

Note on the proceedings

Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications
of Globalization and restructuring in Commerce

Geneva, 25-29 October 1999

Contents

Introduction	1
Part 1. Consideration of the agenda item	5
Report of the discussion	7
Introduction	7
Composition of the Working Party.....	7
Presentation of the report and general discussion	8
Point-by-point discussion	12
New shop formats, distribution circuits, enterprise productivity and economic performance	12
Globalization and job creation, enterprise development and employment prospects	13
Electronic commerce	15
Human resources development	18
Working conditions, opening hours and deregulation	21
Flexibility, productivity and conditions of employment.....	23
Mobility	25
Labour relations	26
Equal opportunities and gender questions	27
The informal sector.....	28
Codes of conduct and social labelling	29
Priorities for ILO action.....	29
Consideration and adoption of the draft report and the draft conclusions by the Meeting.....	30
Conclusions on the human resource implications of globalization and restructuring in commerce	31
General considerations	31
Employment	32
Working and employment conditions	32
Equal opportunity	33
Informal sector	33
Electronic commerce	34
Human resource development	34
Small and medium-sized enterprises	35
Labour relations.....	35
Voluntary codes of conduct.....	35
Part 2. Resolutions	37
Consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the draft resolution	39
Resolution on the establishment of a tripartite forum for consultation concerning employment and working conditions in commerce.....	40

Text of the resolution adopted by the Meeting	41
Resolution on the establishment of a tripartite forum for consultation concerning employment and working conditions in commerce	41
Part 3. Other proceedings	43
Panel discussions	45
Voluntary initiatives in the commerce sector: Promoting synergies with international labour standards.....	45
Electronic commerce and employment: Opportunities and challenges.....	47
Labour-management relations in commerce in a globalizing market	49
Closing speeches	52
Evaluation questionnaire	55
List of participants	59

Introduction

The Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce was held at the International Labour Office in Geneva from 25 to 29 October 1999.

The Office had prepared a report¹ to serve as a basis for the Meeting's deliberations. It addressed the following topics: the forces behind the globalization of commerce and its processes; and the impact of globalization on commerce, employment and labour-management relations in the sector.

The Governing Body had designated Mr. Max Arbesser-Rastburg, Employer member of the Governing Body, to represent it and to chair the Meeting. The three Vice-Chairpersons elected by the Meeting were: Mr. Ö.S. Özmen (Turkey) from the Government group, Ms. F. Palileo from the Employers' group and Ms. A. Rantsolase from the Workers' group.

The Meeting was attended by Government representatives from Canada, China, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, Nepal, Peru, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom; 25 Employer members and 22 Worker members. A Government representative from Nigeria attended the sittings. Representatives from the Arab Labour Organization, the European Free Trade Association, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the Universal Postal Union (UPU) attended the Meeting as observers.

The following international non-governmental organizations also attended as observers: the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the International Council of Nurses, the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees (FIET), the International Federation of University Women, the International Organization of Employers (IOE), and the World Confederation of Labour.

The groups elected their Officers as follows:

Government group

<i>Chairperson:</i>	Mr. P. Saikkonen (Finland)
<i>Vice-Chairperson:</i>	Mr. F. Sans (France)
<i>Secretary:</i>	Ms. I.M. Amin (Adviser, Egypt)

¹ ILO, Tripartite Meeting on the Human Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce, Geneva, 1999: *Human resource implications of globalization and restructuring in commerce*, 113 pp.

Employers' group

Chairperson: Mr. S. Bedard
Vice-Chairpersons: Ms. V. McCoy
Mr. K.O. N'Guissan
Mr. I. Zanetti Peinado
Secretary: Mr. J. Dejardin (IOE)

Workers' group

Chairperson: Mr. A. Spaulding
Vice-Chairpersons: Ms. T. Krylova
Mr. M. Alondo
Secretary: Mr. J. Furstenborg (FIET)

The Secretary-General of the Meeting was Mr. V. Klotz, Chief of the Salaried Employees and Professional Workers Branch of the International Labour Office. The Deputy Secretary-General was Ms. G. Ullrich, the Executive Secretary was Mr. J. Sendanyoye and the experts were Mr. C. Duchemin, Mr. J. Myers and Ms. L. Wirth, all of the same branch; Ms. J. Diller of the Office of the Legal Adviser, Ms. L. Tegmo-Reddy of the Industrial Activities Branch, and Ms. Foucault-Mohammed of the Bureau for Workers' Activities also acted as experts. The Clerk of the Meeting was Ms. T. Bezat-Powell of the Sectoral Activities Department.

The Chairperson welcomed the participants and drew attention to the extreme topicality of the subject-matter of the Meeting as the third millennium drew closer. Globalization and the restructuring of commercial distribution circuits were reinforcing the linkages between internal and external trade the world over. Together with trade liberalization and technological advances, these were transforming the world into a truly "global village", bringing spectacular incomes and higher employment growth. Nevertheless, a number of issues deserved examination, and solutions to certain concerns needed to be found if commerce was to play its full role as an engine of employment and a rising source of living incomes. First, the effects of globalization were unevenly felt around the world; many developing countries were being left further behind. Second, even in industrialized countries, many people were convinced that the rise in unemployment and the declining wages of unskilled workers were the fault of globalization and restructuring, despite studies to the contrary. Third, it was argued that the quality of jobs created, general working conditions, remuneration and training and other human resource practices within the sector ranked very low compared to other economic activities. The Meeting therefore aimed at exchanging views and experiences on these issues and problems, and promoting an international tripartite consensus to provide guidance for measures to deal with them.

Ms. K. Hagen, Executive Director of the ILO's Social Dialogue Sector, welcomed the participants on behalf of the ILO. She noted that this was the first Meeting concerned solely with commerce, as the last Meeting in October 1994 had covered the service sector as a whole. Commerce's problems were frequently dissimilar from those in other service-oriented sectors and required targeted rather than generalized remedies. Commerce was the essential bridge linking producers and consumers of goods and services and was, more than any other activity, central to job creation and economic well-being. ILO data indicated that employment in commerce in most industrialized countries was on the increase; in many developing countries, it was similarly the single largest source of employment in the modern sector outside of the public sector. Many informal sector activities were also directly or indirectly related to commerce. However, the sector's contribution to employment could not be measured simply in terms of the numbers of workers it employed. Unskilled workers predominated and their wages had declined as those of skilled workers rose. Another striking feature of commerce the world over, whether in formal or informal employment, was the prevalence of women workers. ILO data indicated that commerce generally employed more women than most other sectors. It would therefore be useful and important to address the gender ramifications of globalization and restructuring on the sector. While some of the effects might be positive, such as the ability to combine part-time work with family and other responsibilities, the unevenness of opportunities for women at higher-skilled and management levels and their significantly lower wages in general appeared to be aggravated by globalization. The catalytic role it played in facilitating the disposition of goods and services from different industries also implied that it was a sector full of change and uncertainty for the workers, and even the employers. Although it had helped to create a favourable climate for investment and the creation of enterprises, thus contributing to global economic growth and increased employment, it had also been blamed for the destruction of jobs, especially in the industrialized countries. Internal and cross-border mergers and acquisitions activity to boost market share, gain economies of scale, and be better prepared for increased competition resulting from globalization had frequently been followed by job losses through rationalization of operations to cut costs. The minimal (or even total lack of) tripartite or bipartite consultations had contributed to a deterioration in labour-management relations generally. In developing and transitional countries, the growth of the informal sector, primarily in commercial activities, was connected to the loss of jobs in the formal sector as a result of structural adjustment policies or financial crises like the recent Asian financial crisis. Thus, although the emerging global economy had brought unquestioned prosperity, it had also come with widening inequalities which were challenging the world's capacity for collective social responsibility. The ILO, with its tripartite partnership, considered that a globalizing market-place without a matching social dialogue would point towards a clear democratic deficit.

Ms. Hagen informed the participants of recent changes introduced by the new Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia. These aimed at modernizing the ILO so that it would be better able to address today's problems with new thinking, without ever losing sight of the ILO's underlying values. The changes included the setting of strategic objectives to sharpen the focus of the ILO's activities, and the reorganization of the Office to increase its capacity to achieve those objectives. A senior management team composed of six Executive Directors under the Director-

General had been the first step taken to promote these changes. The strategic objectives concerned fundamental principles and rights at work, which recognized and reaffirmed the historical mandate of the ILO, that the Organization's primary mission must be the promotion of social justice and dignity at work. It also emphasized the promotion of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted unanimously by the International Labour Conference in 1998. The second strategic objective related to the creation of employment, an essential first step from poverty. Decent jobs were the most widely shared aspiration of people everywhere, and endeavours must be aimed at helping create a favourable climate for investment and the creation of enterprises to extend access to job opportunities. Social protection was the third strategic objective. In the context of globalization and restructuring, with more people forced out of work into the informal sector, there was a greater need than ever before for the safety nets afforded by social protection systems. Tripartism and social dialogue had been identified as the fourth strategic objective. In the absence of social dialogue, globalization would face rising and frequently very strong resistance. Social dialogue was therefore a prerequisite for the achievement of the first three objectives. It was during times of change, such as was under way at the global, national and sectoral levels, that social dialogue was needed most and could be most beneficial. The Social Dialogue Sector, which brought together the Sectoral Activities Department, the Bureaux for Employers' and Workers' Activities, a new department for Government and Labour Law and Administration, and the InFocus Programme on Strengthening Social Dialogue, would spearhead ILO action aimed at strengthening the social partners and promoting enhanced social dialogue on issues of social and labour importance.

In conclusion, Ms. Hagen pointed out that the current Meeting was an excellent example of social dialogue. The choice of agenda items, especially the themes for panel discussions, had also been made with the ILO's strategic objectives in mind. As could be noted, the four objectives were interlinked. While it would be important to develop policies and programmes targeted at each priority objective, it was inevitable that the ILO's activities would entail more than one strategic objective. There was an overriding commitment to gender mainstreaming and development, which had been identified as two cross-cutting themes to be fully integrated into all the ILO's strategic thinking and action. It would be important for the Meeting to take account of these cross-cutting themes when it addressed the various issues in the commercial sector involving voluntary initiatives, electronic commerce and basic labour-management relations.

Part 1

Consideration of the agenda item

Report of the discussion ¹

Introduction

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

Composition of the Working Party

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

Government members

Canada:	Mr. Duthie
France:	Mr. Sans
Republic of Korea:	Mr. Lim Mu-Song
Turkey:	Mr. Özmen
United Kingdom:	Ms. Brattan

Employer members

Mr. Gordon
Mr. Henriksen
Ms. McCoy
Mr. N'Guissan
Mr. Weitz

¹ Adopted unanimously.

Worker members

Ms. Buls

Mr. Dedieu

Mr. Kpoh

Mr. Romano

Mr. Spaulding

Presentation of the report and general discussion

5. The report that had been prepared for the Meeting was introduced by the Executive Secretary. He observed that employment in commerce had grown in most countries over the last decade and the sector's share in employment had increased in half the countries examined. It was, however, difficult to establish the exact correlation between globalization and employment in the sector, as other economic, political and technological factors needed to be taken into account. Within the European Union, the sector had generated 15.5 per cent of all new jobs between 1985 and 1995, representing half of those lost in the manufacturing industry during the period. In Central and Eastern Europe, the employment effects of globalization had been uneven, with growth shown in some countries and declines in others. The impact of global commerce on employment had been most dramatic in the Asia-Pacific region, at least prior to the 1997 economic crisis, when about 40 million new jobs had been created in ten years. In the United States and Canada, the sector had surpassed manufacturing as the primary source of jobs, while in Latin America, which had seen significant employment growth, it lagged behind that of overall employment. Commerce had also increased its share in total employment in the Middle East and Africa.

6. Expansion had required the sector to attract more workers, yet it remained a low-wage employer with few unions, and a young, female, poorly educated workforce. In many developing countries, non-standard employment that was unprotected by contract had grown since the 1990s. Dramatic gains in marketing and distribution efficiencies had been achieved as a result of partnering between distributors and suppliers. Mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures and the establishment of subsidiaries through organic growth and franchising were the most popular routes to internationalization. Acquired firms were more likely than non-acquired firms to lose jobs. Net job losses were higher in retail than in wholesale commerce, and displaced workers often ended up with part-time jobs and lower earnings. The market-place had become more liberalized worldwide, favouring high-value shop formats. Policy-makers were in a position to influence the kinds of formats that retailing entrepreneurs developed, and by modifying anti-competitive practices could foster job creation in high-value shops. Liberalization encouraged large stores and endangered traditional self-employment. An increase in large stores had led to flexible opening and working hours. The low degree of organization and large share in part-time work and informal labour suggested that workers' bargaining strength might be relatively low. The role of information technology on the sector was important and, in general, was regarded positively.

Electronic commerce was too new to have made an impact on mass markets. An important aspect of this form of commerce was that employees involved in it gradually acquired higher skill levels because they were spared routine and repetitive tasks. Electronic commerce was expected to reshape the earnings landscape and change the distribution of jobs, but its full impact needed to be studied to ensure maximum benefits and minimize potential disruptions. Two groups of consumers seemed to be influencing trends in commerce: one was a convenience-oriented group and the other was price-conscious. Training was more crucial than ever, and required resources to enable sales staff to adjust to developments.

7. The pace of structural change in the sector had affected the rules and practices which regulated relations between employers and workers, including collective bargaining, and had a more general influence on social dialogue. In Europe, however, the European Union's social partners for commerce had been working closely on employment policy matters. In many developing countries, the vast growth of the informal sector presented a dilemma for industrial relations processes and institutions. A broad overview of global developments and ILO activities concerning codes of conduct and other voluntary initiatives, which usually operated at the enterprise, sectoral or cross-sectoral level, was included in the report.

