



First sitting

Tuesday, 1 June 2004, 10.15 a.m.

Presidents: Mr. Chung, Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and Mr. Ray Guevara

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr. CHUNG (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I have the greatest pleasure in declaring open the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference. Our first task is to elect the President of the Conference. I call upon the Chairperson of the Government group, Mr. Lloyd, Deputy-Secretary for Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia, to propose a candidate for the President of the Conference.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. SAWERS (*Government delegate, Australia*)

It is my honour, on behalf of the Chairperson of the Government group, Mr. Lloyd, Deputy-Secretary for Employment and Workplace Relations, who has been urgently called away for a brief but important meeting, and on behalf of the Government group itself, to propose as candidate for the post of President of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference, Mr. Ray Guevara, Secretary of State for Labour of the Dominican Republic. Mr. Ray Guevara has an exemplary legal background and has been a professor of law since 1970. He became Secretary of State for Labour for the Dominican Republic in 2000, having previously acted as consultant to the Secretary of State. Many national bodies have profited from his guidance, particularly in the field of social protection. He has represented his country as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France and the United Kingdom. Mr. Ray Guevara, without doubt, possesses all the qualities to guide the complex questions that will come before this session of the Conference.

Mr. CHUNG (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I thank the Government group for the nomination of Mr. Ray Guevara of the Dominican Republic as the President of the Conference. I now give the floor to the spokesperson of the Employers' group, Mr. Funes de Rioja, Employers' delegate, Argentina, on behalf of the Employers' group.

Original Spanish: Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employers' delegate, Argentina*)

As spokesperson of the Employers' group at this session of the Conference, I would like to second the nomination made by the Government represen-

tative of Australia speaking on behalf of the Government group. May I say that, in the case of Mr. Ray Guevara, this is not mere ritual or formality; it is substantiated by the conviction of the Employers' group, which is familiar with the personal merits of the Minister, his abilities and his dedication to the work of the International Labour Organization.

I have no doubt whatsoever that, given his personal and professional qualities, Mr. Ray Guevara will serve as an excellent President during this crucial year of debate at the Conference. It is therefore with great enthusiasm that the Employers' group seconds the nomination of Mr. Ray Guevara.

Mr. CHUNG (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I thank Mr. Funes de Rioja, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group. I now give the floor to Sir Roy Trotman, spokesperson of the Workers' group and Workers' delegate from Barbados.

Mr. TROTMAN (*Workers' delegate, Barbados*)

As spokesperson of the Workers' group, and as my Employer colleague has done, I also wish to second the nomination of Mr. Ray Guevara. Were I to speak as a member of the Barbados delegation, I would have the same pleasure in seconding this nomination. Mr. Ray Guevara, who comes from a neighbouring State, exercises the kind of warmth and the level of understanding and appreciation that is necessary to the work of the International Labour Organization. The Workers' group firmly believes that these qualities are crucial if we are to have the kind of social dialogue that is important. Both Mr. Ray Guevara and his country respect human rights and social dialogue and uphold labour standards to a level which we find tolerable. We hope that his nomination to the presidency of this session of the International Labour Conference will indicate the importance that we all attach to the promotion of decent work throughout the world. We are pleased to serve under him.

Mr. CHUNG (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I thank Sir Roy Trotman, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group. The nomination of Mr. Ray Guevara, Secretary of State for Labour of the Dominican Republic, has been duly proposed and seconded. In the absence of other proposals, I declare Mr. Ray Guevara President of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference and offer him

my warmest congratulations. I invite him to take the President's Chair.

(Mr. Ray Guevara, Secretary of State for Labour of the Dominican Republic, is elected President of the Conference and takes the President's Chair.)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues from the Americas group who submitted my candidature to the presidency of this session of the Conference. My thanks also go to all my other colleagues in the Government group and to the delegations representing the Employers and Workers which supported my candidature.

