

Seventh sitting

Tuesday, 12 June 2001, 3 p.m.

Presidents: Mr. Donato, Ms. A. Sto. Tomas

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

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

Original German: Mr. ARBESSER-RASTBURG (*Employers' delegate, Austria*) — As the Austrian Employers' delegate I should like to congratulate the President on her election to the 89th Session of the Conference and wish her every success.

I am quite sure that with her long experience she will run our Conference successfully in the weeks ahead.

Since the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Eastern bloc and the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), the world has changed entirely and I have often pointed out that the International Labour Organization has now become of special importance for Europe.

Having so far visited 135 independent States and having held several positions in the ILO for over 43 years, I know the great concerns and problems of the developing countries and I know that they require special assistance programmes such as the AIDS programme, and the struggle against the worst forms of child labour need our full commitment. I am convinced that developments in Europe have to be taken into consideration, not least to provide our assistance and help in the forthcoming expansion of the EU.

The task of consolidating the workers' and employers' organizations in these countries is essential.

Labour law, labour structures as well as the problems of the social market economy and the basic problems of tripartism are all part and parcel of the social and economic life in Eastern and Central Europe. These questions are of special significance for us Austrians and I note with pleasure that ILO resources are available to guarantee success.

A very important area of ILO work is tripartite meetings which have replaced the industrial committees. This is an excellent chance for experts from different industries, both employers and workers, and government representatives to discuss one another's problems and come to a greater mutual understanding.

The Governing Body, whose meetings I have been attending for 43 years, is discussing these problems now and it is my hope and conviction that these deliberations will be concluded successfully.

Concluding my brief comments, I would like to turn to a very important question, namely, the co-

operation of the International Labour Organization with the Bretton Woods organizations.

Since the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1995, which I had the pleasure to attend, when the Director-General played a very decisive role, our organization has gained in importance as the social conscience of the United Nations family.

I trust that increased assistance from these organizations will make it easier to implement our many programmes.

Let us not forget, he who helps quickly, helps two-fold and to conclude, I would like to quote Albert Thomas: "Social peace is the basis for world peace".

Original Chinese: Mr. XU (*Workers' delegate, China*) — First of all, I should like to congratulate the President on her election to the presidency of this Conference. My congratulations also go to the other three Vice-Presidents. I trust that under their guidance the Conference will be crowned with success.

We appreciate the Director-General's Report on converting decent work into feasible programmes and activities in the context of economic globalization. To realize decent work is not only the business of the ILO and national labour authorities, but also the obligation and goal of the ILO's tripartite constituents and the sincere aspirations of all working people, particularly working people in the developing countries.

Now I would like to take this opportunity to make a general comment on the Report. It is pointed out in the Director-General's Report that "what is seen as decent embodies universal rights and principles, but reflects the circumstances in each country". It notes that "decent work provides a moving target, a goal that evolves as the possibilities, circumstances and priorities of societies evolve. The threshold advances with economic and social progress". We are very pleased to see that the Director-General perceives the issue of decent work in the perspective of change and development and recognizes the interrelationship between progress in decent work and economic development. Such recognition is of practical significance in the context of economic globalization, which was fully testified to by the Director-General's recent successful visit to China.

At present, with the unfolding world multi-polarization and economic globalization, science and technology advance by leaps and bounds. The Chinese trade unions maintain that, as no fundamental changes have taken place in the irrational and unjust international political and economic order, economic globalization has exacerbated the uneven development between countries and regions, and widened the gap between the North and the South, the rich and the

poor. In this context, to fill the gap and alleviate the negative impact of globalization on the developing countries is not only the task of the developing world but also the prerequisite and basis for the realization of decent work throughout the world.

With a view to better protecting workers' rights and interests and achieving decent work, trade unions of various countries can play an irreplaceable role through their active participation and adequate cooperation. The ILO should pay more attention to and take practical measures in strengthening technical cooperation with the developing countries, especially the trade unions there, while at the same time appealing to the developed countries to take effective action.

Since China started reform and opening up over 20 years ago, the Chinese trade unions have exerted consistent and unremitting efforts to defend the workers' legitimate rights and interests and secure their decent work. In the last two years, we have worked very hard to organize workers in the newly built enterprises, including foreign-funded enterprises and private businesses, to establish and improve according to law the collective bargaining system and the workers' congress system, to participate in the making of legislation and policies in relation to the workers' rights and interests, to facilitate the improvement and establishment of social security systems and to promote the re-employment of laid-off workers.

