



FIFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report and conclusions of the Tenth
African Regional Meeting**
(Addis Ababa, 2-5 December 2003)**Contents**

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1. The Tenth African Regional Meeting of the ILO was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 2 to 5 December 2003.
2. The Meeting was attended by 221 participants from 39 countries of which 116 were delegates (68 representing Governments, 22 representing Employers and 26 representing Workers), and 105 advisers (68 for Governments, 16 for Employers and 21 for Workers).
3. The Meeting unanimously elected as its Chairperson, the Honourable Mr. Hassen Abdella (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia), and as its Vice-Chairpersons, the Honourable M.M. Mdladlana (Government, South Africa), Mr. Taddese Tilahun (Employer, Ethiopia) and Mr. Mody Guiro (Worker, Senegal). The following were elected to the Credentials Committee: Mr. Jules Oni (Government, Benin), Mr. Gershon N. Konditi (Employer, Kenya) and Mr. Guillaume Attigbe (Worker, Benin).
4. The Meeting adopted the agenda without amendments.

I. Opening ceremony

5. In his welcome remarks, the Chairperson reiterated the major objective of the Meeting, that is to come up with a comprehensive strategy to address common issues within the competence of the ILO. He underscored some of the problems facing Africa – unemployment, poverty, gender inequality, conflict and marginalization from the world economy – as the backdrop against which the Meeting was taking place. In this regard he cited the ILO strategic objectives and decent work as the most appropriate interventions. The Chairperson called upon the Meeting to give due attention to the issues on the agenda.
6. The Director-General of the ILO reaffirmed his personal commitment to Africa and thanked the African region for its contribution to ILO work, particularly the role it played during the International Labour Conference last June. He made special mention of the 2003 International Labour Conference's special guest, South African President, Thabo Mbeki, and the President of the Conference, the late Mr. Michael Wamalwa, Vice-President of Kenya.
7. He stressed that the ILO and the African Union (AU) shared the same commitment of tripartism, as demonstrated by the AU tripartite Labour and Social Affairs Commission, and the compelling call of African tripartite delegates that work was the way out of poverty. It was for this reason that participants were gathered in Addis Ababa to build on Africa's talents and foster home-grown solutions based on African interests, culture and values.
8. Noting that the present model of globalization was not stopping the growth of unemployment, poverty and the informal economy, he voiced concern about the loss of security, absence of human values, and a global economy without a moral compass.
9. The Director-General called for policy changes in Africa to break out of the "one-size-fits-all" world view of the "Washington Consensus". He said that this required a different organizing factor for economic and social policies. He stated that in addition to sound macroeconomic policies, there was a need to invest in employment-intensive activities and enterprises that could generate income. He stressed that work was a source of self-worth and at the heart of economic, political and social concerns of people. He called upon the Meeting to make decent work in all countries the new organizing factor for a globalization that worked for all.

10. The ILO Director-General highlighted the need for promoting hope and opportunity for Africa's youth as well as for expanding opportunities for women.
11. In paying homage to the decision by the Heads of State and Government of the African Union to convene an Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, he observed that it was a key political engagement with the people of Africa and a clear message to Africa's development partners. He added that through the African Union and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), Africa was developing a new vision and institution to tackle collectively its challenges.
12. The Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, His Excellency Alpha Konaré, noted with satisfaction the role of the ILO in promoting social dialogue and social justice and suggested that the AU and its member States should pursue similar objectives. Having quoted grim poverty statistics, Mr. Konaré spoke of the vicious cycle of unemployment, insecurity and poverty and cited the advent of HIV/AIDS as having worsened this situation. He spoke of the creation of jobs through such programmes as the ILO InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development (IFP/SEED) to mitigate chronic unemployment and poverty. He added that the creation of employment required interaction between actors at different levels – local, national and regional. The AU Chairperson spoke of the importance of regional integration in response to globalization, emphasizing that only a strong and united Africa could create conditions for peace and security, social and economic development. He proposed that there should be a broad base participation of civil society in the promotion of economic integration including women and youth. He also underscored the importance of the participation of the private sector and the labour movement in this partnership.
13. When he took the podium to pronounce his opening statement, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, His Excellency Mr. Meles Zenawi, outlined the significance of the ILO African Regional Meeting that was taking place in an era dedicated to fighting poverty at the headquarters of the African Union. The Prime Minister referred to the ILO Declaration of Philadelphia, the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) in reiterating the ILO mandate to promote social justice and employment. He emphasized the significant role of the ILO in socio-economic development for the least developed countries (LDCs).
14. The Prime Minister lamented the lack of the essential connection between poverty eradication and employment creation in international policies and emphasized that employment was the way out of poverty. He referred to the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation that was to take place in Burkina Faso in May 2004 and said it signified the high level of recognition on the part of the AU of the linkage between poverty and job creation. In this regard, he reiterated the call of the AU to the ILO to collaborate in organizing this important event.
15. On the substance of the Meeting, the Prime Minister cited two Reports of the Director-General: *Decent work for Africa's development* and *Working out of poverty: Views from Africa*. He stated that they embraced important issues that would contribute to breaking out of poverty as well as providing inputs to the Ouagadougou Summit.

II. Special Session on the preparation of the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa

16. The Special Session was opened by Mr. H. Abdella, Chairperson of the Tenth ILO African Regional Meeting. He explained that the Special Session had the objective of creating a tripartite platform of support for the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa. The Special Session had before it two reports: the Report of the Director-General, *Working out of poverty*, prepared for the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference; and the Special Supplementary Report of the ILO Director-General to the Regional Meeting, *Working out of poverty: Views from Africa*. He then gave the floor to Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO.
17. Mr. Somavia thanked His Excellency Blaise Compaoré, the President of Burkina Faso, for his commitment and initiative in proposing the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation. He reminded the audience that the decision to organize the Summit was the result of a process that had begun with the Heads of State and Government Summit in Lusaka (2001), followed by the OAU Labour and Social Affairs Commission meeting in Ouagadougou in April 2002 and the African Union Summit in Maputo in July 2003.
18. Turning to His Excellency Blaise Compaoré, the Director-General said: “You want to make employment creation a major African concern, which is the political response to the people’s aspirations, as well as a clear message to international organizations. You can count on our tripartite commitment in this endeavour.”
19. He stressed that employment creation and poverty reduction was a daunting task in a stringent international context characterized by difficult access to international markets and unfair competition, and added that the process of globalization did not enable Africa to create productive and decent jobs that its people needed. He then underlined that the creation of decent jobs was the greatest moral and economic imperative of our times. He further stated that the Decent Work Agenda was a logical and operational agenda for development, which called for greater international solidarity. He emphasized that Africa had been a pioneer in putting the Decent Work Agenda at the centre of a more equitable globalization process, and in orienting the ILO’s work in fields such as HIV/AIDS at the workplace, the fight against poverty, and the social dimension of globalization.
20. He reminded the audience that His Excellency Blaise Compaoré, when addressing the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2003, stated that the African leaders should translate their commitment to job creation into concrete and realistic strategies and programmes.
21. He added that his Report to the International Labour Conference, *Working out of poverty*, had been inspired by President Compaoré’s initiatives mentioned above. This Report had been followed by a series of national consultations, which had enabled the ILO and its constituents in a dozen African countries to understand better the link between poverty and employment, to identify best practices on working out of poverty, and to determine how to further enhance job creation. The main outcome of this process, which was documented in the Special Supplementary Report prepared for the Tenth African Regional Meeting, was the need for a better integration of social and economic policies through a strong social dialogue, which would consider employment as the principal engine of poverty reduction.

22. He expressed the hope that the results of the Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa would contribute to Africa's development and to global progress. He concluded that the time had come for the world to put employment creation at the heart of global macroeconomic policies and international cooperation.
23. The Chairperson thanked the ILO for its support for the preparation of the Extraordinary Summit, and gave the floor to His Excellency Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso.
24. His Excellency Blaise Compaoré started by encouraging this Regional Meeting to provide a high-level framework and platform for the preparation of the Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, which his country would host in 2004. He continued by deploring the paradox of global prosperity on the one hand, and failure to adequately address poverty on the other. It was this injustice that aroused scepticism about the current process of globalization, and showed validity of claims for a more humane and equitable social order. He deplored that Africa, despite its abundant natural resources, remained the poorest and most marginalized region on earth, and that the AIDS pandemic was ravaging African communities that had only very limited access to treatment.
25. He further stressed that even those African countries that had achieved high growth rates through drastic economic reforms had been unable to significantly reduce poverty. He expressed his conviction that the rules of world trade and the functioning of international markets had not provided African countries with the resources needed to pay off their debts, and even less to meet the fundamental needs of their people.
26. The President then called upon African countries to adopt a different mode of organization, and to take their destiny in their own hands, so as to ensure the rebirth and progress of the African continent on a sound and sustainable basis. He pointed out that NEPAD, as well as the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, could constitute the appropriate response to the problems of the African continent.
27. He expressed his conviction that employment should henceforth be considered as a determining factor in the fight against poverty, because employment generated income that contributed to economic growth through enhanced consumption, production and expansion of domestic markets. This in turn would contribute to social and economic stability, and the cohesion of African societies.
28. He then stressed that the process leading to poverty reduction strategies must give voice to those who were most concerned and affected by poverty; it was this that had prompted the organization of a social forum prior to the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation. The reflections and conclusions of this forum would be expected to inform the decisions of the Head of States and Government. He further expressed the hope that the Extraordinary Summit would adopt operational plans and programmes for productive employment creation, backed up by appropriate financing modalities and mechanisms. He believed that the Tenth Regional Meeting would deepen the reflection on poverty and employment creation in the context of the values of the ILO.
29. He concluded by inviting the ILO to become more involved in the policies initiated by the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure due consideration for the social dimension of economic development.
30. The Chairperson then opened the general discussion, and gave the floor to Mr. Showkutally Soodhun, the Honourable Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations of Mauritius and Chairperson of the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission.

- 31.** Mr. Soodhun said that the Commission held high expectations on the outcome of the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation and expressed the hope that the Summit would design strategies to increase the demand for labour, raise productivity and incomes of people, integrate socially excluded communities into the labour market, and establish adequate protection mechanisms for income security. Moreover, the Summit should consider improving the terms of trade and the rules for investment finance. He also expressed the Commission's appreciation of the vision and goals of NEPAD, which should develop tripartite consultation mechanisms.
- 32.** He referred to the recent meeting of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Mauritius, where it had been decided to develop a social policy framework for Africa. The preparation of this framework was making progress with the ILO's assistance and would include practical recommendations regarding poverty reduction and employment creation. He continued by saying that the Commission had carefully examined the priority areas proposed in the Director-General's supplementary Report, and was of the view that activities in the areas of micro-credit, cooperatives and social insurance would be most useful in reducing poverty and maintaining social peace and stability. The ILO and other international bodies should play a significant role in mobilizing resources and in advising on appropriate strategies. He mentioned that the Commission had identified additional priority areas, such as HIV/AIDS, occupational safety and health, eradication of child labour, equality of opportunity, removal of discrimination, and prevention of the brain drain. Moreover the Commission had proposed to work on a plan of action on the family in Africa as a contribution to the International Year of the Family. Other priorities were the closing of the technology gap between developed and developing countries, and the promotion of social dialogue, conflict resolution and sound industrial relations mechanisms.
- 33.** Speaking on behalf of the southern Africa subregion, Mr. July Moyo, the Honourable Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare of Zimbabwe, said that Africa was experiencing harsh times and that despite structural adjustment programmes, jobs were disappearing and growth remained fragile and did not lead to poverty reduction. He noted that the world had become unipolar and that, while economies were globalizing, Africa had become even more marginalized. He then emphasized the need to adopt new approaches to face the challenges of globalization by deepening the resolve to implement NEPAD's programmes, by paying particular attention to job and wealth creation, and by injecting more resources from government donors and the private sector into job-creation programmes.
- 34.** He further underlined that, in order to shift from the "Washington Consensus" to a development agenda, job creation should be used as the key indicator of economic growth.
- 35.** Mr. Yéro De, Minister of Civil Service, Employment and Professional Organizations of Senegal, took the floor on behalf of the West African subregion. He said that poverty was neither a fate nor irreversible, but rather a result of failed macroeconomic policies and a misguided globalization process, characterized by insufficient international solidarity and a "one-size-fits-all" approach to the development challenge. He then described the African continent as being fragile and vulnerable because of armed conflicts, pandemics and weak economic foundations, and stressed that the way out for Africa consisted of sustainable development based on jobs, good governance, participation, human resource development and international solidarity. The latter should include a substantial increase in the contribution to the global fund against HIV/AIDS.
- 36.** He emphasized that the only answer to poverty was the Decent Work Agenda, and concluded by proposing that the statement of His Excellency Blaise Compaoré be attached as an official document to the proceedings of the Tenth ILO African Regional Meeting.

- 37.** The next speaker was Mr. Azad Jeetun, Secretary-General of the Pan-African Organization of Employers, who emphasized the need for a concerted action to attain the twin objectives of employment creation and poverty alleviation, and hoped that the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation would send the right signal to all countries to put employment creation at the centre of government strategies. He mentioned that this would be in line with the ILO tripartite meeting that took place in February 2003 in Addis Ababa to develop a new vision for the Jobs for Africa (JFA) programme. He also welcomed the strong partnership that had developed over the years between the African Union and the ILO as a result of the Director-General's strong commitment to the continent.
- 38.** He mentioned that the ILO had been instrumental in spearheading many projects in Africa, the most important being Jobs for Africa, which doubtlessly had made an impact on the economic and social development of Africa. He believed that the higher economic growth rates that many African countries had achieved in recent years gave ground for optimism, and that the Extraordinary Summit would lead to an increase in investment, employment and economic growth, and thus to a better standard of living for all Africans. This should be sustained by a business-friendly environment for employment creation. He further advocated a fuller implication of the social partners in the NEPAD structures to contribute to a better future for Africa.
- 39.** He acknowledged the support from the ILO Regional Office and the ILO Employment Sector for the development of small-scale enterprises and the integration of informal economy units into the mainstream economy. He concluded by expressing his conviction that the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation would be an excellent way for the African Union to develop an employment agenda for all African countries.
- 40.** Speaking on behalf of the Central African subregion, Mr. Baruti Amissi Ikumaiyete, the Honourable Minister of Labour and Social Protection of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, stressed the fact that the majority of the countries of this subregion was emanating from armed conflicts, which had aggravated the poverty situation in Central Africa. He welcomed the decision to organize the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, and said that the problems were already known; it was most important to obtain the commitment from donors to support employment-creation programmes with the technical assistance of the ILO.
- 41.** He also emphasized the need for the subregion to define a common platform for poverty reduction through employment creation, and secure its implementation through international solidarity. The countries of the Central African subregion should put employment at the centre of national development strategies; NEPAD should be better explained to the people, and its initiatives mainstreamed into national policy-making processes. He further invited the ILO to contribute to peace, stability and security in the subregion, which was a prerequisite for employment creation and poverty reduction. The process of regional integration should be strengthened through the harmonization of labour and employment policies, and information sharing. He underlined the importance of information and communication technologies and vocational training as a vehicle for job creation for youth and demobilized soldiers.
- 42.** The next speaker was the Workers' delegate from Kenya, speaking of behalf of the Workers' group. He began his intervention by confirming that the Workers' delegates were supporting the objectives of the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, and that the ILO had the moral obligation to develop a Decent Work Agenda for Africa. He asked for an early involvement of trade unions in the preparation of the Summit. Particular attention should be given to both the quantity and quality of jobs. He

said that the majority of the jobs that existed today were in the informal economy, but that those jobs would not allow workers to escape from poverty because of decent work deficits. The ILO should assist in harmonizing labour and employment policies. He concluded by expressing the hope that the Summit would adopt concrete action proposals for the creation of new and the protection of existing jobs, as well as measures to fight corruption and foster good governance.

43. Ambassador Chirau Mwakwere, the Honourable Minister of Labour of Kenya, addressed the Meeting on behalf of the East African subregion. He thanked the ILO Director-General and the ILO member States for their messages of condolence to the family of the late Honourable Wamalwa, who had presided over the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference held in Geneva in June 2003.
44. He reminded the audience that the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation was the first of its kind in Africa. He further stressed the conviction of the countries of the East African subregion that the pursuit of employment creation programmes was the only way out of poverty. Education and human resource development should focus on the development of skills that were in demand locally, regionally and internationally. He emphasized the need for career development and placement centres. He said that the African continent was endowed with abundant skills that could be exported and thus generate capital through the transfer of remittances, which would support the development of the continent.
45. He underlined that the East African subregion was in agreement with the ILO's observation that there was a need to empower women and youth so that they could participate in the development process through self-employment in the informal economy and rural communities. He concluded by saying that Africa was on the right path as a continent that had faith in its own destiny, and as a continent that was poised to positively contribute to the global economy.
46. The Government delegate of Algeria took the floor on behalf of the North African subregion. He said that the subregion accorded the highest priority to employment creation and poverty alleviation, and therefore congratulated His Excellency Blaise Compaoré for the initiative to convene the AU Extraordinary Summit on this issue. He emphasized that poverty and unemployment should not be considered as a fate, and stressed the need for a better management of labour markets. Work, he said, procured not only revenue but also dignity, and should be considered as an indispensable instrument in the fight against social exclusion. He expressed his conviction that the forthcoming Summit would take concrete decisions that would enable countries to create employment and alleviate poverty, and that these decisions could be incorporated into NEPAD for the benefit of the African people.
47. He concluded by welcoming ongoing ILO initiatives in areas such as SME development, micro-credit, employment-intensive programmes and employment services.
48. The next speaker, Mr. Hassan Sunmonu, Secretary-General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, cited an African proverb: "When hunger is taken out of poverty, there is nothing left of poverty." Therefore, African countries should make food self-sufficiency and food security their highest priority; this would create millions of decent jobs. Even more jobs could be created through agro-processing. He further proposed to develop Africa's pharmacopoeia into modern medicine, to enhance Africa's cultural industries and to lay more emphasis on human resource development and capacity building; all this would create millions of decent jobs. He also stressed the importance of regional integration, and the necessity for African countries to decide themselves on their future. He strongly criticized neo-liberal economic strategies, which had failed to foster Africa's development.

49. Mr. Andrew Kailembo, General Secretary of the ICFTU African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO), also supported the holding of the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation and expressed his commitment to fully participate in its proceedings. He welcomed the decision to hold the Summit in Burkina Faso, which he praised as a country that upheld the principles of tripartism as sacrosanct, and respected and implemented the ILO's core Conventions. He said that the ILO should give top priority to the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic at the workplace. Furthermore, all jobs created should be decent, safe and secure, and should provide minimum wages and income security. This was not the case in jobs created through part-time work, outsourcing and contract labour. He concluded by appealing to governments to ensure that full tripartite delegations be sent to the Summit.
50. Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General, summarized the debate. He thanked His Excellency Blaise Compaoré and President Konaré for their leadership and guidance in putting employment at the top of the African agenda. He then recorded the unanimous support for the holding of the Summit, the importance of employment in reducing poverty, and the need for tripartite participation. He recalled that several speakers had mentioned the fact that the diagnosis had been done, and that there was now time for action, which should include the upscaling of successful experiences of working out of poverty in Africa. He emphasized the need to promote economic growth that creates jobs. He acknowledged that most jobs were created in the informal economy and in agriculture, thus the need to upgrade those jobs through community development, market access, credit and agro-processing. He considered HIV/AIDS as a cross-cutting issue that should be considered in all employment promotion programmes.
51. He said that many speakers had laid emphasis on the importance of enterprise promotion, cooperative development as a powerful tool for local development, education and capacity building, the need to further both the quantity and quality aspects of job creation, to develop local markets and regional integration, and to guarantee stability and peace.
52. He further underlined that Africans recognized that they themselves should find the solutions to Africa's problems, and that NEPAD was a step in the right direction. He stressed the necessity to have fair rules of the game in the international arena. If the message of the forthcoming Summit was to put employment at the heart of development policies then the international agencies should hear that call. He concluded by thanking the delegates for a rich debate, and by confirming that the ILO tripartite structures stood ready to help out in the preparation of, and the follow-up process to, the AU Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation.
53. The special session was then closed by the Chairperson of the Tenth ILO African Regional Meeting.