8. The Employer spokesperson noted that the report contained a considerable amount of data. Some information was useful – such as the possible link between globalization, liberalization and flexible working hours. However, there did not yet appear to be much knowledge on this, probably due to the fact that conditions in countries differed significantly. For example, while in Finland flexibility in working hours led to an increase in employment, it resulted in a reduction elsewhere. There was a need to review the effects of globalization in more depth. It had not yet been shown to have either positive or negative effects, and the ILO should continue to undertake research in this respect. A number of specific aspects required further analysis, such as the impact of underground economies, problems generated by globalization and how it influenced salary structures of workers in developing countries. The inequalities of globalization needed to be evened out. In some countries, small and medium-sized enterprises required protection to enable them to take part in the globalization process and not suffer unduly, but state intervention had so far not been successful in this respect. The development of means for ensuring the employability of workers should be promoted, including the development of skills relevant to globalization. The ILO should initiate activities in this respect. Electronic commerce was a highly technical issue and depended to a considerable extent on the educational level in various countries, and, as yet, there was little data available on the subject. It should thus be discussed separately.

9. The spokesperson for the Workers' group pointed out that globalization in commerce was not only about American companies expanding into other parts of the world. Large enterprises were also entering the United States and setting up large chain stores. Some companies had positive attitudes towards labour relations while others were against trade unions. He underlined the fact that globalization was not new, just different in form. Previously, globalization meant purchasing

commercial operations abroad for investment. Now, it was more about profit-making ventures and reducing operating costs. This could be acceptable when applied to the use of new technologies, but not if it implied reducing workers' wages. He also referred to the arrival of the giant supermarket chain Wal-Mart in Europe, which had contributed to a frenzied movement towards an increasing number of mergers. He regretted the tendency for companies to mimic others when it came to the lowering of social benefits. This was particularly worrying in regard to reduced wage rates and the practice of part-time work which, while desired by some workers, was not a matter of choice for many others. In the United States, for example, only 38 per cent of workers had health insurance at Wal-Mart. He contended that there was an increase in the number of part-time jobs and in casualization, as well as a decrease in full-time employment in commerce globally. One outcome of casualization was a fall in the level of skills and training, accompanied by falling wage rates. While the Office report provided a very thorough overview of developments regarding technology, e-commerce and mergers, it did not place sufficient emphasis on social aspects and the effect on workers, families and communities of issues such as the extension of shop opening hours.

10. The speaker was critical of multinational companies which violated local laws and customs in developing countries, and the effect of capital outflows from developing countries, which hindered the growth of local commercial infrastructures and put casualization on the increase. He considered that such problems could be addressed through the maintenance of strong trade unions and sound structures for social dialogue. The ILO could provide the impetus for discussions, bringing these issues to the fore. The development of social labelling and codes of conduct which were recognized, monitored and enforced could help ensure that cost-cutting practices were not realized at the expense of workers' welfare.

11. In reply, the spokesperson for the Employers' group clarified that, in his view, increasing part-time work was positive and, since women represented the bulk of employment in commerce, it meant more women could work, who would not otherwise be able to enter the labour market. He queried why there should be a decrease in full-time jobs, as enterprises needed to have trained people working full time in order to increase performance and be competitive in global commerce. He underlined the positive contribution migrant workers made to economic development and employment levels, as they were often well trained in a variety of skills and ready to take on different jobs. Furthermore, he also considered that multinational companies had to take local conditions and customs into account in order to be successful in local markets. He agreed on the importance of strong trade unions, but stressed that employers' organizations needed to be strengthened as well, especially in regions such as Central and Eastern Europe where they did not exist previously, in order to achieve proper social dialogue.

12. An observer from the International Federation of University Women and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women complimented the secretariat on the quality of the report. Women were particularly numerous and played a major role in the sector, but this was often not highlighted. They owned 3 million enterprises, or about 25 to 30 per cent of them, and, according to

projections, could own 50 per cent in about ten years. However, their incomes had not adequately increased, and the corridors of power were not fully open to them. Only four of the 25 members representing the Employers at this Meeting were women. It was hoped that in the twenty-first century, female entrepreneurs would experience positive change. As noted in the UNDP's *Human Development Report 1999*, when women controlled resources there was an increased chance that household incomes would be devoted to basic needs, including food, and the general well-being of the family. Women were agents of change and, as the Director-General had emphasized, could exert pressure for change in this era of globalization and restructuring, and should be valued as full partners in the change process. Electronic commerce offered new possibilities to women, because flexibility in the location and timing of work could enable them to balance work and family responsibilities. However, in order to prevent them from being confined to lower level work, women required training, but were less likely than men to receive training to enable them to progress from data-processing work to more highly skilled areas. Unfortunately, women remained in the least qualified positions with the lowest salaries and worst working conditions, and also faced sexual harassment. The ILO and non-governmental organizations should work towards ensuring that women receive a fair share of the benefits of globalization and enjoy decent living standards.

13. An observer from the International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees (FIET) informed the Meeting that the organization he represented had 11 million members, of whom half were from the commerce sector. In January 2000, FIET would merge with three other union federations, resulting in a membership of 16 million people from the world's most dynamic industries. He emphasized that commerce had changed profoundly in recent years. The establishment in Europe of the world's largest retailer, Wal-Mart, had led its competitors to regroup, and was causing concern to Europe's workers and their trade unions, as it was known for poor employment conditions. Subsequently, Carrefour and Promodès had merged to form Europe's largest commerce company, major restructuring and growth was in progress at German Metro, and other European multinationals were seeking strategic alliances. Home markets were becoming too small for European and American retailers and wholesalers, and while small shops and wholesalers continued to serve their communities, medium-sized enterprises were finding new ways to thrive and survive. Electronic commerce and transport developments were leading to new forms of global commerce. These trends had significant implications for workers, their families, consumers and society. The European social partners in commerce had noted that employment growth in retail and wholesale trade had ceased in the European Union when measured in full-time equivalents – more jobs were being lost than created. New technologies had made jobs obsolete, while mergers and takeovers led to job losses. Other countries could expect to face similar situations. For many workers, the quality of employment had also changed, sometimes improving, but in other cases leading to increasingly polarized working lives. Collective agreement benefits were cut, jobs downgraded and few core employees retained. Poor protection against dismissals had weakened the unions, and many women workers failed to gain economic independence due to low-paid work. Workers were increasingly made to work unsocial hours. They were not sharing in enterprise profits, particularly in developing and transition countries.

14. Commerce trade unions did not oppose structural and technological change; they wanted to work for profitable companies which provided employment security, as well as good wages and working conditions. Vocational training was vital – commerce depended on workers with high theoretical and practical skills, and flexibility to meet fast-changing consumer demands and to compete effectively could best be achieved through such training. The social partners needed to work jointly to ensure that a fair share of education and training resources would be granted to commerce. Trade unions should ensure that the favourable effects of globalization and technological structural development were strengthened and unfavourable ones avoided. They were opposed to full deregulation of shop opening, longer opening hours were not a high priority for consumers, and deregulation often killed more jobs than it created.

15. Collective bargaining and social dialogue were efficient and civilized ways of handling labour relations. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up was a good basis for dialogue and cooperation, and the European social partners had concluded an agreement committing themselves to promote it actively. The European reality could not be directly translated elsewhere, but the fundamental principles were universal values. The unions wanted to develop social dialogue with the employers and governments concerned, in a positive atmosphere, to the benefit of workers, employers, consumers and societies. In this context, the Workers' group would be submitting a resolution to the Meeting calling for a permanent forum for dialogue in the sector to be established within the ILO.

Point-by-point discussion

New shop formats, distribution circuits, enterprise productivity and economic performance

16. The spokesperson for the Employers' group considered that there could not be a comprehensive response to the effects of globalization in commerce, as situations varied so much around the world. He believed that globalization was advantageous to workers, employers and above all consumers. All the same, nobody was completely global. Even Wal-Mart had to adopt a strategy of reduced prices in order to enter the German market, and had earned no profits in the past one-and-a-half years. It was the consumer who benefited from lower prices brought about by concentration and intense competition. The consumer had access to more products from all over the world, and it was easier and more comfortable to shop. There were positive effects for workers, with an increase in jobs. He queried whether wages had fallen in European countries, where a general commitment to existing wage levels and social benefits was maintained. He agreed that in other countries the number of jobs had not risen, and there had been an increase in informal sector work, while in some countries not only had the number of workers decreased dramatically, but also the number of enterprises. More studies were needed on how to ensure productivity and assist developing countries. Despite these differences, the fundamental trend towards liberalization and flexibility was one which clearly demonstrated the advantages of globalization. Resisting liberalization and limiting entrepreneurial activity through legislation would cause

job losses in the long term. Employer members underlined that fierce competition enabled the highest quality and best prices for products. Globalization, accompanied by higher levels of education, meant that people were adapting to common ideas around the world. For developing countries it was important to quickly acquire modern commercial systems which could add value. Such countries did not have the support of structured banking systems or agricultural subsidies, as in Europe for example. Multinational companies which assisted in the updating of distribution systems and e-commerce provided opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises to interact with large markets.

17. The spokesperson for the Workers' group stated that consumer choice was not one of the primary factors driving globalization, as evidenced by surveys which found that convenient shop hours was not the top priority. Worker members underlined the gap between the formal and informal sectors, and the need to ensure respect for the basic rights of workers in the latter. Increasing competition had led to technological and financial frameworks which were difficult to resist, as traditional shops were obliged to close. Increased activity, foreign capital and hypermarkets meant fewer jobs and more unemployment for workers. Involvement of the public and the community was needed, not only individual consumers, to contribute to the debate and decisions on introducing large chain stores and supermarkets in local communities. Dialogue was critical for reviewing human and ethical issues in the context of globalization. One could not generalize about the advantages and disadvantages of globalization, as it depended on the sector concerned. However, it was clear that globalization that excluded the social dimension was disadvantageous for workers. Lack of supervision of the large flows of capital would lead to problems, and international governmental organizations were not addressing this sufficiently. Increased productivity and profits could be celebrated, but not the violation of laws, culture and the environment, or the increase in informal sector workers, rising child labour, prostitution and marginalization. In countries where education had always been considered a right, the children of poor families could no longer obtain decent primary education.

18. Government representatives considered that liberalization should be accompanied by safeguards. Strong social protection legislation could accompany excellent economic outcomes, and an institutionalized tripartite system guaranteed this. It had to be borne in mind that workers and employers had real fears about globalization. Globalization of major distribution channels had changed the commercial landscape. With increasing competition, a vertical relationship between the manufacturers and the consumers had developed, compared to the traditional relationship between manufacturers and distributors. Commerce played a crucial role in the fabric of societies; owing to the borderless nature of e-commerce, its evolution was threatening this role and creating uncertainty. Therefore, ground rules were needed to maintain a balance between the various forms of commerce.

Globalization and job creation, enterprise development and employment prospects

19. The spokesperson for the Employers' group stated that flexibility did not mean the absence of social legislation. The main point was that it should not be excessive. The effects of globalization varied according to the country. With the

movement of multinationals into developing countries, it was often small and medium-sized enterprises which were most affected, and this could be translated into job loss. In more developed countries, some smaller enterprises were affected, but job losses were absorbed by increased opportunities in the new enterprises. It was important to create opportunities and not diminish them with excessive rules and interference. Increasing social and labour benefits were positive for workers in developing countries, but could entail risks to their competitiveness on the global market. Political interventions were needed to ease the process, and care had to be exercised about any decrease in social protection, because globalization would then make the situation more difficult for developing countries. Regarding opening hours, it was difficult to generalize, as shop hours had differing historical origins in every country. E-commerce in fact had no rules for opening hours, and thus created competition obeying completely different rules. An Employer member described how in his country, a developing nation, a local chain store had introduced foreign working methods and created thousands of jobs, 60 per cent of them for women, in a number of cities. Furthermore, the establishment of the supermarkets had stimulated local business and development.

20. The spokesperson for the Workers' group referred to the effects of flexibility and part-time work as a race towards the bottom, with lower wages and benefits. Companies such as Wal-Mart competed against employers who offered good working conditions, and so forced down standards. It was important to examine issues of international market power and market share effects on employment, because if companies managed to keep their market share in the process of change, there would be more possibility of safeguarding jobs. The role of shareholder interests and the monitoring of the destination of investments were also central in terms of links between regions and mutual dependencies. As the major companies in the commerce sector had huge financial resources, they should be obliged to create or at least maintain employment, and work together with trade unions to discuss and solve issues related to working conditions and jobs. Worker members from developing countries referred to the difficulties faced by their governments, employers and workers in confronting globalization. While they were not convinced of any advantages of globalization – it was like another structural adjustment programme – they considered that it was critical that there be a framework of tripartite dialogue to find solutions. A Worker member observed that in South Africa, globalization had caused an employment crisis, leading COSATU to call for a national strike and demonstration.

21. The representative of the Government of Germany pointed out that globalization had not advanced to the extent believed, and thus the effects were not as radical as generally portrayed. Many problems common to countries were in fact domestic, and could not all be attributed to globalization. On the other hand, international trade was generally perceived by employers and economists as positive for both industrialized and developing countries. Increased productivity offered possibilities for higher nominal wages or price reductions. Such reductions also meant increased standards of living and of real wages which could be invested in social insurance. There needed to be a reasonable relationship between productivity and wages, making it possible to increase social protection levels. The representative of the Government of China considered that globalization was set to continue and that for open economies it was irreversible. In China there had been a

positive impact, through joint ventures with foreign companies. This included the introduction of concepts of modern retailing, high efficiency levels, good management techniques, management training and the necessary capital for consumer development. Problems created by competition with local enterprises had been observed, and the Government had conducted surveys and research on the issue. Policies and further measures would be undertaken in this regard.

