rings true for the populations in developing countries because, four years into the new millennium, the world is further from achieving the United Nations millennium development goals on poverty reduction than it was when they were agreed.

As the report shows, one billion people in developing countries remain in extreme poverty, and

three billion – half the world's population – live on less than two dollars a day.

The World Commission Report is also important because the political fractures and tragedy evident in the Iraq crisis must not be allowed to undermine the multilateral system and what is already inadequate economic and social coordination, as well as basic respect for human rights.

The failure of the Sea Island G8, which ended last night, to even treat the social agenda, although not surprising, is disturbing and must be a warning to all. Similarly, we have important and unfulfilled promises on the table from Monterey and Johannesburg that are in danger of being forgotten.

As the World Commission report shows by its emphasis on coherence, the task is a wider one than convincing ourselves and labour ministers. We have to convince the finance, economics and trade ministers that meeting the challenge of achieving fair globalization is crucial to the very survival of both our societies and our economies.

The report follow-up must be a call to urgent action. I will refer just to one proposal that needs to be followed up – the call for a policy-coherence initiative on growth, trade and employment. Key elements should be as follows.

Firstly, as called for in last year's Director General's Report, we need to double income growth per head from 1 to 2 per cent a year and make sure that this growth generates jobs. The industrialized countries have to take a lead here and re-balance the world economy through coordinated growth and pro-poor policies.

Secondly, we have to make sure that resources are available to fund development. Here, new ideas touched on in the Report need serious consideration, and then to be acted on.

Thirdly, we have to strengthen institutions in the labour market that represent and protect the poor and vulnerable. To start with, that means trade unions and giving the poor the basic rights to organize and bargain collectively.

A coherence initiative is one reason why increased cooperation between the OECD and the ILO is essential. It is an objective that we in TUAC have promoted incessantly at the OECD.

Working with our Global Union partners, TUAC has sought to make the ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work a system-wide standard also in the OECD and in the international financial institutions. It is now included in the OECD Development Assistance Committee's Guidelines on Poverty Reduction; in the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises; and through the OECD's work on trade and labour standards and sustainable development, it is still in the WTO debate.

We have also insisted that all OECD members who are also Members of the ILO have to respect all of the features and, notably, core labour rights. It is for this reason that the TUAC continues to insist that countries, such as the Republic of Korea, which have freedom of association violations, condemned by the ILO, reform their labour legislation to bring it into line with ILO principles. We expect the new government in Korea to act rapidly and live up to their international commitments.

The World Commission Report reinforces the crucial link between poverty reduction and decent work, including respect for human rights at work, the key elements of the ILO's fundamental mandate

– this is now more relevant than ever, given the evident failings of the current model of globalization. We do not have much time to make its recommendations work.

Original Russian: Mr. SHMAKOV (Workers' delegate, Russian Federation)

First of all, let me note that the Report presented to us for examination at this 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference gives a full and detailed picture of what the Organization and its Members have accomplished in the last two years.

These last two years have been marked by fairly fruitful cooperation between the ILO and the Russian Federation within the framework of cooperation programmes, which in our view have been, although not entirely, relatively successfully implemented. In these two years, we have begun the first stage of an investigation of the potential social consequences of the Russian Federation joining the World Trade Organization. The results of this investigation did not receive the same reaction from all the social partners. However, the trade unions were more satisfied than the Government and employers' organizations with the conclusions and recommendations of this study. The trade unions were satisfied with the cooperation with the ILO in implementing projects in the area of labour migration, as well as of the monitoring of trade union rights in the Russian Federation.

The Russian trade unions express their complete and full support to ILO activities regarding programmes on decent work the fight against poverty, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and other forms of forced labour, and attaining gender equality in the workplace, as well as programmes promoting strict observance of trade union rights and freedoms in developing systems of collective bargaining and negotiation.