III. Report of the Director-General: ILO activities in Africa

54. The Regional Director of the ILO Regional Office for Africa, Ms. Regina Amadi-Njoku, presented the Report of the Director-General on ILO activities in Africa.
55. She pointed out that the report summarized the conclusions of the Ninth African Regional Meeting, held in December 1999 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire. It also highlighted the five ILO priorities for Africa: (i) poverty reduction; (ii) HIV/AIDS prevention at the workplace; (iii) post-crisis construction; (iv) social dialogue and economic social policies; and (v) regional integration. The report also described the way in which the ILO had contributed towards responding to these priorities, by means of its four strategic objectives

which were the pillars of the integrated approach of decent work, i.e.: (i) to promote and realize standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; (ii) to create greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income; (iii) to enhance the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all; and (iv) to strengthen tripartism and social dialogue.

- 56.** Referring to the first strategic objective, the Regional Director stated that various activities had been carried out and results obtained with respect to the ratification of international labour standards and the elimination of child labour. As regards employment promotion, the second objective, important initiatives had been mentioned: support for the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process; the “Jobs for Africa” programme; the employment-intensive investment programmes for the post-crisis reconstruction of countries; and the strengthening of vocational training systems and the capacities of SMEs. Concerning the third strategic objective, efforts had also been made to formulate coherent policies in various areas such as social protection involving rehabilitation and the reform of social security systems; national policies for occupational safety and health and working conditions; efforts to combat HIV/AIDS at the workplace; and improvements in the conditions of migrant workers. As regards the fourth strategic objective, activities had been carried out in the following areas: the strengthening of social dialogue at national and regional levels; labour law reform programmes; consolidation and capacity building for employers’ and workers’ organizations in the PRSP process and in the context of national, subregional, regional and sectoral policies.
- 57.** The Regional Director also mentioned that during the past few years, considerable progress had been made both from an economic and social standpoint and from that of political will. Within the framework of NEPAD, for instance, many initiatives had been taken concerning the maintenance of peace and security, the promotion of democracy and governance and the harnessing of human resources. Finally, the Report noted the efforts made by the Office to improve and adapt its structures in the region to respond better to the needs and demands of the constituents.

General discussion on the Report

- 58.** All the speakers congratulated the Officers of the Meeting on their election and thanked the Ethiopian authorities for their welcome.
- 59.** Delegates appreciated the quality of the Report and congratulated the Director-General and the Regional Director for their work.
- 60.** The Government delegate of the Republic of South Africa, speaking on behalf of the Governments of Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, noted that the Report referred to the progress made in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda; he stated that the discussions that were to take place would influence the future programmes and budgets of the ILO. Whilst he was pleased to observe the high level of ratification of the ILO’s core Conventions, he stressed that employment was the only means to combat poverty. The introduction of an InFocus programme on HIV/AIDS, announced by the Director-General, would contribute considerably to the campaign against HIV/AIDS at the workplace. The speaker regretted that employment, which remained the priority concern for Africa, had not been sufficiently examined. He called upon the ILO to continue helping member States ratify and apply the Conventions. He requested the ILO to allocate sufficient resources to job-creation programmes especially those concerning youth employment, the informal economy, the development of human resources, cooperatives, and high labour-intensive public works programmes in

rural areas. Finally, he invited the ILO to examine the operational aspects of the reorganization of ILO structures, outlined in the Report.

- 61.** The Secretary-General of the Pan-African Confederation of Employers (PEC), speaking on behalf of the African Employers, thanked the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Regional Office for their unceasing support. He stressed the importance of employment in reducing poverty. In this context, he recalled a number of projects and programmes introduced by the ILO: "Jobs for Africa" and programmes to create and develop SMEs and cooperatives. The Secretary-General of the PEC pointed out that it was in the interest of all countries to create a macroeconomic environment that would be attractive enough to promote employment and the investments necessary for development. Training and the development of human resources were prerequisites for promoting productivity and competitiveness. The speaker recalled the important role that NEPAD played in promoting the private sector in Africa, whilst expressing the wish that it might be more closely involved in the formulation and execution of development projects. Furthermore, he highlighted the importance of regional integration as a tool in promoting inter-African trade and stimulating foreign direct investment once again so that Africa might assume a better position in the world economy. Finally, the Employer spokesperson reiterated his group's concerns at the problem of HIV/AIDS at the workplace. He noted the significant measures taken by the ILO to help the Organization's constituents confront the pandemic, particularly the code of practice on HIV/AIDS.
- 62.** The Worker spokesperson, Mr. George Muchai, regretted that NEPAD did not provide an adequate institutional framework to ensure the participation of the civil society – and in particular the employers' and workers' organizations – in the planning and implementation of national and regional development policies. Furthermore, he hoped that the ILO would invite the Heads of State, at the forthcoming African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, to involve people more in the drafting and execution of economic and social development policies. He also noted that the Comprehensive Development Framework of the World Bank was very much on the lines of the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s, which had not produced the expected outcomes. In the same way as these programmes and NEPAD, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) should allow populations in the developing countries to participate in the formulation and implementation of development strategies. He called for the self-determination of people and condemned the unfair conditionalities that accompanied aid. Social dialogue was a cornerstone for development as it allowed the social partners to participate in the drawing up of development policies and paved the way for democracy, equity, peace and good governance. The ILO should step up its efforts to support the introduction of new labour legislations and to establish institutions involved in social dialogue and the settlement of social disputes. The speaker stressed that efforts to combat poverty through work was a worthy objective and that the ILO should encourage and help governments to attain this objective with determination, particularly by means of policies to combat poverty, unemployment and underemployment.
- 63.** The Minister of the Public Service and Employment of Togo, Mr. Rodolphe Osseyl, stated that the issues raised in the report were in accordance with the mandate entrusted to the ILO at the Ninth African Regional Meeting. He referred to the inextricable links between the economic and social spheres. The Minister added that the activities initiated by the ILO were contributing to the fight against poverty. Nevertheless, he hoped that a number of technical cooperation projects carried out in Africa would improve the impact of these activities and their communications strategy. He also requested that the ILO's activities initiated with other national structures be brought to the attention of labour ministers.
- 64.** The Government delegate of Egypt recalled that the main objective of this Meeting was to define a cooperation strategy for the future, taking into account the challenges faced by the

countries. She mentioned that since the 1990s, the majority of countries had taken courageous measures in economic and social fields but that, in many cases, the results of these measures had fallen short of the vast needs. For this reason, the ILO should step up its interventions, particularly in areas related to the integration of young people and the reinsertion of unemployed workers into the labour market, the promotion of SMEs, enhancing productivity and vocational training. Special attention should also be paid to the revision of labour legislation, social dialogue and social protection. She hoped that the ILO would retain and expand the IPEC Programme in Cairo. Furthermore, she stressed her country's interest in the execution of the second phase of the "Jobs for Africa" programmes and in the mobilization of the necessary resources.

- 65.** Mr. Juma Kapuya, the Minister for Labour, Youth Development and Sports of the United Republic of Tanzania, stressed the importance of statistics in the fight against unemployment and poverty, and for the promotion of decent work. These were vital for the formulation of action policies and programmes – and for evaluating the impact of these programmes. They also made it possible to identify requirements in technical skills appropriate for the region. This information would also allow the various countries to capitalize on the pilot projects and research carried out by the ILO. The sharing of this information and of the outcome of these experiments was vital to propagate better practices. The strengthening of the capacities of the social partners and ministries of labour was another priority. Two particular areas of ILO support had been particularly appreciated: the fight against child labour and the promotion of equal opportunities. The Minister would also like to see increased support to the most vulnerable groups of the population, for example the handicapped.
- 66.** The Workers' delegate of Benin drew attention to the fact that the strategic objective "to promote and realize standards and fundamentals principles and rights at work" was not sufficiently developed in the Report; there was thus a danger that standards-related activities were not adequately addressed, although they constituted one of the important pillars of the ILO in its attempts to combat poverty. He also felt that the workers' participation in the PRSP process remained extremely limited. The ILO should consolidate its support to the social partners to ensure that the employment component was given greater emphasis in the PRSPs.
- 67.** The Employers' delegate of Ethiopia stressed that Africa was still grappling with vast economic and social problems such as: bad working conditions; an extremely high level of unemployment; food insecurity; the spread of HIV/AIDS; the brain drain, etc. Seeking solutions to these problems required joint efforts between governments and the social partners to reduce – and subsequently eliminate – the extreme poverty in Africa. In this context, the Employers congratulated the Ethiopian Government for its successes in combating corruption; transforming the economic system and improving the efficiency of the public service; investing in long-term infrastructures; and reforming the legislative framework. Mention should also be made of the Government's role in promoting the initiatives of NEPAD. It was also worth noting the efforts made by the social partners, which highlighted the importance of having strong employers' and workers' federations for effective social dialogue. The Employers believed that extending social protection was a prerequisite for reducing poverty.
- 68.** Mr. Lee Mlanga, Minister of Labour and Vocational Training of Malawi, noted with satisfaction the efforts to adapt ILO structures in the region and to bring them closer to the constituents. He welcomed the fact that the ILO Report reflected a commitment to pursuing the realization of the Decent Work Agenda in the field. He wished to see the staff and technical cooperation brought even closer to the constituents.

- 69.** The Employers' delegate of South Africa commended the quality of the ILO products showcased at the Regional Meeting. He emphasized the key role of social dialogue in social and economic policy and the value of the post-crisis reconstruction programmes. He highlighted the remarkable work being done by the ILO in regard to employment promotion and poverty reduction, as well as the relevant approach to combating HIV/AIDS at the workplace. However, he suggested that special attention be given to addressing the pandemic in the informal economy. He concluded by indicating further avenues for research that were worth exploring, namely the impact on employment of corruption, agricultural subsidies, war, etc.
- 70.** The Workers' delegate of Tunisia emphasized the need to continue supporting freedom of association, social dialogue and the extension of social protection in order to ensure wide coverage of the population. It was vital to develop social dialogue on matters relating to social and economic policies and strategies. Trade union organizations should be considered as partners representing labour within an institutionalized framework of social dialogue that was both fair and democratic.
- 71.** The Minister of Labour and Administrative Reform of Sudan, Ms. Alison Magaya, speaking on behalf of the subregion of East Africa, stated that in order to better target future activities in Africa, particular attention should be paid to the following issues, namely, the need to draw up strategies and national and regional policies geared towards combating poverty and promoting employment; the revision of labour legislation and social security within the framework of social dialogue aimed at protecting workers' rights; the development of labour market databases; and the examination of working conditions in the informal sector. The ILO should also pay particular attention to vocational training and the development of human resources. In attempting to combat poverty, it was vital to adopt national strategies that took into account ILO experience, the approaches adopted by NEPAD and successful international activities. The "Jobs for Africa" programme should, in its second phase (Jobs for Africa), emphasize the promotion of self-employment and SMEs with a view to integrating young persons and qualified workers. The ILO and other international organizations should attempt to gather the necessary funds, promote and encourage investment for job creation, and combat unemployment. Social and economic policies to promote the productivity and efficiency of institutions should integrate any measures aimed at structural adjustment and administrative reform. The Minister called for greater efforts to combat HIV/AIDS at the workplace because of its disastrous repercussions on productivity.
- 72.** Mr. Baruti Amissi Ikumaiyete, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, highlighted the crisis situation affecting Central Africa, which was marked by conflict and political instability, and called for follow-up mechanisms to assess the stabilizing impact of ILO programmes. He also expressed his appreciation for the fact that, despite all the upheavals, the ILO had continued its programme of support to the subregion.
- 73.** Mr. Clotaire Ivala, Minister of Labour and Employment of Gabon, speaking on behalf of the Government group of the Central African subregion, informed the Meeting that eight out of the 11 countries in the subregion had ratified all of the fundamental Conventions. He also pointed out that the IPEC programme was present in nearly all of the countries of the subregion. He went on to confirm that employment was still the main concern in this area. In this respect, he called on the ILO to strengthen the IFP/CRISIS programme in order to make it more operational. He also pointed out the absence of effective social protection as an inherent aspect of the employment problem. In view of the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS, he requested the ILO to promote partnership with the WHO and UNAIDS. Recalling the conflict situation that had hampered development efforts, he commended the ILO for the measures taken to integrate decent work in development strategies at the

regional level, such as NEPAD, and at the international level in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). He emphasized that this approach, aimed at integrating the social dimension, was in keeping with the resolutions adopted at the Durban Summit in 2002 and at the First Session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union held in Mauritius in 2003. As regards social dialogue, he highlighted the progress that had been achieved thanks to the implementation of the PRODIAF and PRODIAL programmes throughout the countries of the Central African subregion.

74. The Secretary-General of the National Employers' Council of Mali (CNPM) expressed his appreciation for the ILO's efforts to curb unemployment and alleviate poverty. He welcomed the fact that the fundamental Conventions had been ratified by most of the countries in the subregion, but emphasized the need to take the local context into account when it came to application. Referring to the IPEC programme, he highlighted its effectiveness in the field and recommended that it be extended to other countries. He commended the ILO for its efforts to integrate the employment dimension in national and regional policies and highlighted the Jobs for Africa programme as a visionary strategic framework. As regards the promotion of SMEs, he emphasized the need to focus on improving productivity and competitiveness. Lastly, he warned against the risk of poverty alleviation efforts being undermined by the impact of HIV/AIDS and called on the ILO to channel additional resources into the fight against the pandemic.
75. The Secretary-General of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, referring to the PRSPs, stated that "the ILO should not help the Bretton Woods institutions implement their neo-liberal policy, but rather strengthen the capacities of its constituents to enable them to develop alternatives for the promotion of decent work". He further emphasized the need to take three important dimensions into account in the design of social and economic policies, namely participation, empowerment and ownership. He also stressed the need to make the ILO programme on HIV/AIDS a real InFocus programme. Lastly, he advocated the use of social dialogue in all the processes involved in the design and implementation of social and economic policy and recommended strengthening workers' capacities.
76. The representative of the World Confederation of Labour advocated fair, equitable and democratic globalization and called for closer attention to issues related to the debt, access to foreign markets and the price of African products. Noting the repercussions of AIDS on people and the economy in Africa, he requested the ILO to take part in the discussion at present under way at the WTO concerning access to medication for all. Turning to NEPAD, he insisted that NEPAD should be a matter for Africans, conducted by Africans for Africans.
77. The Employers' delegate of Egypt expressed his organization's adherence to the five regional strategic priorities for Africa. Referring to the decent work pilot programmes, he welcomed the results being achieved in his country thanks to ILO support. He also called for promoting self-employment and SMEs, in particular through strengthening managerial capacity.
78. The Government delegate of Algeria emphasized the relevance of the priorities selected by the ILO to deal with the social and economic difficulties faced by the African continent. Although Africa had certainly made great strides in the first years of the millennium, the social and economic situation was still fragile and poverty was still the overriding challenge. International organizations and the ILO in particular had the lead role in the design and implementation of development strategies and programmes to support the constituents' efforts. It was still important to strengthen the ILO's involvement in mobilizing resources and assessing project outcomes and their impact on employment and poverty alleviation. The ILO Office in Algiers should be strengthened to enable it to support the Maghreb integration process and address the priorities relating to employment

promotion, the development of social protection, the promotion of social dialogue and human resource development. The ILO should also give consideration to strengthening the Cairo Office. The ILO should play a key role in supporting the implementation of NEPAD and make greater use of the tripartite approach to eliminating poverty through employment generation. Social dialogue involving all of the social partners was crucial to the fight against poverty through employment. Social dialogue also ensured the effective implementation of programmes targeted at young persons and women and the protection and integration of people with disabilities and displaced workers. The ILO should consider strengthening the regional labour administration centres, which had a key role in strengthening the capacities of the ILO constituents for the implementation of decent work programmes.

- 79.** The President of the Association of Tanzania Employers noted that the employers of the East Africa region had participated actively in three initiatives that might serve as a reference, namely: the elimination of the worst forms of child labour; efforts to combat AIDS through training employers and workers; and the SLAREA project (Strengthening Labour Relations in East Africa) to reform legislation on labour relations in Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. The project had reached a stage at which the efforts of the tripartite partners in each country needed to be consolidated with support from the ILO.
- 80.** The Workers' delegate of Mauritius pointed out that despite NEPAD, the commitment of African Heads of State and the efforts made to mobilize the international community to eradicate poverty, the socio-economic situation remained critical: some 60 per cent of the population were living in absolute poverty, 40 per cent were illiterate, life expectancy had decreased, access to drinking water was difficult, and the scourge of HIV/AIDS undermined development policies. Social dialogue, which was synonymous with good governance and an essential element in the democratic process, could not take place in the absence of trade union freedoms, which presupposed full adherence to the provisions of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. Mauritius had ratified some of the fundamental Conventions, and intended to ratify Convention No. 87, which would involve some fundamental changes to its labour legislation. Social dialogue, which would contribute to the consolidation of well-being, had to become a permanent institution. The implementation of NEPAD was running into major difficulties, such as the burden of debt, the weakness of the private sector, a shortage of skilled workers, inadequate social protection, and the loss of sovereignty by States in the context of globalization and economic liberalization. The ILO therefore needed to help strengthen the negotiating capacities of its African constituents in order to enable them to become better integrated in the globalization process.
- 81.** The Workers' delegate of Benin emphasized that the development of decent work in the region was constrained by labour legislation that favoured deregulation and flexibility. He wondered how one could guarantee decent work for workers faced with waves of mass redundancies and growing unemployment in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and without the support of effective labour inspectorates. Referring in particular to the severe difficulties experienced by young people as a result of this grim reality, he regretted the inability of African societies to come up with appropriate responses to the challenges facing them. The ILO was called upon to play a historic role in supporting its constituents by promoting decent work in order to create an environment conducive to employment generation and improved productivity. Since the Copenhagen Summit had asked the developed countries to allocate 0.7 per cent of their GDP to helping countries to combat poverty through job creation, and this had been unsuccessful, he asked the ILO to play a major part in mobilizing the development partners, so that the recommendation could become a reality. He welcomed the holding of the forthcoming Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Ouagadougou in 2004.

IV. Report of the Director-General: Decent work for Africa's development

Presentation of the Report

- 82.** The Regional Director of the ILO Regional Office for Africa, Ms. Regina Amadi-Njoku, introduced the thematic Report of the Director-General. She underscored that the Report examined the ILO's contribution to the new thinking on development policy and the ways in which to break out of the cycle of poverty in Africa. She stressed that to ensure sustainable development in Africa, decent work should be placed at the heart of efforts to alleviate poverty. This called for more and better jobs for African men and women, within the context of the four strategic objectives of the ILO, namely, employment and enterprise creation, rights at work, basic social protection and social dialogue. Governments and their social partners should thus put employment at the centre of macroeconomic and social policies through an increased participation and empowerment of tripartite constituents; however, employment must be rooted in considerations of social justice, social protection, respect of fundamental principles and rights at work and social cohesion – and most importantly, social dialogue, at local, national, subregional, regional and international levels.
- 83.** The Regional Director noted that this strategy complimented recent political developments in Africa, together with global initiatives, which had paved the way for a reorientation of development strategies towards this new focus on full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work. This had emerged as global strategy at the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, the 24th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000 and culminated in the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals. In this context, the ILO was called upon to develop a coherent and coordinated international strategy for the promotion of freely chosen, productive employment which had been reflected in the ILO Global Employment Agenda (GEA) and other programmes such as “Jobs for Africa”. The ILO had also built international alliances with relevant United Nations agencies as well as with the Bretton Woods institutions in order to incorporate the goals of employment and decent work into country-level poverty-reduction strategies.
- 84.** Ms. Amadi-Njoku said that social dialogue could contribute towards providing a sustainable solution to the many intractable problems of African development. The ILO experience worldwide had confirmed tripartism as a development instrument that countries could use to ensure ownership of poverty-reduction strategies and other national development programmes. Social dialogue had also served as a platform for relations with donors and international organizations. Tripartism was not only a crucial development instrument but could also be an important force for raising productivity and economic competitiveness. Discussions should take into consideration fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards.
- 85.** Ms. Amadi-Njoku concluded by stressing that the time was ripe to bring together the many different initiatives to support the promotion of decent work for all as a central feature of the drive to reduce and eradicate poverty in Africa. This ILO Tenth African Regional Meeting could therefore take an important step towards firmly situating productive employment and decent work at the centre of poverty-reduction strategies in Africa.

