

**Twelfth sitting**

Tuesday, 12 June 2007, 11.55 a.m.

*Presidents: Mr. Sulka and Mr. Blondel***REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE GOVERNING
BODY AND OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION
(CONT.)**

The PRESIDENT

I declare open the twelfth sitting of this session of the Conference. We shall continue with the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

The sitting continues with delegates' statements.

The transcript of speeches made in a language other than English, French or Spanish is produced in the language chosen by the country concerned for the purpose of official correspondence with the ILO.

Ms. DYSON (Minister of Labour, New Zealand)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report to the Conference entitled *Decent work for sustainable development*. The Report is a valuable stocktake of the issues, challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. It is particularly important as we seek to fully embed and position the ILO's Decent Work Agenda towards achieving equitable and sustainable development at the local and global levels.

New Zealand strongly supports the theme of decent work for sustainable development. Sustainable development is a major policy plank of our Government and underlines, and is reflected within, our approach to a wide range of issues.

We believe that, in undertaking these important discussions, it is crucial that we consider the goal of sustainable development in a broad fashion. In other words, and as the Director-General notes, in a way that encompasses and integrates social, economic and environmental considerations.

In influencing and participating in this process, we believe that the ILO should focus and look to build on its unique and particular strengths. That is, what the ILO does best: technical excellence in labour issues; labour standard setting; and tripartism.

We had demonstrated our support of the Decent Work Agenda through the launch earlier this year of a tripartite decent work web site which charts New Zealand's progress towards the decent work objectives. I would like to mention three other areas where the Decent Work Agenda has been promoted in New Zealand, along with another initiative to ensure that such moves are sustainable.

Our Government, not only as a regulator but as a provider and a procurer of services, is fully committed to the promotion of collective bargaining. We have recently moved to tackle endemic problems of low pay and high turnover of staff in our domestic support and residential aged care sectors through collective bargaining. This move will result in benefits for workers, employers and their aged and disabled clients. Secondly, we have continued to increase the minimum wage every year. Thirdly, we have legislated so that vulnerable workers whose employer will change when a contract for work is won by another employer, cannot be re-employed on lower wages or conditions. But my point on these and other initiatives is that they must be sustainable, and therefore the value of the work that our lowest-paid and most vulnerable perform must be increased. If we add value to the work, our Decent Work Agenda will be sustainable.

A critical part of the ability to deliver this agenda is the budget for the ILO. New Zealand supports the ILO in continuing to scrutinize the increased demand for ILO services, to prioritize its work and to provide evaluative information to allow assessment of the value of new proposals and existing work. We agree that the common and global goal of decent work for all is a vital part of the international development agenda and an essential element in shaping a fair, and therefore sustainable, process of globalization.

The ILO is already well positioned to work towards this goal through its unique tripartite structure and approach to social dialogue, a strength that should not be underestimated. In New Zealand we continue to look at ways to encourage tripartite participation across a range of economic and social policy initiatives. We strongly support the ILO's model of social dialogue as an important part of policy development, social inclusion and institutional capacity building. New Zealand welcomes increased dialogue and collaboration between the ILO and other key multilateral actors, both within and outside the United Nations system. Increasing policy coherence in the international arena is essential in order to ensure that we efficiently and effectively work towards the goal of decent work for all.

I note the Report's discussion of the linkage between trade and employment-related issues. New Zealand recognizes that economic and trade agreements are not ends in themselves. The ultimate purpose of trade liberalization is to improve living standards in the countries whose governments have negotiated them. For this reason we have a well-

established trade and labour framework which seeks to better integrate labour standards within trade agreements. This framework guides our approach to these issues, both multilaterally and bilaterally.

In conclusion, the New Zealand Government is committed to working with and within the ILO, if it moves to effectively position itself to address the challenges and opportunities inherent in the multi-lateral arena and working towards the development of decent work for sustainable development. We look forward, as a country, to participating actively in this important dialogue.

Mr. Y.v. KIM (*Employer, Republic of Korea*)

This year's Director-General's Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, certainly presents daunting challenges and enormous opportunities for us all.

Sustainability is a gripping issue. From the developing to the developed world, every society is questioning how to cope with environmental and demographic problems such as global warming and fast ageing societies, as well as problems of poverty, HIV/AIDS and youth unemployment. In this context, the balanced approach to sustainable development suggested in the Director-General's Report is most appropriate. Indeed, market-driven economies alone will not contribute to prosperous societies, unless they are accompanied by effective public policies and sound social partnerships. However, we must remember that a balanced approach to any matter can be taken only when it is based upon correct information, just as a good prescription can follow an accurate diagnosis. Pros and cons should be taken into account, especially on controversial issues. Relevant arguments should be collected and used as references to identify correctly the characteristics of problems, analyse causes and generate findings. Then comes strategy. For correct diagnoses, the ILO needs to secure a broad knowledge base through its strong grounding in the tripartite approach. In this regard, the research capabilities of the ILO need to be strengthened and its cooperation with other international agencies should be focused on improving such capabilities.

Growing inequalities at the national and international levels are certainly an obstacle to both decent work and sustainable development. The problem often manifests itself in various forms at different levels, so how to address it can differ according to the circumstances. For instance, income inequality must be differentiated from income bipolarization, which is affecting many countries including Korea, especially with the experience of the financial crisis and conditionality imposed by the international financial agencies. Income bipolarization is characterized by the decrease in middle income families and in the move by top and bottom income groups, respectively, to the two extreme ends of the income distribution scale. We believe that the policy focus to tackle this phenomenon should be on restoring the middle-income group through economic growth, rather than politically-driven income legislation.

For the middle-income group to grow, the most vital task is to expand domestic demand to restore the growth potential. Strategic industries must be promoted to create more and better jobs. A social environment must be formed that is conducive to investment and business creation, to provide jobs. Coherence among institutions must be pursued. In many countries, reform of labour laws often takes

place without consideration of the complementary nature of the financial system and other systems related to doing business.

Korea has witnessed lowered efficiency in its economic system during the rapid reform process since the financial crisis. The reform, started in a rush and modelled on the so-called advanced system, disregarded the healthy development of conglomerates, entrepreneurship and risk-taking ability, which were the driving forces of the Korean economy.

The Director-General's Report also points out the need for the ILO standards to be more adaptable to changes. This is an appropriate and commendable move, but one that should be taken with caution. Rules and regulations are not a panacea to all problems. They can be a guiding light only if they are reasonable, based on common sense and acceptable to constituents.

I now conclude by expressing the hope that the founding mission of the ILO that labour peace is essential to prosperity, as clearly indicated on the ILO web site, will prevail in all the work and activities of the ILO.

M^{me} GUARRIELLO (*gouvernement, Italie*)

Je tiens avant tout à exprimer à l'OIT toute notre satisfaction pour la campagne en faveur de l'Agenda du travail décent qui figure, justement, en position centrale dans le rapport présenté par le Directeur général, M. Somavia.

Cet engagement figure d'ailleurs au nombre des objectifs du Millénaire établis par les Nations Unies, confirmant le rôle précieux de cette Organisation et la contribution particulière qu'elle peut donner pour améliorer la collaboration et la cohérence entre les organisations internationales dans l'élaboration et la gestion des différents programmes en vue d'une meilleure approche multilatérale de la gestion des défis globaux.

Dans cette même perspective je voudrais aussi souligner la nouveauté et l'importance du premier rapport conjoint OIT/OMC et encourager le développement accru de cette collaboration visant à repérer des mesures appropriées en faveur de l'emploi.

La Conférence discute actuellement le thème crucial du rôle de l'OIT et d'une extension de ses capacités dans le cadre de la réforme des Nations Unies, afin que la coopération multilatérale soit toujours plus capable de refléter les changements de la situation économique et sociale dans un monde globalisé.

Il est, pour nous, essentiel que soit pleinement sauvegardé le caractère tripartite de cette Organisation tout d'abord sur le terrain, sa capacité constante de produire des normes sociales internationales et de veiller efficacement à leur application.

C'est pourquoi je tiens aussi à souligner la valeur que nous attachons à l'activité de la Commission pour l'application des normes qui est le siège reconnu au niveau international pour souligner les violations des normes de l'OIT et qui ne doit pas se heurter à des véto dans l'accomplissement de sa mission.

De même, il faut renforcer la capacité de l'OIT de promouvoir la culture et la pratique du dialogue social et de la négociation collective. Dans le but de renforcer le rôle de l'OIT, je soutiens la proposition d'une déclaration à la Conférence de 2008 en vue de préparer une recommandation à ce sujet.

Je me félicite des travaux tripartites menés par la commission pour approuver la convention sur la pêche que le gouvernement italien s'engagera à ratifier dans de courts délais.

Le travail décent est une composante essentielle du développement durable. Dans ce cadre, il est évidemment important de créer des entreprises en fonction de la compétitivité économique tout en satisfaisant pleinement les nécessités chaque jour plus pressantes de compatibilité avec l'environnement et de conformité aux droits des travailleurs et aux besoins de la société.

L'investissement dans le capital humain, dans la formation et le développement même de systèmes solides de relations sociales se charge alors de significations nouvelles. Ces éléments sont d'ailleurs des facteurs d'efficacité économique et non seulement de justice sociale.

À cet égard, les conclusions sur la promotion d'entreprises durables dans les trois dimensions économiques, sociales et environnementales auxquelles nous sommes parvenus sont importantes et utiles pour réorienter le travail de l'OIT.

Je crois que la prochaine commémoration du trentenaire de la Déclaration tripartite de l'OIT sur les multinationales nous fournira une nouvelle occasion pour enrichir notre réflexion sur les modèles de développement durable pour les entreprises dans le contexte de la mondialisation.

Développement durable signifie aussi salaire adéquat. En ce sens, il est inquiétant de constater que le pourcentage des salaires sur le produit intérieur brut a diminué au cours de la dernière décennie dans un grand nombre de pays. Il est nécessaire d'inverser cette tendance.

Un autre aspect de la stabilité sociale est la question de l'égalité des chances au travail. Il s'agit d'un problème qui reste à résoudre également en Italie, malgré les progrès acquis, sur le plan de la participation des femmes sur le marché du travail et concernant la persistance des différences marquées entre les salaires, les difficultés de concilier le travail et la vie familiale et l'évolution des carrières.

D'autres catégories faibles de travailleurs se trouvent confrontées aux mêmes défis. Le rapport présenté à la Conférence incite à la réflexion et à l'effort de tous pour rattraper ce retard.

Les questions que je viens de rappeler, sur lesquelles la Conférence a ciblé ses travaux, constituent un développement cohérent des orientations du rapport du BIT sur la dimension sociale de la mondialisation qui continue à être pour nous une référence essentielle et une source d'inspiration incontournable.

Je voudrais, à présent, évoquer la collaboration fructueuse entre l'Italie et l'OIT et plus particulièrement l'activité du Centre de formation de Turin. Nous sommes heureux et fiers d'accueillir et d'appuyer le Centre mais, en même temps, nous souhaitons que soit plus intensément mis en valeur son potentiel comme un pôle de référence des activités de formation du système de l'OIT au service d'un développement des capacités des pays émergents de gérer leurs propres institutions.

C'est pour cette raison qu'il faut accroître la visibilité du Centre de Turin et son utilisation comme instrument qualifié de la coopération technique internationale. La participation de l'Italie au processus d'intégration européen m'incite à souligner à quel point il est important d'intensifier la collaboration entre l'Union européenne et l'OIT.

Les agendas des deux organisations révèlent de nombreuses convergences de vues et d'objectifs qui vont de la promotion de l'emploi et du travail de qualité au renforcement du dialogue social, à la défense et la promotion des droits des travailleurs, à la nécessité d'une régulation sociale du processus de mondialisation.

Une harmonisation plus étroite ne peut qu'être favorable aux deux parties pour réaliser les objectifs du développement durable, de progrès et de justice sociale.

Dans l'optique de ces contacts et coopération, il me semble opportun de renforcer la coordination entre les pays Membres de l'Union européenne dans les différentes assistances et articulations de l'OIT.

Je tiens à conclure en rappelant que nous célébrons aujourd'hui la Journée mondiale de lutte contre le travail des enfants. Combattre cette forme odieuse d'exploitation dont l'Italie elle-même n'est pas encore complètement dégagée doit constituer pour nous une priorité comme nous le recommandent les conventions de l'OIT. Je désire renouveler l'engagement de mon pays pour l'élimination définitive de cette violation de la dignité humaine.

M. DONNER (*ministre des Affaires sociales et de l'Emploi, Pays-Bas*)

L'OIT est une Organisation d'une importance vitale, avec des objectifs plus actuels que jamais: faire disparaître le travail forcé, le travail des enfants, l'exploitation et l'exclusion ainsi que la discrimination sur le marché de l'emploi, réaliser un monde où le travail soit l'expression de la dignité humaine et de la liberté fondamentale et non pas une atteinte à ses valeurs, telle est notre mission et notre ambition. C'est pour ces raisons que je me réjouis que le rapport global vise, cette année, en particulier le problème de la discrimination et propose un plan d'action.

La discrimination est une question de préjugés, flagrante ou inconsciente. Préjugés qui font que des membres des minorités ethniques ou des personnes d'origine étrangère, des personnes âgées, des femmes ou des handicapés sont infériorisés et désavantagés sur le marché de l'emploi ainsi que dans la société en général. La discrimination est un mal qui envenime non seulement les relations sociales au plan national mais aussi les relations internationales, puisqu'elle risque de s'étendre aux relations commerciales; et les minorités discriminées dans un pays sont des majorités ou des citoyens dans des pays voisins.

La lutte contre la discrimination fait donc partie intégrante non seulement de l'Agenda du travail décent, mais aussi de la réalisation d'un développement durable. Le rapport du Directeur général, M. Somavia, concorde dès lors parfaitement avec la politique actuelle des Pays-Bas.

Pour les Pays-Bas, le principe est clair et net: toute discrimination sur le marché, et sous quelque forme que ce soit, doit être combattue. C'est une responsabilité que nous partageons tous: gouvernements, partenaires sociaux, employeurs et employés. Chacun a son rôle à tenir dans la lutte contre la discrimination.

L'OIT propose que l'inégalité salariale soit une priorité dans la lutte contre la discrimination. Je m'associe à cette approche. L'objectif d'égalité salariale est incontesté aux Pays-Bas et figure depuis des années parmi les priorités politiques, mais les rencontres que j'ai eues ces derniers mois

lors de mon initiation aux problèmes qui relèvent de mes nouvelles fonctions m'ont fait comprendre que la discrimination n'est pas seulement la conséquence de préjugés flagrants, mais également de clichés ancrés dans nos pratiques de recrutement et de sélection des employés. Il faut revoir ces habitudes et les adapter à une pratique non discriminatoire.

Monsieur le Président, je saisis l'occasion d'aborder un thème cher aux Pays-Bas – la mise en place d'un système de conventions modernes et dynamiques dans le secteur de la sécurité sociale. Les principes fondamentaux de la sécurité sociale sont clairs et non discutables, mais leur traduction concrète dans les concepts et dispositions de nos conventions a tendance à dater, ce qui explique que les ratifications soient rares, avec le risque que l'OIT soit marginalisée dans ce domaine.

Pour les Pays-Bas, le choix est clair: nous préférons des conventions qui soient respectées à des textes vénérables mais peu applicables.

En bref, nous avons besoin de conventions modernes qui établissent des principes et des droits, mais qui laissent le soin aux Etats Membres de les appliquer en fonction des besoins sociaux de leur population. Nous avons besoin non pas de conventions techniques détaillées et ratifiées dans des conditions peu satisfaisantes mais de conventions modernes et consolidées, applicables aux diverses situations de nos pays.

Mesdames et Messieurs les délégués, je répète, notre OIT est une Organisation dont la vocation touche à nos préoccupations vitales dans un monde en pleine globalisation, mais les problèmes ne sont pas simples. Seule une OIT moderne sera capable d'apporter les réponses adéquates au défi d'une économie internationale, une OIT qui n'agisse pas isolément, mais de concert avec d'autres organisations internationales. Elle doit s'engager aux côtés d'autres organisations internationales telles que les Nations Unies et les institutions de Bretton Woods en faveur de la dimension sociale.

Il faut allier le processus de globalisation à l'établissement d'un ensemble de conventions modernes afin que la mondialisation soit sociale et que la protection du travail et la sécurité sociale se globalisent.

Pour ma part, pour les Pays-Bas, nous souhaitons nous associer à un tel engagement de la part de l'OIT.

(Mr. Blondel takes the Chair.)

Sr. CASTRO ESTRADA (*Gobierno, México*)

La economía mundial reporta un crecimiento sostenido en los últimos años. Hoy, como nunca antes, hay más personas trabajando, sin embargo el número de desempleados a nivel mundial sigue siendo alto, como lo reconoce la OIT.

Para hacer frente al reto que representa la generación de empleos en mi país, el Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, expedido por el Presidente de México, Licenciado Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, prevé entre sus ejes rectores, el lograr «una economía competitiva y generadora de empleos».

En dicho plan se reconoce que en un mundo globalizado, el Estado debe promover las condiciones necesarias para la inclusión de un México competitivo en el nuevo orden económico mundial. Habida cuenta de lo anterior, es necesario generar una economía cada vez más competitiva para atraer las inversiones que se traducirán en empleos formales,

dignos y con la previsión y seguridad social requeridas.

Es preciso igualmente, fomentar esquemas de productividad, así como modernizar las relaciones laborales para hacer de éstas un vehículo eficaz, y no un obstáculo, para la instalación y permanencia de nuevas industrias y negocios. De igual forma, se debe generar las condiciones que faciliten el acceso de la población activa a los mercados laborales.

El mismo plan prevé procurar, conjuntamente con el sector empresarial, la inclusión en el mercado laboral de los grupos sociales vulnerables y mejorar sus condiciones de trabajo.

Todo lo anterior, sólo será posible al preservar la paz laboral, a partir de un adecuado equilibrio entre los factores de la producción, que al tiempo de fomentar la transparencia y la libertad sindical, asegure el pleno respeto de los derechos individuales y colectivos de los trabajadores, en busca de la justicia social.

Así pues, uno de los objetivos específicos del Plan es generar las condiciones en el mercado laboral que incentiven la creación de empleos de alta calidad en el sector formal y el fomento de la equidad e inclusión laboral que consolide la previsión social, a través de la creación de condiciones para el trabajo digno, bien remunerado, con capacitación, seguridad y salud.

Lo anterior incluirá la formulación de políticas y la adecuación de la normativa para lograr la no discriminación y la igualdad de oportunidades de las personas. También se establecerá como una de las prioridades de la política laboral, la prevención de riesgos de trabajo, mediante la elaboración e instrumentación de una política pública de seguridad y salud en el trabajo.

Como parte de las estrategias, cabe citar las relativas a incentivar la entrada de jóvenes al mercado laboral formal y vigilar el trabajo infantil. Mi país se une a la celebración del Día Mundial contra el Trabajo Infantil, fenómeno respecto del cual todos los países debemos esforzarnos para que cada vez más niños inmersos en esa situación acudan a las aulas y disfruten de su niñez. Una segunda estrategia es garantizar la legalidad y utilizar la conciliación y el diálogo en las revisiones contractuales, salariales y conflictos laborales, y, por último, actualizar el marco normativo para promover la productividad y la competitividad laboral, garantizando los derechos de los trabajadores.

Como se puede apreciar, los objetivos y estrategias antes mencionadas coinciden con el propósito esencial del trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible, contenido en la Memoria que somete el Director General de la OIT a esta Conferencia Internacional, y cuyo objetivo común se sintetiza en el concepto de «trabajo decente para todos», que constituye la misión actual de la Organización. Dicho concepto supone la presencia de un Estado dinámico que garantice la certidumbre jurídica que los mercados requieren para su desarrollo.

Derivado de lo anterior, es necesario que las secretarías y Ministerios del Trabajo, de la que en México es titular el Licenciado Javier Lozano Alarcón, desarrollemos políticas públicas que promuevan el acceso a los mercados de empleo mediante esquemas de desarrollo sustentable.

Requerimos, de forma tripartita y mediante el diálogo social, que los gobiernos, las organizaciones de empleadores y los sindicatos participemos en la elaboración de políticas públicas novedosas que

tengan el objetivo de crear, preservar y restaurar la empleabilidad de todas las etapas de la vida laboral que, insisto, son necesarias para lograr el desarrollo sostenible.

Como ejemplo de este diálogo social, me es grato mencionar que mi país está representado en esta importante Conferencia Internacional por una delegación plural y representativa de organizaciones sindicales y organismos de empleadores.

La delegación de México invita a la OIT a que lleve a cabo una gestión financiera estricta de los recursos, bajo criterios de eficiencia y transparencia, que incluya un mejor control de los programas, el establecimiento de prioridades y elementos que repercutan en beneficio directo tanto de los trabajadores y de los empleadores de México como el resto de los Estados Miembros de la OIT.

La delegación de México apoya plenamente lo expresado por el Director General en su Memoria al señalar que la globalización sólo tendrá viabilidad si ofrece una mejor calidad de vida, salarios dignos, jornadas laborales decorosas y condiciones de trabajo seguras a los trabajadores, así como un crecimiento económico sustentable para las naciones.

Quisiera finalizar recordando que el trabajo no es una mercancía, sino un elemento inherente a la dignidad y fundamental para el desarrollo humano.

Sr. MARTINEZ (*trabajador, Argentina*)

En la Memoria presentada, el trabajo decente es la nueva síntesis de los valores y objetivos que la OIT se ha fijado en su Constitución. Estos valores y objetivos expresan el rol ético que la OIT asume en el ámbito de las instituciones internacionales.

También coincidimos con el señor Director General en que el tripartismo es la única alternativa que tenemos para que estos principios estén presentes en las decisiones que se tomen. Este año hemos tratado temas importantes en la Conferencia: las empresas sostenibles, el fortalecimiento de las capacidades de la OIT, etc., y estamos seguros de que adoptaremos el Convenio sobre el trabajo en el sector pesquero.

Deseo destacar que los contenidos del trabajo decente y la idea de una globalización justa se encuentran decididamente instalados en esta etapa de la Argentina. Somos protagonistas de un cambio instrumentado y motorizado por nuestro Presidente a partir de una tarea fundacional que acompañó y acompaña la mayoría de los argentinos.

En los últimos cuatro años, el crecimiento económico no se ha detenido y se han reducido los niveles de desempleo. La negociación colectiva, hoy en plena vigencia, ratifica que es el método más eficaz que la libertad sindical nos garantiza para la distribución del ingreso.

Atendiendo una demanda del movimiento obrero, se ha aprobado una nueva ley de jubilaciones y pensiones que restablece a los trabajadores la libertad de optar entre los sistemas público y privado.

Sin embargo, queda mucho por hacer. La informalidad laboral, los niveles de pobreza, la exclusión social y la desigualdad son todavía muy altos. Está atrasada la aprobación de una nueva ley de protección de los riesgos laborales que centre sus objetivos en la cultura de la prevención y que contemple una reparación oportuna y completa para los trabajadores que sufren accidentes de trabajo y enfermedades profesionales.

Debemos seguir el rumbo encaminado y resolver las cuestiones pendientes para avanzar hacia un país más solidario. El diálogo social y la participación

institucional de los actores sociales aparecen como fundamentales para la discusión y diseño del país que queremos. Por ello es que propiciamos para la Argentina la creación de un consejo de desarrollo económico y social que sea el ámbito donde surjan políticas innovadoras orientadas a la inclusión y a la equidad.

En América Latina y en el MERCOSUR hay mucho por hacer. Debemos evitar que la competencia entre los países se dé a costa de las condiciones de empleo de los trabajadores. Los empresarios deben asumir su responsabilidad social ante la pobreza y el desempleo en la región para lograr la justa distribución de las utilidades que da el crecimiento.

Promovemos estándares laborales y salarios compatibles con la dignidad del hombre que trabaja en toda la región. Para ello, se debe tomar como referencia la productividad sistémica con el fin de eliminar las asimetrías y ser más equitativo en el proceso de integración.

Nuestros países en vías de desarrollo demandan más trabajo, más salud, más educación, más infraestructuras, más seguridad social y más inversiones para hacer una sociedad más justa. Los trabajadores queremos reconstruir un camino donde los pueblos sean los protagonistas, con una visión política donde los sindicatos sean la voz de los trabajadores y sus familias.

En el día de hoy conmemoramos un día muy especial que es justamente el Día Mundial contra el Trabajo Infantil, éste es el compromiso del movimiento sindical en el mundo y en América Latina.

Sr. RIVERO GONZÁLEZ (*Ministro del Poder Popular para el Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Venezuela (Rep. Bolivariana de)*)

En el día de ayer se hizo una mención a que el Gobierno del Presidente Hugo Chávez había allanado la sede de FEDECAMARAS. Eso es absolutamente falso, y pido respeto para mi Gobierno y para el proceso venezolano y le pido específicamente al Sr. Jesús de Rioja que no siga mintiendo en relación al proceso venezolano.

La última vez en que un sindicato fue allanado en el país fue el 11 y el 12 de abril de 2002, cuando el breve Gobierno de Carmona Estanga, amigo del Sr. Rioja, allanó un sindicato metalúrgico.

El Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela ha leído con interés la Memoria del Director General, aunque nos hubiese gustado que la versión en español llegara con más antelación y con párrafos numerados para una precisa referencia. Estimamos que éste debe ser el papel de la OIT: proveer de respuestas que puedan servir de guía coherente para superar las deficiencias que se originan por un proceso excluyente llamado globalización. Apreciamos que la OIT se aboque al análisis de los temas sobre el fortalecimiento de la capacidad de esta institución para prestar asistencia técnica a los miembros en la consecución de sus objetivos en el actual contexto de la globalización, así como la promoción de empresas sostenibles. Ambos temas representan un desafío para la Organización que debe enfrentar la redefinición y actualización de conceptos y categorías para responder de manera coherente a las nuevas formas de participación democrática.

Es un desafío difícil porque dentro del capitalismo es precaria la existencia de lo sostenible. Hasta la sostenibilidad de la vida ha estado en peligro bajo el sistema capitalista.

Desde junio de 2002, la resolución que nos ocupa en el término del diálogo social en su literal *f*), párrafo 2, página 2, demandó la urgente necesidad de que se llevaran a cabo estudios en profundidad sobre diálogo social. Es decir, la inteligencia colectiva de los miembros de la Conferencia comprendió que era inaplazable quizá reorientar algunos conceptos y algunas definiciones sobre diálogo social, indicando nuevas maneras de ejecución de este nuevo concepto de globalización neoliberal excluyente, agregamos nosotros.

Dicho de forma concluyente: podemos añadir que la Conferencia admitió algunas inconsistencias en la actual forma de diálogo social, ordenando estudios en profundidad que mejorasen tales debilidades.

Pero además, la propia Comisión Mundial sobre la Dimensión Social de la Globalización, planteó en uno de sus trabajos que el diálogo social era un componente importante del buen gobierno, así como un instrumento para la participación y la responsabilidad.

Gracias al diálogo social en Venezuela se han logrado incluso superar los terribles efectos del golpe de Estado de abril de 2002 y del paro y el sabotaje petrolero de diciembre de 2002 y enero de 2003, de los cuales fueron responsables los directivos de la Confederación de Trabajadores de Venezuela y de la organización empresarial FEDECAMARAS, hechos de los cuales aún no se han arrepentido.

Este diálogo social directo y efectivo ha permitido que nos adelantemos al cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio, que índices del desarrollo humano crezcan, y que el sector privado sea el que más haya crecido en los últimos años, ubicándose su aporte al crecimiento del producto interno bruto en un 86 por ciento. En el año 2007, gracias al diálogo social civilizado, productivo, directo, democrático, vamos a crecer por quinto año consecutivo por encima del 7 por ciento. Gracias al diálogo social verdadero, el desempleo continúa disminuyendo, ubicándose en un 8 por ciento.

Finalmente, lamentamos que en la Memoria se defienda el papel del Fondo Monetario Internacional y del Banco Mundial. Nuestra experiencia nos indica que no hay manera de crecer con las políticas diseñadas por estos organismos, sólo hambre y miseria genera el Fondo Monetario Internacional en particular. La República Bolivariana de Venezuela se encuentra entre los países cuyo desarrollo sostenible viene llegando tardíamente como consecuencia de tener que cancelar obligaciones onerosas contraídas con el Fondo Monetario Internacional y el Banco Mundial. Valdría la pena preguntarse hoy cuáles son esas condiciones razonables mencionadas en la Memoria; las condiciones impuestas por el FMI impulsaron los mayores desbordamientos sociales, tanto en nuestro país como en países hermanos, así como el empobrecimiento, la miseria y el hambre de vastos sectores. Ojalá el FMI condone la deuda que algunos países aún tienen con él, y deje de funcionar para el bien de los pueblos.

M. BILTGEN (*ministre du Travail et de l'Emploi, Luxembourg*)

Le Luxembourg apportera son appui à toute démarche qui aidera à renforcer l'impact de l'OIT dans la politique internationale et le système multilatéral. Il faut relancer d'urgence l'élan politique visant à promouvoir une politique volontariste, à tous les niveaux, combinant le développement économique, l'environnement, ainsi que l'emploi et le social. L'OIT doit continuer à jouer le rôle

moteur dans cette approche dite des trois piliers du développement durable.

Nous devons réaffirmer notre volonté de continuer cette politique, de manière cohérente, à tous les niveaux, nationaux et internationaux, et, surtout, d'une manière interinstitutionnelle.

Comme l'a relevé notre Directeur général, les récents développements de la politique économique et sociale internationale, notamment dans le cadre de la globalisation, ont montré que le *Consensus de Washington*, donnant la prééminence aux institutions de Bretton Woods et aux impératifs de politique de stabilité monétaire et économique, ainsi qu'à la liberté de commerce au niveau global, est définitivement périmé dans sa forme initiale.

Les marchés ne pourront pas se substituer à une politique publique commune alliant exigences économiques, environnementales, de l'emploi et sociales.

Le gouvernement luxembourgeois souhaite une réaffirmation politique claire de la nécessité d'un encadrement politique cohérent de tous les éléments de la globalisation, pour qu'elle profite à tous. Elle profite à beaucoup de personnes, mais elle crée des laissés-pour-compte. Ces personnes doivent rester notre souci constant.

Le gouvernement luxembourgeois salue particulièrement le fait que la Déclaration finale du Sommet du G8 consacre un chapitre consistant, même si peut-être encore trop prudent, à la dimension sociale de la globalisation, en faisant référence à la nécessité de promouvoir et de développer les normes sociales, de renforcer le rôle de l'OIT et la coopération avec notamment l'OMC, ainsi qu'au recours à la responsabilité sociale des entreprises.

Il revient à l'OIT de jouer le rôle clé dans la politique globale et cohérente que je viens d'esquisser. Le Luxembourg est donc d'accord avec toutes les réformes visant à renforcer les capacités de notre Organisation. Il met cependant en garde de mettre en cause certains éléments fondamentaux de fond et de forme qui ont fait la force de l'OIT. Il faut sauvegarder l'essentiel, tout en essayant de faire des progrès. Le recours aux rapports par pays et à la *peer review* généralisée en matière de travail décent pour tous nous semble des éléments prometteurs.

Un recours plus systématique à la notion de responsabilité sociale des entreprises, le cas échéant encadré par le BIT, peut constituer une piste d'action volontaire, avant que ne doive se mettre en œuvre l'action normative de l'OIT. Celle-ci, historiquement initiale, doit cependant rester au centre de son activité, surtout grâce au système unique du tripartisme qui assurera l'acceptation des normes. Le contrôle doit évidemment suivre.

Le Luxembourg soutiendra, surtout par le recours renforcé aux actions de soutien financier bilatérales, toutes les initiatives ayant pour but de concrétiser les efforts globaux pour la justice sociale selon laquelle «le travail n'est pas une marchandise».

Deux éléments me semblent prépondérants dans ce contexte: d'une part, la reconnaissance que chaque société a besoin d'un socle minimal de protection sociale. Au niveau global, les normes de l'OIT sont le minimum en ce sens. D'autre part, une réforme fondamentale de la gouvernance économique et sociale, non pas tellement au sein de l'OIT, mais au sein du système multilatéral, où nous devons appuyer un renforcement du rôle de notre Organisation.

