

Eighteenth sitting

Tuesday, 19 June 2001, 3 p.m.

Presidents: Mr. Donato, Mr. Parrot

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT (Mr. DONATO) — Before continuing, and concluding, the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director General, I give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference to give us details of the new ratifications of international labour Conventions which have taken place.

RATIFICATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION BY SINGAPORE AND MALTA

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — On 14 and 15 June 2001, respectively, the Director-General of the ILO registered the ratification by Singapore and Malta of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). By ratifying this Convention, Malta becomes one of the member States to have ratified all eight fundamental Conventions of the ILO.

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

Original Spanish: The PRESIDENT — We shall now resume our discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Original French: Mr. NIYONGABO (*Workers' delegate, Burundi*) — Before getting down to the essence of what I want to say, I would like to congratulate the President of our 89th Session of the International Labour Conference on her election and on the skilful manner in which she has been conducting the work of this Conference.

I should also like to congratulate Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the ILO, on his submission of a clear, concise and pragmatic Report on the subject of reducing the deficit of decent work in the world, as well as for the impressive way in which he directs the work of the ILO.

The concept of decent work that Mr. Juan Somavia has promoted and popularized within our Organization has now become a sort of watchword in the world of work throughout most of the globe. Decent work has become a goal to be achieved, but it is also a means for ensuring and promoting the living and working conditions of workers, and even a weapon in the fight against poverty.

The workers of Burundi support unreservedly the programme to reduce the decent work deficit. They could do no other, indeed, for the very concept of de-

cent work has been developed first and foremost in the interests of workers.

In my country, Burundi, the decent work deficit is unfortunately still considerable due to the convergence of a variety of factors, the most important of which is the socio-political crisis that has led to a civil war, which has been devastating our country for almost eight years, threatening the physical security of workers and seriously compromising employment security.

The four strategic objectives leading to decent work are far from being achieved.

Indeed, as in any country at war, the fundamental labour rights are still just wishful thinking in spite of the efforts made by the partners in the world of work.

Social dialogue is taking root, but is compromised by political considerations that take the upper hand over socio-economic requirements.

Full employment is seriously threatened by companies closing down because of the war, or because they cannot obtain raw materials. In Burundi we need decent work but, as the Director-General makes so clear in his Report, first of all we must have availability of employment.

Social protection covers only a small proportion of workers in Burundi, and those working in the informal economy are still not able to enjoy it. Upon the initiative of the Trade Union Confederation of Burundi, COSYBU, and the Burundi Association of Employers, AEB, a new Social Security Code has been drafted, adopted and promulgated. Its implementation will, I am sure, meet many needs in connection with social protection and thus protect many sectors of the population.

In addition to all this, however, access to decent work is endangered in my country by the AIDS pandemic, poverty and debt to developed countries and international organizations. Burundian trade unions are now trying to develop programmes to struggle against these scourges, but we do need the support of national and international partners.

In spite of all these difficulties, Burundian trade unions place their hopes in a clear asset: overall, the Burundian people, and Burundian workers in particular, are very industrious people. Provided we have adequate guidance, and with the support of international partners, including the ILO, I have no doubt that we shall manage to overcome these difficulties and we shall come to see light at the end of the tunnel.

As regards unions, union members in particular, we particularly solicit the assistance of the ILO in providing education for workers and trade union training. Standards legislation, bargaining techniques, self-promotion initiatives and entrepreneurship, organization management and issues relating to working women

are all matters that concern us very much, and our trade unions require good training in these subjects in order to be able to play their proper role as partners in the world of work.

In order that our programmes may become fact and our ambitions reality, one condition has to be met: we must once again have peace and security in our country. We demand that the Government of Burundi and the other partners at present involved in political negotiations make every effort to ensure the physical security of citizens. In making this a priority, they will be fulfilling the dear wish of the population as a whole and the workers in particular. It will also allow the partners in the world of work to strive for decent work in conditions of calm. We call on the international community, also to help us return to the security that we desire so much.

Mr. KLEIN (*representative, International Christian Union of Business Executives*) — It is with great pleasure that I join previous speakers in expressing the appreciation of my Organization for the quality of the reports presented to us.

In commending the Director-General and his staff, I would like to assure them of our full support in the pursuit of these global objectives, which are central to the ILO's mandate.

The case for the reduction of the decent work deficit is convincingly made in the Director-General's Report. Indeed, the decent work concept constitutes a coherent framework for the future development of the ILO's activities. While decent work has always been the concern of the ILO, the new concept has innovations. It sets the stage for firmly establishing this goal in the global economy, thereby creating an environment that will enable people and countries to receive their fair share of the benefits of the global economy. While its horizon is long-term, it is adaptable and can be progressively achieved. It further provides a clear focus for the ILO's activities and programmes in addressing its four strategic objectives.

While the decent work deficit is global, the size of the shortfall and its characteristics vary considerably from country to country, as well as within each country. Accordingly, the development of the relevant strategies must give due consideration to the social and economic context so as to strike an acceptable balance between the pursuit of the decent work objective and the concern for job creation.

The fact that decent work realities cover a wide spectrum of situations is distressingly illustrated by the Global Report, *Stopping forced labour*, the content of which is truly awe-inspiring. Notwithstanding the sufferings, the denial of the threat to human dignity is intolerable and must be condemned. It is most disturbing that such practices continue to prevail, despite the fact that international action against this scourge dates back more than 70 years ago.

In this respect, the forced labour issue is a typical example for the justification of the relentless struggle for social justice. Progress is not automatic, and setbacks have to be accounted for. The record of past achievements, however, clearly validates the appropriateness of the ILO's approach, and the implementation of the decent work concept will, beyond any doubt, increase its momentum.

Mr. IRUMBA (*Government delegate, Uganda*) — I congratulate the President on her election to preside

over the proceedings of this august body. I am convinced that she will successfully steer our deliberations to fruitful conclusions.

The Director-General of the ILO, in his thought-provoking Report, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, highlights the importance of decent work, not only as a means of sustaining life and meeting basic needs but also as being crucial to individual choice, for the welfare of families and the stability of society. Indeed, in his introductory statement, he underscored that "ILO cannot deliver on our own — but we can and must be the catalysts to create an expanding global consciousness for decent work". We agree.

Over the last decade, the world has undergone far-reaching socio-economic and political changes which have been accelerated by the process of globalization and liberalization. This has generated anxiety among millions of people around the world and raised legitimate concerns, especially regarding inequality both within and between nations. Developing countries, particularly the least developed countries among them, have been and continue to be marginalized.

We welcome the Director-General's vision and objectives concerning decent work for all. We hope that this will contribute to the process of arresting and reversing the marginalization of our countries. However, we believe that for this vision to be realized, it is essential to have the views of all the social partners, developed and developing alike, fully taken on board.

In order to fully understand the key issues to be addressed in detail, these must include, inter alia, the following: improvements in the functioning and structure of international trading, economic, monetary and financial systems, particularly to bring about more inclusive, accountable, transparent and participatory international decision-making which ensures the effective participation of developing countries; the impact of international trade and investment on employment generation and poverty reduction; the impact of globalization on employment generation; foreign direct investment and its relation to the objective of creating employment for all; the link between the regulation of international financial markets and social stability; the impact of structural adjustment programmes on the socio-economic development prospects of developing countries and, above all, how to reverse the marginalization of LDCs and beneficially integrate them into the global economy.

Declining financial resources for development, worsening terms of trade, restricted access to developed countries' markets, together with weak domestic infrastructure, the heavy debt burden, illiteracy and unemployment, the impact of the AIDS pandemic on the workforce, are all major problems confronting our countries.

As the *World Employment Report 2001* indicates, sub-Saharan African countries continue to be marked by the highest incidence of extreme poverty in the world. Natural and man-made disasters, and weak commodity prices continue to weigh heavily on the fortunes of people in the region. The spectre of HIV/AIDS looms over the fortunes of the entire continent, thus putting a heavy strain on human and financial resources.

A concerted attempt to devise a comprehensive approach to financing development is required, ensuring that adequate and appropriate external finance is available to supplement domestic savings. The

International Conference on Financing for Development, therefore, is of major political significance.

We also look forward to the timely implementation of the Programme of Action for LDCs, adopted in Brussels. It is our hope that the ILO will mainstream aspects of that programme into its work programme.

At the national level, the 1995 Constitution clearly spells out the importance of the protection and promotion of human rights. This includes the freedom of association and the right to organize, protection from slavery, servitude and forced labour, women's rights, protection of children from exploitation and hazardous employment, rights of persons with disabilities and economic rights.

The provisions of the Constitution are now being translated into laws. Uganda was active in the process of developing and the subsequent adoption of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We now have draft laws to bring Uganda into conformity with, among other things, the principles of the Declaration.

Employment is a crucial factor of economic and social stability. With youth comprising more than 50 per cent of the population in Uganda, education, training and health services are very important for ensuring gainful employment. Accordingly, Uganda has introduced universal primary education.