General discussion

- 86.** Mr. Soodhun, the Minister of Labour and Industrial Relations of Mauritius, shared the view that tackling the problems of poverty and unemployment was key for sustainable African development. This was particularly true in the current context of economic uncertainty and growing unemployment. He noted with satisfaction that the Report of the Director-General also proposed concrete strategies to address these problems. He called upon the ILO to pursue efforts to promote decent work in partnership with other international organizations. While the central political challenge was to achieve more and better jobs, he underscored that African governments were also faced with difficult political choices in trying to strike the right balance between regulation of the labour market and market flexibility; between labour standards, social justice and productivity and competitiveness; between corporate social responsibility, good governance and investment promotion. Noting that the report provided no clear guidance on these issues, the speaker stressed that the interests of all parties could best be served through effective social dialogue.
- 87.** Mr. Azad Jeetun, the spokesperson for the Employers' group, noted that the issue of employment was mainstreamed throughout the Report. From the Employers' perspective, emphasis should be placed on creating enabling environments for enterprises to grow and to become more productive and competitive.
- 88.** Mr. Muchai, the spokesperson of the Workers' group, noted that the ILO, given its four strategic objectives, had a comparative advantage in contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the PRSPs, NEPAD and the MDGs. He highlighted the crucial importance of employment creation in development and poverty reduction. He emphasized the role of social dialogue and the need for the implementation of international labour standards. He recommended that national consultations on working out of poverty should be carried out in all countries and further proposed that Pan-African trade unions participate in these discussions.
- 89.** Mr. Muchai further made a series of recommendations for consideration by the Meeting: he stressed the need to create secure and safe jobs commensurate with international labour standards with respect to income security; he advocated increased resources for workers' education, training and retraining of the workforce and support for workers' education colleges such as the Tom Mboya Labour College and Mbeya Labour College, as well as ARLAC and CRADAT; he invited the ILO to support African trade union endeavours towards combating the adverse effects of HIV/AIDS at the workplace; he maintained that both the Cancun Conference and the "Washington Consensus" had failed and therefore advised the ILO to impress other international organizations to respect international labour standards and to appeal to these institutions to practise fair play in their rules; he called on African governments to involve trade unions in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of the PRSP process as well as in the implementation of NEPAD; he called for major financial and budgetary support to ministries of labour in order to fulfil their mandates, including the crucial issues of job creation and poverty alleviation; he underlined the importance of peace for economic and social development in Africa and the role that trade unions could play in this area; and finally, he called for the promotion of tripartism and social dialogue in Africa and the implementation and expansion of gender and youth policies and programmes for employment and poverty reduction.
- 90.** Mr. G. Hultin, the ILO Executive Director for the Employment Sector, introduced Chapters 1 to 3 of the Report of the Director-General, *Decent work for Africa's development*. His presentation focused on growth, employment and the poverty situation in Africa and the recent international policy frameworks that had been complementing the

Decent Work Agenda. These frameworks demonstrated the commitment of the international communities in addressing poverty issues.

91. The Executive Director underlined the challenges ahead of Africa by quoting statistics from the report showing that open unemployment accounted for between 9 per cent to 33 per cent of the population. He stressed the strong prevalence of youth unemployment, estimated at 60 per cent of total unemployment, and the fact that the percentage of female unemployment was higher than average.
92. He pointed out that although economic growth was indispensable for any country, the growth per se was not sufficient to address poverty unless it integrated employment issues that were complemented with long-term strategies for adding value and investment in human capital.
93. Regarding the international policy framework put in place by the international communities to address poverty, mention was made of the Millennium Development Goals which strove to halve world poverty by 2015. The birth of the African Union, the development of NEPAD and the forthcoming Extraordinary Summit on Poverty and Employment and Poverty Alleviation were declared as a new impetus to development within the African framework. The presentation also highlighted the PRSPs, under which 28 African countries had formulated national plans to address poverty. Two challenges had been identified: the need for greater centrality of employment in national development plans and the call for stronger involvement by the social partners to influence the PRSP process.
94. The Executive Director outlined the ILO's contribution in the context of the employment situation and policy framework at the global, regional and national levels. Mention was made of the Decent Work Agenda, the Global Employment Agenda, the establishment of a policy platform and the development of policy tools for making the Jobs for Africa programme operational. He highlighted some of the recent alliances that had been forged at the global level such as the building of partnerships with FAO on food and poverty, the World Bank on youth employment and the alliance with UNESCO in the development of a coherent approach to education and training.
95. At the regional level, the Executive Director mentioned the consultations with the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission with respect to the Extraordinary Summit that would provide further guidance on the orientation that the policy document must take. At the national level, some recent ongoing activities had been executed within the Global Employment Agenda: the development of labour market policies in Ethiopia; job creation through ICT in Burkina Faso; the holding of job summit workshops in Ghana and Nigeria; and the development, in collaboration with South Africa, of a framework with employment focus.
96. As a complement to the previous presentation, Ms. A. Ouedraogo (IPEC) wished to emphasize the important role of international labour standards in the present context, in particular the standards concerning employment promotion and related issues, social protection and social dialogue. The development and implementation of international labour standards was one of the internationally recognized comparative advantages of the ILO in the context of development. The speaker, underscoring the positive contribution that standards could make, referred to the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), that promoted full, productive and freely chosen employment, and the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189). These standards had contributed to the development of effective national policies which had increased productivity and helped to regularize the situation of workers employed in the informal economies – including, in particular, women. She also gave as an example the

ILO instruments on child labour – the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The high ratification rate of Convention No. 182 contributed positively to the fight against child labour through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). IPEC programmes were under way in some 30 African nations, including the United Republic of Tanzania and South Africa; hopefully they would soon be introduced in Kenya and Ghana.

- 97.** Mr. Botsweletese Sebele, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Home Affairs of Botswana, speaking on behalf of the South African subregion, reaffirmed the commitment of the countries in the subregion to the principle of decent work. The Permanent Secretary, in sharing the experiences and the initiatives that Botswana had taken with respect to employment creation and poverty alleviation, mentioned the strategies incorporated in the national development plans that had diversified the economy; he alluded to the positive results that tourism had played in becoming the second contributor to GDP after mining. The Permanent Secretary mentioned the recently introduced National Master Plan for Agricultural and Dairy Development the objective of which was to promote agricultural development through provision of skills and advisory services to farmers as well as the provision of financial assistance for investment and training skills to citizens under the Citizen Enterprise Development Agency. The Permanent Secretary highlighted the Government's decision to establish the National Productivity Centre which developed and organized productivity improvement programmes.
- 98.** The Government delegate of Mali, speaking on behalf of the West African States subregion, commenced by expressing concern over the gravity of the statistics in the report on unemployment, poverty and the anticipated required economic growth rates to work out of poverty. He contended that much of this gloom was due to international factors related to world trade. A strategic orientation was required to apply decent work strategies to counter these impacts. The Government representative then postulated that there was good reason to hope for a better future through the optimization of Africa's greatest asset – its human resource base. But this required the development of targeted training strategies geared to national needs (matching skills and resources to requirements); building upon the political will to meet the needs of the poor through the initiatives of the AU and NEPAD; and having employment creation at the heart of economic and poverty-reduction strategies. He concluded by pledging the support of the West African States to the ILO programmes for employment-intensive investment and job creation encapsulated in the "Jobs for Africa" initiative.
- 99.** Mr. Jeetun, spokesperson for the Employers' group, commented on the integrated nature of the report that highlighted employment in all the chapters. Referring to the statistics in the report, he noted the ratio between youth and overall unemployment and pointed out that youth unemployment in many places was much higher than the national average; the gender imbalance was also variable. The criteria for employability of youth in terms of requirements for skills development and training was, in his opinion, equally applicable to other unemployed groups. The speaker then focused on the issue of a conducive business environment, including the roles of small enterprise development and the informal sector. He stressed that such an environment required serious efforts to address the issues of good governance; anti-corruption measures and transparency; respect and application of the rule of law; political, economic and institutional stability; investment in essential infrastructure; and investment in health care, education and skills development. The Employer spokesperson further stressed that there was a need to develop three key areas: export growth strategy, especially in manufacturing; agricultural products development; and the creation of an environment for the attraction of foreign investment. The Employer spokesperson concluded by stressing the importance of small enterprise development; the need for sufficiently flexible labour market policies to encourage growth; and the review of

legal frameworks to enable the integration of informal economies into the mainstream of economic activity.

- 100.** The Honourable Joseph Henry Obbo, Minister of State, Labour and Industrial Relations of Uganda, speaking on behalf of the East African subregion, stressed the need to fight poverty with renewed strength through adjustment of economic programmes. He believed that the impact of globalization could result in external macroeconomic processes that would be a detriment to national cultures, economies and borders. Consequently, domestic strategies would become irrelevant; free market forces might lead to transnational corporations becoming the principle actors of change, and this would hamper national employment opportunities at all levels. The Government representative then spoke about the decline in employment in the public sector; the private sector concentrated on manufacturing, construction and services, whereas East African economies were agriculture-based with large informal economies. National success, he proposed, lay in the assets of its people and in the realization of the productivity and consumer strength of its citizens; i.e. working out of poverty under an employment strategy framework. Recognizing that sustainable jobs emerged in the longer term, the Government representative stated the need for jobs now. Addressing the issue of challenges and obstacles, he identified the unfair nature of globalization; the need to raise agricultural productivity and rural incomes; and the need to add value to agricultural products by processing exportable finished goods, rather than exporting raw materials. The key issues were identified as high unemployment and low productivity, especially in rural areas and mainly affecting youth and women; child labour; inadequate labour market information for planning; HIV/AIDS and its impact on productivity; inadequate social protection and social security; unsafe working environments and low pay; inadequate policy guidelines; lack of access for informal sector workers; and limited market access for the self-employed. The Government representative contended that employment strategies should refocus the Government's attention and actions towards employment promotion policies and strategies to achieve broad-based economic growth. He highlighted the need to create labour-based opportunities specifically for task-based work, since this would enable the poor and vulnerable to manage their time whilst earning a living. He stated that the private sector and government agencies including district authorities, needed to be more involved in the promotion of labour-based public works. This required developing the skills base, including in the informal sector.
- 101.** The Workers' delegate of Barbados underscored the high level of unemployment and underemployment, especially among youth, and stressed the need for partnership between the government, workers and employers to fight the twin evils of poverty and unemployment, on the basis of the ILO's four strategic objectives. He suggested that, despite the increase in disguised unemployment and other precarious forms of employment, the Report did not address the potential and actual role of international labour standards in this context. With reference to the statements on the need to create business-friendly environments, he felt that such statements should also stress that attention be given to workers' concerns. Furthermore, with reference to the role and function of non-governmental organizations, he believed that – given the representative and democratic nature of the trade union movement – trade unions were better placed to provide an effective contribution to the development of decent work. He concluded by underscoring the need to take concerted action against continued subsidies, particularly those for agricultural products, which blocked access to the subsidized markets.
- 102.** The Government delegate of Egypt emphasized the importance of focusing on youth employment in the present context and noted that the strategies developed to tackle this problem in his country were multifaceted. They included efforts to collect relevant statistical data; provide skills development and training for youth; develop micro-credits for SMEs; encourage a free flow of capital and exports of African products; encourage

interregional mobility and activate social dialogue. His country also relied on the ILO to contribute its experience and technical expertise.

- 103.** The Government delegate of Swaziland expressed his agreement with several of the previous statements; however he stressed that all these efforts were dwarfed by the gigantic task that lay ahead to combat HIV/AIDS. The ILO had a crucial role to play in this context and it was therefore particularly important to reverse the downward expenditure trend with regard to technical cooperation. While most of the proposed strategies to address poverty and unemployment appeared to be relevant, he emphasized that they should take into account the demographics of the African continent; the actions proposed should not be confined to the formal and informal economies only, but should also extend to the communal sector.
- 104.** While agreeing with the previous speakers on the quality of the Report, the Workers' delegate of Senegal noted the references made to civil society. In this context he had some concerns that the ILO might be moving towards "quadripartism". He also shared the view that action should be taken to remove barriers which blocked Africa's access to the global market, particularly in the area of agriculture. He further expressed the hope that the social partners be firmly and thoroughly involved in the development of NEPAD.
- 105.** The Government delegate of Ethiopia appreciated that the report covered important issues such as the participation of stakeholders and local communities in development issues; pro-poor growth; and the vast human potential of women and young people in Africa. The outcome of the pilot consultations had confirmed that action would be needed at both national and international levels to pursue a development agenda for poverty reduction focusing on job creation within the framework of decent work. She noted that while most of the PRSPs for African countries had not given due emphasis to employment, there was consensus that employment should be at the centre of macroeconomic and social policy. Full participation of the social partners and organizations of the poor in the designing, monitoring and review of poverty reduction strategies were also very important. For the majority of African countries, a poverty reduction strategy would necessarily target special groups and regions and address specific measures to remedy structural imbalances. Efforts must also be made to mobilize domestic as well as external resources in support of sectoral plans: and in order to attract foreign direct investment. There must be political stability, good governance, infrastructure and skilled labour.
- 106.** With reference to the vast programme of activities proposed by the ILO, Mr. M. Muchai, spokesperson for the Worker's group, queried the ability of the ILO to provide the financial and human resources to respond to the multifaceted national demands. While noting that several African nations had been unable to implement the goals adopted by the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, he hoped that the Burkina Faso Summit in 2004 would pave the way for real changes.
- 107.** Mr. Mohamed Chandoul, Workers' delegate, Tunisia, stressed that trade unions should be considered as partners representing labour in social dialogue. There were successful examples of such social dialogue in Africa (Tunisia), which had had positive impacts on employment and improved working conditions. Tunisia had introduced a set-up that constituted a success in efforts to combat poverty and promote employment: the National Solidarity Fund and the Employment Promotion Fund.
- 108.** In a concluding statement, Mr. G. Hultin, Executive Director of the Employment Sector, thanked the participants for a rich debate and the valuable contributions made. The issues emerging from the debate had included an emphasis on the need to integrate the four strategic objectives of the ILO; and a need to clarify that decent work and employment were not two different issues but one agenda. Furthermore, he stated that while poverty

and unemployment were global issues, employment strategies should be adapted to the African context and national requirements. They should therefore be endorsed by the national tripartite partners and lead to subregional and regional cooperation. He noted that a number of delegates had spoken about respective roles and functions of trade unions and NGOs. Others had underscored that access to global markets, including markets for agricultural produce, financial markets, etc., were key issues to allow Africa to work out of poverty.

- 109.** He also noted the need to diversify production patterns, i.e. to diversify the production within Africa that might lead to a decrease in the exportation of raw materials and an increase in manufacturing. Furthermore, while there was a need to create business-friendly environments, equal attention should also be given to social dialogue and to the creation of decent working environments. He also made the point that increasing productivity implied caring for workers' health; improved working conditions, skills development and training. It was important to take immediate action to work out of poverty through labour-intensive employment promotion – but these should be integrated into longer term programmes to be sustainable. The national consultation processes were highly valued. The practical experience gained evidenced, inter alia, the potential benefits of increased and intensified regional collaboration. As to the question raised on the ILO's resources to pursue the proposed agenda, Mr. Hultin replied that the ILO had the manpower and technical knowledge to do so; but given the scale of the needs, strong alliances with both national and international development partners needed to be forged.
- 110.** Introducing the fourth chapter of the thematic report on *Breaking the cycle of poverty*, Mr. Assane Diop stressed that employment and social protection were two faces of the same coin; they were essential components of decent work and integral for poverty eradication. In Africa, social protection covered only 10 per cent of the active population. Over 90 per cent of the active population was in the rural and urban informal economy. These informal economy workers, especially women workers, had no social protection coverage and ignored the risks and hazards they faced in their work. Yet occupational injuries and diseases meant that they were not able to work, had no income, and no means of paying for health care, the costs of which are very high. This was the vicious cycle leading to poverty. The ILO was therefore giving priority to the extension of social protection to workers in rural areas and the informal economy. The Global Campaign on Social Protection For All was an important part of the ILO effort. The campaign was inaugurated in June 2003 during the International Labour Conference, and would be launched in Africa during the African Regional Meeting. The campaign was critical to poverty eradication. The ILO was also focusing on improving the knowledge base of innovative ways of extending social protection particularly to those in the informal economy. It was helping countries to develop national strategies based on lessons learned from success stories. Such national strategies must involve the tripartite partners, who all shared equal responsibility for ensuring that adequate financial and human resources are devoted to extending and improving social protection. He ended by recalling that the issues surrounding child labour had been raised in earlier discussions but reminded the Meeting that through improving working conditions and extending social protection to the informal economy, child labour would be more humane, if not eradicated.
- 111.** Mr. Steven Oates focused on the synergies between the ILO's normative work and its employment role. In the ILO, standard setting, starting with fundamental rights, provided tools for achieving aims across the Organization's four strategic objectives. He pointed to the examples raised in the thematic report of the fundamental Conventions on equal pay and non-discrimination as a means of promoting gender equality as well as redressing inequalities arising from the spread of HIV/AIDS and its consequences. The Convention on the elimination of forced labour was obviously connected to the achievement of full, productive and freely chosen employment. The Conventions relating to freedom of

association, the right to organize and collective bargaining referred to basic human rights and showed the way to decent working conditions, even in the informal economy where labour legislation might have little direct effect. He explained that normative action in the ILO included both the procedures for supervising and promoting the implementation of ratified Conventions, and also the Follow-Up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which had the capacity to mobilize resources for technical cooperation to help countries overcome obstacles to implementation. The promotional standards, such as those on labour administration, tripartism and employment policy, showed how the decent work component in national policies for development and poverty reduction could be augmented. He emphasized that such policy standards that spoke to broad issues of labour and employment were applicable to both formal and informal economy workers.

- 112.** Referring to the 300 million Africans who lived in extreme poverty, Mr. Hausiku, the Honourable Minister of Labour, Namibia, speaking also on behalf of Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, stressed the absolute need to break the cycle of poverty which constituted child labour, gender inequality and discrimination, HIV/AIDS and other social tensions. He commended the Director-General for the work being done with regard to child labour and the strategies being implemented in 27 African countries. He mentioned the code of practice on HIV/AIDS at the workplace which had formed the base on which member States developed their policies and programmes. This code would complement the SADC policies as much as the national efforts. He was positive that an impact assessment would be carried out by the ILO to assess the effects of the code on HIV/AIDS management practices at the workplace. The Honourable Minister noted that the need to improve accident prevention and safety management in the region was particularly important and referred to the Zimbabwean experience where an annual award on health and safety at the workplace could be a good learning experience for the region. He continued to stress the need to improve the exchange of information and mentioned also in this context the Malawian experience of the viability to introduce a workers' compensation fund whereas the other countries he spoke for provided other forms of social protection.
- 113.** He mentioned that the subregion took note that Namibia, in cooperation with the ILO and the Government of Luxembourg, was in the process of testing a new social protection pilot scheme, the Global Social Trust Network. If this new concept were successful in Namibia it could provide a blueprint for most member States. The ILO should be mandated to continue its research in this field.
- 114.** The Employer's delegate of Benin recalled that a number of provisions of Labour Code No. 1322, promulgated on 15 December 1952 had benefited not only French overseas departments and territories but also French-speaking African countries south of the Sahara, where the first institutions of social protection had been introduced. In all French-speaking West African countries, social security funds had been set up covering mainly work-related accidents, occupational diseases and retirement pensions. Since then, the notion of social security had evolved and there was growing recognition of the need to have new organizations and structures in this area and to strengthen the capacity of intervention of existing funds. The West African Welfare Institute (IPRAO) had been set up in 1958 to streamline regulations for intervention in former French West African countries in which the Labour Code was applied. However, in the 1960s, a number of member countries in the IPRAO withdrew from the institution to set up their own social security schemes. In Benin, the social security scheme only covered workers in the private sector regulated by the Labour Code. The funds of the National Social Security Fund of Benin were made available from the contributions of the social partners: 3.6 per cent for the workers and 16.6 per cent and 19.6 per cent borne exclusively by the employers. Recognizing the need to extend social coverage to all strata of the population, a mutual assistance fund had been

set up within the National Social Security Fund to cover those in the handicrafts sector – and it was now planned to extend coverage to those in the liberal professions.