22. Mr. E. Hoffmann, Bureau of Statistics of the ILO, provided a clarification on the methodology used for the statistics included in the report prepared for the Meeting. He noted that the Office had used a wide range of sources for the data presented on workers in the commerce sector. The statistics used as a basis for the description on developments on employment and unemployment had been collected from national statistical offices for publication in the ILO's *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* and storage in the LABORSTA database. The statistics presented in Annex 1 provided a headcount of the numbers engaged in the commerce sector and the relation of employment in this sector to total employment in the economy. Statistics on the intensity of work, such as hours worked in the sector, were less readily available from countries and therefore also to the ILO. Understanding the need for such statistics to describe more fully the situation and development of employment, the ILO was working towards improving its collection of statistics on hours of work from countries, in particular those which could provide statistics based on labour force surveys, as these were reasonably comparable not only across sectors but also between countries.

Electronic commerce

23. The Employer spokesperson considered that the third point for discussion covered a new area on which one could speculate but there was not adequate experience. However, massive changes were under way and the OECD had estimated that 100 billion dollars worth of goods would be exchanged electronically. Regarding the impact of electronic commerce on jobs, one had to recall that it was a form of mail-order trade that could take place through existing retailers or through manufacturers. While there would be a certain amount of turnover from retail traders, and jobs in this area would be reduced, this did not imply that jobs would decrease across the board. In fact, a whole series of new jobs would emerge, but these required different forms of skills, such as for multimedia work. More jobs would also be created in stockrooms. In general, there would be a positive effect on skills development, with a larger share of better-paid jobs and greater flexibility in working hours. Jobs in multimedia could be done at home, so employment in disadvantaged areas could be boosted. However, workers needed to be trained and retrained to maintain up-to-date skills, in line with the latest technologies; multiskilling would be essential for them to be prepared for a range of activities. Workers should approach the new challenges optimistically and be prepared to acquire new skills, trading old jobs for new ones. The role of governments was to launch information campaigns on new forms of media and commerce, and in certain countries to examine labour laws and eliminate restrictions that created obstacles for workers taking up new jobs and skills, both formal and informal. They should take into account the specific needs of small and medium-sized businesses, creating an environment for them to be able to invest in new technologies, such as by providing incentives. Workers' organizations should

not try to hinder progress, but instead work closely with governments and employers to together find an appropriate path. Electronic commerce was not an area that could be restricted by national borders, and this matter had to be kept under close observation to avoid the emergence of problems at the international level.

24. The Worker spokesperson also considered that the discussion should be on likely effects rather than on experience, as it was a new field. The Internet was such a fast-moving area that unless one read the morning newspaper, one would be out of date that day. That very morning an article in the *Wall Street Journal* had mentioned how electronic commerce was having a positive effect on economies in Asia. It referred to a company in India which had trained medical personnel who received reports by satellite from doctors in the United States on patients and hospital activities, and returned transcribed documents and information overnight. This was beneficial for the Indian economy, but these were jobs that had earlier been performed in the United States, and a similar loss of jobs could later be experienced in India, with a move of these elsewhere. No one could accurately estimate the employment scenario in five years' time, but it was thought that some 5 to 10 per cent of jobs could be related to the Internet or electronic commerce. There could be new jobs, but others would be lost and workers would be displaced. In Japan, convenience stores were becoming electronic commerce post offices and the year 2000 was announced as "Year One for E-com". The repercussions of the new trends on workers throughout the world had to be considered. It was not just in shops that jobs would be lost, but also in wholesaling. Another area of concern related to the lack of taxation on Internet commerce, as was currently the case in the United States; this could also have a negative effect on tax bases in other countries. The employment standards for electronic commerce should be the same as for other forms of commerce, in areas such as hours of work, wages and sickness benefits. The types of stress related to working in an electronic commerce environment, usually alone, should be analysed. Trade union rights were vital, and governments had to ensure that all workers were provided with the same guarantees. The International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees (FIET) had demanded on-line rights for on-line workers, as at present there were no guarantees. The ILO should develop an international instrument and provide the social partners with the possibility to meet regularly on changes occurring in this area.

25. A Worker member stated that companies were already applying this form of trade and were aware of the danger of protectionist measures. However, a certain amount of rationalization was necessary in combining new techniques with electronic commerce to ensure better protection for workers. Through the new media, better control could be exercised so as to take into account workers' participation in development. In particular, no adequate assessment had yet been made of the amount of psychological pressure and stress involved in the new types of on-line work, including home work. Another issue which needed to be addressed was the regulation of working hours in a sector where a very high level of flexibility prevailed. Similarly, comparable wages needed to be established for workers who were on-line and not on-line, as well as minimum protection and the guarantee of pension rights. Such measures needed to be adopted through cross-border agreements and internationally.

26. The Worker spokesperson agreed that more jobs were going than were being created, because the more machines there were the fewer the number of people who would be needed. It was all very well to call for multiskilled workers, but training for such workers needed to be different from that provided for others. It often turned out that workers were not so much multiskilled as doing several jobs at the same time. Thus the issue of multiskilling should be addressed with prudence. The Workers were not against progress, but opposed the non-respect of workers' rights during the process of change. Business could not just be concerned with focusing solely on their own interests. The Worker spokesperson would therefore urge the Employers' group to take account of the human factor.

27. Workers in SMEs were making an effort to change, adapt and invest, but unless some minimum standards could be established for the sector, many problems would remain unresolved. The speaker urged the ILO to undertake in-depth analysis of the prevailing conditions in commerce and to set up a group to collate and disseminate information for the sector. New on-line jobs were welcome, but it was unclear whether such jobs generated psychological stress and overloading or not.

28. A representative of the Government of Egypt drew attention to the absence of any widely accepted definition of the term "electronic commerce". The WTO, however, had defined e-commerce as the production, distribution, marketing, sale and delivery of goods via electronic means and digitalized data. Two broad categories could be established in terms of e-commerce: first, a business-to-business relationship, and secondly, a business-to-consumer one, with the latter having access to a wide range of shops and services. E-commerce held enormous potential for developing countries. The relationships referred to would be significantly changed. The developing countries now faced constraints in terms of knowledge and infrastructure, policies, a legal framework and financial requirements. In particular, care had to be taken to establish equality of opportunity and broad-based access to knowledge and information. E-commerce was fast eliminating the intermediary stage of jobs in the sector, i.e. distributors, but other jobs were being created which were less labour intensive than those in the traditional intermediary stages. E-commerce also meant that geographical location was neutral so that skilled workers had the option to remain in their home country. This phenomenon should be reflected in policy development concerning this sector. E-commerce also had an influence on the structure of the labour force in terms of gender and working hours. In particular, labour relations needed to address the fresh implications of the types of work involved in these new forms of trade which had come to the fore.

29. A representative of the Government of Canada signalled that existing labour legislation had not been designed to take into account such new types of work. The fact that work was conducted at home made it extremely difficult for the authorities to monitor working conditions and to enforce labour standards and occupational safety and health laws. Home-based employment also made it very hard for unions to organize workers for the purposes of collective bargaining.

30. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom described the setting up of a retail commerce foresight panel. E-commerce was on its

standing agenda, with the aim of maximizing developments in e-commerce for retailers, consumers and disadvantaged groups. The representative of the Government of Portugal informed the Meeting of the creation of a programme in her country to modernize commerce. A tripartite observatory on commerce had also been set up to analyse and share information on the modernization process.

31. A Worker member from the Republic of Korea stated that many of the workers in the commerce sector of her country were women. As they were often very young, significant potential existed for retraining in new technologies. Yet this was limited by the long hours they had to work and the discrimination they faced in access to training. She proposed the establishment of a national tripartite body to address this issue in the framework of technological and infrastructure development.

Human resources development

32. The spokesperson for the Workers' group stated that all people, including in the developing countries, should have full access to free, broad and basic education, vocational training and adult education to ensure mobility and careers. The social partners had to be fully involved, and special support was needed for developing countries whose education budgets were falling. Through social dialogue these issues could be addressed and provide the basis for training and matching skill needs for the new forms of commerce. He referred to a far-reaching vocational training project of FIET in relation to commerce and e-commerce in Europe, in conjunction with the European Social Fund. A Worker member stated that the introduction of new technologies in the traditional commerce sector in developing countries led to job losses as local workers were replaced by machines, while many of the managerial staff were foreigners. He called on multinational companies and governments to refocus training programmes so that nationals could obtain work in new forms of commerce. The ILO could create a platform to enable governments and employers to share the cost of training and retraining when new technology was introduced. Another Worker member indicated that, in his country, the commerce sector was the biggest employer, but owing to increasing competition through globalization, commerce workers had comparatively poor wages and working conditions. Governments and employers needed to recognize the importance of making the sector more attractive to workers, by supporting training and education to improve the status of workers.

33. The representative of the Government of Canada spoke about federal government support over the last 15 years for encouraging and funding activities to enable training, and especially funding partnerships between workers and employers on a sectoral basis. An important feature of these partnerships was that they allowed employers and workers to discuss issues outside the collective bargaining arena, as well as to establish bridges between the sector and the educational system. There were 23 such sectoral councils which were playing an increasingly significant role in solving human resource and training issues at the sectoral level.

34. The representative of the Government of Luxembourg described how the law in his country required that the social partners enter into bargaining on training

policy, although there was no obligation to conclude agreements on this. A national tripartite coordination system set and guided policies on initial and ongoing vocational training. At the enterprise level, tripartite structures set up training programmes, largely financed by the Government, to which employers contributed. These also helped in the integration of the unemployed. The Government also supported workers and the unemployed in obtaining initial qualifications.

35. The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom informed the Meeting of a proposal to establish a Learning and Skills Council in England for the strategic development, planning, funding and management of education and training for those above the age of 16, involving a wide range of partners – including the community, local government, the voluntary sector, trade unions and employers. The employers' role would be important for providing training for people over 16 years old, covering academic as well as vocational education. Trade unions had played a vital role in workforce development, and would need to be increasingly focused on the long-term employability of their members in the future.

36. The spokesperson for the Employers' group generally agreed with the Workers' group that workers had to be properly prepared for the changes brought about by restructuring and new technologies in the commerce sector. Lifelong learning was vital and, as the sector became more international, workers would have to accept the fact that English was increasingly the language of commerce. There would probably be less hierarchical structures, and workers would increasingly need to work in teams, within more effective management systems. There had to be cooperation between workers, employers and the government to reach reasonable consensus through social dialogue. He considered that basic education, literacy and training were the government's responsibility, but the private sector had to make a significant contribution to vocational training. Tax relief could be given to enterprises offering on-the-job training, so that the training of more workers could be financed. While governments had the main responsibility for training, they often did not have the means to provide adequate services. The ILO could support employers' organizations, particularly in developing countries, to develop training programmes which were timely and met the practical needs of the sector.

37. A representative of the Government of Portugal said that training in her country was conducted, beyond those areas covered by the Ministry of Education, by the different ministries concerned and by the social partners. These had an important role in two areas. First, they were involved in formulating vocational training strategies through a variety of tripartite structures at several levels (the Economic and Social Council, the Governing Body of the Institute for Education, and the National Commission on Apprenticeship). Second, they provided training programmes. The Government was striving to encourage agreements and partnerships between enterprises and training centres – for example, between companies and professional colleges, and between the social partners and vocational training centres. This strategy was aimed at ensuring that training was adapted to market needs and to the development of new technologies. Such agreements, and vocational training carried out directly by enterprises, were financially supported by the Government. This vocational training policy was an

integral part of a strategic consultation agreement concluded to cover the period 1996-99 by the social partners and the Government.

38. An Employer member from the Ukraine expressed the view that the role of the employers was extremely important in the area of commerce and trade if the problems arising from recession were to be overcome. Social dialogue in particular was still only embryonic in the transition economy countries and was developing in a disorderly fashion without any structured traditional base of partnership. The Government was, however, aware of this drawback and was attempting to promote social dialogue. Of course the social realities of the Ukraine had to be understood in terms of their implications with regard to the globalization of trade. Unless the economy was reformed it would be difficult to draw benefits from globalization. Governments in the transition economies needed to set up a proper legal framework for regulating the globalization of trade. The ILO could play an important role in disseminating information on the experience of other countries that had made some headway in regulating the sector in terms of international implications. The speaker also urged the ILO to consider assistance to developing countries and transition economies.

39. A Worker member from France perceived training in his country as falling into two categories: initial, basic training which could be provided by schools; and lifelong training for adults who were already on the labour market. In the first instance, the Government assumed responsibility for delivery of basic qualifications, which were sufficiently broad and open to serve as a basis on which further training could be acquired for entering the labour market of the business world. The speaker warned that human capital should not be seen only as a cost, but also as an investment. At the same time, in many countries adult education was provided for in legislation, but these provisions were far from being applied. Unless measures were taken to guarantee workers' access to training, commerce would remain a sector where workers stayed only a short time before moving on to another sector.

40. The Employer spokesperson saw the gains and losses of jobs in the sector, and the devaluation of skills, as occurrences which needed to be weighed each against the other. Restructuring within the traditional commercial field, not taking into account e-commerce, was giving rise to more discount activity, which meant fewer jobs by turnover unit. However, if consumer behaviour were to be polarized, at one end would be discount trade and at the other a corps of highly skilled professional workers. Such a shift would not be particularly unwelcome: it would mean better equipment and stocks. In larger enterprises it was easier to manage effective staff planning and career development than in the SMEs. In the former, more women were entering the labour market as well as more part-time workers. The positive effects experienced so far had all been produced by structural change. No single partner was responsible for all these changes. The consumer now had the opportunity to replace traditional commerce by e-commerce. Many jobs were being created in the sector at much higher levels, and even afforded more leisure time for workers, often as a result of social dialogue. The results needed to be assessed positively.