The National Employment Policy, which has been finalized, has focused on the fundamental rights. Vocational training is now being emphasized in our educational system.

The Ugandan Government has ratified three ILO Conventions related to the Declaration, namely the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

On 28 May this year, Uganda ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). The Government is considering the ratification of the remaining core Conventions.

In conclusion, let me express my appreciation to the ILO for the assistance and technical cooperation accorded to Uganda in various ways, which has contributed to the economic recovery and development of Uganda. I also extend my appreciation to our development partners for sponsoring many activities concerning labour in Uganda. In this I wish to single out the United States, which finances quite a number of our activities.

Finally, we are committed to the social and economic development of our people, and will continue working closely with the ILO towards reducing the decent work deficit.

Original French: Mr. PARROT (Workers' delegate, Canada) — I thank the President and congratulate her and the other Officers of the Conference on their election.

I would also like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report on the challenges which we must meet in order to reduce the decent work deficit.

Having listened to a number of speeches while sitting here at the tribunal, it is a pleasure for me finally to be standing here before you and to be able to share a few thoughts with you. I am very happy to take the floor today on behalf of the workers of Canada.

I will first of all speak of the context in which I believe that the debate on decent work, launched by the Director-General, should take place. This is an economic and social context that has been discussed in many of the speeches of the past few days, a context which is noteworthy for a clear increase in economic inequality and an increasing social deficit in a number of countries.

The Canadian Labour Congress announced for this autumn that it was launching a national campaign on the quality of work.

In the next few weeks, we will be working to develop a series of specific indices which will better reflect living and working conditions, first of all, for our members at work but also in their communities. We hope that this will allow us better to track the development of the very nature of work over the years to come. Thus, I support the Director-General's initiative to place decent work clearly on the agenda. But there is one thing which we should not forget here. We cannot forget that decent work is but a pipe-dream for millions of brothers and sisters around the world. How can the victims of forced labour in Burma think of decent labour when the measures adopted by this august tripartite assembly last year have not yet been implemented?

I believe that even my Government and the employers of my country will recognize that they have not done very much in order to translate these good intentions into reality. Last Friday, in Vancouver, workers and concerned members of civil society held a demonstration while a Canadian mining company, whose activities help to sustain forced labour, was holding its shareholders' meeting.

And what of Colombia? Where shall I begin? When the Colombian ambassador in Canada claims publicly that violence affects everyone equally while the paramilitary forces have openly announced that they are targeting union leaders, how can we speak of decent work?

And how can we talk of decent work when fundamental rights are openly flouted? When presidential decrees can cancel the right to strike for months at a time? To cite an English proverb, justice delayed is justice denied. In my country, the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia has in the past few days introduced a special law to prohibit strikes by nurses even if essential services are maintained.

During this Conference, we have heard a speaker claim that the right to strike is not one of the fundamental rights. Allow me to say to those who believe this, that they are making a mistake, and a disingenuous one at that. This right is an inherent element of the fundamental rights that appear in our statutes and are mentioned in the Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, as established by case law on the application of basic Conventions with reference to those rights.

Moreover, the right of association, accompanied by the right to collective bargaining but without the right to strike, is an illusory right. Without the right to strike, there is no longer a fair equilibrium between the parties, between workers and their employers; all the power is left in the hands of the employers. So it is no surprise that certain employers would like to question this right.

We have only one thing to say to employers and governments who are tempted to follow this idea. The right of association and collective bargaining includes

the right to strike, and this cannot be negotiated. We cannot and will not compromise on this. Incidentally, I would also like to congratulate the Governments of Canada and of Costa Rica for having recognized this right in a trade agreement (unfortunately a parallel agreement) which was recently concluded.

In the past few days, we have said much about decent work. Some have said that employment generation should take priority and takes priority over decent work and fundamental rights at work. In other words, they wish to say that cheap labour, the exploitation of women and children and the negation of fundamental rights at work should remain the norm and attract their investment. It is precisely this attitude that results in half of the world working in the informal sector and it is this way of thinking which is responsible for women everywhere receiving less pay than men. This is why globalization maintains inequality, and this is what causes the decent work deficit.

In Canada and other industrialized countries we are constantly told that we must be competitive, that we must reduce our aspirations and renounce some of what we already have. In other countries, workers are also told that they must be competitive if they want to attract investment. So they are obliged to accept jobs where the most fundamental rights and the health and safety standards are almost totally ignored.

My organization, the Canadian Labour Congress, does not believe in protectionism. To those who accuse us of being protectionist, I would say that you are right in one respect. We do not believe that, in order to end inequality and be competitive, we must take our children out of school to make them work, or that we need to open export zones so that our women and children can be exploited in these areas where fundamental rights are practically inexistent, or that we should permit forced labour or abandon our social programmes.

On the contrary, we believe in sharing wealth, jobs and work. But we do not believe in sharing poverty, we believe in eliminating it. We believe in eliminating inequality, but we do not believe that in order to do so we must choose the lowest common denominator. We believe in improving the quality of life of those who live in the most difficult conditions.

This is why decent work must be a priority so that employment generation does not give us equality in a context of poverty and exploitation, but rather equality in a context of decent work where workers can realize their aspirations and participate.

Free trade implies that all countries be governed by the same rules. Decent work implies that all workers have access to the same fundamental rights recognized by all States Members of this Organization.

During this Conference, we have discussed social security. Without decent work, government revenue is low and, consequently, providing social security to citizens so that workers, with or without jobs, may live in dignity becomes much more difficult, not to mention impossible.

In concluding, I would like to say that my organization is in favour of decent work and of realizing the aspirations of workers around the world. Our work should not simply be a source of profit for companies; it should allow us to meet our basic needs and to contribute through the taxes which we are able to pay to a true social justice for all men, women and children in all our countries.

Mr. ZARB (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Malta*) — The General Workers' Union (GWU) has always believed in social dialogue as it sees industrial stability as a precondition for economic and social development. The GWU was in fact one of the pioneering agents in the creation of the Malta Council for Economic Development (MCED) made up of the Government, trade unions and employers. The trade unions went further and proposed a revamp of this important Council to include civil society. The GWU also pressed for this Council to be transformed into a decision-making body rather than a debating society.

Recently, agreement was reached in this direction between the social partners within the MCED. However, to the surprise and anger of the unions and employers, the draft bill presented in Parliament to amend the role of the MCED did not reflect what had been agreed. Consequently, the Chairperson of the MCED expressed the Council's disappointment to the Prime Minister about the way proposals from the social partners were left out of the new bill.

In view of these facts, the GWU will intensify all its efforts so that the MCED will be transformed into a body that really benefits all levels of our society and where certainly social dialogue takes place.

We are also preoccupied that, though the Government is paying lip-service to the concept of social dialogue, in reality events show the opposite. It is unbelievable that the Government, instead of committing itself to real social dialogue, is taking the social partners for a ride.

Also, the General Workers' Union is worried about the increase in the use of security forces to get in the way during legitimate industrial action. The GWU was, in fact, a victim of such government strategy when, in August 1999, the police and army were used to disrupt our legitimate industrial action.

At that time, we called on the ILO to investigate. The ILO did, and warned the Government to refrain from obstructing trade union activities. The ILO had also advised the Government to negotiate rather than confront the unions.

Recently, however, the Government ignored this advice and, once again, the state security forces were brought to cancel trade union actions.

The GWU is committed to foster, and not threaten, industrial peace. Even in situations which usually tend to result in industrial strife, we are trying to promote new ways through which industrial instability would be averted.

My union is also conscious of degrading working conditions forced on non-unionized workers. In the GWU's traditional May Day message, I voiced our concern over the new trend that has reared its head in our island. I was referring to the terrible conditions and miserable wages of illegal immigrants and foreign workers, especially in the construction industry and the tourism sector. We consider this a new form of slavery, and we pledge to combat this situation in its entirety. I am pleased to say that our concerns have brought about a positive reaction in the media, and we have succeeded in creating an awareness about the hidden social injustices at the place of work.

Since its inception, the GWU has been in the forefront of the fight against any form of exploitation. Our international feeling urges us to support any struggle, anywhere, against exploitation, whether of traditional workers, females or children. Presently, we are part of

the ICFTU's international campaign to stop child labour. We are pleased that, last week, the Government of Malta ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). We feel that the time now is ripe for the international trade union movement to take action and agree upon a strategy of practical measures to combat all forms of child labour and forced labour.

The GWU will be there in the struggle for social justice.

Mr. JENNINGS (*representative, Union Network International*) — I am speaking on behalf of the 50 million members of Union Network International (UNI), organized in 1,000 unions and 150 countries.

We welcome the frankness of the Director-General's Report, *Reducing the decent work deficit*. The deficit is a reality for millions. Too many are denied decent work, decent health care, decent access to treatment for AIDS, decent education and decent treatment in the workplace. The deficit in gender equality means that we see unequal pay and unequal opportunity.

The Report shows that we inhabit a very indecent world. The report on forced labour illustrates the extent of forced labour and points us in only one direction — abolition.