- 115.** Mr. G. Muchai, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, addressed two critical issues. First the need to maintain and expand existing systems of social security and health and safety standards in the *formal* economies and, second, the need to address this issue in the *informal* economy. He mentioned the concerted effort by the international financial institutions and referred to the "Washington Consensus" to promote the privatization of existing social security systems in developing countries which he thought misguided and undermined all attempts to reduce poverty and promote security for vulnerable groups. He stressed the likeliness that without a comprehensive system of social security, workers would oppose enterprise restructuring and other economic reforms that reduce employment security. Social security systems were important to achieve a balance between labour market security and flexibility.
- 116.** With regard to health and safety standards, he noted that due to competitive pressure, resources had been reduced and the importance of this issue downgraded – which had resulted in an increase of accidents at work. He observed a decline in the importance attached to technical cooperation on labour inspection by the ILO and a certain lack of synergy between ILO activities related to safety and health and those concerned with labour inspection. Referring to the second point, he recognized that throughout Africa comprehensive social security systems only existed for the formal economy and that the vast majority of workers in the informal economy lacked any coverage. Speaking for the Workers' group he supported experiments designed to establish micro-insurance schemes for those working in the informal economy, provided these schemes did not undermine the existing schemes in the formal sector.
- 117.** He concluded that, given the high incidence of work-related accidents and the hidden nature of this sector, it should be possible to extend labour inspections into this area. The Workers' group would strongly support attempts by the ILO to expand its technical cooperation and attract donor support in this regard.
- 118.** The Honourable Minister of State, Labour and Industrial Relations of Uganda, Mr. Obobo, speaking for East Africa, referred to the fact that the *extended family* provided security in the past. However, today national social security fund systems had taken over this responsibility. He clarified the various structures in the East African countries, in particular his own and stressed the importance of these schemes for the working person and marginalized groups. He analysed the problems of the social security system and stressed the need to reform the systems to adopt the prevailing environment and the need to feed into the national strategic policy frameworks. He continued to relate to some basic issues like the scope of contributors, the investment policies to be adopted, the payment of benefits, the financing and management of those schemes. He noted that the present schemes did not give adequate financial protection against a host of problems which the insured person might fall victim to and that the structure and efficiency of the management of funds could at times be improved. He concluded that social security was a very strategic and important institution in the region and that it constituted a key in the solution to the employment and poverty dilemma.
- 119.** Mr. Okombi Salissa, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of the Congo, speaking on behalf of the Central African subregion, reaffirmed the fact that employment and social protection were two sides of the same coin. Social protection was a basic right. Some minor steps had been made in Central Africa to provide social protection, including through the ratification of the relevant Conventions and the establishment of social security funds in both the private and public sectors. There had, however, been a number of difficulties, such as the funding for health care and the extension of social protection to the

poor and truly needy. Extended family members, aged persons, HIV/AIDS patients were among those not covered by social protection. He emphasized that there could not be decent work without social protection, and there could not be social protection without productive employment. Therefore, national and subregional efforts should focus on developing policies and programmes that would blend flexibility with security. Reform of the social security system should focus on broadening services, improving working conditions, extending coverage and providing basic income support. The Global Campaign on Security for All should be of great significance and assistance to all countries in Africa.

- 120.** The Employers' delegate of Zambia referred to the social security and protection scenario in English-speaking countries of Africa. He noted that social security systems were multi-pillared systems which should cover all eventualities. He regretted the fragmentation of systems which partly overlapped and hence became less effective and the limited coverage of existing systems. He stressed the need of consensus building of those concerned, namely employers, workers and government when deciding on the form, shape and extent of social security schemes. Government should regulate, review and enforce the schemes and redistribute income through the tax system to provide a safety net which also covered vulnerable groups – in the same way that it should promote the creation of employment – and hence expand membership in the social security system via tax incentive schemes. He added that government was also obliged to address the problems of the informal economy in order to provide coverage for this segment of the population.
- 121.** He noted that effective systems would only be workable if workers, employers and other stakeholders were fully involved next to government and continued that the creation of a conducive working environment was also pivotal in promoting a conducive industrial relations environment. He concluded that social security was about the promotion of welfare for the worker and the maintenance of social cohesion. He called on all concerned to be willing to engage in a proactive cooperative relationship among all stakeholders.
- 122.** Mr. Yéro De, Minister of Labour of Senegal, highlighted four main points: the fight against HIV/AIDS at the workplace; the reduction of occupational injuries; the care of those inflicted with illnesses; and the extension of social protection to the informal economy. He explained that although the prevalence rate was relatively low (1.4 per cent) in Senegal, the country had set up a National Council for fighting HIV/AIDS. The Council had established a multisectoral programme working with enterprises to fight the disease at the workplace. An action plan covering the whole country had been developed, and funding was being sought to implement the plan. Social dialogue had proven very important in the development and implementation of the plan. In terms of dealing with occupational injuries, Senegal had learned important lessons, which were being put into practice. Social dialogue and the establishment of health and safety committees at the enterprise level had been critical. He called upon the ILO to conduct an in-depth study of the major occupational safety and health risks, so that there would be an informed basis for the development of an effective intervention programme. Within the civil service, a system had been operating for some time whereby the State covered 80 per cent and the employee covered the remaining 20 per cent of the costs of illnesses. Senegal was looking to create a mutual assistance fund that would cover the 20 per cent now being paid by employees. Private companies either individually or grouped together had also established health insurance schemes but there was still a great need to improve and extend these schemes. He felt that it was illusory to think that the informal economy could be formalized; hence the importance of extending social protection to the informal economy. He called upon the ILO to conduct studies in various countries on the different kinds of schemes that had been successful in extending coverage to the informal economy, so that these studies could serve as inspiration to African countries.

- 123.** The Workers' delegate of Senegal noted that the standards on social security protection were built on solidarity and were at the heart of each trade unionist. He stressed that the responsibility for occupational injuries, illness and old age lay with the government and were a function of the State. He added that the legal system could act as a basis for an improvement of the social security system. He remarked that the social partners should not only determine their contributions but should also be fully involved and their requests taken into consideration when structuring the social security schemes. He continued that one of the main aims should be the fight against social exclusion of vulnerable groups who very often were not covered by any scheme.
- 124.** He referred to a Senegalese solidarity fund which was made up of voluntary contributions and explained its workings. In conclusion, he referred to the particularly regrettable social situation faced by workers in the export processing zones (EPZs) and called on the ILO to look into the matter again.
- 125.** In his reply, Mr. Assane Diop thanked all the delegates for their very relevant and valuable comments, which would inform the ILO's follow-up actions. He was very heartened to note the great importance given by all delegates to social protection. Where before social protection had been considered as an overhead cost of production, it was now recognized as integral to enhancing productivity. Social protection had become a universal need, a fundamental need and an economic and social challenge – and to promote social protection, social dialogue was a critical element. He gave special attention to the informal economy where poverty was greatest and women and children most vulnerable, and informed the Meeting that the ILO would devote attention to devising policies that would extend social protection coverage to the informal economy. It was in the rural areas and urban informal economy that the occupational safety and health risks were the greatest because workers tended to be illiterate or have no training or social safety nets. He took note of the calls to the ILO to strengthen policies and tools to improve social protection, including training for labour inspectors to supplement the work of the occupational safety and health committees, and also to conduct studies of occupational safety and health risks and ways of overcoming these risks. He ended by reiterating that decent work and poverty reduction called for social protection and that the ILO would spare no efforts to work with the African region to achieve these goals.
- 126.** Ms. Sally Paxton, Executive Director of the ILO for Social Dialogue, introduced Chapter V of the thematic report. She highlighted key issues regarding social dialogue in the delivery of the Decent Work Agenda in Africa through which social partners were given voice to influence social and economic development at the local, national and regional levels. She went on to reiterate the definition of social dialogue according to the ILO which, she said, did not refer to a single model but to a dialogue process reflecting priorities at various levels. She set out the preconditions for social dialogue including the independence of the social partners, the capacity to engage, and the existence of an enabling environment for their effective involvement.
- 127.** Moving forward, she noted high ratification rates of core labour standards, showing the high value placed on labour standards in Africa. On the other hand she mentioned low ratification rates on some important social dialogue Conventions such as the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) – a priority Convention for the ILO – and the Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150). The major challenge for the next biennium would be to extend the implementation of social dialogue Conventions in the informal economy.
- 128.** In summarizing, she pointed out that social dialogue was an important tool for addressing priority concerns of poverty reduction, employment creation, fighting HIV/AIDS and creating good governance.

- 129.** Ms. Catherine Brakenhielm Hansell, ILO standards specialist, highlighted the standards dimension of social dialogue. Firstly, she pointed out that social dialogue was a fundamental right and the very basis of the Constitution of the ILO and object of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. Secondly, she confirmed the potential of ILO standards in offering solutions on the practice of social dialogue. Conventions showed how to organize and structure social dialogue at the national level, like Convention No. 144 on the organization of tripartite consultations, Convention No. 151 on labour relations in the public service, Convention No. 154 on collective bargaining, and Convention No. 150 for the organization of labour administration. Thirdly, the speaker referred to social dialogue as key for the implementation of international labour standards. The ratification reflected the political will of any government and represented challenge beyond the act of the ratification itself. Lastly, social dialogue was referred to as the springboard for the development of new standards.
- 130.** The Employers' delegate of Kenya pointed out that his country had adopted an Industrial Relations Charter, which guided the remarkable way in which social dialogue and tripartite consultation were working. Through training programmes developed by the ILO, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations had acquired skills and capacities enabling them to participate in programmes against child labour and HIV/AIDS, as well as in human resources development. This support had helped them build institutional capacity in these areas. He pointed out that in East Africa the ILO had been very active in its support to the social partners' efforts to promote tripartism and labour law reform. Considerable progress had been made under the ILO/SLAREA project. Through ACT/EMP, the ILO had also given technical support to, and actively participated in, the East African Economic and Social Policy Forum (Kampala, November 2003). He called for ILO support in other areas such as labour law reform, operationalizing productivity centres and strengthening tripartism. The speaker requested the ILO to carry out a study to assess conformity with the fundamental ILO Conventions of the new Public Officer Ethics Act requiring public servants to declare their assets. In his view this law, aimed at stemming corruption, entailed risks and threats to tripartism and trade union freedoms.
- 131.** The Honourable Juma Kapuya, Minister of Labour, Youth and Sports of the United Republic of Tanzania, speaking on behalf of the eastern Africa subregion, agreed that social dialogue was crucial for developing a sound macroeconomic and social policy and a prerequisite for social cohesion and social peace. He reiterated the points already mentioned, and added that social dialogue should be integrated into programmes with bilateral and multilateral donors. The Minister commended the work being done by the ILO/SLAREA in East Africa to support labour law reform and capacity building for social partners. He called for the extension of the project as well as that of the project on mainstreaming gender activities in the work of social partners.
- 132.** The Minister also mentioned the following social dialogue deficits:
- absence of regulatory and institutional mechanism permitting social dialogue. In this regard he pointed out that most countries in the eastern Africa region were engaged in traditional labour issues and that the good practices of the Millennium Labour Council (MLC) and NEDLAC as well as PRODIAF of French West Africa were good examples worth emulating. He informed the Meeting of the proposal to expand the Labour Advisor Board (LAB) of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Labour Economic and Social Council (LESCO);
 - participation of women in social dialogue where they were under-represented at all levels of decision-making.

The Minister appealed to the ILO and the social partners to put in place comprehensive gender capacity-building programmes in support of ILO strategic objectives that would include social dialogue and HIV/AIDS initiatives at national and east African community level. The Minister further recommended the documentation and dissemination of success stories from Africa in order to design appropriate and sustainable programmes in other countries, for which the ILO should assist constituents to mobilize resources.

- 133.** The Honourable Ambassador Chirau Ali Mwakwere, Minister of Labour and Human Resources Development of Kenya, supplemented the contribution of the previous speaker, Honourable Minister Kapuya of the United Republic of Tanzania, and stated that the fight against corruption had been a priority issue for the new Kenyan Government since the elections in late 2002. He underlined that under the new Public Officers' Ethic Act, any person in the public service had to declare their wealth. When holding a public office, as for instance in the Social Security Fund Board, even social partners had to declare their wealth. This should not be regarded as a punitive measure, but as a measure to give transparency to present and future governance.
- 134.** Ms. Angelina Muganza, Minister of State in charge of Skills Development, Vocational Training and Labour of Rwanda, speaking for the Central African subregion, presented social dialogue as an opportunity for all stakeholders to foster transparency, consultative processes and negotiation mechanisms leading to less conflicts. She further described the situation in the subregion, and defined the challenges and future perspectives.
- 135.** Six countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Gabon, Rwanda) had carried out studies on the status of social dialogue. She highlighted the need for political commitment as an essential precondition for effective social dialogue. With the support of ILO/PRODIAF, social dialogue had been instrumental in peace-building and developing sustainability in the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC). Social dialogue had become an important feature in the transition period in Rwanda, where it supported the peaceful election of the Government. The outcome of the parliamentary elections with 48 per cent elected women had been attributed to social dialogue. A major challenge for social dialogue was the prevailing poverty that was reflected in underdevelopment, underemployment, prevailing HIV/AIDS, and lack of capacity of the major players. She also identified potential future gains as being the promotion of political stability, good governance and active international cooperation within the African context.
- 136.** The Employers' delegate of Egypt reiterated the grim statistics on poverty and unemployment in Africa including youth unemployment. He mentioned that poverty was perpetuating intolerance and resulted in destabilization. Employers were keen to promote decent work in Africa by increasing the demand for work and contributing to the improvement of terms of trade. He proposed that social dialogue should be introduced in the economic subregional groupings and in continental initiatives such as NEPAD. He referred to the various initiatives that had led to the agreement for the AU Extraordinary Summit in Ouagadougou in 2004 and said that such initiatives had created a good unifying environment for Africa. He referred to the need for stability in the Employers' group for effective participation in social dialogue.
- 137.** The Workers' delegate of Benin expressed his concern that social dialogue could go beyond the constitutional tripartite set-up defined by the ILO Constitution. He affirmed that any social dialogue should be based on the tripartite structure, and not include non-traditional ILO partners.
- 138.** Mr. Cheikhna Khaled, Director of Labour and Social Protection, Mauritania, speaking on behalf of the western African subregion, highlighted the major challenges for Africa, and expressed hope for the continent if it followed the Decent Work Agenda and effectively

fought poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The solution was seen in the joint responsibility of all partners. In this regard, the ILO's contribution was appreciated.

- 139.** Mr. Mohamed Salah Chatti, Director-General of Labour, Tunisia, speaking on behalf of the north African subregion, underlined the importance of social dialogue for economic and social development and poverty eradication. In its various forms and at various levels social dialogue remained the best solution to improve working conditions, to develop trust between employers' and workers' associations and to contribute to social peace. The speaker stressed the Tunisian experience, where since 1990 working and salary conditions had been improved through periodic collective bargaining, both in the public and the private sector. The speaker added that the outcome of collective bargaining also proved evidence of the spirit of solidarity between the social partners. He further stressed that the notion of solidarity was embedded in Tunisian society. In this context, he referred to the significance of the introduction of the World Solidarity Fund, a Tunisian initiative that had been proposed by the United Nations General Assembly at its 57th Session.
- 140.** The Employers' delegate of Ethiopia underscored the importance of social dialogue in the development of a framework for cooperation for the public welfare, in sharing visions, and in establishing mutual understanding on core development issues. He stressed the importance of social dialogue for increased productivity and industrial growth. Social and economic development was not the responsibility of the government alone, but the result of a joint effort of workers, employers and civil society at large. He referred to the Ethiopian experience where social dialogue was instrumental in creating an enabling environment in combating HIV/AIDS, in reviewing the Ethiopian Labour Proclamation, and in developing strategies in the context of the national poverty reduction plan. Nevertheless, he saw the need for further capacity building for the young Ethiopian Employers' Federation.
- 141.** The Ethiopian Workers' delegate spoke about regulations at the workplace and pointed out that these had to contribute to decent work conditions. He underlined the importance of Convention No. 144, not yet ratified by Ethiopia, but which had the potential of contributing to industrial peace and overall social and economic development. For him, the keys of success were transparency, accountable social partners and respect for human rights at the workplace. He highlighted that social dialogue was a historical chance for Ethiopia to overcome poverty and to develop practical democracy.
- 142.** The Workers' delegate of Benin described the long time it took to bargain within the social dialogue paradigm which, he said, should be reviewed at all levels to be effective. He said that there was a tendency of the government to divide the labour force and in most cases the labour movement had to resort to strikes to be heard. He concluded that social dialogue did not function the way that it should and that workers had to fight for their rights.
- 143.** The Workers' delegate of Egypt informed the Meeting that Egypt was among the first countries to ratify Convention No. 144 and that the trade union movement was fully participating alongside other tripartite members in the review process to modernize the labour law in Egypt. He proposed that good examples of social dialogue should be shared.
- 144.** The Workers' delegate of Kenya added his voice to the call for the extension of the SLAREA project. He also pointed out that social dialogue required the full implementation of freedom of association. He called for the strengthening of capacities of the social partners in order to allow them to participate in the global debate on broader economic and social issues.
- 145.** Ms. Sally Paxton, Executive Director of the Social Dialogue Sector summarized the discussion on this subject which had highlighted good practices in many countries. She

identified challenges for the future, mentioning the high ratification rates of the core Conventions on freedom of association which had not always been followed by proper implementation. She reiterated ILO support and commitment to the review of labour laws and the integration of social dialogue into subregional structures.

146. Reflecting the Workers' delegates concern on the participation of civil society organizations in social dialogue exercises, she assured the Meeting that ILO values would be upheld, and that the decision on the role of civil society would rest with ILO tripartite partners at the national level.
147. Ms. Paxton reiterated the importance of social dialogue in empowering women. Gender mainstreaming was an important part of the overall planning of the ILO and would continue to receive priority. In closing she hoped the next African Regional Meeting in 2007 would see an increased participation of women delegates.