Although the ILO is celebrating its 85th anniversary this year, this is the first time that a government of a country which is both Latin American and Caribbean has had the honour of presiding over the Conference. I consider that your vote in favour of my candidacy is an expression not only of confidence in my country, the Dominican Republic, but also of recognition of the Caribbean region as a whole, to which my country belongs, and with which it has a close and long-standing historic relationship, including – and I have to say this today – its share of suffering.

The people of my country, like our neighbours in Haiti, have just been hit by a natural disaster of unusual violence, even for a country which, like our neighbours in the Caribbean, is accustomed to the extremes of the tropical climate. I would like to ask you to spare a thought for all the lives we have just lost and for all the men, women and children who have survived and who, at this very moment, are struggling to find a reason to go on living after a tragedy which has deprived some of their loved ones, some of their whole family, and others of their home.

The presidency of this session of the Conference by the Dominican Republic is yet another landmark in the recent – but very fruitful – close cooperation between my country and the ILO. Over 20 years ago the ILO helped us to find solutions to problems inherited from a long dictatorship, which still persisted in the agricultural sector and which were contrary to fundamental standards of the ILO. Just over ten years ago the ILO offered us advisory assistance on the drafting of our Labour Code of 1992, and the ILO's proposals enabled the Code to reflect to a great extent not only the fundamental Conventions of this Organization, which have all been ratified by my country, but also the key aspects of the jurisprudence of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the Committee on Freedom of Association.

And more recently, thanks to a technical cooperation project supported by the Government of Spain, the ILO has provided exceptional assistance to raise the professional level of our labour administration.

Similarly, I would like to highlight the unique support provided by this Organization for our programmes aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour. The ILO's cooperation has been appreciated by successive governments of widely differing political orientations in my country which – I must point out – succeeded one another in full respect of the rules of democracy. The support of the ILO has been so productive that it is my fervent

hope that it will continue to cooperate in the same way with the new government that is to take office in a little over two months.

To sum up, the ILO is an institution which the Dominican Republic has learnt first to understand, then to respect, and finally to love, and it is the wish of my country's Government, led by President Hipólito Mejía, that our country's presidency of this session of the Conference be seen as a token of the full measure of our respect for this institution, our affection for it and of our great indebtedness to it.

To conclude, I would like to make one or two remarks upon the agenda of this session of the Conference. Next Monday, when we open our debate in plenary, I will have the opportunity to speak about the contents of some of the topics before the Conference. Today, may I just remind you that we do have a very full and complex agenda, and we must adhere strictly to the rules of debate if everyone is to be able to express their point of view during our deliberations. I do not have to remind you that the freedom of expression of each one of us at this Conference must be accompanied by full respect of the opinions of others, and that personal attacks are not appropriate in this forum. I may be obliged from time to time to remind you of these rules as the discussions move forward, but I sincerely hope that this will not be the case. I count on the cooperation of my Vice-Presidents and I trust that I can count on each of you as well.

I would ask for your understanding if at any time I have to take a difficult decision. The Conference is a joint effort by each and every one of us, and I trust in God that we will all do what is necessary to bring it to a successful conclusion.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

In accordance with Article 25, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, we will now elect the Vice-Presidents of the Conference. I now call upon the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The nomination to the posts of Vice-Presidents of the Conference are as follows:

Government group:

Mr. Maatough (*Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*)

Employers' group:

Mr. Wade (*Senegal*)

Workers' group:

Mr. Attigbe (*Benin*).

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

May I take it that the proposals are adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

NOMINATION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GROUPS

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I now call on the Clerk of the Conference to read out the names of the persons who have been elected as Officers of the various groups.