We are witnessing a concentration of wealth in fewer corporate hands. With power comes arrogance. In April, the United Kingdom retailer, Marks & Spencer, decided to close its non-UK operations. Staff were given a ten-minute warning. UNI, with the trade Union Congress (TUC) organized a large demonstration in London and the result was a change in the position of the UK Government and a proposed new EU directive on information and consultation rights. This was perhaps a decent chance to change corporate decisions.

No wonder we see a backlash against globalization when loyal staff receive such a kick in the teeth with, too often, CEO pay rises in proportion to the payroll cuts.

In the Democratic Republic of Korea, hundreds of unionists a day are incarcerated. One of our own, Lee Yong-Deuk sits on our UNI executive board, and is a leader of the finance union. His "crime" was to protest against the merger of two financial institutions. The case against him was that he was unfairly said to be interfering with the business process. His sentence was two-and-a-half years in confinement. We condemn this breach of ILO standards by the Korean Government, and our message today is to free Lee, and free all those unionists in prison in the Democratic Republic of Korea.

The ILO has to take a stronger stand against these abuses as it is doing with Burma. Global unions like UNI are putting questions to companies operating in Burma. The answers are often evasive, but until forced labour ends, companies should head for the exit door. They should invest in a new and democratic Burma.

Equally, Colombia is the murder capital of the world for trade unionists. We condemn these murderous acts, admire the courage of Colombian workers and call for ILO intervention to put an end to these murderous acts.

The Democratic Republic of Korea, Burma and Colombia are countries where rights are crushed. But what of the new economy? UNI is aiming to unionize

the new economy. We have campaigns in call centres, modern-day sweatshops in mobile telephone companies, among IT professionals and young men and women in the dot-com world.

Stock markets have crashed in the new economy, and thousands have lost jobs. Many were frog-marched from their desks by security officers with indecent haste and were out in the streets in minutes. From mass meetings to online organizing and new services, UNI unions from California to Bangalore are showing that they can organize.

Bill Gates has discovered philanthropy but remains implacably opposed to union organization. Jeff Bezos is a champion of e-commerce, yet his innovations do not extend to labour relations. Amazon refuses to apply ILO standards on freedom of association.

How useful it would be if the ILO Director-General could put the new ILO rights poster in every Microsoft and Amazon workplace.

In some companies, we cannot even get into the workplace. Wal-Mart is the world's biggest retailer with more than a million staff. In the United States, union organizers cannot get into the stores. They cannot even get into the car park. Across the world in Asia, union leaders are subject to constant harassment, such as recently in the Panin Bank in Indonesia.

So, there is no decent opportunity to organize, and we demand a decent chance of access to working people, both directly, face to face, in the workplace and online.

To overcome the decent work deficit, the ILO must take its message to the corporate boardroom. Every business should act in compliance with ILO standards and the ILO declaration on multinationals. The ILO needs to be more robust in this sphere. One way is to strengthen ILO sectoral activities. We already have a decision to create a global social dialogue in commerce, the world's largest private sector employer. The ILO simply must find the resources for this and aim to repeat this in all sectors.

We have global agreements, which does not mean that we agree all the time with the acts of the companies with which we have such agreements, such as with Telefonica, where we simply cannot accept the job losses announced in Chile, nor their manner of going about it, and we have asked the company to withdraw these plans.

We welcome the Global Compact of Kofi Annan but only a fraction of companies have signed up and the monitoring mechanism is insufficient. The silence of so many companies speaks volumes about their irresponsibility. The lack of a global dialogue between unions and companies is, I am afraid, adding to the decent work deficit.

In conclusion, in September UNI celebrates its first World Congress. Our theme is "Global Action @ UNI for People in the New Economy". Our objective is to put people first in this unjust, unstable and unsustainable global economy.

The proposed Global Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization should have as its objective "People first through decent work".

- We will continue our campaign:
- for a transparent WTO where workers have a seat at a table to discuss binding links between trade, core labour standards and jobs;
 - to dump the debt of developed countries and developing countries;

- for respect for fundamental rights by governments and businesses; and
- for decent work through jobs for all.

We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the ILO for the universal achievement of decent work.

Mr. GOODLEIGH (*Workers' delegate, Jamaica*) — I would like to thank the Director-General for his Report, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, but I feel compelled to make certain observations regarding the climate in which we will have to attain those objectives.

First, on behalf of the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions and the Caribbean Congress of Labour, I would like to express our appreciation for the ILO Caribbean Regional Office, which is based in Trinidad and Tobago. That multidisciplinary team continues to give invaluable service to the social partners of the region. They have brought vision, creativity and dedication to their task, and they are a credit to the ILO and to the region.

The economic, social and political environment in which the ILO and its social partners are seeking to establish decent work is being drastically altered. The world's economy is in transition. Transition from an industrial age where human labour was engaged in the production of goods and services to a new age where software and computer equipment are increasingly replacing human labour in agriculture, manufacturing and services.

This is an age where old concepts of property, production, management, leasing, franchising, networking and labour are being reconfigured. All these occurrences are converging with the twin forces of globalization, a technologically driven process, and rationalization, a political and trade construct, which are impacting the world's labour market.

Given these developments, an intense debate has arisen as to what sets of labour market policies are most appropriate. Traditionally, there have been two major schools of thought.

In the first instance, the neo-liberals among us have traditionally argued for the removal of labour market regulations, they argue that they have a distorting effect and stand in the way of economic growth and the ability of an economy to adapt.

Secondly, they insist on a downward spiral in wages and working conditions.

There are many of us who have assumed that this approach has been discredited, primarily because there is no empirical evidence that has supported those notions.

On the contrary, there has been a growing body of evidence that has demonstrated that there is no conflict between civil and political rights, among them trade union rights and human rights, and economic growth and social performance.

In the light of that evidence, the development approach argued for enhanced education and training; labour regulation that stressed adaptability and worker protection; observance of ILO core standards; and a well functioning safety net for workers affected by regionalization and globalization.

It was therefore becoming increasingly clear that this approach was the one that best suited our new circumstances. The ILO Governing Body, in recognition of this value added approach, established a Working

Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards in 1995.

That occurrence seems to have reignited the neo-liberals among us, and based on their traditional beliefs, they are calling for a scrapping of the ILO Convention system and its standards. They are also upset by the fact that there is an element of enforceability in the ILO Convention system. They are seeking the replacement of ILO standards by codes of conduct, charters of good behaviour and minimum protection recommendations.

All these measures seemingly are based on some kind of voluntary gentleman's agreement between the social partners, transnational corporations and NGOs. The assumption seems to be that mankind has attained near perfect levels of enlightenment and that oppression, exploitation, murder, child labour, greed, environmental destruction, slavery and war have been abolished. We all know that man's technological achievement in the last century has been remarkable but the same cannot be said of man's political and social institutions.

It is a paradox that many of the supporters of codes, charters and minimum recommendations are in full support of the WTO and its universal standards for trade, and of its ability to enforce those standards through sanctions.

As far as the Caribbean trade unions are concerned, trade rights, human rights and trade union rights are indivisible. We must be vigilant about the ILO Conventions and the review process. We are in full support of the Governing Body's audit of ILO Conventions, but we reject the notion that they should be scrapped and replaced by voluntary codes of conduct and minimum protection recommendations.

If we are to achieve the objectives of decent work we must protect the ILO system of standards.

Mr. HOFF (*Employers' delegate, Norway*) — Once again in the month of June we come together to celebrate the International Labour Conference.

This year we are in the position to celebrate some ten years of what we could classify as normal working conditions, after the era of communist power. The Soviet leaders and their friends did not fancy ILO tripartism. They were, in fact, quite sceptical, particularly to employers, and they never fully accepted that the ILO should give equal support to "Das Kapital".

There was, however, in all fairness, some reason for their modest enthusiasm because from the very start, in 1919, the ILO has been used to show the world that there existed attractive alternatives to the workers' red paradise.

This clash of interest between East and West was a fact of life for a long time, at least until the cold war lost its meaning.

During the past ten years or so, the ILO has finally become normal, meaning that the three groups are getting nearer to equal working conditions. The agenda is now, as it ought to be, composed of items relevant to social policy, the labour market, technical cooperation and human rights.

However, there are still delegates and staff among us who have not discovered the particular competence of the third party, the employers. Many a project out there in the field is suffering because employers are left out. In areas such as training, health, environment, employment and cooperation on the

floor, it should go without saying that the ILO must get hold of the expertise where it is to be found. There should now be an end to the old-time arrogance and belief that civil servants alone can do wonders.

There is a corresponding syndrome still alive with regard to the ILO Conventions. The unfortunate attitude of fighting and confrontation should now be outdated. We would be well advised to steer steadily towards quality negotiations with one aim only, to reach agreement.

The workers will, as far as I see it, be better served with solutions that attract support from all three groups, where agreed decisions are followed up loyally in everyday life at the workplace. Such a way of cooperating would be infinitely more rewarding than shortsighted and controversial voting triumphs at this Conference. When that happens, it should surprise nobody if governments and employers drop those Conventions into drawers with the firm determination of forgetting about them.