Summary statement by the Regional Director for Africa

148. At the wrap-up session, Ms. Regina Amadi-Njoku, the Regional Director for Africa, summed up the discussion on the Director-General's thematic Report and replied to some of the salient points raised by delegates throughout the various sessions. She expressed her appreciation of the high quality of the discussions, the consensus emerging out of the debate and the commitment of all delegates – Governments, Employers and Workers – for promoting the Decent Work Agenda in Africa.
149. The Regional Director underlined the role of forums such as this Regional Meeting for identifying with constituents the needs, experiences and specificities of African development at the national, subregional or regional levels and in the light of a fast-evolving and changing environment.
150. She stressed that the debate showed the relevance of the decent work approach to Africa's priorities and that the ILO disposed of a broad range of instruments and tools – from its standards to technical cooperation which, used strategically and in an integrated fashion, could contribute to improving access of African men and women to decent employment.
151. Ms. Amadi-Njoku noted that the Director-General's thematic Report had been well received by delegates and that the shortcomings highlighted had been duly noted. She reiterated that the Decent Work Agenda was by definition an integrated agenda and hence fundamental principles and rights at work and international labour standards were fully incorporated into each of the subject areas covered by the Report.
152. The Regional Director underscored the consensus emerging on the main message of the Director-General's Report: *Working out of poverty: Views from Africa*, eloquently corroborated by the guests of honour, His Excellency Mr. Blaise Compaoré, President of Burkina Faso and His Excellency Mr. Alpha O. Konaré, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, and unanimously endorsed by delegates: namely, that employment was the way out of poverty, and that decent and productive employment must be placed at the heart of national, subregional, regional and global development agendas and frameworks in order to eradicate poverty.
153. She stressed the strategic importance of social dialogue and tripartism, participation, empowerment and ownership that came out very strongly in the discussions. She echoed that the social partners had a key role to play at national, subregional and regional levels, not only in solving problems but also in providing sustainable solutions. She also confirmed that efforts needed, first and foremost, to focus on the strengthening of the social partners' capacities. These included, inter alia, the reinforcement of social dialogue

frameworks at all levels; increased collaboration with the International Training Centre, Turin, and the labour administration centres (ARLAC, CRADAT, ACLAE); special strengthening of capacities of the tripartite constituents to engage decisively in the reconstruction processes in post-crisis situations, particularly with regard to children and demobilized soldiers and more fundamentally in building peace and social cohesion. The Regional Director reconfirmed that fundamental principles and rights at work were essential foundations for genuine and effective tripartism and social dialogue.

- 154.** The Regional Director had noted the request to the ILO to assist countries in designing and developing sustainable systems of social protection which extended coverage to the entire population, and especially to the informal sector, and which met the requirement for a minimum level of coverage adapted to the needs of the greatest number. She particularly emphasized the need for the ILO to intensify its efforts in the fight against the pandemic of HIV/AIDS in the world of work, in particular in the promotion of its code of conduct, including in the informal economy. Migration and the issue of the brain drain were other priorities highlighted in the debate that required increased attention.
- 155.** The Regional Director reviewed other areas for action that had come out of the debate: improved training of labour inspectors, better protection and occupational safety and health especially in the export-processing zones.
- 156.** She highlighted major concerns raised with respect to the integration of women and young persons into social and economic life and the need for identifying appropriate strategies for job creation in collaboration with other development agencies and donors. She noted the appreciation of constituents of the work done by IPEC for the protection of children against the worst forms of child labour.
- 157.** She voiced the delegates' views that the Decent Work Agenda was a comprehensive agenda. While there was a need to create business-friendly environments, equal attention should be paid to social dialogue and to the creation of a decent working environment. Growth alone was not sufficient. Special focus needed to be placed on an employment-friendly macroeconomic framework and on sectoral interventions that created decent jobs, such as: employment generation through micro/small enterprises and cooperatives, employment-intensive investment in infrastructure and social insurance institutions, capacity-building and human resources and skills development, upgrading the informal economy, improving productivity in agriculture and food security, investing in food processing and access to markets and development of local and inter-country markets.
- 158.** She reiterated the essence of the above actions in ensuring that both quality of production and quality of employment would be taken care of and that deeply rooted gender inequalities would be overcome.
- 159.** She responded positively to the constituents' request to upscale the ILO's advisory services and technical cooperation activities in some countries and to reinforce linkages with locally available resources.
- 160.** She recalled the strong call for the ILO to increase its collaboration with the international development community through NEPAD, PRSPs and MDGs in the area of poverty alleviation and employment promotion by: (a) placing productive employment at the centre of national, subregional, regional and global development agendas and frameworks; (b) promoting fundamental rights at work and international labour standards and their integration into the formulation, implementation and evaluation of programmes developed by these institutions; (c) improving the terms on which African countries traded with richer countries, obtaining finance and investment and using the quality and quantity of jobs and

their impact on people's lives and human dignity as key indicators of the development agenda.

161. Ms. Amadi-Njoku concluded by highlighting the way forward. She reaffirmed that the outcome of discussions would inspire ILO actions in the next two to four years. The ILO would continue its work around the five priorities endorsed by the region at the Mauritius session of the AU Labour and Social Affairs Commission in April 2002.
162. She stated that the development of decent work programmes would become the tool for participating in the elaboration of national development plans at the country level. She informed the Meeting that the Programme and Budget for 2004-05 and beyond would be reviewed to incorporate issues raised at this Meeting as well as those that would emerge from the Labour and Social Affairs Meeting in Benin and the Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Ouagadougou in 2004.
163. She announced that the forthcoming Meeting of Labour and Social Affairs Commission in Cotonou in April 2004 provided another opportunity to go deeper into the issues raised in the Regional Meeting, and to review the partnerships for the preparation for the Ouagadougou Summit, which included a civil society forum and the Summit itself. She emphasized the need to streamline the role of the social partners – especially trade unions in the civil society forum.
164. She stressed that tripartite involvement in the preparation of the Ouagadougou Summit and its follow-up was critical to its success. It was expected that the African Union Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment and Poverty Alleviation should be a Summit of actions, decisions and initiatives. The expected result was an African employment agenda that encompassed social and economic dimensions. The ILO's decent work approach would enable the Summit to focus on policies to create and improve employment as the main route out of poverty.
165. She concluded by highlighting preparatory activities leading to the Summit. These included the continuation of the national consultations on the Director-General's Report, *Working out of poverty*, with the involvement of subregional and regional tripartite structures. She also expected that between now and the Summit, constituents would share the conclusions and resolutions of the Regional Meeting with their Heads of State and Governments and within society at large.

V. Session on decent work for youth in Africa

166. In his introductory remarks, Mr. Hassen Abdella, the Chairperson of the Tenth ILO African Regional Meeting, stressed the importance of decent work for youth in the African context where strategies and policies were needed to create more and better jobs for the huge number of young men and women entering the labour market. He then gave the floor to the ILO Executive Director of the Employment Sector to present the objectives of the session.
167. Mr. Göran Hultin, Executive Director of the Employment Sector, opened the session by noting that Africa was the youngest continent (55 per cent of all Africans were under the age of 18). Youth employment was recognized as a global priority in the MDG context, hence the Youth Employment Network had been set up by the United Nations Secretary-General, the World Bank and the ILO with a view to promoting employability, equity, entrepreneurship and job creation. Youth employment was also one of the major policy

challenges addressed in the Global Employment Agenda and in the Jobs for Africa programme.

- 168.** He further announced that youth employment would be the theme of the *World Employment Report* in 2004 and had been retained by the Governing Body as a theme for general discussion during the 2005 International Labour Conference.
- 169.** He added that although national consultations on working out of poverty highlighted youth unemployment as a major concern, national strategies and policies failed to effectively address it.
- 170.** He concluded by asserting that Africa's youth possessed an enormous amount of energy, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. They were capable of reducing poverty and creating wealth and must therefore be given the opportunity to develop their potential. He invited the ILO tripartite constituents to closely work with the ILO and the Employment Sector taskforce on this major challenge.
- 171.** Ms. Lin Lim, from the ILO Employment Sector, introduced the theme "Decent work for youth in Africa", focusing on the youth employment challenge in Africa, the global and ILO response and the specificity of the ILO approach; she provided elements of the strategy to promote decent work for youth.
- 172.** She indicated that Africa was youngest continent in the world with almost two-thirds of its population below 24 years of age. Over the next ten years, almost 300 million young Africans would be entering the labour force, the best educated and trained generation ever. They were Africa's greatest asset for its present and its future: as workers, entrepreneurs, innovators, consumers, citizens and leaders.
- 173.** The speaker went on to say that in Africa, over the past decade, informal work had accounted for almost 80 per cent of non-agricultural employment, over 60 per cent of urban employment and over 90 per cent of new jobs. Work in the informal economy in both rural and urban areas could not be termed decent. The informal economy was characterized by serious decent work deficits in terms of poor quality, unproductive and unremunerative, subsistence-level jobs that were neither recognized nor protected by law, the absence of rights at work, inadequate or no social protection and the lack of representation and voice. Young people were often denied the freedom to join associations of their choosing or to take legal or industrial action to secure their legitimate rights.
- 174.** She warned that the "brain drain" of highly educated and skilled young Africans migrating from the continent to the Western world in search of jobs, might deprive Africa of its human capital and hope for the future. She also referred to another alarming feature. Half of all new HIV/AIDS infections were occurring among young people. Young people were particularly vulnerable to infection because of the lack of opportunities for decent work, the discrimination they faced and their lack of influence and representation and poor social protection. Sub-Saharan Africa was hardest hit; it was home to over 70 per cent of young people living with HIV/AIDS and to 90 per cent of AIDS orphans in the world. It was especially worrying that the average age of infection was getting younger for women; in a number of countries, a young woman of 15-16 years of age was up to six times more likely to be infected with HIV/AIDS than a young man in the same age group.
- 175.** She noted that the international community had finally acknowledged the challenge of decent work for youth. The United Nations Millennium Summit in September 2000, which had been the largest gathering ever of Heads of State and Government, recognized the urgency of addressing the problem of unemployment and underemployment of young people. The Millennium Declaration resolved to "develop and implement strategies that

gave young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work". The United Nations system as a whole had been invited to develop a global partnership for development, to be implemented through local partnerships between governments, employers, workers, civil society, the business community and young people themselves. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, together with the Director-General of the ILO and the President of the World Bank, had formed the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and appointed as part of the network a high-level panel of 12 eminent persons to prepare a set of policy recommendations. The political message of the high-level YEN panel could be summarized in terms of the four Es: employability, equal opportunities, entrepreneurship and employment creation.

- 176.** Based on these recommendations, the United Nations General Assembly adopted in December 2002 a resolution promoting youth employment. The resolution called upon member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to involve youth organizations and young people.
- 177.** The ILO had responded to the call by taking the lead in organizing the work of the YEN and to assume responsibility for hosting its permanent secretariat.
- 178.** She presented the ILO's approach to youth employment as being part and parcel of its Decent Work Agenda and integral to its strategy for working out of poverty.
- 179.** Ms. Lin Lim concluded her presentation by briefly highlighting some of the key elements that could be considered in a strategy for promoting decent work for youth in Africa. Firstly, she indicated that policies and programmes specifically targeting youth alone were important but far from adequate. Youth employment must be an integral component of an integrated policy framework aiming to promote macroeconomic growth that was employment-intensive, enterprise-friendly, poverty-reducing and socially inclusive. Secondly, she stated that what the youth of Africa most needed was not just more jobs but decent jobs. Decent work deficits in both the rural and urban informal economy should be addressed as a matter of priority; and here she referred back to the conclusions of the 2002 International Labour Conference on decent work and the informal economy. Thirdly, she considered it critical to develop specific activities targeting vulnerable young women. At the same time, gender concerns should be mainstreamed into all efforts aimed at promoting decent work for youth. It was impossible to address the problems of youth merely by focusing on those between the ages of 15 to 24 years. Fourthly, she advocated that employment-appropriate education and training – programmes combining work experience with classroom training, apprenticeship systems and grassroots informal systems of training – were most effective when combined with active labour market policies.
- 180.** The Workers' delegate of Kenya, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group, stated that in order to provide decent work for young people in Africa two related issues – a significant increase in the quantity of jobs available and simultaneously an upgrade of the quality of work for young people – needed to be tackled.
- 181.** He noted that the ILO secretariat had correctly placed the issue of youth unemployment in the overall labour market context and the economic development challenge in Africa. To achieve a substantial reduction in both youth unemployment and underemployment, significantly faster levels of economic growth and a comprehensive approach to economic development would be required.
- 182.** He conveyed the Workers' group's support for the suggestion from the ILO secretariat that youth unemployment must be tackled through the recently adopted Global Employment Agenda which provided a framework of policies to tackle both the international and national obstacles to expanding economic and employment growth in Africa. He

underlined the fact that in developing new activities on youth unemployment, it was imperative for the ILO to build on its experience gained with the Jobs for Africa programme.

183. He stated that in designing policies to improve the quality of work for young people, attention should be devoted to enhancing regional integration of labour and employment policies. The ILO in particular should focus on promoting the harmonization of employment policies and labour legislation at the regional level within Africa.
184. He reaffirmed that the Workers' group supported and endorsed most elements of the strategy proposed by the Office: the suggestion of integrating youth policies into a comprehensive macroeconomic framework growth strategy that was employment-intensive and socially inclusive, the focus on reducing decent work deficits in the rural and urban economy and the focus on cooperatives for youth. Furthermore, he said that the Workers' group strongly supported the ILO's future work on youth employment in Africa as well as the resolution on "Decent work for youth in Africa and the ILO's response" which had been submitted to the Tenth African Regional Meeting.
185. The Employers' delegate of Egypt, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group, endorsed the ILO secretariat presentation on "Decent work for youth in Africa", and more specifically the promotion of entrepreneurship, job creation through the development of small and micro enterprises, and the employability of youth.
186. He underlined that in order to achieve the main objective of providing decent work for youth, there should be a concrete commitment from governments, employers' and workers' organizations to promote and develop a spirit of entrepreneurship among youth, to maximize the employability of youth by investing in education and skills development, and to make it easier for them to start and run enterprises.
187. The Government delegate of Mozambique, speaking on behalf of the Government group, indicated that future generations would depend on the space reserved for adolescents and children today. Therefore, the road map towards development in Africa necessarily required as one of the main assumptions, the promotion of employment in all social and economic policies, paying particular attention to youth and the female population, who were the majority on the continent.
188. She pointed out that the population growth factor had a major impact on poor countries. She regretted that the lack of resources to create more jobs widened the gap between needs and the availability of jobs, contrary to what was happening in developed countries.
189. She concluded by stating that peace and political stability were indispensable conditions to plan social development based on work and employment.

VI. Panel on social dialogue and tripartism

190. Ms. Sally Paxton, Executive Director of the Social Dialogue Sector at the ILO, introduced the session, outlining the objectives it was hoped would be achieved, namely: (i) exchanging information on good practices and the experience of social dialogue in the countries of the region; (ii) identifying the major challenges and priorities (struggle against poverty, employment creation, governance, HIV/AIDS, gender equality, economic integration), and reviewing the practice of social dialogue in the framework of those priorities; (iii) recommending the future actions of the ILO and its tripartite constituents to strengthen social dialogue and tripartism. She said that the discussions should make it possible to illustrate some concrete results in the sphere of social dialogue in the region

and to detect the remaining areas where dialogue was still lacking. Ms. Paxton went on to explain why the ILO considered social dialogue and tripartism to be imperative to meet the challenges countries faced. She recalled that the ILO had unique access to sources of knowledge and comparative advantages owing to its tripartite structure, which enabled both the social partners and governments to be heard on the world stage. She indicated that the challenges facing the region could not be resolved by governments alone, and stressed that strengthening social dialogue and tripartism required integrated and concerted action. To illustrate what could be achieved through social dialogue and tripartism, she called on two senior ILO advisers to present case studies. To conclude, she expressed the hope that the discussions would highlight the obstacles identified in the field and the experience gained by individual countries and the tripartite constituents, in order to provide guidance to the ILO for the following biennium.

- 191.** Ms. Johanna Walgrave, Chief Technical Adviser for the ILO/PRODIAF programme, supported her presentation on experiences in French-speaking Africa. She stressed the role of social dialogue in good economic and social governance and for maintaining peace. She also explained the influence of social dialogue in the framework of subregional integration; the role of social dialogue in the struggle against poverty; the role of social dialogue and the social partners in the prevention of conflicts, the maintaining of peace, and reconstruction. She concluded by indicating some areas for reflection to extend social dialogue and tripartism and make them more effective, namely: political will, the political maturity of the participants in dialogue, the effective freedom of the organizations of the social partners, the existence of permanent structures for dialogue, political peace, the quality of human relations, etc.
- 192.** Mr. Charles Nupen, Chief ILO Adviser in the framework of the ILO/Switzerland project, spoke of the role of social dialogue and tripartism in meeting the challenges facing Africa in general and the countries covered by the project in particular. He indicated how the ILO and its constituents could make a difference, quoting success stories of social dialogue in southern Africa. The social dialogue in question covered several priority themes such as good governance, labour legislation reform, economic integration, employment creation, and the exchange of good practices in the subregion.
- 193.** Another example of successful social dialogue was presented by Mr. Andrew M. Kailembo, General Secretary of ICFTU-AFRO, who reported on the ravages of the HIV/AIDS pandemic that were affecting the most productive segment of the African population (15-49 years). He noted that enterprises, the public sector and the informal sector in Africa, south of the Sahara, were recording low levels of productivity owing to the pandemic.
- 194.** He explained that awareness of the situation had led the ICFTU to formulate and implement a project with the support of several partners; the project covered nine countries that had been particularly hard hit. The results of that project, obtained as a result of tripartism and social dialogue, revealed the increased commitment of employers, the establishment of national action plans, the training of at least 395 peer educators, behavioural change at the workplace in most of the countries concerned, and the production of training manuals on HIV/AIDS in English and French, which were available on the project's web site.
- 195.** He called on employers and governments to integrate workers more fully into national programmes to combat HIV/AIDS. He closed by reiterating his commitment to cooperate with the ILO and the employers to ensure that the synergy established would help to achieve convincing results in the struggle against HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

- 196.** Mr. B. Botha, Employers' delegate, South Africa, explained that South African experience in the sphere of social dialogue was the product of a long and fascinating process. Tripartite institutions were part of the way of life in South Africa. They were the result of negotiations between the social partners and had promoted the development of democracy, good governance, and the reduction of disputes and strikes. Successful examples of social dialogue were: the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), which had made it possible for a large number of civil society organizations to participate alongside the social partners; the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA); and the Millennium Labour Council (MLC), which was very powerful and had been increasingly influential in strike resolution. The success of the culture of social dialogue in South Africa was due in large part to the social partners' willingness to resolve crises and identify common challenges, integrating them into the national strategic policy frameworks, and also to the mutual trust among the partners concerned. The promotion of social dialogue was also shaped by recognition of genuine freedom of association, independence of the partners, the right to establish institutions and the protection and training of trade union representatives.
- 197.** Mr. Sunmonu Hassan (OATUU) stated that social dialogue was a valuable and useful tool to build social peace, harmonious relations among the social partners and economic development. For social dialogue to succeed, it was essential to enhance the capacity of the social partners to enable them to take the right decisions. There was also a need to strengthen the structures and institutions responsible for social dialogue. HIV/AIDS was taking on alarming proportions in Africa. To address the pandemic, the OATUU had developed an action programme including workshops and training and advocacy seminars, a code of conduct on HIV/AIDS, programmes for AIDS orphans and the elderly, and public awareness campaigns. He requested the ILO to design and implement structures and action programmes to meet this major challenge. The creation of an InFocus programme in the Office should be given priority in order to upscale ILO action and ensure coordination of activities as well as building synergy among the different partners.
- 198.** Mr. Patrick Kafumukache, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Zambia, speaking on behalf of the African Governments, endorsed the statements made by previous speakers concerning social dialogue, especially with regard to tripartite partnership in the design of poverty reduction policies by ILO member States. He added that the social partners should be actively involved in all development programmes at the national or subregional level. He warned against the risk of Africa being marginalized in the globalization process unless social dialogue was promoted and considered as a development tool for Africa. He concluded by recalling the need to take into consideration the recommendations made in the Director-General's Report concerning the integration of social dialogue in subregional groupings.
- 199.** The Workers' delegate from Benin, Mr. Guillaume Attigbe, emphasized that social dialogue was crucial to social peace and development. Recalling that social dialogue contributed to the realization of all of the ILO's strategic objectives, he highlighted aspects of the success of the PRODIAP programme (building a culture of dialogue in certain countries and promoting dialogue at the subregional level: West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA) and Central Africa Economic and Monetary Community (CAEMC)). The speaker also pointed out certain shortcomings (agreements were concluded only to be violated in certain countries, trade unions were not recognized or excluded from discussions on issues of national interest). He welcomed the results that had been achieved and commended the efforts of ILO departments that had contributed to achieving them (ACTRAV, ACT/EMP and IFP/DIALOGUE, among others). Lastly, he expressed the Workers' concern about the future of the PRODIAP and SLAREA projects, which were due to terminate at the end of 2003 and 2004, respectively, and for which financing had not been confirmed.