Original French: THE CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The groups have chosen their Officers as follows:

Government group:

Chairperson: Mr. Lloyd (*Australia*)

Employers' group:

Chairperson: Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*)

Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*)
Mr. Botha (*South Africa*)
Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*)
Mr. Potter (*United States*)
Mr. Barde (*Switzerland*)

Secretary: Mr. Peñalosa (*International Organisation of Employers*)

Workers' group:

Chairperson: Mr. Trotman (*Barbados*)

Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Ahmed (*Pakistan*)
Ms. Anderson (*Mexico*)
Mr. Diallo (*Guinea*)
Mr. Sidorov (*Russian Federation*)

Secretary: Mr. Cunniah (*International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*)

The members of the Officers of the Workers' group, apart from the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons are: Ms. Engelen-Kefer (*Germany*), Ms. Valkonen (*Finland*), Mr. Nakajima (*Japan*), Ms. Beaumont (*New Zealand*), Mr. Saïd (*Algeria*), Mr. Atwoli (*Kenya*), Ms. Byers (*Canada*), Mr. Zellhoefer (*United States*), and Mr. Attigbe (*Benin*).

CONSTITUTION AND COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The next agenda item concerns the establishment of the various committees that will examine matters put before the Conference. The Conference may wish to establish the following committees: the Committee on the Application of Standards, the Committee on Human Resources, the Committee on the Fishing Sector, the Committee on Migrant Workers, the Resolutions Committee, the Selection Committee, and the Standing Orders Committee.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals are adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I would now like to ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups for the composition of the Selection Committee.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The appointments for the Selection Committee, in accordance with article 4 of the Standing Orders are as follows:

The 28 Government members are the titular members of the Governing Body of the following countries: Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, United Kingdom and United States.

The Deputy Government members are: Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malawi, Morocco, New Zealand, Niger, Oman, Philippines, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela and Viet Nam.

The 14 Employer members are: Mr. Barde (*Switzerland*); Mr. Dahlan (*Saudi Arabia*); Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*); Mr. Jeetun (*Mauritius*); Mr. Lambert (*United Kingdom*); Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*); Mr. M'Kaissi (*Tunisia*); Mr. Noakes (*Australia*); Mr. Potter (*United States*); Ms. Sasso Mazzufferi (*Italy*); Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*); Mr. Tabani (*Pakistan*); Mr. Trogen (*Sweden*) and Mr. Wade (*Senegal*).

The Deputy Employer members are: Mr. Anand (*India*); Mr. Arnold (*New Zealand*); Mr. De Arbeloa (*Venezuela*); Mr. Eremeev (*Russian Federation*); Mr. Ferrer Dufol (*Spain*); Mr. Finlay (*Canada*); Mr. Hilton Clarke (*Trinidad and Tobago*); Ms. Horvatić (*Croatia*); Mr. Konditi (*Kenya*); Mr. Makeka (*Lesotho*); Mr. Nacoulma (*Burkina Faso*); Mr. Nathan (*Malaysia*); Mr. Oshinowo (*Nigeria*); and Mr. Ricci (*Guatemala*).

With regard to the 14 Worker members, the nominations are the same as those of the Officers of the Workers' group which I read out previously.

The Deputy Worker members are: Ms. Burrow (*Australia*); Mr. Cortebeek (*Belgium*); Mr. Mortensen (*Denmark*); and Ms. Yacob (*Singapore*).

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

If there are no objections, may I take it that the composition of the Selection Committee is adopted by the plenary?

(The proposals are adopted.)

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The next agenda item refers to the suspension of certain provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference to implement recommendations made by the Governing Body at its 289th Session, in March 2004, regarding the discussion of the Global Report that the Director-General presents annually under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In order to implement these recommendations, the President and the three Vice-Presidents unanimously recommend, in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders, that the Conference decide that the discussion of the Global Report should not fall under the limitation concerning the number of statements by each speaker in the plenary, but that, within each Government delegation, interventions be made either by the minister or by the Government delegate and that, to that extent, article 12, paragraph 3, of the Standing Orders should be suspended; and that the Conference decide that the discussion should not be governed by the provisions regarding time limits to speeches and, to that extent, suspend article 14, paragraph 6, of the Standing Orders; and that the Conference decide not to apply, to the extent required, the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders on the sequence

with which the floor is given to speakers, in order to facilitate an exchange of views.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals pursuant to article 76 of the Standing Orders will take effect, with the agreement of the Conference, as from its next plenary sitting, which will be held next Monday, 7 June. As I can see no objections, I take it that the proposals are adopted.