Let us all hope then that the positive trends of the 1990s and the beginning of this century will continue and, if so, there is good reason to believe that decent employers will respond positively.

Original French: Mr. RASMY (*Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Lao People's Democratic Republic*) — On behalf of the Government delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, we would like first of all to say what a pleasure and honour it is for us to take part in this session of the International Labour Conference. Please allow me to express my most sincere congratulations to Ms. A. Sto. Tomas on her election, having been elected to the Presidency of this annual event. We hope this session will be crowned with success.

This session of the Conference marks an important stage in the march of our institution into a new century, fraught with challenges to development and requiring improvements in the world of labour, within the framework of globalization. It is thus very important for the member States of the ILO to focus their efforts on solving the social and labour problems which have become exacerbated by the economic crises of recent years. They must improve the skills of the workforce in a continuous and systematic manner so as to secure economic development and set the stage to move successfully into the new millennium, where technological development produces rapid change.

The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic commends the ILO for its ongoing efforts to frame the right policies to develop labour management and administration for its initiatives aimed at solving the various problems related to the protection of fundamental rights and to the safety and health of workers in all sectors of industry and agriculture, using modern techniques and technologies. This is indeed an unprecedented move.

In recent years, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has focused — and is still focusing — its efforts on drawing up a masterplan for social and economic development for both the short and the long term. It is designed to eradicate poverty in populations in remote areas and to gradually improve their standards of living.

Last year as a Member of the ILO, the Lao People's Democratic Republic continued to discharge its duties, in cooperation with experts from the Office, for

the implementation of programmes to restrict child labour and to wipe out trafficking in women and children.

We have begun to put in place a social security system for the private sector. It is now in its initial phase, with coverage extending to production units employing more than a hundred workers. The reform of the system application to the public sector is now under way. We will continue to study possibilities for implementation, possibly including the ratification of international standards in this area, in accordance with prevailing conditions.

Recently, the ILO provided us with assistance in training staff for work in the social affairs and labour field, so as to improve occupational safety and health and gradually strengthen the implementation of our labour legislation and our labour administration.

We would like to thank the ILO and friendly countries for their support, cooperation and assistance. We hope that the ILO will continue to cooperate closely with us so as to gain a deeper knowledge of the status of work in our country and, if necessary, to furnish technical assistance so that we can find our place in globalization without excessive difficulties.

In recent years, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has, along with other ASEAN countries, focused on implementing large labour-intensive projects with the aim of securing jobs for all and reducing poverty.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic endorses the stance taken by ASEAN members, and asks the ILO to find reasonable solutions to outstanding issues pertaining to the Myanmar.

We wish this current session of the International Labour Conference every success.

Original French: Mrs. LUKIANA MUFWAN-KOLO (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Democratic Republic of the Congo*) — On behalf of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and our 20-strong tripartite delegation, I warmly congratulate the President and the two Vice-Presidents on their well-deserved election to preside over this 89th Session and on the competence with which they guide the work of this important forum.

For the Democratic Republic of the Congo, this session, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, is a forum of hope for the promotion of work around the world. So we take this opportunity to express our sincere congratulations to Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office, for his contribution, which holds many lessons for us all, as well as the efforts to reinforce the presence and the role of the ILO that he has pursued tirelessly since his nomination.

In my country, popular wisdom tells us that work is our father and our mother. This means that it is work which helps us meet our basic needs, such as health, food and lodging and so on.

It is our ardent hope that, at this historic turning point, the world will give to the ILO operational capacities proportional to the central place occupied by work in the life of the human race. The Democratic Republic of the Congo pledges to contribute to this effort to the best of its ability.

Certainly, as we all know, not all forms of work help man to realize his aspirations. This explains the importance of the Director-General's Report, which struck a particular chord with us when it referred to

measures that must be taken in order to make decent work a reality in all countries in the context of a globalized economy.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo fully subscribes to the range of measures advocated. These will allow us to reduce the great deficit of decent work and to increase the potential for creating a social floor, the foundation of any sustainable, equitable economic development, in order to eliminate poverty, and especially extreme poverty, the sad burden that humanity is still bearing in this third millennium.

We believe that the decent work concept, which has a very strong resonance with our peoples, reflects the aspirations of millions of men and women in Africa and around the world who yearn to have productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security, dignity and solidarity — a world with a more human face.

The current session is being held at a crucial moment in the history of our country at which, more than ever, we desire to eliminate obstacles to progress. The dramatic socio-economic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, aggravated by the war perpetrated by unjust aggressors whom we have been fighting for almost three years, manifests itself in the dysfunctional operation of all key sectors of our national life. We have experienced, for instance, a worsening of trade and a halt to investment, the closure of many businesses and a slowdown in production, mass layoffs and surging unemployment, ravages in the agricultural sector, where almost 80 per cent of the workforce is employed, mass internal migration due to the war of aggression, and extermination of the labour force (national and international sources estimate the number of victims at over 2 million). Social protection is very poor and social benefits are low.

Though this is a very gloomy picture, the Government is far from taking a fatalistic or defeatist stance. Rather, it is determined to muster still more courage and ingenuity in order to seek, together with our partners, the way to meet the many challenges awaiting us on the path to national reconstruction and growth.

Our efforts are encouraged by the fact that our country's development potential remains intact because of its tremendous natural and mineral resources and our large, skilled workforce inside and outside the country, which can transform our natural riches into real development.

In order to translate all of this potential into productive and decent work, the basis of a better life for all, the Government is sending a clear and strong signal through the following actions: first of all, a drive, led by President Kabila himself, to open up the country to the world. Secondly, energetic macroeconomic reform. Thirdly, the implementation of a programme to consolidate social dialogue, with the signing of a convention with public sector unions and the launch of the work of the National Labour Council to revise the Labour Code and examine the request for a national minimum wage submitted by employers and workers in the private sector, as well as the establishment of a framework for permanent dialogue and labour tribunals. Fourth, support to the standing-setting activity of the ILO as an essential tool to make decent work a reality. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has today announced the ratification of the seven core ILO Conventions, namely the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), the Discrimina-

tion (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971 (No. 135), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The ratification instruments will be deposited with the ILO Director-General tomorrow and a press conference will then be held to raise public awareness. The fifth effort being made by my Government is the strong support of ILO goals, despite budgetary constraints, through the payment of most of my country's outstanding ILO contributions and the presence of a large delegation at this 89th Session, representative of both employers and workers.

At this important meeting, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, though damaged by the war, is resolved to move forward with hope. We would like to call on men and women of good will and on bilateral and multilateral bodies as well as peaceful States to help my country in a concerted and mutually beneficial partnership which will allow us to meet the challenges facing us. My Government calls especially on such programmes as ILO PRODIAP, Jobs for Africa and IPEC for support to help us consolidate the efforts which have already been begun by the Government and social partners. We would like to thank all of those who are helping us to improve the situation in my country.

Allow me finally to mention other important matters on our agenda. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is a very agricultural country with enormous further potential and agrees wholeheartedly with the proposals to adopt a Convention and a Recommendation on safety and health in agriculture in order to put an end to the marginalization suffered by workers in the agricultural sector.

The promotion of cooperatives is an issue of great interest to us. The cooperative movement is already a reality, organized spontaneously by the population, which wished to have this framework of solidarity. So the Government of my country fully supports the need to protect the cooperative movement, notably through the definition of an appropriate institutional framework.

The question of social security is a serious concern in our country in all sectors. Many steps have been taken in order to define a framework for the creation of a system to reinforce social protection. Additionally, a project to strengthen the system of social protection, based on overhaul of the general social security system and comprehensive reform, with a view to extending social coverage, in particular to the economically active population in the informal sector, has been launched with the support of UNDP and the ILO. This project was shelved due to lack of financing, but deserves to be continued.

In conclusion, the recent experience of the Democratic Republic of the Congo compels us to call on all of the actors in the world of labour to work for peace in the world; without this, any effort for decent work will be in vain. It is our hope that this session will mark a decisive turning-point in our common march towards social progress in a globalized world.

Mr. KYRITSIS (*Workers' delegate, Cyprus*) — Two days prior to the conclusion of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, it would have been a little late to wish the President success in the task

she undertook when she was elected. We may, however, now congratulate, both her and through her, all her colleagues — the other Officers of the Conference — on the perfect coordination of the deliberations of this important Conference.

First of all, allow me to convey the warm greetings of the Cypriot working people, who expect, who look forward with considerable interest, to the results of the present session.

I would like to start my statement by expressing our satisfaction, which we believe we share with working people all over the world, on the elaboration by the International Labour Office of the Decent Work Agenda.

Decent work is an ambitious aim and meets the expectations of the working people, because it creates the preconditions, both at the national and international level, to turn at last the attention of politics to the real problems of the working people, which, as also shown by the positions taken up by other trade union members of this Conference, are constantly worsening.