VII. Launching of the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All in Africa

- 200.** In her introduction, Ms. Regina Amadi-Njoku, Director of the ILO Regional Office for Africa, described the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All in Africa as an opportunity to reflect on issues of social protection – a vital aspect of the Decent Work Agenda. In 2004, this campaign will be launched at subregional levels in Mozambique, Nigeria and Senegal. Social security had a particular role to play as a poverty reduction strategy and promoter of decent work. A number of countries such as Tunisia had succeeded in achieving universal coverage, but the vast majority of Africans did not have access to health care; often they were unable to pay for this care and few amongst them could expect to have a retirement pension. It was for these reasons that Ms. Amadi-Njoku believed that Africa should be covered by the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All. There was a general consensus that all Africans should be able to benefit from an acceptable form of social security. In the past, the ILO had developed innovative approaches demonstrating that all Africans, even those working in the informal sector, where women were strongly represented, could be covered. However, technical cooperation to support the drafting and introduction of various strategies to extend social security was still very limited. The ILO needed to increase its partnership to ensure significant impact of this campaign on the continent. The governments and social partners, at national, subregional and regional levels, were the major actors in this campaign. They were not only the architects of these national strategies but also accountable for them to their populations. In order to achieve the goals set by this campaign, they would need the support and commitment of the donors, institutions and civil society. Ms. Amadi-Njoku hoped that these partnerships might soon be developed and confirmed at the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, to be held in Ouagadougou in 2004.
- 201.** Mr. Assane Diop, Executive Director of the Social Protection Sector of the ILO, stressed how important he felt it was to launch the Global Campaign on Social Security Coverage for All – a vital component of the Decent Work Agenda. For most workers in the world, it was not a matter of obtaining social security for tomorrow but to find the means of establishing one today – and for all. In Africa, nine out of ten workers were working and living in the informal sector without any coverage at all. Not having access to social security implied living in a society and not knowing what tomorrow would bring – a society in which old age was synonymous with poverty and where people died because they did not have access to medicine or medical care. It was well known that a health policy was only viable if it was backed up by a workable social security system. Given the impossibility of having an acceptable level of social security resulting from full employment and the contributions generated, Africa should consider an integrated approach on a community basis. Particular attention should be paid to women in the informal sector and child workers, especially since in the sectors of activity in which they were engaged, occupational safety and health measures were non-existent. Mr. Diop felt that social protection was a powerful means to ensure lasting economic and social development and to combat poverty. Tripartism and social dialogue were vital components for success. By launching this campaign in Africa, the ILO was setting in motion a dynamic process to encourage the largest possible number of partners to embrace social security for all Africans, so that those excluded today would be covered tomorrow.
- 202.** Mr. Reynaud, Social Protection Sector, outlined the major features of the campaign and the strategy it was implementing. He started by recalling that this campaign was in response to a specific request made by the International Labour Conference in June 2001. It had been drawn up in close cooperation with teams at headquarters and in the field and had been

launched, on a global level, at the International Labour Conference of 2003. It was an example of a real operational campaign and not merely a communications campaign. It consisted of three complementary areas of action: a research and testing component, to understand better social security; a technical cooperation component, to achieve real improvements in coverage in the various countries (this being the most important component and the very goal of the campaign); an advocacy and communications component, to mobilize the major actors and develop partnerships. The speaker stressed that the goal to extend social security in Africa was entirely realistic and achievable. Social security was a powerful tool for development and efforts to combat poverty. Extension of social security implied that specific steps were being taken to overcome poverty through work. Each country should choose its options and define its priorities in the national context – and it was here that social dialogue assumed a particularly valuable role. Three complementary approaches were being proposed for the extension of social security: traditional social security; community-based systems; and linkages between community initiatives and public initiatives. Two vital ingredients were needed to ensure the extension of social security: creativity and innovation.

- 203.** The following speakers gave specific examples of progress achieved in Africa with support from the ILO.
- 204.** Mr. Dieng described the experience of the National Union of Agricultural Cooperatives of Senegal (UNCAS). UNCAS was a national apex structure grouping 4,500 grass-roots village sections covering 800,000 individual members. However, these members had to cope with high-risk situations, given that their income was linked to agricultural production. The annual average income was less than 200,000 FCFA. The producers were particularly confronted with problems related to mother and child care, malaria, etc. UNCAS and its women's committee had taken the initiative to set up a health insurance scheme. In 2003, UNCAS and the ILO set up a partnership aimed at developing a health insurance system for the members of agricultural cooperatives and their families. The ILO's support took the form of feasibility studies, the upgrading of skills and technical capacities, and institutional support. The first pilot scheme was launched in June 2003 in Mboro. The insurance covered health services at primary and secondary level. The second pilot scheme had started in the region of Diourbel. The strategy of health insurance extension had considerable potential to bring social protection to rural areas, with a possible outreach of more than 4 million people – bearing in mind that the average rural household consisted of six persons.
- 205.** Mr. Pascal Ndiaye gave an account of the network of mutual health organizations in western and central Africa (*Concertation entre les acteurs du développement des mutuelles de santé en Afrique de l'Ouest et du Centre*). This initiative, set up and backed by the ILO with several other partners, was a network of exchange of information and experiences on mutual health organizations. It operated on the basis of a flexible system that created synergies between various types of actors at the subregional level (11 countries) and national level – by establishing national frameworks for dialogue and activities such as a newsletter, web site, thematic workshops and follow-up on the development of mutual health organizations (inventory, studies and research). The “Concertation” provided an excellent platform through which its members could make a real contribution to the objectives of the global campaign to extend social protection and coverage. As far as international and national actors were concerned, the network constituted a tool for dialogue and was a guarantor of consistency in its programmes. It brought together actors from the formal and informal sectors and thus promoted the establishment of strategic and operational linkages between these two sectors; it also increased the visibility of problems faced by those excluded from social protection and of efforts taken to overcome them (advocacy component); and, finally, it contributed to subregional integration.

- 206.** The example of Ethiopia was then given by Mr. Girma, followed by Ms. Lemma. This consisted of a dual-pronged approach: the extension of social security for the private formal sector and the creation of micro insurance schemes in the informal sector. In the formal sector, a process of consultation involving the social partners had been set up to draft a social insurance pension scheme for workers in the formal sector and their families. Furthermore, the introduction of the concept of micro insurance health schemes had paved the way for dialogue with the communities on their mutual support systems – and the approach had been well accepted. The speakers stated that considerable progress had been made in these activities and that the prospects of establishing and putting in place the schemes were good.
- 207.** Ms. Christine Bockstal, coordinator of the STEP/Africa programme and the campaign for social protection extension in Africa, gave an account of the attempts in Mali to extend social security coverage to the poor and excluded by means of social dialogue. This initiative, backed by the ILO, had taken as a basic premise that social coverage was minimal and that the systems initiated by the State, entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector were developing in a totally uncoordinated way. The solution would therefore be to bring together the government, the employers' and workers' organizations and civil society. The dialogue between these actors, who met as a national committee for social protection policy, resulted in the drafting of a national action plan. This consensus document defined the strategy for extending social protection and laid down guidelines to bring together various systems (formal, community-based, etc.) – not only for those in the formal sector but also those working in rural areas and in the urban informal sector. The proposed main areas of action were the following: social security and compulsory health insurance for the formal sector; the development of mutual health organizations and other forms of organizations based on solidarity, aid and social action; and a health assistance fund for the destitute. In order to bring about the national action plan, actors in social protection extension would be trained and pilot schemes introduced.
- 208.** Ms. A. Ouattara, General Director of Labour and Social Protection in Burkina Faso, felt that social security was a right for every individual, guaranteed by the constitutions of the various African countries. Social security was also vital for families and society had already accepted partial responsibility for social hazards through “*tontines*”, spontaneous assistance programmes and mutual health organizations. However, the existing social security structures, whether state or community-based, were limited – from the standpoint of geographical coverage, the number and categories of persons covered and the quality of the coverage. Ms. Ouattara believed that it was vital to overhaul social security in many African countries and she felt that this reform should aim at extending coverage for all.
- 209.** A representative of the Employers' group stated that the Employers felt extremely positive about the global campaign. However, he felt that caution should be exercised and the delegates should be aware of the extent of the task ahead. He also added that it would be useful to learn from the lessons that might be drawn from errors committed by the industrialized countries. He called for innovation, flexibility and a cautious approach. A sound assessment should be made of the impact of social security extension on the labour market, employment and economic growth. An extension of social security should be accompanied by strict budgetary discipline and a serious macroeconomic policy. Furthermore, various types of schemes should be envisaged, especially private enterprise schemes. In concluding, he reiterated strong support for a global campaign that exercised caution.
- 210.** A representative of the Workers' group stated that the Pan-African Trade Union Movement appreciated and warmly welcomed this ILO initiative that came at exactly the right time to consolidate the activities of the campaign on the African continent. He noted with encouragement that the objectives of the launch were to show that social security was

a cornerstone of the Decent Work Agenda, to encourage governments and the social partners to take action, and to increase public awareness through the media. He recalled that the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All was requested at the International Labour Conference in 2001. He was pleased that the campaign was an operational instrument designed to achieve specific outcomes in the area of extension. He pointed out that micro insurance schemes had considerable potential but they should be integrated gradually and, in the long term, integrated into formal schemes. Finally, he encouraged the ILO to act as a catalyst to bring the international community of donors into the fold. In this context, he warmly welcomed the ILO's project to organize a meeting of donors on social security extension in Africa in 2004. He also expressed his gratitude to the Governments of Belgium, France and Portugal which had already financed social security extension projects in Africa. He ended by calling upon the ILO to replicate this type of project in a number of countries.

VIII. Closing ceremony

- 211.** In his closing remarks, the Vice-Chairperson of the Workers' group, Mr. Mody Guiro from Senegal, thanked the Director-General and the ILO Regional Director for Africa for the organization of the Meeting and the quality of documents prepared by the Office. He said that the Workers' group had noted with appreciation, the presence of high-level personalities at the Meeting. This provided an opportunity for the ILO to share with them issues of social justice, equity and respect of fundamental principles and rights at work. The group paid homage to the decision by Heads of State and Government to organize an Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa. The Extraordinary Summit should propose, amongst other things, concrete action to: help eradicate poverty in Africa; fight against HIV/AIDS; create opportunities for decent employment for men, women and youth; and extend social protection to all. The successful implementation of programmes also depended on the political decisions on the management of the debt issues for Africa. He concluded by noting with concern that there were only 26 Workers' delegates accredited to the Meeting as compared to 68 Government delegates.
- 212.** In his closing remarks, Minister M.M.S. Mdladlana, Vice-Chairperson of the Government group, stressed the fact that poverty was a nightmare and that there was enough information on the consequences of it. He quoted from President Mbeki and reiterated that we owed the positions that we occupied to a decision made by millions of our people, most of whom were poor. Hence, it was our responsibility to take people out of poverty through the establishment of sound labour markets. It was essential therefore to ask whether in this Meeting, the self-worth of the poor had been improved. In order to address the challenge of poverty eradication with honesty, without prevarication and to implement programmes that produced actual results, fair and just rules were required. The rules must reflect a basic sense of decency and social justice. The common measure was employment, which would take people out of poverty. The Government group identified the common standard within the framework of the Global Employment Agenda, which indicated the promotion of employment opportunities as fundamental to decent work. He highlighted three areas: youth employment, gender and HIV/AIDS. The commitment to job creation was perceived as an important step towards developing pro-employment economic policies. The strengthening of social dialogue institutions and the involvement of the social partners in the development of employment policies were essential in the process of policy formulation. He ended his remarks on the note that resources existed within Africa to achieve the objectives of poverty eradication. However, protection of human rights, good governance, peace and security should be the basis for development as expressed within the NEPAD framework.

213. In his closing remarks, Mr. T. Tilahun, Employer representative, stressed the development challenges that the African continent faced and the way in which they marginalized the role that Africa played in the global economy. He highlighted the importance of social dialogue and tripartism in the process of enterprise creation and employment generation. In recognition of social dialogue, the Employers' and Workers' groups had submitted two resolutions on youth employment and HIV/AIDS. The Employers' group appealed to governments to provide an enabling environment where there was peace, security and sound economic management, to remove bureaucratic practices that delayed decision-making and to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of various government organs to speed up the implementation of policy decisions. In addition, the Employers' group called for the promotion of policies which contributed to enterprise and national competitiveness and labour market flexibility. In his conclusion, he stressed the importance of permanent and real partnerships in responding to the development challenges that faced Africa.
214. The Chairperson of the Meeting thanked all delegates for the confidence and support that he had received during the four days. He stressed the delegates' unanimous support of the documents prepared by the Director-General, confirming that those reports reflected the reality of the region and accurately pointed out the challenges to be met. He concluded in congratulating all delegates for their active participation and thanked the ILO Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, and the Regional Director for Africa, Ms. Regina Amadi-Njoku, and the ILO secretariat for the work done.

IX. Adoption of the report and conclusions of the Meeting

215. The Tenth African Regional Meeting unanimously adopted its conclusions as amended by the participants, the report of the Credentials Committee and the resolutions on the role of social dialogue in addressing HIV/AIDS in the world of work, as well as the resolution on decent work for youth in Africa and the ILO response and draft report.
216. *The Governing Body may wish to request the Director-General:*
- (a) *to draw the attention of the governments of member States of the African region and, through them, that of their national employers' and workers' organizations, to the conclusions adopted by the Meeting;*
 - (b) *to take these conclusions into consideration when implementing current programmes and in developing future programme and budget proposals;*
 - (c) *to transmit the text of the conclusions:*
 - (i) *to the governments of all member States and, through them, to national employers' and workers' organizations;*
 - (ii) *to interested international organizations concerned, including the non-governmental international organizations having consultative status.*

Geneva, 9 February 2004.

Point for decision: Paragraph 216.

Appendix I

Conclusions

1. Ministers of Labour and leaders of Africa's employers' organizations and trade unions met at a time when trends in poverty and unemployment and underemployment, coupled with the increasing impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on the economy and social fabric of the continent, are extremely grave. Yet at the same time governments, workers and employers were united by a sense of opportunity created by the decision of the Heads of State and Government of the African Union to accept the proposal of President Blaise Compaoré to convene an Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government on Employment Creation and Poverty Alleviation in Burkina Faso in 2004.
2. Delegates warmly welcomed the presence and contributions of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, President Compaoré of Burkina Faso, and Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, in their deliberations. The Meeting endorsed the decent work development strategy outlined in the ILO Director-General's Report *Working out of poverty* and in the background papers¹ for the Meeting as providing a framework for the ILO's contribution to the Summit and the strengthening of its role in the region.

Putting decent work at the heart of Africa's economic and social development policies

3. The Meeting pledged its strong support to President Compaoré and to Chairperson Konaré of the African Union in the preparations for and follow-up to the Summit, welcoming in particular the decision to associate the ILO fully in the initiative. Delegates expressed their conviction that the ILO's decent work approach would enable the Summit to focus on integrated policies to create and improve employment as the main route out of poverty.
4. The Meeting agreed to make full use of the unique tripartite structure of the ILO to ensure the effective participation of the social partners so that their views, experiences, proposals and, most of all, commitment may enrich the Summit. It was especially important to bring to the Summit the many examples of successful actions to create more and better jobs so that Africa's leaders could concentrate on how to replicate and scale up action on poverty.
5. In discussing the priorities that the Summit would need to address, the Meeting proposed an integrated strategy based on the need to promote faster growth in output and employment so as to accelerate the pace of poverty reduction. A sectoral approach to employment creation is important to ensure that the impact on women and youth living and working in poverty is maximised.
6. Component elements of such an approach included the need to develop local markets, micro and small enterprises and cooperatives. This in turn required the upgrading of the informal economy to provide security to businesses and workers, improved social protection, and increased opportunities to raise productivity and sustain earnings.
7. With a large majority of Africa's poorest working families living in rural areas, it was vital to recognize the central importance of agriculture and related rural industries to the enlargement of decent work opportunities. Improving food security, working conditions, incomes, health and safety and productivity in agriculture is critical to reducing poverty amongst women and the rural poor, ensuring that deeply-rooted gender inequalities are overcome.
8. In both rural and urban areas, employment-intensive investments in infrastructure were identified as having a proven track record in reducing poverty while at the same time providing quality services to poorer communities.

¹ *ILO activities in Africa 2000-03, Decent work for Africa's development and Working out of poverty: Views from Africa*, ILO, 2003.

9. The Meeting highlighted the need to prioritize human resource development through investment in education, training and skills development. Human resource development should work in tandem with policies to mobilize small-scale savings for investment in smaller enterprises often starved of capital despite their job-creating potential.
10. Delegates expressed grave concern that the continued rise in the incidence of HIV/AIDS, as well as constituting a continental human tragedy, was sapping productivity and human development in many African countries. They committed themselves to intensified efforts to contribute to campaigns to arrest the spread of the disease, introduce effective and affordable drugs and remedial treatments and end discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS.
11. Participants urged the Summit to mobilize resources for integrated employment strategies for countries and regions emerging from natural and man-made crises. Job-intensive reconstruction programmes were vital to rebuilding shattered homes, infrastructures and divided communities.
12. Turning to the process of developing appropriate policies to address specific national circumstances, the Meeting urged the forthcoming African Union Extraordinary Summit to recognize the enormous value of well-functioning mechanisms of social dialogue based on respect for fundamental principles and rights at work. Autonomous, democratic, representative organizations of employers and workers are a major asset to democratic societies, good governance and the efficient and equitable functioning of economies. Tripartism was beginning to demonstrate its key contribution to the strengthening of strategies for poverty reduction. But governments and their development partners (e.g. the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the ILO) should avoid sidelining the social partners and ensure their greater involvement as the representatives of the main economic actors.
13. The Meeting expressed strong support for an active role for Africa's subregional economic communities in the process leading up to and following the African Union Extraordinary Summit. The delegates suggested that the next session of the Labour and Social Affairs Commission of the African Union, to be held in Cotonou, Benin, in April 2004, should examine the expected outcomes of the Summit.
14. In view of the increased feminization of poverty, delegates urged that attention be paid to gender policies and the empowerment of women in all areas of economic and social development.
15. The need for increased participation of the social partners in the rapidly evolving regional economic communities of Africa was stressed by the Meeting. Their voices would help governments to grasp the opportunities to increase regional integration and enhance the influence of Africa in the global policy-making process. A strong regional tripartite consensus on the way forward is particularly vital to ensuring that the policy advice offered by international agencies to Africa is adapted to take on board fully the decisions of the African Union Extraordinary Summit.
16. Delegates to the Meeting took note of the results of 13 tripartite consultation meetings held in the run-up to the Regional Meeting to collect national views and experiences related to the Director-General's Report, *Working out of poverty*. The Meeting called on constituents and the Office to continue this process with a view to mobilizing a large-scale involvement of the ILO's tripartite regional network in the preparations for and follow-up to the African Union Extraordinary Summit. It was suggested that tripartite meetings be requested with Heads of State and Government around the region to convey the conclusions of the Meeting.

Strengthening the ILO's contribution to Africa's new development strategies

17. In addition to addressing the unprecedented opportunity offered by the African Union Extraordinary Summit to introduce a new focus to the region's development strategies, the Meeting also agreed on the priorities for action by the ILO to strengthen its role in Africa over the coming two to four years. This programme of work is designed to further, through an integrated approach, the four global decent work objectives of the ILO, namely international labour standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, employment and enterprise development, social protection and social dialogue. The regional priorities are poverty reduction, HIV/AIDS prevention and management at the workplace, social dialogue and good governance, post-crisis reconstruction, and regional and global integration. The Meeting welcomed the endorsement of the priorities by the African Union's Tripartite Labour and Social Affairs Commission at its 2003 session in Mauritius.

