



Provisional Record

Eighty-ninth Session, Geneva, 2001

Nineteenth sitting

Wednesday, 20 June 2001, 10.15 a.m.

Presidents: Ms. A. Sto. Thomas, Mr. Parrot

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SAFETY AND HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE: SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION

The PRESIDENT — Today we open the 19th sitting of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. The first item on our agenda is the review of the report of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture, which is to be found in *Provisional Record* No. 15.

I give the floor to Mr. Abu Bakar, Reporter of the Committee, to submit the report.

Mr. ABU BAKAR (*Government delegate, Malaysia; Reporter of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture*) — It is always a privilege to address the International Labour Conference and I am especially honoured that the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture has chosen me for a second time to enjoy that privilege.

It is a particular pleasure to come before you today to report on the success of our Committee in establishing the text of the proposed Convention and the proposed Recommendation on safety and health in agriculture.

Before describing for you how we achieved that, I would like to add my congratulations to those already offered to Ms. A. Sto. Tomas on her election as President of this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Many of the Government members of this year's Committee testified to the central role of agriculture in their countries' economies. The ILO estimates that, for the world as a whole, half of the workforce is engaged in agriculture and we have heard from countries where the proportion of the agricultural workforce reaches 80 per cent. The global proportion of workers is, unfortunately, mirrored in a global proportion of workplace fatalities. Figures from 1997 suggest that out of 335,000 fatal workplace accidents worldwide, 170,000 struck agricultural workers. If the total annual loss of life to work-related accidents and diseases is 1.2 million, half of these can be expected in agriculture. Many times more numerous than the fatalities are the injuries and the non-fatal diseases, the cases of social disruption and environmental degradation entailed by a disrespect for ILO principles in this sector.

It was with a strong sense of commitment that our Committee reconvened two weeks ago for its second reading of a proposed Convention and a proposed Recommendation on safety and health in agriculture. We examined documents that had undergone almost three dozen substantive changes since their first

reading, as a result of responses to questionnaires on the proposed instruments approved at last year's Conference.

In addition, our Committee added a new Article to the proposed Convention, according to which "Hours of work, night work and rest periods for workers in agriculture shall be in accordance with national laws and regulations or collective agreements". This constitutes a landmark because it has not always been recognized that working time arrangements have a significant impact on the safety and health of workers.

The ratification of the proposed Convention under discussion was a constant concern of our Committee and I am personally pleased to be able to say that most of the provisions of the proposed instrument, including those on working time, are already consistent with Malaysian legislation.

In addition to producing instruments that would set standards for all workers in agriculture as high as those for sectors that already benefit from ILO Conventions and Recommendations, we were also asked to discuss the possibility of studying the impact of trade clauses on safety and health in agriculture. The Committee felt that it did not have the competence or the mandate to vote on a resolution on this topic but many members of the Committee thought that the subject deserved a place on the ILO agenda some time in the future.

We held 19 sittings, three more than for the first reading of our instrument last year and examined 226 amendments as against 198 last year. We owed our productivity to the excellent rapport that existed within our group. When I had the honour of presenting our Committee's report last year, I remarked on the degree of consensus shown by the four votes taken during our deliberations.

What can I say this year? We produced the proposed Convention and proposed Recommendation with only one vote. For example, the expression "as far as reasonably practicable" reintroduced by the Employer members and viewed favourably by a number of Government members, was a potential obstacle to a successful conclusion. But, in the spirit of collaboration that typified our debates, the compromise terminology "in so far as is compatible with national laws and regulations", was accepted as the equivalent.

For their part, the Worker members pushed hard for recognition of regional city representatives for workers in undertakings too small to have their own city committees, but they were willing to let this issue be handled at the national level for the time being.

This ability to reach practical consensus without compromising principles is a gift abundantly shared by Mr. Schlettwein, the Chairperson, and Mr. Makeka

and Mr. Trotman, Vice-Chairpersons of the Employers' and Workers' groups, respectively.

I would also like to pay tribute to the contribution of the legal adviser and deputy legal adviser of the Conference, both during sittings of the Committee and during the ten-hour drafting committee meeting that successfully integrated the many amendments and stylistic changes adopted during our two weeks of deliberation.

Finally, sincere thanks are owed to Dr. Takala, representative of the Secretary-General, and his team of experts, secretaries, clerks, typists and others whose work was essential to lead to the successful conclusion of our activity. It is the outcome of those activities, our report and the proposed instruments in *Provisional Record* No. 15, Parts 1 and 2, that I now have the pleasure of submitting for your consideration and recommending for adoption.

Mr. MAKEKA (*Employers' delegate, Lesotho; Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture*) — Since this is the first time that I am addressing this assembly this year, allow me to add my delegation's congratulations to the President and the Officers of the Conference on their unanimous election to manage and guide the deliberations of this Conference to successful conclusions.

I speak here today in support of the report of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture, which has just been introduced by our Reporter. It will be recalled that the Governing Body decided to put this item on the agenda of the Conference for the Conference to consider whether to conclude international instruments in the form of a Convention or a Recommendation. The Conference assigned this item to a Committee, which worked on the matter over a two-year period, culminating in this report and the two instruments — a proposed Convention and a proposed Recommendation — now before this assembly.

The Employers' group in the Committee made it clear right from the start that it was opposed to a conclusion that would lead to a Convention and Recommendation on the subject. This was in accordance with the group's stand against sector-specific instruments. We were of the view that the subject matter itself was not ready for the conclusion of international instruments in the form of a Convention and a Recommendation owing to widespread practices among member States. At no point, however, did we minimize or doubt the importance of safety and health of workers in agriculture. We are after all, the first to uphold and safeguard health standards for workers because we need healthy workers to contribute towards the productivity and profitability of our farms. We would have preferred the matter to have been handled by way of a general discussion or at most by way of a protocol, codes of practice or guidelines for employers and workers and their organizations.

We remain opposed to the practice of concluding sector-specific ILO instruments and we are gratified that the Governing Body of the ILO is addressing this issue comprehensively. We are concerned at the continuing tendency of some of our collaborators who perceive the mandate of the International Labour Conference as the compilation and manufacturing of one instrument after another without regard to the consequences. This attitude seems to be shared by

many Governments who support and favour whatever instruments are concluded by the Conference, knowing very well that they will not ratify them or incorporate them into their national legislation. Thanks to the Employers' group in the Governing Body, the numerous instruments that have gathered dust on our shelves are being reviewed with a view to updating them or discarding them if they are found to be obsolete.

The world has changed, and this Organization with it, from the days when employers were treated as strangers and in some instances the enemy on whom as many obligations as possible were to be piled. Today, employers are and must be perceived for what they really are, namely, creators of jobs and the most realistic vehicle for economic and social development. I cannot deny that employers in the past may have contributed to the hostility and confrontational approaches that characterized employer-worker relations at the national level and in this House. Employers today, while still pursuing profit margins, have accepted and acknowledged their social responsibilities towards their workers, the environment and the communities they serve. The championing of fundamental principles and rights at work as well as the Global Compact to give two examples, are a living testimony of this commitment on the part of employers. Unfortunately, there are still remnants of the old legacy amongst our collaborators and in this House who still believe that international instruments such as Conventions and Recommendations are a panacea for problems which cannot be resolved to their satisfaction at national level, and that these instruments can and must be adopted by majority votes as opposed to adoption by consensus even if the employers are opposed to such instruments. The recently adopted Convention and Recommendation on maternity protection is a glaring example and we are not surprised that to date it has only attracted two ratifications.

It is against this background that we approached the matter assigned to the Committee. We made our commitment clear that, if the Workers' group and the Governments were determined to have a Convention and Recommendation on the subject of safety and health in agriculture and this was done by way of a vote, we would go along with the conclusions of the proposed Convention and proposed Recommendation provided that they took into account and reflected our rights and interests as employers, and that they were flexible and not overly prescriptive to allow for the possibility of wide ratification. We knew that at the end of the day, we could not get everything that we wanted so we approached the matter in a spirit of give and take "as opposed to the spirit of take and grab", to quote our Chairperson. We are grateful that this spirit permeated to all groups and in consequence we were able to draw up the texts now before you largely through consensus.

The deliberations of 2000 were so difficult that I was very sceptical about the prospects of a compromise. At this juncture, I would like to point out that in March 2001 inter-sessional informal consultations, sponsored by the Director-General himself, could be said to have been a turning point because they opened up avenues and created trust and confidence among us. For this I would like to express our appreciation to the Office and to the Director-General for having made those informal consultations possible.

This year there was good will on all sides. Even though we lost on the issue of “as far as is reasonably practicable” referred to by the Reporter, particularly under Article 4 of the proposed Convention, on the whole our concerns and interests were taken into account. We are very grateful to the accommodating spirit of the Vice-Chairperson of the Workers’ group, Mr. Trotman, as well as his group because they were happy to accommodate us even when we had shot ourselves in the foot. There are many other issues which, in our view, could have been included or excluded from the instruments — for example, we did not want to see any reference to self-employed farmers in the wording of the proposed Convention or in the text of the Recommendation. But, as they say in this House, most of us can live with the present text of the proposed Convention and proposed Recommendation.

I have no hesitation, therefore, in commending the report as well as the two instruments for adoption by this Conference. It is our hope that the two instruments will be adopted with the support of the Employers as well. This does not mean that individual Employers’ delegates may not have reservations or misgivings about one or two points in the text. There will therefore be Employers’ delegates who may abstain from voting on the instruments for one reason or another, some of which I have already elaborated on.

I would like to conclude by expressing my thanks and words of appreciation to our Chairperson who did a marvellous job in promoting consensus in the group, to the Vice-Chairperson of the Workers’ group as well as to his group, to the many Government delegates and representatives as well as their spokesperson, and to the Reporter and the Drafting Committee, and lastly but not least to the Office and the secretariat. And I would like to end by thanking the Employers’ group itself without whose support, guidance, cooperation and understanding we would not have been able to reach where we are today.