(The proposals are adopted.)

The discussion of the Global Report, *Organizing for social justice*, will take place on Thursday, 10 June, during two plenary sessions. There will be no other plenary sessions on that day and there will be no list of speakers established prior to the sitting. On that day, speakers must register to speak once the session has been declared open, making use of the application forms that will be available in the room.

In accordance with the recommendations made by the Governing Body at its 288th Session in November 2003, security provisions have been established this year to control access to the ILO building during the Conference. We ask participants to kindly accept any inconvenience that such security measures may entail and we count on the cooperation of all participants so that the Conference activities may proceed smoothly. We ask you to bring to the attention of the guards or secretariat staff any irregularity which anyone may feel could compromise the security of the buildings or individuals. We also ask all participants to scrupulously respect the health rules that have been established and to bear in mind that we are all responsible for health and security. We urge everyone to wear the conference badge that they received at registration.

May I also bring to the attention of all participants that, under article 13, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, the President of the Conference is responsible for maintaining order throughout the proceedings. Again, I thank you for your understanding and for your cooperation.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING BODY: SUBMISSION

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I now call upon Mr. Chung, the Chairperson of the Governing Body, to submit the report of the Governing Body, which was published in *Provisional Record* No. 3.

Mr. CHUNG (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

It is my honour to present to you my report on the work of the Governing Body over the past year. The text of this report is published in *Provisional Record* No. 3 and I shall confine myself here today to brief introductory comments grouped under the Organization's four strategic objectives.

In the field of international labour standards, the Governing Body has continued to follow closely the work of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). As stated in my report, the Programme has made systematic efforts to mainstream its work at country and global levels, and to operate coherently with the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. The programme is the largest ILO technical cooperation programme and it continues to expand at a very rapid rate.

The Governing Body has also paid close attention to the work of the InFocus Programme on Promoting the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. It followed up on last year's Global Report, *Time for equality at work*, by approving an action plan aiming to raise the coherence, visibility and impact of the Organization's action, and to achieve measurable results in this field between 2004 and 2007.

This year is the fifth annual review under the Programme's follow-up and the Global Report before the Conference is entitled *Organizing for social justice*. The Declaration Expert-Advisers have this year returned to the first of the four categories for annual review: freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining.

The Governing Body, in examining the Expert-Advisers' introduction to the review of annual reports under the follow-up to the Declaration, called on the Office to develop further the means for countries to assess their progress in promoting fundamental principles and rights at work.

The Committee on Freedom of Association which, as you are aware, reports to each of the three Governing Body sessions, has continued its very important work and examined some 200 cases over the review period, noting a certain number of positive developments.

The Governing Body also followed with great interest the progress on the proposed consolidated maritime labour Convention, which is designed to replace almost all maritime labour Conventions adopted since 1920. Work has been going ahead on the proposed Convention in the High-level Tripartite Working Group on Maritime Labour Standards, which held its fourth meeting in January 2004. The discussions of the Working Group have narrowed areas of potential disagreement and I am confident that the meetings will greatly ease the work of the Preparatory Technical Maritime Conference to be held in September. The proposed instrument will come before the 94th (Maritime) Session of the Conference in 2005.

The question of the observance by the Government of Myanmar of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), has also been intensively followed, and some progress towards an implementation of the tentative Plan of Action has been observed. In March 2004 it was felt that although the Myanmar authorities had demonstrated an openness to cooperate, the discovery of sentences for high treason against certain Myanmar nationals, in which contacts or exchange of information with the ILO appeared to be cited as criminal offences, undermined the prospects of a credible implementation of the Plan of Action, and more specifically, of the Facilitator mechanism. The Office and the Officers of the Governing Body were requested to study available information more closely, before any further decisions on proceeding with the Plan of Action and particularly the function of a Facilitator foreseen by it.