Unfortunately, in the Russian Federation, as in many other countries of the world, progress in these areas is far from satisfactory. In recent years, the gap between rich and poor countries has become wider. The same could be said of the gap between the rich and poor citizens in almost all the countries of the world. As far as the Russian Federation is concerned, despite the Government's statements about the steady rise in the prosperity of the population, today about 20 per cent of the Russian population receives monetary income below the minimum subsistence level – and yet many of these people work. At the same time, wage arrears are on the rise again. In April, wage arrears amounted to 26 billion roubles, which is around US\$1 billion. Approximately 5 million Russian workers do not receive their pay on time. What is more, illegal actions by some unscrupulous employers have forced workers to resort to rather extreme forms of protest, such as the mass hunger strikes that were recently carried out over several days at a Siberian mine.

Under these conditions, the Russian Government continues to try to decrease social benefits. Unemployment insurance has already been abolished, and limitations have been placed on the payment of maternity and sickness benefits. Draft laws are being considered which cause serious concern to Russian trade unions – draft laws on the substitution of pensioner benefits with monetary compensation, and on liberal housing and pension reforms etc. What is more, to please the employers, the Government is suggesting deleting the provisions on a minimum

wage, from the Labour Code. When those provisions guarantee workers this important concession in Labour relations.

Still on the subject of trade unions and civil rights, the introduction of new tax rules is equivalent to direct interference in the internal affairs of trade unions and, in fact, creates unlawful strict administrative controls over their activities and puts pressure on them. An imperfect and prejudicial judicial system does not provide much hope of a fair solution to many cases of violations of workers' rights.

At the same time, the Russian Tripartite Commission was only able to resume its activities, after more than four months suspension, as a result of the efforts made by trade unions.

These facts lead us to conclude that there is a new attack being made against trade union rights, but trade unions will not take this lying down, because the Russian Government's deafness to the calls of millions of workers has moved the trade unions to action. Yesterday, on the initiative of the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, a protest was held across the country involving almost all trade unions. Protesting against the antisocial policies of the Government, the trade unions picketed the buildings of the national and local bodies of executive and legislative power across the country. We will continue to work to overturn these unjust laws. The trade unions will not lose hope that social partnership will allow us to overcome these difficulties, and we are sure that the cooperation between the ILO and the Russian Federation will help considerable in this.

The contents of a recently signed protocol in the development of this cooperation for the coming two years inspired us with great hope.

Original Russian: Mr. HRISTOV (Workers' delegate, Bulgaria)

Allow me, on behalf of Bulgarian workers, first of all to congratulate the President and Officers on their election to these important positions, and to express my certainty that the decisions that will be made by the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference will make an important contribution to increasing opportunities for decent work and pay for workers the globalized world over. Allow me also to congratulate the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, and say that through dialogue we can make the world a better place, and with a unified political and institutional approach we can make globalization a more just and human phenomenon.

In Bulgaria in recent years, there has been a continuing trend towards macroeconomic stability. The statistics show this in terms of real growth of 4.3 per cent in the GDP, a controlled and relatively low inflation rate of 2.4 per cent, a zero budget deficit compared to a projected deficit of 0.7 per cent of GDP, and a fall in unemployment to 13.2 per cent.

We are also seeing some troubling tendencies. The main problem in the Bulgarian economy is a growing deficit in the current account of the balance of payments. This is due to a deteriorating balance of trade – the negative foreign trade balance has reached –13.1 per cent of GDP. We, as trade unions, are also very concerned by the high levels of accumulated business debts, which have reached 122 per cent of GDP. Faced with the threat of bankruptcy, we were forced to stand our ground and, to a certain extent, we can take credit for the adoption, in April this year, of an Act guaranteeing workers earnings in the event of insolvency of the employer.

This Act is also a significant step forward on our path to the European Union, and is in conformity with Part I, Article 25 of the revised European Social Charter and the Protection of Workers' Claims (Employers Insolvency) Convention, 1992 (No. 173).

One of the main challenges ahead is to reach the level of income required of the new accession countries.

Despite a continued increase in the real wage over the last three years (2.8 per cent per year) widespread poverty is still a major problem in Bulgaria. It is a matter of particular concern that a significant proportion of these poor people are working poor.