Permettez-moi, pour terminer, de vous faire part d'un souci majeur. J'ai un peu la crainte que nous ne dispersions nos moyens et nos efforts. Cela vaut pour les discussions sur une réorganisation de l'OIT, mais aussi pour les enjeux réels. Nous avons discuté dans le passé de la lutte contre le travail des enfants. Cette année, cet aspect a disparu de la vitrine politique de la Conférence, même si les efforts techniques continuent. Je pense que la lutte contre le travail des enfants doit systématiquement rester dans le focus politique, notamment lors des Conférences. Et je profite de la Journée contre le travail des enfants, qui est fêtée aujourd'hui, pour rappeler que 250 millions d'enfants travaillent dans le monde, dont 170 millions dans des conditions exécrables et dont 73 millions ont entre 5 et 9 ans.

Le gouvernement luxembourgeois a mis les droits des enfants et la lutte contre le travail des enfants au centre de ses activités dans le cadre de cette année où le Luxembourg et la Grande Région sont la capitale européenne de la culture. Oui, je dis bien «culture», car l'ancrage dans les consciences des pays développés des misères et effets néfastes liés au travail des enfants passe aussi, sinon en grande partie, par l'action culturelle. Ainsi, dans le cadre d'une exposition phare de cette année culturelle, exposition appelée *All we need* et centrée sur les contraintes et nécessités des pays développés et des pays en développement, notre gouvernement a confronté la population, et surtout notre jeunesse, à la présence d'enfants ayant expérimenté le travail des enfants. C'est la meilleure manière de rendre les populations des pays ne connaissant pas – ou plutôt plus – le travail des enfants attentives à la question et de les mobiliser pour lutter efficacement contre ce fléau.

Merci de votre attention.

M. BERTRAND (*ministre du Travail, des Relations sociales et de la Solidarité, France*)

Les fonctions qui m'ont été confiées au sein du nouveau gouvernement français il y a moins d'un mois me permettent aujourd'hui de m'exprimer devant la Conférence internationale du Travail, en ce jour dédié spécifiquement, comme vient de le dire à l'instant mon homologue luxembourgeois, à la lutte contre le travail des enfants.

Vous le savez, l'engagement de la France en faveur de l'Organisation internationale du travail est un engagement qui repose sur des racines anciennes, qui remontent à l'époque où le ministre français Albert Thomas défendait le projet d'une organisation internationale consacrée aux «questions ouvrières».

Mais cet engagement, cet attachement, a aussi des raisons d'être profondément modernes, car aujourd'hui cette enceinte est un lieu privilégié pour encourager la promotion du travail décent dans le monde et faire vivre la dimension sociale de la mondialisation, dimension sociale à laquelle la France est particulièrement attachée, comme elle l'est à la place, au rôle et à l'avenir du Bureau international du Travail.

Cet engagement au sein de l'Organisation internationale du travail, la France lui donne une portée concrète: elle a ratifié 123 des conventions qui ont été élaborées dans cette enceinte depuis sa création pour faire progresser, dans tous ses aspects, la législation internationale sur le travail. Nous avons voulu aussi apporter notre soutien à l'adoption des textes qui, récemment, sont venus compléter la législation

existante, notamment la Déclaration relative aux principes et droits fondamentaux au travail, en 1998.

Enfin, nous avons voulu renouveler l'année dernière l'accord de coopération bilatérale qui lie la France au Bureau international du travail depuis 1999, et qui traduit aussi la confiance qu'elle a dans les initiatives de l'Organisation.

Cette année encore, je voudrais également au nom de la France et du gouvernement français féliciter la Conférence pour les travaux qui ont été menés.

Nous soutenons également la réflexion qui a été entamée pour renforcer la capacité d'action de l'Organisation dans le cadre de la mondialisation car l'Organisation, nous en avons conscience, doit renouveler ses structures et ses méthodes pour assurer l'efficacité de son action au XXI^e siècle.

Nous soutenons également les initiatives de la Conférence au sujet du travail dans le secteur de la pêche, qui rendent très probable l'adoption d'une convention et d'une recommandation dans ce secteur où les conditions de travail sont particulièrement dures.

Enfin, nous soutenons la démarche présentée par le Directeur général du Bureau, dont je veux souligner l'action efficace, au travers notamment du rapport «Le travail décent au service du développement durable» qui souligne la nécessité d'assurer la cohérence des politiques publiques, dans leur dimension sociale, économique et environnementale.

Cette nécessité est forte, les discussions qui ont récemment eu lieu à Heiligendamm le montrent. Elles montrent aussi que les entreprises auront en ce domaine un rôle essentiel à jouer.

Si je suis très heureux de m'exprimer devant vous aujourd'hui, c'est aussi parce que je sais la place que l'Organisation internationale du Travail fait, depuis sa création, au dialogue tripartite entre les représentants des gouvernements, ceux des travailleurs et ceux des employeurs.

Je crois à ce dialogue à trois voix et j'y vois même l'une des clés de la réussite pour mener à bien des projets dans le domaine du travail et des relations sociales.

Je crois à l'importance de ce dialogue au sein de l'OIT, bien sûr, mais aussi pour la réussite des réformes que nous avons en France devant nous.

La valeur travail, la valeur du travail a tenu beaucoup de place dans la campagne qui vient de s'achever pour les élections présidentielles car cette valeur est en soi un projet de société.

Les réformes que nous avons amenées sont de grande ampleur et les partenaires sociaux auront, chez nous, un rôle de premier plan à y jouer, comme au niveau international.

Il faut savoir que nous avons voulu, avec la loi du 31 janvier 2007, dans notre pays, sur la modernisation du dialogue social, placer les partenaires sociaux au cœur des réformes que le Président de la République a pris l'engagement, devant les Français, de mener à bien.

Sur la base de ce dialogue, nous allons engager la réflexion sur la «flexicurité» car, comme la Confédération européenne des syndicats l'a dernièrement rappelé et proposé, il faut rechercher les moyens d'offrir à une main-d'œuvre plus flexible un niveau plus élevé d'emploi et de protection sociale.

C'est un vrai défi, la voie est étroite mais la voie de passage existe entre l'équilibre qui assurera une juste conciliation entre les besoins des entreprises et les aspirations légitimes des salariés.

La recherche de cet équilibre appartient d'abord bien sûr aux partenaires sociaux mais, à l'échelle européenne, de la même façon, la réflexion doit être poursuivie.

Nous souhaitons également nous saisir de la question de l'égalité salariale et professionnelle entre les hommes et les femmes. Je sais la volonté de l'Organisation internationale du Travail de progresser dans ce domaine, elle qui a choisi de consacrer cette année son rapport global à l'élimination de la discrimination professionnelle en matière notamment d'emploi.

Le gouvernement auquel j'appartiens est engagé en ce sens: il s'est fixé un délai de deux ans pour ne plus laisser subsister d'inégalités salariales entre les hommes et les femmes.

Enfin, je souhaite que nous puissions faire progresser, au niveau national bien sûr mais pas seulement, les conditions de travail pour réduire le nombre d'accidents du travail et lutter contre toutes les formes de maladies professionnelles. Je pense aussi à des sujets comme le stress, les troubles musculaires ou les pathologies causées par les travaux les plus pénibles qui doivent diminuer sensiblement et le plus rapidement possible.

Sur tous ces sujets, les partenaires sociaux seront acteurs. Vous voyez, ces questions ne sont évidemment pas franco-françaises, elles sont déterminantes à l'échelle européenne, elles sont essentielles au niveau international, et j'ai la conviction profonde que, sur toutes ces questions, l'Organisation internationale du Travail peut elle aussi être un moteur.

Par la qualité du dialogue qui s'y noue, par la rigueur qu'elle met dans ses travaux, cette Organisation a la capacité d'être une force de proposition et de faire progresser tous les pays, quel que soit le choix de leur modèle, dans la voie du travail décent.

Je sais que la Conférence internationale du Travail prendra les décisions qui s'imposent pour que l'OIT soit en mesure d'assumer pleinement ce rôle.

M. DIALLO (*ministre de l'Emploi, de la Fonction publique et de la Réforme de l'Administration, Guinée*)

Monsieur le Président, comme elle le fait chaque année, l'OIT offre aux représentants des gouvernements, des employeurs et des travailleurs un cadre adéquat de concertation et d'échange de vues sur les problèmes intéressant le monde du travail, dont la dimension et l'acuité le disputent à la complexité d'un monde en pleine mutation.

Dans cette optique, elle entretient une dynamique constante de réflexion et de dialogue pour permettre à l'Organisation de mieux s'adapter aux mutations intervenues, à relever les défis mondiaux qui nous interpellent et ainsi répondre aux attentes des peuples.

Ce cadre de concertation apparaît aujourd'hui plus que jamais nécessaire au regard de la mondialisation de l'économie, dont les répercussions négatives affectent particulièrement le continent africain.

C'est pourquoi je voudrais avant tout relever la justesse et la pertinence des questions inscrites à l'ordre du jour de notre session et féliciter les membres du Conseil d'administration et le Directeur général du BIT, M. Juan Somavia, pour la qualité des rapports élaborés et soumis à notre examen.

Monsieur le Président, avant d'aborder le rapport du Directeur général, j'aimerais avant tout exprimer ici quelques impressions que suscite pour ma délégation l'examen des questions techniques inscrites à l'ordre du jour de la session.

Le travail dans le secteur de la pêche est une question que notre assemblée avait examiné lors des 92^e et 93^e sessions de la Conférence internationale du Travail.

A l'occasion, mon pays, la République de Guinée, avait souscrit aux conclusions du rapport du Directeur général et souhaité l'adoption des projets de convention et recommandation soumis à notre examen afin de doter nos Etats d'instruments juridiques cohérents et efficaces, capables à la fois de protéger les travailleurs du secteur de la pêche et de promouvoir l'activité de pêche au niveau de nos pays.

Au regard de l'importance du sujet pour la vie de millions de personnes qui vivent du travail de la pêche, mon pays souscrit à l'adoption d'une convention et d'une nouvelle recommandation complétant celle déjà en vigueur.

Monsieur le Président, en ce qui concerne le renforcement de la capacité de l'OIT d'appuyer les efforts déployés par ses Membres pour atteindre ses objectifs dans le cadre de la mondialisation, ma délégation estime que cette question est d'un intérêt capital, dans la mesure où tous les efforts de notre Organisation n'ont de sens ou de raison d'être que lorsqu'ils permettent aux mandants de l'OIT d'améliorer leur bien-être social et économique.

A cet égard, les discussions engagées autour de cette question ont permis de comprendre davantage que l'OIT demeure, par son caractère tripartite, un instrument efficace de promotion du dialogue au service de la paix et des droits de l'homme.

C'est pourquoi la République de Guinée souscrit aux conclusions formulées par la Commission de renforcement de la capacité de l'OIT.

Monsieur le Président, un autre sujet important de notre Conférence est celui de la promotion d'entreprises durables.

En effet, s'il est un constat commun qui se dégage dans la plupart des pays en développement, c'est bien naturellement celui de l'insuffisance de moyens et d'un cadre juridique et réglementaire attractif pour la promotion d'entreprises viables pouvant générer des emplois décents.

Or, comme on le sait, la réalisation de l'Agenda du travail décent appelle, dans une large mesure, à l'existence d'entreprises viables capables d'être des leviers efficaces à même de promouvoir l'emploi et ainsi contribuer à la lutte contre la pauvreté.

A cet effet, mon pays a pris sans réserve toutes les initiatives et les recommandations visant à renforcer les politiques, programmes et stratégies de promotion du travail par le développement d'entreprises durables, et lance un appel pressant à l'OIT et à tous les partenaires au développement pour une meilleure coordination, et surtout une adéquation de ceux-ci avec les aspirations des travailleurs.

Monsieur le Président, ma délégation apprécie hautement le rapport du Directeur général invitant les mandants à fournir à l'OIT des avis sur la manière d'orienter ses activités pour répondre au mieux à leurs besoins et estime, s'agissant du rapport de l'OIT, qu'il ne saurait y avoir de progrès social réel sans base économique solide.

C'est dire que, dans un monde où la majorité de la population vit dans la pauvreté, il ne saurait être question de développement par le travail sans une réduction des inégalités et l'avènement d'une mondialisation plus juste par l'accès de tous au bien-être.

La question est donc de savoir aujourd'hui quelle signification peuvent avoir les activités de l'OIT pour la grande majorité de nos populations qui opèrent dans le secteur informel et dont les modestes revenus n'arrivent même pas à satisfaire les besoins essentiels.

C'est pourquoi il est vital pour ma délégation que la priorité soit accordée au développement économique, lequel ne sera jamais une réalité sans une réelle volonté d'aide et de coopération des pays développés, des organisations internationales et de la communauté des bailleurs de fonds.

Monsieur le Président, mon pays, la Guinée, vient de connaître une crise sociale sans précédent dont la cause profonde se trouve dans l'exacerbation des inégalités sociales doublée d'une mauvaise gouvernance.

Je voudrais, de cette tribune, renouveler l'appréciation et les remerciements de la délégation guinéenne à tous ceux qui, de près ou de loin, ont soutenu la juste lutte de revendication sociale des travailleurs et des populations guinéennes. Les remerciements s'adressent également à M. Juan Somavia, Directeur général du BIT, à ses nombreux collaborateurs et aux membres du Conseil d'administration du BIT pour leur soutien constant durant ces tristes événements qui ont endeuillé notre pays à l'occasion de la grève générale menée par les travailleurs guinéens au début de l'année en cours.

La Guinée toute entière a apprécié cet élan de soutien de la communauté internationale et en particulier celui des mandants de l'OIT qui se sont massivement mobilisés pour témoigner de leur solidarité agissant à l'endroit des populations guinéennes.

C'est aussi le lieu de saluer la Confédération syndicale internationale (CSI) qui a tenu à organiser une conférence de solidarité en Guinée, en signe de soutien à la lutte des travailleurs de mon pays. Aujourd'hui, nous pouvons affirmer que pour les millions de Guinéens l'espoir renaît.

Monsieur le Président, pour conclure, mon pays réaffirme sa détermination à renforcer la coopération avec le BIT afin de promouvoir davantage les idéaux de notre Organisation qui fondent notre engagement commun au service des travailleurs, car il est convaincu que, face aux nombreux défis qui nous interpellent, il n'existe pas de remède miracle, mais des solutions réalistes et pragmatiques pour faire de l'OIT un outil au service de la paix, du progrès, de la justice sociale et de la démocratie.

Je vous remercie.

Mr. KONTOS (*Government, Greece*)

Let me start Mr. President, by addressing to you my warmest congratulations on your election to this high office. My congratulations go also to the three Vice-Presidents of the Conference.

Mr. President, distinguished Ministers, Mr. Commissioner, the Report of the Director-General should be commended for encompassing key issues in promoting decent work for sustainable development. The advancement of the ILO's goal, decent work for all, both as a vital part of the International Development Agenda and as an essential element in shaping a fair globalization, requires, indeed, a strengthened tripartism, at the international and national levels alike.

We agree that social protection and economic and environmental development are the cornerstones of an effective sustainable development. Hence, an

integrated international and national policy and co-operation in these sectors is necessary in order to tackle distortions that a hasty and unrestrained globalization could produce.

Consequently, the debate in the Conference concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises comes at the right time. The sustainability of enterprises presupposes the development of coherent policies for investment, growth and employment and the intensification of national efforts in reducing unemployment through the creation not simply of more but mainly of better jobs.

In social terms, a direct and frank dialogue with and between our social partners, ensures, within a generally agreed public framework, unhindered, equal and equitable treatment for all working women and men irrespective of their race, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, HIV/AIDS status and disability.

Mr. President, the priorities and policies of Greece aim to allow us to stay on the path of sustainable development. We have planned and are currently successfully implementing a comprehensive reform programme for the promotion of sustainable economic growth, more and better jobs and strengthened social cohesion.

Through modernizing labour law and social protection systems, disseminating active labour market policies, securing healthy workplaces and collective bargaining, we try to achieve a balanced mix of flexibility and security, which will stimulate competition of enterprises and will also lead to increased opportunities for all, in particular those on the fringes of the labour market.

Such policies are basic elements of the European social model, which should be an example of combining market growth with assurances for employment and occupational security for all employees and workers. Moreover, active solidarity at the international level, and active involvement of our social partners at the national level, will contribute to a fair distribution of the benefits of globalization to a broader part of our citizens.

Mr. President, the United Nations reform is a work in progress. We are confident that the Director-General's commitment to the reform, combined with the necessary caution in pursuing the relevant adjustments for the ILO, will result in the enhancement of country delivery, in the strengthening of the whole multilateral system and in the reinforcement of our common values.

The ILO's unique tripartite and standard-setting identity, in conjunction with the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda and its four strategic objectives, namely the promotion of rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue, and its main delivery mechanism through the Decent Work Country Programmes, will be decisive in realizing the ultimate aim: fair globalization.

Finally, Mr. President, we believe that modernization and strengthening of ILO governance and management will play a major role in securing equitable and inclusive globalization both for States and social partners, and adapting the Organization to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Thank you Mr. President.

M^{me} BITOUGAT (*ministre du Travail et de l'Emploi, Gabon*)

Je voudrais exprimer mon appréciation pour les efforts assidus de M. Juan Somavia, Directeur gé-

néral du BIT, et de toute son équipe pour nous avoir soumis, une fois de plus, des rapports pertinents.

En cette journée mondiale commémorative de lutte contre le travail des enfants, mes premières pensées vont bien évidemment à ces êtres fragiles encore exploités en grand nombre de par le monde dans des conditions plus que dangereuses. Mon pays reste résolument engagé dans la lutte contre le travail des enfants en général, et des pires formes en particulier. Pour cela, nous pensons qu'il faut redoubler d'ardeur, de vigilance et de fermeté pour libérer ces êtres innocents, hélas privés de leurs droits les plus élémentaires.

Dans son rapport intitulé «Le travail décent au service du développement durable», le Directeur général nous invite à nous approprier et à concrétiser les opportunités qui nous sont offertes pour assurer un développement et une prospérité universels et équilibrés.

Il est établi que la mondialisation doit aller de pair avec la justice sociale. Dans cette optique, l'étude conjointe OMC/BIT nous édifie pleinement sur les rapports complexes entre politiques commerciales et politiques de l'emploi. Nous sommes d'avis que notre institution doit poursuivre dans cette voie.

Le rapport 2007 du Fonds monétaire international sur les «Perspectives de l'économie mondiale» nous apprend que: «lorsqu'une part croissante du revenu national va aux détenteurs du capital et non aux travailleurs, l'inégalité dans la répartition des revenus tend à s'accroître puisque le rendement du capital revient à une minorité prospère».

Ce qui est vrai à l'échelon national l'est davantage au plan mondial. La nécessité de trouver un équilibre entre la flexibilité du marché du travail et la protection des travailleurs est de ce fait capitale.

L'amplification du phénomène des travailleurs pauvres doit nous interpeller et mériter une attention soutenue. C'est pourquoi, nous sommes tout à fait acquis à la tenue de la Conférence internationale des statisticiens en 2008.

Deux des piliers du travail décent sont le dialogue social et le tripartisme. Au Gabon, et depuis fort longtemps, cette orientation est clairement comprise et mise en œuvre au quotidien, grâce essentiellement à la volonté et à l'engagement personnel du Président de la République, Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba qui a su engager le gouvernement à convenir avec les partenaires sociaux d'une trêve sociale triennale.

Au terme de celle-ci, qui vient de s'achever, il en est résulté des avancées significatives d'amélioration des conditions de travail. C'est le cas du relèvement du SMIG qui est passé de 44 000 francs CFA à 80 000 francs CFA depuis 2006.

Il faut par ailleurs relever la création du «Club» dit de Libreville. Ce club est un cadre de concertation entre le gouvernement et le patronat sur la question de la dette intérieure de l'Etat.

Au plan institutionnel, un Secrétariat permanent du dialogue social va être mis en place. Cette institution permettra désormais un fonctionnement efficient des organismes consultatifs prévus dans notre législation du travail.

Enfin, nous fondons l'espoir que les propositions de programme et de budget pour le biennium 2008-2009 seront adoptées. Nous notons en effet avec satisfaction qu'elles prennent en compte l'objectif global du travail décent, se plaçant ainsi au cœur des quatre objectifs stratégiques de l'OIT.

Mr. LITTORIN (*Minister for Employment, Sweden*)

A number of important items have been placed on the agenda at this year's session of the International Labour Conference. Allow me to address a few of them.

First of all, let me compliment the Director-General on the excellent Report entitled *Decent work for sustainable development*, which raises a number of important points within the core functions of the ILO, not least concerning globalization. Globalization has been at the forefront of the discussions during this session of the Conference. Indeed, it is a timely and very relevant discussion and in line with the mandates of the ILO to promote welfare and social development. Let me stress a few points which I think are particularly important concerning globalization.

Globalization is something extremely positive; it adds to our mutual trade, employment and common wealth. Moreover, globalization is not a zero-sum game. Benefits in one country are not offset by losses in another. We can all be winners from globalization.

No doubt, globalization affects people's jobs and everyday life, for example when factories close down and production moves abroad. Structural adjustments can lead to periods of unemployment and insecurity. We cannot close our eyes to the negative effects of globalization, nor to disparities and imbalances in the global economy. We need to facilitate adjustment and change. We need to combine economic development with sustainable social systems that can handle change. The key to success in the global economy is to focus on the employability of the workforce, not the protection of every single job. It is all about taking on the challenges of globalization by promoting our own competitiveness. The fight against unemployment is therefore not only a fight against social exclusion today, but a necessity in order to reap the full benefits of globalization tomorrow.

Like some other countries, Sweden has established a Globalization Council to provide all-round analysis and to promote public debate on the changes we are facing and what may be required to meet these future changes. The Council consists of representatives from the public sector, trade unions, industry, culture and science. It is of course too early to evaluate the Council's work, but I am confident that a coherent and horizontal approach is necessary to address the challenges of globalization.

Against this background, I highly commend the ILO and the Director-General's ambition to make decent work a global goal, to identify fair rules that all countries can live up to, and to create a level playing field in the global economy. After this session of the Conference, I hope that we will have moved up the ladder in our understanding of the ILO's central role and capacity in the global economy.

Another important subject on the agenda is equality at work. The Global Report *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* is an excellent example of the ILO's comparative advantage within its core mandate. The subject is very relevant and the Report gives a good analytical framework, including commendable recommendations. It is important to remember that the solutions to problems of workplace discrimination can differ according to national circumstances. Part of the solution, which is empha-

sized by the Report, is an active labour market policy which contributes to including those groups who are outside the labour market, especially young people and the disabled. The fight against social exclusion is one central dimension of combating workplace discrimination.

In conclusion, the promotion of human rights is one of the central duties of the international community. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda is a very important tool in achieving this task. It also functions as a signal to member States to fulfil their commitments. The ILO should only deliver what member States demand and expect. At the same time, the ILO itself must be modernly and adequately equipped to fully grasp and meet the challenges in today's global economy.

I am hopeful that the ILO, with its unique tripartite structure, has the potential in the long run to live up to our current expectations as the global vanguard in defence of human rights at work, thus making a lasting difference for its constituents all over the world.

Mr. O'REILLY (*Employer, New Zealand*)

I would like to concentrate in my remarks on the part of the Director-General's Report that concerns sustainable enterprises. The notion of sustainable enterprises is one that has gained increasing attention in recent years, but in reality the need for sustainability is far from new. The whole idea of good business is to sustain and grow your enterprise.

Some companies will inevitably fail. That is because the very essence of enterprise is that business entails risk: usually with your own money, if you are a small enterprise, which the vast majority of businesses are.

Since there are bound to be some failures, reasonable social protections are necessary, as the Director-General's Report points out. Those protections should provide a bridge to new employment and retain social cohesion, while not becoming an end in themselves.

But the fact that some enterprises will fail is no reason to abandon faith in the free market, as the Director-General appears to have done. So I have real concerns with some aspects of the Report.

Sustainable enterprise and development is first and foremost the product of successful entrepreneurship. Sustainable enterprises are private sector creations, which require sensible underpinning policies to survive. It is therefore good to see, by contrast, the ILO's Report VI on the same subject, and the draft conclusions of the Conference Committee itself, which recognize the importance of enterprise as a principal source of growth and employment.

Report VI acknowledges that "regulatory policymaking presents a conundrum", with constant demands for protective regulation that "can impose excessive costs and constrain productivity". But all too often, the view of the ILO can appear to be that any labour regulation at all is a good thing, when in reality labour regulation, like all regulation, needs to be well thought through, fit for its purpose, efficient, and conducive to enterprise growth. When it is all those things, workers' rights are most likely to be well protected.

Today, for enterprises to be truly sustainable, there is a need to abandon past attitudes (where these still persist) and look for ways in which employees and employers can cooperate to their mutual benefit.

Last year's 14th Asian Regional Meeting in Busan produced a list of 15 priority actions for realizing decent work and the reduction of poverty in that region. Among these, two in particular, if carefully implemented, will go a long way towards ensuring sustainable enterprises. They are: firstly, improve effective labour market governance by adopting, implementing and reviewing labour laws and social policies against the objectives of full and productive work sought by the Decent Work Agenda; and, secondly, develop effective labour management cooperation and bipartite partnership mechanisms and other appropriate institutions and regulations, including frameworks for social dialogue, as important elements for the effective and fair functioning of labour markets.

The ILO has a big role to play in these aims. It can start by doing more of what it is good at – building the capacity of governments and of employers' and workers' organizations so that they can together work out what is best for them in their own countries.

In doing this the ILO would be well advised to steer clear of the idea that its rules should always be interpreted in precisely its way.

Our Conference conversation on sustainable enterprise this year was a good start. Let us hope that we can build general acceptance here that successful enterprise is crucial. And that, as well as agreeing on all of the important protections and advances for workers that may be appropriate, that we can also agree that entrepreneurship is critically important, and that at least one role of all governments – assisted by the ILO – should be to build a truly enabling business environment.

Original German: Mr. MÜNTEFERING (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany)

Germany wants to be part of efforts to join forces for a social Europe and a social world. We support the ILO in its fight for decent work, at the forefront of which is the fight against child labour.

Today, on the World Day Against Child Labour, many initiatives around the world remind us that in many parts of the world, young and very young children are often forced to work, many under circumstances and conditions that are not decent. At the ILO, we have achieved the prohibition of child labour, and progress has been made towards its gradual elimination. But our efforts must continue, just as the efforts to achieve equality for women at work must continue. The results of the child labour project, which Germany has initiated with the ILO, and the Global Report entitled: *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* show that much remains to be done. The fight for decent work for all must continue unabated.

The fight for decent work benefits from the involvement of the people concerned in the social dialogue. The bodies of the ILO can contribute to this by lending their voice and making them heard wherever possible. In particular, I am thinking of the representatives of (women) working in the informal sector and the spokespersons of working children. The next opportunity is the ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization in Lisbon, scheduled to be held in autumn of 2007, in which I encourage everyone to participate.

The fight for decent work is important and necessary. In Europe, we go a step further. Since the Council decision adopted in March, we talk about

“good work”. This means work for everyone, good work for all: health and safety at the workplace, fair wages, workers’ rights, equality of opportunity, further training and skill-building, and the promotion of a family-friendly work environment. All this makes for good work. This is all part of the European social model, which we have strengthened during our Presidency.

Good work is decent work. We have therefore taken the social dimension right into the G8. The G8 Ministers of Labour a few weeks ago have given momentum to the areas of social protection in emerging countries and corporate responsibility, which is reflected in the declaration of the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm. The European Union Ministers of Economic Cooperation and Development are also concerned with decent work, employment and social security. This corresponds to our initiative. Behind all these initiatives is one objective: to establish social rules for globalization. If they are guaranteed, all people can benefit from globalization.

The ILO is an important partner in this process. It can and should become stronger. A strategy for decent work, core standards, and minimum standards for social protection are central, global concerns. We can further increase the effectiveness of such initiatives. To this end, international organizations such as the United Nations, the ILO, World Trade Organization (WTO), World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should further enhance their cooperation. The Director-General, Mr. Somavia, has called for more coherence. If we are successful together, we can give new momentum to social concerns.

Giving a social dimension to globalization means to reaffirm the primacy of political processes over money. Politics should be at the service of people.

Globalization is a reality. It creates opportunities for people, and we have to find ways and means of controlling globalization and ensuring that it becomes a good opportunity for people all over the world.

I believe we can set a good example in Europe if we prove that the 27 sovereign Member States of the European Union are able to agree on designing common policies without a superordinate government, organizing existing organizations more efficiently, and improving coordination among them. Shaping the social face of Europe means giving primacy to political processes. We must not accept development models designed by industries in other parts of the world, such as for example, the finance industry. We, as politicians, have to prove that we can find ways of acting in the interests of all human beings in the world. The idea of a social market economy has been very successful in Europe. We have achieved affluence in Europe, not despite but thanks to a social market economy. We have to spread this idea around the world.

M. SPIDLA (*Commissaire européen chargé de l'Emploi, des Affaires sociales et de l'Égalité des chances, Union européenne*)

Permettez-moi, tout d’abord, de féliciter le Président de la Conférence pour son élection ainsi que le Directeur général du BIT pour son rapport sur le travail décent au service du développement durable.

Je salue également le rapport global qui porte sur la non-discrimination dans l’emploi.

La non-discrimination dans l’emploi et l’égalité des chances font partie de la législation, des actions et des programmes de l’Union européenne.

Le rapport de l’OIT permet de mettre en évidence les initiatives de l’Union européenne dans ce domaine et souligne, à juste titre, que des efforts supplémentaires sont nécessaires pour renforcer l’application effective dans toutes les régions, y compris au sein de l’Union européenne. La commission est disposée à renforcer sa coopération avec l’OIT dans ce domaine.

Le rapport du Directeur général se concentre sur des points de repère essentiels pour promouvoir la mise en œuvre du travail décent, notamment en soulignant qu’il faut s’assurer que tous les citoyens, dans tous les pays, aient accès effectivement aux opportunités offertes par la mondialisation. Il souligne aussi la nécessité d’aborder les conséquences négatives de la mondialisation.

La commission partage les propositions du BIT quant à la nécessité de moderniser la gouvernance du monde du travail, et de promouvoir des approches qui combinent progrès économique et progrès social.

L’Union européenne est résolument engagée dans une stratégie en faveur de la croissance, de l’emploi et de la cohésion sociale. A cette fin, elle poursuit des politiques intégrées, dont les composantes économiques, sociales et environnementales se renforcent mutuellement.

La situation de l’emploi au sein de l’Union s’est améliorée récemment. Néanmoins, nous devons continuer à améliorer l’adaptabilité à la fois des travailleurs et des entreprises, et nous devons renforcer nos efforts en matière de cohésion sociale et d’égalité des chances.

La Commission européenne constate également un intérêt croissant des pays tiers et de l’OIT pour la stratégie de Lisbonne mise en œuvre par l’Union européenne, qui combine compétitivité économique et justice sociale.

Dans ce contexte, la commission adoptera prochainement, sur ma proposition, une communication sur la flexicurité. La flexicurité est une stratégie intégrée qui vise à moderniser les marchés du travail.

Cette modernisation est essentielle à la fois pour la compétitivité de l’économie européenne et pour la consolidation du modèle social européen fondé sur la solidarité et l’égalité des chances.

La flexicurité repose sur l’idée selon laquelle la flexibilité et la sécurité ne s’opposent pas nécessairement et peuvent être, au contraire, combinées pour se renforcer mutuellement.

La flexicurité est un ensemble qui associe quatre composantes: des dispositions contractuelles flexibles et sûres; des politiques actives du marché du travail; l’apprentissage tout au long de la vie; et des systèmes de sécurité sociale modernes.

Le dialogue social est une composante transversale qui permet de déterminer les formes de flexicurité les plus appropriées pour chaque Etat Membre. Je constate, avec satisfaction, que notre approche coïncide largement avec celle présentée par le BIT.

La Commission européenne est engagée dans la promotion du travail décent pour tous dans le monde. Notre initiative est fermement soutenue par le Conseil des ministres, par le Parlement européen et par le Comité économique et social européen.