41. The task at hand was to establish clearly why the traditional forms of commerce were not functioning perfectly. The answers were surely to be found in the options of part-time and flexible work, which did not necessarily have positive repercussions for workers, but solutions needed to be found to reconcile the needs of the enterprise and those of workers, jointly by employers and workers, so as to bring about an acceptable level of harmony. Often there was no option: flexibility was imposed by the outside world. However, it remained a question of reconciling conflicting positions.

42. An Employer member from the Ukraine indicated that in the transition economies, globalization had brought with it a wider range of products and better quality on the whole, implying a higher quality of staff in the services sector, but in the process of liberalization, ordinary citizens were being drawn into trade which represented a contradiction. Compromise agreements had been signed. The main goal should be to develop commerce as a sector of the economy where, with the greatest number of jobs, social protection could be provided to workers and the community as a whole.

Working conditions, opening hours and deregulation

43. A Worker member questioned whether the issue of deregulation should be raised at all. The status quo was functioning very well. It was not that workers were refusing to be flexible; they were merely wondering why such insistent demands were being made on the part of the employers. Only economic issues seemed to be at stake. More profit seemed to be the sole objective, but the purchasing power of consumers was not increasing proportionately, so their argument in favour of deregulation to promote profitability was fallacious. It had to be remembered that consumers were also workers. He asked whether the Employers felt commerce should become a leisure industry. The Workers were concerned about what sort of society they wanted. Once commerce was deregulated, deregulation in other sectors would follow. Employers sometimes cheated; petrol stations which opened on Sundays, for example, developed in some cases a supermarket sideline in these service stations.

44. In Germany, deregulation had actually led to a reduction of 6.8 per cent of jobs and also to a fall in earnings. Society was not ready to deregulate commerce just to please a few people, and had to consider questions of childcare and family life arrangements. The meaning of deregulation for workers had to be fully understood, remembering that it was mainly women who were employed in commerce, many of whom worked part time. They had to cope with two levels of precarious conditions: the deregulation of working time and the stretching of work over a longer working week. Such work could be organized in a precarious manner over an entire year, which meant that workers could not be on an equal footing with employers in negotiations. The structure of present-day towns and cities also had to be taken into account. Housing close to shopping areas was expensive, so workers often commuted over long distances. Road infrastructure and public transport were not adapted for longer opening hours in the cities, and the question of longer opening hours was a major societal problem that States needed to address in a thorough manner. Caution needed to be exercised.

45. The Employer spokesperson said that the bulk of consumers in various countries had advocated longer working hours. They considered that shopping was indeed a form of leisure time spent with the family, as long as other forms of leisure were available. In fact people with children usually did not work late hours. Shops had started opening late in big cities where services could group around commerce.

46. A Worker member from the Russian Federation held the view that while foreign investment in transition economies could certainly create new jobs, in the commerce sector it was not enough to adopt a solely business approach that did not take into account the human factor. Workers were often ready to accept any kind of employment conditions just to earn a living, so when foreign firms offered them short-term employment contracts, workers and jobseekers felt they had no choice but to accept. All shops in the Russian Federation were nowadays open on Sundays and holidays, and many women had to work and be away from their families, some even at night. He asked whether consumers really needed this. Workers in the commerce sector needed to be calm and serene in their interaction with clients and not in a constant state of fatigue. Foreign companies were also paying much lower wages in different countries for the same work. ILO standards needed to be applied in this area. Similarly, workers in the informal sector enjoyed no health and safety protection whatsoever, nor did they benefit from any medical services or holiday periods. A harmonious relationship had to be sought by the three parties if the commerce sector was to have any future.

47. A representative of the Government of Germany referred to the results of two surveys which had been undertaken by research institutes. These showed that longer opening hours in Germany had not increased the job opportunities in the retail trade. Only a minority of workers were earning better pay for the increased strain. More than half of the customers welcomed the longer opening hours, but only 16 per cent wanted further opportunities to shop after 8.00 p.m. from Monday to Friday and only 25 per cent on Saturday after 4.00 p.m.; 26 per cent of retailers did not want any prohibition of specific opening hours; 40 per cent were in favour of closing at 6.30 p.m. These expert reports indicated no urgent necessity for action. However, trade unions, churches and the German Government were against any tampering with the status quo as regards Sundays and holidays, since the German Constitution provided for Sunday rest and holidays.

48. An Employer member from Spain said that the Government representatives had to decide whether they wanted a dynamic commerce sector or not. The customer had to be the target. In Spain, Sunday trading was now authorized and this measure had led to a 10 per cent increase in the number of workers. In Europe, social coverage was provided for all workers, even part-timers and those working under other flexible arrangements. Longer opening hours had led to an increase in part-time work contracts and in the number of women workers; 50 per cent of the workers in the commerce sector were women, whereas in the national economy they represented 20 per cent.

49. A Worker member from Japan said that more flexibility meant excessive competition, and would eventually lead to a rat-race on the Japanese labour market. In Japan, where shops were open every day of the week, workers had become

victims, so the effects of liberalization also had to be evaluated in cultural and social terms.

50. The question of job security had to be examined, as well as deteriorating working conditions. Longer opening hours meant that less care could be taken, leading to higher accident risks in the workplace. Employers and governments should share the responsibility for health and safety in the workplace by ensuring the application of international labour standards: rest periods for workers and the same rights and conditions for workers throughout the world.

51. An Employer member from Germany called attention to the heterogeneous character of the population in certain cities which were not necessarily tourist destinations and where the population was multicultural: Sundays often had no special significance.

52. A Worker member from Argentina pointed to the relevant legislation, ILO standards and tripartite agreements in force, and asked if they were to be changed. Young workers who had just entered the commerce sector in Spain, most of whom were women, could be condemned to working only in the commerce sector for their whole career, and rarely in management positions. In Argentina, restructuring had led to situations where workers had to think of the employer and focus on flexibility.

53. A Worker delegate from Zambia reported on the situation in her country, where workers were poorly protected in terms of safety and health, and jobs were increasingly casualized. In an enterprise of 400 workers, only about 10 per cent would be permanent, so the workers had no say and were being more and more exploited. The labour laws needed to be amended.

54. An Employer member drew attention to consumer behaviour when they found a shop closed and placed orders over the Internet. The labour market in the non-electronic sector would suffer. There was no way to prevent consumers from finding alternative ways of shopping. If jobs were to be kept in the commerce sector, shops had to be kept open.

Flexibility, productivity and conditions of employment

55. A Worker member from Germany referred to the ILO Tripartite Meeting on Productivity in Commerce and Offices in 1994, at which three major approaches had been identified: first, productivity could only be increased if benefits were shared; secondly, new jobs needed to be created and the employment of those already working in the enterprise needed to be safeguarded and the quality of jobs improved; and thirdly, those affected by flexibility should also be protected. More attention had to be paid to these questions in developing countries and in transition economies. At the European level, some agreements had already been reached. The ILO, too, had in the meantime adopted instruments on part-time work. However, within the framework of the European social dialogue, a directive needed to be developed to cover part-time workers, based on the principle that unsocial working hours should generally be prohibited and that, in cases where such work was unavoidable, adequate compensation should be guaranteed. In terms of job

security, whatever agreements were drafted and adopted should be monitored and checked after implementation to ensure the protection of workers under flexible arrangements. Measures were being studied to guarantee continuous employment and the means of subsistence.

56. The Employer spokesperson perceived no contradiction between flexibility and job security. Companies saw their workers as their most important feature. In many countries, instruments were already in place to cover flexible working arrangements, but open social dialogue was necessary to deal with details. The initiative for flexibility often came from workers, thus increased productivity and flexibility were not in conflict with good working conditions and job security. The Employers had noted the Workers' points and were convinced that the issues raised could be discussed in a positive spirit; they recognized that measures had to be taken with regard to training and vertical mobility. Progress had been made in Europe, but there was no global formula. Such measures could only be adopted where the transfer of technology operated smoothly. However, the difficulties were not insoluble. At worst, national solutions could be found.

57. An Employer member from India stated that non-core activities were being outsourced more and more. Employers preferred less labour-intensive technology. Flexibility was not in the interests of the employers themselves. Another Employer member equated the need for higher productivity with the need to strengthen the enterprise in order to be able to provide secure jobs.

58. A Worker member from Brazil saw flexibility as a very complex issue, involving flexibility in working hours, labour legislation, and wages. Collective agreements were needed in all three areas.

59. A Worker member from South Africa called for definitions of productivity and flexibility, asking whether flexibility meant multifunctioning. What actually influenced the employers' decision to opt for flexibility needed to be clearly understood: if the issue was being presented as one of satisfying consumers, the means found to do so was exploiting workers. Workers had not been consulted. Workers could be credited with a capacity to be reasonable if approached. Employers should be working hand-in-glove with employees. It was time that workers ceased to be treated like commodities. They were instructed to be flexible, but they had never been asked. Enterprises could even liquidate and start again under a new name just so as to engage workers under new working conditions. In the commerce sector, workers were earning next to nothing, and many were constantly tired.

60. An Employer member from Peru argued that productivity meant the same thing for workers and employers: to satisfy the consumer. The worker was by no means a slave. Flexible working arrangements meant rotation and shifts. No one was being compelled to work more hours than he or she wished. Social protection measures were usually covered in labour legislation, and provisions were in force requiring extra pay for longer hours.

61. An Employer member saw the need to organize work in such a way as to find better solutions for customers. Societies were more democratic and market-oriented, offering greater possibilities for people to choose, and employers had to

respond to consumers' needs. Another Employer member provided a statistical definition of productivity: overall output divided by the sum of hours worked. Depending on the number of hours worked, productivity could be increased by smaller or larger numbers of workers. There was nothing harmful intended in organizing work according to shifts.

62. The representative of the Government of Canada said that flexibility was defined in Canada in terms of multiskilling and working time.

63. A Worker member from Argentina felt that workers and employers would be called on by the ILO to redefine productivity and flexibility. In Argentina the market had for many years been under state protection, and workers were not used to venture capital, so the country had actually been going backwards. The workers had become victims. In practice, greater productivity had not led to any improvement in the quality of life. In Argentina, 18 to 20 per cent of the population were unemployed and not in a position where they could choose to consume. With regard to apprenticeship contracts, fewer and fewer were available.

64. An Employer member from Argentina informed the Meeting that average wages in the commerce sector, measured in United States dollars, had increased by over 100 per cent between 1990 and 1998, and challenged the accuracy of the statistical information provided by the Worker member.

Mobility

65. The Employers' spokesperson questioned how long an enterprise should employ expatriates, at what moment should nationals take over and what happened when people who worked abroad returned home. Did it mean the end of their career? In many countries, foreign workers were victims of discrimination: nationality rather than performance was the criteria in vertical mobility. Employers had been looking at practices in multinationals where no quotas or restrictions applied in the case of non-nationals.

66. Worker members expressed the view that no distinction should be made among workers on the issue of mobility, noting that in Europe, common references existed on the question of pensions and social protection, but developing countries had to operate within the context of World Bank and IMF requirements which negatively affected the social dimension. In Asia, no adequate mechanism had been set up to deal with such issues, and this should be linked to ILO standards as well as European Framework Agreements. Whatever measures were agreed on would need to be tailored regionally and nationally. Such mechanisms would be created on a mutual trust basis.

67. An Employer member said that the ILO was an independent institution and that labour issues should not be linked with trade questions. The Singapore Declaration of the World Trade Organization had already recognized the distinct role of the ILO. The representative of the Government of Egypt supported this position, while the representatives of the Governments of Luxembourg and France did not. They felt that the issues had to be linked, otherwise this would only be a pretext to avoid the real issues by separating the two mandates.

68. A Worker member from France stated that the ILO might be a privileged forum for social and labour questions, but that it could not be divorced from economic issues. Workers could not leave the businessmen of the world to take decisions without a clear understanding of the workers' position with regard to globalization. Behind the fruits of capital stood a part of the world's population: the workers. Economic issues could not be excluded from any discussion of social issues. The mobility of workers in the sector should be considered with regard to all workers, not only the upper echelons, and commercial travellers also required some form of protection and special status.

Labour relations

69. The spokesperson for the Workers' group noted that some employers in commerce were anti-union. Multinational enterprises, and even some governments, did not always respect international labour standards. He argued for full implementation of the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy. The ILO had to promote the ratification of all relevant international labour Conventions in this field. Social dialogue at enterprise, national, regional and international levels was the only way commerce could create more and better employment. It was essential that the appropriate structures be set up, including in multinational enterprises, in order to strengthen social dialogue between the social partners.

70. A Worker member stated that globalization, the development of multinational commerce enterprises and electronic commerce had made a great impact on national markets and labour relations. Trade rules were increasingly being defined at the international level, thus there was a need to establish a global framework for labour relations in commerce that would be beneficial for all – workers and employers, in industrialized and developing countries. He stressed the importance of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up (1998), but noted that some of these rights were trampled underfoot by the multinationals, and workers should share in decision-making in such firms, as envisaged in the European Works Council Directive.

71. The spokesperson for the Employers' group argued that employers were not always the guilty party, and they did not always aim for the lowest common denominator in the commerce sector. Indeed, multinationals usually paid better wages than their national counterparts – 40 per cent above the collective agreement level in Germany, for example. They were in favour of free discussions, perhaps in a different framework, in harmony with workers – but these discussions should not be stuck in old professional and sectoral categories, resisting new perspectives for the future. Workers appeared to want to maximize rules, but fewer and more specific ones would be better. Social dialogue was not always useful if forced upon the parties by government, or if it strayed outside economic and social fields into the political area; it had to be limited to working conditions, safety and health, employment and so on, but not to incomes or political matters.