It is our belief that, against the backdrop of economic globalization, further exchanges and cooperation between the ILO and trade unions of the developing countries, including the Chinese trade unions, are of major significance for the materialization of decent work. The Chinese trade unions are, as always, willing to further enhance cooperation with the ILO and trade union organizations of all other countries and make joint efforts to promote employment, alleviate poverty and ensure decent work for all working men and women.

Original Arabic: Mr. MATTAR (Employers' delegate, United Arab Emirates) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! It is my pleasure first of all to congratulate the President of the Conference on her election to this session of the Conference and I wish her every success in the accomplishment of her very important task. I hope also that this 89th Session of the Conference will be a great success.

I bring greetings from the Chambers of Commerce and Agriculture in the United Arab Emirates and on their behalf I wish all participants successful discussions so that the Conference might give new impetus to the betterment of labour and work.

With regard to the report of the Chairperson on the activities of the Governing Body over the past year, we can but pay tribute to the important role played by the Governing Body and the spirit of cooperation which characterizes tripartite work within this Organization. We hope that this will also prevail in future sessions of the Governing Body.

The Director-General's Report has a way of presenting the concept of decent work on the national level within the context of increasing globalization. This Report defines very carefully the concept of decent work and the ways in which obstacles can be overcome so that this worthy objective may be achieved for humankind. Among the most important conclusions of the Report are the ways in which

decent work is a means of raising living standards by creating jobs, and how it provides social protection as part of the development strategy of countries. The Report showed that the failure of the traditional structural adjustment policies implemented by the international financial institutions, such as Bretton Woods, lies partly in their inability to integrate these objectives. This concept of decent work and how to achieve it has been clearly expressed in the Report and we hope that the ILO, in collaboration with member States, will succeed in formulating policies to implement measures to achieve this. The ILO should define a cooperation programme in consultation with the IMF and the World Bank so as to take this component fully into consideration in the programmes and policies of those financial institutions.

The Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work this year concerns stopping all forms of forced labour and it clearly portrays the situation of countries on this issue. In this context, we are very happy to be able to report that the United Arab Emirates has ratified the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). Forced labour is prohibited, in fact, by law and indeed in our countries. With regard to the follow-up to the Declaration, the importance of technical cooperation programmes should be emphasized for all member States, employers' and workers' organizations so that aid to implement the objectives of the Declaration in a tangible way would come from the regular resources of the Organization.

The agenda for this session of the Conference covers a number of very important subjects and I would like to make certain comments on the policy of my country regarding development and on how this policy manages the issues.

We believe that the cooperative sector should be strengthened because of its prime importance in raising the welfare of the rural and the urban populations and in creating jobs. The ILO has played a modest role since 1966 and we believe that it should strengthen its activities to encourage cooperatives and should adopt an international instrument which would strengthen the cooperation movement for the benefit of society.

The discussion on social security will help the Organization become aware of the changing situations in relation to the specific circumstances of each country and the social security challenges that exist in the world.

The States of the United Arab Emirates have a long and positive tradition in the sphere of social security because we have widened the concept of social protection so that it encompasses a social security system where the State picks up all expenses without any charge to the beneficiaries. Social insurance and pensions are also covered by the Government with participation from the employers and the workers.

I would also like to report to you that the employers in my country participate at a rate of 12.5 per cent of costs in social security and private sector pension schemes. Insurance covers retirement, pensions, incapacity to work and sickness benefits. Men and women are treated equally and women in the workplace can benefit from a certain number of privileges.

Ms. HAUGSNES (State Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Government Administration, Norway) — I

am very honoured to have the opportunity to address the International Labour Conference. The Norwegian Government has the promotion of fundamental human rights as one of its highest priorities. The ILO has the mandate to deal with fundamental workers' rights. Norway has always given full support, both political and economic, to the Organization's efforts to combat social injustice and the exploitation of workers. We remain strongly committed to promoting freedom of association, the elimination of all forms of forced labour, the abolition of child labour and the elimination of all forms of discrimination at work.

In his Report, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, the Director-General presents a number of proposals on how we can translate the decent work agenda into programmes and activities that can be realized within the context of a changing global economy.

We find most of the proposals very relevant and will offer our support to their further development.

The ILO has taken important steps to enable the Organization to deliver coherent programmes on decent work, but in the end the success will depend very much on the efforts of the governments and workers' and employers' organizations at the national level.

Governments must realize that globalization does not reduce their responsibilities. The Report before us shows that governments face great challenges if the globalization of the economy shall lead to social and economic progress. If Governments, in cooperation with the social partners, are not able to face these challenges, globalization can easily lead to exclusion, inequality and loss of fundamental rights, instead of progress.