Je voudrais terminer mon intervention en félicitant le Directeur général, M. Somavia, en ce qui

concerne le Conseil d'administration, pour sa décision de mettre à l'ordre du jour le thème du renforcement des capacités de l'OIT dans le contexte de la mondialisation, thème central pour l'avenir de l'Organisation.

Je me réjouis de la participation active et constructive de l'Union européenne à ce débat, débat qui, j'espère vivement, aboutira l'année prochaine à un document faisant autorité. La Commission européenne est disposée à soutenir l'OIT à cet égard.

Sr. AMEZCUA CASTILLO (*trabajador, México*)

Represento a la Unión Internacional de Sindicatos de Trabajadores de la Energía, el Metal, la Química, el Petróleo e Industrias Afines y al Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas, el sindicato más antiguo de mi país, con más de 92 años de lucha.

Me presento en esta Conferencia para exponer de manera breve lo que ocurre en México en el ámbito laboral y sindical.

En México, la situación en que se encuentran los trabajadores es muy adversa y existe la posibilidad real de que lo sea más. Sobre los trabajadores y el pueblo mexicanos pende la amenaza de una serie de reformas a la Constitución calificadas como reformas estructurales, exigidas por el Banco Mundial y el Fondo Monetario Internacional (FMI), instrumentos de los países ricos, el G8, que les facilitan el despojo de bienes a los países pobres sin ser acusados de intervencionismo.

Aunque todas esas reformas son nocivas y de origen ajeno a los pueblos, la que afecta directamente a los trabajadores en México es la llamada reforma laboral, con la que se intenta derogar sus derechos constitucionales, conquistados a base de fuertes luchas, para facilitar su sobreexplotación.

La agresión a los derechos de los trabajadores mexicanos del campo y la ciudad está en marcha desde hace varios años, aunque ahora esté agravada por dos gobiernos sucesivos, derechistas y neoliberales.

Para saber cómo se han desempeñado estos gobiernos, veamos estos datos reconocidos por la titular de la Secretaría de Desarrollo Social: «Desde hace algo más de seis años, el número de mexicanos que vive en situación de pobreza patrimonial es del 47 por ciento, es decir, 49 millones; y los que viven en pobreza alimentaria es del 18,2 por ciento, es decir 19 millones». Para decirlo todavía más claramente, 19 millones de mexicanos se están muriendo de hambre.

Durante el penúltimo de esos gobiernos, 1.826 desempleados mexicanos emigraron diariamente hacia Estados Unidos en busca de trabajo para el sostenimiento de sus familias enfrentando innumerables riesgos.

En el ámbito laboral, son ejemplos de los agravios de estos gobiernos contra los trabajadores, entre otros casos los siguientes:

El intento de desalojo de 25.000 trabajadores del campo y sus familias por la construcción de la Presa La Parota, en Guerrero, que además de estar en una zona altamente sísmica, anegará más de 17.000 hectáreas de tierra productiva y aniquilará su elevada biodiversidad.

El despido y negativa de reconocimiento de los dirigentes electos del Sindicato de Trabajadores al Servicio de los Poderes del Estado, en Querétaro, dejando al sindicato indefenso legalmente y a los trabajadores sin representación.

La negativa de restituir en su trabajo a más de 3.000 trabajadores del Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática, a pesar de existir resoluciones judiciales que lo ordenan desde hace varios años. En el instituto existen más de 17.000 trabajadores eventuales.

La intromisión en la autonomía de sindicatos independientes, como el de trabajadores mineros y metalúrgicos, omitiendo tomar nota de las decisiones de los trabajadores en el cambio de sus dirigentes. Esa omisión inhabilita e inmoviliza al sindicato para realizar sus gestiones.

El impulso al corporativismo, con el que avalan decisiones contra el interés de los trabajadores y del país, sin el consentimiento de éstos y con el beneficio solamente para líderes espurios.

La imposición de topes salariales y salarios mínimos miserables; el intento por liquidar la seguridad social de los trabajadores y sus familias, quitándole su carácter social y solidario para convertirlo en privado e individual y en un negocio de transnacionales; el acatamiento de las recetas y directrices de los países ricos, productoras de miseria, relegando el bienestar de los pueblos a base de mentiras y promesas falsas.

Ni el pueblo mexicano ni los pueblos del mundo soportan ya las políticas neoliberales de los países ricos, impuestas por medio del Banco Mundial y del Fondo Monetario Internacional, para sustraer la riqueza y apropiarse de los bienes de los países pobres. No aceptan ya la imposición de gobernantes espurios y de políticas ajenas a sus verdaderos intereses.

Acaba de reunirse el G8 en Alemania para ampliar, profundizar y fortalecer sus políticas depredadoras. Habrá ahora una nueva dotación de mentiras para decirle al resto del mundo cuánto se verá beneficiado cuando sobre él se apliquen esas políticas. Muchos gobernantes de los países pobres aplicarán sobre sus gobernados las políticas neoliberales renovadas en Alemania, pero no dirán que el neoliberalismo es la palabra que se usa ahora en lugar de imperialismo y colonialismo. Los pueblos no deben saber quiénes son sus verdugos.

El Gobierno de México ha decretado un Plan Nacional de Desarrollo, irrealizable si no se despoja al pueblo mexicano de su industria energética o se encadena aún más con créditos sobre el presupuesto del Banco Mundial.

México no es la voluntad de un solo individuo, ni se someterá a ésta. México es 103 millones de mexicanos, es su realidad multicultural, es su diversidad étnica, su historia, su territorio, su biodiversidad, sus recursos naturales.

Un individuo es sólo eso, aunque ese individuo se atribuya el derecho de decidir sobre todo México y todos los mexicanos, aunque sea Presidente de la República, ni siquiera ha demostrado que lo es legal y legítimamente. Desde aquí afirmamos: Calderón no es México.

En el Día Mundial contra el Trabajo Infantil creemos que otro mundo es posible, con libertad, justicia y democracia.

Original French: The PRESIDENT (Mr. BLONDEL)

I will now give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference to make an announcement.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

We have a request for a right of reply as decided by the Officers of the Conference and announced to

you at the seventh sitting, the answer must be brief, not exceed two minutes and be confined to the point challenged and not lead to a new speech. Further, it has to be couched in parliamentary language. As decided by the Officers of the Conference, no right of reply to reply can be granted.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

Mr. Funes de Rioja will make use of the right to reply on behalf of the Employers.

Original Spanish: Mr. FUNES de RIOJA (*Employer, Argentina, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group*)

I am responding to the statement made by His Excellency Minister Rivero González. It would appear that, in his statement, the Minister made some accusations which are improper, both in substance and in terms of parliamentary procedure.

The Employers' group of the Conference rejects any accusation of solidarity or association with the

coup d'état or any other kind of institutional instability. Quite the contrary, the values of the Employers' group are the values of this house: respect for the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and respect for the autonomy of the groups. We therefore urge the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela once more to respect Convention No. 87 and to keep in mind that we will defend the bodies that form part of our international organization and of the Employers' group of the Conference and of the Governing Body against any form of harassment.

I also wish to point out to the Minister that my name is Daniel Funes de Rioja, and not the name that he used, and the accusations he has made are not appropriate.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.50 p.m.)

The transcript of statements made in a language other than English, French or Spanish is produced in the language chosen by the country concerned for the purpose of official correspondence with the ILO.

Thirteenth sitting

Tuesday, 12 June 2007, 2.30 p.m.

Presidents: Mr. Barde, Mr. Blondel and Mr. Sulka

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

Original French: The PRESIDENT (Mr. BARDE)

I declare open this afternoon's sitting of the plenary, so that we can proceed with the general discussion.

The sitting continues with delegates' statements.

The transcript of speeches made in a language other than English, French or Spanish is produced in the language chosen by the country concerned for the purpose of official correspondence with the ILO.

Ms. ARIF (Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Syrian Arab Republic)

I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, and pay tribute to this Organization, with its glorious past, and to commend the efforts he has made, his sound management and his interest in labour issues, based on an approach which links the economic and social dimensions, in the interests of the social partners.

I am not necessarily convinced, for my part, that a statement, regardless of its content, can lead to a dialogue, a decision or action. The Conference listens to what is said, and the secretariat consigns it to the record, and the social partners listen to this, without any of it being reflected in reality.

This is why I personally wonder why we devote so much time to listening to so many statements, prepared with a great deal of effort, to talk about labour issues in a given country, and to discuss the Report of the Director-General at length as it deserves.

Personally, I would like to have an answer to the question why, as a Member of this Organization, we have never, over the years, received a report from the Organization setting out the conclusions reached by the statements made during the plenary sittings of the Conference or laying down proposals or measures taken by the Organization, or which it intends to adopt to give effect to such conclusions.

This is why, personally, I wonder about the need to take such an approach in the discussion of the Report of the Director-General. Are the comments made examined? Are these comments amended

where there are contradictions in the terms they contain? Etc., etc.

In the light of this introduction, I would like to reiterate what the Syrian Arab Republic has repeatedly said over the years in the discussion of the Report of Director-General on the situation of Arab workers in the occupied Arab territories in Palestine and the Golan. Here I am correcting the terms that were used in the Report, contrary to the United Nations terminology. I would like to make things clear in the sense that our people do not reside as populations or inhabitants in territories under Israeli domination, but are citizens on land seized from them by force of arms and not by force of law. In this context, and despite all the positive aspects of the Report, in describing all the forms of suffering to which Arab workers and employers are exposed in Palestine and the Golan, we had hoped that the Report would define precisely the violations of international labour Conventions and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We had also hoped to ensure decent work for these workers, who continue to suffer from discrimination in employment and occupation and in remuneration for equal work, are denied of the right to join organizations to defend their interests, and are subject to forced labour.

This means that the issues we are debating on today, reflected in the titles of the Reports of the Director-General on equality at work, non-discrimination, and decent work and sustainable development, are forgotten in this part of our country. To put it more precisely, these issues are passed over in silence. They are ignored; yet one cannot ignore or accept coercion, injustice, and starving people into submission to the detriment of their health.

We are grieved to have to call on the Organization to apply standards, and is all the more regrettable because we respect its capacity and important role in taking on important labour issues.

The pressures exerted on our people in this part of our country cannot make us waver in our determination to continue striving to meet the needs of the social partners, through a restructuring of the labour market to keep pace with economic progress and development, in line with the strategy adopted by the Syrian Government to create decent jobs for those seeking them. This brings me to a brief overview of the programmes put in place in cooperation

with Arab and international organizations, through Syrian initiatives. First, a programme has been put in place to empower women and reduce poverty.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks and respect to all of you, in particular the Regional Office in Beirut and its young and dynamic director, who discharges the tasks entrusted to her with dedication. I hope the Conference will be more respectful of other speakers.

Mr. SHEIKH (*Government, Canada*)

Let me state at the outset that Canada appreciates the contribution of this Organization and its tripartite constituents to addressing the social dimension of globalization, but we are also convinced that reform is necessary.

In his Report entitled *Decent work for sustainable development*, the Director-General poses a number of challenges for the future work and directions of this Organization. Canada welcomes the opportunity to address these challenges in this year's Committee on Sustainable Enterprises and the Committee on Strengthening the ILO's Capacity. These are both timely and important discussions.

(*The speaker continues in French.*)

Nous soulignons également l'importance des mesures allant dans le sens d'une mondialisation équitable et du développement durable. A cet égard, les lois qui régissent les lieux de travail doivent suivre le rythme des changements. Un rapport préparé par le gouvernement du Canada qui s'intitule *Équité au travail: des normes du travail fédérales pour le XXI^e siècle*, présente une série de recommandations de nature législative et administrative pour moderniser les principaux articles de notre loi régissant les normes du travail et les conditions du lieu de travail relevant du gouvernement fédéral.

Nous avons consulté divers intervenants et nous tentons maintenant de déterminer la meilleure approche pour assurer la modernisation de nos normes du travail.

En même temps, nous suivons des politiques visant l'observation stricte de nos lois et règlements sur le travail et une application moderne des dispositions qu'elles comportent.

(*The speaker resumes in English.*)

We have, in fact, consulted various stakeholders and now we are trying to identify the best approach to ensuring the modernization of our labour standards. At the same time, we implement policies aimed at ensuring strict compliance with labour legislation and regulations and the forward-looking implementation of the provisions contained therein.

In order to make equality a reality at the workplace, this year's ILO Global Report entitled: *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* notes the need for non-regulatory initiatives, in addition to effective enforcement of legislation. In Canada, we are considering new ways to cultivate the diversity that is Canada's strength. The Government of Canada's new Racism-Free Workplace Strategy acknowledges our changing demographic landscape and the need to eliminate racism in the workplace. It aims to remove the systemic discriminatory barriers facing visible minorities and aboriginal peoples through education and awareness and by bringing workplace partners together to share good practices and work on innovative solutions.

Earlier this year we, at the federal level, had the opportunity to discuss the future direction of the ILO with the ministers of labour of Canadian provincial and territorial governments. While all of them expressed strong support for the mission and objectives of the ILO, they shared the federal Government's views on the pressing need to reform the ILO and strategically plan and implement activities within its core mandate. They highlighted the need for effective management systems and a strong governance structure. They believe it is essential that the ILO focus on key elements of the Decent Work Agenda, where it can bring the greatest value and impact. The ILO should further develop its capacity to undertake strategic research and analysis, develop strong partnerships, and work closely with other international organizations within one United Nations system. They also support the ILO's work to build the capacity of the social partners and to assist member States to develop and effectively administer laws, policies and programmes that support the Decent Work Agenda. Finally, Canadian labour ministers unanimously underlined the importance for the ILO to ensure that its standards are up to date, adaptable to national circumstances, relevant to modern workplaces and overseen by an effective supervisory system. The Government, on the basis of this consensus among labour ministers of Canada, intends to participate actively in working towards a more effective and efficient ILO standards suited to the contemporary global world.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate Canada's support for the ILO and for the Decent Work Agenda. Moreover, Canada wants to challenge this Organization to move forward with essential reforms to ensure that it can effectively respond to today's ever-changing workplace. And we are ready to contribute to this process.

Mr. VASSILIOU (*Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus*)

It is an honour for me to address this 96th Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

I wish to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Somavia, for the theme of his Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, which is not only apt but also crucial, as it promotes even further the Decent Work Agenda. We fully concur with his view that the promotion of opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work constitutes the primary goal of the ILO today. The goal of achieving decent work as the best route to sustainable development, by tackling today's multifaceted challenges, is indeed a core labour issue.

We live in a fast-moving world shaped by the forces of globalization, rapid technological advances and demographic developments, which affect considerably the production of goods and services, business organization, the distribution of jobs at a global level and the structure of labour markets.

Within this global environment, it is incumbent upon us to rise to these challenges and take advantage of the opportunities presented. It is important to take action not only at the local but also at the global level and follow an integrated approach determined by policy interlinkages and synergy requirements. It is imperative to advance a strategy for sustainable development, respecting the environment, encompassing productivity gains and aiming at reconciling economic growth with equity and

social cohesion, via a fair distribution of benefits, both within and between countries and regions.

Economic and social progress need to go hand in hand, if we are to ensure viability. Decent work should constitute our platform of fundamental values and principles of action and governance. By combining economic growth and competitiveness with social justice and respect for basic labour standards, decent work carries and diffuses great rewards and beneficial externalities for all.

We should have a universal vision of a world social model, based on international solidarity and solidly underpinned by economic efficiency and well-planned policy focus and effectiveness. Decent work, through its various dimensions and objectives, is our definitive flagship in our fight to ensure conditions of freedom, equity and security combined with flexibility and offers real opportunities for dignified and human self-realization.

Consequently, this places a huge responsibility upon us to take concerted action in proactive partnership with the principal institutions and actors of the multilateral system and the global economy. Collaboration within a framework of multilateral governance, by taking advantage of the ILO's unique tripartite identity and membership, is a great means for achieving an equitable, inclusive and sustainable development, including poverty reduction and the elimination of working poverty.

In this respect, we fully welcome and support the Director-General's proposal to improve further the ILO's institutional capacities, methods of work and governance and strengthen its research, technical analysis and information base in order to improve the monitoring of labour market developments and help deliver the Decent Work Agenda. The concept of decent work has to be clarified further, and we need to develop appropriate and comparable indicators to measure it and, of course, to ensure its progress. Decent work, including good work organization, equality at work and more and better jobs, within the context of sustainable development, is an essential part of my country's targets and policies.

In light of the above, Cyprus takes a comprehensive approach, which includes legislative measures, mainstreaming employment and other positive actions, as well as offering financial support via action programmes.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my country's steadfast will to promote with its entire means the Decent Work Agenda across all pertinent policy fields in order to ensure justice and fairness to all. I would also like to express our wholehearted support to all international actions, and to all efforts of the ILO in this direction, including the key role the ILO can play in economic development, progress and ultimately the achievement of a more equitable and peaceful world.

Original arabe: M. MANSOURI (ministre de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle, Maroc)

Je voudrais féliciter M. Juan Somavia, Directeur général du Bureau international du Travail et remercier tous ses collaborateurs pour la qualité du rapport et des documents qui nous ont été soumis pendant cette Conférence. L'organisation de la Conférence par ailleurs a été tout à fait remarquable.

Le rapport du Directeur général est consacré essentiellement cette année au travail décent, dont il faut faire une priorité à l'échelon international et dans le domaine du développement. Le travail dé-

cent est devenu une composante essentielle pour réaliser un équilibre entre, d'une part, le développement économique et, d'autre part, les acquis sociaux et ceci à travers des politiques de l'investissement, de l'emploi et des échanges commerciaux et surtout, une bonne gouvernance sur le plan du marché du travail.

En affirmant l'importance du travail décent et des effets positifs qu'il peut avoir, nous approuvons le contenu du rapport du Directeur général soumis cette année à la Conférence.

Je voudrais également remercier l'OIT pour la persévérance dont elle fait preuve et pour son attachement aux principes de la paix, de la justice sociale et du développement social. Je remercie l'OIT pour tous les efforts accomplis afin de sauvegarder ces principes dans un monde en mutation constante, dans un monde soumis à la mondialisation.

Sur la base des résultats positifs obtenus par l'Organisation et des réformes institutionnelles qu'elle a entreprises, nous approuvons le rapport du Directeur général et nous souhaitons qu'il y ait un suivi régulier des effets de la mondialisation, sur le développement social et économique. Nous espérons également qu'une assistance technique sera accordée aux pays africains qui ont des difficultés à mettre en œuvre les programmes pour le travail décent et que l'on utilisera tous les instruments nécessaires pour assurer le suivi de la mise en œuvre des conventions de l'OIT.

Le principe de l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, qui a été choisi comme thème de discussion, ainsi que le document sur l'abolition du travail forcé présenté à la Commission d'experts pour l'application des conventions et recommandations sont aussi importants que le rapport du Directeur général car ce sont deux droits fondamentaux qui sont un préalable au respect de tous les autres droits. De même qu'ils sont prévus par toutes les religions et par le droit positif.

Le Royaume du Maroc affirme dans le préambule de la Constitution marocaine son respect pour les droits de l'homme tels que définis par la communauté internationale, de même qu'il respecte les droits fondamentaux des travailleurs conformément aux conventions de l'OIT et à la Déclaration de l'OIT adoptée en 1998. Tous ces principes ont été inscrits dans notre législation du travail de même qu'y a été intégré le contenu des huit conventions fondamentales.

Depuis la réforme lancée par Sa Majesté Mohammed VI en 2005 et qui vise entre autres à lutter contre la pauvreté, nous essayons de protéger les petites entreprises et d'assurer la scolarisation des personnes vivant en zone rurale, contribuant ainsi à la satisfaction des besoins fondamentaux de la population. Ce programme a été depuis élargi de façon à toucher les régions et les villages les plus vulnérables.

Nous avons également entrepris des efforts pour adapter notre législation nationale, afin qu'elle soit conforme à la législation internationale, notamment en matière de travail des enfants. En coopération avec les organisations intergouvernementales et les organisations non gouvernementales, nous avons préparé un projet de loi qui régleme les relations de travail pour les travailleurs domestiques, conformément aux conventions n^{os} 138 et 182. De même, un autre projet de loi est à l'étude, relatif à ce que nous appelons les occupations tradition-

nelles, notamment les métiers d'artisanat traditionnel «à caractère particulier».

Concernant l'égalité entre hommes et femmes, ce principe a été reconnu dans notre Constitution et traduit dans le nouveau droit du travail et le droit de la famille qui représentent une avancée considérable pour la société marocaine et l'une des grandes réformes sociales qu'a connues le pays et nous ont valu la reconnaissance de la communauté internationale.

Les politiques en matière d'emploi, de protection sociale et de dialogue social, mises en œuvre par le Maroc, représentent un pas en avant très important. Nous avons en effet mis en place une politique qui comprend toute une série d'éléments stratégiques, tels que la formation assurée aux diplômés afin de leur permettre de s'intégrer au marché du travail, une formation spéciale pour que les formations dispensées correspondent exactement aux emplois occupés, des mesures visant à encourager la création par les diplômés de petites entreprises et enfin, des mesures en matière de gouvernance du marché du travail.

L'annexe du rapport du Directeur général explore la situation des travailleurs dans les territoires arabes occupés qui est extrêmement difficile. Cette situation a empiré en raison du blocus économique injuste et la situation économique est de plus en plus grave, tout cela en violation des droits internationaux du travail, des principes de l'OIT, des principes des droits de l'homme et du droit de chacun à vivre dans la paix, la sécurité et la dignité. Nous appelons ainsi la communauté internationale, par l'intermédiaire de l'OIT, à mobiliser tous ses effets afin que soit levé ce blocus et que les travailleurs palestiniens puissent jouir de leurs droits fondamentaux et de leur droit à un travail décent.

Je voudrais conclure en souhaitant plein succès à la Conférence internationale du Travail.

Mr. FONG (*Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia*)

The topic of decent work for sustainable development is particularly timely for discussion at this session of the Conference. Malaysia welcomes the Director-General's Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, which discusses essential elements for shaping a fair globalization. The Report, among other things, touches on the issues of a balanced approach to sustainable development, more coherent policies on trade and employment and the promotion of social justice, labour market information, social protection and social dialogue, which are undeniably fundamental to decent work.

Sustainable development should be based on three essential components: the creation of economic wealth, environmental improvement and social equity. All these are essential for long-term sustainability. These components should be built into business strategies and form an essential part of the framework of standards and values in the Organization. The framework has to be aligned with major standards such as the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Practising good governance and running businesses within a framework of standards and values will help the Organization in its efforts to achieve sustainable development.

In the present context of liberalization and changing economic scenarios, emphasis should be placed on consultations among governments, employers and workers. These have a responsibility to ensure

social protection and security, especially in the case of restructuring, and to implement active labour market policies such as retraining and lifelong learning to remain competitive. At the national level, integrated Decent Work Country Programmes, developed by ILO constituents, should define the priorities and targets within the national development framework. The ILO should provide in-depth expertise and key policy instruments for the design and implementation of these programmes, for the building of institutions to carry them forward and for the measurement of progress.

My delegation is pleased with the ILO's efforts and commitments in preparing the Global Report on equality at work. Malaysia agrees that there is a need for better enforcement of legislation and non-regulating initiatives by governments and enterprises against discrimination, and the social partners need to be equipped to be more effective in making equality a reality at the workplace.

Furthermore, failure to deal with discrimination at work will mean that it is more difficult to deal with challenges, especially the social dimension of globalization and the need to accommodate diversity. Discrimination can also perpetuate poverty, stifle development, productivity and competitiveness and ignite political unrest. However, States must be allowed to set their own priorities and plan how to deal with discrimination.

We share the deep concern expressed in the Director-General's Report regarding the plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories and in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights. Violence continues to affect the Palestinian civilians and the situation in those territories remains highly volatile. The destruction of Palestinian houses, property, land and infrastructure is a result of continued Israeli occupation and aggressive practices. The Report noted that economic activities have declined sharply, leading to widespread poverty, precarious employment and unemployment. The high unemployment and poverty rates among the Palestinians in the occupied territories are the direct consequences of the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities on the movement of the Palestinians.

These policies have weakened hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, depriving them of their potential to work with dignity and support themselves and their families. The Israeli actions contravene international human rights and laws that guarantee the right to freedom of movement, the right to work and the right to an adequate standard of living.

In this regard, Malaysia calls on the international community to urge strongly the Israeli Government to cease immediately its aggressive and violent actions against the Palestinians in the occupied territories and to respect international laws.

Malaysia welcomes the efforts of the ILO to intensify its programmes on technical cooperation, capacity building and the promotion of social dialogues to bring peace and development to the occupied territories, with the aim of increasing work opportunities and reducing poverty and unemployment. Malaysia also reaffirms its full support for the peace process and for stability in the occupied territories in order to achieve peace and security in the region.

Malaysia wishes to underline the importance of the ongoing efforts to improve the working methods and procedures of the Committee on the Application of Standards and the expansion of the Commit-

tee on Freedom of Association. I wish to reiterate that these Committees must continue to focus on enhancing their transparency, objectivity and credibility in order to carry out the ILO's mandate.

In this regard, Malaysia supports the statements by the Non-Aligned Movement that provide the specific inputs aimed at improving the methods and procedures of the Committee on the Application of Standards and also the justification for the expansion of the Committee on Freedom of Association. We hope that both the Committees and the ILO will address these matters in a constructive manner for the benefit of all Members.

Mr. MOKGOTHU (*Government, Botswana*)

It gives me great pleasure, Mr. President, to address this august assembly this afternoon. Let me join others in congratulating you on your election as President of the 96th Conference. I am confident that under your guidance this assembly will achieve the intended objectives.

The 96th Session of the International Labour Conference presents yet another opportunity for us to reflect on the performance of the International Labour Organization, and to address the challenges that impact negatively on the realization of the goals and objectives of the Organization.

We must look beyond the accomplishments we have made; in the words of the Director-General, "we need to continue preparing the ILO for the accelerating pace of change in the world of work in the current context of globalization".

The Report of the Director-General provides an invaluable basis for undertaking the gigantic task ahead, as well as guidance for mapping future strategies. In accordance with the vision of decent work for all, the Report of the Director-General takes us a step forward in our pursuit of the goal of sustainable development. We cannot agree more that the integrated social development strategy that encapsulates social, economic and environmental dimensions is the key to success in the ILO's efforts to fulfil its mandate.

There is no doubt that the Decent Work Agenda continues to present a unifying vision among the social partners and within the multilateral system. In Africa, we have just adopted the resolutions on the Decent Work Agenda 2007-15. In so doing, we committed the national constituents of the ILO and the Office to a series of ambitious targets for the development of integrated Decent Work Country Programmes.

We recognize that the ILO does not operate in a vacuum. Its efforts to infuse fairness and efficiency into labour market policies, as well as in trade and investment policies, appeal to all. The objectives of this Organization are inextricably linked to the objectives of other multinational organizations. Of course this makes sense since the customers of all these organizations are human beings, whose needs have a tendency to converge. It is therefore logical for the ILO to forge closer partnerships with all stakeholders, with a view to coming up with concerted strategies to address problems confronting mankind.

It is for this reason that the African regional meeting, held in Addis Ababa in April 2007, committed the ILO to increasing its collaboration with partner agencies in order to accelerate progress towards the agreed international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

The unique structure of the ILO, which is premised on tripartism, gives it a comparative advantage in the international development agenda. Tripartism is the basis for the existence of the ILO. It is this make-up of the Organization that gives it the strength and resiliency to withstand the contemporary challenges. We therefore have every reason to guard zealously the principle of tripartism.

At the national level we cannot boast of a perfect system of tripartite consultation. It is not uncommon for the social partners to criticize the government for the product of tripartite consultation or social dialogue. It is therefore imperative that we instil commitment and integrity into the process of tripartism in order to maximize its value.

The agenda for the Conference touches on issues of critical importance for all the constituents of the ILO. We are looking forward to the recommendations on the promotion of sustainable enterprises. Enterprises, particularly private ones, are deemed essential to the transformation of Botswana's economy. Consequently, a Local Enterprise Authority has been established with the mandate of creating an environment that is conducive to enterprise development.

The Authority undertakes a number of interventions to promote and facilitate entrepreneurship and enterprise development in Botswana. I believe the recommendations on the promotion of sustainable enterprises should form an important part of these interventions.

The discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members to reach their objectives in the context of globalization is timely. In this rapidly changing world, the call for self-assessment and adaptation to the prevailing circumstances cannot go unheeded. Continuous improvement is important for the survival of any organization.

Lastly, the ideas put forward in the Office Report on this subject are helpful in improving the responsiveness of the ILO to the needs of its constituents.

However, care must be taken not to overburden the Office. We must also avoid creating unnecessary duplications. Due consideration also needs to be given to the implementation of the proposed measures on the Organization's scarce resources.

Mr. INDRASUKHSRI (*Government, Thailand*)

It is a particular pleasure for me to speak here in this year, 2007, which marks for us the auspicious occasion of the 80th birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

The Director-General's Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, confronts the major challenge in advancing the Decent Work Agenda effectively, and indeed puts forward the core employment values that should be continually considered and provoke our reflections.

As the ILO reported recently, more than 13 million ASEAN workers are migrant workers, and more than 5 million of those are working in other ASEAN countries. The Thai Government has consistently sought to make progress with respect to our commitments regarding labour and to improve employment conditions in our country. I would like to draw your attention to the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers, adopted in January 2007. It commits all of our governments to promoting decent, humane, productive, dignified and remunerative employment for migrant workers.

We are also committed to promoting human resource development programmes for our workers and to helping them to reintegrate into society when they return from working overseas, and also to upholding the rights of migrant workers.

I would next like to touch upon the issue of work in the fishing sector. This subject is a very important one and we welcome the attention paid to it at this year's Conference. We are determined to ensure that decent conditions exist for people working in the industry.

We believe that, to protect fishers, the adoption of a new Convention concerning the fishing sector will be beneficial. At the moment it would be a challenge to adjust working conditions on board to the requirements agreed. We believe that we are not alone in facing this challenge, but that it would be possible to try to regulate working conditions according to these standards in the near future. Of course we very much welcome the sentiments offered, and hope that fishers, not only in Thailand but worldwide, will one day grasp and use to the full the opportunities provided by the Convention.

The ILO's desire to improve its capacity to assist Members' efforts to reach their objectives in the context of globalization reflects its strong responsibilities. We fully support this approach, and congratulate the ILO on continuing to seek to improve its effectiveness, which will help to ensure that women and men living in poverty have opportunities for more productive employment. We will of course do whatever we can to assist this process.

Regarding the topic on the promotion of sustainable enterprises, the Tenth National Economic and Social Plan of Thailand emphasizes the need for peaceful development in society by strengthening family and community bonds to create a green and happy society.

At all levels, Thai people are being encouraged and helped to consider how they are living their lives and how this can be brought into line with the self-sufficiency principle. Ensuring that our economic activities do not damage the environment, or bring our descendants into unsustainable debt, is an important strand in the overall strategy.

Finally, the Ministry of Labour has made more progress in enhancing social protection for the disabled in collaboration with the Council of Disabled People of Thailand, employers and government agencies. At the moment, we are on the way to submitting our findings on the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) to the Cabinet, which will be the next stage in ensuring ratification. It is expected that more favourable measures will be expanded in future.

I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of Thailand, to express our heartfelt appreciation to the ILO for its commitment and continued support. Thank you.

Sr. DE REGIL (*empleador, México*)

México, país profundamente involucrado en la libertad, ha experimentado recientemente un proceso electoral calificado particularmente por los observadores internacionales de limpio, claro y transparente, que constituye un ejercicio democrático ejemplar y conforme transcurre el tiempo va dando solidez y congruencia a las acciones gubernamentales, respecto de las cuales, la Confederación de Cámaras Industriales de los Estados

Unidos Mexicanos que tengo el honor de representar, es objeto de consulta constante.

Hemos analizado con interés y acuciosidad los temas que integran el orden del día de la Conferencia y la Memoria del señor Director General y la nueva estructura de la Conferencia de cuyo ejercicio experimental deberá concluirse su efectividad y pertinencia a la conclusión de esta Conferencia.