72. The representative of the Government of France spoke of the experience of the European Works Council Directive, which had allowed employers and workers in companies with more than 1,000 employees and at least 150 in a second

country to discuss labour relations issues across national borders. Globalization that was linked with social dialogue could be a more positive experience for all parties.

Equal opportunities and gender questions

73. The spokesperson for the Employers' group noted that the different social, economic and cultural backgrounds of member States did not allow global recommendations. The issue of women in management was a problem that had firm historical roots, but was being reduced by globalization. Equal opportunity rules were working in Europe, but would be more difficult to apply in developing countries. He requested that governments refrain from setting too many regulations, which might restrict employment opportunities for women, whereas flexibility had helped them. Another Employer member welcomed better human resources policies, more open organizational structures, diminished occupational segregation and greater training opportunities for women.

74. A Worker member noted that women only benefited to a limited extent from the positive impact of globalization and restructuring, while shouldering more negative effects – a higher rate of dismissals and continuing pay discrimination. Fulfilling family responsibilities when these clashed with new “flexible” working hours in commerce was becoming a problem for women; efforts should be made to resolve this and to facilitate special leave for men so that they could share such responsibilities without being discriminated against. With regard to recruitment, discrimination on the grounds of age often restricted women's career options, while women in part-time or precarious jobs in commerce were often excluded or poorly covered in relation to health, old-age or unemployment benefits. Another Worker member spoke of the specific impact of globalization and restructuring on women in Africa – as only 10 per cent of girls were able to obtain schooling, few had been offered opportunities for career development when they grew up, and this had been reinforced by lower pay and higher taxes for women workers in her country, and by their family responsibilities. The ILO was urged to expand and promote its gender activities within the UN system by another Worker member.

75. The representative of the Government of France described how European Action Plans for Employment had emphasized the strengthening of equal opportunities as one of its four pillars, but it was too early to judge their effectiveness. He noted family-friendly measures at the enterprise level, such as workplace crèches in stores in northern Europe.

76. The representative of the Government of Portugal informed the Meeting about a Tripartite Commission for Equality at Work in her country that could propose equal opportunity legislation. The Commission's main tasks were: monitoring the application of standards on equality between women and men; commenting on questions raised by workers; presenting proposed laws on equal opportunity; and ensuring the follow-up of measures for equal opportunities that formed part of the Global Plan for Equal Opportunities approved by the Council of Ministers in 1997. Equal opportunities, which was a feature of the National Plan for Employment, was a priority objective of employment policy in Portugal.

77. The representative of the Government of Switzerland, while sharing many of the views expressed by previous speakers, noted that part-time work could be impossible to reconcile with family responsibilities if the working hours were flexible and irregular. Part-time workers were often disadvantaged in training opportunities, and he believed that flexibility tended to reinforce gender inequalities. Some Employer members were surprised by this problem of reconciling part-time work and family life, which they felt could be resolved by better planning, but a Worker member responded by concurring with previous speakers' remarks, which were borne out by experience in transition economies and Africa for example, because the flexibility was on the employers' terms.

The informal sector

78. The spokesperson for the Workers' group reaffirmed that international labour Conventions applied to all workers, including those in the informal sector. A Worker member from Ghana observed that the informal sector was growing in most developing countries, with attendant economic, social, health and safety and environmental questions, on which the social partners should collaborate in finding solutions. The growth of the informal sector had also brought to the fore the issue of income redistribution, to which governments in developing countries must pay attention. There was a need for a conscious structuring of the informal sector to enable it to receive appropriate public policy attention. Another Worker member related how globalization was expanding hand-in-hand with the informal sector in the Russian Federation – new supermarkets were competing with legal traders and with informal sector enterprises that were operating outside the law, evading taxes, not declaring incomes, and competing on prices with legal commercial outlets. Such informal sector operators offered little in the way of social rights, safety and health, pension rights and so on, thus the ILO should apply corrective measures in new labour standards. The experience of Brazil on child labour was related by one Worker member, highlighting the positive role of an ILO-backed forum to tackle this problem in São Paulo, among other initiatives; while the problem of displaced workers in the Republic of Korea moving into the informal sector was raised by another Worker.

79. The spokesperson for the Employers' group was disturbed by the reports on the informal sector from previous speakers, but pointed out that the informal sector was growing because of the economic crisis, fiscal problems, a wish to minimize non-staff labour costs and to evade taxes, and the fact that competitive conditions were so bad that commerce found it difficult to function. He felt that it was more important to shift people from the informal to the formal sector than to offer credit to informal sector workers, and the top priorities were to ensure that minimum health and safety protection was available and that neither child labour nor forced labour would be used. Other Employer members reinforced these points, while emphasizing that one should not stifle growth in this important area, and that transition economies needed particular assistance to help informal sector operators to become legal entrepreneurs.

Codes of conduct and social labelling

80. The spokesperson for the Employers' group had a positive attitude towards codes of conduct – they encouraged modernization and good business practice, gave a “pioneering” aspect to the social partners' roles, and employers were eager to continue cooperating in this field. Social labelling, on the other hand, while aimed at raising consciousness, ended up as an emotive issue. Labels tended to be unclear, unverifiable, confusing and sometimes caused discrimination against good formal sector enterprises. Another Employer member noted that codes had also improved human resource practices, working conditions and business practices in general.

81. A Worker member argued that labels and codes could not replace collective bargaining, but they were important at the world level. Labelling allowed ethically produced goods from developing countries to sell better in industrialized countries, encouraged partnerships between the social partners and consumers in collaboration with NGOs, and could guide and educate consumers. He asked for clarification on how social labels pushed children into more dangerous activities (page 93 of the French report and page 86 in the English version which refers to “less formal sectors” rather than more dangerous activities), and noted that labels could sometimes make things worse rather than better.

82. The Secretary-General of the Meeting responded that such evidence had been provided by practical experience and research undertaken by the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC).

83. The representative of the Government of China was against labelling, because it created a new trade barrier in already unequal world trade, while it did nothing to improve conditions in developing countries. The representative of the Government of France suggested that codes should be seen not only as an obligation on enterprises, but also as a factor for economic development – those firms that chose to spurn them would lose out.

84. The representative of the Government of Egypt stated that social labelling was inefficient, reduced consumers' trust in developing countries' products, was costly for verification, cumbersome, discriminatory, protectionist on behalf of industrialized country firms and challenged the credibility of governments. Voluntary initiatives could be inconsistent with attempts to promote small and medium-sized enterprises.

85. The representative of the Government of Italy felt that codes and voluntary initiatives were a move in the right direction, towards basic rights. They could assist, for example, in moves to eliminate the worst forms of child labour and to promote workers' fundamental rights and better working conditions, thereby preventing some of the most negative consequences of globalization.

Priorities for ILO action

86. The spokesperson for the Workers' group called on the ILO to support and follow up the conclusions to the Meeting, to promote social dialogue actively, to enhance data collection and analysis on the sector, to undertake research on

human resources development, social protection, opening hours, gender issues, and the informal sector, to encourage ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), to work towards the adoption of a Convention on telework and electronic commerce workers, to organize social dialogue meetings and to ensure that the social dimension was stressed in World Trade Organization talks in Seattle in November 1999 and thereafter.

87. The spokesperson for the Employers' group asked for the ILO to focus on developing and transition countries, to undertake more research and analysis (especially on informal sector commerce), to ensure that declarations and codes of conduct were up to date, to offer incentives and assistance for training for small and medium enterprises (particularly on new technologies), and to prepare a manual on how to develop codes of conduct – designed above all with transition economies in mind. Another Employer member requested ILO assistance for further deregulation, research on part-time employment in commerce, promotion of further social dialogue and training, and new initiatives for commerce in transition countries.

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

88. The Working Party on Conclusions submitted its draft conclusions to the Meeting at the latter's sixth sitting.

89. The Employers' spokesperson stated, for the record, that his group took exception to the draft conclusions provided to the Working Party on Conclusions. The text originally submitted contained negative influences about the commerce sector which did a disservice to both employers and workers, raised unnecessary concerns and made it more difficult to reach consensus.

90. The representative of the Government of France noted that, with regard to the wording of paragraph 11 of the conclusions that referred to the shortcomings in equal opportunities in developing countries, the representatives of governments recognized that the difficulties were more acute in those countries, but wished to point out that the problem also affected industrialized countries. In the spirit of consensus, they would concur with the proposed wording of paragraph 11, but would continue, especially within the European Union, to assume their responsibilities in this area with determination.

91. At the same sitting, the Meeting unanimously adopted the present report and the draft conclusions, with a number of amendments.

Geneva, 29 October 1999.

(Signed) Mr. M. Arbesser-Rastburg,
Chairperson.

Conclusions on the human resource implications of globalization and restructuring in commerce¹

The Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce,

Having met in Geneva from 25 to 29 October 1999;

Adopts this twenty-ninth day of October 1999 the following conclusions:

General considerations

1. Commerce is a wide-ranging activity, encompassing both the highly organized, modern sector and sometimes a rudimentary, informal sector. The sector plays a multiple and central function in the satisfaction of consumer needs, as a major source of employment, and as a catalyst for the economy as a whole. Both the wholesale and retail are, as such, indispensable engines of economic development. A healthy economy is likewise a prerequisite for a vibrant commerce sector.

2. Commerce the world over has undergone profound change over the last decade; earlier regional expansion is being replaced by globalization of big business. Globalization most often takes the form of international mergers and acquisitions, joint ventures between multinational distributors and local operators, strategic alliances between retailers in different countries and increased franchising arrangements. Among other effects, these activities are resulting in the consolidation of the sector into fewer, bigger operators with better scale advantages, higher purchasing and economic power and retailers better prepared for expanded global competition.

3. In addition to globalization, internal market deregulation, increased competition and changes in consumer behaviour are accelerating the sector's restructuring. Among some of the consequences of this process are the crowding out of smaller, independent community wholesalers and retailers in some parts of commerce, and the ability of local enterprises to establish themselves in the market-place has deteriorated, with attendant job losses and impacts on previously vibrant urban and rural shopping areas. These problems are also extremely serious in developing countries. Another consequence of changes in consumer behaviour and increased competition is growing pressure in many countries for liberalization of shop opening hours, which are a product of long-standing traditions, cultural considerations and specific local or national circumstances.

¹ Adopted unanimously.

4. Notwithstanding the additional convenience for many customers, liberalization has been found to affect commerce workers' employment and working conditions, without always contributing to job growth. In addition to existing social and labour legislation in each country, the specific concerns of the sector can be complemented by negotiated agreements between the social partners.

5. Gains in marketing and distribution efficiencies have also been achieved as a result of retailers' new operating styles and philosophy, including improved responsiveness to consumer demand, closer retailer-led partnerships within the supply-distribution chain, and the introduction of new information technologies.

6. All these developments have contributed significantly to increased productivity and corresponding profitability for many large retailers and wholesalers, especially in the industrialized countries. The ability of commerce workers to share significantly in the success of their companies through consultation related to restructuring, including issues of improved pay, job security and better working conditions, will be a decisive factor towards productivity and profitability which will be sustained with the continuing changes.

Employment

7. An expanding commerce sector has generally been good for employment creation in many countries, generating the job growth required to replace some of those lost in other parts of the economy, especially in manufacturing. There are however countries where employment in commerce has turned into decline. The lack of reliable statistics concerning the structure of the commerce labour force makes it difficult to assess the employment development in terms of annual hours worked.

8. There are both positive and negative effects of the processes of globalization, restructuring and the introduction of new technologies on existing jobs and employment in general. In a number of cases, some occupations have simply been rendered obsolete and ceased to exist, while others have been transformed beyond recognition and new jobs have been created.

Working and employment conditions

9. Restructuring, constant relaxation of zoning and establishment regulations, and increasing business demands for labour flexibility have contributed to a situation where there are not enough full-time jobs available and to an increase in part-time and atypical work.

10. Globalization means that expanding wholesale and retail activities in a competitive market-place require the capacity to attract qualified people. A means to do this is for commerce to promote stable and secure quality employment, training and career opportunities, satisfactory wages and favourable and healthy working conditions.

Equal opportunity

11. A striking characteristic of commerce is that it provides jobs to more women and young people than any other sector. In fact, the majority of commerce workers are indeed from these two categories, and growth in the commerce sector would expand their opportunities. In light of the effects of globalization and restructuring and in order to improve equal opportunity, better policies by employers and, where appropriate, by governments are needed however. Such policy action should aim at expanding career options, secure employment and equal pay and ensure that training and other benefits are available to these categories of workers. Particular attention must be paid to ameliorate the position of women workers in developing countries to ensure their equal access to quality employment in commerce. In this context, the availability of education and training opportunities is of particular importance.

12. Flexibility can have both positive and negative effects. On the positive side, flexibility has created work opportunities, especially for men and women who might otherwise not be able to work. On the other hand, flexibility may increase job instability and diminish working conditions. In addition, increased temporary and part-time work may not always provide access to training opportunities, thus hampering career progress. Social dialogue at appropriate levels which reflect the needs in the particular countries concerned is a good way to establish a satisfactory framework on equal opportunity.

Informal sector

13. In a great number of developing countries as well as in some of those in transition, globalization has brought a rising number of multinationals into these new markets, and given some local firms the opportunity to expand beyond national borders. There are cases where the efficiencies introduced by this new competition and the ensuing restructuring of the distribution sector have led to a rising number of retrenched workers swelling the ranks of those forced into an ever-expanding informal sector.