The Programme and Budget proposals for 2002-03 are based upon the four strategic objectives. Within the zero real growth framework, we fully support the proposal of the Director-General to redistribute resources to provide for an overall increase in the technical programmes on HIV/AIDS and decent work and increasing resources for the existing programmes on standards policy, freedom of association, child labour and the Declaration. We see that as a first step towards even more significant shifts of resources to high-priority programmes.

It is 50 years since the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), was adopted. I mention this because I believe that we should not be satisfied by the results of the 50 years of this Convention. In all member States, including my own country, we still find significant differences between the wage level for men and women. The ILO should therefore take this opportunity to promote the ratification and implementation of Convention No. 100. I know that the Director-General has the general issue as one of his top priorities. We support his work in promoting this issue throughout the Organization. Since I will not be present when the Global Report: *Stopping forced labour* will be discussed later this week, allow me to conclude my intervention with a few brief remarks on that report.

The Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), have by now been ratified by 157 and 150 member States, respectively. These are impressive numbers which show us that forced labour is universally condemned. Nevertheless, the report demonstrates that ratification does not necessarily mean implementation.

It is shocking to learn how widespread forced labour continues to be. The most alarming finding, however, is the increasing practice of trafficking in persons, many of them boys and girls. These children are often exploited in the sex trade or as house-slaves. We all have a responsibility to take part in the fight against forced labour. Norway strongly supports the development of an ILO action plan for the eradication of forced and compulsory labour. As the Report says, "there is no excuse for forced labour in the twenty-first century".

Mr. FINDLAY (*Deputy Secretary of Labor, United States*) — I congratulate the President on her election and thank the Director-General for his efforts to secure more economic opportunities for all workers.

This is my first visit to the International Labour Conference and it is indeed a great pleasure to be here representing the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao, and the Administration of President George W. Bush. Secretary Chao has asked me to tell you that she regrets very much that she is unable to be here herself.

When President Bush was sworn in as America's 43rd President, he spoke of "the promise that everyone belongs, that everyone deserves a chance, that no insignificant person was ever born".

I believe this vision is a universal one, a dream of hope, dignity and opportunity that lies in the hearts of all people, regardless of race, colour, religion or nationality.

At its heart, it is the same vision that Director-General Somavia expressed in his Report to the Conference, where he spoke eloquently about the need to provide all adults with the opportunity for decent, productive work.

In the few minutes that I have, I would like to describe briefly what that vision means to us at the Department of Labor in the United States.

First of all, because we believe that no insignificant person was ever born, we believe this truth about workers everywhere, regardless of the country in which they happen to live.

In the twenty-first century, this can no longer be just a moral sentiment. It must become an economic fact.

Whether we embrace it or not, we are in a globalized economy. There is a globalized flow of goods, a globalized flow of money, globalized systems of production and distribution, and globalized standards for technology.

One of the most exciting things about this trend is the emergence of globally accepted norms for labour conditions as well.

The ILO plays a crucial role as the world's standard-setter for improving working conditions and worker rights.

But it is the globalized economy that is providing the energy and the force to make these standards into reality.

The key to strengthening the globalized economy is continued free trade. We will not have the benefits of globalization without the open doors of free trade among nations.

Throughout history, nations have tended to view each other as economic competitors. Many view the global economy as a market-place of finite size. And until recently, most of the world saw international trade as a zero-sum game, where one person's gain inevitably results in another person's loss.

The evidence now shows that these notions are not correct.

That is not to say that free trade does not pose challenges. Of course it does. Jobs and industries can be threatened by foreign competition. Industrial growth can produce environmental and labour problems.

It is the responsibility of trade negotiators to open up trade among nations. But it is our responsibility to meet the challenges of free trade that I just discussed and to secure the benefits that a globalized economy can provide.

Some people say that labour and environmental concerns are reasons not to pursue free trade. I believe the opposite is true. In my view, the goal of improving global labour standards and the goal of free trade are complementary.

When we open doors, we also raise awareness. And when trade stimulates economic development, it usually produces an atmosphere for addressing concerns like social justice and environmental protection.

That is why the Bush Administration is committed both to free trade and to improved labour and environmental conditions throughout the world.

The second implication of this universal vision we have now been discussing is the need for us to develop our workforces. If we want every adult to have decent work, then we need to train and motivate workers for those kinds of jobs

In order to realize this vision, Secretary Chao has called for the creation of a twenty-first century workforce that is fully prepared for the challenges of a new and dynamic world economy.

In our Department we are re-evaluating every single programme and activity we have that trains workers. We want to know for every programme: are we helping people find better jobs and more rewarding career paths, are we providing workers with the skills that the economy demands?