Decent work development strategies

18. The Meeting called on the ILO to develop further the decent work integrated approach to poverty-reducing development in the African context. Building on the ILO's Global Employment Agenda, this would require further examination of the relationship between economic growth, employment and self-employment, poverty reduction and social inclusion. The ILO and its tripartite constituents should also deepen their knowledge and develop a methodology for the identification of the main elements of successful pro-job programmes and projects so that they could be scaled up and replicated. This on-the-ground practical experience should be blended with a stronger analysis of the component elements of sound macroeconomic policies for pro-jobs/pro-poor growth.
19. Key issues identified by the Meeting included strategies to promote investment in enterprise development, especially micro and small enterprises, with a view to increasing both the start-up and survival rate of small businesses. To ensure that the growth of such businesses contributed to decent work and poverty reduction, it was important to exploit the synergies between productivity and the quality of employment. Furthermore, work with micro and small enterprises connects directly to broader programmes to ease access to the formal sector. In this regard, increased support for the role of employers' and workers' organizations in reaching out to the unorganized is critical to the success of programmes to improve safety and health; it also promotes micro-finance and social insurance institutions, cooperatives and other forms of voluntary association active in the informal urban and rural economies. Policies for productivity and competitiveness are needed to strengthen local investment and attract foreign direct investment so that it contributes to decent jobs and national wealth creation.
20. The Meeting called on the ILO, through its established tripartite machinery, to increase its engagement in the agricultural sector and rural activities. The majority of Africa's poorest families, often headed by women, live and work in rural communities. Long hours of hard work on small farms and in many large plantations fail to lift families out of poverty. Increased productivity and improved incomes in agriculture and related rural manufacturing and services is therefore a focus for decent work strategies to reduce poverty. The Meeting called on the ILO to expand the partnerships with the Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and the World Food Programme.
21. The Meeting encouraged the ILO to extend its work on local economic development with the close participation of governments, trade unions and employers' organizations in programme design and implementation. In both the urban informal economy and rural communities, this integrated approach has added value to initiatives such as employment-intensive infrastructure investments.
22. Participants endorsed the continuing work of the ILO on the eradication of child labour. They agreed that child labour was both a cause and an effect of poverty and that action to break the perpetuation of child labour from one generation to the next was therefore essential. The Meeting called on the ILO and constituents to step up further their efforts to develop national time-bound programmes and obtain the enhanced budgetary support required.
23. Reflecting the gravity of unemployment and underemployment amongst young women and men in the region, the Meeting adopted a resolution on the subject (see Appendix II). Delegates agreed that employment creation, entrepreneurship, employability (investing in education and effective vocational training) and equal opportunities for young women and men are key components to providing decent work for Africa's youth. They thus called upon international organizations, governments and the social partners to support initiatives under the Youth Employment Network. Decent work for young people must become a central component of an integrated policy framework that aims to promote economic growth that is employment intensive, enterprise friendly, poverty reducing and socially inclusive.
24. The ILO should strengthen its role in social protection in the region. The Meeting welcomed the launch in Africa of the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All. Key elements in the struggle against poverty include protection against income loss, improved health care and the provision of education, reinforcing labour inspection services particularly in the informal economy, enforcement of health and safety laws and promotion of micro-insurance to provide health care to workers and employers, particularly in the informal economy. Delegates noted the field-testing in Africa of the Global Social Trust.
25. Delegates also requested the ILO to develop its action on migration issues and the damage caused to Africa's development by the brain drain. In this context the Meeting expressed the wish that Africa

should preside over one of the Committees of the 2004 International Labour Conference that will also focus on the issue of migration.

Arresting and reversing the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa

26. The Meeting was unanimous in expressing its alarm over the rapidly increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS. Unless current trends in the spread of HIV/AIDS and in its socio-economic impact are arrested, Africa's struggle to escape deep and widespread poverty will be set back severely. Delegates requested the ILO to increase the resources for its activities aimed at strengthening the capacity of constituents in the struggle to combat HIV/AIDS. The Meeting adopted a resolution on this issue (see Appendix III) to guide the extension of the ILO's work in the region in particular in the promotion of its workplace code of conduct, taking into account prevention care and treatment. The Meeting called for the ILO to establish an In-Focus programme on HIV/AIDS at the workplace in order to have adequate interventions and activities in this area.

Labour standards, social dialogue and the ILO's contribution to enhanced governance

27. Delegates to the Meeting expressed their concern that weaknesses in governance were a considerable brake on Africa's development, not least because of the widespread problem of corruption. They welcomed the increasing interest in developing mechanisms of international and regional cooperation to improve governance systems.
28. The Meeting took the view that the ILO could make a substantial contribution to improving governance through the promotion of international labour standards as tools for development. They viewed the ILO's own standards supervisory system as one of the most advanced mechanisms for the promotion of sound governance principles. They called on the ILO to consider how it could be further strengthened in the light of increased international economic integration. Delegates emphasized the importance of strengthening labour administration and assisting governments to apply ratified Conventions.
29. Although Africa has a high rate of ratification of core ILO Conventions, such as the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), application still gives rise to problems in some countries, not only in Africa. The Meeting noted that these rights are particularly important to the strengthening of the decent work approach to poverty reduction as they address the key issues of freedom of association, collective bargaining and the elimination of discrimination. Workers and promoters of small businesses, living and working with the constant risk of poverty, need above all a voice in the political process to ensure that policies to reduce their vulnerability and enhance their opportunities are pursued by governments and local authorities.
30. In addition, the Meeting reaffirmed that the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is an essential foundation for genuine and effective tripartism and social dialogue. It is increasingly accepted that a broad-based sense of national ownership of development policies is critical to a sustained drive to reduce poverty. This, in turn, requires an engagement by government with social and economic stakeholders. Trade unions and employers' organizations are in most African countries amongst the largest and most representative "non-state actors". It is therefore vital that governments use and develop the tools of tripartite social dialogue as part of their poverty reduction strategies.
31. The delegates welcomed the ILO's campaign to increase ratification and observance of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). The ILO will also highlight the valuable role that social dialogue can play in new strategies for African development and in fostering national cohesion, particularly in countries facing international constraints.

Working for peace and stability

32. The Meeting expressed its conviction that one of the foundations of peaceful societies and peaceful relations between States is decent work for all. Where working women and men, especially young people, can realistically expect to achieve their aspirations to live and work in freedom, security,

equality and dignity, the frustrations that are often the root cause of violence are less likely to take hold.

33. The Meeting therefore stressed the importance of employment and well-being for the prevention of civil strife and for post crisis recovery in Africa. Delegates urged the ILO to seek increased financial and technical support for activities such as the rehabilitation of demobilized combatants and their reintegration into economic activities.

ILO support for Africa's integration in the global economy and for regional institution building

34. A decent work strategy for poverty-reducing development in Africa must address the reduction of excessive debt burdens, catastrophic falls in the prices of key export commodities, unfair barriers to access to industrialized country markets for products in which the region has a clear comparative advantage, such as cotton, and distortional agricultural subsidies. Delegates also considered that international trade rules need to ensure that emerging national and local industries in developing regions such as Africa have time and space to become competitive before facing full competition with established and large global businesses.
35. The Meeting called on the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to facilitate economic growth and decent work opportunities in Africa. Delegates further urged the Bretton Woods institutions to achieve better cooperation with the ILO on the integration of social and economic policies including at the sectoral level.
36. The Meeting called on the ILO to coordinate with concerned United Nations organizations so as to accelerate the setting up of the World Solidarity Fund proposed by the Government of Tunisia and approved by the 57th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. This Fund should play an effective role in supporting national efforts and programmes of international agencies geared towards fighting poverty in the world in general, and in Africa in particular.
37. The Meeting endorsed the goal of building a strong and united Africa able to take control of its own destiny, change its inequitable terms of trade, fully exploit its own capacity and attract investment finance from the industrialized countries. The representatives of the tripartite constituency of the ILO expressed their conviction that to advance Africa's development in an integrated global economy, social dialogue was a vital component in building national and regional support for enhanced economic and political integration and stability.
38. Delegates assessed the prospects for enhanced African integration with enthusiasm and optimism. The Meeting therefore called upon the ILO to continue to develop its partnerships with the African Union, as well as with the African Development Bank, the subregional economic communities and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. In this respect, the Meeting welcomed the commitment of the African Union to its tripartite Commission on Labour and Social Affairs and called upon the secretariat of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) to extend and strengthen its recent beginnings of tripartite consultations.

Enhancing the capacity of the ILO's constituents in Africa and the effectiveness of ILO programmes

39. Delegates reviewed ILO activities over the four years since the Ninth African Regional Meeting and, while welcoming many of the specific projects and programmes, urged the Office to give renewed attention to enhancing the capacity of the ILO's constituents in Africa and improving the effectiveness, scope and scale of ILO programmes.
40. The Meeting took note of the Office's intention to work closely with constituents in developing decent work country programmes.

Capacity building with the social partners

41. With increasing pressures on labour ministries, employers' organizations and trade unions to engage in a wide range of activities, targeted ILO support programmes are more necessary than ever. The Meeting drew attention in particular to training representatives of the constituents for participation in the PRSP and other socio-economic processes. Such programmes needed to fit the needs in particular countries and could be developed in cooperation with the African Union, the United

Nations Economic Commission for Africa and other partners. The Meeting also urged the ILO to enhance the capacity of the social partners to mainstream gender issues in their policies, programmes and activities.

Knowledge sharing

42. Many delegates confirmed that one of the most valuable services provided by the ILO was comparative information on different national approaches to similar issues. Constituents urged the Office to step up its work on knowledge sharing and communications. Information on decent work success stories and the particular ingredients that were seen as determining success are especially welcome.

Monitoring and evaluating programmes

43. The Meeting called on the Office to systematize methods of monitoring and evaluating its programmes with particular attention to tools for measuring results against objectives and resources applied. The ILO is competing for financial resources with many other agencies and needed to demonstrate convincingly the effectiveness of its approach. Furthermore, constituents themselves often invest heavily in ILO programmes especially in terms of scarce human resources and they wanted to know more precisely what worked and what did not. In this connection the Meeting noted the Office's work on developing possible indicators to measure progress on the Decent Work Agenda.

Resource mobilization

44. The challenges facing the ILO as a whole and its African regional network in particular are immense and far exceed the resources currently available through its regular budget. The Meeting urged for renewed efforts to raise and sustain the flow of funds for technical cooperation activities. The decent work approach to poverty-reducing development is attracting growing interest from a wide range of current and potential funders. However, to mobilize this potential, close cooperation is required between the Office and its tripartite constituents to maintain the quality of ILO programmes and to report objectively and clearly on progress, and widely disseminate the findings. The Meeting called on the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union and bilateral donors to increase their support to the ILO to enable it to carry out the priorities identified by its tripartite constituents.

Alliance building and policy integration

45. The success of the decent work strategy for Africa's development depends on the synergies between the employment, labour standards, social protection and social dialogue pillars of the ILO's approach and on policies in related areas that fall within the mandate of other international institutions. Such collaboration was particularly important for the ILO's work with constituents on PRSPs and is of critical importance in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Meeting therefore urged the ILO to continue to build up alliances with other global and regional agencies. In this respect, a number of delegates looked forward with interest to the publication of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, established by the ILO Governing Body and co-chaired by President Benjamin Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania and President Tarja Halonen of Finland.

Increasing participation of women in the work of the ILO

46. The Meeting was concerned by the low level of participation of women in the Regional Meeting, which they attributed to inadequate progress towards gender equality in social dialogue institutions at the national level. The Meeting requested the ILO, in partnership with the constituents, to institute a comprehensive and integrated approach for building the capacity of the social partners to integrate gender issues in their policies, programmes and activities. Delegates requested the ILO to consolidate existing gender-specific and gender-mainstreaming programmes and assist the tripartite partners in mobilizing resources and technical support for integrated sustainable programmes that aim to achieve gender equality in all spheres of decent work.

Appendix II

Resolution on decent work for youth in Africa and the ILO's response

Originally submitted by Mr. J.W. Botha, Employers' delegate, South Africa, Mr. Ronald Baipidi, Workers' delegate, Botswana and Mr. George Muchai, Workers' delegate, Kenya.

The Tenth African Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization,

Reaffirming that the participation of young people is an asset and a prerequisite for sustainable economic growth and social development and for working out of poverty,

Recalling the ILO decent work paradigm, the Global Employment Agenda as well as the United Nations Millennium Declaration¹ which includes important goals and targets pertaining to youth and the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment,²

Noting that Africa is the youngest continent in the world with over one-fifth of the population currently between 15-24 years of age and over 300 million young Africans entering the labour force over the next ten years,

Also noting that more than 50 per cent of all new HIV infections occur among persons of between 15-24 years of age and concerned with the implications for the labour market, productivity and decent work,

Seriously concerned that African youth unemployment rates are among the highest in the world and that the female share of youth unemployment is consistently higher in all countries,

Bearing in mind that open unemployment rates do not adequately reflect the stark reality, which is that most young men and women, especially in rural areas, are too poor to be openly unemployed and have to eke out subsistence in activities in the informal economy,

Seriously concerned that in respect of the quality of employment, many young Africans are especially susceptible to serious decent work deficits in terms of wages that are substantially below national minimum standards, working conditions that do not comply with national labour legislation or international labour standards, lack of access to social security and social protection, lack of freedom to join trade unions or to take legal or industrial action to secure their legitimate rights and discrimination on the added grounds of gender, race and ethnicity,

Recognizing that the youth employment problem is integrally part of the larger macroeconomic and social development problem in Africa and the current international and national constraints to Africa's ability to benefit through trade and investments from globalization,

Encouraged by the application of social dialogue to enterprise, sectoral, national and international responses in the world of work and in particular to the joint formal commitment made by the International Organisation of Employers and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions "to working together to unite our efforts to try and arrive at solutions that provide young people everywhere with opportunities for decent and productive work",

Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization to request the Office to:

1. **Promote** the employment of young people in Africa within the context of decent work, poverty reduction and the Global Employment Agenda, recognizing that the ILO committed itself as part of the Youth Employment Network (YEN) and under the United Nations General Assembly Resolution on Promoting Youth Employment, to assist in national reviews and action plans on youth employment;

¹ United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/55/2.

² United Nations General Assembly resolution A/RES/57/165.

2. **Facilitate** social dialogue and the active involvement of the social partners in defining and implementing decent work for young people in Africa;
3. **Provide** practical assistance and policy advice to governments, the social partners and other relevant national stakeholders to tackle the youth employment problem, taking into account that the precise mix of policies and interventions necessarily will vary from country to country but ensuring that both the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of employment are addressed within holistic and comprehensive macroeconomic development frameworks that are employment intensive, enterprise friendly, poverty reducing and socially inclusive;
4. **Coordinate** its advisory services and technical cooperation activities that concern macroeconomic development, employment and poverty reduction, making sure to avoid duplication and to build synergies with existing national initiatives and other initiatives, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Global Employment Agenda (GEA), the Decent Work Pilot Programme (DWPP) and initiatives related specifically to youth;
5. **Support** governments and the social partners to implement practical measures for decent and productive work for young people, including through measures to:
 - encourage and facilitate national dialogue led by workers’ and employers’ organizations together with governments and other key relevant national stakeholders, to build consensus around strategies to promote decent work for young people in both rural and urban areas and at local, national and regional levels, within the context and as an intrinsic part of the implementation of the Global Employment Agenda;
 - build the capacity of trade unions and employers’ organizations to represent young workers and young entrepreneurs;
 - improve employment-relevant education and training opportunities for young women and men, including through publicly-funded programmes that combine training and exposure to work;
 - strengthen active labour market policies and employment services, including job search assistance and career advice especially for young men and women making the transition from school to work;
 - promote affirmative action for especially disadvantaged youth, such as reserving for youth without work experience a proportion of jobs in public works programmes or making the hiring of young people a condition for public tenders;
 - ensure that young women are not marginalized or excluded from affirmative action on youth employment and introduce gender mainstreaming in all policies, programmes and projects to overcome discrimination and obstacles to decent work for young women;
 - promote training and retraining for youth with disabilities so as to enhance their qualifications and capabilities to be fully integrated into the labour market;
 - encourage innovative schemes to bring young people into productive and decent employment in both rural and urban areas – by drawing attention to the lessons learned and good and bad practices from the experiences of different countries and also by helping to mobilize funding for such schemes;
 - encourage and support employers’ efforts to draw young people into productive and decent employment through training and skills certification schemes, apprenticeship, mentoring, etc.;
 - promote both social and individual entrepreneurship among young people to provide the basis for initiatives around the development of enterprises and institutions, including cooperatives;
 - ensure, including through the provision of basic legal training and legal aid services, that young workers understand and are able to access and exercise their rights and entitlements at work, and in particular their fundamental rights: freedom of association and collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of discrimination, the elimination of forced labour and the effective abolition of child labour.

Appendix III

Resolution on the role of social dialogue in addressing HIV/AIDS in the world of work

Originally submitted by Mr. J.W. Botha, Employers' delegate, South Africa, and Mr. G. Attigbe, Workers' delegate, Benin.

The Tenth African Regional Meeting of the International Labour Organization,

Recalling the continuing spread of HIV infection, such that 42 million people worldwide are now living with the virus and millions more are affected by it,

Bearing in mind that the great majority of those infected are between 15 and 49 years of age, and so are the most productive segment of the workforce on whom their countries depend,

Understanding the increasingly severe and long-term nature of the impacts of HIV/AIDS on individuals, societies and economies, as a result of the loss of skills, the reduced productivity and profitability of enterprises, contracting tax revenue and market demand, and the loss of investment, at the same time as pressure is mounting on public services and government authorities to cope with the consequences of the epidemic,

Noting with particular concern the threat of HIV/AIDS to the Decent Work Agenda, to the ILO's four strategic objectives, and above all to the tripartite constituents of the ILO, especially to the common interests of employers and workers,

Recognizing the potential of the social partners – especially through joint action – to contribute to national efforts against HIV/AIDS, and the effectiveness of the workplace as an entry point for prevention messages, measures to combat discrimination, and the delivery of care, support and treatment,

Acknowledging the usefulness of the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work, and its accompanying education and training manual and other guidelines, as a tool to guide the workplace response to HIV/AIDS,

Noting that the ILO code of practice identifies *social dialogue* as one of its key principles, and states that the successful implementation of HIV/AIDS policies and programmes requires cooperation between employers, workers and their representatives and government, where appropriate,

Encouraged by the application of social dialogue to enterprise, sectoral, national and international responses in the world of work, and in particular by the growing collaboration between employers and workers in the fight against HIV/AIDS, as demonstrated by the following key events:

- “Fighting HIV/AIDS together”, a statement of principle and declaration of commitment to joint action by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), and their affiliated organizations, signed by the general secretaries of each organization at the ILO on 12 May 2003;
- the ICFTU-African Regional Organization (AFRO)/IOE/Pan-African Employers' Confederation (PEC) HIV/AIDS review workshop, Nairobi, 7-9 April 2003, which brought workers and employers together to review existing workplace initiatives and to plan an intensification of their partnership against HIV/AIDS;
- a similar declaration and statement of agreement between the Pan-African Employers' Confederation and ICFTU-AFRO, Nairobi, 24 September 2003;
- the platform of action on fighting HIV/AIDS in the world of work adopted by the Arab Regional Workshop recently organized by the ILO in Algiers; and
- a series of consultations to develop a programme of national action plans,

Wishing to extend and intensify the contribution of employers and workers and their organizations, and of the ILO as the agency committed to protecting and promoting their interests within the framework of the UNAIDS partnership,

Invites the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization to:**1. Appeal to governments to:**

- (i) promote and support the efforts of employers and workers to combat HIV/AIDS by providing an enabling legal and policy framework for workplace action, including measures to oppose stigma and discrimination;
- (ii) strengthen national AIDS plans through the inclusion of a strategy for the world of work and especially with the involvement of employers' and workers' representatives in national coordinating mechanisms;
- (iii) work towards a strengthening of public health systems, social protection institutions and education and training authorities, with a view to maintaining capacity in the face of the HIV epidemic and developing it over the longer term;
- (iv) facilitate access to financial resources of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) for social partners in the world of work, especially employers' and workers' organizations.