In 2003-04, the Governing Body devoted much attention to improvements in standards-related activities, and in particular to reinforcing the operation of the supervisory bodies of the International Labour Organization. The procedures for submission of instruments adopted by the Conference to the competent authorities, and for filing representations and complaints under articles 19, 24 and 26 of the Constitution were considered, and the Governing

Body will study the proposed amendments to these procedures in November this year. The Office has also undertaken to produce a manual of good drafting practices to improve the drafting of instruments submitted to the Conference, and this is to be reviewed by the Governing Body in March 2005.

Under this heading, I should also mention that the Governing Body, following the complaint submitted at the last Conference under article 26 of the Constitution by a number of Workers' delegates, decided to establish a Commission of Inquiry to examine the allegations of non-observance by Belarus of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. In the meantime, all other procedures have been suspended.

In the field of employment, the Governing Body's Committee on Employment and Social Policy continued to discuss the implementation of the Global Employment Agenda, advocating greater integration of the various ILO programmes presently operating. The Committee was pleased with the high level of national ownership and national involvement in the Decent Work Pilot Programme. These experiences should constitute a tool-kit for future activities. The Committee discussed the theme of productive employment for poverty reduction, supporting proposals for increased efforts to integrate employment into Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, and Millennium Development Goals. The Subcommittee on Multinational Enterprises turned its regard inwards, considering possible internal changes to its structure, and outwards, considering priorities to promote awareness of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

In respect of social protection, the Committee on Employment and Social Policy noted progress in the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All, which had been launched for Africa at the Tenth African Regional Meeting, and would likely be taken up at the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation to be held in a few months' time in Burkina Faso.

In June 2003, the Governing Body reviewed progress in activities under the Special Technical Cooperation Programme for Colombia. The Committee on Technical Cooperation received a further report in March this year. The Workers' group strongly denounced the continued assassinations and attacks against trade union members and their families, and the Governing Body called upon the Government of Colombia to take urgent steps to redress the situation of impunity in the country.

The enhanced Programme of Technical Cooperation for the Occupied Arab Territories also received close attention. The Governing Body noted that significant steps had been taken to make the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection operational, and to launch fund-raising activities.

In respect of social dialogue, a theme that cuts through all ILO activities and on which the organization's tripartite nature is founded, the Governing Body approved proposals to take action in certain specific industrial sectors, while maintaining international tripartite sectoral meetings to foster dialogue in other sectors. It has been well informed, with reports in November 2003 and March 2004 on progress in this important and active area, noting the reports of the sectoral and technical meetings which took place during the period, and endorsing their recommendations and conclusions.

In February this year the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization concluded almost two years of discussions and published its report: *A fair globalization: Creating opportunities for all*. As you are aware, the Director-General has submitted a Report to the Conference entitled: *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*. The Governing Body Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization was able to follow the work of the World Commission through visits by both co-Chairs of the Commission: in November 2003, President Halonen of Finland gave a progress report on the Commission's work. In March 2004, President Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania presented a report of the Commission to the Governing Body; President Mkapa was generous enough with his time to remain for two whole days of discussion. A full summary of the debates on these two days is included in Appendix II of my report.

Before concluding, I should like to take this opportunity to thank my two fellow officers, Mr. Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson and Sir Roy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson. Their cooperation and friendship have been invaluable over the past year, and without their support the many tasks undertaken by the Governing Body would have been impossible. I should also like to thank the Director-General and his staff for their constant support. It has been a great honour for me to hold the Chair of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office.

With these introductory remarks, I submit my report to you for your consultation.

**STATEMENT BY MR. SOMAVIA, SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE CONFERENCE**

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

It is now my honour to give the floor to Mr. Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, so that he may present his Report entitled *ILO Programme implementation 2002-03*, with its Appendix, *Report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, and the Global Report, *Organizing for social justice*, which is a part of the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The Report entitled *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO* will be introduced by the Director-General on Monday, 7 June.

Original Spanish: THE SECRETARY GENERAL

Mr. President, I congratulate you on your election. I am really very pleased in as much as we have worked together over many years and in particular in the ILO Governing Body.

(Speaker continues in English.)