Mr. TROTMAN (*Workers’ delegate, Barbados; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture*) — In commending the report on the attending instruments to this house, I wish to advise that I have been directed by the Workers’ group to express their deep gratitude to the following persons and institutions for the great assistance they rendered us in the preparation, discussion and conclusions of the item now before us, addressing the matter of health and safety in agriculture.

We are especially grateful to the SafeWork staff, to JUR (legal services) and to all other staff members for their long hours, indeed long months, of dedicated work aimed at providing delegates with a sounder basis at every stage in our debate.

We are grateful to the Employers’ group for being positive and committed, particularly in being able and willing to rise beyond their original objections and display a strong sense of commitment to the instrument before us.

We are so satisfied with that positiveness that we do not believe that there will be any abstentions or disagreements among the Employers.

We wish to thank all those governments which participated in the debate, particularly those whose skilful representatives frequently lifted the debate when it was threatened by obstacles of various sorts.

Our special debt of gratitude goes to the representative of the Government of Namibia, Mr. Schlettwein, who, as Chairperson of the Committee, led the way with patience, evenhandedness and humour, and always with a focused sense of purpose.

The various members of the Workers’ group came here last year, and again this year, looking for a different set of conditions in many of the Articles which were eventually agreed.

We had a sense, however, far beyond our dreams and wishes, that history would deliver judgement on our action in the Committee and later, like today, on our report and the eventual result of the vote.

The Workers’ group gave ground, as did the Employers and most Governments, to ensure a Convention which is flexible and highly rectifiable. There are two important and influential considerations which consolidated our sense of commitment. One relates to the ILO itself, and the other to the protests of civil society.

Let us take the second one first. Geneva, Seattle, Davos, Washington: meetings of influential world organizations and their attendant meetings of the young and the not so young, the poor and the not so poor, the constructive and the not so constructive.

All are driven by the same rejection of the current rules of engagement. Some of them are our children. Many of them are wealthy and able to afford the phenomenal cost of transport from city to city. All of them are driven by a demand for change in the terms of this engagement — a demand to see identifiable world movers and shakers, and to be able to discuss rules and methods with them in moving towards an acceptable new world order where transparency is the buzz word and social inclusivity is the guiding objective.

This vision of the demonstrators and the demonstrations taking place all over the world should be instructive, just as we need to have a clearly defined mirror image of ourselves and our position within the present-day landscape of human interaction.

These protestors are impatient with the way in which international organizations function, and whether we like it or not, we have to admit that in the case of Seattle, they have forced the establishment to rethink its position on matters relating to human values and social justice.

Fortunately, they view the ILO in a less hostile manner than they do other international bodies. The image of the ILO has improved in recent times and the campaigns it is promoting for peace, bread and freedom have done much to restore the faith of several developing countries in the Organization.

We have to recognize that if we do not make meaningful efforts to meet this demand for transparency and for inclusivity, then the attention focused on other international bodies may also be turned on us with equal anger.

The report before us represents a marvellous level of goodwill. The Workers’ group wishes to make the point that this instrument represents a challenge — a challenge to see in the course of time whether members participating in the ILO’s activities can further demonstrate their faith in, and commitment to, a better life for all.

In the time remaining, let me draw attention to the view of the secretariat that this may be the last of the sectoral standards.

Paragraph 9 in the report correctly refers to ongoing discussions at the level of the Governing Body.

But it may be misleading for this House if it is not confirmed that, in the final analysis, standard-setting matters reflect the importance which the Governing Body assigns to issues as they unfold.

The Workers' group looks forward to seeing support, and indeed funds, for ensuring decent work in agriculture, and to having early indications that this vast body of workers in agriculture, which was neglected in the past, now has protection equivalent to that enjoyed by other workers.

The Workers' group commends the report, the Convention and the Recommendation.

Mr. SCHLETTWEIN (*Government delegate, Namibia; Chairperson of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture*) — I want to start by sharing with you the great honour which was accorded to my country, Namibia, and myself, by being involved in a very intimate way in the development of a Convention and Recommendation on safety and health in agriculture. I am very thankful for that opportunity which was afforded to us.

The instrument in front of us started four years ago, so the time span during which we have developed an instrument is four years, and not only the past two weeks. So, I just want to make it quite clear that our efforts during the last two weeks involved just adding the dots and commas. The most important work was done in the previous period.

When we started discussions on the proposed Convention and Recommendation, one of the buzz words was "flexibility"; it had to be flexible, it also had to be ratifiable and able to be implemented. If you judge these qualitative measures, or yardsticks, against that which you would like to see, whether you have a good or a bad instrument, I am confident that the answer is that we in fact do have a good one.

Words like "where appropriate", "where necessary" and "where compatible with national law and practice" are all indicators that there was a willingness on all sides — the Workers and Employers — to indeed incorporate flexibility into the instrument along with ratifiability.

But, I dare say that ratifying, or even adopting this Convention, is just the mere beginning of a long journey. It is my hope that after adoption and ratification the real work of the Convention will only start, namely the implementation of these instruments at the grass-roots level. As citizens involved in agriculture, we are fortunate in that we can really work at the grass-roots level in the true sense of the word. The Workers' delegate asked correctly, and so did the Employers' delegate, whether sector-specific instruments are relevant or not. It is my conviction that if we want to work at the grass-roots level, if we want to reach people where it matters, then obviously the future of sectoral instruments is not as bleak as some people want to believe. I would therefore agree that we are in a mutual and amicable situation where we do not have to decide on whether or not, but how best to combine sectoral and generic Conventions.

I have tried to very briefly touch on the qualitative nature of the Convention. Let me now proceed to the quantitative achievements that we have managed during the last two weeks. I am told that we wrote history this time. We produced the most voluminous report ever. It has in fact 829 paragraphs. I am also told that if you compare our report with that of the ma-

ternity protection Convention, the latter would just appear to be a mere note in comparison. Some people may believe that people shy away from voluminous reports, but since I have been intimately involved in this one, I am sure it makes very interesting reading. In fact, it is a crucial report which will assist those who implement the Convention with the interpretation of this rather important instrument.

We have also talked about the spirit in which the Committee did its work. When we started off, I think we were prejudged to be on the path of a very difficult process, but I can assure you that through the willingness of my two Vice-Chairpersons and their groups, through the accommodating process of Government delegates, we managed to turn an adversarial process into one which was much more conciliatory. And, as was reported by the Employers' delegate, we managed to reach a consensus on all Articles except one when we took a vote. I think it would be unfair to say that this achievement could only be accredited to the groups. I think the secretariat and the Office, through very well-prepared documentation and pre-discussions of this initially controversial instrument, did a tremendous job which, in fact, assisted me and my Vice-Chairpersons in reaching these consensus positions very easily. I am very thankful for their participation.

Lastly, I would like to thank by name the Vice-Chairperson of the Workers' delegation, Mr. Leroy Trotman, not only for the enjoyable English that he speaks, but also for the content that helped us to draw up, in my opinion, a very good Convention. I would also like to thank Mr. Thabo Makeka who, in spite of having difficulty in understanding many of the provisions, if I refer to his introductory remark, helped us tremendously to eventually be in a position to put forward to this House a Convention and Recommendation on safety and health in agriculture.

In conclusion, I would put it to the House and appeal that you support this very important instrument when voting on this issue tomorrow. We will support it in any event.

The PRESIDENT — I now open the general discussion on the report of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture.

Mr. TANDON (*Minister of Labour, Government of Punjab, India*) — I am grateful to the President for giving me this opportunity to place on record the support of India to the proposed Convention on safety and health in agriculture. As we mentioned during the last session, the subject of safety and health in agriculture is of paramount importance to us in India, and recognizing the importance of the subject, we supported the initiatives discussed during the last session on the subject. This session, continuing the support we gave to this important subject, we congratulate all participants, namely the representatives of the Workers, Employers and the various Governments, on their support to the proposed Convention.

As you know, India is predominantly an agricultural economy, where most economic activity is << related to agriculture and allied sectors. Historically, agricultural holdings in the country have been small. Of a total of 110 million cultivators, over 50 per cent belong to the small and marginal farmer category; landless agricultural workers number over 75 million in our country.

I represent Punjab, one of the states of the Indian Union where the “Green Revolution” has made a significant impact. It has no doubt led to increased productivity, but it has also increased the use of pesticides and insecticides and greater use of agricultural machinery and other artificial methods of increasing production. It has also made a marked impact on the health and safety of agricultural workers. However, we do not have a national policy for safety and occupational health in agriculture and this issue has yet to be tackled on a large scale.

It is in this context that we welcome this proposed Convention on health and safety in agriculture. India is a federal polity wherein a large number of subjects, including agriculture, are the concern of the state governments. Any central legislation or policy would necessarily have to be put to consultation of all stakeholders before it could be implemented effectively.

We support the provisions of this Convention, though we did make certain suggestions for minor modifications in the Articles of the draft Convention at the time of discussion. As I said earlier, the approach of the Government of India would be to draw up a national policy on occupational health and safety in agriculture, taking the view of all sections that are directly concerned.

In this context, I am confident that the mechanism of social dialogue between the social partners, as propagated by the ILO, will be of great assistance to us. The State of Punjab, to which I belong, presents a living example of the mechanism of social dialogue in action in real life. The ILO organized, in Punjab, a seminar on promoting social dialogue in India in December 2000, with the active collaboration of the Government of Punjab. Motivated by the deliberations of the seminar, the state launched two unique projects for labour welfare, one for resolving disputes between labour and management through a process of mutual reconciliation, and the other for carrying out thorough medical checks on workers employed in hazardous industries.