The greatest challenge that everyone in this room faces is the challenge of developing a trained workforce, one that is prepared for the kinds of decent, productive work that Director-General Somavia envisions.

Finally, if we take seriously the words of President Bush that “everyone deserves a chance”, we must make serious strides in combating child labour.

I salute the work the ILO and IPEC have done on this issue. We had a very significant meeting earlier today.

I am hopeful this will be a model for other countries to follow. President Bush has said, with respect to the need to improve schools in my country, “we must leave no child behind”. If we work together, that is a vision we can extend throughout the world.

Original Spanish: Mr. BENAVIDES BENAVIDES (*Minister of Labour and Social Security, Costa Rica*) — On behalf of the Government and the people of Costa Rica I should like to extend our warmest greetings to you accompanied by our best wishes for success in the work of this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference in the interest of each nation represented.

In Costa Rica the “Sixth Report on the State of the Nation”, published in 1999, showed that during the past decade work was the main source of income for nearly 90 per cent of Costa Ricans, which confirms the importance of work as a means to meet the basic needs of individuals and as an ally in combating poverty.

But we know that this situation is not limited to the national level, as the Director-General of the ILO has stated in his Report to the Conference where he expresses his concerns about the decent work deficit.

The Government of Costa Rica, always ready to respond to the call of the ILO, understands the need for work to provide social as well as economic wellbeing.

The new economic conditions brought about by globalization oblige us to strengthen the international labour standards in force and to rethink our labour administration approach if we want our citizens to enjoy their right to decent work.

A stable political climate and the vision of illustrious Costa Rican men and women provided the nation throughout the twentieth century with a wealth of social guarantees and respect for labour rights, the basis for the prolific social dialogue which today promises us a bright future.

The resurgence of the High Labour Council in 1998 was followed by important agreements on labour relations. One of these agreements is in fact a draft bill approved by a legislative committee to enrich standards governing freedom of association, which includes strengthening the independence of unions and establishing a more expeditious process for trade union protection.

We are pleased to announce that on 31 May last the Government issued a regulatory decree, on which the ILO had previously made observations, which guarantees the full right to negotiation in the public sector.

This progress allows trade unionism in Costa Rica to develop within a very balanced constitutional and legal framework. Whatever the case may be, the Government has asked the ILO for a technical assistance mission to visit us next September in order to provide assistance in formulating these initiatives and to make recommendations in respect of current legislation, a request for which we have received a favourable response.

I would also like to mention the Workers’ Protection Act, an excellent example of dialogue and the cornerstone of the new social reform introduced by the Government of Costa Rica. This legislation, combines the ideals of social solidarity and individual justice with the contribution of employers and workers in the public and private sectors to strengthen the national pension system and reform the unemployment assistance scheme. Under this Act trade unions are entitled to carry out the administration of pension funds, which is a real innovation in our labour legislation.

Today, we would like to share with this Conference our satisfaction at having presented a bill for the new Law on General Act on Cooperatives to the Legislative Assembly. This bill, which is currently being perfected through dialogue, will broaden the possibilities for cooperatives to operate better in the reality of the world today and favours a more active role for members and their leaders. We would also like to mention the signing of a labour cooperation agreement between the Governments of Costa Rica and Canada, which is intended to complement the free trade agreement which both nations signed in April. The agreement emphasizes the promotion of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which both countries should reflect in their laws, regulations, procedures and practices. It reaffirms our

interest in complying fully with international labour standards, particularly in areas such as collective bargaining and freedom of association.

“Work is not something for children” — this is the slogan we have used to promote the prompt approval of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which is now before the Legislative Assembly. We also consider to be of great importance the approval of the regulation on the recruitment and occupational health of adolescents. This regulation recognizes the right to work of those between 15 and 18 years of age; we are trying to ensure that they are recruited into activities that are not detrimental to their physical, emotional and social integrity and that do not affect their right to regular schooling.

Throughout our work on labour standards we have sought to incorporate gender in order to guarantee protection for women in work. Institutional guidelines on maternity leave and breaks for breastfeeding, gender-related labour discrimination, and on harassment of work are being supported by an intense awareness-raising campaign on the labour rights of women workers.

Lastly, I would like to invite those present at this Conference to consider standards, principles and rights at work as the point of departure and not the target of labour legislation in our respective countries.

Mr. HYGUM (*Minister of Labour, Denmark*) — On behalf of the Danish delegation, I would like to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election at this session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to thank the Director-General for the Report *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. Unfortunately, it is not a new challenge to try to create decent work for all. This is a theme that has always been on the ILO agenda, and we still have a lot of work to do in this regard.