Representative employers' and workers' organizations at the national level have offered their support to the Government for the introduction of registration of individual employment contracts and minimum thresholds for purposes of social security, according to economic activity and broken down into nine categories of workers, as of the beginning of 2003.

The positive impact of these measures is evidenced by the additional 250 million euros paid into social security funds; over 280,000 workers have made the transition from the grey economy into the formal economy.

Despite the success achieved in certain areas, for the third year running social dialogue is foundering in bureaucracy and ineffectiveness.

At the national level, tripartite collaboration takes the form primarily of consultations, i.e. the Government providing information on its intentions and then implementing them – often without debate and without taking the social partners' views into account.

Despite the fact that we now have 63 industry and branch collective agreements, bipartite dialogue still has a long way to go, especially in terms of its most essential aspect – the setting of a working wage and updating it according to the formula "inflation + labour productivity".

At the same time, to date the Minister of Labour and Social Policy has not availed himself of his right under the Labour Code to extend the coverage of branch and industry agreements or parts of them, at least in cases where positive progress has been achieved.

For the third year running, owing to disagreement by certain employers' organizations, we have not signed a national agreement, which would have provided a framework and basic parameters for concluding collective agreements.

Meanwhile, the Government is attempting to restrict other rights – the right to hold peaceful assemblies, rallies and demonstrations which are also a means of defending labour and trade union rights.

An example of a good decision in our country has been the adoption of the status of refugee, which gives migrants full rights to be integrated in the labour market, together with all the concomitant protections. To enhance their employability, a vocational training centre has been established in the State Agency for Refugees.

In conclusion, I would like to draw your attention to the flagrant and dramatic way in which not only labour rights, but human rights are being flouted in a member State in North Africa, in the case of five nurses and one Palestinian doctor. They were sentenced to death solely on the basis of an extracted confession under duress, totally disregarding the

expert conclusions of eminent scientists in the field of one of today's worst problems – AIDS.

As trade unionists, we cannot, and we do not have the right, to remain indifferent to the fate of these working people who are from our own country.

We are convinced of their innocence and, in our efforts to obtain their acquittal and a verdict of not guilty, we have already received the support of our brothers and sisters in the worldwide trade union movement, for which we are deeply grateful.

From this eminent rostrum, I would like to call on all governments, employers' organizations and representatives of civil society organizations to do their part, whether through their institutions or informally, to obtain a review of the death sentence passed on these six medical workers and demand full guarantees of a fair legal process, in full observance of fundamental human rights, dignity and international legal standards.

Original Arabic: Mr. JRAD (representative, Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb)

On behalf of the trade unions which are members of the Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb it is an honour to congratulate the President. I hope that the deliberations of this session of the International Labour Conference will be crowned with success. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, on his excellent Report on the situation of migrant workers. He did not simply analyse migratory movements in the era of globalization, but also stressed the importance of social dialogue, between the North and the South in order to find solutions to migration issues in conformity with the international Conventions guaranteeing the rights of migrant workers.

Today, migration has become a world dilemma, particularly since certain international actors have tried to sow hatred among peoples after the events of 11 September and the war in Iraq. It is this feeling of hatred between the population of host countries and immigrants which has prepared the ground for political dogmas that spread the theory of the clash of civilizations and that produce reactions leading to cultural isolation.

I would also like to grasp this opportunity of saluting on behalf of all the trade unions from the Maghreb countries, all the peace-loving forces in the world who brave the campaigns which tarnish the image of the Arab and Muslim world and the Maghrebian community in Europe, who reject this equation of immigration and terrorism and who remain attached to the principle, of freedom and tolerance in the face of racism and fanaticism. We appreciate the initiatives taken by the ILO to protect migrant workers' rights and we call on the Organization to support the efforts of trade unions to set up a Euro-Mediterranean observatory on migration.

The efforts made by the ILO to strengthen the tripartite dialogue which is the best guarantee of a better balance between economic growth and progress are essential and praiseworthy. Nevertheless, there are still many obstacles to development, such as rising unemployment levels, greater job insecurity and the widening gulf between north and south.