As in the traditional mechanism, disputes between labour and management are first brought before a reconciliation panel, where an attempt is made to bring about a settlement between the parties. About 50 per cent of disputes are settled in this manner, and the rest are sent to the labour courts, where they take a long time to reach settlement. A conscious attempt was made to settle such cases by social dialogue between the partners through the management of the Peoples’ Courts, or Lok Adalats, as recognized by our Legal Services Authority, 1987. I am happy to inform you that there was an enthusiastic response from all social partners including the representatives of workers, employers, government officers, judges and even lawyers. This has resulted in the settlement of about 11,500 cases out of a total of 18,000 pending cases, within the short span of six months. The sum of 75 million rupees was also paid to the workers in settlement of these cases. These results are very encouraging, as this step concludes litigation between the parties; there is no scope for further appeals, etc.

Similarly, about 143 medical camps have been organized over five months, providing medical screening for about 45,000 workers, with the primary objective of protecting their health and safety. We are shortly going to extend this project to cover non-hazardous enterprises.

What I want to emphasize is that the mechanism of social dialogue has taken deep root in our state and is being implemented successfully in real life. It is encouraging to note that not only our neighbouring states, but also neighbouring countries, are seeking information and our active assistance in adopting and implementing the mechanism within their respective areas. A number of inquiries have already been received by us in this regard from various quarters.

I may assure you, therefore, that we shall do our best to build consensus through the process of social dialogue, putting into place a system which is effective in developing and implementing a coherent safety and health policy in agriculture.

Finally, I once again congratulate the ILO and the tripartite mechanism on having developed such a Convention. On behalf of my country, I can assure you that the decisions that form part of the Convention will be given every attention and incorporated in our national policy.

Mr. POTTER (*Employers’ delegate, United States*) — We endorse Mr. Makeka’s description of the background leading to the two-year discussion on safety and health in agriculture and we highlight particularly his comments that related to maternity leave to which points are equally applicable here. We also very much appreciate and commend Mr. Makeka’s capable leadership of the Employers’ group on this issue.

For the past two years the United States business community has been represented on the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture by Ms. Jodie Stearns, who operates a family farm along with her husband outside Toledo, Ohio. They employ approximately 125 workers to harvest pickling cucumbers and peppers grown on their farm. She is also an attorney who is on the board of directors of the National Council of Agricultural Employers which represents thousands of agricultural employers across the United States. Her hope and that of the United States business community was to participate in the drafting of a Convention and Recommendation that would benefit both farm workers and farmers.

Although the Convention is a vast improvement on last year’s text, it should not be adopted by the Conference for some very practical reasons.

Everyone knows that the United States is a very blessed developed country. Yet even in the United States the cost structures and economics of family farms are such that full implementation of this Convention would drive the majority of family farms out of business because of the additional costs incurred. Such farms would become unprofitable and unable to compete. This is particularly true today when so many US farmers are struggling just to survive. The reality for most farms in the United States is that they are husband and wife operations with virtually no infrastructure to implement the provisions of the Convention. The Convention and Recommendation treat farms as if they are large businesses with a substantial human resources infrastructure. In our view, any country that ratifies this Convention and fully implements it will have created a competitive disadvantage for its agricultural sector in the global market-place.

In addition, the Convention goes far beyond the safety and health of agricultural workers. It needlessly duplicates and often exceeds the provisions of other ILO Conventions such as the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), the Mini-

mum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), the Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170) (as well as its accompanying Recommendation (No. 177)), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). For example, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), does not limit all agricultural labour for youth under 18, but this Convention does. There is virtually no flexibility in the Convention other than the method by which the country goes about complying with it.

The Convention is impractical at several levels. It assumes that farms have stable workforces where representatives can be identified and elected. For most farms in the United States, the workforces are seasonal and the composition of those workforces vary each year. The Convention assumes that farmers have sufficient infrastructure to conduct risk assessments and training programmes.

Perhaps most significantly, the Convention does not recognize that agriculture is driven by the weather. The concept of working time arrangements is injurious to production agriculture because the hours of work are dictated by weather conditions that cannot be controlled. These compelling problems as well as the inclusion of such issues as ergonomics, special treatment of women workers and compulsory insurance undermine the fragile economics of agriculture.

For these practical reasons, US employers will abstain on the vote for both the Convention and the Recommendation.

Mr. REKOLA (*Employers' adviser, Finland*) — Health and safety at work is definitely an important and, as an employer, I would say even a natural aspect of working life. Every reasonable employer takes care of the health and safety of his workers because by doing so he ensures the productivity of economic activity in the enterprise.

Accidents at the workplace and absenteeism from work with working hours lost because of an inadequate working environment, always cause costs for employers and disturb the production process. So, from an employers' point of view, health and safety activities and productivity at the enterprise level go hand in hand. At least in the long term, the efforts and costs of promoting health and safety of personnel can be seen as inputs for higher productivity. This is also true in an agricultural undertaking.

Employers and employees in their undertakings can jointly improve health and safety step by step without causing excessively heavy economic costs for the undertaking.

The drafting of the Convention and Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture has required good will and intrinsic work from all the tripartite parties.

Thanks to the good cooperation and targeted effort of the Workers, Employers, Governments and the Office during this session of the Conference, the Committee has been able to draw up these new instruments for safety and health in agriculture. Again, from an employer's point of view, both the Convention and Recommendation form a new global framework which provides a space for national measures in the ILO member States.

From the very beginning, flexibility shaped the employers' objectives because of the huge variation of conditions, legislation and practices concerning agri-

culture in different parts of the world. The purpose is for us to get the best possible agreement that will be ratified by as many member States as possible. We all agree that the final aim of this process is to implement these instruments widely and through the different national approaches to promote health and safety in agricultural work.

As an Employers' delegate from Finland, I would like to express my most sincere thanks to Mr. Schlettwein, the Chairperson of the Committee, to Mr. Makeka, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, and to Mr. Trotman, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, and to all my colleagues in the Government and Employers' and Workers' groups. It has been interesting to work in a global and inspiring spirit.

Ms. NASIREMBE (*Employers' adviser, Kenya*) — I am privileged to make these comments. For the last two weeks we have reviewed every word and phrase that formed the sentences of the proposed instruments before us. I am left with complete admiration for all of you here, and those who have now left but who participated tirelessly to achieve what is now in final draft form.

At the tripartite meeting on Monday we reviewed 811 paragraphs of the Committee's proceedings and, with a few observations, agreed that the record represented a fair view of our discussions, debates and agreements.

We are now here to give the green light for progress to be made on our work regarding the proposed Convention and Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture.

On Monday we also paid great tribute to the good work performed by our tripartite Chairperson, and by his two colleagues, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Trotman, and the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Makeka. We were grateful that, despite the differences in opinion during the debates, these three people indeed guided us to harmonize our thinking to reach desired compromises on all Articles of the Convention and Paragraphs of the Recommendation. We all generally agreed that we could live with what is contained in these two instruments.

From the African Employer point of view, and as a Kenyan employer, I urge your delegates to vote "yes" for these instruments; we have a moral duty and responsibility to do so. To vote otherwise, while of course democratic, would not only undermine our determination and energy to contribute tangibly to the world community, it would also undermine the efforts of the ILO, which strives for fairness for all at the workplace.

Ms. MAYMAN (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Australia*) — On behalf of the Workers' group, I seek to address two specific aspects of the proposed Convention concerning safety and health in agriculture, and its associated Recommendation, before the Conference. These aspects are particularly important to workers, and they address the issue of the ability to elect a worker safety and health representative, and the special needs of women workers already mentioned this morning, although not necessarily in a positive sense.

Given the unacceptably high number of injuries, fatalities and ill health in this sector, it is particularly important that the social partners and governments address in cooperation the preventive strategies

necessary to ensure that health and safety are a normal part of the agricultural sector. Factors that we need to consider, as social partners and as governments, include seasonal work, which often necessitates long hours of work and, therefore, high risks, the geographic isolation of many agricultural areas, the low levels of inspection and enforcement by many competent authorities, small undertakings with less than five employees, and the casual, part-time and itinerant nature of seasonal work.

The proposed Convention before the Conference covers the three fundamental worker rights in safety and health. Those are rights that we all know, the right to know, the right to participate and elect safety and health representatives, and the right to stop unsafe work in the face of imminent or serious danger.

In this respect, worker participation in the agricultural sector must occupy a central place if we are to implement preventive strategies. The challenge is for worker organizations, in their respective member States, to ensure that a comprehensive approach is adopted to worker participation, and Brother Barry Leathwood, from the United Kingdom, will present some of the options that are already implemented in member States throughout the world.

The Workers' group particularly welcomes the achievements on women workers, and also the fact that it was an all-male contingent, in terms of the Worker Vice-Chairperson and the Employer Vice-Chairperson, and indeed the Chairperson of the Committee, that posted those achievements. Congratulations from all women.

Those achievements can be seen in an important Article, "Measures shall be taken to ensure that the special needs of women agricultural workers are taken into account in relation to pregnancy, breast-feeding and reproductive health". Clear recognition has been given to factors within the sector that impact on women and, in particular, the need for safety and health with regard to the foetus, to babies through their mothers' breast milk, and to the potential for women to reproduce without risk from workplace contaminants.

Delegates will all appreciate that, as workers in this sector, because of the nature and the culture of work, women often do not go home at night, because of the long hours, or are lodged near their place of work and therefore their exposure to workplace contaminants may occur 24 hours per day. In this case, pesticides and the issue of chemicals has to be given high regard. Women workers are particularly vulnerable, and the Article, and indeed the proposed Convention and an aspect of the proposed Recommendation, takes this into account.