Decent work is an ambitious aim, which causes, however, workers and their trade union organizations to pose several questions, particularly in relation to the existence of a real and sincere will to pursue the strategic policies that would lead to its implementation. The questions over which workers have concerns are not the result of arbitrary ideas. They are the result of the everyday experiences of the workers in all those countries where the neo-liberal model of economic development has been imposed and pursued with great consistency.

I am sure you will agree with me that decent work begins with safeguarding the right to work. Unfortunately, we have every reason to ponder and question the declarations about broadening employment and creating conditions for decent work, since the measures taken and the neo-liberal policies implemented, such as the policy of privatization and the deregulation of labour relations, lead, in fact, millions of people to unemployment, poverty and social marginalization. To what extent can we be optimistic that social sensitivity will prevail in politics, which is a necessary element for the success of a Decent Work Agenda, in a period when the accumulation and escalation of the problems faced by the workers are being tackled by the shrinking of the institutions of the social state?

It is precisely for this reason that we believe that the aim of the Decent Work Agenda will succeed only to the extent that national economies and social policies that promote social justice and aim at eliminating social inequalities make the welfare of man the focus of their attention and not the servicing of the interests of the economically powerful. The trade union movement, with its struggles, mobilizations of people and creative participation, has a decisive role to play in this matter.

The title of the ILO Director-General's Report *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, implies that the responsibility cannot be limited to the admittedly narrow, national framework, and points to the international dimension of this challenge. The development of economic interdependency between States calls on us to address the issue of decent work at the international financial level. However, can we say that the institutions of the international system, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary

Fund and the World Trade Organization, are appropriate to provide answers to these challenges? Is globalization, as it is being carried out today, a process that can in fact safeguard decent work, as the Director-General contemplates in his Report?

I am afraid the answer is no. Many other colleagues speaking before me from this same podium have made it clear that, more often than not, their governments take measures which go against the interests of labour and the people, following the advice of or even in response to coercion by the abovementioned bodies. These bodies, with their austerity and structural adjustment programmes, as well as with the terms of world trade, which they impose, serve the interests of multinationals and strengthen the dependency of the poor countries upon the rich ones. Consequently, the implementation of the aims of decent work is something that is directly linked to the need to create a favourable international institutional environment, based on solidarity and in line with our agenda's fundamental principles.

I would also like to address the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. We are happy to note that the ILO does not remain indifferent vis-à-vis the continuous inhuman violation of the labour and human rights of the workers and the Palestinian people in general by the Government of Israel. We call on the ILO to continue following the situation closely in the occupied Arab territories until the Israeli Government complies with international law and the rights of Palestinian workers are fully implemented and respected.

We are also shocked by and indignant at the fact that paramilitary organizations in Colombia are continually assassinating and terrorizing our trade union colleagues in their country. We feel that the ILO should take action there. A first step would be to establish a commission of inquiry, and I support the request for this raised during this session by other colleagues.

For 27 consecutive years the vision of decent employment for everyone in my country has been prevented, not only as a result of economic and social causes. Unfortunately, it is also being prevented by the occupation of a part of Cyprus by Turkish occupation troops. Despite United Nations resolutions, since 1974 Turkey has been obstructing the reunification of our country, the return of refugees to their homes, and Turkey deprives them of their property and their workplace. The conditions for Turkish Cypriot workers, who the Turkish troops came in allegedly to protect, are also particularly hard. The implementation of a programme for the assimilation and annexation of the occupied part to Turkey, is forcing the Turkish Cypriot working people into poverty and causing them to emigrate, while their mobilizations, when they do try to rise up, are dealt with by the use of force and terrorism.

I conclude my statement by expressing the wish that the deliberations of this session will conclude successfully, thus contributing to the effort to improve the conditions of life and work of working people.

Original Spanish: Mr. ESPAÑA SMITH (*Employers' delegate, Bolivia*) — I am really delighted to have my colleague, Mr. Donato chair this particular sitting.

The Director-General has once again addressed the Decent Work Agenda in his Report to the Confer-

ence. It is a very well written document for which I would like to thank and commend the Director-General, although I regret that it was late in being distributed.

Bolivian employers share this vision of decent work, as the paradigm described in the Report, which is consonant with productive activities carried out in proper conditions and with a safety net that generates human, social and personal fulfilment. Without a doubt this concept is a duty which falls upon all of us, and we shall aspire and contribute to achieving this goal. However, to do so requires a number of policies and tripartite efforts aimed, above all, at overcoming the employment gap, which is the main current deficit, as illustrated by present unemployment and underemployment figures, particularly in developing countries, like my own, where the needs of enterprises and the national economy faced with the demands of competitiveness in the globalized world are accompanied by an acute economic crisis.

In the everyday world, in the real world, the main priority is to create and sustain employment, across the board. As the Director-General states “there are no workers’ rights without work”. With this in mind, the Confederation of Private Sector Employers of Bolivia has considered employment to be a key feature of the economic policy that it has been drawing up and proposing to society and the national Government, with the conviction that a balanced micro-economic framework is essential, but not enough, given that we also need policies to provide micro-economic support, which facilitate the creation of enterprises and the healthy development of formal enterprises as the most effective way of generating work offering social protection. These proposals also include establishing programmes for temporary work — with public and private financing — to deal with the emergency until the employment situation has improved owing to growth and the normalization of the economy. It is advisable that the strategy for developing employment involves a process of investigating and identifying the obstacles preventing job creation, whether they lie in over-rigid, out-of-date standards, excessive social contributions or lots of red tape and bureaucracy.

We are also very concerned by the lack of protective mechanisms in the increasingly vast informal sector, which in Bolivia, owing to the current economic crisis, has grown enormously, to the point of reaching nearly 50 per cent of the active population.

We are willing to help seek ways and means of providing protection to this particular sector. However, it is very important to draw a distinction between what we could term “a justifiable informal sector”, such as independent micro-enterprises and self-employed people, transitory stages that should not be confused with the irregular situation of informal employers. Such a distinction should be observed, because we do not want to hold back the development of deliberate informality chosen for the sake of convenience or punish formal employers.

We also support the Report’s comment that we should use training as “an instrument to improve employability and reduce the insecurity of youth, women and other affected groups”. In line with this, the Bolivian employers, through their national and regional employers’ associations, have been executing and financing a package of programmes and training activities implemented in different ways at different levels:

the workforce is being provided with training by INFOCAL, an institute which is totally funded by the business community and has establishments throughout the country; another organization, PROCAL, is responsible for a programme providing access to technical training. A further institute, IDEA, caters for middle management, and there are two universities, UPB and UPSA.

Finally, allow me to say that we are very glad to see the vital issue of social security on the agenda of the session. The general discussion brought a broad-based approach to the conclusions that will be submitted to the plenary. They include an element of flexibility that does not rule out the possibilities offered by a modernized system. Without detracting from the principles of universal access and comprehensive protection, the approach takes on board the needs, capacities and economic dimensions of the different regions and countries in a form that may serve as a perfect example of discussions in the forum of the ILO, conducted in a transparent manner with mutual understanding and a true spirit of social dialogue.

Original Spanish: Mr. DE ARBELOA (Employers’ adviser and substitute delegate, Venezuela) — On behalf of FEDECAMARAS, which is the Venezuelan Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Manufacturers’ Associations, the most representative organization of Venezuelan employers, I would like to join all those who have congratulated the President and the other Officers of the Conference on their election.

FEDECAMARAS, ever since its inception over 50 years ago, has been committed to and identified with the very same approaches and objectives which the Director-General of this Organization, Mr. Juan Somavia, includes in his Report on the subject of decent work. The labour climate in Venezuela in its over 40 years of democracy is proof of the exemplary and constructive labour peace that exists there, based on dialogue and mutual understanding and on the pursuit of common objectives for the greater good of the country, an effort which brings together both workers and employers in Venezuela. Consequently, our organization — FEDECAMARAS — will go on doing everything in its power to ensure that decent work becomes a reality for all people in Venezuela.

However, we must point out that it is only possible to broaden and improve the praiseworthy objectives of decent work on the basis of productive employment, and this in turn requires as an indispensable precondition the broadest possible freedom, respect for human rights and observance of the 1998 ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. In addition, other essential elements are real and effective social dialogue with tangible results, dynamic and timely tripartism, as well as the fullest respect for and compliance with the principles of freedom of association, collective bargaining and tripartite consultation as enshrined in Conventions Nos. 87, 98 and 144, which have been fully ratified by our country.

In conclusion, we reaffirm the faithful commitment of the Venezuelan employers to the principles and basic guidelines of the Organization which we share with the International Organization of Employers, our worldwide umbrella organization. We fully trust in the fact that if we all work together, those of us who believe in and defend freedom and private initiative

will succeed sooner rather than later in improving the quality of life — something which workers, employers and governments working together must ensure for our peoples.