14. The continued growth of the informal sector can generate downward pressure on wages and working conditions in the formal commerce sector with which it is in competition. The challenge to the tripartite partners is therefore to work towards the creation of conditions conducive to the integration of informal sector workers, be they independent traders or employees of micro and small businesses, into the mainstream economy. Another challenge facing governments and social partners is the growing problem of child labour in the informal commerce sector.² Vigorous promotional work on both the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up of 1998 should be undertaken and targeted at the informal sector.

² Reference is made to the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138).

15. Quite apart from the fact that workers in the informal sector usually work for very long hours for low wages, they also lack even the bare minimum of social and workplace protections. This situation must be corrected.

16. The paucity of reliable statistical data on the informal sector renders it impossible to develop and implement properly targeted policies and programmes on the informal sector. The ILO should undertake to ensure that the statistical methodologies which it has developed specifically for the informal sector will be used to collect information about informal commerce, and to carry out analytical studies on different aspects of the sector in order to provide a scientific basis for decision-makers.

Electronic commerce

17. Information technology, in which the wholesale and retail enterprises have invested significant resources, has brought many practical benefits, especially for the consumer, the enterprise and the sector's growing number of information technology personnel. However, these benefits need to be spread as widely as possible to all the workers in the sector if their impact is to be maximized.

18. Electronic commerce is a new and high-growth marketing and distribution tool, whose full potential is yet to be realized, and whose overall effect on employment can only be tentatively estimated at present. However, extrapolating from current trends, it is clear that in the next decade electronic commerce will have a very significant impact on the structure of commerce, its ability to generate employment, the organization of work and working relations, occupational categories, and the range of skills requirements. Although many of the existing labour laws can be applied to work in both traditional commerce as in cyber-commerce, certain provisions such as those relating to hours of work, are difficult to enforce. Governments and the social partners need to watch closely the continued growth and direction of electronic commerce, with a view to developing policies and programmes to take full advantage of this technology and to minimize its potential disruptions on business, workers and communities.

Human resource development

19. It is worth recalling that the enterprise interacts with the customers through its employees. Past policies that emphasized on-the-job learning with little prior training can no longer be considered sufficient. In the context of fast-changing consumer demand, a highly competitive market environment, and increased use of information technologies, the social partners need an active and cooperative approach on human resource development policies. These should include efforts to ensure that commerce gets a fair share of education and training resources, the development and implementation of lifelong learning programmes and the multiskilling of existing workers.

Small and medium-sized enterprises

20. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have often been able to find efficient ways of improving their competitiveness through the establishment of different forms of partnerships and associations; through staff training; the introduction of new technology; and through new methods of work organization. In addition, SMEs frequently play an important role, which goes beyond the purely economic.

Labour relations

21. Freedom of association and collective bargaining rights and continuous social dialogue, on the basis of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up of 1998, are also valid in the commerce sector.

22. The ILO should undertake promotion of all the international labour Conventions relevant to commerce, as well as social dialogue at appropriate levels. The ILO should, in cooperation with the social partners, also develop and widely distribute a manual on social dialogue in commerce to assist the social partners, particularly in countries where the institutional framework for social dialogue is still weak or non-existent.

Voluntary codes of conduct

23. Voluntary codes of conduct are one of the methods which have been introduced in the commerce sector which have had positive effects. They encourage good business practice, have a pioneering role in social progress, and have led to positive alliances, including among business, workers' representatives³ and other sections of civil society. Their increased application, together with other innovative voluntary initiatives, should be encouraged and widely disseminated.

³ The term "workers' representatives" is used as defined in Article 3 of the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), which reads as follows: "For the purpose of this Convention the term 'workers' representatives' means persons who are recognised as such under national law or practice, whether they are: (a) trade union representatives, namely representatives designated or elected by trade unions or by the members of such unions; or (b) elected representatives, namely representatives who are freely elected by the workers of the undertaking in accordance with provisions of national laws or regulations or of collective agreements and whose functions do not include activities which are recognised as the exclusive prerogative of the trade unions in the country concerned."

Part 2
Resolutions

Consideration and adoption by the Meeting of the draft resolution

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

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

Officers of the Meeting

Mr. M. Arbesser-Rastburg (Chairperson of the Meeting)

Mr. Ö.S. Özmen (Government Vice-Chairperson)

Ms. F. Palileo (Employer Vice-Chairperson)

Ms. A. Rantsolase (Worker Vice-Chairperson)

Government members

China: Mr. Zhang Junfeng (adviser)

Egypt: Ms. I.M. Amin (adviser)

Germany: Mr. R. Lang-Neyjahr

Employer members

Mr. S. Bedard

Mr. A. Bertolotti

Ms. L. Maunga

Worker members

Mr. A. Spaulding

Mr. A. Matla

Ms. S.B. Santomingo

At the Meeting's sixth plenary sitting, the Chairperson, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Working Party on Resolutions and in accordance with article 14, paragraph 8, of the Standing Orders, submitted the recommendation of the Working Party on Resolutions regarding the draft resolution before the Meeting. As required by the same provisions of the Standing Orders, the three Vice-Chairpersons of the Meeting had been consulted on the contents of his oral report.

The Working Party had before it one draft resolution submitted by the Workers' group, which was declared receivable. The Working Party amended the text of the resolution on the basis of proposals made by its members within the time

limit set by the Officers of the Meeting. The Working Party recommended the adoption by the Meeting of the amended draft resolution.

Resolution on the establishment of a tripartite forum for consultation concerning employment and working conditions in commerce

The Meeting agreed to a minor amendment in the title of the resolution and unanimously adopted the text as amended.

Text of the resolution adopted by the Meeting

Resolution on the establishment of a tripartite forum for consultation concerning employment and working conditions in commerce¹

The Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce,

Having met in Geneva from 25 to 29 October 1999,

Considering that commerce is the essential link between producers and consumers, distributing goods and producing services, that it is one of the most important employers, providing employment and livelihood for hundreds of millions of workers around the world, and that it is also an industry which continuously needs to adapt to demographic and other changes in consumer demand and expectations,

Noting that the commerce sector is undergoing important structural and technological changes as a global market-place is being created, with large retail and wholesale enterprises, already well established on regional markets, expanding fast on a worldwide level, and small and medium-sized commerce companies seeking new approaches to retain and strengthen their competitiveness,

Further noting that the informal sector continues to play an important role in commerce, particularly in many developing countries, but increasingly also in the transition economies of Europe,

Recognizing that the expansion of electronic commerce and Internet trade will bring new actors, structures and procedures to the commerce scene,

Considering that employment, qualifications and working conditions for commercial workers are affected by the globalization process and that the constant change in wholesale and retail trade poses important challenges not only to the companies, but to governments and social partners as well,

Being aware of the major effects that the entry of global enterprises into national markets will have on commerce structures and thus also on employment in countries all around the world,

Recognizing that this process, together with technological developments, including electronic commerce and new ways of structuring and conducting

¹ Adopted unanimously.

business-to-business transactions, will lead to changes in the whole structure of the commerce sector, that new areas of work will be created, that many traditional ones will be redefined and that others will disappear,

Considering that future developments in commerce may cause changes in work organization, procedures, job design and qualification requirements and that it is therefore important for the social partners in commerce to address these challenges, to consider their impact on new organization of work and to conduct a dialogue with each other and with the relevant public authorities about measures to be taken to reinforce and support positive employment developments and to counteract negative ones,

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

Taking into account that commerce is changing and continues to change at an increasingly rapid pace and that the effects on employment and working conditions of these changes are profound, affecting large numbers of workers and causing major changes in the conditions for many of them;

Adopts this twenty-ninth day of October 1999 the following resolution:

The Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce calls on the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to request the Director-General of the ILO to set up a small tripartite forum to convene regularly and as often as possible for dialogue on global developments in commerce and their implications for employment, working conditions and labour relations. Among the priority issues that could be placed on its agenda are e-commerce, gender issues, flexibility, productivity, vocational training, job creation, employment security, social protection and issues specific to developing countries and countries in transition.

Part 3

Other proceedings

Panel discussions

Voluntary initiatives in the commerce sector: Promoting synergies with international labour standards

Moderator: Mr. P. Saikkonen, Chairperson of the Government group

Panellists: Ms. J. Diller, ILO, Geneva

Ms. V. Etienne-Martin, Federation of Commercial and Distribution Businesses, Paris

Mr. S. Lykkebo, HK/Handel, Copenhagen

Ms. Diller described the ILO's work regarding voluntary initiatives, stressing the need for making linkages to the ILO's guiding principles. Where the context of the ILO's work was concerned, she noted that confining oneself to examining codes of conduct was not enough and that there had to be a commitment to social labelling and ethical investment as well. Stressing that the aims often related to improving employment and working conditions or the application of basic Conventions, Ms. Diller pointed out that private voluntary initiatives were of interest to all those attending the Meeting. In 1998, the ILO published a study which reviewed the main features of several hundred codes of conduct, focusing on the aims sought by these various initiatives. Following the work carried out to date, and in the light of discussions held in the Governing Body, the ILO considered it wise to continue the study of current initiatives in order to understand how synergies with international labour standards could be developed. It might also be useful to raise the question of the impact of these initiatives on productivity or revenues. During the previous discussion on this subject in the Governing Body, a consensus was reached on the fact that the ILO could, on request, provide help to businesses which wished to come close to ILO aims and find synergies between the ILO's mandate and private initiatives, so long as this action was carried out in close consultation with ILO Members and that the Office's methodology was sectoral rather than on a business-by-business basis. Finally, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had announced a partnership between business and the United Nations. A bundle of nine universal principles in the field of human rights had been defined, and four of these principles related to the world of work. The ILO and the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights had been designated to ensure the application of these principles. Discussions were under way to develop tools for implementing them, and reflection was required on what voluntary initiatives would offer.

Ms. Etienne-Martin provided details on the experience of the Federation of Commercial and Distribution Businesses, a French employers' association which grouped all types of general food distribution, as well as some specialist distribution companies, and which represented some 500,000 jobs in France. The subject of ethics was considered indispensable in commerce. The Association's members were no longer content with requiring suppliers in developing countries

to make commitments regarding honourable behaviour where the respect of certain basic principles was concerned, but had decided to carry out on-the-spot checks. The Federation's action was based on five principles. First, ethics was not and should not be the subject of commercial competition; using human rights for advertising purposes should be avoided. Next, this collective partnership movement should be based on a positive vision for the countries concerned. In other words, it was a way for businesses in developing countries to become more competitive thanks to their attractiveness to distributors and consumers. The third principle related to adapting to realities on the ground, which translated into being pragmatic. The fourth principle was transparency: reports were regularly distributed to associations and the media. The last principle underlined the voluntary and private nature of the action, even if it was complementary to ILO or NGO actions. As this voluntary initiative only began in 1998, it had not yet been possible to evaluate its impact. On-the-spot control mechanisms had been set up in five countries so far: Bangladesh, India, Madagascar, Pakistan and Viet Nam. The sectors concerned were essentially textiles, footwear and toys. The point of reference for social issues was international labour standards, and the document which currently summed up the ILO's work best was the SA 8000 standard. One of the challenges for the Federation of Commercial and Distribution Businesses was how control was to be organized; no presently available method seemed to fulfil their requirements. Imagination would be required for developing future instruments of control, which must avoid excessive rigidity and should involve the competent authorities.

Mr. Lykkebo explained that for 20 years, unions had been able to carry out in-depth studies on the issue of voluntary initiatives, which in itself was not new. The aim of codes of conduct was primarily to improve working conditions. What was new, on the other hand, especially in the field of commerce, was the accelerating rhythm of reforms in various States. The Scandinavian countries had gained experience in the field of voluntary initiatives, which had often provided positive results when the public had taken action against companies whose behaviour was not socially correct. But as far as countries in transition were concerned, for instance, the situation was often worse, and cases of exploitation of the workforce were common. Governments for their part were not all equipped to take action on the worst situations. However, businesses were aware that a consumer boycott would harm them. It was noted that the reputation of companies in the commercial sector in Europe was not very good and that young workers were turning away from jobs in this sector. This was mainly due to poor working conditions, such as abusive schedules or working hours, low pay or lack of professional training. If there were to be voluntary initiatives which resulted in agreements, all parties involved must be brought into the process. It was a fact that Europe had a particular responsibility in this area as it was the home to many multinational organizations. Voluntary agreements allowed progress to be made despite the fact that there were no specific tribunals to monitor their application. Nevertheless, the positive aspect of the codes of conduct needed to be stressed, such as the one agreed in 1999 by Euro-FIET (for the workers) and EuroCommerce (for the employers), which aimed at eliminating child labour and forced labour throughout Europe, as well as enhancing union freedoms and the right to collective negotiation.

Discussion

During the debate, several Workers' representatives raised the question of the real impact of voluntary initiatives, whether they were of the code of conduct or the social labelling type. In this respect, some businesses tended to avoid controls and made this a point of strategy when setting up in a developing country, which made control of some enterprises very difficult to carry out. According to one Employer, it would be more efficient to ratify ILO Conventions which had a genuine global reach, whereas voluntary initiatives were primarily applicable to the conditions under which imported products and services had been prepared. Ms. Diller noted that voluntary initiatives were closely linked to consumer demand in industrialized countries, even if some labels were produced for consumers in developing countries. Ms. Etienne-Martin stressed that the possibility of a breakdown in the relationship between a major distributor and its local supplier was a fairly efficient deterrent, and that one of the aims of control was the search for partners, with the help of local NGOs.