However, the introduction of the decent work concept reflects an ambitious new concept. It is certainly not easy to put under one label all the elements that together make up what can be termed decent work. I think that efforts carried out to pinpoint the key elements have been very successful. This has led to the creation of a highly operational concept which will form a strong foundation for future work to create decent working conditions for all people, all over the world.

In this context, it is extremely important that other international organizations also pursue the same objective and use this concept as a dynamic, integrated development strategy in cooperation with the politicians.

I would like to take this opportunity to say that we in Denmark are very pleased to participate in one of the four decent work pilot projects. I very much appreciate the close cooperation we have had with the ILO in this area.

I find that the way in which the ILO considers decent work is very much in line with Denmark's approach to organizing its labour markets. Not only with regard to the four main areas in focus here, but also concerning the emphasis on the importance of coordinating in policy fields in order to obtain synergy effects.

I will not go into detail about this, but I would like to point out one important characteristic feature of the Danish model, namely, the fact that the social partners have their proper place at the table when politi-

cal decisions are taken. This means that they will share responsibility for the overall labour market policy.

The Danish experience shows that the involvement of the social partners creates the optimum conditions for a broad acceptance of the labour market policy. There is no doubt that Denmark has come a long way with regard to satisfying the decent work criteria as a result of this constructive climate.

Scientific evidence may contribute to convincing more sceptical member countries that decent work is the way towards peaceful and stable labour markets where increased productivity will lead to prosperity and continued development.

I am looking forward to future activities relating to decent work. I can assure you that Denmark will contribute actively to the important task of creating decent working conditions for all people, all over the world.

I would also like to make a few brief comments on the Global Report 2001: *Stopping forced labour*. It is absolutely vital to focus on one of the biggest disgraces of our time, which is slavery in its worst forms. The report gives shocking examples of the extent of forced labour and leaves the reader with the question of how the international community can eliminate this horrific problem in the quickest way possible.

It is extremely important that international society — international organizations, governments and the social partners — cooperate on this vital issue. On the basis of a holistic approach, they must draw up action plans on how to help the millions of people who live and work under totally inhuman conditions.

The report shows that virtually all countries are involved, either as receiving countries, transit countries, or countries exporting people. So we must all ask ourselves “in what areas can we do better?”

Finally, I wish the President the best luck for this session of the International Labour Conference. I hope that we will adopt a useful Convention and Recommendation concerning safety and health in agriculture.

Original Spanish: Mr. CASTILLO (*Minister of Sugar Industry, Labour and Local Government, Belize*) — It is indeed a pleasure and an honour for me to be given the privilege of addressing this august assembly on behalf of the Government and people of Belize.

May I join the many other speakers in congratulating the President and Vice-Presidents on their election and wish them every success in the task before them. Permit me also to congratulate the Director-General of the International Labour Organization on his excellent Report on *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*.

It is very important that I express once again my sincere thanks and gratitude to the International Labour Organization and its Regional Office for the continued assistance to Belize, particularly in the areas of advice, training and information technology. We look forward to their continued support in the future.

With the spirit of tripartism and through collaboration, the Government of Belize has accomplished the following over the past year: National Social Dialogue Adviser for Belize, Legislation of Trade Unions and Employers Act, 2000, Social Security Benefit Amendment Regulations, 2000, the launching of the Child Labour Project, and the modernization of the Ministry of Labour.

The Government of Belize appointed a National Social Dialogue Adviser in March 2000; this is in connection with a USAID-funded project which is being administered by SIECA, the Secretariat for the Economic Integration of Central America.

As part of the activities, three national social dialogue preparation seminars were held in Belize. These seminars were attended by trade unionists, representatives of employers' organizations and officials of the Labour Department. They provided a wonderful opportunity for the social partners to meet and discuss how they all can contribute to the improvement of industrial relations in Belize, considering globalization and trade liberalization.

One of the main aims of this project is to finalize the approval of a pilot project on alternate conflict resolution methods in the agricultural sector. Finally, a social dialogue commission will be put in place.

Belize is proud to announce the fact that the Trade Unions' and Employers' Organizations (Registration, Recognition and Status Act) was passed into law in December 2000. This Act is in keeping with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Workers and employers are now legally provided with the right to organize. This Act will be administered by a tripartite body.

The Social Security Benefit Amendment Regulations, 2000, allow for improved sickness and injury benefits to insured persons. Maternity benefits have increased from 12 to 14 weeks. There are also increases in the maternity grant, invalidity grant, retirement benefits, survivors and disablement benefits. The Government of Belize has taken the initiative to appoint a reform commission to improve the social security legislation.