Ministers, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, friends of the ILO from the international community who are here with us, thank you for accompanying us. Welcome to the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

With this Conference, I begin my second mandate. So let me begin by thanking you for your support and for your trust. I am proud of our ILO. I am convinced that tripartism has a global role to play in the year of globalization. You can count on my commitment to forge into the future with the ILO

flag flying high, with all my energy and my heart and soul – that is my commitment to you today.

We have come a long way together. Over the last five years, we have worked in a tripartite manner to develop three fundamental and inter-linked concepts: the Decent Work Agenda as a development tool; employment as the main route out of poverty; and achieving a fair globalization as a source of global stability. On this foundation we shall build for the future.

While we have accomplished much together, there is no room for complacency. We have many challenges ahead. But I think that we can be satisfied that these three concepts express in simple terms the perceptions, the needs and the growing political pressures that people everywhere place on their leaders. We are connecting with people when we refine these three areas.

I will synthesize this in the following way: “Give me a fair chance at a decent job”. Today that call is a worldwide demand. We are answering that challenge with a full Conference agenda, focused on real issues that address real problems. We will continue our discussion on a new instrument on human resources development that will reflect twenty-first century approaches to lifelong learning, portability of skills and the education and training that are needed for small and medium enterprises. All these are central issues in the emerging knowledge economy.

I am sure the Committee will also take up the challenge of skills development in the informal economy in order to turn its creativity into productive gains and generally address issues of particular importance to the developing countries.

We will have a general discussion on migrant workers in the global economy. A growing number of migrants, as you know well, are crossing borders in search of employment and human security that they may not find at home – eighty-six million workers at the last count and growing. And, taken together with their families, migrants would make up the fifth largest country in the world. This is just to say how key and crucial the issue of migration is for the world today, for the world of globalization and for the mandate of the ILO.

The difficulties in managing migration are having profound political and human consequences, exacerbated by an unbalanced globalization process. This is a timely discussion because the challenges of migration apply to North and South. We need to develop a more cooperative approach that could lead to a plan of action to strengthen the ILO’s capacity to assist member States in managing migration based on the values of opportunity, fairness and equality. I want to thank Mr. McKinley who is here with us and will participate in the discussion of this issue.

In the fishing sector, we will focus on developing a new instrument to replace seven existing ILO standards. International trade in fish products is worth US\$55 billion, a third of which is exports from developing countries. The sector employs 25 million people, mainly on smaller vessels. It illustrates graphically one of the major issues of globalization because we need to find a way to ensure that the 90 per cent of workers in the small-scale and artisanal part of the industry can compete with those working on the big industrial fishing vessels; and that both can improve their working conditions.

The Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, the anchor of our system of standards supervision, will review reports on a large number of countries. Large or small, East, West, North and South – the Committee will ensure that all countries have a fair hearing and that the principles we work so hard to formulate are adhered to in practice.

The latest Global Report on freedom of association shows encouraging signs of progress, increased ratifications, more openness as to ILO technical assistance and changes in laws. But it is clearly not enough. We still see too many threats to the life and freedom for those attempting to organize and make their voice heard.

The right to organize of workers and employers and the ensuing social dialogue is one of the most powerful tools for promoting decent work and finding and fighting poverty. We must all do more to make this fundamental right a reality in the lives of people and the institutions of society. The right to organize and social dialogue are the foundations of stability for the future. We are not going to have stable societies when people, sectors and interested parties do not talk to each other; and in order to talk, and to talk well, they need to be organized. That is a rule that is absolutely essential in this first part of the twenty-first century.

We also have the latest Report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. The findings continue to be disturbing. The image of “collective punishment” is still the defining feature of life in Palestine. The focus of this year’s Report is on the dramatic social effects of the economic disruption caused by restrictions, security measures, systematic acts of violence and other impositions on the daily life of Palestinians. For the first time there is a special emphasis on the impact on Palestinian women. It also reflects the insecurities that violence brings to the life of Israelis.

The Report makes a number of practical suggestions in our field of action, including a call to the donor community for resource commitments that permit a real activation of the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection. We at the ILO pledge to do our part within our mandate to promote dignity and a normal life to the long-suffering people of that troubled region.