While we approve of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, we invite the ILO to redouble its efforts to help the social partners, especially those in the Maghreb and in other Arab countries to arrive at a tripartite agreement through social dialogue and closer col-

laboration between the International Labour Organization and regional trade union organizations.

Fighting injustice in all forms and encouraging dialogue between civilizations and cultures are the main focuses around which peace may be achieved. Regional conflicts must be resolved in keeping with international law. The suffering endured today by the Palestinian people and the Palestinian workers who are weighed down by the yoke of Israeli occupation is very serious and is evidenced by the economic blockade and the building of the separation wall, the destruction of infrastructure and homes, the murdering of civilians and the assassination of political leaders. We must set up more support programmes to assist and aid the productive forces in Palestine to rebuild the infrastructure of Palestinian society which has been destroyed by the Israeli army.

Our Union strongly condemns terrorism and appeals to all parties to denounce the state-sponsored terrorism perpetrated by the occupying forces and to work for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State and withdrawal from the occupied territories in the Syrian Arab Republic and the Lebanon.

The situation in Iraq represents a major challenge for the future of the country, particularly in the face of the war crimes committed against civilians and the scandal of the torture of Iraqi prisoners which have shocked the world. This occupation needs to be brought to an end as soon as possible and Iraqi workers must be helped to establish an independent trade union movement and to regain their national sovereignty.

The role of the ILO is essential in strengthening the credibility of the United Nations and providing assistance to those countries affected by the occupation. The ILO can also contribute to building international relations based on justice, peace and solidarity between peoples.

Original Vietnamese: Ms. CU (Workers' delegate, Viet Nam)

First, on behalf of the workers and trades unions of Viet Nam, we wish to convey our congratulations to the President and wish the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference every success.

The Vietnamese workers and trade unions highly value the Director General's Report, *ILO programme implementation 2002-03*, and the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body. We share with you the evaluations and recommendations made by the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. We also share the views in the Report entitled *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*, presented by the Director-General at this session of the Conference. Globalization creates a lot of opportunities but it also poses challenges for the poor and less developed countries. It requires the world community, in which the ILO plays a key role, to make every effort to make globalization a drive for development, to bring about benefits and opportunities for all. Globalization should be linked to the Decent Work Agenda and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The workers and trade unions of Viet Nam highly value the efforts and successes made by the ILO. We have all recognized, in recent years, that the ILO has further focused on issues of great concern to the world trade unions and workers in general, and the Vietnamese trade unions and workers in particular.

In Viet Nam, the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour (VGCL), currently uniting more than 4 million members from all economic sectors, has been recognized by the national Constitution and by laws and regulations, and is going to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its foundation.

The VGCL actively participated in the formulation of the legal system, including the trade union and labour laws and regulations, the social insurance law, the salary reform, the law on unemployment, the national programme on vocational training and the active labour market, poverty alleviation, fighting against discrimination, child labour and promoting sound industrial relations. In practice, the right to trade union membership and the right to collective bargaining has been further enforced and executed. Over the past five years, from 1998 to 2003, the VGCL has formed 10,400 primary trade unions with over 850,000 members in the private sector. Much attention has been paid to collective negotiation and collective agreements. The ratio of collective agreement coverage currently reaches 80 per cent in the state sector, over 30 per cent in the foreign investment sector and over 15 per cent in the domestic private sector.

It is our great pleasure to note that the cooperation relationship between the ILO and Viet Nam in general, and the trade unions of Viet Nam in particular, is achieving positive outcomes. The ILO sent its representative to attend the 9th National Congress of the Vietnamese Trade Unions last October. The National Congress has set forth the overall objectives of the Vietnamese trade unions for the next five years. These are to build a strong working class, to participate in the management of the State and society, to defend and take care of the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of the workers and public servants, to develop membership and set up trade unions in every economic sector to achieve the target of recruiting one million more members in the period from 2004 to 2008, to upgrade the competencies and skills of the trade union activists, to renovate the content and methods of activity of the trade unions aimed at building strong trade unions and to expand and promote international cooperation.