Belize became the fifth nation in the world to sign and ratify the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The Convention is an internationally binding agreement that acknowledges the full human rights of children, and commits signatures to protecting and providing for the needs of children.

On 1 March 2000 my Government ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Subsequently, on 11 November 2000 we launched the Child Labour Project for the strengthening of the prevention and eradication of child labour in Belize.

Finally in keeping with my Government's commitment to the modernization of the Ministry of Labour, the Cabinet has recently approved a significant increase in the number of labour officers and secretaries to the Labour Department. This is in keeping with the Ministry's vision to move ahead to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

My Government fully appreciates the efforts made by the ILO with regard to the implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on the labour market and employment in developing countries.

I would also like to urge the ILO to address the impact of policies in the areas of technology, trade investment and development.

In conclusion, I would like to assure the Conference of my Government's fullest support for the efforts of the International Labour Organization to contribute to a better working environment that is safe and secure for the social and financial well-being of all mankind equally. It is our sincere wish that the

deliberations of this 89th Session of the Conference will be crowned with success. May God bless us all.

Original Russian: Mr. POCHINOK (Minister of Labour and Social Development, Russian Federation) — May I begin by congratulating the President on her election to preside over the work of this Conference.

We share the general view of the future role of the ILO in a changing world and the priority orientation of its programme of work as set out in the Report of the Director-General of the International Labour Office, Mr. Juan Somavia, entitled *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. This Report clearly depicts the relationship between the economic and social development processes in the context of globalization and indicates the requirements of ILO member States. The concept of decent work can, as described by the Office, make a significant contribution to a comprehensive approach to a general development policy and can help governments to adapt to new social phenomena. The process of globalization, and particularly financial liberalization, the control of resources by the private sector and corporate investment strategies, at this stage dwarfs the ability of government to react adequately and to regulate these processes in the interests of all levels of society. This is particularly true for the countries with economies in transition. The concept of decent work as described in the Report is a dynamic one and comprises many aspects which are very important for our national development. I would like to point particularly to the relationship between decent work on the one hand and on the other hand macroeconomic policy, including employment policy and tax policy, and regional development and social policy, which is related to the family, social security and other matters. The member States of our Organization are expecting results from the international project for decent work, and await with interest the conclusion of the quantitative assessment of decent work. The Government of the Russian Federation, carries out its economic reforms, it is attaching great importance to the objective of ensuring decent work. We are ready to cooperate closely with the Office to draw up and implement whatever measures are necessary to achieve this aim, as part of the four strategic objectives of the ILO's activities: the fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

For the first time in ten years the Russian Federation has stable economic growth, which began in 1999. That is without any doubt the most important facet of the present stage of the transformation of our society and our economy. However, in spite of the positive trends in all the macroeconomic indicators, our social and labour problems remain quite serious. These include the differentiation of our population on the basis of income levels, low wages in many economic sectors, and a high level of poverty. The Government has drawn up a vast programme of measures to tackle these problems. This year alone, the minimum wage will increase by 3.3 times.

I would like to stress the importance for our country of cooperation with the ILO. We very much appreciate our joint implementation of the poverty reduction strategy, which defines a comprehensive approach to studying and resolving these problems. A project to review social expenditure and draw up a model social budget is now being completed. Its aim is, inter alia, to perfect financial planning tools and to

recast the social budget. We are now working on a two-year cooperation programme which will cover our most urgent priorities. I should now like to turn to the question of standard setting in the activities of the ILO, and in the field of social security in particular. A report on this subject has been presented for discussion to this session of the International Labour Conference. I believe this subject is very topical. Some 12 years have gone by since the adoption by the ILO of the last legal instrument in this very important field. Although the subject was discussed by the Conference in 1993, that discussion did not lead to any tangible results. The report prepared by the Office raises such topical questions as the link between social security and employment policy and the strategy for extending social protection and broadening social dialogue, globalization and social expenditure. It includes new approaches with an increasing role for private systems. The report defines the economic, social, historical and other factors of the various countries and regions. This report can serve as a point of departure to determine the position of the International Labour Organization in respect of the basic principles of social security set out in ILO Conventions (solidarity between generations, general scope, state administration, etc.). As you know, the Governing Body has proposed a new concept for the development of social security in the twenty-first century. How should the ILO's standard-setting activities develop? Will the principles of social security laid down in ILO documents have to be modified? Will those principles of social security laid down in ILO documents have to be modified? Will those principles which serve as a foundation for current attempts to build public and private social insurance systems in many countries need to be further developed? I believe it is necessary immediately to draw up an ILO Convention on basic principles of social security, making use of the experience gained in drafting the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Particular attention should be paid to the need to study the inter-relationship between social security and economic growth, and their close relationship. We know that the social security systems are continuing to develop in countries with stable economic growth rates (for example in many European countries), despite the fact that they are obliged to seek solutions to new demographic problems such as ageing populations and changing family structures.