We have for consideration our regular financial report. We also have this year’s Report on programme implementation, which presents our performance against the objectives set five years ago and outlines how we have tightened up our management systems using results-based targeting methods.

It shows what we can do and all that we are doing in the face of a zero real growth budget and a list of requests that keeps on growing. And we will continue to strengthen our management capacities. In the last five years, we have been successful in mobilizing extra-budgetary funds with a 53 per cent increase in programme implementation. In the same period, our delivery rate has increased by 40 per cent.

We are doing all of this while pursuing a gender mainstreaming policy and implementing an office-wide plan to promote gender equality. But if you permit me, I must add that we are not fulfilling our mission when it comes to gender balance at the International Labour Conference. At the Conference last year, and I hope that this year we will do better,

women were represented in about 20 per cent of delegations and constituted 12 per cent of delegates. The situation was similarly skewed in terms of speakers.

During the last Conference, a delegate suggested we should start by implementing a 30 per cent positive action policy for future sessions: I must say that I agree with that idea. Addressing this issue must be a priority. Frankly speaking, we need to see more women in delegations and not hear any more excuses.

Finally, when it comes to the Conference agenda, let me say that I greatly look forward to hearing your views about my Report on the implications for the ILO of the findings of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. I am happy to see that the Report has been welcomed, and sometimes highly welcomed, in all regions of the world. It is a Report that is making its own road. The ILO's role in creating a fair globalization that creates opportunities for all is a major challenge for the institution and for tripartism.

Next week we will be honoured by Presidents Halonen and Mkapa who will be here to present the report of the World Commission to the Conference. I am glad that they will be joined by the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Helen Clark, and the President of Bulgaria, Georgi Parvanov, for a Presidential Panel discussion. Prime Minister Rodríguez Zapatero of Spain will also honour us later next week.

This full agenda is an expression of our mission – age-old and yet forward-looking – to connect values and ideals with the demands and concerns of families and communities today.

We move into the future building on the three concepts we have developed: decent work; working out of poverty; and a fair globalization.

The decent work message is resonating around the world. The last reference to it was given to me just a few days ago. At the recent EU-Latin American/Caribbean Summit, the heads of governments of Latin America and Europe reiterated their agreement with the principles of decent work as defined by the ILO. We are thus receiving a constant flow of support for the notion that we have put forward as an institution.

Our challenge today is to deepen our tripartite capacity to make the Decent Work Agenda an operational concept, for it to become a reality in the life of people; and that we need to do together. We need to consolidate and advance results on the ground – and for that decent work country programmes are key. I invite all of you to reach tripartite agreements on the best way to move forward in each one of your countries: the reality in each country specific to you. It is through tripartism within society that you can best evaluate the manner in which the Decent Work Agenda may be implemented within your own reality. So I invite you to utilize tripartism to show its vitality and its strength, giving thought to the concepts and the principles that can be applied within your own context. The ILO will be behind you to service.

The notion of working out of poverty – that employment is a sustainable way out of poverty – is also taking hold. It is our policy contribution to reaching the Millennium Development Goal of reducing poverty by half. And later this year the African Union will convene an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of States and Governments on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Burkina Faso. The

ILO has been singled out to play a leading role in preparation for that Summit in support of the African Union. We are mobilizing to deliver for that Summit – and for its follow-up.

And, of course, the concept of a fair globalization and the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization opens up tremendous new scope for ILO action. I will speak in greater detail when I present my Report next week. But I would say today that the Report defines what I see as four challenges for the ILO: making decent work a global goal; mobilizing tripartism for global action; making the ILO a global player; and all of this makes it necessary for the Organization, the Office included, to become a global team. Global goal, global action, global player, global team.

It is clear that if there is an institution at the forefront of the emerging global community of multiple actors, rooted in a knowledge economy and a network society, an institution that is key to a fair globalization – it is the ILO.