Governments, employers' and workers' organizations recognize, indeed, in considering women workers, that agriculture is the primary source of employment for women in most developing countries, and women's participation in the sector generally, including in the developed countries, is increasing. In this regard, ensuring their safety and health and recognizing their special needs, is fundamental and I commend the proposed Convention and Recommendation to you.

Mr. KANGAH (*Workers' adviser, Ghana*) — On behalf of the Workers' group in the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture and on my own behalf and that of my national union — General Agri-

cultural Workers' Union of TUC, Ghana — I am delighted to have this opportunity to address the plenary session of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Over the last two weeks, we have completed a process that started in 1998, although for many years before that the trade unions had been pressing the ILO in tripartite sectoral meetings and other forums to address the issue of improving safety and health in agriculture.

The Workers' group very much welcomes the new Convention and Recommendation that are now before you, and urges unanimous support in tomorrow's voting.

We believe that these instruments, when ratified and implemented, will bring about considerable improvements in the lives of agricultural workers. I can also assure you that we will not be idle in the meantime and trade unions will be using the adoption of these new instruments to campaign for better health and safety for agricultural workers. This is an issue that cannot wait for ratification — it needs urgent action and immediate action now, to halt the appalling death toll and injury rate.

This situation is so grave — half of workplace fatalities take place in agriculture alone — that we would also like to call on the ILO to update the old code of practice in agriculture, drafted as long ago as the 1970s. This would be very useful to build on the success of the Convention and Recommendation and to help with their implementation in the workplace.

Finally, we would also like to use the opportunity to welcome the very recent work that has been initiated by the Director-General of the ILO to develop a code of practice on HIV/AIDS in the world of work. AIDS is a grave threat to rural villages, and the decimation of the workforce threatens livelihoods and food security. It is important to use the workplace to pass on information on preventive measures and to use workplace organization to combat the disease.

On behalf of agricultural workers worldwide, I would like to thank the Director-General of the ILO, for his personal interest in attempts to ensure that these two instruments are adopted tomorrow in this very Conference hall. The scope of the Convention and Recommendation is very wide-ranging. On behalf of agricultural workers worldwide, I would like to assure the distinguished delegates assembled here that the adoption of the Convention is going to strengthen the International Union of Food's campaign for clean and safe food, as well as efforts to increase food production which have been led by a Food and Agriculture Organization campaign for some time.

Mr. LEATHWOOD (*Workers' adviser, United Kingdom*) — Like everyone who has been involved in this process, I have been both delighted and at times frustrated by the lengthy nature of the process which started, not just at the beginning of this session of our Conference, but when the Governing Body made its decision in 1998 to put safety and health in agriculture on the agenda in a very firm way, and I commend them for that.

As we all know, half the population of this planet works in agriculture and over half of these are women. It is an industry full of vulnerable people — women, men and children — and this proposed Convention and its Recommendation, if ratified and

implemented by the countries of the world, will undoubtedly improve the lives of so many people. Indeed, it will literally save lives. People who would otherwise die, will live because of the work that is being carried out by this Conference, by this Working Group, by Employers, Governments and Workers.

The proposed Convention covers many aspects of safety and health in agriculture and I am particularly pleased to note the special provisions concerning women. But I would like to draw attention to two other aspects of the proposed Convention. Article 8 makes provision for safety and health representatives and committees. It is a good article which will allow workers to become involved in the organization of their own safety. It is crucial that people are not just told what is necessary, but that they themselves are allowed to participate and organize their own safety. This is a mechanism which in other industries has made a dramatic improvement to the safety and health of the workers covered by this system. However, whilst the text does not impose limits on the size of our current undertakings, it does not however provide the mechanism to ensure that the workers in small undertakings are able to benefit from these provisions. There are vast differences in experience in various parts of the world in the work of safety and health representatives. One example is Sweden, which for many years has had a system of regional, or what we prefer to call roving, safety representatives. This is experience from which we can all learn. In the United Kingdom, several pieces of research have been carried out, and private schemes have been in operation for a number of years. Because we believe this is so important, we would urge that in 2003 on the occasion of the review of safety and health in agriculture, the issue of small undertakings be addressed, so that the lives of so many more people may benefit from improved provisions.

Article 16 addresses the issue of young workers. Young people are our future and child labour is a major issue; this Convention will outlaw children under 16 years of age from working in agriculture. Now that might provide some difficulties in some parts of the world, but it is something that must be done as we cherish our future. Indeed, those between 16 and 18 will only be able to work in what might be described as hazardous occupations if they are not properly trained. This is in fact an issue for my own country — the United Kingdom — which is working on changes which hopefully will enable it to ratify this Convention very quickly.

Finally, all the work of Governments, Employers and Workers will have little value unless many governments ratify this Convention and implement it too. I therefore call upon the ILO, and indeed the member States, to supply the necessary resources to campaign for the ratification of this Convention throughout the world, and generally to achieve decent work in agriculture. I commend the proposed Convention to you.

Mr. AGARWAL (*Employers' adviser, India*) — I represent a country of over 100 million people, with a recorded history of more than 5,000 years. I come to you with humbleness to talk to you. I am proud to say that we are the oldest civilization. Human history has seen many ups and downs. Let us not get intoxicated with today's civilization, for this has happened many times.

The ILO is one of the most important parts of the United Nations system. It is dedicated to tripartism but we must ask what is the purpose of that tripartism? Is it producing the desired result, or is it tripartism for tripartism's sake?

There was certainly a lot of talking last year. Since then, I have been working in the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture and we have been able to hammer out a draft Convention but, believe me, all the Articles of the Convention are not to my full liking.

We are very interested in the health and safety of workers in agriculture, but you must remember that conditions differ from country to country. This aspect must be taken into account. There are small farms, big farms, farms that are big by our standards but small by those of developed countries. Many of the recommendations are not relevant to our farms.

Of course, many problems are common to all countries. I feel that in many cases we have repeated the work of earlier Conventions, for example, with the provisions on the handling, storage and use of chemicals. Similarly, concerns for women workers have been taken care of in earlier Conventions and are again repeated here. Why this repetition?

Our Worker friends are sometimes not agreeing to delete even a single word. We all know how proceedings were held up for one small word. Different languages and perceptions make the task all the more difficult. We feel that provisions for workers, transport and agricultural produce have different connotations in the context of South-East Asian countries. Similarly, it is difficult to apply the same age restrictions for workers in agriculture.

We feel that the ILO is dominated, directly or indirectly, by a few countries. If this continues, then all the Conventions which we pass will remain on paper and will never be implemented. I ask you to respect on this aspect of our work. What we all want to see is implementable Conventions.

We consider the world to be one family, and the smallest unit of our society is not an individual but our family. In the end, I must say that we have made progress and I am happy that many times we have been able to insert a rider relating to national laws.

Original Spanish: Mr. DELGADO (*Government delegate, Uruguay*) — I am speaking on behalf of MERCOSUR, Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay — as well as on behalf of Chile. The report which is placed before the Conference reveals the great and fruitful work that has been done by the Committee and the Officers. In particular, we thank the Chairperson and the two Vice-Chairpersons for their efforts.

This difficult and valuable work has led to a Convention and a Recommendation on which the countries that I represent will vote in favour. We think that these instruments will promote improvements in the safety and health of agricultural workers.

However, we would like to point out that previous instruments on safety and health at work approved by this Organization have not been ratified by enough countries. Paragraphs 787-811 of the report, reflect the discussion which took place on the resolution that the Argentine Government, with the support of the MERCOSUR countries and Chile, together with Honduras, Panama and the Dominican Republic, submitted to the Conference, in full compliance with the ILO Constitution, the Declaration of Philadelphia and the Conference regulations. In essence, the restriction

links working conditions with discriminatory practices in international trade. The restriction requests States Members to remove subsidies and reduce tariff barriers, while recognizing a special regime for developing countries. It recommends that the Organization take a number of steps in that direction.

The OECD has confirmed that subsidies accorded to agricultural exports in the industrialized countries, which represented more than \$360 thousand billion in 1999, have returned to the high levels which prevailed before the completion of the Uruguay Round. This is, for example, more than the total value of the agricultural exports of all of the Latin American and Caribbean countries combined.

Agriculture is now the next highly subsidized sector of the world economy, and the use of export subsidies by a small number of countries reduces the income of agricultural producers in other exporting countries and impairs local production in food importing countries. Moreover, there are considerable differences between the market access conditions for agricultural produce and those afforded to other products.

The average import duty on agricultural produce is over eight times more than the tariff applied to industrial products. Taxes of over 300 per cent are not uncommon. These commercial practices are an obstacle to the improvement of the health and safety conditions of agricultural workers in many countries.

On behalf of the Governments that I represent, I request that this Conference, the Governing Body and the Director-General take into account this very important issue, which clearly comes within the mandate of this Organization. It is not only our right but our duty to analyse it, discuss it and try to resolve it.

The PRESIDENT — We shall now proceed to the adoption of the report itself, that is the summary of the discussion to be found in paragraphs 1-516 of the first part, and in paragraphs 517-829 of the second part. But before we do that, I will give the floor to the Clerk who will inform us of a correction to be made to the report.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — There is a correction to be made to the French, English and Spanish texts. It concerns paragraph 51 of the first part of the report. In the English version, the last sentence of this paragraph should read as follows: “The Government member of Zimbabwe, speaking on behalf of the African Government members of the Committee (Angola, Algeria, Botswana, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia) expressed agreement with the Workers’ intentions and their support for an inclusive approach on this issue.”

The PRESIDENT — If there are no objections, I take it that the report is adopted.

(The report is adopted.)

PROPOSED CONVENTION CONCERNING SAFETY
AND HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE: ADOPTION

We shall now adopt the proposed Convention, Article by Article.

We shall now proceed to the adoption of the proposed Convention.

May I take it that the proposed Convention as a whole is adopted?

(The Convention is adopted as a whole.)