(*Mr. Parrot takes the Chair.*)

Original Spanish: Mr. MARTÍNEZ (*Employers' delegate, Honduras*) — I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President on her election and to extend a respectful and fraternal salutation to all delegations attending this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. On behalf of the umbrella organization of private enterprise in Honduras, which I represent at this session, I would also like to commend the Director-General of the ILO, Dr. Juan Somavia, for the thrust and the in-depth concepts addressed in his Report with a view to fostering socio-economic development efforts and thereby achieving important goals in the reduction of the decent work deficit and the fight against forced labour, in the context of the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. These recommendations, which are designed to guide industry and the member governments of the ILO, throw light on the errors that still occur in a number of countries. Despite the fact that we are already in the twenty-first century, some governments have still failed to grasp, let alone put into practice, a genuine representative tripartite philosophy, as laid down in the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia.

I am saying this, Director-General, because despite the effort made in your Report and the content of the report on *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*, which has been used to guide the Employers' group in drafting our document to go to the Governing Body, it is this latter document, which has tripartite approval, which we suggest could serve as a basic instrument in the setting up of special committees and in planning tours to those countries requiring assistance.

In the course of consideration of and discussions concerning the social security report, we came up against huge inconsistencies which reflect negatively on the attitude of some governments, including, I regret to say, that of my own country. Now is the time for in-depth analysis, and for positive thinking. If we are to overcome the obstacles with which the road ahead to globalization is fraught in developing countries, then the forces of production and governments should address these issues hand-in-hand. We have to say with great sadness that the employers in my country regret that they were excluded from consultation with labour in the reform of the social security law which the legislature recently adopted. That law has been promulgated by the executive branch, to the detriment of the economic interests of the employers.

By adopting this stance, in our opinion our legislative body has in fact violated the agreement entered into with labour, as under this agreement, reforms of the social security law must be enacted taking into consideration the principles, agreements and viewpoints adopted by both the workers and the employers. This was totally ignored, and the reform was enacted under terms that had not been agreed.

This kind of attitude jeopardizes the tripartite philosophy espoused by the ILO, which is contained in the fundamental rights and principles set out in the Declaration of Philadelphia — the cornerstone of the

defence of workers' and employers' interests and inalienable rights in the economies of ILO member States.

The Employers of Honduras deeply regret these events, and hope that the Government will do the honourable thing and reconsider its decision. If not, all we can do is respectfully but strongly protest against the methods and procedures used in adopting this law.

If we want to ensure prosperity and strengthen our economies to benefit society as a whole, then we must not resort to unproductive selfish behaviour. We must depoliticize our institutions and together forge a better destiny, with the ardent desire to strengthen peace, promote harmony and foster fraternity.

Mr. VONGDARA (*Workers' delegate, Lao People's Democratic Republic*) — On behalf of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions, I am extremely honoured to participate in the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. May I express our sincere thanks to the ILO, and to the Director-General, for the invitation to this important Conference. Allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate Ms. A. Sto. Tomas on her election to preside over this session.

This Conference is very important for a multitude of reasons, including workers' activities at the international level, and the improvement of rules and regulations relating to the working system of the ILO and its effectiveness.

Governments, workers and employers are taking greater responsibility for improving working conditions and promoting socially viable development. We should continue to strive for greater unity of purpose. Through the principle of tripartism the ILO seeks to coordinate activities for the protection of the legitimate rights and interests of workers in all countries.

The Lao Federation of Trade Unions has recently been involved in activities to provide education, training and skills upgrading for workers in various areas. Allow me to express my sincere thanks to the ILO for providing assistance to the Lao Federation of Trade Unions in the form of training for its officials to teach them about the role of the ILO and about labour legislation related to the protection of workers' legitimate rights and interests.

In January 2001, a delegation from the Lao Federation of Trade Unions took part in the ILO/ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC) Seminar on Trade Unions and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which was held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

At present, the Lao Federation of Trade Unions has been involved in developing rural areas to encourage agricultural production. The Lao Federation of Trade Unions has learnt about the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). We are also currently developing human resources and are endeavouring to increase the knowledge and skills of our workers.

The Lao Federation of Trade Unions will pursue its efforts with regard to education, training and protecting the legitimate rights and interests of the Lao workers, and also those of workers throughout the world.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Lao Federation of Trade Unions and Lao workers, I would like to express to the ILO my deep appreciation of the excel-

lent facilities provided for us, and of the warm hospitality extended to us here. Permit me to wish you every success in your future work.

Original Spanish: Mr. CHACÓN DIAZ (Employers' delegate, Cuba) — I should like to add my wishes to those of previous speakers and offer my congratulations to the President and her colleagues on their election.

I am glad to point out that, in spite of the difficult situation of our economy because of the harsh embargo we have been subjected to for over 40 years, the objectives and the principles of the ILO, and in particular all the issues of decent work, are very much of concrete reality for all workers and employers in our country.

In a country such as ours, where the primary principle is respect for the full dignity of the human being, decent work is a direct consequence of the overall justice which is promoted, upheld and vigorously defended.

The prime objective of the Cuban employers is to have an efficient kind of enterprise, but we also have a big responsibility in the genuine dialogue with the trade unions and the Government to create new employment so that our workers can maintain and improve, as far as possible, the labour achievements which they have acquired through the Revolution. For this reason, we are responsible to, and monitored by, the Government to train workers for qualifications and direct them into new jobs so they progress and make a better living. In this way, improvements are occurring on the employers' side, and our strategy is achieving encouraging results.

The fact that there is no inequality and no discrimination of any kind, and the fact that all social partners are vigilant in avoiding any kind of discrimination, enables us to carry out this essential process without any major traumas regarding labour or social matters.

Protection of women, in terms of equal opportunities and rights, and the fact that there is no child labour whatsoever, out of a deep humanitarian conviction, are achievements we are proud of. Every day we feel more fulfilled as employers and as human beings.

All this is possible primarily because the State continues to play its full role with respect to legislation and supervision in all relevant areas such as education, health and social security, amongst others.

We do not think it likely that the aim of decent work can be achieved if governments and employers subscribe to neo-liberal policies, taking away from the State more and more of the functions which are a fundamental part of the State's activities.

If globalization goes on widening the gap between the rich and the poor countries, governments and employers in the poor countries will never be able to ensure that their workers achieve the target of decent work as set by the ILO.

If we do not eliminate the causes of poverty, hunger and disease, no dialogue will be possible and no improvements will be made. If no actual work is offered, no concrete measures are taken and no programmes are implemented which go beyond superficial rhetoric and bureaucracy, there will never be progress, equity, equality and real justice.

Original Spanish: Mr. ECHAVARRÍA SALDARRIAGA (Employers' adviser and substitute delegate,

Colombia) — On behalf of the employers of Colombia, I would like to commend the President of the Conference and other Officers who have been elected.

As we have done over the years, the Colombian business community and employers reiterate their commitment to the fundamental principles and rights at work, both for ethical reasons, but also because we believe that without them you cannot achieve social harmony and well-being. We will continue therefore, to lend our support to initiatives aimed at preserving these in our country, especially if they come from an institution such as the International Labour Organization.

Hence, we welcome the decision taken by the Organization to appoint a Special Representative of the Director-General for Cooperation with Colombia, because we believe that this is a very valid contribution to the very serious problems that dog us.

We would also be very grateful if the ILO could set up a permanent office in Bogotá. Such an office would allow the Organization to gain a better grasp of the complex realities of the Colombian situation. It would also, I believe, encourage interaction between the various social sectors of the nation which is experiencing difficult times because of a lengthy and complex internal conflict, the causes and players of which are many and varied, and the victims of which are to be found in every area of society.

It is this internal conflict, and not government policy, that is responsible for the violent acts against trade unions, which we unequivocally condemn.

We are convinced that the solution to this conflict, of which we are also victims, comes from political negotiation, and will only come from that. This is why we fully support the current Government's decision to try and get a peace process with the rebel groups under way.

Many of the aspects that need to be addressed concern the strengthening of institutions, in particular the justice systems so as to end impunity, and to get rid of the sources financing the conflict.

In order to achieve these aims we really do need the help and support of the international community. This should be part of the solution, and not the problem. Therefore we consider that to appoint a commission of inquiry for Colombia is not in keeping with Government efforts and it will only serve to make matters worse for civilian society.

We would invite all the participants to this 89th Session of the Conference to help us in our quest for peace.

Mr. TETABEA (Minister for Labour, Employment and Cooperatives, Kiribati) — On behalf of the Government of Kiribati, the country that was first in the world to see the dawn of the new millennium, I extend greetings to the President and all the distinguished delegates of the International Labour Conference.

I congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their appointment to serve this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference and express my Government's fullest support and confidence in them.

Unfortunately, I have only just arrived in Geneva, due to a parliamentary session in my country. Therefore, I have missed the various important points and contributions that have been made by distinguished speakers before me in this great hall. However, I was

informed of progress by my delegates who have been here since the first sitting of the 89th Session.