Aplaudimos toda acción tendiente a eliminar y evitar la discriminación en todas sus formas, pero no identificamos a la contratación colectiva como el principal medio para su combate. Creemos que ésta tiene un objetivo dirigido al ámbito de las relaciones laborales y que no es el único medio de definición de las condiciones de trabajo entre empleadores y trabajadores o sus representantes.

Es loable el esfuerzo realizado para integrar un documento base de la discusión en la Conferencia respecto del trabajo en el sector pesquero; pero seguimos preocupados por la presencia de instrumentos excesivamente prescriptivos que incluso rebasan el ámbito específico de las condiciones de trabajo.

Esto dificulta sin duda su ratificación y limita el desarrollo de la actividad pesquera. Coincidimos en la lucha contra la pobreza a todos los niveles y estamos convencidos de que el medio o camino efectivo para que realmente pueda darse una disminución consistente del problema de la pobreza, es a través del trabajo, de la creación de empleos productivos y libremente escogidos.

En este proceso, no se tiene más ni mejor opción que la de dar fortaleza y consistencia al espíritu emprendedor, a la creación de empresas, a inducir al autoempleo como simiente de las nuevas empresas y propiciar la consistencia y crecimiento de las actuales.

Si no convergen los esfuerzos de los interlocutores sociales en esta ruta dando oportunidad a la administración pública para facilitar la multiplicación de centros de trabajo y la oferta de empleo, la pobreza seguirá adelante.

Para ese efecto se requiere, entre otras medidas, una mejora regulatoria simplificando la normatividad, fortaleciendo la seguridad jurídica, y buscar el financiamiento de apoyo de las micro, pequeñas y medianas empresas, dando lugar a una política económica, industrial y laboral consistente, y de no ser así seguiremos viendo con preocupación el incremento de la emigración forzada que desarraiga a los trabajadores de sus lugares de origen en procura de mejores condiciones de vida.

Los empleadores estamos comprometidos en orientar esfuerzos e inversiones para lograr la generación de empleos con el interés de que sean mejores en calidad, ubicación y cantidad.

Si bien las estructuras locales de cada país son básicas para el crecimiento del empleo y el desarrollo del espíritu emprendedor, los organismos internacionales que de una u otra manera tienen relación con el tema, pueden y deben coadyuvar para satisfacer el objetivo de la creación de empleos del trabajo decente en el contexto de la OIT.

Consecuentemente, en las actividades de la OIT resulta fundamental por una parte, entender la aplicación de la discusión general que se ha tenido durante los trabajos de esta reunión de la Conferencia sobre la promoción de empresas sostenibles y por otra parte, identificar a los empleadores como factor sustancial de las actividades de la OIT y, dentro de ellas, considerar que la cooperación técnica se encauce a definir mecanismos de fortalecimiento de

las organizaciones de los empleadores para estimular el espíritu empleador, su capacidad para el mejor aprovechamiento de los avances tecnológicos a fin de lograr una mayor eficiencia e incorporar novedosos sistemas de vinculación en productividad y competitividad.

Los empleadores mexicanos confiamos en que esto es posible y estamos dispuestos a colaborar en todo este esquema a favor del empleo y en contra de la pobreza.

Sr. BRUNA (*empleador, Chile*)

Los empleadores chilenos, representantes de la Confederación de la Producción y del Comercio, agradecemos la oportunidad de dirigirnos a esta asamblea tripartita.

En primer lugar, queremos expresar que compartimos la aspiración muy loable de la OIT de crear y ofrecer trabajo decente. Sin embargo, debemos advertir que existe un gran riesgo al establecer como requisito previo del empleo que éste cumpla con las características del trabajo decente. Esa exigencia para los pobres de África, Asia y América Latina, que antes que nada requieren un empleo, es poco realista y podrían obstaculizar la creación de nuevos puestos de trabajo. La prioridad, a nuestro juicio, debería ser el empleo, y mientras menos desempleo exista más decente será el trabajo. Pero si colocamos varas muy altas para el empleo, el resultado será informalidad, en el mejor de los casos, y desempleo en el escenario peor.

El empleo es la meta. El trabajo decente es, en una medida importante, la consecuencia de una alta tasa de empleo.

En mi país hemos legislado recientemente sobre subcontratación. Se trata de una ley con muchos aspectos positivos y que hace más decente el trabajo para muchos, pero que no genera nuevos empleos.

Para los jóvenes y los mayores de 50 años desempleados se requieren leyes que alienten y faciliten su contratación, no les sirven las leyes que mejoran la situación de quienes ya tienen trabajo.

En relación con la reforma provisional que abordará mi país, quiero señalar que apoyamos aquellos cambios inspirados en dar mayor protección y cobertura a aquellos trabajadores que, por desempleo o por informalidad, no han podido financiar su previsión. A la vez, aspiramos a que este proceso de reforma legal sirva para garantizar la estabilidad de un sistema iniciado en Chile en 1980 aplicado hoy por más de 30 países, cuyo éxito se demuestra tanto por su aporte al mejoramiento de las pensiones como por su contribución al desarrollo económico.

También debo expresar que somos activos partidarios del diálogo social enmarcado en una estructura ágil y no burocrática que privilegie los acuerdos libremente alcanzados, sin presiones de ninguna naturaleza. Igualmente, debo señalar que la Confederación que represento considera que el sistema legal de negociación colectiva vigente en Chile no debe ser modificado en lo que se refiere al ámbito de la negociación. En la actualidad, está radicado en la empresa, y creemos que ello permite valorar adecuadamente los aportes de productividad de los trabajadores.

Una negociación obligatoria sectorial o entre empresas establece condiciones promedio que pueden ser muy gravosas para las pequeñas empresas y muy convenientes para las grandes empresas. Por tanto expresamos nuestro desacuerdo con las eventuales

propuestas de reformas legales en el sentido comentado.

Quiero destacar finalmente un hecho relevante ocurrido en mi país en el último año. De acuerdo con resultados oficiales, la extrema pobreza se ha reducido de un 18,8 por ciento en 2003 a un 13,7 por ciento el año pasado. Ello se ha logrado con crecimiento económico, mayor productividad y una aceptable protección social que podría mejorar muchísimo su eficacia.

Original arabe: M. JAZAÏRY (*gouvernement, Algérie*)

Monsieur le Président, j'aimerais intervenir au nom du ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité sociale qui n'a pas pu assister à cette Conférence car il a dû rentrer d'urgence à Alger.

L'expérience de l'Algérie dans le développement s'est appuyée sur un plan à moyen et à long terme, et également en tant que moteur pour le développement social. Dans ce sens, l'Algérie a commencé à appliquer deux programmes de développement: le programme d'appui à la revitalisation de l'économie de 2001 à 2004 et un programme de développement économique entre 2005 et 2009.

Les deux programmes ont pu commencer à avoir des résultats dans le cadre de la création d'usines, de cette façon le chômage a reculé de 30 pour cent en 1999 et de 12,3 pour cent en 2006. C'est dans ce cas-là que nous avons reçu l'appui de l'OIT par le biais de séminaires sur la base de données qui ont été collectées à ce sujet.

Le Centre de Turin, qui travaille d'une façon excellente, ne peut pas, par contre, répondre à tous les besoins des pays en développement. C'est pour cela que nous pensons créer des centres régionaux, et l'Algérie est tout à fait disposée à créer un centre de ce genre dans son pays dans le cadre de l'OIT ou sous les auspices de l'OIT.

Nous avons, en Algérie, organisé une réunion tripartite récente avec les représentants des employeurs et des travailleurs, qui s'est tenue du 30 septembre au 1^{er} octobre 2006.

Ce pacte économique que nous avons réalisé peut être pris comme exemple pour les autres États Membres et nous sommes tout à fait certains que l'Organisation n'hésitera pas à le faire distribuer.

Le gouvernement algérien, depuis un an, a commencé les consultations avec les partenaires économiques et sociaux pour rénover le droit du travail et, dans ce cadre, nous espérons que l'OIT va pouvoir nous aider dans cette réorganisation de notre loi, et nous sommes heureux de ce que l'Organisation nous présente. Nous espérons que ces programmes pourront augmenter car l'Algérie a une capacité d'absorption beaucoup plus grande.

Avant de conclure, j'aimerais parler de ce qui est contenu dans le rapport du Directeur général sur la situation des travailleurs arabes dans les territoires arabes occupés. Il est clair, dans ce rapport, que cette occupation et la violence dans ces régions sont l'obstacle principal au développement en Palestine et dans les autres territoires occupés, et ceci demande à toute la communauté internationale de prendre des mesures urgentes afin que les pratiques israéliennes cessent immédiatement.

Mr. PINTER (*Government, Slovakia*)

I will read the statement of Ms. Tomanová, Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and inform you of certain labour code amendments adopted by the Parliament of Slovakia.

Part 7 of the Report of the Director-General of the ILO: *Decent work for sustainable development*, entitled Modernizing governance of the world of work, emphasizes the need to adopt labour laws and social dialogue institutions to changing patterns in the world of work and in markets, while securing full respect for fundamental rights at work. I would like to say a few words about this part of the Report of the Director-General and to apply the principles and points of departure contained in the Report to the conditions in the Slovak Republic.

The Government of the Slovak Republic, which took office in July 2006 on the basis of the results of democratic parliamentary elections, in its programme devotes special attention to labour and social affairs, which create the essential precondition for increasing employment, improving business conditions and promoting economic development in general.

The primary goal of the Government's social policy is to provide social programmes for the population that guarantee maintenance and development of economic and social rights to achieve decent work and a decent standard of living for every person. The Government is building its social policy mainly on the basis of European social and legal culture, with full respect for interrelations between social processes and processes at the European and global levels. The Government recognizes social dialogue as an effective instrument for the participation of employees and employers in the formulation of economic and social policies and the preservation of social peace. This year, Parliament has adopted the Tripartite Act. The purpose of this Act is to support effective social dialogue at the national level among Government, employers and employees on macro-economic policy and social policy issues.

The Labour Code is an important instrument in shaping industrial relations. Its amendment is subject to the approval of Parliament these days; its amendment is intended to secure a balance in relations between employers and employees. It shall create conditions for flexible labour markets, on the one hand, and secure the protection of employees and stipulate conditions for decent and good work, on the other. It shall also prevent attempts to disguise employment relationships in the sense of the ILO Employment Relationship Recommendation, 2006 (No. 198).

My Government is convinced that sustainable and prospering enterprises are the basis of successful economic development. The Government creates positive business conditions for the development of all types of undertakings, mainly through tax policy and investment incentives. There are no possibilities to secure prosperity and economic growth to the detriment of rights of employees. Social dumping is not our route to prosperity. I am convinced that, alongside economic growth and flexibility of the labour market, conditions for decent and good work need to be secured as formulated under the German Presidency of the European Union. In an era of a knowledge-based economy, attention needs to be paid, inter alia, to developing human resources. This is the challenge we should address and the route we should take in the third millennium.

We are approaching the 90th anniversary of the foundation of the International Labour Organization. From its foundation in 1919 to the present, it has justified its existence; its unique tripartite man-

date is a guarantee of social justice and development of labour and social relations.

Mr. RYDER (*representative, International Trade Union Confederation*)

Thank you Mr. President and congratulations to you on your election and to the Director-General on his Report to the Conference. A Conference to which for the first time in the ILO's history, the overwhelming majority of the representatives of independent and democratic trade unions come as affiliates of a single unified trade union, the International Trade Union Confederation. The creation of the ITUC in November 2006 in Vienna required from our affiliates the political vision necessary to overcome historic division in our movement. It was also an expression of ambition: the ambition to build a new trade union internationalism and to bring fundamental change to the world of work and to the model of globalization which is shaping it, and to provide effective trade union representation to workers wherever they are placed in our globalized economy.

In many aspects, the ITUC's founding documents echo the founding texts of the International Labour Organization and its Declaration of Philadelphia. And so I think it should not come as a surprise to anyone here that our Confederation is constitutionally committed to work to strengthen the ILO and that our programme recognizes the ILO as a global reference point, both as a source of international labour standards and their supervision, and as a practitioner, a proponent and a promoter of tripartism and of social dialogue. What resonates most clearly from these documents and from the Director-General's Report is the absolute relevance today of the International Labour Organization, its values and objectives, and those that may have been tempted to write-off trade unions as yesterday's organizations may have been tempted to do the same for the ILO. But more than ever, and together, we are building for tomorrow. At a moment when the international trade union movement is in a profound process of renewal, we cannot but be encouraged by the vision and the leadership which has inspired the Decent Work Agenda, made it a global goal and put the International Labour Organization where we want to see it at the centre of international policy-making.

Mr. President, I think that it is worth recalling the efforts made by this Organization on its 75th anniversary in 1994, which was not an easy moment in its history, to trace out its future place in a world transformed. Today we are half way between that moment and the ILO's centenary and so I believe that the moment is truly auspicious and that the time is surely right not simply to dwell on the considerable achievements of this Organization over the last decade but to move forward, and build on those achievements further so that the ILO's first 100 years of history will truly have been everything that its founders foresaw and hoped for.

We all need to remember that for all the ILO has achieved, and for all the value that the ITUC attaches to it and its work, much of what is happening in the world of work today is in clear contradiction to its objectives. The Director-General has highlighted the persistent and deepening decent work deficits which together we must recommit to eliminate. I do not believe the trade unions serve the interests of their members by condemning globaliza-

tion as the root cause of all of their problems but equally others serve no good purpose by closing their eyes to the profound injustices and dysfunctions of today's globalization, both parties would do better working together to build fairness and social justice into the system. When the share of income going to workers has shrunk today's historic lows and is still on a downward path, when world unemployment stands at record highs, and jobs are evermore precarious, when the international community has still to tackle effectively its responsibilities to guarantee respect for workers' rights everywhere, when our societies are growing more unequal and the differences between them greater, and when poverty persists and basic social protections are denied, then not just trade unions but employers and governments too are impelled to act. Where better than here, and when better than now? The simple truth is that we need to do more, and the Director-General gives us the opportunity to do so by picking up the six challenges that he presented to the Conference yesterday when he introduced his Report. The ITUC assumes its responsibility in meeting those challenges.

An ILO which takes the lead on the jobs agenda which has to accompany action on climate change, an ILO which plays a central role in trade and employment, an ILO which addresses growing inequality between capital and labour and intensifies its cooperation with others in the multilateral system to advance the Decent Work Agenda, which strengthens its standards machinery, and which improves its analytical capacities and does all of this with the full and committed engagement of its tripartite constituency is an ILO that people want, and which will reach its 100th anniversary as a key actor on the key issues of the day.

Mr. YITZHAKY (*Government, Israel*)

First, I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, with respect to the excellent preparation of this Conference and for his Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, the subject of our discussion this week. This Report by the Director-General acknowledges that tripartism is a tool that promotes decent work and creates a better place for working. Thus, I would like to express my appreciation for the ongoing dialogue and cooperation between the three parties involved in labour relations in Israel. There is no doubt that cooperation, in particular, between the Histadrut (Israel's General Federation of Labour), the Israeli Trade Union Federation and employers' organizations is greatly beneficial to the Israeli economy. It has been encouraged by the Government and as a result, the Israeli economy recently exhibited positive signs and trends.

We have recently been witnessing a substantial decline in unemployment figures from 11 per cent of the labour force a few years ago to about 7 per cent today. The rate of participation in the labour market has also increased during the same period. The financial indicators are also positive, reflected by low inflation, a relatively low national debt and low budgetary deficit. In the light of this information, we are witnessing massive foreign investment in the Israeli market. Furthermore the recent meeting of the Council for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) at ministerial level, the Council decided to invite Israel to engage in preliminary talks in order to obtain member State status

in the Organization. This is a step that will surely assist the complete integration of the Israeli economy into the global economy.

Moreover, the labour relations situation is also improving. This is mainly thanks to the fruitful cooperation between the leaders of the social organizations. This cooperation between the parties to labour relations matters is a significant factor in the drastic decrease of strike data.

There are also collective agreements between organizations. The Government is grateful for these and encourages their existence by applying them to all employees and unorganized employers by extension orders.

The minimum wage is also increasing gradually and reasonably, as a result of consultation between the three parties in an effort to fight poverty. Despite the fact that the poverty data appear to show a decline, the Government has recently decided to combat poverty by granting negative income tax, increasing old-age pensions, ensuring a pension for all those in the second tier, encouraging women to work by subsidizing day care centres for children and encouraging productivity and innovation in the traditional industries and services that offer employment. Likewise, the Government has decided to boost enforcement of workers' rights through close collaboration with the social partners.

The pension issue in Israel is currently a top priority. Furthermore, the Government is promoting a law allowing parties to labour relations matters, the Histadrut and employers' organizations to reach an agreement within a period of time to be extended by virtue of that law to all workers.

To conclude, we hope that the ongoing dialogue between the three parties will be fruitful and beneficial to the economy and the labour market as a whole, and that it will be in accordance with the spirit of the rules and norms of the ILO.

Mr. GAZDÍK (*Worker, Slovakia*)

First of all, allow me to extend to you my best regards on behalf of the Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic, and also in my own name. I congratulate the President on being elected to this important position.

It is an honour for me to address this distinguished assembly and to inform you briefly of the present position of trade unions in the Slovak Republic with regard to tripartite, relations as well as the present stance of Slovak trade unions on legislative changes in the world of work. I am pleased to respond to the ideas advanced by the Director-General.

In terms of area, Slovakia is not one of the large European States, but it is one of those countries of the world which are actively participating in the work of the ILO. The Slovak Republic has ratified eight ILO Conventions relating to fundamental principles and rights at work. The Confederation of Trade Unions of the Slovak Republic is one of the social partners that is actively participating in the preparation of changes of the Slovak Labour Act, as stated in ILO documents.

The issues raised by globalization, which have to be resolved in favour of sustainable development in the world of work, are of concern also to Slovakia. Slovak trade unions are aware that it is quite logical that our country should also be affected by a form of development that has resulted in a decrease in workers' protection. It is therefore, necessary to

pass the draft amendments to the Labour Code, so that Slovakia respects a certain amount of labour flexibility but nevertheless ensures the greatest possible protection of workers.

We are pleased to say that the present Slovak Government, which came to power after the last parliamentary elections, is listening sensitively to the voice of workers. We, trade unionists, are fully aware that, to ensure the conditions for decent work, it is not enough to pass legislation. The collaboration of employers in this long and demanding process is irreplaceable and necessary. In this regard, I am happy to say that, since April this year, social dialogue in Slovakia has a new legal framework providing the conditions for the effective cooperation of all social partners.

The 90th birthday of the ILO is approaching. On behalf of the Slovak trade unions, I wish to declare that the Slovak trade unions are prepared to engage fully in social partnership.

To conclude, allow me to express my hope that today, at a time of extensive globalization, the ILO Conference debate will contribute to the improvement of the quality of human life all over the world. I wish all social partners fruitful cooperation, both at the level of this important world organization and at the national level.

Mr. THAILUAN (*Worker, Thailand*)

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to have the opportunity to convey my message on behalf of workers in Thailand.

In the past ten years, reporting on the trade union situation in Thailand, I used to tell this Conference that there were two serious problems in my country. The first problem was on subcontracted workers, and the second, the intervention of the tripartite mechanism. May I inform you that these two problems have not been solved yet and the situation seems to be even more serious.

The type of employment that I called the double-standard employment still exists. Subcontracted workers, who are employed at the same time as permanent workers, receive a lower salary, without any fringe benefits. At present, this type of employment is spreading throughout the country. Moreover, most foreign investors have changed their way of recruitment in favour of subcontracted workers. There are two million subcontracted workers now in Thailand, and their numbers seem to increase more and more.

As to tripartite system, for more than 30 years the Government has controlled all tripartite committees by claiming authority to appoint their members, including the Labour Relations Committee, the Labour Welfare Committee, the Social Security Committee and the Workmen's Compensation Committee. Only the Labour Advisory Committee and Associate Judge in the Labour Court are elected by trade unions.

Over the past ten years, workers and trade unions in Thailand have tried to change the tripartite system by giving workers a better chance to elect their own representative in all tripartite committees, but their efforts have never succeeded.

There was a good opportunity for Thai workers to solve the problem when there was a change in politics on 19 September last year, when the military dissolved the Constitution and appointed a Constitution Drafting Committee. I, in cooperation with trade unions and workers in Thailand, have submit-

ted a proposal to the Drafting Committee to insert a clause in the Constitution to prevent the abuse of subcontract work and to empower trade unions and workers to elect their own representatives in all tripartite bodies. I am pleased to inform you that our proposals have been accepted by the Constitution Drafting Committee.

Article 83, paragraph 8, of the new draft Constitution states that the Government's economic policy must be to promote employment opportunities for the working-age population, to protect child workers and women workers, and to organize the labour relations and tripartite system so that workers can elect their own representatives, to provide a social security system and to promote decent work for all, with fair remuneration, and equal treatment in welfare and fringe benefits and without any discrimination.

I hope that, if this draft Constitution comes into force, the Government will follow this policy and that the problem of subcontracted workers and the tripartite mechanism in Thailand will be solved.

I will be here again next year to report on progress in this matter.

Ms. BLINKEVICIUTE (*Minister of Social Security and Labour, Lithuania*)

I am very glad and honoured to be here once again and address all of you participating in the 96th Session of the ILC.

Firstly, let me express congratulations to the President on his election and on his successful Presidency of this session.

We meet here every year not only to identify the main issues of the working world but also to take steps in tackling them. This is possible only by the power of our collaboration.

The questions that the ILO has put forward for this Conference are of great importance. Indeed, the promotion of decent work and sustainable development are among the main priorities on our political agenda at both global and national levels. It is evident that we all are facing a time of opportunity and huge responsibility in this field.

In Lithuania, we devote considerable attention to the promotion of all elements of decent work, taking into consideration the sustainable development dimension. We consider that it is an important precondition for strengthening the competitiveness of our country for the development of an active and inclusive labour market and for ensuring proper social protection for all. The introduction of necessary measures for flexibility and security in the labour market are among the priorities of our labour market reform. We also affirm the importance of corporate social responsibility in seeking to promote decent work and ensure sustainable development.

The Report of the Director-General, *Decent work for sustainable development*, clearly imposes on us an obligation to fortify our efforts in making this world a better place not only for us but also for future generations. It draws our attention to issues which can be addressed only by ongoing cooperation between social partners, States, different international organizations and other stakeholders. We have to work together with social partners in reaching our goals.

We see the tasks, objectives and guidelines drawn in the Report of the Director-General as ambitious and far-reaching but, at the same time, they are ap-

propriate to tackle the challenges which are standing before us.

The impact of decent work for sustainable development is impossible to measure. It is huge! Lithuania considers decent work an issue of utmost importance. We are strongly convinced that sustainable development could not be achieved without decent work. Here, the crucial role of international labour standards and their proper implementation is evident.

I also want to emphasize the need to bring attention to target groups: young persons, women, senior employees, disabled people, migrants and minorities. We have to ensure creation of equal opportunities for them. This need is emphasized once again at the EU level by the declaration of this year as the Year of Equal Opportunities for All. Seeking to unify and strengthen our efforts in this field, the Lithuanian Government recently adopted a National Anti-Discrimination Programme, where a great amount of measures have been introduced. The proper implementation of these measures is a main condition for the creation of social justice, which is an essential element of sustainable development.

We have reached the stage where sustainable development through decent work is no longer treated as only a fashion trend. We have reached a point of no return.

I am strongly convinced that the ILO and the actions it takes have to become even more visible at international and also national level.

The ILO has to be seen by individuals waiting for positive outcomes. I believe that the ILO can undertake and fulfil this obligation.

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

I am glad to have this opportunity to address the Conference on behalf of the TUAC that groups the 55 union centres in the OECD countries and is a partner with the ITUC and the Global Union Federations in the Council of Global Unions.

The Director-General's Report articulates the deep concern that I hear when I talk to the working people in the OECD countries that TUAC represents. They are worried over their and their children's futures. The worry certainly reflects the non-sustainability of current consumption and production patterns, given the now clear evidence of climate change. But they are also worried about their own living standards and the growing feeling of insecurity of work.

Of course the situation is far more dramatic for the 1.4 billion people in developing countries who have to work for less than two dollars a day.

Workers do not see the newly created wealth that has been talked about by some as the fruits of market-driven globalization trickle down to them and their families. The benefits are accruing to a few at the top of the income scale. Yesterday it was made public that the two founders of the private equity group Blackstone stand to collect 2.3 billion dollars with the public offering of their company on top of the 400 million dollars that the CEO earned as salary last year. That is enough to treat one million HIV/AIDS patients for a year.

Meanwhile the overall share of wages in national income has been falling as never before in history. Inequality of incomes has been rising in 17 out of the 20 countries surveyed by the OECD.

There is also a disturbing surge of inequality in developing countries.

It would be stupid to lay all the blame for this situation at the door of globalization. There was a lack of decent work before the current surge of globalization. However, one fact about global supply chains, which according to some have replaced multinationals as the dominant form of business model, is that it has given employers and investors an exit option in any country.

So there is a paradox between the laudable objectives of achieving partnerships for sustainable development and sustainable enterprises and the sort of business conduct that is being discussed in this Conference; and the threats by employers to relocate activities to other countries and the pressure for short-term profits from new financial investors such as private equity and hedge funds at the other end of the spectrum.

So, we face the challenge of achieving just and fair globalization as already set out by the ILO's World Commission three years ago.

First and foremost, this requires governments to regulate and put the floor in labour markets by ensuring the respect of core workers' rights as defined by the ILO. That is the cornerstone of decent work.

The right to organize is a basic human right but we also know that when workers are free to form unions this is a key part of the solution to growing inequality. Where unions exist and bargain there is less low pay, more secure work and often more efficient economies and certainly more just societies.

So, we have our own role to play as unions but also ILO core labour standards must become the international benchmark through different international institutions and they must include the OECD, the IMF, World Bank and the WTO.

Governments have to work for a more effective regulatory response.

For decent work and enforcement of workers' rights, we have to progress by several routes at the same time. As Vice-Chancellor Müntefering said this morning, we certainly feel that it was also a step forward that the G8 last week in Heiligendamm called for the implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda even though other aspects of their agreements were wanting on financing to developing countries.

Also, in the TUAC's view, it is now time to move forward with a new cooperation agreement between the ILO and the OECD covering the progression of decent work through development assistance recommendations of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee and also ensuring that the existing OECD countries, including the Republic of Korea, respect workers' rights to organize, as well as insisting that new members who are now to be invited to join the OECD should respect these rights.

We require more effective application of instruments such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. We want to work with companies to ensure that they are applied more effectively in regions such as China and with governments to develop more effectively operating national contact points.

The integration of the three pillars of sustainable development, environmental, economic and social, must be the central concern for us all but to face this challenge I ask myself each day, do we not need more and better government regulation? Is it realistic to ask partners in private equity firms to behave

responsibly? We must do more and we must do it better. In the TUAC with the creation of the ITUC and the Global Unions we are working as part of a reinforced partnership to make the difference and to make sure that no one, no one is denied decent work.

Sra. MUÑOZ (*Trabajadora, Chile*)

Ya todos comprobamos que no es verdadera la afirmación «el mercado lo regula todo» y entonces debemos ocuparnos de establecer reglas y alianzas para lograr desarrollo, crecimiento y progreso para nuestros países, pero también justicia social.

El trabajo decente sigue siendo una aspiración para hombres y mujeres que luchan por sobrevivir y salir de la pobreza y la exclusión social con dignidad. Sin embargo, ven que la globalización económica y el modelo de desarrollo profundizan aún más las desigualdades.

Los cambios en la organización del trabajo que dan más importancia al rendimiento del capital y las ganancias, atropellan la dignidad del trabajo y los principios y derechos fundamentales de los trabajadores.

Las desigualdades, cada vez más grandes, en los salarios, amenazan el desarrollo sostenible, ya que la paz se basa en la justicia social y ¿qué es para los trabajadores la justicia social? Buscar cómo vivir mejor; simplemente, calidad de vida.

Los grupos más afectados bajo este principio son las mujeres y los jóvenes.

Es necesario considerar el tema de género por la incorporación de la mujer al trabajo remunerado. Las mujeres acceden a empleos precarios.

Compartimos el tema del cuidado infantil iniciado por el actual Gobierno, pero aún falta mucho por hacer y debemos terminar con las discriminaciones en el salario y en el trato.

Los sistemas de protección social deben adecuarse a la realidad de los trabajadores del siglo XXI y responder a sus necesidades.

En mi país comienza un proceso de reforma del sistema de pensiones, impuesto en un período negro en que no teníamos democracia. En este nuevo escenario lucharemos para que sea en realidad un sistema de protección social y no uno de capitalización individual. Pero también hay que decir que hay muchos espacios donde la democracia aún no ha llegado.

Como en nuestro sistema electoral, que excluye a las minorías y niega la participación de los dirigentes sociales y sindicales en elecciones populares.

En el ámbito de las relaciones laborales dentro de la empresa, se necesita mayor apoyo a la parte más débil, los trabajadores, para eliminar prácticas autoritarias y falta de derechos en las relaciones laborales.

Requerimos una negociación colectiva real y efectiva, *supra* empresa, vinculada a las ramas de la producción, situación que, en la práctica, se está dando de hecho. Recordemos que hace un mes se generó un proceso de negociación *supra* empresa en el sector forestal. Debemos lamentar que fue con el costo de la vida de un trabajador a manos de fuerzas de seguridad.

Relevamos la importancia de fortalecer los organismos de fiscalización, tales como las inspecciones del trabajo, como instrumento que garantice el cumplimiento de las normativas legales de cada país.

Inspecciones del trabajo con políticas claras de fiscalización, con atribuciones. Funcionarios calificados y eficientes que cuenten con respaldo de los gobiernos a sus acciones y decisiones.

En Chile, el trabajo formal, con contrato, después de cinco meses de aplicarse la Ley de Subcontratación, aumentó a un 70 por ciento, y la cesantía está bajando al 6,5 por ciento.

Son resultados concretos de una Ley de Protección a los Trabajadores.

Hago un llamado desde esta tribuna al empresario chileno, que ha tenido todas las garantías para desarrollarse y crecer desde la década de los años ochenta a la fecha. Nosotros creemos en el diálogo social entre iguales.

Los trabajadores creemos que el diálogo social puede contribuir fuertemente al desarrollo del país. Nuestra apuesta al diálogo tiene que ver con el país que queremos, con la ampliación de los espacios democráticos y la participación ciudadana. Tiene que ver con un país que apuesta a su desarrollo integral, en donde todos y todas se beneficien del fruto de este desarrollo.

Por último, los trabajadores de Chile reafirman la necesidad de fortalecer la OIT como el único organismo tripartito de diálogo social capaz de lograr el ideal del trabajo decente, con empresas sostenibles y caminar hacia un desarrollo sostenible para toda la humanidad.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL ALOUL (Minister of Labour, Palestine)

If you find anything unusual in what I say, it is because of the exceptional circumstances which the Palestinian people are experiencing.

We come from Palestine – a land of love and peace since the dawn of time – but have not known peace in Palestine recently; unlike other countries which have acceded to independence and freedom, the Palestinian people and the Syrian people of the Golan are nearly the only ones suffering for several decades now under Israeli occupation. The Palestinian people aspire to peace and is struggling to achieve it, doing all it can to achieve this goal. We feel that this International Labour Conference is an important forum which contributes to establishing an equitable basis for peace, including social peace, in all countries throughout the world, and Palestine in particular.

We appreciate the role of the ILO in helping the social partners in the developing countries, and in Palestine in particular, where living conditions are exceptionally harsh. We appreciate the assistance you have provided in every area, and also the Director-General's Report this year, which gives an accurate picture of the conditions in which our people live, as a result of the occupation and its attendant practices. The Report emphasizes the need to revive the economy of Palestine, confirming what was said in the recent report published by the World Bank. We thank the Director-General for signalling the ILO's readiness to work with the social partners in our country and with the donor community in developing programmes in Palestine to promote job opportunities.

We also welcome the ILO's willingness to field a technical mission to Palestine to implement detailed proposals and appreciate its intention to strengthen the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, as this would contribute to reducing unemployment and poverty.