In accordance with paragraph 7 of article 40 of the Conference Standing Orders, the provisions of the Convention concerning safety and health in agriculture will be submitted to the Conference Drafting Committee for the preparation of the final text.

PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION
CONCERNING SAFETY AND HEALTH IN AGRICULTURE:
ADOPTION

We shall now proceed to the adoption of the proposed Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture.

May I take it that the proposed Recommendation as a whole is adopted?

(The Recommendation is adopted as a whole.)

In accordance with paragraph 7 of article 40 of the Conference Standing Orders, the provisions of the Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture will be submitted to the Conference Drafting Committee for the preparation of the final text.

We have now concluded the consideration of the report of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture, as well as the proposed Convention and proposed Recommendation submitted to us by the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture.

I wish to thank the Officers and members of the Committee, as well as the staff of the secretariat, for the excellent work they have done.

A record vote will be held tomorrow in the plenary on the Convention and Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY:
SUBMISSION AND DISCUSSION

The PRESIDENT — We proceed now to the examination of the report of the Committee on Social Security, which is contained in *Provisional Record* No. 16.

I give the floor to Mr. Laroque, Reporter of the Committee, to submit the report to plenary.

Original *French*: Mr. LAROQUE (*Government adviser, France; Reporter of the Committee on Social Security*) — As Reporter for the Committee on Social Security, I am honoured to present the report of the Committee to the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. The report was adopted by the Committee on Monday, 18 June 2001. Discussions in the Committee covered a number of issues defined in Report VI — *Social security: Issues, challenges and prospects*. The high quality of the report was emphasized by delegates, although certain delegates proposed slightly different views on some points.

The knowledge and various experiences shared by Employer, Worker and Government members of the

Committee produced a very rich general discussion, during which various points of view emerged, as did points of convergence. I shall present this report to you by on the one hand telling you how the Committee conducted its work and on the other by describing the general discussion and conclusions adopted by the Committee.

First of all, I shall tell you how the Committee conducted its work. The Committee followed the normal procedure for the adoption of reports, but the teamwork and consensus building in the Committee were remarkable.

This positive and constructive climate made it possible to avoid the failure experienced by several recent international conferences, such as the 13th Conference of American States Members of the ILO and the Commission for Social Development of the United Nations, held this year in New York. Social security is of the utmost importance in the debate on decent work and globalization.

The report followed the normal procedure for the adoption of reports. In March 1999 the Governing Body of the ILO decided to place social security on the agenda of the Conference and defined the subject to be addressed. The preparation of the report of the Office, which was the basis for our work, required a great deal of concertation within the Office because of the interactions between social security and other aspects of work and employment.

During this session of the Conference, the work lasted three weeks and covered several phases. First, we had a week of general discussion. The second week was used for the work on the conclusions by the Drafting Group and for the consideration of the conclusions by the Committee. The third week was devoted to the consideration and adoption of the report in the Committee on Monday the 18th, and today, we are adopting the report and the conclusions in the plenary.

The report is made up of three parts, which reflect the three phases of our work. In the annex you will find the resolution and conclusions on social security adopted by the Committee.

The report was drawn up using a new method of presentation which, as part of the Director-General's modernization efforts, is aimed at making reports for general discussion more user-friendly. The report thus outlines main ideas without referring, in the part entitled "General discussion", to each of the statements made by delegates. This practice was already used last year for the report of the Committee on Human Resource Development. It greatly improves the quality of the report, and makes it a truly international document. The presentation of the general discussion has headings which correspond to the main points of the general discussion.

The report is the result of teamwork and consensus building. There was a truly remarkable climate of cooperation and a strong will to succeed in our Committee, in particular the Drafting Group. The Drafting Group was made up of five members from each group, and drew up the draft conclusions last week on the basis of statements delivered in the general discussion. It worked in four sittings, including one night sitting, and we finished our last sitting ten minutes after our deadline.

The Government representatives of the five regions of the world represented in the Drafting Group set forth the viewpoints of their regions and worked to

improve the draft conclusions. The same was true for the representatives of the Workers and Employers, who worked very hard to overcome differences within their groups so that we could have a document which would be valid and acceptable to Workers, Employers and the States, and a document which would be as far-reaching as possible, taking into consideration the differences in the social security systems in the world and various sensitivities.

If you read the report you will see the divergences of opinion in the general discussion and the reasons for failure of other international meetings on social security. This shows that our success in obtaining consensus was by no means simple.

The low number of amendments proposed — only 28 — confirms that the text drawn up by the Drafting Group struck the necessary balance. Thanks to that, there was a quick examination of the amendments, during which they were accepted, clarified or slightly modified. We rejected some amendments which were of great interest, but which if taken on board might have jeopardized the precarious consensus achieved by the two social partners.

As Reporter, I would like to pay tribute particularly to our Chairperson, Ms. Lenia Samuel, and to the Worker Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Bill Mansfield, and the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Jorge de Regil. I would like to thank them for their talent, authority and above all for their constant spirit of teamwork, which made it possible to have frank and open exchanges in a remarkably constructive atmosphere and to overcome obstacles. I would also like to stress how hard all the delegates worked towards achieving a positive consensus to help ensure more social security for all mankind.

I would like to thank the secretariat for its efficient teamwork, which enabled us to achieve our results in the best possible conditions. The team, led by Mr. Emmanuel Reynaud, did a great deal of difficult work, sometimes toiling until 1 a.m., and starting off again at 4.30 a.m., without even mentioning weekends. It worked well with all the other teams in the Office which provided logistic services, interpretation and translation.

Now that I have told you how the Committee conducted its work, I would like to inform you briefly, at the risk of oversimplifying, about the general discussion and the conclusions which appear in the document submitted to you. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons who will speak after me will further elaborate on my comments.

I shall follow the six points in the general discussion, which you will also find in the conclusions. The conclusions, however, begin with an initial paragraph which recalls the Declaration of Philadelphia and advocates the launching of a new campaign to improve and extend social security coverage to all those who need this protection, so as to bring to an end a fundamental injustice suffered by hundreds of millions of persons in the member States.

On the first point, which is the link between social security and development, the positions of the groups and the delegates diverged. The Employers' group stressed the need for the economy to be capable of financing social security and underscored the cost of social security, whereas the Workers' group stressed the positive role of social security for the economy and emphasized that globalization rendered social security more essential than ever. The delegates of the

States tended to cite one or the other of these aspects. One of them proposed an amendment to call attention to the fact that social security “ensures income redistribution for the benefit of persons faced with social risks. It consists mainly of social transfers which, while they represent part of the labour costs for enterprises are not, at the macroeconomic level, a burden for the nation”, which might be handicap to international competitiveness. The precarious balance of consensus between the Workers’ and Employers’ groups made it impossible to accept this amendment. A subamendment was adopted which confined itself to stating that, while social security represents a cost for enterprises, it is at the same time an investment in the human being, or a support for the human being.

The agreed conclusions recognized important principles in paragraphs 2 to 4, particularly the significance of social security as a fundamental right of the human being, and as an essential tool in achieving social cohesion (paragraph 2) and the economic role of social security, which promotes productivity and is becoming increasingly necessary in the context of globalization and structural adjustment policies (paragraph 3). In paragraph 4, the conclusions state that while there is no single right model of social security, all systems should conform to certain basic principles such as secure, non-discriminatory benefit payments, sound and transparent management, the lowest possible administrative costs, a strong role for the social partners, public confidence and good governance.

On point 2, “Extension of social security coverage”, there was unanimity about the gradual extension of social security coverage (paragraphs 5 and 6), either by compulsory or by voluntary insurance mechanisms such as micro insurance, which could be a useful first stage, or by means of social assistance.

An integrated national strategy for social security was recommended. This objective means that we will have to encourage the integration of the informal economy into the formal economy.

Point 3 concerned income security for the unemployed and employment. Although there were disagreements on the effect on employment of unemployment insurance, a consensus was reached on the priority objective of access to decent work, which implies that unemployment benefits should be designed so that they do not create dependency or barriers to employment, and that they have to be coordinated with active employment policy measures, such as training and lifelong learning. When it is impossible to provide unemployment benefits, it is necessary to create jobs in such projects as labour-intensive public works (paragraph 7).

Point 4 deals with equality between men and women. This objective (paragraphs 8 and 9) was nearly unanimously supported, not only as a foundation and a theme of social security, but also for the development of society. Delegates of some States informed us of their achievements in this area. The measures which are required, in particular strengthening of individual rights, are not confined to social security rules. They entail a more general approach, which would encompass in particular the need to combat wage discrimination.

I now turn to point 5, Financing of social security and ageing. Here divergences were greatest, and most keenly felt, both between the two groups of social partners and between Government delegates. On the

one hand, we heard advocates of the state pay-as-you-go systems, and on the other hand we heard advocates of minimum pensions complemented with individually funded reserve schemes. The report reflects the arguments of both sides.

Points of agreement were, however, identified in the conclusions, in paragraphs 11 to 15, and I will mention six of them.

First, ageing strongly affects retirement pension systems, whether financed as pay-as-you-go schemes or as funded systems. For the latter, financial assets are sold to pay for pensions and are purchased by the working generation. The solution is first and foremost to increase employment rates, particularly among women, older workers, youth and persons with disabilities, and to achieve higher levels of sustainable economic growth. The second main point of agreement is that ageing affects both pensions and the cost of health care. The third is that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has catastrophic consequences which also affect the financial balance of social security systems. Fourthly, in pay-as-you-go retirement systems with fixed benefits, the risk is carried collectively, whereas in systems based on individual savings accounts, the risk is borne by the individual. Statutory retirement schemes must guarantee sufficient levels of benefits and ensure national solidarity. Supplementary systems can be a valuable contribution, but in most cases they cannot replace the statutory systems. Any subsidies or tax incentives for these systems should be geared towards low- or middle-income workers.