In recent years, the ILO has coordinated with the VGCL to conduct important activities, such as formulating a national commitment on implementation of the Decent Work Agenda, training trade unionists on collective bargaining and combating child labour.

Last April, the VGCL hosted the Asia-Europe Trade Union Forum with the participation of various trade union representatives from the two continents and the ILO representative, with a view to promoting the social pillar within the Asia-Europe cooperation framework and further revitalizing the cooperation between the two continents, for the sake of the workers.

In past years, the workers and trade unions of Viet Nam have received constant support and assistance from the ILO and friendly trade union organizations the world over. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks for this valuable and effective support and assistance and our hope to receive further support from the ILO and from other friendly trade union organizations.

In the name of God, the Merciful the Compassionate! It is an honour for me to address you on behalf of the employers of the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman. It is also an honour to congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session of the Conference. We are convinced that his experience and wisdom will enable him to ensure success for this Conference so that we may achieve our objectives.

I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, and to the Governing Body for the programmes that they have proposed for their activities to strengthen and guarantee protection and social justice and to improve social dialogue between the social partners.

We would like to welcome the support provided to my country by the Organization in the framework of bilateral cooperation and to pay tribute to the Regional Office in Beirut for its efforts and technical support.

The Sultanate of Oman carries out consultations and coordination with the social partners to develop labour and economic legislation that is in conformity with the relevant international conventions and protocols.

In this respect, we have promulgated a new Labour Code, No. 25/2003, which contains a title on the establishment of tripartite committees in private sector enterprises. These laws are aimed at strengthening social dialogue between the social partners and realizing social justice in our country, as well as achieving a balance between the social partners.

The situation of Arab workers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories prompts us to mention the efforts made by the Director-General, which we duly appreciate and commend. It is essential to continue to help the employers and workers in Palestine through the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection and to do everything necessary to provide them with technical assistance.

We also hope that stability will return to Iraq, so that the social partners can play their part in building prosperity in the country and creating job opportunities so that the Iraqi people can enjoy well-being and peace.

Conflict and war in the Middle East have swelled the ranks of the unemployed and fomented instability. Individual earnings have dropped and the number of people below the poverty line who are unable to meet their most basic needs has increased. The time has come to find appropriate ways to ensure that these workers can live in decency and dignity. But it is also essential to find a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through withdrawal from the Palestinian territories and the creation of an independent Palestinian State.

The issue of the social dimension of globalization and the Director-General's Report on the subject bear witness to the importance of the role of the ILO in furthering the cause of social justice. We are convinced that the Organization will be able to design policies and a strategic framework that will enable employers and workers to reap the benefits of globalization through dialogue between all the social partners.

To conclude, I would like to thank the President for all his efforts and to express the hope that peace,

security and prosperity will prevail in the world, for the common good.

I would like to commend the initiative taken by the Director-General to discuss an issue which deserves our full attention: looking at globalization in the light of a universal aspiration, that of justice. In order to do so, we have to begin by ridding the issue of ideological positions and placing it within its proper context, which is as one more step in an ongoing quest for progress and civilization. To do this, we are also going to have to focus on the fact that the effects of change bring with them instability and, unavoidably, resistance from those who feel threatened by such changes.

From my point of view, the main concerns felt within the world of work arise from the loss of jobs or the lack of job creation. This is a justified and legitimate concern although its causes go beyond the phenomenon of globalization; its roots go deep into a history of errors of all shapes and forms being committed in many countries – especially the least developed countries – such as corruption, populism, poor public administration, weak institutions, a lack of national strategies, ideological wars, etc.

The problem is a serious one and goes beyond the expertise of our Organization. Nevertheless, our Organization can, and should, play a central role in the specific area of quality job creation. We must concentrate all of our efforts in achieving this goal, and this is where the ILO should make its presence felt at the global level.

Other activities, including standard-setting activities, will no longer have meaning if there are no formal jobs for which such activities can be developed and to which standards can be applied.

I would propose that our resources be concentrated on programmes for creating jobs, without forgetting that it is vital to create an appropriate environment in all countries and region to facilitate private capital investment, which is the only way to create decent jobs in a sustainable way. For this reason it is essential to support the institutions and governance of countries. In this struggle partners from both within and outside of the United Nations system need to come forward whose objective is the strengthening of democratic institutions, economic and social development and poverty eradication.