Electronic commerce and employment: Opportunities and challenges

Chairperson: Ms. F. Palileo, Employers' Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting

Panellists: Mr. P. Jennings, General Secretary of FIET (International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional and Technical Employees), Geneva

Mr. W. Tevie, Systems Manager, Network Computer Systems, Accra, Ghana

Ms. A. Walker, Consultant, Employers and Manufacturers Association (Central), Wellington, New Zealand

Mr. Tevie outlined the stakes for e-commerce in Africa as a whole and for Ghana in particular. The Internet was taking its first hesitant steps on the continent, and electronic commerce was both raising hopes for development and fears regarding the risk of Africa being sidelined. In fact, in order to start up e-commerce activity, the necessary communications infrastructures must first be put in place. In this respect, the gap that separated Africa from the developed world persisted, especially with regard to access to telephone networks. Because of the weakness of the terrestrial infrastructure, African companies were looking to satellite networks, which significantly increased operating costs. Other stumbling blocks to the development of electronic commerce included lack of resources for training, the weakness or non-existence of banking networks or even psychological obstacles such as lack of trust in this new method of trading or the reliability of products exchanged. In South Africa, Internet business was developing rapidly, mainly due to more up-to-date payment systems than on the rest of the continent. The most noteworthy electronic commerce sites were in South Africa, Ghana, Mauritius, Egypt and Tunisia.

Mr. Jennings was happy to note the pride of place given to ILO sectoral activities in the reorganization of the ILO. He underlined the technical revolution in

which commercial employees were playing an active part. Electronic commerce knew neither physical frontiers nor closing hours. Even home delivery, which many had predicted would disappear with the arrival of hypermarkets and malls, was booming again thanks to electronic commerce. Although employment in parcels delivery services and logistics in general should go up, some feared that the downsizing of the 1980s and 1990s would be replaced by “e-sizing” or the electronic rationalization of jobs. The unions were not remaining idle in the face of these developments. Proof of this was the setting up in the year 2000 of UNI (Union Network International), a federation of unions from over 100 countries and grouping some 15 million members. The convergence process between sectors such as commerce, media and communications was currently bringing together organizations which traditionally had no linkage. However, people must not lose sight of the fact that they were far from a universal service for access to new information technologies. While a computer could be bought with one month’s salary in Europe, eight years’ salary were needed in Bangladesh. It was important to envisage new rights, new methods of functioning for the labour market, and to place value on intellectual capital compared with material capital. A new international labour Convention for “on-line” employees would also doubtless be required. This was the time to develop social tools that met the requirements of a new economy based on communications networks. The ILO should stop focusing on the classic sectors of the economy and turn to new service activities that create jobs. The ILO should also reflect on the public policies which had an influence on electronic commerce. Thus, if electronic commerce should bring about a drop in fiscal revenues for lack of a new international Convention in the field, the workers would be the first to suffer the consequences.

Ms. Walker noted that e-commerce was still at the bottom of its growth curve. Its impact on employment was still small, and the nature and extent of future impact were very difficult to predict. She suggested, however, that e-commerce was likely to result in organizations with flatter structures, requiring employees with higher level skills and continual training, a high capacity for innovation, a more collaborative environment between organizations with Web-based alliances, greater team work, flexible working hours, location and other working conditions. Occupations most likely to gain employment growth as a result of e-commerce included security design, firewall implementation, Web page design and creation, and Internet and Intranet applications development. Increased consumer sales would require managerial, marketing, sales and technical people with the ability to quickly analyse and act on buyer-pattern data, generated by sales analysis tools built into cyber-store operations. In terms of industries, traditional intermediaries such as wholesalers, travel agents, transport and retail organizations were liable to be most negatively affected by employment losses. The nature and extent of these impacts would also depend on whether organizations ran dual electronic and traditional commerce systems. The finance area would likewise be affected by an increase in electronic commerce, as processing and other repetitive tasks carried out by low-level clerical workers diminished, and banks moved away from traditional branch operations and decreased their requirements for branch-based banking staff. However, the biggest challenges for employment arising from electronic commerce were related to changes in skills requirements. For workers to be able to take full advantage of e-commerce job creation capabilities, there would be a need for greater emphasis on training and education, from school education

through to tertiary and lifelong education. Employers would need to ensure that they provided training, gave their employees the opportunity to become multi-skilled and keep up with new information technologies. The requirements of such a scenario would prove particularly challenging to countries with a shortage of skilled and trained workers.

Discussion

During the discussion that followed, the stakes for society were highlighted in several questions. For instance, how to reconcile e-commerce development and the teleworking that was linked to it with the growing need for human contact; how to avoid locally produced goods being sacrificed to imported goods; and how to deal with the sidelining of developing countries which do not possess sufficient technical capacity to develop e-commerce. While these questions often went beyond the ILO's mandate, they nevertheless demonstrated the importance of e-commerce as a factor of economic and social change and as a potential cause of the growth of a phenomenon of exclusion. Several participants reminded the Meeting that the globalization of which we speak was only partial as only a minority of consumers were able to take advantage of e-commerce. The panellists were nevertheless in agreement on the fact that different countries can gain from their comparative advantages thanks to e-commerce, and that even small businesses can find new and previously impossible markets thanks to it.

Labour-management relations in commerce in a globalizing market

Chairperson: Ms. A. Rantsolase, Workers' Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting

Panellists: Ms. H. de Clerck, Employment and Social Affairs Directorate-General, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium

Mr. J. Marcus, Swedish Business Federation

Mr. C. Beer, Actions Unia, Geneva

Ms. de Clerck provided an update on European social dialogue in the commercial sector. In 1985, EuroCommerce and Euro-FIET had launched a social dialogue at the European level. They had the backing of the European Commission. European social dialogue in the field of commerce has progressively matured. It began with discussion on the least controversial subjects, such as professional training and violence at the workplace. Since the end of 1997, there had been much interest in employment policies thanks to the "European Strategy for Employment". It was striking to note that all joint Euro-FIET/EuroCommerce initiatives related to the subjects dealt with in the report drawn up by the ILO for this meeting, be it professional training (it was recommended that standards relating to this type of training be defined at European level), small and medium-sized businesses (the wish was expressed to improve staff training capacity) or again work organization, for which European social partners had drawn up a plan which they hoped to put before the summit on employment, to be held in Lisbon in March 2000. In the framework of the expansion of the European Union, Euro-FIET and EuroCommerce had worked with social partners in the candidate countries to

promote social dialogue. Finally, in August 1999, the social partners had signed an agreement on the principles and fundamental rights at work which expresses their will to transcribe the ILO Declaration of the same name, adopted in June 1998. According to the speaker, this “joint code of conduct” sought to avoid social dumping within Europe and also to improve working conditions across the world, mainly because the code applied to workers in companies subcontracted to European companies.

Mr. Marcus dealt with the issue of professional relationships in the business sector in the light of Swedish experience. The restructuring of the retail business in Sweden had been a kind of silent revolution. Mergers in the business sector had picked up speed in the 1990s, mainly due to foreign investment and specialist shops which met consumer needs with a wide range of products at bargain-basement prices with flexible opening hours. In 1991, the Swedish Government carried out a study which showed that most employers, consumers and even employees wanted longer shop opening hours. In contrast with other sectors of the Swedish economy, productivity had increased in the commercial sector in recent years and the low-price policy had contributed to the country’s low inflation rate. Globalization had had other positive effects, such as the spread of efficient human resource management techniques. In Sweden, unionization in the commercial sector was very collective and widespread (80 per cent of workers in the sector were union members), had long been encouraged by the Government and continued to play a major role, while the development of outsourcing had made up for the lack of flexibility in the labour market.

Describing his union experience in the commercial sector in Switzerland, Mr. Beer claimed that Swiss labour law was worthy of a socially underdeveloped country: a low level of union activity, the voting down of maternity leave in a national referendum, and the refusal by certain employers to engage in collective bargaining. However, like other countries, Switzerland was affected by globalization, which, like elsewhere, led to rationalization and the development of new distribution systems such as Internet. Quoting the example of a major toy distributor that had set up in Geneva, he described the employees’ insecure salary status, and the fact that FIET had to intervene to force the employer into collective bargaining. The employees had to go on strike for a social security scheme, an event so rare in Switzerland as to be worth mentioning. In conclusion, the speaker stressed the advantages of collective agreements which set the rules at European and global level in order to prevent the exclusion that the globalization of trade might bring.

Discussion

An observer noted that in the commercial sector, older workers were the most vulnerable, and asked what solutions were possible given that population ageing in some countries might lead to the raising of the age of retirement. Ms. de Clerck stated that one of the aims of collective bargaining in the European Union was to avoid the laying-off of older workers. In addition, the social partners were convinced that once support measures such as continuous training were implemented, older workers would be of greater value to companies and their fellow workers. Mr. Marcus was of the opinion that the arrival of major distributors

in Sweden seemed to have raised less problems than in Switzerland as regards work relationships, or in Germany as regards shop opening hours. He put the problems of adapting down to cultural differences. A participant from the Workers' group asked a question about employees' security in the face of late opening, claiming that crime increased late in the evening and at night. Mr. Marcus replied that the risk of theft, for example, was not necessarily related to closing hours; in the banking sector, employees had been trained to react to misdemeanours or aggression and that specific solutions could be exported to the commercial sector.

Closing speeches

The Secretary-General noted that the Meeting had been an important landmark in the ILO's effort to address social and labour problems in the commerce sector, itself a backbone of social and economic well-being the world over. The Meeting had contributed substantively towards clarifying the challenges commerce faced under the globalization and restructuring processes under way around the world. In addition, it had highlighted the manner in which the tripartite partners in commerce could together face those challenges. It had been impressive to observe the seriousness and willingness with which consensus and pragmatic answers had been sought, despite legitimate differences on the issues under discussion. The resolution and the set of conclusions which had been adopted provided some very thoughtful and substantial guidance to government policy-makers, employers' and workers' organizations and other interested partners as they sought responses to the complex challenges of globalization and restructuring and to invigorate social dialogue, and with it the most valuable resource of the sector: the workers. The resolution and conclusions would also guide the Governing Body and the entire Office in formulating the ILO's future programme of work for the sector.

Mr. Saikkonen (representative of the Government of Finland; Chairperson of the Government group) deemed the Meeting to have been intellectually and professionally of a very high level, and paid special thanks to the secretariat which had been very helpful throughout. He also paid tribute to the Employer and Worker participants who had been ready to share information and been willing to negotiate. He considered this type of meeting very valuable and believed that they should be continued, to improve both the ILO's work and even the world in general.

Ms. Palileo (Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Meeting) believed the Meeting had provided the opportunity to discuss a very timely topic on a workshop session basis as Employer, Worker and Government groups separately and then in plenary on a tripartite basis. The spontaneous sharing of thoughts and ideas, while sometimes difficult, had nevertheless provided participants with a wider perspective to the topic and made it possible to agree and accept without much discussion a resolution and an agreement on conclusions. She was confident that whatever had been learned during the discussions would further equip each one of their respective organizations and draw attention to measures applicable to each one's respective situations. Overall, the Meeting had been rewarding and very educative to all the participants, in spite of certain areas that could have been improved. She thanked the ILO for bringing the participants together, and considered such international meetings as opportunities to gain new friends, increase networking and sharpen participants' respective social skills.

Mr. Spaulding (Chairperson of the Workers' group) expressed his group's sincere gratitude for all the ILO staff had done during what must have been a difficult week, with some people working very late at night. The Employers' representatives had proved worthy adversaries in committee sessions and the Workers looked forward to becoming partners with them as they proceeded with the process initiated during the week. He commended the Government representatives for playing a very constructive role throughout the deliberations.

Without them, the task would have been much more difficult. He expressed the hope that the Governing Body and the Director-General would join in extensively promoting the new approach to social dialogue, and believed the Meeting had created a sound foundation on which to build.

The Chairperson congratulated the Meeting on the open and constructive dialogue as well as on the spirit of give-and-take in which it had conducted its deliberations. There had been concurrence on a wide-ranging report, a set of conclusions, and a resolution which reflected the convergent areas of agreement by Governments, Employers and Workers to strive towards enhancing the positive, and mitigating the negative effects of globalization and restructuring on commerce workers. He had found the experience rewarding, and thanked everyone for the help they had extended to him, and the frank and patient way in which all participants had helped to build a consensus to enable the Meeting to successfully reach and adopt conclusions, supplemented by a resolution. He was confident that the results of their work over the past week would help social partners and the governments in all member States to take up the impacts of globalization and restructuring in commerce, and turn them into positive impulses for commerce and all its workers. The Chairperson declared the Tripartite Meeting on the Human Resource Implications of Globalization and Restructuring in Commerce closed.

Evaluation questionnaire

A questionnaire seeking participants' opinions on various aspects of the Meeting was distributed before the end of the Meeting; the response rate was 22.6 per cent of the participants. Items were rated on a five-point scale. The following table gives the absolute number of respondents who assigned each rating and the weighted average score on each item evaluated.

