Thank you, Chair.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to address the Conference on behalf of Japanese workers.

First and foremost, let me express my deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims of the catastrophic earthquake that hit Nepal on 25th of April. One month and a few days have passed since the earthquake occurred, and eight million people have been affected by the disaster according to the United Nations’ report. I would like to take this opportunity to call on the international community for the continuous and even stronger solidarity and support towards an early recovery of the livelihoods of Nepalese people. We, RENGO, are committed to being part of the efforts as a member of the international community.

Now I’d like to touch upon the report of the Director-General titled “The future of work.”

As the Report rightly describes, work is an activity of overcoming social
problems and creating a new value through connecting people and making a link between workplaces and the society. This will become a driving force for personal development and self-realization, as well as for business growth and social sustainability.

The reality is, however, that the linkage between work and the society is becoming weaker and weaker by the increase of the number of unemployment and the deterioration of employment quality.

The global financial and economic crisis in 2008 was indeed a wake-up call for the world to recognize the importance of stronger coherence between growth strategies and employment policies. I have to say, however, that little or no lessons have been learnt from the Crisis when we look at the policies being implemented in the world today.

The Report poses a question on how the ILO could continue to pursue its goal of social justice under the situation where forms of employment are rapidly becoming diversified. What I would like to highlight here is that the principle of “equal remuneration for work of equal value” which is clearly stated in the Preamble of the ILO Constitution adopted in 1919 must be secured. On the basis of this principle, each worker could adequately choose the style of employment in accordance with the necessity during his or her life such as the cases of pregnancy, childbirth, child care and elderly care. I believe this will enable everyone to carry on a sustainable, decent life while working.

The Report also addresses important challenges with regard to the governance of work. The ILO’s tripartism has brought tremendous value to society for
nearly a century by setting and promoting application of labour standards through social dialogue. The recent tendency of the inclusion of the core labour standards of the ILO in trade agreements shows clear evidence to the universal value of the ILO at the global level.

I am confident that the ILO’s mission to pursue social justice will be duly sustained towards the next century. And I strongly believe that the future of work lies in constant and firm commitments by all the stakeholders through the respect of the ILO’s tripartism.

We, RENGO, are determined to be actively involved in the ILO’s “centenary conversations” while continuing our endeavours to listen to and deliver the voices of all working people.

Thank you for your kind attention.