Our new National Unity Government has adopted a political programme to address the difficult conditions in which we live as a result of the occupation and to meet the conditions set by the Quartet. This political programme is sufficiently flexible and moderate so that there is no longer any reason to continue the unjust embargo imposed on our people. I thank those countries that have called for lifting the embargo.

We also welcome the concerted Arab approach reflected in the last Arab summit in Riyadh with a view to achieving peace in the region through the Arab peace initiative launched by His Highness King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, which was endorsed by all the Arab States and many other countries in the world. The programme of the National Unity Government and the Arab peace initiative are an opportunity to resume the peace process in the region in order to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and the other occupied Arab territories, with a view to establishing a just and comprehensive peace.

The occupying State, Israel, however, has thwarted these attempts through an escalation of violence in the region, with practices such as daily killings of Palestinians, confiscation of land and construction of settlements, and the continued erection of the apartheid wall despite the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the subject. It has also continued the Judaization of occupied Al Quds and announced its intention to build 20,000 settlement housing units in the area, with the aim of undermining the Arab peace initiative and any other foundations of the peace process, and to impose a fait accompli to prevent the establishment of a sustainable Palestinian State.

On the basis of what I have said, and in the light of the practices of the Israeli occupation – the embargo, the closures, the killings and destruction – the economy of our country and its labour market are going through a serious crisis which stands in the way of development. Recent statistics show that the unemployment rate has risen dangerously: in the first quarter of 2007, the rate was 35 per cent, compared to 10 per cent in the third quarter of 2000, before the Israeli aggression; the rate is highest among young people, especially those aged 20 to 24, bearing in mind that our society comprises a majority of young people.

Despite the failure of the international community to make Israel cease its aggression and occupation, our Palestinian people is determined to continue to struggle for a just peace, in order to realize all its rights enshrined in international resolutions, to establish an independent Palestinian State with Al Quds as its capital, and to obtain the dismantling of the settlements, the return of refugees and the release of prisoners from Israeli prisons. We feel in Palestine that peace is a noble aim which we endeavour to achieve, and a strategic choice that we will not give up. We call on the international community to shoulder its responsibility in this regard and to take serious action to this end.

The escalation of violence in the world today, and in the Middle East in particular, has unfortunately meant that the Palestinian cause is no longer at the forefront of the world's concerns, but the best way to settle all the conflicts in the region is to find an equitable solution to the Palestinian problem, and end the Israeli occupation of the other occupied Arab territories. We express our solidarity with the

Syrian people of the Golan, the people in the Shebaa farms in Lebanon and the people and workers of Iraq.

Mr. DIOUF (*Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations*)

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today at the 96th Session of the International Labour Organization Conference and to join you in celebrating the World Day Against Child Labour. Today marks a very important event – it is the first time that the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is formally commemorating this day because, for the first time, the focus this year is on child labour in agriculture. Today's event is a call for awareness and for action. It is a call on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves, the more than 132 million children between 5 and 14 years of age who work each day in farming, fishing and forestry, or those who are involved in other agricultural activities.

Children are part of our families, and family agriculture is the backbone of the economy of many developing countries. But child labour is not the same thing as helping in the family with household chores, which is an important part of a child's education and upbringing. Child labour is work that exploits and abuses children; it is work that harms children's well-being and hinders their education, development and future livelihoods.

Of particular concern to the FAO is the worst form of child labour: agricultural work which is unconditional or hazardous and can harm the safety, health and moral well-being of children. Common examples in agriculture, fisheries and forestry include children working with sharp tools, dangerous machinery and poisonous pesticides and chemicals, children carrying heavy loads, climbing high trees or diving deep into the oceans to untangle nets, or simply working long hours while school is in session.

All these tasks can harm a child's health, physical and mental development. And they can lock a child into poverty. Some 70 per cent of child labour worldwide is found in agriculture, with many children engaged in forced and hazardous activities and this is totally unacceptable.

As you may know, the FAO's mission is to fight hunger and poverty and to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger. What many of us may not have realized, however, is that the success of this mission depends also on the elimination of child labour in agriculture. Working children bring small amounts of much-needed income to their families, but this money comes at a significant long-term cost. If children are unable to attend school, they will not only be uneducated, but they will also be poor. If they are harmed by exposure to hazardous chemicals, dangerous tools or work conditions, they may even lose their lives. For instance, each year at least 22,000 children lose their lives while working, and the number of those that suffer injuries, illnesses or other harm is much higher. We must fight poverty and hunger to eliminate child labour.

The FAO has long been striving to support agriculture that is both economically profitable and harmless to the environment. But the FAO is also working to support agriculture that is socially just. By developing labour-saving technologies and

training workers on the safe use and disposal of pesticides we may achieve this goal.

Mr. KYI (*Deputy Minister of Labour, Myanmar*)

Mr. President, on behalf of my delegation, I extend my warmest congratulations to you on your election as the President of this Conference. My delegation is convinced that, under your able guidance, this august assembly will come to a successful conclusion and bear fruitful results.

Mr. President, firstly, I would like to state that, as expressed in the introduction of the ILO Director-General's Report, the future needs of the developing countries have become transparent and the prospects of the future have been better. In his Report, the Director-General mentioned that the goal of the ILO is to develop coherent policies for investment, growth and employment, which ensure that the global economy as well as national economies follow a path of sustainable and well-balanced increases in productivity and employment. I would like to recommend, strongly, that we need to make progress in reducing unemployment and working poverty through the creation of more jobs and an improvement in the quality of jobs.

In the globalization process, the developed countries are well aware of their strategic requirements and their nationals are well-educated with respect to advanced technology: that they have been enjoying the benefits of globalization. However, as some developing countries like Myanmar have more unskilled than skilled labour, we need to promote knowledge of advanced technology among our nationals. This is one of the main challenges that we are facing. As long as we cannot overcome this hurdle, the developing countries will continue to miss the opportunities and benefits of globalization. It is therefore incumbent on the ILO and its entire membership to cooperate in every possible manner so that the benefits of globalization will be equally enjoyed.

In this context, I would like to say a few words regarding our continuous cooperation with the ILO. Myanmar and the ILO signed the Supplementary Understanding to the Understanding concerning the appointment of an ILO Liaison Officer in Myanmar (2002) on 26 February 2007. Many countries have recognized that we are effectively implementing this Supplementary Understanding. Meanwhile, the entire population has widely known of the implementation of the Supplementary Understanding signed between Myanmar and the ILO. The cases that have been sent by the ILO Liaison Officer (a.i.) have been expeditiously investigated and the Myanmar authorities have taken legal action against those who committed forced labour. This shows the genuine commitment and political will of the Government of Myanmar to eradicate forced labour. I wish to underline that, at present, the mechanism established under the Supplementary Understanding is fully and effectively functioning.

Forced labour is also related to poverty as well as to the values and beliefs of the majority of the population. It is our responsibility to address poverty as a matter of priority in order to totally eradicate the use of forced labour. Moreover, efforts should be made to instil in the people the values and beliefs that conform with the ILO standards. For this reason, Myanmar should be given equal opportunities and treated in the same manner as other member States. In his Report, the Director-General encour-

aged all Members to carry out the promotion of decent work for sustainable development. Despite that, as a result of the sanctions imposed on her, Myanmar faces many difficulties in effectively implementing the promotion of the employment of workers. These difficulties hinder the development of the nation and undermine the beliefs of the people in the fulfilment of the ILO standards.

At present, Myanmar is complying with all the requests of the ILO with a firm political will. It is high time that this should receive deserved recognition from the ILO membership. Therefore, I wish to conclude by requesting that, under the present circumstances, the Emergency Resolution adopted by the 87th Session of the ILC and the resolution adopted by the 88th Session of the ILC concerning Myanmar be reviewed.

M. BINDEA (*secrétaire d'Etat, Département des affaires européennes et relations externes, ministère du Travail, de la Famille et de l'Égalité des chances, Roumanie*)

Qu'il me soit permis de féliciter le Directeur général pour le rapport *Le travail décent au service du développement durable*. Le gouvernement de la Roumanie soutient pleinement les conclusions du rapport.

En Roumanie a été élaboré le plan national pour le développement, en vue d'orienter et de stimuler le développement économique et social, ayant comme objectif l'accomplissement de la cohésion économique et sociale. Les priorités du plan sont similaires aux objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement pour la Roumanie. En même temps, ce plan contient les quatre piliers qui définissent le travail décent: l'emploi productif et librement choisi; le droit de travailler, y compris les normes fondamentales du travail; la protection sociale; et le dialogue social.

Le développement durable est le type de croissance économique qui satisfait les besoins de la société en ce qui concerne le bien-être à court, moyen et long terme. Le développement durable est axé sur le fait qu'il doit répondre aux besoins actuels sans que les futures générations périclitent.

C'est pour cette raison que le moment actuel est opportun pour discuter le concept de promotion des entreprises durables.

Aujourd'hui, la Roumanie connaît une période de croissance économique, et il est important que tous ceux qui bénéficient de cette croissance puissent y contribuer.

Dans ce contexte, la communauté des affaires prend conscience et accepte graduellement le besoin de mettre en œuvre une politique sociale et environnementale. Par exemple, la protection de l'environnement et la protection sociale ne sont plus considérées comme un domaine exclusivement gouvernemental. Elles sont également assumées par les communautés locales, des compagnies, des institutions financières, des créateurs, des consommateurs ainsi que par le grand public. Tous sont intéressés à élaborer des standards en ce domaine.

En même temps, au niveau local, des partenariats ont été créés qui ont pour objectif un développement complet, efficace et durable des communautés locales aussi bien que des pactes régionaux et des partenariats locaux d'emploi et d'inclusion sociale, soutenus par le gouvernement.

Au cœur de toutes ces idées se trouvent les gens, le développement complet des ressources humaines

étant le cœur de chaque stratégie ou plan de développement.

En tant qu'Etat membre de l'Union européenne, la Roumanie utilise des fonds nationaux et européens en vue d'appuyer la cohésion économique et sociale, y compris le développement des ressources humaines. Il y a des fonds spéciaux, destinés à la promotion de l'inclusion sociale, à faciliter l'accès au marché du travail, au développement des compétences et à l'appui des groupes défavorisés, à appliquer les mesures de responsabilité sociale corporatiste, à consolider les partenariats.

Les partenaires sociaux et les organisations non gouvernementales jouent un rôle particulièrement important dans le processus d'application du plan national pour le développement, de la stratégie nationale pour l'emploi, de la stratégie à court et à moyen terme pour la formation professionnelle continue, de la stratégie nationale pour l'égalité de chances entre hommes et femmes. Ils peuvent aussi élaborer des projets financés par des fonds structurels en vue de promouvoir les objectifs spécifiques.

Finalmente, je voudrais faire mention du fait que le gouvernement de la Roumanie appuiera pleinement l'application des objectifs du travail décent dans le cadre des objectifs du développement durable.

(Mr. Blondel takes the Chair.)

Sr. ESPINAL ESCOBAR (*Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social, El Salvador*)

En esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, es el momento ideal para que reflexionemos sobre los nuevos desafíos que se presentan para lograr un desarrollo económico y social sostenible, fundamentado en la promoción del trabajo decente.

Es una oportunidad para definir prioridades y líneas de acción que nos permitan enfrentar en el corto, mediano y largo plazo, los grandes retos del proceso de globalización y apertura comercial en marcha, con una doble perspectiva: primero, mejorar los niveles de competitividad y productividad de nuestros países y segundo, continuar con el fortalecimiento de los sistemas nacionales de protección de los derechos de los trabajadores.

En su Memoria, el Director hace una particular reflexión sobre la promoción de un enfoque equitativo del desarrollo, sobre la necesidad de elaborar y poner en marcha políticas integradas de comercio, finanzas y empleo, y nos invita a consolidar una estrategia para aumentar la productividad y el empleo de manera sostenida y equilibrada.

Para enfrentar estos grandes desafíos, el tripartismo y el diálogo social se han convertido en herramientas fundamentales para la OIT y deben orientar los diferentes procesos nacionales para la consolidación de un sistema de relaciones laborales más justo, armónico y participativo.

En El Salvador, nuestros esfuerzos para la promoción del trabajo decente han dado muy buenos resultados porque hemos sido respetuosos de las condiciones, las características y las necesidades específicas de los sectores que intervienen en la dinámica laboral.

En este marco, y luego de un intenso debate que contó con la participación de todos los actores que intervienen en el escenario laboral, el 24 de agosto de 2006 se logró que nuestro órgano legislativo

adhiriera a los Convenios núms. 87, 98, 135 y 151 de la OIT, lo cual garantizará el goce y respeto de los derechos de asociación y libre sindicación de los trabajadores del sector público en El Salvador.

En el área de inspección y resolución alternativa de conflictos, el Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social de El Salvador ha fortalecido las capacidades institucionales ya existentes ofreciendo capacitación continua a su personal y desarrollando el primer diploma en Derecho Laboral impartido por una de las instituciones de educación superior más prestigiosas del país. También se ha implementado el «Manual del Conciliador», que ha eliminado aquellas etapas que resultaban burocráticas y que desnaturalizaban el proceso.

Con el propósito de difundir los derechos y obligaciones laborales de los trabajadores, hemos iniciado una campaña nacional por medio de la distribución de más de 250.000 materiales educativos y de programas de radiodifusión para destacar los derechos a un salario justo, el derecho de sindicalización y la no discriminación de empleo por razón de género.

Como parte de nuestros esfuerzos para prevenir los conflictos laborales, hemos puesto en marcha el programa nacional para la creación de «comités de diálogo» dentro de las empresas.

En lo referente a la gestión del empleo, hemos avanzado sustancialmente en el tema de la desconcentración del servicio público de empleo y de la integración de los sistemas de formación profesional e intermediación laboral.

También es importante destacar que, con el fin de fortalecer la justicia laboral en El Salvador, en los sistemas judiciales y administrativos, suscribimos un convenio de cooperación interinstitucional con la Corte Suprema de Justicia, el Consejo Nacional de la Judicatura y la Procuraduría General de la República, con el fin de fortalecer las competencias técnicas de los operadores del sistema de protección de los derechos laborales y hacer más expeditos los procesos judiciales en el ámbito laboral.

En este día internacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil, me complace compartir otro de los grandes logros alcanzados durante este periodo: la elaboración y ejecución de un «Plan nacional para la erradicación de las peores formas de trabajo infantil en El Salvador» que ha beneficiado a un total de 46.657 niñas y niños trabajadores y adolescentes, y a 5.550 familias.

Para el logro de todos estos objetivos hemos contado con el acompañamiento solidario de la comunidad internacional, por lo que quiero reconocer y agradecer el apoyo brindado por los Gobiernos de los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica, Canadá y España, así como el BID, la OEA y especialmente la OIT, quienes en su conjunto han permitido incrementar sustancialmente las actividades de protección y difusión de los derechos y deberes de los trabajadores salvadoreños y también mejorar la productividad y la competitividad de las empresas.

Finalmente, quiero manifestar que considero un honor y una gran responsabilidad ostentar desde el mes de mayo de 2007 la Presidencia *pro tempore* del Consejo de Ministros de Trabajo de Centroamérica y República Dominicana, posición desde la cual ya hemos iniciado, en coordinación con los trabajadores, los empresarios y los ministros de esta subregión, el desarrollo de políticas y programas orientados al fortalecimiento de los Ministerios de

Trabajo y a la promoción del trabajo decente en cada uno de nuestros países.

Mr. DE PAYVA (*Worker, Singapore*)

Mr. President, the Singapore National Trades Union Congress delegation joins other delegates to congratulate you on being elected to preside over the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference.

In Singapore, we recognized that discrimination is very difficult to prove, and therefore it is difficult to enforce the law. We have therefore decided to make continuous efforts to educate the employers and the public on the issue. Early in 1999, the tripartite partners, that is, the Singapore National Employers' Federation, the Ministry of Manpower and the Singapore National Trades Union Congress, issued the "Tripartite guidelines on non-discriminatory job advertisements" to promote the use of objective criteria in the recruitment of job candidates.

In 2001, at the National Manpower Summit, the tripartite partners endorsed a statement to the effect that in line with the principle of meritocracy, employers will select candidates for jobs based on merit, experience, capability and other relevant job requirements. In 2002, the tripartite partners jointly issued a code of responsible employment practices, based on the principle that staff should be treated fairly and employers should continue to recruit on the basis of skills, merit, experience, capability and relevance of job.

Last year, the Singapore's Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices (TAFEP), which was co-chaired by SNTUC, was set up on the recommendation of the Tripartite Committee on Employability of Older Workers, to shift mindsets among employers, employees and the general public towards fair and responsible employment practices for all workers. Last month, the TAFEP launched a new set of guidelines to fight discrimination at the workplace. Following the new guidelines, job application forms asking for a person's age, gender, race or even photograph are soon going to become a thing of the past in Singapore.

As Singapore is a small country with very limited human resources, every citizen is important to us. We can ill afford to allow discrimination to strip us of much needed human resources and break up our social fabric. The SNTUC will continue to fight discrimination till the end together with our social partners.

As we become more and more globalized, the gap between the rich and poor, the skilled and unskilled, permanent and contract workers is increasing. Singapore is no exception. Hence, I am pleased to inform you that, since last year, the SNTUC has come up with a five-year plan to bridge the gaps and strive for an all-inclusive labour movement that reaches out to all income groups, especially lower incomes, as well as all workers, all nationalities and all ages. We plan to achieve this through job redesign, creation of skills, skills upgrading, development of membership benefits and the strengthening of our social partnership with the Government and with the employers.

Sr. LASCURAIN (*empleador, Argentina*)

Es un honor para mí dirigirme a esta magna asamblea, en representación de los empresarios de la Argentina, saludando en tal carácter al señor Presidente y a las autoridades de esta Conferencia.

Lo hago con la profunda convicción de que nuestro país se ha recuperado económicamente, no solo en forma acelerada, mediante índices de crecimiento de producto bruto interno, cercanos al nueve por ciento anual en los últimos cuatro años, sino que también ha reafirmado ejes sustantivos para la competitividad y el desarrollo, especialmente en el campo industrial.

El superávit fiscal y comercial y el tipo de cambio competitivo han permitido lograr una respuesta importante en inversiones en el campo industrial, creciendo en exportaciones y demostrando que somos capaces de volver a competir en el mundo y consolidar este proceso favorable de recuperación de la economía.

Proceso que ha traído aparejado, un importante descenso del desempleo a través de la generación de empleo genuino y productivo, y consecuentemente con ello la mejora del poder adquisitivo de la sociedad.

Hoy, el país se encuentra en una etapa propicia que permite encarar el futuro y aspiramos a que Gobierno, partidos políticos y actores sociales seamos capaces de diseñar conjuntamente políticas de Estado que tengan como eje garantizar el desarrollo sustentable; y en lo productivo forjar una nueva cultura del trabajo, que nos permita hacer frente a los cambios que la globalización impone en los sistemas de producción y en la organización de aquéllos.

Hemos dejado atrás el colapso financiero, productivo y social, que no solo nos llevó a una crisis sin precedentes en el año 2001 con serias implicancias, incluso constitucionales, sino que también se proyectó en una precarización de la producción, con cierre de fábricas, pérdidas de empleo, y altos niveles de pobreza y exclusión social.

Sin embargo, la crisis más profunda fue la pérdida de la cultura del trabajo como valor del hombre que se siente identificado con el producto que fabrica, con la idea de que a través de ese trabajo se realiza personal y familiarmente y contribuye también al progreso de la nación.

Esa penosa situación fue soportada no solamente por trabajadores, sino también por los miles de pequeños y medianos empresarios que perdieron su actividad de la misma manera que los trabajadores se quedaron sin empleos, pues no cabe la menor duda del que hay un correlato irrevocable: sin empresas no hay empleo.

La política industrialista que el Gobierno Nacional ha encarado ha permitido resurgir empresas y empleo, siendo nuestro actual desafío garantizar que este crecimiento se convierta en sustentable.

En tal sentido y específicamente en el campo laboral, los empresarios argentinos creemos que es necesario reafirmar nuestra convicción de que solo un régimen laboral moderno y eficiente — especialmente para las PYME — es el marco adecuado para promover más y mejor empleo, fomentar la formalización de las relaciones del trabajo y así disminuir, drásticamente, la alta informalidad y dar justa y razonable protección a los trabajadores.

En este orden de ideas, hemos reclamado una adecuación del régimen de riesgos del trabajo que lo haga asegurable y previsible, poniendo énfasis en la prevención y garantizando prestaciones adecuadas al trabajador, a la par que desalentando la hoy creciente industria del juicio con costos exorbitantes que terminan haciendo inviable los objetivos aludidos.

Quiero ser claro en esto: la existencia de un seguro de cobertura es un beneficio para ambas partes de la relación laboral, ya que garantiza al trabajador asistencia médica y farmacéutica, así también como su salario o indemnizaciones ante la ocurrencia eventual de un daño.

El empresariado argentino ha visto con preocupación un sinnúmero de iniciativas legislativas que, lejos de establecer el marco propicio para alentar la creación de empresas y de empleo, terminan siendo disuasivos: pues conllevan mayor burocracia, pérdida del poder de dirección por parte del empleador, costos laborales que afectan la competitividad o alientan una litigiosidad que lejos de favorecer a los propios trabajadores, terminan perjudicándolos.

Esto ha sido y es materia de permanente señalamiento por el empresariado que ha requerido una adecuación normativa para facilitar la creación de empresas y de empleos en el sector formal de la economía, habida cuenta de que las PYME constituyen no solo desde el punto de vista numérico el más alto porcentaje de unidades productivas de nuestro país, sino que son las generadoras de la más alta proporción del empleo registrado.

Debemos expresar nuestra satisfacción por el temario que ofrece esta Conferencia anual, ya que la discusión general sobre empresas sustentables nos parece un verdadero desafío para conciliar tripartitamente puntos de vista, perspectivas y aun orientaciones para la sustentabilidad de la empresa privada, ya que la misma es el punto de partida para el empleo de calidad y decente y por ende para el desarrollo y el progreso.

Sin empresas sustentables, no hay trabajo decente, ya que el trabajo es la consecuencia de hacerlo en el lugar apropiado y en condiciones apropiadas, y ello solo puede verificarse cuando se configura un entorno propicio para que se creen empresas.

Este es el verdadero círculo virtuoso. De ahí que estemos convencidos de que sólo cuando se conjugan ambos aspectos empresas sustentables y trabajo decente, se está garantizando el camino del desarrollo.

Para ello estamos seguros de que el diálogo social es fundamental. No escapamos a la lógica de los naturales conflictos que la dinámica de la sociedad presenta, pero frente a ello tenemos una respuesta: gobiernos, trabajadores y empleadores deben generar ámbitos propicios para discutir, diseñar y poner en práctica mecanismos de diálogo social no sólo para la coyuntura sino también para ayudar a forjar las estrategias de largo plazo que terminan siendo las grandes políticas y los grandes consensos con que las naciones modernas más desarrolladas han afirmado su liderazgo.

En este plano, celebramos también que el tema del fortalecimiento del accionar de la OIT y la interacción de sus objetivos estratégicos encuentre un lugar en la agenda para que esta Conferencia tenga oportunidad de debate y propuesta.

Quiero concluir la intervención diciendo que somos optimistas y tenemos confianza en el futuro, tanto de nuestro país como de esta Organización. De nuestro país, pues pensamos que tenemos por delante una inédita posibilidad de trabajar para la consolidación de un modelo de desarrollo sustentable, competitivo en lo productivo, con inserción internacional e integración regional y claramente inclusivo en lo social.

En cuanto a la OIT porque pensamos que en un mundo globalizado la pertinencia y relevancia de la misma y del diálogo social y tripartismo son incontestables.

Sr. DELGADILLO (*Ministro de Trabajo, Bolivia*)

Presento el saludo del Presidente Evo Morales, primer Presidente indígena de la República de Bolivia, a todos los delegados y delegadas a la Conferencia.

Por lo que he comprendido, el Director General de la OIT nos ha propuesto reflexionar sobre el tema del trabajo, desde el desarrollo sostenible. El desarrollo sostenible implica equilibrio económico, social y ambiental. En estos términos utilizamos en la reflexión actual en Bolivia, sostenibilidad, como equilibrio con uno mismo, con los demás y con la naturaleza; a esto es a lo que llamamos vivir bien, vivir en equilibrio, no mejor ni peor que otro, vivir bien.

En esta Conferencia se han hecho esfuerzos, en la reflexión, para encontrar el camino del desarrollo equilibrado, del desarrollo sostenible, a partir del actual sistema moderno de acumulación de riqueza. La hipótesis de partida de estas reflexiones es que la sostenibilidad es compatible con el crecimiento económico permanente, única manera de acumular de manera competitiva. Esta hipótesis es la que queremos poner en cuestión desde las reflexiones y prácticas del actual proceso de cambio que vive Bolivia.

Desde nuestro punto de vista, no hay compatibilidad, no hay continuidad, entre la sostenibilidad y la acumulación de la riqueza.

La acumulación de la riqueza es estructuralmente contradictoria con la sostenibilidad del empleo, y es contradictoria, por tanto, con el empleo digno; es contradictoria con el equilibrio con los demás; no se puede acumular riqueza permanentemente y a la vez pensar en empleo digno. Para acumular riqueza, en los términos que dicta la modernidad y lo dicta la práctica permanente actual, se requiere una permanente competitividad, y para tener competitividad se debe hacer del empleo una variable de ajuste. Esto es lo que ha hecho la modernidad en su brazo más duro, capitalista; ha hecho del trabajo y del empleo una variable de ajuste. Para entrar en márgenes de ganancia la empresa moderna debe disminuir el empleo, tanto en cantidad como en calidad.

La otra variable de ajuste es el medio ambiente. A fin de alcanzar niveles de competitividad y ganancia permanentes, las empresas modernas deben explotar los recursos naturales sin pensar en los costos; si se ponen a pensar en los costos no entrarán en márgenes de competitividad. Por esto, las empresas norteamericanas, por ejemplo, no aceptan acuerdos de respeto al medio ambiente.

Estas dos cuestiones, precarizar el empleo y romper el equilibrio con el medio ambiente, llevan a la disminución de costos, a la acumulación y a la competitividad. Por tanto, desde nuestro punto de vista, son estructurales al sistema, hacen su esencia, sin ellas no es posible hablar de acumulación y de prolongación del modelo actual. Desde nuestro punto de vista, no pueden ser variables de ajuste las personas o el medio ambiente; podrán serlo otros factores como el capital o la ganancia, pero no las personas y la naturaleza.

El tema es crucial especialmente para las sociedades del Norte; hasta es admisible que las economías del Sur necesiten crecer para cubrir sus

déficit de desarrollo humano; las del Norte ya han resuelto esta parte y deberían pararse para pensar en lo que deben hacer sin agredir al resto del mundo y a la naturaleza.

Y son los países del Sur, los pueblos indígenas en concreto, los que proponen repensar los paradigmas de desarrollo de la humanidad, repensar con seriedad las posibilidades del desarrollo sostenible; en esos marcos proponen repensar los temas del trabajo y del empleo. Estos pueblos han tratado de vivir en condiciones de equilibrio a pesar de las dificultades emergentes de las invasiones del Norte; ahora, algunos de ellos reviven en proyectos políticos como los de Bolivia. Nuestra propuesta, la propuesta de Bolivia, no es de retorno al pasado, es de reconstrucción de lo que ha ocurrido hasta ahora, de pensar lo que le ha ocurrido a la humanidad, para, a partir de esta reflexión, reconstruir propuestas paradigmáticas en términos de equilibrio y real sostenibilidad. No es que estemos pensando en destruir todo lo realizado por la modernidad: se trata de utilizar toda esta historia en otro sentido; en el sentido de la reconstrucción en nuevos términos, los de la efectiva sostenibilidad.

En torno a esta revisión paradigmática, proponemos pensar nuestros problemas como los de la migración, el trabajo infantil, etc. Al respecto, planteamos la necesidad de encontrar acuerdos que permitan el respeto entre todos y ello implica una política de cooperación mutua que tenga por horizonte crear condiciones de dignidad del trabajo en ambos lados, en el Norte y en el Sur.

Es que una reflexión de fondo sobre los soportes del actual modelo de acumulación moderno nos puede situar mejor en condiciones para resolver los problemas del trabajo, del empleo, en relaciones de equilibrio con la naturaleza. Es a esto a lo que convocamos a todos y todas las participantes de la Conferencia.

Original portugais: M. VIAGE (travailleurs, Angola)

C'est pour moi un honneur de m'adresser à vous, au nom des travailleurs d'Angola et en tant que dirigeant de la principale organisation syndicale de mon pays, la Confédération syndicale-UNTA.

Après une longue absence, les travailleurs d'Angola reviennent à cette tribune, comme ils l'ont fait auparavant, pour unir leurs voix à celles des représentants des gouvernements, des employeurs et de leurs camarades et se prononcer sur des questions qui préoccupent l'ensemble du monde du travail. C'est possible maintenant que la période noire qu'a été la guerre qui a marqué l'histoire de notre pays de façon indélébile est définitivement derrière terminée.

Pendant les cinq années écoulées depuis la signature de l'Accord de paix, l'exercice de la tolérance, de la solidarité et de la fraternité a fourni aux Angolais l'occasion de se retrouver et de se lancer dans la tâche de la reconstruction nationale, avec de bons niveaux de stabilité macroéconomique selon les données officielles. Les Angolais ont retrouvé, par conséquent, la joie de vivre et de travailler pour la prospérité du pays.

Dans ces conditions, d'importants projets d'infrastructures sociales et d'entreprises sont menés, et de nouvelles possibilités d'emplois redynamisent le marché. Par exemple, le gouvernement, dans son programme général, pour 2007-08, estime que plus de 480 000 emplois seront créés, et qu'ils s'ajouteront aux plus de 500 000 emplois existants

qui sont assujettis de la protection sociale obligatoire.

Ces chiffres, qui ne concernent pas encore une grande proportion de salariés, ont justifié que les institutions de l'Etat, l'Angola étant Membre de l'OIT, procèdent à une concertation sociale pour éclaircir et approfondir les conditions de fonctionnement des relations professionnelles.

Dans ce sens, les sujets qui sont examinés dans toutes les conférences suscitent l'intérêt, par exemple le sujet de l'égalité au travail qui est traité de manière approfondie et complète dans le rapport global intitulé, *L'égalité au travail: relever les défis*, présenté par le Directeur général à la présente session de la Conférence internationale du Travail.

En Angola, le principe de l'égalité au travail est consacré dans la législation nationale, mais son application dans la pratique quotidienne se heurte à des difficultés dues à certains facteurs discriminatoires à l'encontre des parties à la relation de travail.

On peut en citer quelques exemples: absence de réglementation du travail domestique, lequel occupe un grand nombre de personnes, principalement des femmes; absence de réglementation pour inciter les entreprises à embaucher des personnes à la capacité de travail réduite; limites d'âge pour l'admission à la fonction publique ou exigence d'une expérience professionnelle, alors que la plupart des demandeurs d'emploi sont les jeunes; retards dans le paiement des salaires dus à des travailleurs de différents secteurs d'activité mais occupés par un même employeur, ce qui est souvent le cas dans la fonction publique.

Ces facteurs se conjuguent à d'autres qui se traduisent pas une qualité de vie insuffisante des travailleurs, instabilité dans l'emploi, rémunérations faibles, sous-emploi, chômage.

Un service spécialisé du gouvernement a présenté récemment un rapport dans lequel il indique que, en 2006, 70 pour cent des 1 495 demandes d'intervention dans des cas de différends du travail ont été traitées, soit une augmentation de 27 pour cent par rapport à 2005. Ce rapport souligne aussi que les différends du travail portaient sur les points suivants: licenciements illicites; traitements discriminatoires; abus dans l'application de mesures disciplinaires; non-versements d'indemnités; temps de travail excessif, absence de sécurité sociale; d'assistance médicale et de fourniture de médicaments; arriérés de salaires; non-octroi de prestations et de primes prévues par la loi. On ajoutera que 14 326 recommandations ont été formulées à des entreprises.

Ces données indiquent clairement qu'il y a, d'un côté, des facteurs susceptibles de rendre indécent le travail et la vie des salariés en Angola et, de l'autre, une prise de conscience accrue des questions juridiques et du travail, et une plus grande confiance des salariés dans l'impartialité des institutions.