Kiribati only recently became a member State of the International Labour Organization. Although Kiribati has not formally ratified any Conventions yet, Conventions such as the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), 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 Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), are reflected to a certain extent in the labour laws of the country. These laws, in particular, are the Employment Ordinance, Trade Union and Employers' Organization Act and the Industrial Relations Code.

The abovementioned Conventions were actually ratified by the Government of the United Kingdom during its colonial rule over Kiribati, when we were known as the Gilbert Islands, prior to our independence in 1979. Therefore, in accordance with ILO rules and formalities, we, Kiribati, are now required only to confirm our acceptance of the obligations arising under these, without modifications.

Before this very important step can be taken, Kiribati has resolved to carry out a detailed examination of these Conventions and its laws to ensure that Kiribati legislation fully supports the ILO Conventions.

My delegation, which arrived in Geneva before me, has further consulted the ILO secretariats and officials for their assistance with the procedures required for ratification of these four Conventions.

In regard to the other core Conventions, such as the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), positive steps have been taken to ensure that Kiribati is well placed to ratify these Conventions. In the first tripartite meeting of the ILO constituents following Kiribati's accession to the ILO, agreement was reached on a plan of action for progressing this matter. This plan includes, among other things, measures to ratify all fundamental Conventions.

With regard to reporting requirements, Kiribati has not as yet submitted a report on obligations as required under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. However, this matter is a priority for my Government, and a report for the year 2001 is in the process of being prepared.

Similarly, my Ministry has spent considerable efforts to create internal systems to address the various requests for information that are received each year from the ILO. However, it should be noted that the capacity for reporting under related obligations is a matter for concern. My Ministry and other constituents are very new to reporting to the ILO, and there are no members of my staff from my Ministry, nor any other constituents, who are familiar with such activities. It is therefore important at this stage to request that the ILO secretariat consider providing assistance not only in this area but in other areas of development that are relevant and essential to nation building.

It is also important to mention here that considerable progress has been made towards creating a form of tripartism forum which reflects the ILO's stated policy on tripartism. In particular, a committee involving representatives of Government and employers' and workers' organizations has been established to prepare draft documentation, enshrining these principles in legislation. This committee has made a number of proposals, including the creation of industrial tripartite "maneaba" with the objective of promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between public authorities, employers' organizations and workers' organizations. Work on this project will continue, following the return of the delegates from this Conference.

Ratification of the four core Conventions mentioned above (Nos. 29, 87, 98 and 105) is expected to take place before the end of this year or early next year. The remaining core Conventions will follow as soon as all the necessary formalities are completed.

My Government is fully aware of the wave of globalization coming to my country, where industry is underdeveloped and the employment situation in general is fragile. In the Pacific region, the Pacific Regional Trade Agreement (PARTA), a free trade agreement, is now at the final stage of consultation and adoption by the Pacific Islands Forum. The final stage is expected to be concluded this August. We cannot stop this wave of globalization. However, to provide the maximum and utmost support to our own citizens is a top priority of my Government, while respecting the trend of globalization.

According to the ILO's geographical categorization, my country is a part of Asia and the Pacific. I have noticed, however, with regret, that somehow ILO attention to the Pacific is less than that to our Asian friends. I am fully aware of the fact that our Asian friends have more population, more developed industry, and that access to the Regional Office is very easy, while there are only four member States of the ILO from the Pacific, and we are less developed and have smaller populations.

I thank the ILO Suva Office for their previous superb efforts and assistance. However, the Pacific has unique problems and requires more attention and local activities from the ILO; it is this that I would like to request from the Director-General.

Let me conclude, as the newest member of this esteemed international organization, that my Government is looking forward to working together in this international arena for the betterment of all peoples on this mother earth as well as, of course, the citizens of the Republic of Kiribati.

May I offer you a sacred motto of my country: *Te Mauri, Te Raoi, ao Te Tabomoa*, May health, peace and prosperity be upon us.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — The discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General is now concluded. The meeting is hereby closed.

(The Conference adjourned at 5.15 p.m.)



Vote par appel nominal sur la résolution concernant les arriérés de contributions de la République centrafricaine

Record vote on the Resolution concerning the arrears of contributions of the Central African Republic

Votación nominal relativa a la resolución sobre las contribuciones atrasadas de la República Centroafricana

Pour/For/En Pro: 239

Contre/Against/En contra: 3

Abstentions/Abstentions/Abstenciones: 3

Quorum: 272

Pour/For/En Pro: 239

Afrique du Sud/South Africa/Sudáfrica
NDEBELE, Mr. (G)

Algérie/Algeria/Argelia
LOUHADIA, M. (G)
RAÏS, M. (G)

Allemagne/Germany/Alemania
WILLERS, Mr. (G)
KLOTZ, Mr. (G)
HEINZEMANN, Mr. (E)

Angola
N'GOVE LUSSOKE, M. (G)
TIAGO GOMES, M. (E)
PEDRO GARCIA, Mme(T/W)

Arabie saoudite/Saudi Arabia/Arabia Saudita
AL-MANSOUR, Mr. (G)
ALHADLAQ, Mr. (G)
AL-SIMAEEL, Mr. (E)
AL-HAJRI, Mr.(T/W)

Argentine/Argentina
SPAGHI, Sr. (E)

Australie/Australia
BRODRICK, Mr. (G)
DREVER, Mr. (G)

Autriche/Austria
ZIMMERMANN, Mr. (G)
DEMBSHER, Ms. (G)
ARBESSER-RASTBURG, Mr. (E)
GREIF, Mr.(T/W)

Bahamas
DEAN, Mr. (G)
SYMONETTE, Mr. (G)
ARNETTE, Mr. (E)

Bahreïn/Bahrain/Bahrein
ESSA, Mr. (G)

Barbade/Barbados
SIMMONS, Mr. (G)

Bélarus/Belarus/Belarus
KOLOS, Ms. (G)
MALEVICH, Mr. (G)

Belgique/Belgium/Bélgica
CLOESEN, M. (G)
VANDERVEKEN, M. (G)
DA COSTA, M. (E)

Bénin/Benin
AGUESSY, Mme (G)

Botswana
SEBELE, Mr. (G)
MOJAFI, Mr. (G)
DEWAH, Mr. (E)
MONYAKE, Mr.(T/W)

Brésil/Brazil/Brasil
MACHADO, Mr. (G)
GOMES DOS SANTOS, Ms. (G)
DONATO, Mr. (E)

Burundi
NDUWAYO, M. (G)
NZISABIRA, M. (E)
NIYONGABO, M.(T/W)

Cambodge/Cambodia/Camboya
THACH, Mr. (G)
KEO, Mr. (G)
VAN, Mr. (E)
CHUON, Mr.(T/W)

Cameroun/Cameroon/Camerún
MBAPPE EPANYA, M. (G)

Canada/Canadá
ROBINSON, Ms. (G)
MACPHEE, Mr. (G)
PARROT, Mr.(T/W)

Cap-Vert/Cape Verde/Cabo Verde
ALVES LOPES, M. (G)
SPENCER, Mme (G)
BARBOSA FERNANDES, M. (E)

Chili/Chile
BERG MONASTERIO, Sr. (E)

Chine/China
LI, Mr. (G)
ZHANG, Mr. (G)
YAN, Ms. (E)
XU, Mr.(T/W)

Colombie/Colombia
ECHAVARRIA SALDARRIAGA, Sr. (E)

République de Corée/Republic of Korea/República de Corea
YI, Mr. (G)

Croatie/Croatia/Croacia
HORVATIC, Ms. (E)

Cuba
LAU VALDÉS, Sra. (G)
HERNÁNDEZ OLIVA, Sra. (G)

Danemark/Denmark/Dinamarca
ADLER, Ms. (G)
HESS, Mr. (G)

République dominicaine/Dominican Republic/República Dominicana
CUELLO, Sr. (G)
BRETON SANCHEZ, Sr. (G)
VARGAS SAILLANT, Sr.(T/W)

El Salvador
CASTRO GRANDE, Sr. (G)
HUIZA CISNEROS, Sr.(T/W)

Emirats arabes unis/United Arab Emirates/Emiratos Arabes Unidos
AL-MOUHAIRI, Mr. (G)
AL-ABDOULI, Mr. (G)
AL-GAIZI, Mr. (E)

Erythrée/Eritrea
WOLDEYOHANNES, Mr. (G)

Espagne/Spain/España
LOPEZ MONIS, Sr. (G)
FERRER DUFOL, Sr. (E)

Estonie/Estonia
JOONSAAR, Ms. (G)
HINDOV, Ms. (G)
PÄÄRENDSON, Ms. (E)

Etats-Unis/United States/Estados Unidos
SPRING, Mr. (G)
POLASKI, Ms. (G)
FISHMAN, Mr.(T/W)

Ethiopie/Ethiopia/Etiopía
TEFERA, Ms. (G)
ANDARGE, Ms. (G)

Fidji/Fiji
BALEIKANACEA, Mr. (G)
KURUDUADUA, Mr. (G)