The fifth main point of agreement is that for the State to establish an effective regulatory framework and mechanisms for application and monitoring. The sixth point is that each society must decide which combination of systems meets its needs, taking into account the conclusions of the general discussion of the report and the relevant standards of the ILO relating to social security.

The last area of discussion was “Social dialogue and ILO activities”. While certain Government delegates called into question the importance of the role of the social partners in reducing exclusion, their role is clearly set out both in the general management of social security systems (paragraph 4) and in the management of supplementary regimes (paragraph 13). The need for social dialogue to ensure the effectiveness of measures to establish or extend social security coverage is affirmed in paragraph 16. The State has primary responsibility for promoting, improving and extending social security coverage.

Concerning the standard-setting work of the ILO, various views were expressed. It was stated that certain standards have become outdated as society has changed, particularly in the case of the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), which was thought to be based on the model of the male breadwinner and the female homemaker. The Employers’ group stated that the ILO standards were relevant, but it was in favour of revising them within an integrated approach. The Workers’ group thought it was better to try the integrated approach first in the area of occupational safety and health and that for the moment it was necessary to promote ratification of existing Conventions which the Governing Body considered to be relevant and sufficiently flexible to adapt to the various situations. Government delegates were divided on the various possible approaches. The Committee therefore did not adopt any

recommendations on future standard-setting activities of the ILO. It was decided to discuss these at the Governing Body session in late 2001.

On the other hand, a definition of national strategies to achieve the objective of social security for all is set out in paragraph 16. The Committee on Social Security proposes to the Conference four main fields of activity to improve and extend social security coverage to all those who need it. I shall not go into the details of these useful proposals, but I will briefly mention them. The first consists in launching a broad-based campaign to promote the extension of social security coverage. The second is to urge governments to give higher priority to social security. The third is to provide technical assistance when necessary, and to promote research and share information on good practices in specific areas. The fourth is to develop inter-agency cooperation in social security and to invite the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to support the conclusions adopted by the Conference, and to be partners in promoting social justice and solidarity by extending full social security coverage. These are the salient features of the report, the resolution and the conclusions. I hope I have described them accurately, although I have had to give an abridged version of a complex and multifaceted debate. We have cooperated in a constructive manner on a tripartite basis. I, therefore, recommend the adoption of this report because it can serve to strengthen the role of the ILO in social security, for the benefit of all mankind.

Original Spanish: Mr. DE REGIL (Employers' delegate, Mexico; Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Social Security) — Social security is an old instrument of social justice recognized by the ILO and still beyond the reach of a large number of inhabitants of our planet. Consequently, this general discussion on social security has always been considered as a challenge, in view of the very size of the subject and the immense variety of national circumstances, societies and economies. The report prepared by the Office confirms and captures this great variety.

Social security is an important subject for the ILO, both because it is in its mandate and also because of the fact that this is an integrating feature for a proper social framework in any country at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The importance of this subject can be seen in the number of countries which today have difficulties in achieving a decent coverage and sustainability in social security schemes. We have also seen that, for many countries, bringing in a social security scheme or increasing its scope is still beyond the reach of their governments.

These challenges require a thorough study and new responses.

This Committee was our opportunity to explore which answers can be found, answers which will look towards the future and which will avoid the errors of the past. It was an opportunity to bring forward real solutions rather than air impractical theories.

The conclusions which are placed before you for adoption recognize the requirements of the present world but also recognize and indeed emphasize the realities of today. It is quite clear that there is not one single approach. There cannot be one single solution for everybody. It is also clear that the answers have to be tailored for the problem. There is no universal panacea. The conclusions reflect the requirements of

each country to determine what it can do and how to go about it. We recognize that the systems and proposals of social security all have their merits and have to be looked at carefully. The merits and the value of these proposals are up to each nation to determine. We should, with all due honesty and good faith, review our opinions, not to speak of our previous prejudices, as we should avoid a priori condemnation of new and innovative systems and solutions.

These conclusions recognize that social security changes as society changes. It recognizes that it is not possible to do everything at the same time, that there is a need to proceed gradually and that different realities have to be dealt with in different ways. Saying this, the conclusions should help those countries which are having difficulty in understanding where their obstacles are. The idea is to propose solutions to problems. We cannot accept that the problem can outweigh the solution. We can provide social security. We can make it an acceptable scheme for all.

These conclusions bring to the Office an extensive programme, but it is clear and it is realistic. We welcome the size of the programme because indeed there is a lot to be done, and a lot to be researched before the ILO can once again take up a leading position in the subject which is of such vital importance for all societies.

We think that the expectations that this Committee has invested in the Office should be supported immediately and steps should be taken to begin work now. That is our hope.

Future discussions, technical meetings, and research should be solidly implanted in the realities of each nation, in the realities of each society and the realities of each economy.

For the Employers, the basic features, in order to achieve a positive result which should be realistic and sustainable, are as follows:

The creation or maintenance of a strong, sustainable economy featuring constant growth. We recognize that as a prerequisite for any society before you can even start talking about social expenditure. Each country should be capable of paying for its social security system and sustaining it.

It is indispensable to find the proper balance between what each country can spend without compromising its economic growth, the creation of employment and its competitive position. The governments here have a responsibility of ensuring that there is the right environment to allow the private sector to grow, because that is the driving force of development. The governments have to recognize the barriers which can stand in the way of growth, get rid of them and take care that new obstacles are not created. In the discussion a lot was said to the effect that the best social security is based upon decent jobs. We think that that is true provided governments can facilitate the proper environment to create employment and promote the development of business. We hope that governments will do what has to be done to this end.

Each answer, each system proposed has to be designed by and for those who require its assistance. The systems have to be simple, and free of bureaucratic overburden. Since social security is not a static matter, the answers also have to be flexible and capable of adapting rapidly to the changing circumstances of economics and societies.

In this discussion, the subject of "political will" was often referred to. Governments therefore should pro-

vide appropriate answers to social security. However, it was also stated that governments should receive the necessary support in order to be able to take appropriate action. That is perfectly understandable. Consequently, we must explore the ways and means in which this political will can be mobilized. There is no doubt that a consensus has to be sought here and the organizations of employers and workers are key factors in forming consensus and in sustaining it, thus providing the support and confidence to the governments which have to act. All governments have to deal with a variety of claims on their budgets. These demands are competitive and they should define the priorities of each programme. Social dialogue therefore is indispensable because it is through such dialogue that you can get the right answers to these demands without falling into mere popularistic slogan-mongering. Social security is a vital subject for the society of each nation; each citizen has to play his role. It is easy to find rapid solutions but very often that merely means transferring the burden of responsibility onto the shoulders of just a few and the employers are nearly always those who receive the burden with all the consequences that that has for society as a whole. If really and truly we want a future for social security, if we take this question seriously, if we want long-term solutions, then such solutions have no place. We employers play our part and we will continue to do so but we also require others to do their duty. It can easily be seen from the conclusions that the proper design for the system, its proper governance and its correct administration are essential features for success. If we do not have these features present then you cannot satisfy the expectations of society. Each country requires to make sure that the benefits of social security are not lost by inbuilt problems of the system.

Consequently, each system should be corrected and revised, so as to make quite sure that the benefits get to those who require them. Resistance to change very often is from the inside, either because of fear of change itself, or because there are vested interests.

Of the groups which are outside of social security as the situation is today, the informal sector is the biggest challenge for many countries. Providing for those persons who work in the informal economy, and finding some way of formalizing this great economic force, is a formidable challenge. The conclusions reflect this, and propose ways and means so that social security can become one of the ways of getting into the formal economy for these people who are sometimes much more numerous than those who work in the formal sector.

We hope that this initial reference will be useful for the Office in preparing the forthcoming general discussion upon the informal sector.

The conclusions refer also to questions concerning self-employment and migrant work. Migrant workers constitute an interesting challenge for those countries which take in migrants. These people often, when they go back to their countries of origin, lose acquired rights and that point requires future examination.

We began our discussion with no intention of telling anyone what should be done, and very fortunately this attitude prevailed in each group. In a frank, open discussion, the Committee has come to conclusions which we think are extremely useful indeed.

We also think that we have achieved the objective of providing the Organization with guidelines, clear

guidelines, so as to enable us to move towards social security for the member States, and also which will help create a solid platform upon which the ILO can demonstrate its position as the international organization in the best position to discuss this vital subject.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to all the Employer members of the Committee for their very useful input and their support.

I also thank the representatives of the Governments for their open-mindedness and their contributions to a document which is now placed before you for approval.

And finally, some special words for the Workers' group, particularly my colleague, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, Bill Mansfield.

The result which we have achieved to a great extent is due to the fact that we were capable, once again, of speaking frankly and honestly. We were able to put aside the ghosts of the past and we were able to put to one side the prejudices still held by some. When we sat down at the table we wanted to look forward, and consequently Bill, I would like to thank you and your group very warmly indeed. I hope that what we have achieved today and the experience in negotiating this subject, with the support of the secretariat, will become the rule for all future discussions. I am sure that with this rule it has become clear that the idea of the class struggle is a matter for the past, the remote nineteenth century. The way in which we all worked together, members of the Committee, the Chairperson, Ms. Samuel, the secretariat under Mr. Reynaud, Mr. Beattie and Ms. Juvet-Mir, the report under Mr. Laroque, and the Drafting Group, all of whom worked in a very satisfactory manner, is the reason why we stand before you today with this excellent document for adoption.

Mr. MANSFIELD (*Workers' delegate, Australia; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Social Security*) — At the outset, I wish to express my thanks to the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Lenia Samuel, the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Jorge de Regil, and all members of the Committee, especially my colleagues on the Workers' benches. Their efforts enabled the Committee to produce a result which we believe can make a difference.