Original Portuguese: Mr. DORNELLES (Minister of Labour and Employment, Brazil) — I would initially like to congratulate the Vice-President on his election at this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. I am sure that, together with the President, Patricia A. Sto. Tomas, she will lead our discussions in this forum with great competence. I would also like to thank the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, and the Chairperson of the Governing Body and Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Amorim, for the Report presented, and it has been a great honour for Brazil to occupy the presidency of the Governing Body of this Organization.

My country welcomes the Report of the Director-General, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. Indeed, my Government is committed to promoting decent work within its borders. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which has been broadly applied in Brazil, cons-

titutes an important framework for guiding government action in the labour field. The successful promotion of decent work needs public policies geared towards high job and income generating sectors, policies to target sectors with a high proportion of informal workers and concerned action from the public sector and with a public sector action to discourage practices likely to threaten decent work.

In our view, the development of the formal sector is a fundamental condition for workers' welfare and, consequently, my Government has been taking a number of steps, with excellent results. Only last year, around 880,000 workers were brought into the formal sector out of a total workforce of 70 million. To combat the informal economy in rural areas, the Government has encouraged the formation of employers' condominiums, which consist of the union of several rural producers to contract workers whose services are rendered exclusively to those condo members. In the year 2000, 35 condominiums were formed, which account for some 42,000 workers, newly integrated into the formal economy. The Brazilian Government considers cooperatives to be an important instrument in the development of the formal economy. However, we have to combat cooperatives that aim to cover up irregular employment relationships, and are therefore harmful to workers' interests.

With regard to health and safety and work, my Government has set as a target for 2003 the reduction of the mortality rate due to employment hazards by at least 40 per cent, and the reduction of the rate of work-related accidents by at least 25 per cent. With this in mind, the discussion on safety and health in agriculture takes on greater importance. My country has a strong interest in this area, because of the socio-economic importance of agriculture. Let me remind you that the Brazilian Government is currently holding discussions with the social partners over health and safety regulations for the agricultural sector.

Vocational training is also an important part of the Brazilian Government's strategy for the promotion of decent work. With a national plan for vocational training, we intend to train 20 million workers by 2003 with 4 million trained this year.

My Government has developed several mechanisms for protecting Brazilian workers. The service guarantee fund, for example, is a savings fund made up of contributors from employers, which workers can benefit from in case of retirement, serious illness or the purchase of a house. 16 million workers were assisted by the savings fund in the year 2000. Another important social welfare mechanism is the salary bonus, which consists of a minimum salary paid annually by the Government to all low income workers in the public or private sector. This benefit reaches some 6 million employees. A third mechanism— unemployment insurance — provides unfairly dismissed workers with the equivalent of two minimum salaries per month during the first five months. Lastly, the workers' meals programme, which encourages companies to supply meals to their employees, reaches some 8 million workers and will reach 11 million by 2002. These activities accounted for almost 3 per cent of GDP (US\$16,000) in 2000.

An important barrier to the accomplishment of decent work is discrimination. The Brazilian Government has made great efforts to remove this barrier through the programme Brazil — Gender and Race.

The units set up to implement this programme deal with complaints relating to discrimination at work, and attempt to resolve conflicts through negotiation. They also investigate cases of discrimination against the disabled, and play a leading role in ensuring that companies fill the quotas imposed by law. The accelerated process of economic integration has a considerable impact on the labour world.

I wish to support the Director-General when he highlights in his Report, the importance of social welfare provision in achieving higher levels of productivity. This is a key issue for the Brazilian Government, because we believe that economic growth is only legitimate when it brings about social inclusion, and social inclusion cannot take place without formal labour relations, which are a passport to the enjoyment of labour protection and social security.

With regard to the debate on trade and labour, the Brazilian Government has clearly stated its agreement with the 1996 Singapore Ministerial Declaration of the World Trade Organization, as well as the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Labour-related issues cannot be used as a pretext for commercial protectionism. I also wish to inform you that the Governments of the member countries of MERCOSUR have reinforced their ties in the labour field with tangible results, such as the setting up of the MERCOSUR labour market observatory. The Brazilian Government's commitment to promote decent work remains clear. Though we have achieved a great deal, other challenges await us in the future. I am confident that Brazil will succeed in rising to those challenges, with cooperation and constructive dialogue among employees, employers and the Government.