Il convient de saluer, les efforts que le gouvernement déploie pour renforcer les ressources humaines, techniques et matérielles des institutions de l'administration du travail et de la juridiction du travail, et être à la hauteur des défis que pose la tendance à la déréglementation du marché du travail.

Nous devons également dire que nous soutenons l'idée d'un lieu de travail pour tous les âges, comme il est indiqué aux paragraphes n^{os} 138, 139 et 140 du rapport global.

Comme on le sait, l'Angola est un pays à la population jeune, à la faible densité démographique, où

les richesses potentielles sont importantes par rapport au nombre d'habitants.

En 2006, la population totale était de 15 740 064 personnes, la population active de 8 131 036 personnes, soit 55 pour cent de la population totale, et 7 pour cent seulement (500 806 personnes) de la population active avaient un emploi dans l'économie formelle.

Dans ces conditions, à notre avis, il incombe aux partenaires sociaux et aux acteurs économiques et du marché du travail en Angola de lutter contre les facteurs de discrimination et pour l'égalité dans l'emploi. Ils doivent mener à bien des politiques de promotion axées sur l'inclusion sociale et la valorisation de la main-d'œuvre, par le biais de la formation professionnelle, pour que l'on dispose d'une main-d'œuvre qualifiée qui puisse relever les défis du développement économique et social. Les syndicats ont un rôle important à jouer à cette fin.

Sr. LEDESMA (*Gobierno, República Dominicana*)

El concepto presentado en la Memoria del Director General, titulada, *El trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible*, ha captado la atención de todo el mundo como un objetivo viable que puede aportar un cambio trascendental e importante en la vida de la gente y ayudar a crear estrategias de reducción de la pobreza.

El camino del trabajo decente es un elemento esencial en la vida de los ciudadanos, un objetivo mundial que se logrará mediante políticas de diálogo social y la participación activa de los actores sociales en el mundo del trabajo. Crear oportunidades para los ciudadanos garantiza que las políticas sociales de todas las naciones lleguen a los sectores más necesitados de la sociedad, tanto en el plano mundial como en el plano local. Esta debe ser la visión de la OIT y de aquellos países con economías desarrolladas, los cuales deben cooperar con aquellas naciones que sufren de una pobreza generalizada.

En la República Dominicana desarrollamos políticas coherentes de inversión, crecimiento y empleo que garantizan que nuestra economía se encamine por una vía de crecimiento sostenible y equilibrado de la productividad y el empleo. Por ello, hemos reducido el desempleo y el número de trabajadores pobres mediante la creación de más y mejores empleos. Durante el año de 2006 se crearon más de 100.000 empleos, con los cuales desde 2004 hemos podido generar 286.636 nuevos empleos directos en la República Dominicana. Esa generación de empleos ha permitido que la tasa de desocupación sea en estos momentos del 16,4 por ciento, con una tasa de inflación de tan sólo el 5 por ciento del índice de precios al consumidor. Otra fuente importante de crecimiento es el turismo, el cual hace una contribución importante al crecimiento y al empleo como ente generador de divisas. De hecho, medido en términos de su contribución al producto interno bruto, el sector se expandió en un 8,4 por ciento durante el año 2006. El sector turístico es, directa e indirectamente, responsable de la creación de unos 175.000 empleos y genera más de 3.750 millones de dólares en entradas de divisas para la economía dominicana. Debo resaltar que este primer trimestre del año 2007 la economía dominicana ya ha crecido en un 9,1 por ciento. Esta creación de nuevos empleos ha aumentado significativamente gracias a los factores de confianza, seguridad y estabilidad macroeconómica que inciden positivamente en el in-

cremento de las inversiones, lo que repercute en el trabajo de calidad para todos los trabajadores. Para lograr esa estabilidad, el Gobierno ha puesto en vigencia un plan sistemático de competitividad que sirve para promover el desarrollo humano integral de los ciudadanos.

El desarrollo sostenible para un trabajo decente depende significativamente del tripartismo, el cual debe ser utilizado para lograr políticas sociales de concertación para los trabajadores. En el mes de abril de este año 2007 se ha logrado un incremento de los salarios, lo que ha permitido a los trabajadores asegurar un mejor nivel de vida. Este aumento que representa un 20 por ciento de su poder adquisitivo; ahora bien, no puede lograrse ningún avance significativo en una estrategia nacional de reducción de la pobreza e implementación del trabajo decente si no se presta especial atención a la educación, la salud y la seguridad social.

En el campo de la educación, nuestro Gobierno ha invertido más de 2.500 millones de pesos en infraestructuras, lo que ha permitido incorporar al sistema educativo nacional 3.996 aulas en 465 centros educativos.

En lo relativo a la salud, concretamente en materia de atención integral, hemos implementado con el Consejo Presidencial del SIDA y la Secretaría de Estado de Trabajo un programa de asistencia judicial a empleadores y trabajadores y, muy especialmente, a las personas que viven con el VIH que han sido objeto de estigma o discriminación en su lugar de trabajo. Esta asistencia es gratuita y busca un cambio de trabajo frente a la asistencia de salud que nos limita e impide a las personas que viven con el VIH/SIDA tener un trabajo decente, acorde a su formación.

Cabe destacar que las reformas estructurales y el combate de la pobreza sólo pueden tener éxito si se acompañan de una agenda social, y entre las medidas a tomar en esta coordenada está indiscutiblemente la protección social de los ciudadanos.

Sobre estos fines, el Gobierno dominicano ha iniciado la implementación del seguro familiar de salud del régimen contributivo, el cual brindará la oportunidad de hacer más equitativa la sociedad dominicana y reducirá la desigualdad social.

En lo que respeta a las peores formas de trabajo infantil, la República Dominicana ha logrado muchos progresos en cuanto a la erradicación del trabajo infantil en América Latina, requisito para la adhesión al Tratado de Libre Comercio.

Hemos elaborado un Plan Estratégico Nacional para la Erradicación de las Peores Formas de Trabajo Infantil en la República Dominicana 2006-2016. Con este Plan, el Estado dominicano se compromete a poner en marcha políticas públicas sostenibles para garantizar el bienestar integral de nuestros niños, niñas y adolescentes.

Por último, quiero referirme a una campaña internacional de descrédito contra la República Dominicana por supuesto maltrato contra ciudadanos haitianos que emigran al país en busca de mejores oportunidades.

No entendemos el ensañamiento tan irracional por parte de naciones, agentes internacionales y grupos enquistados en el país, ya de que las condiciones laborales de los trabajadores es la misma para todas las nacionalidades en el sector laboral.

This year, the second Global Report on discrimination under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work entitled *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* – really this is the challenge for all of us but all those trying to contribute to the preparation of this ILO Report deserve our warm congratulations and appreciation.

Lots of subjects are very important in this Global Report: sustainable enterprises, decent work and also flexibility among others. All those are important subjects, but I will confine my address to gender equality, and I try to convey what we have done in my country. This topic is very interesting for us, because our confederation has allocated much time, energy and resources to address this issue. This put us in a position to give an overview of the status of women in our country.

This morning, we have saluted the Prime Minister of Jamaica. She is the first woman to hold that post in Jamaica, and it is worth remembering that 11 years ago, Turkey chose the first woman Prime Minister, and we are very proud of that.

I have already pointed out, that our confederation is quite active in that area, but I must also emphasize that the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, said: “If a society does not march toward its goal with all its women and men together, it is impossible for it to progress.”

In the earlier years of the Turkish Republic, a radical reform took place inspired by this vision, and great things have been achieved. I would like to inform you that the advancement of the status of women in my country really is a success story. Today, 36 per cent of university staff are women; 21 per cent of top and middle executives in public institutions are women; 29 per cent of lawyers of the Bar Association are women; and 32 per cent that is more than one-third of economists are in my country women. I am very proud to share these facts with you.

Moreover, my country, Turkey, has ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). The Civil Code and the Penal Code, among others, are based on the principles of equal treatment of women and men, equal pay, equal rights and equal opportunities. We have also established crucial protection mechanism against sexual harassment and discrimination.

Women account for more than half of the population, so Turkey must provide employment for both men and women. Today, in the 15–64 age group only, 26.9 per cent of women are working. This is a very low rate compared to the European average, and we aim to at least double this percentage over the next ten years.

As I have already pointed out, our confederation has been quite active in this area; we have organized an employment summit and have cooperated extensively with Turkish trade unions in particular.

We are glad that women will play a more prominent role in the forthcoming elections in Turkey. I wish you success for the ILO Conference, especially with regard to the issue of women’s equality.

I am honoured to address the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. Allow me to extend my congratulations to the President of this Conference on his election.

The International Labour Organization occupies a unique role in the Republic of Namibia. Our founding fathers and mothers saw fit to include in the Namibian Constitution “membership of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and, where possible, adherence to action in accordance with the international Conventions and Recommendations of the ILO” among the principles of state policy designed to promote and maintain the welfare of our people. The ILO is the only international organization mentioned in the Namibian Constitution.

It is therefore not surprising that this International Labour Conference has on its agenda the same issues that the Namibian Government is addressing in its efforts to achieve our national Vision 2030, a vision of a prosperous nation by the year 2030 that can ensure the well-being of its people.

I would like to express my appreciation for the very informative and thought-provoking Reports of the Director General: *Decent work for sustainable development* and the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work that focuses on *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*.

Namibia presently implements a number of key programmes that are aligned to the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda.

Given its history of discrimination in employment and in so many other socio-political and economic spheres under colonialism and apartheid, Namibia attaches special importance to achieving equality at work.

Our tripartite Employment Equity Commission, which was established by statute to eliminate the vestiges of discrimination on the grounds of race, gender and disability, has expanded its activities to require all employers with 25 or more employees (from a previous threshold of 50 employees) to comply with affirmative action requirements.

Apart from HIV and AIDS, the high rate of unemployment, close to 36 per cent, is Namibia’s greatest social problem. In line with the Decent Work Agenda and the Ouagadougou Plan of Action adopted in 2004 on employment and poverty alleviation, Namibia is formulating plans to mainstream the issue of employment creation in all relevant areas of economic activity.

Our strategy for employment creation includes, inter alia: strong government support for entrepreneurial activity and the creation of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises; prioritizing educational programmes and vocational training to equip our youth with skills required by the labour market; diversification of agricultural activities in the commercial and communal areas and the establishment, on a tripartite basis, of a national productivity centre.

The on going review and reform of labour market regulation and legislation is a key element in the Government’s efforts to promote a harmonious and stable labour relations environment that is conducive to investment and enterprise development, in collaboration with its social partners.

We expect the enactment in the near future of a revised labour code which will introduce, among other things, a new and speedier system for labour dispute resolution through conciliation and arbitration.

The bill also makes provision for expanding the activities of the tripartite Labour Advisory Council in the area of labour dispute prevention and resolution. Legislation to regulate employment services agencies, including labour hire, or labour broker companies, is also being prepared.

Namibia has taken steps to improve social protection for its most vulnerable citizens. Of particular importance was the increase in the amount of the universal social pension for persons over the age of 60 and for persons living with disabilities, which is financed through state taxation.

Namibia also provides social grants for orphans and vulnerable children. These social pensions and grants play a key role in alleviating the poverty of senior citizens and their extended families, including the growing number of AIDS orphans cared for by their grandparents or by young people. At the same time, the Social Security Commission, which administers the Maternity, Sick and Death Benefits Fund based upon employer and employee contributions, is working on the introduction of a National Pension Fund for employees eligible for social security.

The Namibian delegation is most appreciative of the discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity, which I am informed is likely to continue at the next session of the International Labour Conference. It comes at a time when the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is devising methods to enhance its own capacity to implement and realize the objectives that are enshrined in the Decent Work Agenda.

Namibia has a substantial fishing industry. As a flag, port and labour-supplying State, we look forward to the unanimous adoption of the proposed Convention and Recommendation for the fishing sector.

We are proud to have played an active role, over the past several years, as coordinator of the Africa group, in the efforts leading to the adoption of this comprehensive, protective and flexible instrument for the fishing sector.

Before I conclude, let me state that the Namibian Government remains firmly committed to social dialogue and tripartism as the best and most democratic means to ensure that the inseparable goals of social well-being and economic prosperity are achieved.

We salute the International Labour Office for its efforts to assist the member Governments and the employer and trade union organizations of every country to achieve these noble goals.

Original Russian: Mr. KOZIK (Worker, Belarus)

We have studied in detail the documents and the reports that have been produced for this Conference, including, of course, the Report of the Director-General of the ILO and all the documents and reports submitted to the 96th Session of this Conference for its consideration.

We have here a number of excellent and thought provoking documents that put forward very interesting ideas that we now have to put into practice.

In its activities the ILO has succeeded in getting the right balance when it comes to where the emphasis has to be laid to achieve the goals of decent

work, sustainable employment and to eradicate discrimination of all kinds in the world of work.

Reading the Director-General's Report, I am convinced that substantial results have been achieved and also that a very sound basis has been established for future progress. Those who follow the recommendations contained therein can, I believe, achieve a great deal as the years go by.

The ILO is committed to the system of tripartism and to the system of social dialogue. It is a system that has made it possible for us to establish the legislative basis that is required throughout the world in order to ensure that we have the standards and laws that we need in the world of work – in particular, in order to outlaw all kinds of discrimination based on gender, race or ethnic origin.

This is the only correct model, the only correct basis, that we have to move towards achieving justice. If we do not have that, then where are we? You still have all the problems of child labour, of gender discrimination and so on. They would still be with us if we did not have this approach that has allowed us to eradicate many of these scourges.

Now, I would like to focus on what is actually happening in Belarus. Certainly, in Belarus today, workers are very actively involved in monitoring and supervising the way in which the Government actually seeks to put into practice the very high ideals of its policy on labour, on the world of work, and very good results have been achieved in the area of unemployment. Our unemployment rates are dropping year after year. We have also made progress in ensuring wage parity for men and women, and we have outlawed child labour in all its forms.

The trade unions are very actively working with the Government on this, and they are working towards developing standards and rules – for instance, a minimum wage – which should exceed the subsistence level as set by the budget.

Of course, we still have a lot to do. There are still many problems to be resolved, particularly in respect of the principles and the position that are set forth in the Director-General's Report that we are discussing here today.

Belarus is very much involved in the work of the ILO. We have a very good basis for our cooperation with the ILO, both workers and the Government. This kind of dialogue is something that has already achieved a great deal and will achieve even more in the future, I am convinced, in terms of both substantive and significant results. We believe that it is important that we objectively assess the whole spectrum upon which Belarus is making progress.

In the second part of the Director-General's Report, he refers to the fact that trade liberalization is something that is welcomed by the ILO. He says this is a positive consequence of what has been going on in recent years, and we can see its positive outcome in terms of increases in employment and wages.

Now it seems to me, reading that, that I do have some concerns, especially as it is possible that there might be quite different repercussions.

For instance, if we look at the recent decision of the EU that Belarus should be excluded from the generalized system of preferences, this means that we have to pay 10 per cent more than other countries to export our goods to the EU. This is how the EU is getting round the standards that have been set by the ILO in this area, it seems to me.

I call upon the Committee on the Application of Standards to recognize that we have made considerable progress in seeking to implement the ILO's recommendations and in developing our dialogue with the Organization. Yet once again we see that the Committee on the Application of Standards has decided to include a special paragraph on Belarus. I do not think that this can in any way protect the rights of the workers of Belarus that they now enjoy thanks to the efforts of the trade union movement in Belarus to increase their wages and their general standard of living.

I therefore urge the Conference and the Director-General not to overlook the achievements made by Belarus. In particular, they should bear in mind what we have done to improve the standards of living of our workers. That is something that surely has to be lauded and welcomed. And I am sure that you will continue to agree that this kind of approach can be fruitful and productive in many countries in the world.

Original portugais: M. MILACO (ministre de la Fonction publique et du Travail, Guinée-Bissau)

Au nom du gouvernement de la République de la Guinée-Bissau, je voudrais féliciter le Président de cette séance pour son élection, ainsi que le Directeur général du BIT, Juan Somavia, à qui j'adresse une parole de reconnaissance pour son engagement dévoué dans la conduite de la destinée de notre Organisation et pour les progrès qu'elle a obtenus.

Je souhaite également féliciter les représentants des partenaires sociaux de la Guinée-Bissau, ici présents, pour la fermeté avec laquelle ils mènent leur lutte légitime en faveur des intérêts de la classe qu'ils défendent et pour leur promptitude à collaborer avec la société guinéenne dans la quête de solutions aux problèmes émergents dans le monde du travail.

Le thème de cette Conférence, «Travail décent et développement durable», est pour moi particulièrement important, puisqu'il traite de la condition de travail dans les différents secteurs d'activité. Raison pour laquelle le travail productif décent est inscrit à l'ordre du jour de la Conférence.

On parle aujourd'hui beaucoup de travail décent. Or il serait impensable d'évoquer autant l'amélioration des conditions de travail et de la production des travailleurs si nos législations nationales ne respectaient pas l'esprit du travail décent et si nous ne tenions pas compte des conventions internationales dans ce domaine.

La question des conditions de travail a retenu toute l'attention des organisations internationales, notamment de l'OIT, à laquelle viennent se joindre d'autres agences spécialisées de l'ONU, comme l'Organisation mondiale de la santé.

Aujourd'hui, la préoccupation fondamentale de l'OIT est que chaque homme et chaque femme ait accès à un emploi et à un travail productif décent, dans des conditions de liberté, d'égalité, de sécurité et de dignité. C'est sur cette base qu'il faut partir pour analyser de façon urgente les normes existantes et les problèmes dont les retombées se font sentir sur les différents groupes de travailleurs.

Le travail décent est un droit fondamental qu'il est urgent de respecter. Il est fondamental pour la motivation des travailleurs et pour l'augmentation de la productivité au travail. De même, il constitue un facteur de production et de développement durable.

Pour atteindre la paix et la stabilité effectives, conditions essentielles pour un travail décent et pour le développement du pays, le gouvernement de la Guinée-Bissau s'est engagé dans le cadre du Pacte de stabilité politique nationale à rechercher des consensus avec l'ensemble des forces vives du pays.

Les Guinéens sont de plus en plus conscients du fait que la paix et la stabilité politique sont indispensables pour promouvoir la confiance interne et externe, ceci afin d'attirer les investissements en vue du développement durable.

Dans le cadre de son actuelle réforme de la fonction publique, le gouvernement a procédé au recensement général des fonctionnaires publics pour identifier les excédents. En vue de leur réinsertion sur le marché du travail privé, les fonctionnaires bénéficieront d'une aide de reconversion professionnelle au Centre de formation et de promotion sociale. Ce centre a été mis en place avec l'appui du gouvernement brésilien, à travers un fonds spécial créé à cet effet, et financé par l'Union européenne. Le gouvernement a, d'autre part, procédé au gel des embauches dans la fonction publique.

Concerné par les problèmes de sécurité sociale de ses citoyens, et en particulier des fonctionnaires, le gouvernement a soumis à l'Assemblée nationale populaire la loi d'encadrement de la protection sociale qui couvrira trois axes, à savoir: la protection sociale des citoyens, le régime général obligatoire et le régime complémentaire.

Le ministère de la Réforme administrative, de la Fonction publique et du Travail a mis en place deux programmes: l'un de sensibilisation sur la question du VIH/SIDA sur le lieu de travail, l'autre portant sur la lutte contre le travail des enfants.

Pour terminer, je voudrais dire que le gouvernement de la Guinée-Bissau et les partenaires sociaux sont plus que jamais engagés dans la quête des meilleures voies à adopter pour favoriser le développement du pays. C'est dans ce sens que l'on signera, dans le cadre du dialogue tripartite, un pacte de stabilité socioprofessionnelle, moyen pour notre pays de favoriser le travail décent et de promouvoir le secteur privé en tant que moteur de l'économie de lutte contre la pauvreté vers le développement durable.

Original Vietnamese: Mr. LE (Vice-Minister for Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam)

First of all, I would like to agree with the Director-General's main findings in the Global Report on *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*. We appreciate all of the achievements recorded by the ILO in the fight against all forms of discrimination at work. We are aware that these achievements are always accompanied by challenges, on both global and national scales. For Viet Nam's part, equality at work is always secured in our policy-making process. This position is clearly demonstrated in our Labour Code and our Law on Gender Equality of 2006. Vietnam has also ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). So, all forms of discrimination, whether based on gender, race or social origin are prohibited by law in Viet Nam. We welcome the inclusion on this Conference's agenda of the issue of sustainable enterprise development and the role of the private sector in job creation. With our Law on Enterprises and Law on Investment, we in Viet

Nam have created a favourable, equal and non-discriminatory investment climate which has enabled domestic investment to take place and has attracted an influx of foreign direct investment, thereby bolstering private sector development. Under this favourable regulatory framework, some 40,000 private businesses have been established every year, churning out hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The Government of Viet Nam considers the determination of the Director-General and the ILO to review the draft convention on work in the fishing sector as being appropriate action to improve working conditions within the labour force in this sector. At present, there are about 4 millions persons in Viet Nam involved in aquatic fishing and aquatic farming. This sector is characterized by small-sized production with basic and poor working conditions which need improving.

Regarding ILO's budget for 2008–2009 and the discussions of the Committee on Strengthening the ILO's Capacity, the Government of Viet Nam would like to express concern that the ILO needs to enhance its operational capacity in order to deserve contributions from member States.

It is my pleasure to inform you that, as of 2007, Viet Nam has become a full member of WTO. This marks a new stage in Viet Nam's integration into the world economy. WTO accession will expose Viet Nam to both new opportunities and new challenges. To meet developmental requirements in this new context, Viet Nam has been proactive in developing a system of labour legislation. In this connection, the National Assembly of Viet Nam has adopted four laws in relation to labour and employment, namely the Law on Social Insurance; the Law on Vocational Training; a law on sending Viet Namese workers overseas on short-term contracts; and amendments to the Labour Code relating to settling labour disputes. Furthermore, the Government of Viet Nam established a national committee on labour relations in May 2007, in order to promote the roles of the social partners in constructing a sound and harmonious labour relations environment.

In July 2006, the Government and social partners in Viet Nam signed a national cooperation framework on promoting decent work with the ILO for the period 2006–10 focusing on four pillars: labour market development; employment creation and poverty alleviation; extending social security and occupational safety and health; and supportive policies for the most vulnerable workers. Some of these activities with the participation of donors have been operational as a result, thereby contributing to successfully realizing the objectives and goals stated in Viet Nam's 2006–10 Socio-economic Development Plan by 2010.

We would also like to inform you that the Government of Viet Nam has ratified the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). This happened in March 2007. Currently, with the technical assistance of the ILO, feasibility studies are being conducted on ratifying the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and Viet Nam is seeking ILO technical assistance for the ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). The Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184) and the Vocational Rehabilitation and Em-

ployment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159) are also being reviewed.

Viet Nam is one of eight pilot countries of the "One UN" initiative. At present, the task force comprising representatives of the Government of Viet Nam, donors and UN organizations, including the ILO, are actively formulating the "One Plan".

In the future, assessment of social impacts stemming from WTO accession, particularly on labour market and employment, as well as enhancing labour relations and social dialogue, will be very important, as will reforming wage policies, implementing voluntary insurance schemes for farmers and workers in the informal sector, and promoting occupational safety and health. These are priorities on our agenda.

Before ending my speech, I would like to thank you for the valuable technical assistance and support which has been and which will continue to be extended by the ILO and donors to Viet Nam.

Mr. LEKHAK (*Minister of State, Ministry of Labour and Transport Management, Nepal*)

On behalf of the Government of Nepal and on my own behalf I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the Presidency of the Conference. My delegation is fully confident that your able leadership and wisdom will steer the Conference to a successful conclusion.

I have brought with me the sincere greetings and best wishes from the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Girija Prasad Koirala, a veteran trade unionist and an icon of the Nepalese democratic movement. I also take this opportunity to extend my profound thanks to the Director-General of the ILO, a great friend of Nepal, for his recitation of respect and regards to the Right Honourable Prime Minister of Nepal. I congratulate the Director-General for his Report, *Decent work and sustainable development*, which encompasses in its depth and width the core fundamentals of a just, democratic and sustainable society.

Let me briefly highlight some of the historic changes taking place in the political landscape of my country, Nepal, which will have a definitive impact in the areas of work, employment and production. Following the monumental success of the historic People's Movement in April 2006, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the Government and the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist), an interim Constitution promulgated, an interim Parliament formed and an eight-party interim Government put in place, inducting the former rebel party into the Government. The decade-long violent conflict was effectively ended.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement places a special emphasis on the maintenance of industrial harmony, the right to collective bargaining, social security, the amicable settlement of industrial disputes and respect for fundamental ILO principles at work. Further, in the interim Constitution of Nepal, the right to employment and social security and the right to form trade unions have been enshrined as fundamental rights for the first time in our constitutional history. The Constitution places the State under an obligation to increase opportunities for employment and income generation by enlarging investment in industry, trade and export promotion while at the same time ensuring the occupational rights of the workers. Trade union leaders have been nominated as members of the interim Parlia-

ment. For the first time in the history of the country, a Labour and Industrial Relations Committee has been created in Parliament to look into labour-related issues.

I would like to reiterate our deep and abiding commitment to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Nepal has already ratified six out of the eight fundamental ILO Conventions. The ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), is under active consideration by the Government of Nepal and will soon be submitted to Parliament for final approval.

The National Plan of Action for Decent Work has been framed and significant policy measures have been devised in the areas of migration and HIV/AIDS in the workplace. After about three years, the Government has approved and implemented the new minimum wage. Now we are in the process of formulating new labour legislation based on the principle of flexibility and social protection.

Economic liberalization and globalization have completely changed the global economy and the world of work. Capital, technologies, goods and services have global mobility without the barriers of national borders. This has created unprecedented challenges and opportunities for all countries – challenges and opportunities which are unevenly distributed. The reality is that the weak and lower-income countries are trapped in a vicious circle of poverty, marginalization, stagnation and unemployment. They are in greater need of support and cooperation. Therefore, our collective efforts should be directed towards promoting an inclusive and fair globalization, enhancing high, broad-based and sustainable economic growth and gainful decent employment opportunities. Labour migration is another prominent issue of interest. In many cases, migrant workers are working in vulnerable conditions. Our focused attention is required to protect the rights of workers working outside the country as well.

The Government of Nepal is fully committed to eliminating all exploitative forms of child labour. The National Master Plan on Child Labour 2004–14, is also under implementation. The master plan has set a time-bound goal to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2009 and other forms of child labour as a whole by 2014. The ILO/IPEC Time-bound Programme has assisted us in implementing the first phase of our Time-bound Programme on the elimination of child labour was completed last year. Extension of the programme for the second phase would further strengthen our capacity to deal with the problem.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the ILO for the technical cooperation that is being provided to Nepal. At present, we are in a special situation of a post-conflict peace-building process. Our needs are enormous and people's aspirations are high.

Finally, I would like to express our firm commitment to eliminating child labour, strengthening tripartism, enhancing social dialogue and mainstreaming labour standards and rights at work in the ongoing peace process. I call for the ILO to play a vigorous and supportive role in helping us to achieve these goals.

Original portugués: Sra. DE CRISTO RAPOSO DE CARVALHO (*Gobierno, Santo Tomé y Príncipe*)

La Memoria del señor Director General que nos ha presentado este año merece nuestra especial atención con relación a las cuestiones de orden laboral y reviste una importancia muy particular, sobre todo cuando trata a nivel internacional, los problemas actuales y las perspectivas futuras para el bienestar de los países miembros de la OIT.

Este año reflexionaremos sobre un aspecto muy importante como es el trabajo decente al servicio del desarrollo sostenible.

La presencia de la delegación de Santo Tomé y Príncipe en este importante foro, ocurre en un momento muy especial para nuestro pueblo que acaba de obtener la condonación de su pesada deuda externa, que consumía anualmente casi una tercera parte de su presupuesto.

Esto se logró gracias a un programa de ajuste estructural concertado con las instituciones financieras internacionales en 1987 y acompañado por duras medidas de ajuste macroeconómico y de un programa de reforma estructural a partir de finales del año 2000.

En ese momento integramos la iniciativa de los países pobres muy endeudados que ha tenido en cuenta los grandes problemas sociales con los que nos confrontamos, permitiendo destinar ingresos que antes se dedicaban al reembolso de la deuda externa para que ahora permanezcan y se destinen a la solución de los problemas de salud, de educación y de las comunidades rurales y suburbanas.

Lo que se quiere es mejorar el empleo precario que afecta al 14 por ciento de nuestra población activa, queremos lograr un desarrollo sustentable que considere a los grupos más vulnerables de nuestra sociedad.

Para enfrentarnos a los desafíos que tenemos ante nosotros es necesario proseguir con las reformas estructurales que se encuentran en vías de aplicación y que se logre no sólo una gestión más transparente y eficiente de nuestro presupuesto.

Sin embargo, sabemos que estas reformas de fondo son complejas y que toman tiempo para lograr resultados. Además, en el Parlamento estamos debatiendo una reforma fiscal ambiciosa que al reducir la carga fiscal y reducir el impuesto ha dado lugar a un código de inversiones más eficaz y rápido. Este es el reto del Gobierno del que formo parte, figura en su programa de dinamización del sector privado para relanzar de forma duradera el crecimiento. Por eso nos parece necesario transformar el entorno comercial y la estructura dentro de la cual opera.

La República de Santo Tomé y Príncipe ha ratificado 22 convenios internacionales del trabajo, es cierto que no ha respetado todas sus obligaciones en materia de presentación de informes y esto se debe al poco número de personal calificado que tenemos para cumplir con estas exigencias.

Ante esta Conferencia podemos decir que nos sentimos muy orgullosos de que gracias a muchos esfuerzos, nuestro Gobierno ha elaborado y enviado al Departamento de Normas Internacionales del Trabajo más del 80 por ciento de los informes que se nos habían pedido. De todas maneras, nuestras dificultades en lo que respecta al cumplimiento de nuestras responsabilidades con la OIT siguen siendo evidentes. En este sentido, apelamos a la cooperación técnica de la OIT para que podamos mejorar

los trabajos que se llevan a cabo en el Ministerio que yo dirijo.

Para terminar me gustaría felicitar a Secretaría por los esfuerzos que ha realizado con el objeto de poner toda la documentación a nuestra disposición. Espero que nuestro trabajo se vea coronado por el mayor éxito.

Sr. CÉSPEDES (*Gobierno, Paraguay*)

Quisiera en primer lugar felicitar al señor Presidente por su designación para llevar adelante las sesiones plenarias de esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, y expresarle nuestros mejores deseos de éxitos en sus tareas.

Asimismo, deseo congratular al Señor Director General de la OIT, don Juan Somavia, por el Informe global realizado este año, el cual se refiere a *La igualdad en el trabajo: afrontar los retos que se plantean*. El mismo ofrece un panorama de la discriminación laboral en el mundo, incluyendo sus formas tradicionales en base a sexo, raza y religión, y también manifestaciones más nuevas relacionadas con edad, orientación sexual, VIH/SIDA y discapacidad.

Con relación al tema, en nuestro país, la República del Paraguay, se ha dado prioridad a las actividades tendientes a la no discriminación en el mundo del trabajo, en particular se han llevado adelante reuniones de la Comisión Tripartita para la Igualdad de Participación de la Mujer en el Trabajo.

En ese mismo sentido se ha remitido al Parlamento Nacional el pedido de ratificación del Convenio núm. 156 de la OIT sobre responsabilidades familiares, el cual incluye una campaña de sensibilización con diversas actividades vinculadas al tema.

La Comisión Tripartita es un espacio permanente de diálogo social en el cual participan todos los sectores y a través de la cual se realizan labores coordinadas con la Secretaría de la Mujer dependiente de la presidencia de la República que incluye la campaña «Iguales en todo».

Asimismo, a través de la OIT y con la cooperación del Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales de España tenemos previsto iniciar las actividades del proyecto «Políticas de empleo para la igualdad de género, raza y etnia», que se desarrolla en los países del Cono Sur conforme a la Reunión del Grupo de Alto Nivel de Empleo del MERCOSUR, realizada en la ciudad de Asunción, entre el 21 y 25 de mayo, durante la Presidencia Pro Tempore de nuestro país.