2. Appeal to employers, workers and their organizations to:

- (i) scale up their joint efforts to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, and to implement comprehensive workplace programmes that include prevention, measures to combat stigma and discrimination, and the provision of care and support;
- (ii) work in partnership with governments and international donors to extend access to anti-retroviral treatment at the workplace and in the community, especially through opportunities afforded by the "3 x 5" initiative which was launched by the World Health Organization (WHO) in December 2003 and of which the ILO is a partner.

3. Request the Director-General to:

- (i) prioritize and accelerate efforts by the tripartite constituents in all countries of the region to take collaborative action to reduce the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, with particular reference to the roles of the ILO's Bureau of Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and Bureau of Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and their specialists in the field;
- (ii) strengthen the capacity of the constituents by developing policy guidance and training with key leaders, coordinators and organizers in government departments and employers' and workers' organizations who will in turn guide and train others;
- (iii) explore the possibility of appointing an HIV/AIDS coordinator in the African Regional Office with responsibility for mobilizing and supporting the constituents;
- (iv) identify the ways that each of the four ILO sectors can support the constituents through their own units, programmes and specialists, with resources allocated and programming agreed in a coordinated and transparent way;
- (v) ensure that the Tripartite Interregional Meeting on Best Practices in HIV/AIDS Workplace Policies and Programmes, ILO, 15-17 December 2003, takes into account the recommendations on HIV/AIDS of the Tenth African Regional Meeting;
- (vi) support the launch of the IOE-ICFTU national action plans on HIV/AIDS through pilot workplace programmes in eight African countries, which will bring together employers' and workers' organizations to intensify prevention efforts, enforce measures against discrimination, and build capacity for the provision of care and support: to include a meeting at the end of the biennium to take stock of progress and plan the replication of successful interventions;
- (vii) in the context of UNAIDS co-sponsorship and UN inter-agency discussions, insist on the vital role of the workplace in tackling HIV/AIDS to ensure support for the social partners throughout the United Nations system and to secure increased funding for HIV/AIDS programmes in the world of work;
- (viii) encourage the ILO's association with discussions and initiatives by international institutions such as the WHO and WTO, concerning improved access to HIV/AIDS treatment, care and support.

Appendix IV

Report of the Credentials Committee

1. The Credentials Committee, which was appointed by the Meeting at its first sitting, met on 2, 3 and 4 December 2003, in conformity with article 9 of the Rules for Regional Meetings, to examine the credentials of the delegates and technical advisers accredited to the Meeting, as well as two objections and two communications pertaining to the credentials of six countries. The Committee was composed as follows:
 - Mr. Jules Oni (Government delegate, Benin), Chairperson;
 - Mr. Gershon N. Konditi (Employers' delegate, Kenya);
 - Mr. Guillaume Attigbe (Workers' adviser, Benin).
2. Credentials in the form of official instruments, official letters or official facsimiles had been received in respect of the members of the delegations shown in the table in the annex to this report. The Committee draws the attention of the governments to the importance of respecting article 9, paragraph 1, of the abovementioned Rules, according to which credentials must be deposited at least 15 days (i.e., 17 November 2003 for this Meeting) before the opening of a meeting. The Committee was concerned that credentials from only 15 Members had been received within that time limit.

Composition of the Meeting

3. At the time of the adoption of this report, of the 53 member States invited to attend the Meeting, 39 Members had sent credentials that were comprised of 74 Government delegates, 31 Employers' delegates and 33 Workers' delegates, i.e. 138 delegates in all. In addition, there were nominated 72 Government advisers, 18 Employers' advisers and 24 Workers' advisers, i.e. a total of 114 advisers. Persons appointed as both substitute delegates and advisers have been included among the advisers. The total number of nominated delegates and advisers was thus 252.
4. With respect to the delegates and the advisers registered, the number of Government delegates was 68, there were 22 Employers' delegates and 26 Workers' delegates, that is to say, a total of 116 delegates. Total advisers were 105, of those 68 were Government advisers, 16 were Employers' advisers, and 21 were Workers' advisers. The annexes, including a table, to this report contain more detailed information as to the number of accredited and registered delegates to the Meeting.
5. The Committee observed that the delegations of six of the member States – Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Madagascar and Morocco – represented at the Meeting were exclusively governmental. Moreover, the number of incomplete delegations was larger in fact as certain accredited delegates did not register themselves at the Meeting for a variety of reasons, some of which were no doubt financial. This point is taken up in paragraphs 29 to 34 below.
6. The Committee noted that 15 of the delegates accredited and 16 of the advisers accredited were women, as compared with 12 and 10 respectively at the last African Regional Meeting. The ministers or vice-ministers of 21 member States of the region attended the Meeting.
7. Fourteen Members of the Meeting were not represented, as was the case at the last African Regional Meeting. In addition, one accredited member State did not register.

Representatives of official international organizations

8. Of the official international organizations invited to attend the Meeting, in accordance with the relevant agreements or decisions of the Governing Body, the following were represented:
 - Economic Commission for Africa;
 - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees;
 - United Nations Population Fund;
 - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;

- World Food Programme;
- International Monetary Fund;
- African Union.

Representatives of non-governmental international organizations

9. The non-governmental international organizations invited to participate at the Meeting in conformity with article 1, paragraph 7, of the Rules that were represented were:
 - International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
 - World Confederation of Labour
 - International Organisation of Employers
 - Organization of African Trade Union Unity
 - Pan-African Employers' Confederation
 - International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions
 - ICFTU African Regional Organization

Objections

10. Following are the two objections examined by the Credentials Committee.

Objection concerning the nomination of the Workers' delegation of Djibouti

11. The Committee had before it an objection challenging the nomination of the Workers' delegate and his adviser of Djibouti, submitted by the President of the *Union djiboutienne du Travail* (UDT), Mr. Ahmed Djama Eguieh, which was supported by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions – African Regional Organization (ICFTU-AFRO) as represented by its General Secretary, Mr. Andrew Kailembo.
12. According to the objection, the Minister of Employment had substituted the legitimate representatives of the trade union confederations, the most representative being the UDT, with usurpers that effectively have no connection with the legitimate trade union confederations.
13. Neither the Workers' delegate nor his adviser represent either of the confederations despite their submission as such by the Minister. Further, the ICFTU-AFRO maintains that the nomination of the Workers' delegate of Djibouti to the African Regional Meeting is not in conformity with article 1, paragraph 4, of the Rules for Regional Meetings. He also refers to the conclusions of the Credentials Committee adopted at the Ninth African Regional Meeting (Abidjan, 8-11 December 1999), as well as to those of the Credentials Committee of the International Labour Conference.
14. In a written communication addressed to the Committee in response to its request, the Director of Labour and Relations with Social Partners, Mr. Guedi Absieh Houssain, considered that the nomination of the Workers' delegation of Djibouti had been in conformity with the dispositions of article 1, paragraph 4, of the Rules for Regional Meetings. He emphasized that the objection emanated from a supposed president of the UDT and that it had neither been signed nor submitted on official letterhead, which places in doubt its receivability.
15. He indicated that in Djibouti there exist two representative organizations, the *Union générale des travailleurs djiboutiens* (UGTD) that has 25 trade unions affiliated to it and the UDT that has more than 25 affiliated trade unions. The Government of Djibouti in an effort to be transparent and respectful of the independence of the trade unions officially consulted the two organizations with the view that they could freely designate their delegates to the Regional Meeting. To this effect, the Government furnished a copy of a communication from the Secretary-General of the UGTD in which it appears that the Executive Board of the UGTD had decided that Mr. Abdo Sikieh Dirieh would represent it at the Tenth African Regional Meeting.
16. In addition, the Government indicated that there did not exist an agreement for the rotation of the two organizations and that they preferred to each designate a representative to the different

international meetings. Further, the Government considered that the criteria for representativeness that it had used to nominate the delegates conformed to the principles contained in the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

17. The Committee notes that in the first place the Government raised a question relating to the receivability of the objection submitted by Mr. Ahmed Djama Eguieh in his capacity as President of the UDT and that it had neither been signed nor submitted on official letterhead.
18. The Committee recalls that the requirement of a signature or the submission of an objection on "official" letterhead does not figure in the criteria set forth for irreceivability in article 9, paragraph 4, of the Rules for Regional Meetings. Further, without entering into the substance of the question to determine whether the nominees truly represent the legitimate trade unions, the Committee notes that the objection was supported by a regional representative organization, the ICFTU-AFRO. Consequently, the Committee considered that there was no reason to put in doubt the receivability of the objection submitted by Mr. Ahmed Djama Eguieh and supported by the ICFTU-AFRO.
19. The Committee regrets that the Government did not furnish information in its communication on consultations that might have taken place with the UDT and that it rather confined itself to providing information on consultations held with the UGTD.
20. The Committee recalled that the Credentials Committee of the International Labour Conference had been seized of this question in its four most recent sessions,¹ as well as at the Ninth African Regional Meeting (Abidjan, 8-11 December 1999). Similar to previous years, neither the Government nor the authors of the objection have furnished the necessary information concerning the question of who is effectively and legitimately representing the two most representative trade unions in the country. In view that the questions that had been raised in the objection are the same as those that are being examined by other organs, notably the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, and as the information that has been submitted is insufficient to proceed with the examination of the situation as per the terms of article 1, paragraph 4, of the Rules for Regional Meetings, the Committee could not under these circumstances usefully exercise its mandate. The Committee, however, remains concerned by the absence of any apparent progress and deeply deplores that doubts continue to subsist as regards the legitimacy and independence of the Worker representative accredited to the African Regional Meeting.

Objection concerning the nomination of the Workers' delegate of Mauritania

21. The Committee had received an objection challenging the nomination of the Workers' delegate of Mauritania submitted by the General Secretary, Mr. Andrew Kailembo, of the ICFTU-AFRO. According to the objecting organization, the Workers' delegate of Mauritania, Mr. Hamady Touré, had not been democratically elected by the members of the *Union des travailleurs de Maurantie* (UTM).
22. The objecting organization submits that Mr. Hamady Touré is a member of an executive body whose members' names were simply read at a congress held from 30 June until 1 July 2003 in Nouakchott in the presence of two ministers who represented the Government and the Chairperson of the National Assembly, Chairperson of that session of the congress. The new Secretary-General of the UTM was not in the room at the time of the "election". Further, during his speech at the end of the congress the new Secretary-General recognized that he was not familiar with trade unionism and that the outgoing Secretary-General would assist him in his daily activities.
23. The ICFTU-AFRO esteems that under these circumstances the present Workers' delegate of Mauritania does not legitimately represent the Mauritanian workers and seeks that the Committee rejects his nomination.

¹ ILC, 88th Session (June 2000); ILC, 89th Session (June 2001); ILC, 90th Session (June 2002); and ILC, 91st Session (June 2003).

24. In a written communication addressed to the Committee at its request, Mr. Khaled oud Cheikhna, Government delegate of Mauritania, rejected the allegations put forth by the ICFTU-AFRO. The Government in particular noted that:
- (a) the Mauritanian authorities do not intervene at any moment in the election process of the leaders of the trade unions and assist only at the congresses to which they are invited. It is in this manner that they were at the UTM congress held in June 2003 and one month later at that of the CLTM;
 - (b) the congress of the UTM, which it seems the ICFTU-AFRO contests, took place in a completely transparent manner as it was in the presence of numerous observers: ICFTU-AFRO, CNTS (Senegal), UTM (Mali), etc. and under the supervision of the former leaders of the trade union as a whole (the Chairperson of the National Assembly was there in this role);
 - (c) the UTM has been, in the opinion of the Government, the most representative organization for over 40 years taking into account the number of professional trade unions and members with which it counts. This fact has never been contested by the ICFTU-AFRO in any forum (International Labour Conference, Arab Labour Organization Conference, CTAS, etc.).
25. According to the Government, the criteria pertaining to the representativeness were fulfilled for the selection of this organization. Moreover, the Government has always been concerned that the trade unions participate in international forums.
26. In light of the above and in the view of the Government, Mr. Hamady Touré, is the legitimate representative of the workers by the fact that he was designated by the most representative workers' organization.
27. The Committee notes that the question raised bears essentially on the legitimacy of the leaders of the UTM elected at the congress that was held in June 2003. The Committee considered that the issue raised in the objection concerning the validity of the elections of the new leaders of the UTM appears to be an internal one and that there is recourse to the competent organ of the ILO, namely the Committee on Freedom of Association. Under these circumstances, the Committee deems that it could not but consider that the questions raised in the objection were not within its mandate.
28. On 3 December 2003, the Committee received a communication from the Secretary-General of the CLTM, Mr. Samory oud Beye, regarding the nomination of the Workers' delegate of Mauritania. As this communication had been received on 3 December 2003 at 12.55 p.m., which is to say after the expiration of the time limit foreseen under article 9, paragraph 4, of the Rules for Regional Meetings, the Committee considered that it was irreceivable.

Communications

29. The Committee considered two communications regarding incomplete delegations.
30. The secretary of the Employers' group, Mr. Frederick Muia, drew the Committee's attention to the fact that the Governments of Gambia, Madagascar and Morocco had not nominated Employers' delegates to their respective delegations to the Tenth African Regional Meeting. Similarly, the General Secretary of the ICFTU-AFRO communicated that Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar and Morocco had incomplete delegations. On behalf of his organization he shared the deep concern regarding the fact that these Governments had deprived the workers' of their right to participate at the Meeting, which is incompatible with the principles of freedom of association and tripartism which are the foundation of the ILO.
31. In a written communication addressed to the Committee in response to its request, the Government of Morocco referred to the trade union elections that had been recently held in both the public and private sectors and whose results were still not officially known. In these circumstances, the Government considered that the nomination of a Workers' delegate on the basis of unconfirmed results would give rise to criticism and objection. As such, the nomination of an Employers' delegate in the absence of a Workers' delegate could be considered as discriminatory. For these reasons, the Government limited its participation to diplomatic representation located in Addis Ababa.
32. The Government of Madagascar in a written communication addressed to the Committee at its request, indicated that as no delegation could be sent from Antananarivo, the diplomatic mission considered itself obligated to participate at the Meeting in light of its importance.

33. The Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Gambia did not respond to the Committee's invitation for information.
34. The Credentials Committee expressed its deep concern that several Members of the Organization, represented exclusively by governmental delegations, had not respected the principles of tripartism. The Committee emphasized that whereas a government has the ability to assure its representation through a diplomatic mission, the same cannot be said for employers' or workers' organizations. The Committee wishes to call the attention of those Members that accept an invitation to attend Regional Meetings of their obligation under article 1, paragraph 1, of the Rules for Regional Meetings to nominate complete delegations that would ensure, in particular, a balanced representation of employers and workers as well as to their duty to ensure their effective participation at the meetings.

* * *

35. In conformity with article 9, paragraph 5, of the Rules for Regional Meetings, the Committee seeks by unanimity that the Meeting include its report amongst the documents that the Office is to bring to the attention of the Governing Body.

Addis Ababa, 4 December 2003.

(Signed) Mr. Jules Oni,
Chairperson.

Mr. Gershon N. Konditi.

Mr. Guillaume Attigbe.

Annex 1

Accredited delegates and advisers

(Updated as of 5 p.m. on 4 December 2003)

	Government delegates	Government advisers	Employers' delegates	Employers' advisers	Workers' delegates	Workers' advisers
Algeria	2	3	1	-	1	-
Angola	2	3	1	-	1	-
Benin	2	2	1	-	1	1
Botswana	2	-	1	-	1	-
Burkina Faso	2	3	1	-	1	-
Burundi	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	1	-	-	-	-	-
Cape Verde	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central African Republic	1	-	1	-	1	-
Chad	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comoros	-	-	-	-	-	-
Congo	2	4	1	1	1	1
Côte d'Ivoire	2	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2	5	1	-	1	1
Djibouti	2	2	1	-	1	1
Egypt	2	3	1	2	1	1
Equatorial Guinea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eritrea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ethiopia	2	10	1	9	1	9
Gabon	2	3	1	1	1	-
Gambia	1	-	-	-	1	-
Ghana	2	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea-Bissau	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kenya	2	1	1	-	1	-
Lesotho	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberia	1	-	-	-	-	-
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	2	3	-	-	1	1
Madagascar	2	-	-	-	-	-
Malawi	2	-	1	-	1	-
Mali	2	2	1	-	1	1
Mauritania	2	1	1	-	1	-
Mauritius	2	1	1	-	1	-

	Government delegates	Government advisers	Employers' delegates	Employers' advisers	Workers' delegates	Workers' advisers
Morocco	2	2	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	2	3	1	-	1	-
Namibia	2	1	1	1	1	1
Niger	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nigeria	2	3	1	-	1	-
Rwanda	2	-	1	-	1	-
Sao Tome and Principe	-	-	-	-	-	-
Senegal	2	5	1	1	1	3
Seychelles	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somalia	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Africa	2	1	1	-	1	-
Sudan	2	-	1	-	1	2
Swaziland	2	1	1	-	1	-
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2	1	-	1	-
Togo	2	1	1	-	1	-
Tunisia	2	2	1	-	1	-
Uganda	2	2	1	-	1	-
Zambia	2	2	1	2	1	-
Zimbabwe	2	1	1	1	1	2
Total	74	72	31	18	33	24

Annex 2

Registered delegates and advisers

(Updated as of 5 p.m. on 4 December 2003)

	Government delegates	Government advisers	Employers' delegates	Employers' advisers	Workers' delegates	Workers' advisers
Algeria	2	2	-	-	-	-
Angola	2	3	-	-	-	-
Benin	2	2	1	-	1	1
Botswana	2	-	1	-	1	-
Burkina Faso	2	3	1	-	1	-
Burundi	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cameroon	1	-	-	-	-	-
Cape Verde	-	-	-	-	-	-
Central African Republic	1	-	-	-	-	-
Chad	-	-	-	-	-	-
Comoros	-	-	-	-	-	-
Congo	2	3	-	-	1	1
Côte d'Ivoire	2	-	-	-	-	-
Democratic Republic of the Congo	1	3	-	-	-	-
Djibouti	2	2	1	-	1	1
Egypt	2	3	1	2	1	1
Equatorial Guinea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Eritrea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ethiopia	2	10	1	9	1	8
Gabon	1	3	-	1	-	-
Gambia	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ghana	2	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guinea-Bissau	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kenya	2	1	1	-	1	-
Lesotho	-	-	-	-	-	-
Liberia	1	-	-	-	-	-
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	1	3	-	-	1	1
Madagascar	2	-	-	-	-	-
Malawi	2	-	1	-	1	-
Mali	2	2	1	-	1	1
Mauritania	2	1	-	-	1	-
Mauritius	1	1	1	-	1	-

	Government delegates	Government advisers	Employers' delegates	Employers' advisers	Workers' delegates	Workers' advisers
Morocco	2	2	-	-	-	-
Mozambique	2	3	1	-	1	-
Namibia	2	1	1	1	1	1
Niger	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nigeria	2	3	-	-	-	-
Rwanda	2	-	1	-	1	-
Sao Tome and Principe	-	-	-	-	-	-
Senegal	2	5	1	1	1	3
Seychelles	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sierra Leone	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somalia	-	-	-	-	-	-
South Africa	2	1	1	-	1	-
Sudan	1	-	1	-	1	2
Swaziland	2	1	1	-	1	-
United Republic of Tanzania	2	2	1	-	1	-
Togo	2	1	1	-	1	-
Tunisia	2	2	1	-	1	-
Uganda	2	2	1	-	1	-
Zambia	2	2	1	2	1	-
Zimbabwe	2	1	-	-	1	1
Total	68	68	22	16	26	21