All activities conducted by this Organization and other international institutions must take into account the differences in the current stages in development in each and every country. This is a reality which, very often, for reasons of self-interest, is ignored by those who feel that practices they themselves once carried out are now unacceptable. Instead of trying to justify these practices, we should be changing them in step with the levels of development in different countries.

At the same time, within the international organizations recognition must be given to a principle that is widely accepted in the business world, that of specialization. This means that although all international organizations must work in the same direction, each one should have its expertise, whilst complementing each other in trying to achieve common goals, the main one being poverty eradication.

In this struggle against poverty, the role of the ILO is fundamental since it is responsible for find-

ing concrete solutions to foster the creation of better and more jobs. Lastly, there is a worrying fact that cannot have gone unnoticed by this assembly owing to its serious implications for the credibility of the supervisory mechanism of the ILO. I am referring to the selection of countries whose cases are examined by the committee on the Application of Standards. For years we have been pointing out an imbalance, which is tilted against Latin America, and more specifically Central America. As we have said, this could be due to interests which do not correspond to the purposes or objectives of this house.

Unfortunately, this year we have seen these attitudes confirmed. It is unacceptable that from a subregion of seven countries, four of those countries are under examination, when there are no technical reasons to justify this. As has already been said by a spokesperson of one of the groups represented in this room, there are criteria which have more to do with trade agreements than labour standards. This is unacceptable.

We cannot allow our supervisory mechanisms to be manipulated in this way; this will only lead to the loss of their credibility.

Original French: Mr. SEMOV (Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Bulgaria)

Over the past year, Bulgarian employers have continued to participate dynamically in the tripartite partnership, as well as in bipartite social dialogue, in the interests of the harmonious development of economic relations in the Republic of Bulgaria.

This joint effort on the part of the social partners has permitted the attainment of many true successes. The tripartite working group has formulated the most recent modifications of the Labour Code specifically to implement European Directives in Bulgarian labour legislation. The tripartite group also elaborated a draft law on salary guarantees in the event of bankruptcy in enterprises. This text has been adopted by the Parliament and the signing of the agreement on tripartite cooperation to improve working conditions in enterprises crowned the entry into force, on 27 December 2003, of the occupational health and safety act.

Currently, there are 63 labour agreements operating at the sectoral and branch levels and the scope of collective agreements within sectors of activity in our economy and in enterprises is around 38 per cent in total, 29 bipartite agreements were signed in 43 sectors and branches of the economy in 2003; in 2004, the number of bipartite agreements concluded was 44 in 50 sectors and branches. Nevertheless, we regret that this year the national tripartite agreement on the content of sectoral and branch collective agreements has yet to be signed.

The effective beginning of this year's activities of the Economic and Social Council of Bulgaria was a great success for the social partners in particular, and civil society in general. This national body, which was constituted in 2001, includes representatives of employers, trade unions and civil society, in all their diversity.

New tripartite negotiations on issues relating to social and economic activities in Bulgaria began last month.

Unfortunately, however, there are clauses which were negotiated between representative organizations of the employers, on the one hand, and of the workers, on the other, which have yet to be implemented. This is the case particularly for the unful-

filled commitments regarding the progressive redistribution of social charges between employers and employees, which continue to weigh more heavily on the former. The employers currently cover 75 per cent of such charges.

The Bulgarian employers should like to pay tribute to the efforts of the Parliament and the Bulgarian Government in signing the Seafarers' Annual Leave with Pay Convention, 1976 (No. 146), the Recruitment and Placement of Seafarers Convention, 1996 (No. 179), the Repatriation of Seafarers Convention (Revised), 1987 (No. 166), and the Seafarers' Welfare Convention, 1987 (No. 163). However, we would wish for a better understanding as regards the need to ratify the Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181), as well as strong mobilization in favour of applying the Private Employment Agencies Recommendation, 1997 (No. 188), Part III, regarding cooperation between the public employment service and private employment agencies.