Finlande/Finland/Finlandia
SALMENPERÄ, Mr. (G)
RAIVIO, Ms. (G)
HUTTUNEN, Mr. (E)
AHOKAS, Ms.(T/W)

France/Francia
LAVERGNE, M. (G)
BENHAMOU, Mme (E)

Gabon/Gabón
ELLA MENIE, M. (G)
NDONG-NANG, M. (G)
ABOUGHE OBAME, M. (E)

Ghana
WUDU, Mr. (G)

Grèce/Greece/Grecia
LAIYOU-SPANOPOULOU, Mme (G)
CHRYSANTHOU, Mme (G)
TSOUMANI-SPENTZA, Mme (E)
DASSIS, M.(T/W)

Guatemala
ARENALES FORNO, Sr. (G)
RODRIGUEZ MANCIA, Sra. (G)
PRETI JORQUIN, Sr. (E)
GONZALEZ, Sr.(T/W)

Hongrie/Hungary/Hungria
HERCZOG, Mr. (G)
VARGA, Mr. (G)
ROLEK, Mr. (E)
GYÖRGY, Mr.(T/W)

Inde/India
THAKKAR, Mr.(T/W)

Indonésie/Indonesia
SITUMORANG, Mr. (G)

Irlande/Ireland/Irlanda
JESTIN, Mr. (G)

Islande/Iceland/Islandia
GUNNSTEINSDÓTTIR, Ms. (G)
JÓNSSON, Mr. (G)
MAGNÚSSON, Mr. (E)

Israël/Israel
WAXMAN, Mr. (G)

Italie/Italy/Italia
SALIMEI, M. (G)

Japon/Japan/Japón
HARAGUCHI, Mr. (G)
NAKANO, Mr. (G)
SUZUKI, Mr. (E)

Jordanie/Jordan/Jordania
SHAHATEET, Mr. (G)
ASFOUR, Mr. (E)

Kazakhstan/Kazakhstan
TASHIBAYEV, Mr. (G)

Kenya
KYUNGU, Mr. (G)

Koweït/Kuwait
AL ME'DHADI, Mr. (G)

Lesotho
MATHIBELI, Mr. (G)
MAKEKA, Mr. (E)

Lettonie/Latvia/Letonia
PAVELSONS, Mr. (G)

Liban/Lebanon/Líbano
ISMAIL, M. (G)
EL HAJ HASSAN, M. (G)
GHOSN, M.(T/W)

Jamahiriya arabe libyenne/Libyan Arab Jamahiriya/Jamahiriya Arabe Libia
DERBI, Mr. (G)

Luxembourg/Luxemburgo
SCHOLTUS, Mme (G)
FABER, M. (G)
KIEFFER, M. (E)
GOERGEN, Mme(T/W)

Madagascar
PASEA, Mme (G)

Malaisie/Malaysia/Malasia
MUNUSAMY, Mr. (G)

Malawi
ANTONIO, Mr.(T/W)

Malte/Malta
PULLICINO, Mr. (G)
AZZOPARDI, Mr. (G)
ZARB, Mr.(T/W)

Maroc/Morocco/Marruecos
KARMOUNI, M. (G)

Maurice/Mauritius/Mauricio
JOLIE, Mr. (G)
SADIEN, Mr.(T/W)

Mauritanie/Mauritania
KANE, M. (G)

Mexique/Mexico/México
ROVIROSA, Sra. (G)
ORNELAS, Sra. (G)
DE REGIL, Sr. (E)

Namibie/Namibia
SCHLETTWEIN, Mr. (G)
NGHIYOONANYE, Ms. (G)
TRUEBODY, Mr. (E)

Norvège/Norway/Noruega
VIDNES, Mr. (G)
BRUAAS, Mr. (G)
OYNA, Mr. (E)
BUVERUD PEDERSEN, Ms.(T/W)

Nouvelle-Zélande/New Zealand/Nueva Zelandia
CRENNAN, Ms. (G)
ROUTLEDGE, Ms. (G)

Oman/Omán
AL-AMRI, Mr. (G)
ABDUWANI, Mr. (G)

Ouganda/Uganda
OGARAM, Mr. (G)
LAPENGA, Mr. (E)

Pakistan/Pakistán
HUSSAIN, Mr. (G)

Panama/Panamá
LEDEZMA VERGARA, Sr. (G)

Pays-Bas/Netherlands/Paises Bajos
VAN DER HEIJDEN, Mr. (G)
SCHRAMA, Mr. (G)
HUNTJENS, Mr. (E)

Pérou/Peru/Perú
BACA CORDOVA, Sra.(T/W)

Philippines/Filipinas

IMSON, Mr. (G)
VARELA, Mr. (E)
EDRALIN, Mr.(T/W)

Pologne/Poland/Polonia

BORUTA, Ms. (G)
JAKUBOWSKI, Mr. (G)
ZAJAC, Mr. (E)

Portugal

RIBEIRO LOPES, M. (G)
BARCIA, M. (G)
FERNANDES SALGUEIRO, M. (E)
DE CARVALHO, M.(T/W)

Qatar

AL-KHULAIFI, Mr. (G)
AL HAYDER, Mr. (G)
AL-HAJRI, Mr.(T/W)

Royaume-Uni/United Kingdom/Reino Unido

NIVEN, Ms. (G)
WARRINGTON, Mr. (G)
LAMBERT, Mr. (E)

Fédération de Russie/Russian Federation/Federación de Rusia

LUKYANENKO, Mr. (G)
PIROGOV, Mr. (G)

Saint-Marin/San Marino

MANUZZI, M. (G)
BIGI, Mme (G)
VAGNINI, M. (E)
FELICI, M.(T/W)

Seychelles

MACGAW, Ms. (G)

Slovaquie/Slovakia/Eslovaquia

VAVRO, Mr. (G)

Slovénie/Slovenia/Eslovenia

ZIDAR, Mr. (G)
MIKLIC, Mr.(T/W)

Soudan/Sudan/Sudán

YOUSIF HAYDOUB, Mr. (G)
EL HASSAN, Mr. (G)
EL GURASHI, Mr. (E)

Sri Lanka

MADIHAHEWA, Mr. (G)
DASANAYAKE, Mr. (E)
SUBASINGHE, Mr.(T/W)

Suède/Sweden/Suecia

JONZON, Mr. (G)
WIKLUND, Ms. (G)
WAHLSTRÖM, Mr. (E)

Suisse/Switzerland/Suiza

ELMIGER, M. (G)
BRUPBACHER, M. (G)
BARDE, M. (E)

Suriname

VAN OMMEREN, Mr. (E)

Swaziland/Swazilandia

GININDZA, Mr. (G)
MNDZEBELE, Mr. (G)
HLOPHE, Mr. (E)
SITHOLE, Mr.(T/W)

République-Unie de Tanzanie/United Republic of Tanzania/República Unida de Tanzania

MAENDA, Mr. (E)

République tchèque/Czech Republic/República Checa

FUCHS, Mr. (G)
PINTÉR, Mr. (G)
DRBALOVÁ, Ms. (E)
BERAN, Mr.(T/W)

Thaïlande/Thailand/Tailandia

ANANTAGOOL, Ms. (G)
NAKCHUEN, Mr. (G)
WICHITRAKORN, Mr. (E)
SUBSARN, Mr.(T/W)

Trinité-et-Tobago/Trinidad and Tobago/Trinidad y Tabago

RICHARDS, Ms. (G)
HILTON CLARKE, Mr. (E)

Tunisie/Tunisia/Túnez

CHOUBA, Mme (G)
KCHAOU, M. (G)
M'KAISSI, M. (E)
TRABELSI, M.(T/W)

Turquie/Turkey/Turquia

ISIK, Mr. (G)
AKSAHIN, Mr. (G)
CENTEL, Mr. (E)

Ukraine/Ucrania

MAYKO, M. (E)
CHILOV, M.(T/W)

Uruguay

IRRAZABAL, Sr. (G)
DELGADO, Sr. (G)

Venezuela

CORRALES LEAL, Sr. (G)
GALUMCH, Sr.(T/W)

Viet Nam

NGUYEN THANH, Mr. (G)
VU LAM, Mr. (G)
NGUYEN TIEN, Mr. (E)
NGUYEN AN, Mr.(T/W)

Yougoslavie/Yugoslavia

BOSKOVIC-PRODANOVIC, Mrs. (G)

Zimbabwe

MUSEKA, Mr. (G)

**Contre/Against/En
contra: 3**

Roumanie/Romania/Rumania

COSTACHE, M. (E)
NEAGOE, M.(T/W)

République arabe syrienne/Syrian Arab Republic/República Árabe Siria
SHAMSEDDINE, Mme (G)

**Abstentions/Abstentions/
Abstenciones: 3**

Cap-Vert/Cape Verde/Cabo Verde
VAZ, M.(T/W)

Emirats arabes unis/United Arab Emirates/Emiratos Arabes Unidos
ALMARZOOQI, Mr.(T/W)

Roumanie/Romania/Rumania

MAGHERUSAN, Mme (G)

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