Al mismo tiempo venimos ejecutando con la OIT otras actividades relacionadas con temas laborales tales como el proyecto de cooperación técnica «Políticas y programas sobre VIH/SIDA en los lugares de trabajo en Paraguay».

Deseo igualmente expresar con satisfacción que el Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo ha suscrito en el mes de abril del año en curso el Programa de Trabajo Decente para nuestro país, el cual contiene las acciones a ser desarrolladas en materia de promoción de los derechos fundamentales en el trabajo, con el desarrollo de actividades concretas como son el fortalecimiento institucional, el cual va a ser ejecutado mediante el Programa BID/OIT, para fortalecer la inspección del trabajo, establecer un marco jurídico adecuado a los mecanismos extrajudiciales de solución de conflictos individuales y colectivos del trabajo, el mejoramiento de la calidad

de los registros administrativos del Viceministerio de Trabajo y de Protección Social.

En el citado documento se aborda el tema de la creación de empleo de calidad a través del fortalecimiento de las instituciones públicas para las políticas de empleo, de políticas de empleo con dimensión de género, así como de inversiones públicas intensivas en empleo.

Tenemos también como prioridad la erradicación del trabajo infantil a través de tareas concretas llevadas adelante por la Comisión Nacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil y la Protección del Trabajo de los y las adolescentes y el desarrollo de los proyectos que lleva adelante el Programa IPEC de la OIT.

En particular, se ha puesto en vigencia el nuevo Registro del adolescente trabajador, que significa una protección no sólo para el adolescente, sino también para la empresa donde trabaja, pues los padres o tutores son quienes los autorizan a trabajar. A través de dicho Registro es posible acompañar y garantizar condiciones adecuadas de trabajo para los mismos, ya que se los protege de los trabajos peligrosos, insalubres y de los horarios prohibidos, lo cual permite su permanencia dentro del sistema educativo.

El Gobierno Nacional, a través del Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo, el Ministerio del Interior y la Secretaría Nacional de la Niñez y la Adolescencia, con el apoyo del Programa IPEC de la OIT, viene realizando labores con funcionarios judiciales — jueces, defensores y fiscales — así como con oficiales de la Policía Nacional y la Policía Urbana Especializada, enmarcadas dentro de las actividades de capacitación y sensibilización dentro del plan nacional de erradicación de la explotación sexual, comercial de niños, niñas y adolescentes en las zonas de frontera y en los principales centros urbanos.

Agradecemos a la OIT la cooperación que nos brinda a través del Programa Internacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil (IPEC), al cual alentamos para que continúe desarrollando iniciativas tripartitas a nivel local.

Por otro lado, tenemos previsto desarrollar acciones concretas en la promoción de los derechos fundamentales y el trabajo forzoso. En ese sentido, hemos realizado con la OIT talleres de difusión de normativa dirigidos a empleadores y trabajadores, así como un seminario de formación y sensibilización sobre las normas internacionales del trabajo y el sistema de control de la OIT, dirigido a miembros del poder judicial del fuero laboral que contó con la participación de jueces, camaristas, defensores y fiscales de todo el país.

Quisiera referirme asimismo a los instrumentos que forman parte de la discusión de esta Conferencia y que tienen relación con cómo mejorar las condiciones de vida y trabajo del sector pesquero, en cuyo texto se aprecia que se refiere a las condiciones de vida y trabajo de alrededor de 30 millones de personas que trabajan en ese sector. Por ello, es importante recalcar que nuestro país, que se encuentra en una situación geográfica de mediterraneidad, tiene trabajadores pesqueros en nuestros ríos, los cuales reciben una compensación por parte del gobierno nacional durante la temporada de veda pesquera que significa una protección importante de los trabajadores y sus fuentes de trabajo.

En igual sentido, el documento que hace relación a la promoción de las empresas sostenibles es de

suma importancia, pues las micro, pequeñas y medianas empresas forman parte importante de la economía de los países, especialmente en el nuestro.

Me permito hacer una sugerencia al señor Director General de la OIT de involucrar a otros organismos internacionales del sistema de Naciones Unidas, para que conjuntamente con las instituciones locales de economía y finanzas de los respectivos países se pueda proseguir en la lucha para lograr la igualdad de derechos en el trabajo, la no discriminación, la erradicación del trabajo forzoso infantil y el respeto a las libertades sindicales, y de esta manera coadyuvar a la tarea gubernamental para lograr la erradicación de la pobreza.

Por último, cabe destacar la importancia que el Paraguay asigna a la Oficina Internacional del Trabajo que se ve reflejada en el Convenio del Trabajo Decente firmado recientemente, así como las políticas públicas que impulsa el Gobierno, por lo cual solicitamos la constante cooperación de este organismo internacional con la República del Paraguay.

Original Russian: Mr. SHCHERBAKOV (representative, General Confederation of Trade Unions)

This session of the Conference is taking place in the run up to preparations for the 90th anniversary of the ILO. In that connection the Director-General of the ILO has called upon participants to make proposals as to how we can best ensure that the ILO's activities fully respond to the needs and requirements of its Members.

For us, as trade unions, that means first and foremost improving its activities that are undertaken in the interests of people in the world of work.

Today the ILO is working in conditions when the fast pace of globalization of our economies and the liberalisation of international trade relations, which are causing fundamental economic and social changes, and are creating more and more new unprecedented challenges for the world of work. The UN and the ILO, not to mention the trade union movement, have recognized the need to give globalization a human face, in other words a genuine social dimension. An invaluable contribution to that process was made by the conclusions and recommendations of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which was established at the initiative of the ILO. We are convinced that this report has already become the bedtime reading for all tripartite participants and their organizations at national level throughout the world.

We share the view of the Director-General, that within the foreseeable future the main goal of this Organization has to remain that of fighting for the implementation of the Decent Work agenda throughout the world as the most important means of creating a just globalization.

In the current world economy there is no more urgent global task than fighting for full and productive employment, well paid, safe and socially-supported labour, trade union rights and freedoms, and everything that gives people a feeling of their own worth and their own dignity as they work.

The GCTU agrees with the four topics that are the proposed basis for work to develop the activities of the ILO in future, and which were outlined by the Director-General at the last session.

We also fully support the basic idea in the current report on the immutable value of the principles of tripartism and social dialogue as the basis for any activity undertaken by the ILO.

On the other hand, it is also true that those two notions cannot be set in stone. They must develop and respond flexibly to changes that take place in the world of work.

We cannot fail to see, for instance, that today the very nature of tripartism itself is starting to take on global characteristics. This is also one of the manifestations of globalization and that is something that is worthwhile thinking about, both within the ILO and indeed for each and every participant. After all we cannot rule out the idea that after the 90th anniversary of the ILO we will find ourselves seeing the birth of new labour relationships that will now operate at a global level.

Today, in response to global, consolidated transnational capital, which is becoming the largest, cumulative employer in the world, the trade unions have also consolidated themselves, and we now have seen the birth of the ICTU. This should be seen as an appropriate response of the world's trade union movement to the challenges of economic globalization.

We believe that the ICTU will play a constructive role in discussions on the future development of the ILO, and we should remember that in its day, a group of workers within the Governing Body of the ILO unanimously adopted a programme entitled "The ILO at the threshold of the twenty-first century". The document contains the views of trade unions from all countries on how the organization should develop. It remains very pertinent and should not be forgotten when discussing the role of the ILO in the modern world.

Furthermore, there should be no developments or forms or directions of work that weaken the main function of the ILO, that of standard setting. That is the quintessence of ILO activity, and the reason why the ILO was established. Throughout its history, the Organization has been able to respond to the challenges of the times by adopting the necessary Conventions or Recommendations.

Trade unions in our region are concerned about the fact that for some time there has been a decline in interest in ILO standards-setting activities. Sometimes, for instance, we have seen that no Convention or Recommendation has been adopted at a Conference or sometimes, as we saw happening with the fishing Convention, for purely procedural reasons a painstakingly prepared Convention is in the end defeated.

The GCTU and its member organizations would like to see that trend reversed.

In the world in which we live, we believe that the ILO, like all other UN agencies, has to find its niche in relation to the WTO, and other international organizations. The achievement of sustainable development has posed the problem of harmonizing economic, social and environmental interests.

Globalization of the economy means that we have to modernize the way in which we manage the world of work, and renew the working methods of the ILO. All of these issues will have to be addressed in the near future and we are convinced that they will be resolved through the joint efforts of the Organization and its Members. But we are also convinced that no matter what transformations are undertaken the three pillars of the ILO should remain unshakeable. Tripartism is the basis of its activities, social dialogue as a means of cooperation between Members and standard setting as its main goal. Thank you for your attention.

On behalf of the UNMIK delegation, I am pleased to have the opportunity to explain the important work being undertaken in Kosovo in the pursuit of the aims of the ILO. Furthermore, I express the commitment of the UNMIK delegation to transfer the results of the Conference into concrete action for our people.

As the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, I have a heavy responsibility in responding to the employment and welfare needs of a diverse ethnic population. Our needs are many. The registered unemployment rate is 43 per cent, one of the highest in Europe. With such a huge unemployment rate, we are aware that the right to work is not offered to many Kosovars. But I would like to assure you that, even with very few employment opportunities, we are making every effort to avoid discrimination of all kinds.

Patterns of unemployment are of concern for all of society and, of course, for my Ministry, as everybody is affected. But the categories most affected are youth, women, minorities (particularly Roma and Ashkali), people with disabilities and job-seekers from rural areas.

Faced with these patterns, my Ministry has taken seriously the support of these categories. In 2006, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare decided to use an action plan for Kosovo, with the financial support of the Italian Foreign Ministry, aided by strong technical support from the ILO's Budapest Office. I would like to thank both of them very much.

A project has also been designed for close partnership with our social partners, youth organizations, civil society, trade unions, through the creation of a working group on implementation and monitoring.

We firmly believe that this document will give positive results and will help to secure budgetary and extra-budgetary support. This very important document, which is now being implemented, has clearly identified three main policy priorities: education and training, enterprise development, and labour market policies with targeted services.

In every way we have tried to support the ideas of sustainable development through an inclusive approach. Despite all the efforts that have been taken by my Ministry, the level of youth unemployment continues to be alarming. We continue to reach out to you, the international community, for seasonal work visas for our young people. We believe that by supporting institutionalized seasonal employment we can avoid the problems associated with illegal labour migration.

Decent work means decent and sustainable work for all. The unemployment rate among women is higher than among men. Therefore, we are giving increased attention to policies which promote women in the labour market and help them find decent and sustainable employment. Through the provision of start-up grants for small and medium-sized enterprises, retraining initiatives, vocational guidance and counselling and other policies, we expect the rate of unemployment among women to fall.

As for the minority communities – Ashkali, Bosniak, Croat, Egyptian, Gorani, Roma, Serbs and Turkish – we are taking steps to address their needs, but much remains to be done. We hope that by giv-

ing greater priority to this issue the general picture will change.

Social exclusion of Roma and Ashkali communities is identified as a particular challenge. Many Roma and Ashkali fail to access the education and training services, and exist on the periphery of the Kosovan economy. Our efforts to support this category are not enough and we have to do more, but to do so we require additional assistance from donors. We are grateful to the German employers' organization, AWO, for implementing small but important employment projects to provide decent work for Roma, repatriated to Kosovo. I believe this initiative to be a good example of how sustainable employment will aid reintegration into our community.

Other affected categories of people are those with disabilities. In Kosovo, the number of local and international NGOs helping us to address this matter is not insignificant. The results are visible, but the problem remains how to attract even more support from our international donors. My Ministry is soon to propose to Parliament a new draft law on the employment of people with disabilities, which I believe has great merit and will be passed into law.

All ministries in Kosovo are working together with the European Union pre-accession programmes to develop integrated approaches to sustainable social programming. The World Bank is funding our community development fund, which is currently supporting community-based NGO activity to promote a bottom-up approach to social and economic development.

The burden of unemployment is heavy. However, Kosovars are focused on moving forward in the future. We want to build a future of progress, thanks to the support of a number of organizations and donors in the past few years.

Our thanks go to the International Labour Organization, the European Agency for Reconstruction, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Monetary Fund, the Council of Europe and to all who have made a substantial contribution. Many other countries, too numerous to list here, can be assured that they are remembered by Kosovo for their immense contribution in the areas of employment and social security. Progress in education and vocational training has led to improvements in the skills level of the labour force.

I hope that I have been able to highlight the commitment of my Ministry of Labour.

Mr. ALLEN (*Employer, Jamaica*)

It is important for me to recognize the positive impact that this great and noble institution, the ILO, has on the quality of life and the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Jamaican economy. In addition, I wish to join my colleagues in congratulating our esteemed Director-General for such an impressive report on *Decent work for sustainable development*. Sustainable development is about ensuring a better life for everyone today and in the future. We fully endorse the commitment made at the Johannesburg World Summit to promote the integration of the three components of sustainable development – economic development, social development and environmental protection – as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars.

The Government of Jamaica, through its legislative and policy agenda, has implemented and continues to implement measures to strengthen the sustainable development programmes contained in the

publication “Economic and Social Survey of Jamaica 2006”.

The employers of Jamaica strongly believe that the sustainable enterprise and profit-driven enterprise are not mutually exclusive. In order for an enterprise to be sustainable, it must generate financial as well as social and environmental benefits. In this regard, I will briefly comment on four main cornerstones that we consider to be building blocks for creating and promoting a sustainable enterprise.

First, visionary leadership and governing principles. Top managers have created procedures that are supportive, not punitive. There is easy access to all levels of management; employees are empowered and encouraged to take ownership of the business and to learn, rather than complain. The atmosphere of tripartism and collective bargaining is fully respected.

Second, corporate governance. In this regard we promote ethical and responsible decision-making; respect the rights of shareholders; encourage enhanced performance; remunerate fairly and responsibly; and recognize the legitimate interest of stakeholders in ensuring the quality and independence of the external and internal audit processes.

Third, corporate social responsibility. This is expressed in our ethical standards, employment practices, community outreach and nation building.

Fourth, environmental responsibility. Many of our organizations are ISO-14000 compliant and have developed and implemented environmental policies.

Notwithstanding our efforts, to promote sustainable development we face challenges as a country, including urban sprawl, waste generation, rural poverty, the need to build capacity in science, technology and innovation (STI), and to expand the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure.

The thrust to build capacity in STI as well as expanding the ICT infrastructure is paramount in creating a knowledge-based economy for sustainable development and international competitiveness. The concept of expanding access to ICT was also highlighted in this year’s Report VI, *The promotion of sustainable enterprises*. This is crucial to us in the Caribbean. Whereas the United States of America, European nations and the European Union continue to dominate these fields, the Caribbean countries are only slowly embracing the international thrust and do not yet play a major part in the world’s STI arena.

In order for Caribbean enterprises to contribute to this thrust and become sustainable, we have to continue to develop our human capital and engage in talent management for creativity and innovation because we regard our human resources as the foundation of value creation in our organizations. This great institution, the ILO, is strategically positioned to provide intervention and support in this area of capacity building in science, technology and innovation, which would greatly enhance our enterprises to achieve sustainability. We would therefore welcome the ILO’s intervention in enhancing this transformation.

Finally, on behalf of the Jamaican Employers’ Federation, I would like to say that we deem it an honour to have participated in this session of the International Labour Conference, as we consider it a privilege to be a part of this global institution, the ILO, which is able to bring together constituents from all over the world to deliberate on challenges

that are being faced by workers, employers and governments. We wish for its continued sustainability.

Mr. VAN VUUREN (*Employer, South Africa*)

On behalf of Business Unity South Africa, I wish to thank the Director-General for his Report. The Report is comprehensive and, therefore, I will only deal with and focus on a few aspects in the Report. At the outset, I will address the principle of tripartism as dealt with in the introduction of the Report, as we feel that this is a very crucial point.

We fully endorse a statement in the Report alluding thereto, and I quote “... the practice of tripartism, so important to us but underrated by so many others”. In South Africa we have learnt that the principles of tripartism are fundamental to any developing country in creating and facilitating an environment that will enable economic growth and social stability. By embracing social dialogue we have been able to address the world of work in an inclusive manner, allowing for the social partners to *inter alia* provide valuable input into legislation affecting the world of work prior to its adoption and implementation. In addition to this we have also agreed to a social accord known as the Growth and Development Summit agreement. This agreement involves not only the Government, workers and employers, but also the community. Furthermore, this agreement goes a long way to identifying strategies and initiatives focusing on the eradication of poverty, addressing decent work and the training and development of workers. The themes of this Growth and Development Summit agreement are categorized under the following four headings: more jobs, better jobs, decent work for all; addressing the investment challenge; thirdly, advancing equity, developing skills, creating economic opportunities for all and extending services; and lastly, local action and implementation. It is with great disappointment that we note many developing countries have not properly embraced the two principles of social dialogue, only to their detriment.

We recognize and applaud our own Government’s efforts to promote and entrench the principles of social dialogue into our society. We urge the ILO to continue to emphasize the importance of tripartism in the regions, not only where it is lacking, but also in countries like ours to ensure that we do not become complacent and forget the importance thereof.

I will now briefly comment on a few other points raised in the Report. We note with appreciation the current debate at the Conference pertaining to sustainable enterprises and trust that the outcomes of this debate will provide valuable input to determine the role of the ILO as it goes forward. We also recognize the principle of equity that is being continually raised in the Report. It is, however, important that this be measured against the backdrop of recognizing the size and sophistication of business around the world. We are concerned that the role of small and medium enterprises (SME), particularly in the developing and underdeveloped countries, has not been emphasized strongly enough. It is at the SME level that the ILO’s help is most needed as this is where job creation and poverty alleviation will be able to be impacted upon. The wage squeeze and increasing inequalities in wages are certainly a challenge in developing economies like ours. It is often difficult to retain vital skills in a developing country when persons are continually offered far

higher wages in other more developed economies. The only means of maintaining these much needed skills is to try and match the offer made, thus leading to a further distortion of an already distorted wage gap.

There is no easy or quick solution to this challenge, but education and training really sticks its head up to deal with that of lower bracketed workers, in particular, and this is a key element in closing the gap and needs to remain a focal point. It is in the area of fact-based research into the wage gap that the ILO can play an important role and we hope that the ILO will develop capacity in this area.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize the need for the ILO to maintain a balanced approach when addressing the areas raised in the Report thus ensuring input and application from all social partners and, furthermore, the need for the ILO to recognize national circumstances rather than a “one-size-fits-all”.

Original Lao: Mr. LOLONSY (Worker, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

On behalf of Lao Federation of Trade Unions (LFTU) I would like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the Director-General of the ILO in drafting the Global Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*.

This Report contains an objective scientific analysis of the efforts made by all societies endeavouring to promote the principles of social justice within the framework of the standards of the International Labour Organization in order to tackle the problem of eliminating discrimination in respect of employment and occupation which has disfigured humanity because of differences in the lifestyles and working conditions of workers. We would like to mention that the Government has ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Moreover, Lao Labour Law has also been amended. The LFTU has organized and regulated the labour force, and workers at production units are protected. The important thing is inspection and tripartism for ensuring fairness of working hours, rest times, salaries and wages, checking on the concerns of women and child workers, safety and health in the workplace, and other issues governed by law.

On trafficking and illegal migrant workers, we are not just focusing on prevention but also concentrating on the rehabilitation of victims, undertaking activities in education, training for raising awareness, and organizing workshops in the provincial and target districts. Many sectors concerned were involved in these processes. Through monitoring and learning progressive lessons, we learn that the root cause of all these problems is poverty. Therefore, we have to develop a poverty reduction strategy as a priority in order to combat trafficking and people smuggling, as well as eliminating illegal migration.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has ratified some core ILO Conventions, as I have indicated. However, we consider those are still not enough. We welcome our Government's intention to ratify two more core Conventions in the future. These are the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

There are also fundamental Conventions on forced labour. The LFTU has implemented its roles

for education, training and raising awareness of workers and working people in all societies, so that they deeply understand the implementation of the international labour Conventions that the Government had ratified, or will ratify in the case of two other core Conventions as mentioned above.

In conclusion, we firmly support the decision that the framework of policies and strategies of the ILO be based on the four pillars of decent work. The ILO is the only international organization that brings together the tripartite social partners to engage in meaningful dialogue and cooperation. We must all be committed to achieving real progress in ensuring the continued protection and enhancement of the welfare of the hundreds of millions of workers in the world. Trade unions need strengthening and support in their efforts to improve the lives of the workers. Our federation will continue to cooperate closely with the ILO Subregional Office in Bangkok.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the International Labour Organization and international unions for their support in these processes, and we hope that this support will continue in future. We wish you all a prosperous and successful Conference.

Thank you for your attention.

Original Arabic: Mr. ABU ALRAGHEB (Employer, Jordan)

The Director-General's Report for this year is particularly important because it deals with decent work for sustainable development. This is the right foundation to promote development and progress within our societies. Similarly, equality at work and the elimination of discrimination will enable creativity to flourish and will lead to decent work and sustainable development.

Dialogue between the social partners will lead to solid regulations and legislations, including the world of work. This is a prime incentive for investment and the promotion of a strong economy which will have a positive effect on finding job opportunities and decent work that is free of discrimination.

In the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, with support and close monitoring by of His Majesty King Abdullah II, we are moving steadily towards achieving progress in all fields, especially in the field of work. An agreement on decent work has been signed between Jordan and the ILO. We have also concluded the discussions on amendments to Jordan's Labour Law through dialogue between all the social partners, that is to say the Government, employers and workers. The new amendments include freedom of association for all workers, of nationality, and no discrimination in terms of duties and rights.

We have recently, in Jordan, declared the establishment of a Tripartite Labour Commission, in cooperation with and with the participation of the ILO. This Commission will enable us to engage in more dialogue in order to coordinate the adoption of laws in different sectors of the economy. We will also soon announce the adoption of law on the Jordanian socio-economic council.

As regards vocational training, we as employers would like to extend our thanks to our wise Government and the Ministry of Labour for allocating an important role to employers in managing and operating vocational training centres in a practical manner and according to the needs of the labour market which will guarantee decent work for gradu-

ates. We, in Jordan, are amongst the pioneers in our region in many of the areas I have mentioned.

We request the ILO to give more support to developing countries and to set priorities for those countries. We also call on the ILO to build bridges of dialogue between rich and poor countries and to assist poor societies to develop without discrimination. We also call for the strengthening of relationships between the ILO and the Arab Labour Organization.

Employers and workers in the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon are confronted with great difficulties as a result of the complicated security situation in these areas and also the unfair practices of the occupation authorities, such as the closure of crossing points which hampers the movement of workers, goods and the provision of services to citizens. This is where the ILO could play a role by taking strict measures to put a stop to such practices and providing adequate aid to these areas as soon as possible, at a time when unemployment rates have reached record levels worldwide.

Mr. COCKROFT (*representative, International Transport Workers' Federation*)

On behalf of the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) – the global voice of workers in transport, the industry which is central to the process of globalization in the world economy – I wish to congratulate the Director-General on his Report.

Decent work and sustainable development are crucial to workers in every region and in every sector. Workers in the maritime industry suffered the effects of globalization even before the word was invented. The flag of convenience system, which provided shipowners with an easy choice of the least onerous legal framework, meant that from the very foundation of the ILO, maritime labour standards have been central to its work.

But although many maritime standards have been adopted by the ILO, their application was far from universal and that is why, in 2001, seafarers through the ITF and shipowners represented by the International Shipping Federation began work on building a comprehensive and enforceable maritime instrument, together with major maritime nations led very capably by the Government of China.

As the Director General's Report makes clear, the new Maritime Labour Convention, which was adopted overwhelmingly at the 94th (Maritime) Session of this Conference last year, is a huge step forward in making the work of the ILO of direct relevance to workers. For the first time, an ILO Convention will be enforceable globally, not just by flag States but by ratifying States at whose ports the ships call. Ships will be inspected regularly to see whether they carry and comply with a maritime labour certificate, and if they do not, then the port State will take remedial action.

This shows why the sectoral dimension of ILO work is so important to working people. There are very few seafarers anywhere in the world who are not aware of the ILO and its activities. We need to make the ILO equally well understood by workers in every sector, and that is why we strongly support the new programme for ILO sectoral activities, which was adopted by the Governing Body in March. Advisory groups in each major sector will soon provide a direct link between the sectoral social partners and the ILO Governing Body.

This is important in every sector and in every branch of transport. The ITF represents not only seafarers but port workers, road and rail workers and those in aviation. In pursuing the goal of decent work for sustainable development, the principle of global social dialogue also needs to apply elsewhere.

Following a successful tripartite sectoral meeting on cross-border road transport last year, the ITF is now working closely with the International Road Transport Union, training road transport drivers on how to stop the international transmission of HIV/AIDS. Promoting healthy work is something that trade unions and responsible employers can always make a common cause. Road transport workers often face appalling working conditions and there are plenty of bad employers trying to avoid union organization and decent work, using methods such as cross-border competition, subcontracting, fake self-employment and casual and informal work relationships. The ILO needs to continue to monitor these things very carefully.

The ITF is now working on establishing similar relationships with global employer groups in the railways, ports and aviation industries and it was increasingly working with global unions in other industries to ensure decent work in logistics and throughout the global supply chain. Next year will see an ILO tripartite meeting where we will work together with our colleagues from the International Federation of Chemical, Mine and General Workers' Union to discuss oil and gas production and distribution "from well to wheel".

But there is one sector of ITF activity which is very much on the agenda of this session of the International Labour Conference: fishing. There are many ITF unions here today representing workers in the fishing industry. They have worked tirelessly over many years to bring about the second consolidated Convention – for fisheries – and to bring it to a successful conclusion. Having suffered a strange setback in 2005, when the Conference quota for adoption was lost by one vote, the social partners and governance this time have reached a tripartite consensus.

Fishers need this Convention desperately. Fishing is the most dangerous industry on earth and has some of the worst conditions. Flags of convenience are used in that industry, too.

We need you here for the final record vote on Thursday, so please do not rush to catch your plane home. We are sure that this time there will be a comprehensive standard. The ILO then needs to put sufficient resources into the campaign for widespread ratification and implementation of the maritime Convention, the fisheries Convention and the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185).

I said that organizing in fisheries can be a very dangerous occupation. Regrettably, that is also true in other sectors. The risks of being a union activist in Colombia are well known. Regrettably, however, the ITF recently experienced the same situation in another Latin American country, Guatemala.

Pedro Zamora, the General Secretary of the ITF Affiliated Union of Workers in Puerto Quetzal, fought long and hard, with strong support from the ITF and affiliates, against the privatization of the port. Unfortunately, he was so successful in his campaign that, in January this year, a bunch of hired thugs riddled his car with bullets as he returned

home. Pedro was killed but just managed to save the lives of his two sons.

It would appear that this kind of assassination, which followed months of death threats to Pedro and his colleagues in the union leadership, is nothing new in Guatemala. It took a major international union mission, organized jointly by the ITF and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), with strong political action by the European Parliament, even to persuade the authorities to treat the murder as more than a domestic squabble. The death threats continue for the new leaders and the ITF is now engaged in a major campaign, "Pedro Zamora No Impunity", to make it clear to governments everywhere that attacking brave trade union leaders who stand up for workers' rights will be brought to justice.

But it is not just in the Americas where unionists find themselves under attack. I can now announce with great pleasure that Mansour Osanloo, the President of the ITF's Iranian affiliate, the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company, arrived in London this afternoon and tomorrow will attend a conference of ITF road-transport unions.

His union is a genuine Iranian union. We know this because Osanloo has been in and out of prison for over a year, arrested and beaten up by security forces simply for organizing trade union action. Until early this morning, we were not even sure that Osanloo, who is currently appealing a five-year jail sentence for his union-organizing activities, would even be permitted to board the plane. We are now working to bring him to Brussels next week for the ITUC General Council and to deliver the message that the basic principles of the ILO, including the right to freedom of association, are just as valid in the Islamic Republic of Iran as in other nations. We hope that his presence in Europe is a positive sign from the Iranian authorities and that he will face no reprisals of any kind when he returns home next week.

Transport is central to globalization. As the Director-General's Report makes clear, better-coordinated public transport is also a crucial part of sustainable development. Transport workers and the ITF are totally committed to the ILO and the work of the Director-General. We hope and expect that the ILO will also continue to support our efforts to ensure decent work for all transport workers and, of course, fishers.

M. ZOULA (*employeur, Congo*)

Monsieur le Président, la délégation des employeurs du Congo se réjouit de votre élection à la tête de la 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail. Par ma modeste voix, elle vous prie d'accepter ses vives et chaleureuses félicitations.

Je ne vous cacherai pas que les péripéties qui ont précédé cette année l'élection du Président de notre Conférence ont laissé un triste souvenir à notre délégation. Mais, rassurez-vous, Monsieur le Président, nous avons depuis tourné cette page car notre foi en l'OIT est de loin plus forte que tout nationalisme étroit.

La 96^e session s'est ouverte sous le thème du travail décent au service du développement durable. Comme l'indique l'introduction du Directeur général du BIT, c'est une occasion idéale de mener ensemble une réflexion sur les difficultés que rencontrent les travailleurs, les employeurs et les gou-

vernements, et sur l'aide que l'OIT peut leur apporter à tous pour les surmonter afin d'atteindre cet objectif.

Mais quel travail décent peut-on prétendre réaliser dans un pays en développement comme le mien quand l'environnement socio-économique ne le prédispose pas à créer des entreprises viables et durables?

C'est pourquoi, tout en considérant la promotion des entreprises durables comme un objectif à long terme, la délégation des employeurs du Congo préfère s'arrêter un moment sur quelques aspects des progrès accomplis dans le domaine de la législation du travail avant d'espérer ouvrir de nouvelles pistes.

Sur ce registre, nous citerons l'application heureuse du tripartisme et du dialogue social. Des mécanismes permanents sont mis en place et favorisent la concertation entre les trois parties avant que le gouvernement n'arrête sa décision.

Au cours de cette année, à titre d'illustration, les concertations ont abouti à l'augmentation du salaire minimum interprofessionnel garanti et à la rédaction des textes ci-après: la loi 4 de la sécurité sociale et les textes qui l'accompagnent, et les lois portant relèvement de l'âge de la retraite des fonctionnaires et des travailleurs du secteur privé de 55 à 60 ans.

Tous ces projets de textes ont été d'abord examinés par la Commission nationale consultative du travail avant que le gouvernement ne les soumette au parlement.

Les partenaires sociaux sont aussi associés à la rédaction du document sur la réduction de la pauvreté et à la discussion du document en rapport avec la politique nationale de l'emploi.

A côté du tripartisme, nous pouvons aussi relever que la procédure de création d'entreprises a été simplifiée. On peut estimer à quarante-huit heures le temps qu'il faut pour ouvrir une entreprise. Cependant, pour nous autres entrepreneurs, ces avancées, quoique significatives, ne suffisent pas à créer des conditions favorables à l'émergence des entreprises performantes de nature à offrir des emplois décents et à encourager le développement durable.

Au nombre des facteurs qui limitent notre action, il est à noter l'absence d'une politique plus dynamique et plus cohérente en matière de commerce, de crédit aux petites et moyennes entreprises, de formation professionnelle et de protection de l'environnement; la multitude des taxes et impôts qui découragent les investisseurs; l'expansion du secteur informel qui concurrence injustement le secteur formel; le dysfonctionnement de certains services publics comme ceux de l'énergie, notamment l'eau et l'électricité; les communications et les télécommunications.

Certes, les guerres récurrentes que notre pays a connues ne sont pas étrangères à ces limites. Néanmoins, nous espérons que le gouvernement poursuivra son œuvre de reconstruction afin de nous offrir les meilleures conditions pour entreprendre.

Avant de terminer, permettez-moi une fois de plus de remercier Monsieur le Directeur général du BIT qui, chaque année, nous invite à cette réflexion allant dans le sens de rendre le monde du travail plus moderne dans la justice et l'équité. Je vous remercie pour votre bienveillante attention.