A new opportunity to be meaningful is coming in front of us – and I believe that we should seize this opportunity. But as we address these challenges, where do we draw our strength to forge ahead? What makes us move forward; what are the foundations on which we can address these challenges? I think that, first of all, we continue to be a value-based institution. It is the source of our legitimacy. The ILO has always been about finding its place, its space, its voice to be an advocate for social justice at different moments in history; and these moments have been very varied. We have achieved this through the vehicle of dialogue and consensus-building, and we can be proud of the ILO today and of its history.

This year marks the 85th anniversary of the ILO; the 60th anniversary of the Declaration of Philadelphia and the 35th anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize. In these last decades, the work of our founders has been carried forward for such leaders as Wilfred Jenks, a firm advocate of the rule of law, tripartism and asserting the moral authority of the ILO in the international system; Francis Blanchard and his expansion of technical cooperation, demonstrating how we could work with and assist countries moving into independence; and Michel Hansenne in the advancement of our cause through the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work – just to mention some of their many achievements.

Each in their own way enriched the gifts that our founders bestowed upon us. The gift of an institution rooted in social justice and borne out of conflict, an institution that gradually emerged as a moral compass for the global system. The gift of a Constitution that gives us a wide economic and social mandate. And the gift of the simple, yet path breaking concept of tripartism, of dialogue, of finding common ground – which this Conference and all of you here today represent.

Taken together, our founders gave us another gift, perhaps the best one of all. They gave us an institution with a mandate to dare and to dream. President Roosevelt, a strong advocate of the ILO, called it a “wild dream”. “Who had ever heard of governments getting together to raise the standards of labour on an international plain” he said. “Wilder still was the idea that the people affected – workers and employers – should have a hand in it”.

He was right. But what was once seen as “wild”, soon became possible, then practical, and I would say today, essential. We are the heirs of that proud inheritance – forged in Versailles, reaffirmed in Philadelphia, rewarded in Oslo, and renewed every day in Geneva and around the world.

When our institution received the Nobel Peace Prize, the Committee said: “There are few organizations that have succeeded to the extent of the ILO in translating into action the fundamental moral idea on which it was based”.

Nothing could be more inspiring as we celebrate our past. Nothing could be more empowering as we forge our way into the twenty-first century: decent work, working out of poverty, a fair globalization that creates opportunities for all. To some it may seem like a dream; yes, even a “wild dream”. But through our history, our mandate and our record, many dreams have become reality in the halls of the ILO and in the lives of workers, employers and governments these last 85 years.

What others may call wild, we call possible. What others dismiss as a dream, we strive to make real in the lives and the hopes of people. That is our ILO foundation. It is what the ILO family of the past put in our hands to shape the ILO of the future. Let us carry forward these traditions with the humility that acknowledges difficulties and the passion that overcomes them.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

I should like to remind you that the discussion on the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, the Report of the Director-General on ILO programme implementation 2002-03 and its Appendix, and the report on a fair globalization and the role of the ILO, will begin on Monday, 7 June, in the afternoon.

At the beginning of this plenary session, the Director-General will make a detailed presentation of his Report, *A fair globalization: The role of the ILO*.

Also on Monday, 7 June, there will be a special event which will bring together a number of Heads of State and Government to comment on the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

The fact that the next plenary sitting will not be held before 7 June implies that the everyday tasks related to the organization of the Conference will be carried out by the Officers of the Conference, if the Conference wishes to confer on them the necessary powers to do so.

I shall now ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out, for your approval, the delegation of authority.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization hereby delegates to its President and three Vice-Presidents authority to take any decisions or perform any functions which fall within the competence of the Conference with respect to any matter that needs to be dealt with before the Conference resumes its plenary sittings, unless the Officers consider that the Conference should hold a sitting to discuss such matters.

Decisions taken under this authority will be set out in the *Provisional Record* of the work of the Conference.

This delegation of authority shall take effect at the end of this sitting and shall terminate when the Conference resumes its plenary sittings.

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT

If there are no objections, I take it that the delegation of authority is accepted.

(The delegation of authority is accepted.)

I now declare closed the first sitting of the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 11.30 a.m.)

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