Special thanks are also due to the ILO staff for their professionalism and assistance, which was an essential contribution to the result which was achieved. Mr. Emmanuel Reynaud, Mr. Roger Beattie and Ms. Antoinette Juvet-Mir, and their staff, deserve special recognition.

Around 200 members of this tripartite Conference have come together to consider the issue of social security. Together we have brought forward a vision, a set of values and a substantial programme for the ILO's role in bringing social security to the hundreds of millions who make up the excluded majority.

The Workers' group came to this Conference with one objective with regard to social security. That was to work with employers and governments to enable the ILO to move forward to address this fundamental injustice which sees hundreds of millions of workers and their families throughout the world without the benefits of a system of health care, without unemployment or retirement benefits, and largely in unregulated, low-paid work in the informal economy.

We said to each other that we could only be proud of our efforts if we could say with conviction that we,

as a Committee, made a difference so that, as far as this institution is able, social security will be made available for those who in the past have been excluded, and maintained for those who have it already.

I recently listened to a speech by Nelson Mandela, who was outlining how we can make a difference. He said we must “light the mind, warm the heart and change the world”. In our Committee discussion, and through the Office report, we did “light the mind”. No one who begins to understand the circumstances of the excluded majority could not “warm the heart”. The question is, can we “change the world”?

Last week I was working one evening and a programme relating to a community-based housing project for disadvantaged people came on the television. In part it focused on a woman who was standing in the half-finished framework of what would be her new home. The home was small; the brick walls were roughly made; the window frames were surrounded by gaps; and she was happy. Her smile was broad and constant. Before, she had virtually nothing, and now she has something. This is how it should be with social security. For those who have nothing, we must provide something and over time we must develop a system.

This example illustrates the North-South divide or, more precisely, the divide between those who have, like myself, and those who have not. The divide has been growing rather than reducing. The increase in the number of poor in the world, the growing levels of unemployment in many countries, and the absence of social security, are all manifestations of this issue.

If our world is to survive and we are to live with peace and social justice, the ILO must help to light our minds on fresh solutions, by which those who have-not can obtain more advantage from the world's economic and social development.

The Committee has given the Director-General a major challenge, namely to renew the campaign, started in 1944, to bring social security to all those in need. The Workers' group believes that the conclusions reached by the Committee reflect universal values held by the social partners and represent a substantial set of objectives for the ILO.

They include, as our Reporter and Mr. de Regil had said:

- (a) acknowledging that social security is a basic human right which can enhance productivity and achieve both social and economic progress. At in a time of rapid change in our world, this is more necessary than ever;
- (b) they state that there is no single model which will suit all nations, but stress that the State has a priority role in facilitating, promoting and extending social security;
- (c) the principles which should underpin all schemes are set out:
 - (i) benefits should be secure and non-discriminatory;
 - (ii) schemes should be well managed;
 - (iii) administrative costs should be as low as practicable;
 - (iv) there should be a strong role for the social partners; and
 - (v) good governance is essential.

(Unfortunately, many social security reforms that have taken place in some regions in recent years have

not respected these principles They include examples of privatization which we do not support.)

- (d) the extension of social security coverage to the excluded majority is recorded as the highest priority and mechanisms for achieving this are set out;
- (e) the objective of moving people from the informal economy to the formal economy is acknowledged. We all know that, in large part, this requires good government, strong but sustainable economic growth, job creation and a fair distribution of the nation's wealth;
- (f) the link between unemployment and poverty is made. The importance of education and skills is stated. Active labour market policies must ensure that we do not trap people in social security systems, but at the same time, adequate unemployment benefits need to be paid;
- (g) gender discrimination is recognized as a major issue. We must work to overcome it, where necessary by policies which promote positive discrimination to ensure that women are not left with inadequate social security benefits;
- (h) many of our societies are ageing. Fewer children are being born, people are living longer and the workforce must support more dependants. The answer is not to reduce social security benefits, but to increase levels of employment and boost economic growth;
- (i) HIV/AIDS is acknowledged as a major problem which requires more urgent attention by the ILO and other institutions;
- (j) finally, and most importantly, it sets out a wide-ranging and important work programme for the ILO to undertake in conjunction with member States, including a major campaign to promote the extension of social security and calling on governments to approach the ILO for special assistance to achieve outcomes which significantly improve the application of social security to the excluded majority.

With regard to the ILO's work programme, the Committee, I believe, would want to stress one word — “outcomes”. The poor have been waiting a long time for social justice. Any ILO research, technical advice or expert meetings should be judged on one criterion — does it result in outcomes whereby social security is made more available to the excluded majority, and are deficiencies in existing systems being remedied?

I work for a national union council in Australia. It is easy for our affiliated unions to hand a problem over to the council they work for and say “please fix it”. Sometimes they do not even say “please”. Often these are problems which should be a joint responsibility, and this is the case with social security. If we simply give the task to the ILO without acting at home, our outcomes will be much reduced. States must lead the way and their actions are crucial. Employers and unions must also accept part of the responsibility and work alongside the State and the ILO. We all understand that to be successful the social security programme needs resources. The ILO has to re-examine its priorities to ensure that the necessary funds and staff are put in place to achieve the results that are needed. It may be that we need extra assistance from external funds. I would hope that the Gov-

erning Body will receive a report on this matter in November.

The Director-General, Mr. Somavia, may recall words he said in a speech to a global welfare conference in the mid-1990s which remain valid today. He said: "Wounds inflicted on people by poverty, deprivation of dignity, by exclusion and lack of opportunity for productive employment will continue to fester until we acknowledge the need to ... work together to make our common dwelling truly secure for people everywhere."

He concluded his speech by saying that we: "... should never fear to be out in front with ideas and values. ... For a dreamer is one who can find his way by moonlight and sees the dawn before the rest of the world."

We know that many hundreds of millions of people dream of a better life with productive jobs, democratic governments, fair labour standards and social security. The class war that Mr. de Regil referred to will not exist if we have those factors, if we have productive jobs; if we have democratic governments; if we have fair labour standards and social security. If we have a country where those things are absent there will be conflict, there is no doubt of that. We urge the Director-General to continue to use the resources of the ILO to achieve outcomes in the area of social security which can help make that dream a reality, so that together we might change the world.

Ms. SAMUEL (*Government delegate, Cyprus; Chairperson of the Committee on Social Security*) — When I was asked whether I would agree to chair the Committee on Social Security, my heart immediately answered "yes", for social security has always occupied a cherished place in it. Indeed, when one considers the health and well-being of our 6 billion fellow inhabitants of this globe, it is hard to image a topic of greater importance than social security. When one considers that more than half of humanity has little or no access to social security, it is hard to imagine a greater social injustice. My head counselled me to think it over. Social security is a complex issue and an increasingly contentious one. Not only did the social partners have differing concerns but the problems and priorities of different regions and countries also varied widely. But in the end my heart won — not for the first time — and I accepted.

Our task was to elaborate a new region of social security for the ILO and its constituents. It was not an easy task. Such a vision should find its roots in the basic principles of the ILO, while responding to the new issues and challenges facing social security.

The Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, encouraged us to be innovative, creative and unafraid of new ideas.

He challenged us to bring the social security agenda a significant step forward and took a keen interest in our work over the past two weeks.

How effective their conclusions will be, only time will tell. However, it is generally acknowledged by all three sides that the fruitful discussions allowed us to reach a consensus and an ambitious one at that. We have renewed the commitment of ILO member States, Employers and Workers to the promotion of social security worldwide. We have elaborated a set of principles to which all parties can subscribe. We have shown a way forward, it is up to each country to decide how best to proceed. Moreover, we set out an

agenda for work for the ILO in the years to come, at least for the next decade.

Some of the key elements of this agenda are the extension of coverage of social security to those now excluded, the creating of governance and management of social protection schemes, and the achievement of sound financial, fiscal and economic bases for national social security systems.

The Office will have to pursue these and other objectives through research, policy and methodological developments and technical assistance — a paramount task. A task which makes it imperative to provide social security with more adequate resources and a higher profile within the overall context of the Organization's activities.

The discussion has clearly demonstrated not only the social, but also the economic importance of social security. The conclusions state categorically that social security is not only necessary for the well-being of workers, their families and their community, but also enhances productivity and supports economic development. With globalization and structural adjustment policies, social security becomes more necessary than ever.

Many people feared that the Committee's work would meet the same unfortunate fate as that reserved for the regional deliberations in Caracas in 1992, or the more recent debates in the Commission for Social Development in New York earlier this year.

Their fears proved to be unfounded. What made the difference here? We began our deliberations with an excellent background report which provided rich elements for our mutual understanding, and we were well assisted throughout our work by a carefully selected, well-trained and thoroughly professional secretariat staff. Members of the Committee were unflinching in their open-mindedness and their willingness to seek a new approach in line with the present realities and capable of meeting the aspirations of millions of people in all parts of the world.

However, the critical factor for our success was the Committee's genuine search for a tripartite consensus. Coming from a country myself where tripartite dialogue is widely practised, I know very well how important this search for consensus is. After a rich and meaningful debate within the Committee, the exchanges within the Drafting Group had led to a most delicate balance. All sides wished strongly to maintain it; sometimes it was a bit like balancing on a tightrope, with Mr. Mansfield on the Workers' side and Mr. de Regil on the Employers' side. The rope was taut. Genuinely wishing to preserve this delicate equilibrium, neither group submitted any amendments. The Governments also supported this expression of the Committee's eagerly awaited vision and offered few amendments. These mainly aimed to improve the existing text rather than make any substantive change.

Fearing that even this might jeopardize a carefully crafted result, the social partners accepted only a small number of proposals. They did not even spare the Chair, the proposals of my Government of Cyprus were rejected along with those of others, but we bear no grudges. We are delighted with the very successful outcome of our work.