(*Mr. Sulka takes the Chair.*)

**REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF
GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES: SUBMISSION,
DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL**

The PRESIDENT (Mr. SULKA)

We shall move to the next item on our agenda, the submission, discussion and adoption of the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives.

This report has been published in *Provisional Record* No. 11. I call on the Chairperson and the Reporter of the Committee, Mr. Kristinsson, to present the report.

Mr. KRISTINSSON (*Government, Iceland: Chairperson and Reporter of the Finance Committee of Government representatives*)

I have the honour to submit to the Conference the report of the Finance Committee of Government Representatives. This report is published in *Provisional Record* No. 11 and contains the recommendations of the Committee on all the matters it considered.

The six resolutions proposed by the Committee appear at the end of the report, immediately before the appendices.

A paper regarding the assessment of contributions of two member States, Montenegro and Brunei Darussalam, was considered. The proposals covering the years 2006 and 2007 for Montenegro and 2007 for Brunei Darussalam were accepted.

The Committee then looked at the proposal concerning the scale of assessments of contributions to the budget for the 2008–09 financial period, which in accordance with normal practice is based on the United Nations scale of assessment. The Committee recommends that it be adopted.

The next item in the report concerns the composition of the Administrative Tribunal of the ILO. The Committee unanimously accepted a recommendation from the Governing Body that the Conference express its appreciation to Mr. Michel Gentot for his services to the Tribunal over the past 15 years and adopt the proposal from the Governing Body concerning one new appointment and the renewal of two appointments to the Administrative Tribunal.

The Committee also considered and accepted proposals regarding the treatment of proceeds from transfer or sale of land.

The main item of business for the Finance Committee was to consider the Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for 2008–09, which were originally discussed at the 298th Session of the Governing Body, three months ago.

After a long and detailed debate during that session, and further discussions by the Finance Committee, it was agreed to recommend a zero real growth budget to the Conference for adoption.

I am pleased to report to you that there was evidently strong support for the Organization throughout the whole of the discussion on this item in our Committee.

The report before you sets out the views of members, expressed in a rich and fruitful debate during which we heard eloquent statements about the importance of strengthening the ILO's Decent Work Country Programmes, the need further to develop resource-based management and the urgency surrounding the issue of funding the maintenance and renovation of the Organization's buildings.

Despite the sometimes differing opinions expressed, the meetings were held in an atmosphere of harmony and understanding. Although a majority of members supported the proposals, a consensus on the amount of the budget was not reached.

In view of this, I make a special appeal to you all—Governments, employers and workers alike—to give your full support to the resolution concerning the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2008–09. I would like to express my thanks to Mr. Matsui of Japan, the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee and to the members of the Committee and the secretariat, all of whom have helped me greatly in my task as Chairperson. May I commend our report to you for adoption.

The PRESIDENT

The general discussion is now open. If there are no speakers, I propose that we proceed with the approval of the report—that is, the summary of the Committee's discussions in paragraph 1 to 76 of the report, the five resolutions and the five appendices. If there are no objections, may I take it that the report and its appendices I to IV are adopted.

(The report – paragraphs 1 to 76 and Appendices I to V – are approved.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ASSESSMENT OF
CONTRIBUTIONS OF NEW MEMBER STATES:
ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed to adopt the resolutions contained in the report. May I take it that the Conference adopts the resolution concerning the assessment of the contributions of new member States.

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE SCALE OF
ASSESSMENTS OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
BUDGET FOR 2008–09: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Conference adopts the resolution concerning the scale of assessments of contributions to the budget for the 2008–09 financial period?

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE COMPOSITION OF THE
ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL
LABOUR ORGANIZATION: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

The next resolution concerns the composition of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization. Does the Conference adopt this text?

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF
PROCEEDS FROM TRANSFER OR SALE OF LAND:
ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

Are there any objections to the adoption of the resolution concerning the treatment of proceeds from transfer or sale of land?

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE ADOPTION OF THE
PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2008–09 AND THE
ALLOCATION OF THE BUDGET OF INCOME
AMONG MEMBER STATES: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

The last resolution presented by the Finance Committee of the Government representatives is the resolution concerning the adoption of the Programme and Budget for 2008–09 and the allocation of the budget of income among member States. Are there any objections to the adoption of this resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

Under article 13.2(c) of the Constitution this resolution will be the subject of a record vote, which will take place on Thursday, 14 June at 10 a.m.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE FISHING SECTOR:
SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL**

The PRESIDENT

This report has been published in *Provisional Record* No. 12. I welcome the Committee members who will present the report: the Chairperson of the Committee, Captain Neil Campbell (South Africa); for the Employers, Mr. Ment van der Zwan (Netherlands); and for the Workers, Mr. Marcos Castro (Argentina).

The Reporter of the Committee was Mr. George Thullen (Ecuador), and I invite him to present the report.

Original Spanish: Mr. THULLEN (Government, Ecuador; Reporter of the Committee on the Fishing Sector)

It is a great privilege to be able to address the International Labour Conference after having had ties for 40 years now with the ILO, first as a staff member and then as a member of the Government delegation from Ecuador. It is a great honour that the Committee on the Fishing Sector has entrusted me with the task of submitting the draft report and the texts of a proposed convention and a proposed recommendation relating to work in the fishing sector to this Conference.

The report bears witness to the highly positive spirit in which the Committee has carried out its work. This constructive spirit was manifested from the first meeting, and that carried on beyond the formal sessions to, for instance, the bilateral discussions between the Employer and Worker members and, informal meetings between the two social partners and Government members.

This has demonstrated the continuing relevance and vigour of tripartism, since each of the groups has given proof of its commitment to a consensus-based outcome, following the splendid tradition of the ILO.

It is worth pointing out that this was the third debate on two instruments relating to work in the fishing sector, bearing in mind the outcome of the 93rd Session of the Conference in 2005. As you will remember, the Governing Body, at the request of that session of the Conference decided to include the item relating to the fishing sector on the agenda of the current session of the Conference. This is why the Committee has focused its discussions on the main problematic areas raised at the 2005 session,

namely, the scope of application, medical certification, hours of rest, crew accommodation and the role of private employment agencies. The excellent reports prepared by the Office have been of great use to the discussions held in the Committee, as indeed were the valuable contributions from the social partners and governments over the past two years, since 2005, over the course of which a whole range of consultations have been held, including the Inter-regional Tripartite Round Table on Labour Standards for the Fishing Sector which convened in December 2006.

The Committee was able to achieve its work in ten sittings, and with such a degree of efficiency and effectiveness that there was no need to have night sittings and we were able to end our work earlier than scheduled initially. Seventy amendments were examined. Many of them were very similar in content. Others were co-sponsored by the Employer and Worker members and by a large number of Government members. All this augured very well for a speedy discussion and decision taking. The proposed Convention contains 46 articles and 3 annexes, not counting the final provisions which will be included, taking into account the pertinent decisions of the Conference. The proposed Recommendation has 55 paragraphs.

Four resolutions were adopted which are recorded in this Report. They refer to the promotion of ratification of the Convention, port State control, vessel tonnage, accommodation and the promotion of the welfare of fishers. Both the proposed Convention and Recommendations have been examined in minute and exhaustive detail by the drafting committee of our Committee to ensure that, on the one hand, the corresponding texts are in conformity with the usual practice of the ILO and, with the previous texts adopted by the Conference and on the other hand, that the English and French versions are duly aligned.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of that Committee, Ms. Moussat from France, Mr. Mackay, Employer delegate, and Mr. Victor, Worker delegate.

As to the Spanish version of our report and of both instruments, I can certainly reassure my Spanish-speaking colleagues that thanks to the experience and the linguistic talent of the Spanish language team, headed by Raoul Flores, there is total concordance between these official texts.

The Office merits particular thanks for the outcome of our work and, indeed, for the report on the Committee's work. Allow me to highlight the efforts made, first of all, by Ms. Elizabeth Tinoco who is the representative of the Secretary-General and her deputy, Giuseppe Casale, the professional quality of the principal expert, Mr. Brandt Wagner, here with us, and his colleague, Danny Appave.

I would also like to thank the coordinator of the secretariat services, Ms. Antoinette Juvet-Mir and the Committee's secretaries, particularly Mr. Martin Hahn and Mr. Malcolm Gifford. I thank the translators and, in particular, the interpreters.

I would also like to acknowledge in particular the contribution of the Legal Advisor Ann Trebilcock, Mr. Tillman Geckeler and their team.

Although it is brief, the Committee's Report is exhaustive and provides a detailed summary of our deliberations. Given the exhaustive nature of the work carried out since 2005, the tripartite support and the final outcome, I hope and I trust, that it will

be unanimously voted in favour. I recommend the adoption of this Report and both of the proposed instruments.

Mr. VAN DER ZWAN (*Employer, Netherlands; Employer member, Committee on the Fishing Sector*)

It is an honour for me to be here in this mighty hall, where all colours and languages meet to create a better harmonious world, and from where agencies of the United Nations radiate their efforts to protect human rights and the rights of refugees, children, women, migrants and workers.

Fishing is ancient. It existed long before written history and even long before agriculture was invented. Fishers belong to the last surviving hunter-gatherers. They remind us of our deep human roots.

Fishers provide food – healthy, natural food, nutrients and proteins we all need. Let us not forget that when we talk about environmental issues relating to the seas and the oceans. Fishers work hard and often under difficult circumstances, and in doing so provide a living for their families and themselves. Let us give us, fishers and fishing vessel owners, a voice too, when we inevitably have to talk and discuss environmental issues relating to the seas and the oceans. Let us not forget the socio-economic dimension. Fishers deserve our deep respect and protection.

It is indeed an honour for me – the son of a fisherman – to be here and to have the privilege to report you on behalf of the Employers' group of the Committee on the Fishing Sector on the outcome of a difficult, but intriguing process that took about eight years, the process of achieving a fairly comprehensive set of standards giving millions of fishers the prospect of basic protection and decent working and living conditions on board their vessels.

We all know that in 2005 the second discussion on the Work in Fishing Convention ended in disillusion. What appeared to be an “accident at work” – no quorum – was in fact an accumulation of disappointments. The Committee on the Fishing Sector had failed to address the concerns of a majority of Asian countries and had not sufficiently acknowledged that developing countries might find difficulties in complying with some or most of the more demanding requirements, leaving them no other choice than refraining from ratification. Nor had it been able to find solutions for emerging, new employment relationships in fishing.

But the heart of the matter was that there had not been a real dialogue; the groups had been talking *at* each other instead of *with* each other.

Fortunately, due to the intervention of the two Vice-Chairpersons of the 2005 Conference, the sector got a second chance. And we took it.

The summer of 2005, we used to analyse the debacle and to find possible solutions. This resulted in an Employers' position paper which was released in February 2006.

In May 2006, the ILO informally consulted delegations of Workers, Employers and Governments and, in this crucial meeting, views coalesced to launch social dialogue to address the concerns that had been identified, namely: the concerns relating to developing countries; medical examination and certification; manning and hours of rest; accommodation of crews on Asian fishing vessels; and the use of private employment agencies.

While the ILO sent a questionnaire to its Members, the social partners themselves commenced a series of informal bilateral talks.

When in December 2006, an Interregional Tripartite Round Table on Labour Standards for the Fishing Sector was convened by the ILO, it became apparent that all parties were interested in building bridges to close the gaps between previous positions, and progress was made in that direction.

The December 2006 meeting was also pivotal in that the concept of progressive implementation was recognized as providing a potential way to facilitate ratification by countries that might otherwise not have been in a position to do so due to problems of a substantial nature in the light of insufficiently developed infrastructure or institutions. For those who hear this term for the first time, I can say that progressive implementation gives countries concerned the opportunity to ratify the Convention at an early stage, implement the provisions regarding basic protection and take the time necessary to implement more demanding provisions and requirements on the basis of a plan of action, which includes projected timetables and moments for evaluation and consultation.

That December 2006 round table was a success, and I would like to reiterate our appreciation of the ILO Office for the way this dialogue was organized.

In the intervening months between December 2006 and May 2007, informal discussions continued between the three partners, especially between the social partners.

By the time this session of the International Labour Conference commenced, while gaps between positions continued to exist, it was apparent that bilateral discussions had reached a point where an agreement was in sight. More importantly, an effective working relationship had emerged between the social partners, and there was a shared will to create solutions for the remaining problems. Responding positively to the requests of the social partners, the ILO Office once again facilitated effective working conditions by integrating bilateral discussions into the itinerary of our Committee. Compared to the previous two sessions of the Conference, this was an important innovation.

We have addressed most of the more important concerns previously raised by employers and some governments, and have made important changes to the Convention that will improve the opportunity to realize widespread ratification.

Progressive implementation has been adopted. While the number of provisions and requirements and the conditions for eligibility of fishing operations remain limited, there is an improved scope for earlier ratification, particularly for developing countries. We are of the opinion that this concept deserves further development by the ILO and that it could be successfully employed in its future instruments.

On manning and hours of rest, prescriptive requirements for rest periods remain, but greater flexibility has been introduced.

Adjustments to the tonnage/length conversion and relaxation of some requirements in Annex III on fishing vessel accommodation pave the way for acceptance and ratification by some major fishing nations in Asia.

We have also formally recognized the emerging role of private employment agencies in various fisheries around the world. The protection the Con-

vention gives to fishers who are employed or engaged by the fishing vessel owner it also gives to fishers who are employed or engaged by private employment agencies. This, however, does *not* mean that ratifying ILO Members have to allow such agencies in their fishing sectors. They are free to do so.

Besides the work in fishing Convention and its supplementing work in fishing Recommendation, our Committee has also adopted four resolutions that are helpful for effective implementation of the Convention. These resolutions should be considered as part of the unique package of agreements that was reached through the positive social dialogue of this Conference and should not be considered to be an approach that is necessary or appropriate for all situations.

On behalf of the Employers and our spokesman, Bruce Chapman, who cannot be here due to other activities, I wish to thank all who participated in the discussions of our Committee, in particular Nigel Campbell, Chairman of the Committee, for his guidance through the 2006 round table and this Conference, Elizabeth Tinoco and her excellent team for their tremendous work, and Government representatives for their constructive contributions.

Special thanks go to the fisher representatives for their goodwill and positive approach, despite the 2005 text they had already accepted. In our view, we would not have created the instrument that now lies before you without the leadership of Peter Sand Mortensen, who cannot be here either, his very effective team and the support of his group.

What we have now is a much better result than the one we had in 2005. Given the unanimous adoption of the texts by our Committee, I think this view is shared by all who participated in its tripartite discussions. And I think I do not exaggerate in saying that this result is a victory for social dialogue. The instruments and resolutions deserve unanimous adoption by this International Labour Conference.

Original Spanish: Mr. CASTRO (Worker, Argentina; Worker member, Committee on the Fishing Sector)

It is a matter of great pride for me to be able to address you on behalf of the Workers' group of the Committee on the Fishing Sector in order to recommend to the Conference the adoption of the proposed Convention concerning work in the fishing sector and proposed Recommendation concerning work in the fishing sector.

It is no secret that the Workers were extremely disappointed when the previous proposed Convention was not adopted in 2005. That failure was due to several factors, among them the abstentions of some Governments which had important and sometimes legitimate reservations regarding the text. On the other hand, because of their nature, the negotiations in 2004 and 2005 could not really be considered negotiations. That has now become just a part of history which we have fortunately overcome, because what happened this year was totally different and proceedings in the Committee on the Fishing Sector were a true example of social dialogue within the ILO, with partners who showed that they not only knew their industry, but were also experienced negotiators and responsible participants, inspired by the wish and the will to contribute to achieving a result which, without any doubt, will benefit hundreds of thousands of fishers all over the world, thus contributing to a full improvement of

the industry. The Workers' group would like to recognize the enormous contribution made by our counterparts, especially Mr. Bruce Chapman and some of his very distinguished colleagues in the Employers' group. All of them constantly showed a positive attitude and a constructive spirit.

The negotiations, which started more than a year ago on a bilateral basis and outside the auspices of the ILO, were made much easier by the Interregional Tripartite Round Table on Labour Standards in the Fishing Sector held in December 2006, and by the contacts maintained with various governments, especially that of Japan. As a result of this dialogue, it was possible to ensure solutions that were acceptable to both parties on those problems which resulted in the failure of the discussions in 2005. The debate, which was extremely frank and conducted in good will, was an ideal example of tripartism and achieved the results we can present today.

We would like to show our appreciation to the Government representatives for the valuable contribution they made to this debate and we very much appreciate their acceptance of joint commitments previously made by the social partners. We should also mention that the work of the Committee on the Fishing Sector was made much easier because it was chaired by the very competent Captain Nigel Campbell of South Africa, whose sense of humour and flexibility helped the Committee enormously in making speedy progress towards this long-awaited agreement.

The result we are introducing today is a group of minimum standards for the fishing sector, which will offer very necessary protection to fishers in quite a number of areas in an activity which is considered worldwide to be one of the most dangerous ones at an industrial level.

I will not go into great detail, but will simply highlight some of the important subjects discussed, including: minimum requirements for work onboard; rest hours; prevention of fatigue, which is something that it would be difficult to include in a general Convention because fishing activities are so specific; minimum standards for accommodation in new ships which are longer than 24 metres; social protection for fishers; with recognition of the role played by the social partners; accident prevention onboard; healthcare; insuring general safety; and provisions which relate to port state control.

The Convention also contains a very important clause on the prohibition of more favourable treatment for ships of non-ratifying countries. It establishes a provision for the protection of fishers who work on board ships that fish in international waters, and contains an implementation clause.

The Convention fulfils most of the expectations of the Workers on what should be included in a framework instrument. We hope that the provisions of a progressive implementation clause and the possibility of exclusion, under certain conditions, of some of the requirements of the Convention will make it possible for the majority of States to ratify this Convention.

We believe that the adoption of this Convention, which we hope will come into effect very soon, will show that work at the ILO can really make a difference at the sectoral level, bringing long-awaited improvements in working conditions for fishers in the real world. On this basis, we will measure our final success in this field.

We trust that the ILO will actively promote ratification of this Convention and, if necessary, allocate resources that will make this instrument the success the members of the Committee hope for, the maritime fishing industry needs, and its selfless workers demand

For this reason, on behalf of the Workers' group of the Committee on the Fishing Sector, it is a pleasure for me to recommend the adoption of this Convention on work in the fishing sector.

Mr. CAMPBELL (*Government, South Africa; Chairperson of the Committee on the Fishing Sector*)

Fishing is a way of life. This is probably a better description than "occupation" or "work". It is the last true hunting profession.

It is the last true hunting profession. Fishers are away from home on the sea but, unlike their counterparts on trading ships, are usually paid by a share of the catch. No fish, no pay.

Fishing is a very diverse sector. Vessels range from 140 metres in length with a crew of 100 to two fishers on a three-metre canoe. There are many communities where fishing is the only opportunity to work and put food on the table, whereas in certain countries fishing is a key economic activity. Families, workers' representatives and employers often have no idea what is happening until the vessel returns to shore. Because of the many factors that make this sector unique, it has often been left in the shadows when legislation to protect workers has been considered. This has been detrimental to fishers and their families. After an accident, I have often heard the cry: "The boat is insured, the catch is insured, but my husband is not insured – where is the next meal coming from?"

Last year this august body adopted the Maritime Labour Convention. This gave protection to 1.4 million seafarers. However, fishers were excluded from this Convention.

Before you is an instrument that will protect and uplift the dignity of some 30 million fishers serving on four million vessels. This instrument should not be seen in isolation. Other United Nations' agencies – the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization – are very involved in this sector. The Fishing Vessel Safety Code and Voluntary Guidelines have been revised. Draft safety recommendations for the smallest fishing vessels have recently been completed. This, with the work of the ILO, is all part of a process ensuring decent working conditions for fishers.

After 2005, when this instrument was not adopted, we could say that the traditional position between employers and workers persisted afterwards: there was a breakdown in negotiations. A process of consultation at both bipartite and tripartite levels was then begun. The areas that led to the non-adoption were examined and understood. This was vital in understanding how meaningful instruments that could be widely ratified could be achieved. This focus led us to consultations between the social partners and a round table meeting of all partners.

Then it became obvious that there was a desire to reach consensus to improve working conditions for fishers. What was most important was that both parties had to be prepared to make sacrifices and both, to their credit, did. To reach this conclusion also required an understanding of certain technical parameters. A good example of this is the very differ-

ent hull forms of vessels built in Europe compared with those built in Asia. The relationship between gross tonnage and length needed to have equivalence acceptable to all parties. Again, this required some lateral thinking by governments. They are used to administering the International Tonnage Convention, 1969, in its purest form. Again, to their credit, movement was made and consensus reached.

When ratification was considered it became obvious that there were very different levels of readiness. Concerns were raised that developing countries would not be able to ratify even if they had already complied with certain articles. In further debate, a methodology for bringing those countries on board was discussed. However, there are no definitive parameters to identify a developing country. A new approach was needed. An innovative approach was identified for progressive implementation. This approach allows for early ratification and allows countries to build capacity and adopt or revise legislation that will enable them to give full effect to the instrument. (Of course, there are core rights which cannot be subjected to progressive implementation.)

There are many spin-offs from this approach. One is that it will increase social dialogue at a national level leading to implementation and will bring social partners closer together – a key principle of the ILO. It also listens to the concerns of this very diverse sector. Another would be if work towards its implementation were included in a country's Decent Work Country Programme.

As the Director-General reminded us in his address to our Committee, extending the net of social protection and decent work for fishers is an important part of the ILO's commitment to social justice. This instrument will help protect fishers against exploitation.

Our Vice-Chairpersons, Bruce Chapman for the Employers and Peter Sand Mortensen from the Workers, deserve special thanks for their commitment to dialogue.

Mr. Thullen has made sure your report is an accurate reflection of the deliberations. I also wish to express my thanks to the representatives of the Secretary-General of the International Labour Conference. Ms. Elizabeth Tinoco and her deputy, Mr. Guiseppe Casale. The whole Fishing Committee staff has worked very hard. I wish to especially note the work of Ms. Antoinette Juvet-Mir, the leading coordinator, and to thank her team; to Mr. Tilmann Geckeler, from the Legal Office, Mr. Brandt Wagner, who has been dedicated to this effort for several years and from whom I have received a high professional support, and to Ms. Johanna Walgrave.

In my opening address to the Fishing Committee, I asked the Committee to listen to the wise counsel of Nelson Mandela, who said to us, "We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right." In adopting the report, they listened; I therefore ask you to listen to his counsel and do right when you vote.

The PRESIDENT

I shall now open the general discussion on the report.

Ms. SCHANTZ (*Worker, United States*)

After several years of hard work, we are proud to have produced a Convention and a Recommendation that address the needs, the hopes and the aspira-

tions of the world's nearly 30 million fishers. It covers all fishers, women and men, aboard both big vessels and small, and different types of fisheries, taking into account the flexibility required for its global application.

The Convention provides for the progressive implementation of certain provisions, thus assisting developing countries to apply most of it, while giving them the time needed to adjust their infrastructure, to fully execute all the requirements. It grants much-needed port State control for large vessels fishing outside the exclusive economic zone of the flag State.

Importantly, it will help fishers in all countries improve their lot and will contribute to securing decent work and better conditions of daily existence for those labouring in one of the most treacherous of all livelihoods.

We strongly urge the delegates at this International Labour Conference to support the fishers of the world by approving the report and later by voting for this Convention and Recommendation concerning work in the fishing sector.

Mr. MASEMOLA (*Worker, South Africa*)

As other colleagues have pointed out, we were disappointed some two years ago that this Convention was not adopted. However, this time around we are looking forward to its adoption.

Millions of fishermen across our planet are looking forward to the successful conclusion of this Conference and therefore to the adoption of the Convention, and to its ratification later on by Governments. During the debate in the past two weeks, we believe that we have found a suitable balance, a balance that reflects the different types of fisheries and the regional differences that go with the diversity of this sector. As Captain Nigel Campbell has pointed out, it also takes into account the flexibility that has been consistently required for the small-scale fisheries in developing countries. We believe that all this was achieved owing to the meaningful dialogue with our social partners, and that is why we were successful in achieving this goal and in securing this package. Thanks to our social partners for their cooperation and understanding.

We believe that the provisions will help more than 30 million fishermen in all countries across the world and contribute to the securing of decent work and living conditions, while at the same time reducing the rate of deaths and accidents in this dangerous and hazardous industry. We therefore strongly recommend that the distinguished delegates at this Conference vote for the Convention and Recommendation concerning work in the fishing sector.

In conclusion, we want to state that Captain Nigel Campbell has truly steered the ship in the right direction. And, finally, as they say in some parts of the world, it was good doing business with Governments and Employers at this Conference.

Mr. MATHEW (*representative, International Collective in Support of Fishworkers (ICSF)*)

Two-thirds of the world's fish production originates mainly from marine catcher fisheries that employ over 30 million fishers on board four million fishing vessels. It is high time that this socially disadvantaged section, which includes both men and women often forced to carry on earning a livelihood under adverse working and living conditions, fi-

nally, benefits from an ILO instrument that guarantees decent work.

The size of vessels and crew, the duration of fishing trips and the area of fishing operations vary across the world. Considering this diversity, it is commendable that the Committee on the Fishing Sector could propose for adoption a Convention and a Recommendation on work in the fishing sector that cover fishers on board both small and large-scale fishing vessels with vigour and flexibility. The proposed Convention provides a common framework to address issues related to minimum requirements for work on board fishing vessels and living and working conditions, as well as the social security fishers.

The marine fishing industry in particular, the sub-sectors characterized by larger fishing vessels undertaking longer fishing trips would benefit from the provisions of the proposed Convention after the adoption, ratification and development of national legislation toward its implementation. Developing countries can greatly benefit from the provisions of the Convention not only in terms of their national fishing industries but also as fishing labour exporting nations. Implemented well, the Convention can put an end to the inhuman treatment of fisherworkers, particularly migrant fishers on board distant water fishing vessels. ICSF urges the Conference to adopt the Convention. This time, the additional flexibility offered by the proposed Convention should ensure wider support and enable its ratification on adoption even in countries with insufficiently developed infrastructure or institutions. ICSF hopes however, that provisions for a progressive implementation approach do not lead to an undue delay in extending the benefits of the Convention to all fishers who fall within its scope. ICSF requests Governments to consider speedier ratification of this Convention on adoption, and also to consider extending its relevant provisions, where applicable, to shore-based fishers especially women, in consultation with social partners. This would be consistent with the ECOSOC Ministerial Declaration in July 2006 on creating environment at the national and international levels conducive to decent work for all.

ICSF believes that the proposed Working Fishing Convention, 2007, can complement the legal instruments for sustainable and responsible fisheries, namely the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement and the 1995 FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, by addressing the social dimension of sustainable development of fishers and fishing communities. ICSF has been disseminating the content of and mustering support for the proposed fishing Convention since 2003 and it has in this regard, organized several meetings in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe mainly for small-scale fishers who as a result, have evinced a greater interest in the proposed Convention. Once the working fishing Convention is adopted ICSF, looks forward to collaborating with the International Labour Office, governments, trade unions and NGOs for its dissemination, ratification and implementation.

Mr. Chairman, last but not least, ICSF would also like to take this opportunity to urge the ILO to look into the conditions of work in the burgeoning aquaculture industry that employs an estimated 10 million people and to develop if it deems necessary, an

instrument to guarantee them decent work. Aquaculture today accounts for one-third of the world's fish production. Over the past five years while marine catcher fishery production has been stagnating, aquaculture, fish production has been registering impressive growth. It would be only appropriate that such growth is not achieved at the cost of decent work.

Original Portuguese: Mr. SOUZA (Worker, Brazil)

Mr. President, we cannot destroy in one day a consensus over a period of eight years, by countries whose delegations took part in the Tripartite Committee on the Fishing Sector.

The fishing sector now has a moment of glory at this 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, since we can now approve this Convention, a Convention proposed by this Committee which has been working on it through consensus for over eight years.

We have been awaiting this moment anxiously and I would like to extend a word of praise to all participants, to all delegates, who have signed this text.

To conclude, I would like to say that we, in Brazil, are very happy with the text. There is one point that I would like to make, something people say in Brazil: we say that if you can do something today, you should not postpone it. I think that we should move forward in this way with ratification.

Original German: Mr. KERSTEN (Government, Germany)

Germany welcomes the report of the Committee on the Fishing Sector. It indicates clearly that the social partners and the governments have unanimously adopted the report, the Convention, the resolutions and the Recommendation, and we hope that the vote on Thursday will only be a formality. We also very much hope that the Convention on work in the fishing sector will be ratified by a large number of Members of the ILO and thus rapidly enter into force.

Minimum standards in the fishing sector will at last exist. Globalization will thus be achieved, meaning that thousands of fishers and their families will enjoy better working conditions and standards of living. Germany would like to say to all those involved a word of thanks for the successful work; the main players have already been mentioned. A special word of thanks, however, goes to the social partners who, through their willingness to enter into discussion and compromise, have really been a model for true and successful social dialogue.

Thank you very much Mr. President.

Mr. KANEKO (Government, Japan)

Japan is very happy with the outcome of the discussions of the Committee on the Fishing Sector. The atmosphere of the Committee was very positive and constructive. During the meetings of the Committee, we saw that participants were doing their best to compromise, to find a way forward, to achieve the adoption of the Convention and the Recommendation in 2007. As a result, the new proposed Convention has become more flexible and feasible compared to the 2005 draft. Japan hopes that the many member countries will adopt the new Convention and vote for the new Convention and Recommendation on 14 June.

The PRESIDENT

That concludes our list of speakers. I propose now that we move to the approval of the report, paragraphs 1 to 416. If there are no objections, may I take it that the report is adopted by the Conference?

(The report – paragraphs 1 to 416 – is approved.)

**PROPOSED CONVENTION CONCERNING WORK
IN THE FISHING SECTOR: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

We shall now move to adopt the proposed Convention concerning work in the fishing sector, Article by Article, beginning with the Preamble. May I take it that the Preamble and Articles 1–46 are adopted?

(The Preamble and Articles 1 to 46 are adopted seriatim.)

The proposed Convention includes three annexes for adoption. May I take it that the Conference adopts the proposed Convention in its entirety, with its three annexes?

(The proposed Convention, as a whole, with its three annexes, is adopted.)

**PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION CONCERNING WORK
IN THE FISHING SECTOR: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

We shall now proceed to adopt the proposed Recommendation concerning work in the fishing sector. I shall proceed Paragraph by Paragraph, beginning with the Preamble.

(The Preamble and Paragraphs 1–55 are adopted seriatim.)

May I take it that the Conference adopts the proposed Recommendation concerning work in the fishing sector in its entirety?

(The proposed Recommendation, as a whole, is adopted.)

I should like to remind you that the proposed Convention and Recommendation on Work in the fishing sector will be submitted to the Conference for a record vote on Thursday, 14 June in a sitting beginning at 10 a.m.

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF THE
RATIFICATION OF THE WORK IN THE FISHING
CONVENTION, 2007: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

We shall now move to the adoption of the four resolutions contained in the annex to the report. Does the Conference adopt the resolution concerning promotion of the ratification of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007?

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING PORT STATE CONTROL:
ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

May I assume that the Conference adopts the resolution concerning port State control?

(The proposed resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING TONNAGE MEASUREMENT
AND ACCOMMODATION: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

Does the Conference adopt the resolution concerning tonnage measurement and accommodation?

(The resolution is adopted.)

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING PROMOTION OF
WELFARE FOR THE FISHERS: ADOPTION**

The PRESIDENT

Lastly, the resolution concerning promotion of welfare for the fishers is submitted to the Conference for adoption. Are there any objections?

(The resolution was adopted.)

In accordance with paragraph 7 of article 40 of the Conference Standing Orders, the texts of the Conference and Recommendation will be submitted to the Drafting Committee to prepare the definitive texts.

Before closing the sitting, I should like to take a moment to thank the Officers of the Committee and its members for the work they have done. The comprehensive instrument on this subject has, as you know, been discussed by the Conference at its 92nd and 93rd Sessions, when its adoption was not voted. The result for us today therefore represents several years of work. I offer my thanks and congratulations to the Committee, its Officers, as well as to the secretariat.

(The Conference adjourned at 8.35 p.m.)

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