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

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
The choice of agenda item (subject of the Meeting)	10	15	2			4.30
The points for discussion	6	17	2	2		4.00
The quality of the discussion	2	19	5			3.88
The Meeting's benefits to the sector	6	11	6	1		4.04
The conclusions	2	9	8	1	2	3.36
The resolution	4	14	5		1	3.83
Panel discussion on voluntary initiatives in the commerce sector: Promoting synergies with international labour standards	7	4	8			3.95
Panel discussion on electronic commerce and employment: Opportunities and challenges	10	10				4.50
Panel discussion on labour-management relations in commerce in a globalizing market	7	8	2		1	4.11
Opportunity for networking	4	14	2		1	3.95

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

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
Quality of analysis	6	13	6	1	1	3.81
Objectivity	6	10	5	4	1	3.61
Comprehensiveness of coverage	6	14	6		1	3.89
Presentation and readability	9	14	3		1	4.11
Amount and relevance of information	5	15	6		1	3.11

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

	Too much	Enough	Too little
Discussion of the report	1	21	4
Panel discussions	2	19	5
Groups	1	18	7
Working Party on Resolutions	2	16	5
Working Party on Conclusions	1	13	9

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

5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
15	10	1			4.53

5. Respondents to the questionnaire

Government	Employers	Workers	Observers	Total	(Response rate: 22.6%)
8	8	12	1	29	

6. Participants at the Meeting

Government	Employers	Workers	Observers	Total
17	25	22	14	78

List of participants
Liste des participants
Lista de participantes

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

Mr. Max Arbesser-Rastburg, Professor, Wien

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

CANADA CANADÁ

Mr. Warren Duthie, Senior Analyst, Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa

CHINA CHINE

M. M. Zhang Wei, conseiller, Mission permanente de Chine à Genève

Advisers/Conseillers techniques/Consejeros técnicos

Mr. Liu Xu, First Secretary, Permanent Mission of China in Geneva

Mr. Wang Bin, Vice Director, The State Internal Trade Administration, Beijing

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

CZECH REPUBLIC RÉPUBLIQUE TCHÈQUE REPÚBLICA CHECA

Mr. Jindrich Mozny, Director, Domestic Trade Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Praha

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Stanislav Benes, Adviser, Ministry of Labour & Social Affairs, Praha

EGYPT EGYPT EGIPTO

Mr. Adel Khalil, Minister Plenipotentiary (Commercial & Economic Affairs), Permanent Mission of Egypt in Geneva

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Ms. Islah Mohamed Amin, Counsellor for Labour Affairs, Consulate of Egypt in Geneva

FINLAND FINLANDE FINLANDIA

Mr. Paavo Saikkonen, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Labour, Helsinki

FRANCE FRANCIA

M. Frédéric Sans, chef du bureau «Emploi–relations du travail», Direction des entreprises, ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et de l'Industrie, Paris

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejera técnica

M^{me} Claire Lefebvre, sous-directeur, Direction des entreprises commerciales, artisanales et de services, ministère de l'Economie, des Finances et de l'Industrie, Paris

GERMANY ALLEMAGNE ALEMANIA

Mr. Roland Lang-Neyjahr, Administrator, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Meckenheim

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Werner Ringkamp, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Germany in Geneva

ITALY ITALIE ITALIA

M. Rosario Cappelleri, Direttore Capo Aggiunto di Divisione, Direzione Generale, Rapporti di Lavoro, Divisione II, Affari Internazionali, Ministero del Lavoro e della Previdenza Sociale, Roma

REPUBLIC OF KOREA RÉPUBLIQUE DE CORÉE REPÚBLICA DE COREA

Mr. Lim Mu-Song, Director, Labour-Management Cooperation Division, Ministry of Labour, Seoul

Advisers/Conseillers techniques/Consejeros técnicos

Mr. Kim Youn-Chul, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea in Geneva

Mr. Kim Dae-Hwan, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea in Geneva

LUXEMBOURG LUXEMBURGO

M. Jean Zahlen, conseiller de gouvernement 1^{ère} classe, ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, Luxembourg

Adviser and Substitute/Conseiller technique et suppléant/Consejero técnico y suplente

M. Joseph Faber, conseiller de direction 1^{ère} classe, ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, Luxembourg

Advisers/Conseillers techniques/Consejeros técnicos

M^{me} Maryse Fisch, attachée de gouvernement, ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, Luxembourg

M. Pierre Schloesser, attaché de direction, Administration de l'emploi, ministère du Travail et de l'Emploi, Luxembourg

NEPAL NÉPAL

H.E. Mr. Shambhu Ram Simkhada, Ambassador, Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Nepal in Geneva

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Nabin B. Shrestha, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Nepal in Geneva

PERU PÉROU PERÚ

Sr. Gonzalo Guillén, Primer Secretario, Misión Permanente del Perú en Ginebra

PORTUGAL

M^{me} Maria Candida Soares, directrice générale, Direcção Geral do Emprego, Ministério do Trabalho e Solidariedade, Lisboa

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejera técnica

M^{me} Teresa Paccetti, juriste, Ministério do Trabalho e Solidariedade, Lisboa

SWITZERLAND SUISSE SUIZA

M. Daniel Veuve, chef de section, Service juridique, Secrétariat d'Etat à l'économie, Direction du travail, conditions de travail, Berne

THAILAND THAÏLANDE TAILANDIA

Mr. Kamjorn Nakchuen, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Thailand in Geneva

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Kiran Moongtin, Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Thailand in Geneva

TURKEY TURQUIE TURQUÍA

Mr. Ibrahim Kuluöztürk, Deputy Under-Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ankara

Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Özkan Suat Özmen, Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Ankara

UNITED KINGDOM ROYAUME-UNI REINO UNIDO

Ms. Sara Brattan, Higher Executive Officer, International Relations Division, Department for Education & Employment, London

Members representing the Employers

Membres représentant les employeurs

Miembros representantes de los empleadores

Mr. Sabri Acar, General Manager, Cukurova Kimya Endüstrisi A.S., Manisa, Turquie

Mr. Abdul Salam Al-Awadi, Member of the Board of Directors, Kuwait Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Kuwait

Mr. Michael Antoniou, Industrial Relations Officer, Cyprus Employers & Industrialists Federation, Nicosia

Mr. Stephen Bedard, Vice President, Industrial Relations, Bell Canada, Toronto

Sr. Ambrosio Bertolotti, Directivo, Cámara Nacional de Comercio y Servicios del Uruguay, Montevideo

Mr. Dan Bundhoo, Director, Rogers and Co. Ltd., Port-Louis

M. Lanfia Camara, Directeur administratif, PRODIMAL S.A., Bamako

Mr. Roosevelt Gordon, Director, Personnel & Administration, Tourism Product Development Company Ltd., Kingston

Mr. Soren B. Henriksen, Senior Manager, Danish Commerce and Services, Hellerup

Mr. Viktor Khmilovskyi, President, Association of Employers of Trade & Commercial Org. of Economics, Kiev

Ms. Maruta Kokina, Latvian Central Cooperation Union "Turiba", Riga

Sr. Ramiro Francisco León Páez, Gerente General, Tejidos Pin-tex, Quito

Sr. Enrique Mantilla, Vicepresidente Política Social, Unión Industrial Argentina (UIA), Buenos Aires

Mr. Johan Marcus, Vice President, Swedish Federation of Trade, General Manager, Swedish Commercial Employers Association, Stockholm

Ms. Leta Maunga, Personnel Manager, Total Zambia Limited, Lusaka

Ms. Veronica McCoy, Director Consultant, Human Resources Development South Pacific, Nadi Town

Sr. Manuel Melero Abaroa, Secretario General, Cámara Nacional de Comercio, Servicios y Turismo, Santiago

M. Komlan Ouattara N'Guissan, Chargé de mission, Conseil national du patronat, Lomé

Ms. Fe Palileo, Treasurer, Employers Confederation of the Philippines, Makati City

Mr. Sharad S. Patil, Secretary-General, Employers' Federation of India, Mumbai

Sr. Rafael Potti Robles, Confederación Española de Organizaciones Empresariales, El Corte Inglés S.A., Madrid

Mr. Philip Sack, Industrial Relations Manager, Old Mutual Group, Cape Town

Ms. Angela Walker, Employee Relations Consultant, Employers & Manufacturers Association (Central), Wellington

Mr. Robert Weitz, Head of Department of Economics, Hauptverband des Deutschen Einzelhandels, Köln

Sr. Iván Zanetti Peinado, Abogado, Confederación de Instituciones Empresariales Privadas, Lima
Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Sr. Alfredo Zanetti Peinado, Abogado, Confederación de Instituciones Empresariales Privadas, Lima

Members representing the Workers

Membres représentant les travailleurs

Miembros representantes de los trabajadores

M. Abou-Sédik Alassane, Fédération panafricaine des employés, Confédération syndicale des travailleurs du Togo (CSTT), Lomé

M. Maurice Alondo Ayangma, Fédération libre des syndicats du commerce du Cameroun, Union des syndicats libres du Cameroun, Douala

M. Charles Beer, secrétaire général, Actions Unia, Le syndicat du secteur tertiaire, Genève

Ms. Mersiha Besirovic, Educational & Information Secretary, Commerce Trade Union of Bosnia & Herzegovina (STBiH), Sarajevo

Ms. Hannelore Buls, Secretary of International Affairs, Deutsche Angestellten-Gewerkschaft, Hamburg

Ms. Jay Choi, International Affairs, Korean Federation of Commercial Workers Union (KFCWU), Seoul
Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Kim Hyungkeun, President, Korean Federation of Commercial Workers Union (KFCWU), Seoul

M^{me} Fatoumata Cissoko, secrétaire formation-éducation, Syndicat national du commerce, banque, assurance, crédit (SYNCAB), Bamako

M. Thierry Dedieu, secrétaire national, Fédération des services, Confédération française démocratique du travail, Pantin

M^{me} Maria Antonietta Franceschini Nofroni, Secretaria Nazionale, Federazione Italiana Lavoratori Commercio Turismo Servizi, Roma

Mr. Napoleon Kpoh, General Secretary, Industrial and Commercial Workers Union (ICU), Accra

Ms. Tatiana Krylova, President, Trade Union of Commercial Workers of Russia, Moscow

Mr. Sten Lykkebo, International Secr., HK/Handel, Copenhagen

Mr. Andrzej Matla, Coordinator, International Department, National Commission NSZZ "Solidarnosc", Gdansk

Ms. Daniela Merunkova, President, Trade Union of Employees in Commerce and Tourism (OZPOCR), Bratislava
Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Ivan Schwarz, Officer, International Affairs, Trade Union of Employees in Commerce & Tourism, Bratislava

Mr. Yasuyuki Oga, Director, Social & Welfare Department, Japan Federation of Commercial Workers' Unions, Tokyo

Ms. Astridah Phiri, Director, Women Affairs, Education, National Union of Commercial & Industrial Workers, Kitwe

Ms. Alina Rantsolase, National Treasurer/COSATU, South African Commercial Catering Allied Workers Union, Johannesburg

M^{me} Jeanne Clairette Razanarimanana, secrétaire générale, Fédération chrétienne des employés du service du secteur privé (SEKRIMA), Antananarivo

Sr. Rubens Romano, Presidente, SEPROCOS, Secretario FIET, São Paulo
Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Sr. John Fernandes, International Secretary, Força Sindical, São Paulo

Sra. Susana Beatriz Santomingo, Asesora Secretaría Asuntos Internacionales, Federación Argentina de Empleados de Comercio y Servicios, Buenos Aires

Mr. Alan Spaulding, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, Washington

Mr. Fouad M. Toma, General Trade Union of Commercial Workers, Cairo
Adviser/Conseiller technique/Consejero técnico

Mr. Hussein M. Hassan, General Trade Union of Commercial Workers, Cairo

Others

Autres

Otros

Representatives of member States present at the sittings
Représentants d'Etats Membres présents aux séances
Representantes de Estados Miembros presentes en las sesiones

NIGERIA NIGÉRIA

Mr. Abdullah Shehu Ahmad, Permanent Mission of Nigeria in Geneva

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

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

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

Arab Labour Organization

Organisation arabe du travail

Organización Arabe del Trabajo

M. Adnan El-Telawi, chef de la délégation permanente, Genève

European Free Trade Association (EFTA)

Association européenne de libre-échange (AELE)

Mr. Markus Kummer, Head of Unit, Geneva

International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

Union internationale des télécommunications

Unión Internacional de Telecomunicaciones

Ms. Barbara Wilson, Human Resources Development Division, Geneva

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Union postale universelle

Unión Postal Universal

M. Qu Delu, conseiller supérieur, Berne

Representatives of non-governmental international organizations

Représentants d'organisations internationales non gouvernementales

Representantes de organizaciones internacionales no gubernamentales

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

Confédération internationale des syndicats libres (CISL)

Confederación Internacional de Organizaciones Sindicales Libres (CIOSL)

Mr. Dan Cunniah, Director, Geneva

Ms. Anna Biondi Bird, Assistant Director, Geneva

International Council of Nurses (ICN)

Conseil international des infirmières

Consejo Internacional de Enfermeras

Ms. Mireille Kingma, Consultant, Nursing and Health Policy, Geneva

International Federation of Business and Professional Women

Fédération internationale des femmes de carrières libérales et commerciales

Federación Internacional de Mujeres de Negocios y Profesionales

Ms. Conchita Poncini, Troinex

**International Federation of Commercial, Clerical, Professional
and Technical Employees**

Fédération internationale des employés, techniciens et cadres (FIET)

Federación Internacional de Empleados, Técnicos y Profesionales

Mr. Philip Jennings, General Secretary, Châtelaine/Geneva

M. Jan Furstenborg, Head of Department, Châtelaine/Geneva

Sr. John Fernandes, International Secretary, Força Sindical, São Paulo

Mr. Kim Hyungkeun, President, Korean Federation of Commercial Workers Union (KFCWU), Seoul

International Federation of University Women

Fédération internationale des femmes diplômées des universités

Federación Internacional de Mujeres Universitarias

Ms. Conchita Poncini, Troinex

Ms. Christiane Privat, Vessy

International Organization of Employers (IOE)

Organisation internationale des employeurs

Organización Internacional de Empleadores

Mr. Jean Dejardin, Deputy Executive Secretary, Cointrin/Geneva

M. Eric Oechslin, secrétaire exécutif adjoint, Cointrin/Genève