As regards the recommendation presented in the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization on strengthening subregional and regional cooperation as a key instrument in developing a system for managing globalization, the Bulgarian employers support the proposal of holding, at the end of 2004, in Sofia, a subregional tripartite conference for south-eastern Europe on the social dimensions of globalization, with the participation of the ILO Director-General.

The Bulgarian employers also share the view that the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150) is no longer in keeping with the times. Thus, the Bulgarian employers in the tripartite delegation will support the proposal of the International Labour Conference regarding the directing of a new Recommendation to replace the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150), which was adopted in 1975.

In conclusion, we should like to express our hope that the work of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference will contribute to promoting greater respect of the ILO by governments and the social partners, not only fostering support for the ILO as an important promoter of international labour standards, but also as a guarantor of their application. The ratification of international labour Conventions is necessary, but it is also necessary for us to ensure the monitoring of such application on the national level.

Finally, allow me to draw the attention of all democratic countries here present to the very sad fact of the unfair detention, for five years now, of five Bulgarian doctors in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Despite their innocence, which has been proven categorically by the world's most renowned specialists, these five Bulgarians have just been condemned to death.

We demand justice for these innocent Bulgarians in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.

Mr. SHENOY (Government delegate, India)

I join the other distinguished speakers to congratulate the President on his unanimous election as the President of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference, which is taking place in Geneva. I would also like to take this opportunity to place on record the appreciation of the Government of India for the very comprehensive and informative

Report of the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, *ILO Programme implementation 2002-03*.

My delegation compliments the ILO for the improvements achieved under the different ILO strategic objectives vis-à-vis the Decent Work Agenda. It is our considered view that, in order to attain decent work, every potential worker should be given the opportunity to work in a reasonably safe place and it is only after this that measures conforming to other decent working conditions would be possible.

Mahatma Gandhi said that for the hungry man, God can come only in the form of food. We, therefore, are always in favour of according the highest priority to the employment sector. We feel that the success of the other strategic objectives is contingent upon this employment sector alone. We suggest that massive efforts should be made in the employment sector to generate employment, and impart training to unskilled workers. The ILO's approach to employment intensive investment should continue.

We also feel that socio-economic activities like child labour should be tackled with all the seriousness they deserve. However, they are only symptoms of a greater malady, which requires a concerted effort by all social partners and the ILO.

I am happy to inform this august body that in 250 districts of India, we are implementing national child labour projects at the cost of US\$135 million. In addition to that, we are contributing US\$20 million, along with the United States' contribution of US\$20 million for the Indus Project in 20 districts of India.

The success of the ILO's campaign for ratification of the ILO core or fundamental Conventions is laudable. However, we feel that there is a need for better cooperation with the national governments with a view to identifying obstacles in the process of ratification.

I refer to 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). There are some technical reasons why some of the largest democracies and some of the countries which have a large worker population could not ratify these Conventions. Perhaps we can have a protocol to introduce flexibilities into these Conventions so that they become ratifiable. India is fully committed to the principles enshrined in the ILO core or fundamental Conventions. The right to equality is a fundamental right under the Constitution of India. The various provisions contained in the core Conventions are being implemented in the country for the benefit of our workers through national laws and development programmes. We, however, ratify an ILO Convention only when our national laws and practices are fully brought into conformity with the provisions of the Conventions in question.

Ms. THEODORSEN (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Norway*)

As a representative of the workers of Norway, I congratulate the President and the Director-General on the reports presented, as well as on all the other good work of the ILO this last year. The excellent work performed by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, and the report presented, have really given the ILO a new dimension on the world stage and the workers of Norway

look forward to seeing the follow-up of the recommendations.

Among all the good work done, the Norwegian trade union movement is especially satisfied that the ILO has also this year shown its great concern for workers in the occupied Arab territories by publishing the special Report about the economic and social situation in the region. It is extremely important that the ILO continues to keep a high profile in this work by both documenting and assessing the situation the workers and their families are living under, as well as giving political and moral support and financial assistance. The Report documents how poverty and unemployment continue to grip Palestinian communities to the extent that people are able to survive only with large-scale external assistance. There will never be peace and prosperity in the region without the end of the occupation. Only then will Palestinian workers be secured a decent job and live in peace in their independent Palestinian State beside the State of Israel.