There is another aspect of the tripartite approach which deserves mention. The tripartite debate is necessarily a wide debate; it takes into account not only financial or budgetary considerations but also encom-

passes the social dimension. This is of paramount importance as we move towards a decent global society, the ultimate goal of the ILO today.

Chairing the Committee on Social Security has been an honour and a privilege. For this rewarding experience I wish to thank all those Committee members who placed their faith in me at the outset. Particular thanks are due to the representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Emmanuel Reynaud, whose wise counsel and discreet guidance supported the Committee's work, and to his able team. The quality and precision of their work have been most appreciated by all three sides. I am also grateful to our Reporter, Mr. Michel Laroque, Government member of France, for his very accurate and objective report.

Now, coming to Mr. Mansfield and Mr. de Regil, I must say that each of them, in his own way and with his own distinctive personality, has defended his group's positions with clarity, vigour and a splendid sense of humour. I thank them both and indeed I thank all members of the Committee from the bottom of my heart for their contributions and their support.

(Mr. Parrot takes the Chair.)

The PRESIDENT (Mr. PARROT) — The general discussion on the report of the Committee on Social Security is now open.

Mr. OYNA (*Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Norway*) — Social security is a vast topic, with a great variety of approaches and solutions owing to the demographic, economic, political and cultural differences between countries. It is also a very important topic affecting everyone of us.

This is why many of us came to the Conference with a fear of failure, but nevertheless with a hope that the conclusions from this session of Conference, through tripartite consensus, might contribute to move the world.

It might be that our fear of failure, combined with our humble attitude to this immense task, and at the same time a sincere wish to succeed, made it possible to achieve consensus on the very positive conclusions placed here for adoption.

This consensus, these conclusions, are a success. But the success is not worth anything unless we acknowledge that the real work starts now. The document reflects what we want to be done now, and in the years to come, and gives a clear mandate to the Office and the Governing Body on how to proceed. And we are confident that the Office will follow up the agreed conclusions in paragraphs 17-21, and also the pilot schemes mentioned in paragraph 16.

I would like to emphasize the importance of paragraph 17, and also 19: research is very important but it is only through implementation of the results that we really achieve success. If we cannot turn the results of research into practical solutions that benefit people, the research in itself is of little or no value.

Therefore we, the Employers, and the Workers and especially the Governments have a responsibility: a responsibility to seek possible and sustainable solutions; a responsibility to call upon technical assistance from the ILO, when needed; but first and foremost, and this is the responsibility of governments, to create an environment for economic growth and prosperity, thus creating new jobs.

The conclusions placed here for adoption are tools which, in the hands of the three parties, with help and guidance from the Office, can mean a difference to people.

The Norwegian Employers endorse the adoption of these tools.

Mr. DAS (*Labour Minister, Government of Jharkland, India*) — I am grateful to the President for giving me this opportunity to speak in this session of the Conference.

The final ILO report on social security is an excellent document which has brought out clearly the challenge being faced by different nations in extending the social security net and the choices before the policy-makers in the context of globalization and its impact on the labour force. This document will now form the basis of a strategy focusing on the various aspects of providing social security.

The ILO has defined its primary goal as the promotion of opportunities for all women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Social security is a key ingredient in the goal of decent work, and there is a need for linkage between employment and social protection policies.

The package of social benefits that a country can sustain depends upon the level of its economic growth. In the context of the developing countries, there is a need to focus attention on the workers of the unorganized sector. Human development is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of social security measures because it builds the capacity of individuals so that they are entitled to social security benefits.

In this context India has taken several initiatives, and alternative options are being explored for the expansion of existing social security schemes in the organized and unorganized sectors. The second National Commission on Labour has been constituted to suggest umbrella legislation for the workers in the unorganized sector. State governments in India have also taken the initiative to provide social security for the workers in the unorganized sector. In our country we are committed to protecting the interests of the workers and providing them with social security which we can afford after taking the views of all stakeholders into account.

I congratulate the ILO for coming out with this report on social security through the time-tested tripartite mechanisms and we agree with its main recommendations. India has been one of the pioneering countries in introducing the concept of social security. We have successfully put in place a social security net in the organized sector, but the real challenge lies ahead when we begin tackling the unorganized and informal sector.

Let me assure you from my country that we will strive very hard to achieve the goals which we have set ourselves. We realize and understand that providing social security to vast numbers of people in large countries will not be easy. However, we are determined to do our best in this direction.

Original Spanish: Mr. MURRO (Workers' adviser, Uruguay) — As a Worker member of the Drafting Group, I greet the Conference. The document before us is a very good one, as is the resolution, given the circumstances affecting social security in various parts of the world.

We also recognize that there are some important documents that relate to ILO Conventions, resolutions and Recommendations. This resolution clearly represents a series of challenges for which we must share responsibility. It is not only the ILO or governments that have responsibility; so too do the workers and employers and their respective organizations.

It is no use just making demands; we must also participate effectively and professionally in producing the necessary changes in order to guarantee social security as a universal human right and a priority of the State and all of society.

There are some specific problems in the countries of our region. Evasion in all its forms is on the increase, and this increases individual risk, as mentioned in the resolution. The market risk is thus compounded by the risk arising from non-registration or failure to contribute. This gives rise to the situation currently seen in Latin America, where less than one-third of workers are covered by social security and the situation has not improved. This calls for substantial changes as regards the high administrative costs, which today represent an average of 25 per cent of workers' income, also as regards transition costs. In countries where effective, serious studies have been carried out, it has been found that this can reach 200 or 300 per cent of the GDP in the long term. This is a fiscal cost that States must evaluate carefully before launching reforms.

Prior economic projections and follow-ups are essential, as are social dialogue and careful prioritization.

We must not support privileges or corporativism. It is essential to define very clearly in this resolution that, in the ILO's investigative, technical cooperation and other activities, the priority is to extend social security coverage in all its forms.

Mr. TRUEBODY (*Employers' delegate, Namibia*) — By some accounts, the subject of social security has been a matter for heated debate in the circles of the International Labour Organization in the past. By the time it came to be debated in the Committee on Social Security at this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, tempers had cooled and the issues could be debated objectively and with decorum.

The report produced by the Office was a useful contribution to the knowledge base for the debate, even though it was received very late for thorough study prior to this session of the Conference.

The consolidation of the issues by the Office to cover six points for discussion, instead of the 12 originally proposed, was also useful in facilitating the assessment of priorities for further attention.

The initial debate in this tripartite Committee of the Conference was followed by some sound work by a Drafting Committee to produce a document that

clearly meets most of the expectations of the social partners.

Consensus on the contents of the report under discussion, the accurate reflection of the views expressed in the document and the coverage of the issues addressed, was reached in record time and with very little argument.

In the report before the Conference, it is stressed that the social security net is important, not only because of the benefits it can offer to the disadvantaged, but also because of the contribution that investment in social security can make to increasing productivity and efficiency of productive systems and providing peace of mind for employees.

On behalf of the Namibian Employers' Federation, I would like to suggest that the report before the Conference, together with the conclusions contained therein, be adopted. I do however wish to note that in order for the proposals to be implemented effectively, this will have to be done in the objective and transparent manner in which the discussions have been conducted in the tripartite committee at this Conference session.

In the report submitted for adoption, it is noted that considerable work in the way of research and analysis by experts needs to be carried out. This is necessary in order to test some of the speculations that form the basis of much opinion concerning the most effective means of providing social security to the target groups that are identified. The same applies to speculations regarding the impact of both inputs to, and outputs from, new social security schemes that might be devised to meet the perceived needs of disadvantaged communities.

The issues mentioned in paragraphs 17-19 of the conclusions of the tripartite Committee are crucial to the continued evolution of criteria for social security systems that are relevant to the problems of the country and target group for which they are intended. What is regarded as good practice in one community might not be good practice in another. The macroeconomic impact of a suitable system at one time might not be the same as the macroeconomic impact at another, to mention but two aspects of the matter.

Finally, it must be recognized that social dynamics have a relatively long response time, except in times of revolution. Consequently, the gestation period of any schemes that might be introduced would have to be acknowledged accordingly. This has direct implications for the design of any research projects and the reliability of the analysis of the results flowing from the research. It also implies that the research time-scales need to be pitched at levels that will ensure that the results obtained from that research may be reliably extrapolated into the future.

(The Conference adjourned at 1 p.m.)

CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Nineteenth sitting:</i>	
Report of the Committee on Safety and Health in Agriculture: Submission, discussion and adoption	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Abu Bakar, Mr. Makeka, Mr. Trotman, Mr. Schlettwein, Mr. Tandon, Mr. Potter, Mr. Rekola, Ms. Nasirembe, Ms. Mayman, Mr. Kangah, Mr. Leathwood, Mr. Agarwal, Mr. Delgado.	
Proposed Convention concerning safety and health in agriculture: Adoption	9
Proposed Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture: Adoption	9
Report of the Committee on Social Security: Submission and discussion	9
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Laroque, Mr. De Regil, Mr. Mansfield, Ms. Samuel, Mr. Oyna, Mr. Das, Mr. Murro, Mr. Truebody.	
<i>Twentieth sitting:</i>	
Ratification of international labour Conventions by Benin, Lesotho and the Czech Republic	18
Report of the Committee on Social Security: Discussion (<i>concl.</i>) and adoption	18
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Pandeni, Mr. España Smith, Mr. Asfour, Mr. Thierry, Ms. Buverud Pedersen.	
Report of the Committee on the Promotion of Cooperatives: Submission, discussion and adoption	20
<i>Speakers:</i> Ms. Supersad, Mr. Tan, Mr. Patel, Mr. Pliszkiwicz, Mr. Attigbe, Mr. Ampiah, Mr. Erixon, Mr. De Arbeloa, Ms. Andrew.	