I also appreciate the emphasis put on the gender dimension in the Report. Palestinian women are facing enormous obstacles and challenges. They have to try to keep their families together in an abnormal life situation. At the same time, they are marginalized on the labour market. It is my hope that the ILO will continue to present this type of objective information as well as promoting dialogue between Palestinian and Israeli workers. Financial assistance to Palestinian workers and their families must be given the highest priority. I hope there will be a special session next year on this issue. There are too many unsolved burning questions. The ILO has an important role to play in this process.

Coming back to the question of gender in general, I want to emphasize the importance of getting better representation of women at all levels in the ILO. It is very disappointing to see that neither the workers nor the employers gives this question the attention it deserves. The representation of women at this year's session of the Conference is not much better than it was last year. Only 15.5 per cent of the delegates are women. The Norwegian trade union movement really appreciates the Director-General's concrete approach to the question by suggesting a 30 per cent positive action policy for future sessions. I can promise him our support.

Both Norway and Sweden now have women as trade union presidents. The impact on gender-related questions can be easily observed. There is more focus on questions of equal pay for work of equal value than before. More attention is given to issues concerning part-time and low-paid work, women-related health and safety measures, pension consequences, etc. We really do look forward to cooperating with the Director-General on this issue.

Among other challenges, it is more important than ever before to be aware of, and let the work in the ILO, be guided by the special characteristics of the ILO and its core function. The practice of tripartism must not be diminished. The social partners are an inalienable part of the ILO. Their contribution in all of the ILO's work must not be underestimated. Social dialogue is a core activity and must be an integrated part of all of the ILO's work in whichever sector it is.

The same can be said about the standard-setting activities. There is unanimous support in our country for the promotion of labour standards, not just labour standards in the core Conventions, but for

labour standards in most of the existing Conventions. There must be even more emphasis put on this work in the future. We need to see new standards and we need to see more ratification campaigns on passed Conventions, whether it be on migration or maternity protection or other burning issues.

The normative mandate of the ILO must always be the guiding tool in all the activities of the Organization.

(The Conference adjourned at 7 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Page

Twelfth sitting

Ratification of an international labour Convention by Mauritius	1
Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>).....	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Marius, M. Kozik, Mr. Al Ansari, Mr. Naghiyev, Mr. Barimah, Ms. Ngindinwa, Mr. Tabani, Ms. Sto. Tomas, Mr. Solari Saavedra, Mr. Trogen, Ms. Menkerios, Mr. Tomada, Mr. Ross Leal, Mr. Togari, Mr. Hached, Mrs. Sinjela, Mr. Louh, Mr. Valerio, Mr. Martínez Molina, Mr. Okuda, Mr. Djilani, Mr. Mammadov, Mr. Peet, Mr. Paiva, Mr. Van Vuuren, Mr. Palacio Betancourt, Mr. Musenge, Mr. Van Leeuwen.	
Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>).....	23
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Al-Rizaiqi, Mr. Vaccari Neto, Ms. Poncini, Mr. Georgetti, Mr. Rampak, Mr. Le, Mr. Ortega Nadal, Mr. Keira, Mr. Techateeravat, Mr. Soriano, Mr. Batbayar Mr. Kasey, Mr. Kapuya, Mr. Boisson, Mr. Edström, Mr. Halkin, Mr. Kusano, Mr. Gurián Castellón, Ms. Morava, Mr. Mehbaliyev, Mr. Trabelsi, Mr. Magaya, Mr. Vardanyan, Mr. Monges Espínola, Mr. Daer, Mr. Djemam, Mr. Evans, Mr. Shmakov, Mr. Hristov, Mr. Jrad, Ms. Cu, Mr. Al Rabaie, Mr. Ricci Muadi, Mr. Semov, Mr. Shenoy, Ms. Theodorsen.	