Original Arabic: Mr. TADILI (Government adviser delegate, Morocco) — In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful! I would like first to congratulate the President, on behalf of the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco and on my own behalf, on the confidence which has been demonstrated by her election to preside over the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to wish her every success in her work.

The ILO, over the past 82 years, successfully maintained a role for itself at the heart of the historic events and international transformations that have marked the second millennium. This Organization has been able to establish the right to full employment, freely chosen, and the importance of not regarding work as merchandise. Now the concept of decent work, as defined today, has given new legitimacy to the Organization as it faces the challenges posed by globalization and contributes to establishing a social dimension and giving a human face to this trend dominating international economics.

Nothing that the ILO has been able to meet this challenge by linking the right to full and productive employment, freely chosen, to the concept of decent work, I call on the ILO, and through the ILO, the other United Nations organizations and their financial institutions to support the economies of the countries of the South, especially the African countries, which suffer from a burden of debt that hinders them in their efforts for sustainable development. Without sustainable development, the international community will not be able to achieve a global peace based on social justice as called for by the Constitution of the ILO.

Morocco believes in the noble, valuable principles and objectives of the ILO, which aspire to provide what man needs for a dignified life.

Our country is focusing particularly on the social sector, as reflected by the budgetary credit allocated to the sector, which represents 48 per cent of the state budget. The Government of His Majesty Mohamed VI, is pursuing a national policy with a social dimension based on our conviction of the need to promote all aspects of social development, including combating poverty and exclusion, and developing rural zones, social development and other subjects of importance to employers and workers.

Morocco is proud of the efforts which continue to be made, especially following the 1998 change of government. The new Government believes strongly in democracy as a means for social and economic development.

I would like to mention some of the major sustained efforts in our country to this end, including: the strengthening of democracy through the establishment of the rule of law; the adoption of social dialogue as a civilized way of dealing with various issues; support of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, underlining the need to guarantee freedom for association, collective bargaining, the elimination of forced labour and child labour; the elimination of discrimination relating to employment and profession and the ratification of a number of important international Conventions, in particular Convention Nos. 138 and 182. We are now in the process of ratifying Convention No. 135, following the Government's adoption of that Convention on 14 December 2000. Work is also proceeding on the harmonization of national legislation to bring it into line with international labour standards, and in particular on the draft Labour Code, currently being examined by the Parliament of Morocco; on promoting employment through the creation of a national employment office and a national social development office; on promoting the development of small and medium-sized enterprises; and on broadening social protection and extending it to the most vulnerable categories in society.

Despite the financial and economic constraints, Morocco is determined to continue its efforts in order to create decent work conditions for everyone. We are convinced that those countries which have the wherewithal, as well as the international organizations, will be able to continue and strengthen their assistance to countries who have not the means to face these challenges on their own.

When we evoke human dignity through the concept of decent work, we should not forget the inhuman conditions suffered by Iraqis and Palestinians, which are an insult to the entire human race at the beginning of the third millennium. We call on the ILO to intervene as far as possible in order to reduce the suffering of the Iraqi people caused by the blockade. We also call on the ILO to work for an end to the scandalous practices imposed on Palestinian workers and Palestinian people as a whole.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Director-General of the ILO and his staff for their efforts to develop our organization further. I would like to congratulate once again the President, and wish her every success in her work.

Mr. GREENIDGE (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform, Barbados) — I welcome the

opportunity to address this assembly of distinguished delegates at this, the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Let me, at the outset, state that I am pleased to inform this assembly that Barbados has now ratified all the core Conventions, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Apart from its discussions relating to the Global Report, this Conference focuses on a number of issues which are of critical importance to developing countries such as Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean. Indeed, safety and health in agriculture, the promotion of cooperatives and social security, are all matters of serious concern to us.

It is no secret that developments in technology have produced major transformations in the traditional forms of production, resulting in new and varied hazards in the workplace. Information provided suggests that, each year, work-related injuries and diseases kill an estimated 1.1 million people worldwide. This figure includes 300,00 fatalities from some 250 million accidents that happen in the workplace annually.

Many of these accidents have led to partial or complete inability to work, considerable human suffering, loss of productivity in the workplace, increased poverty and increased reliance on the State and have fundamentally affected progress towards sustainable development for many countries. It is against this backdrop that Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean supports the goals and objectives of the Convention pertaining to safety and health in agriculture. For many of us, agriculture is the basis of our livelihood; in fact, safety and health conditions in agriculture should be no less favourable than those in other sectors of the economy. Indeed, Barbados is currently overhauling its safety and health legislation, as well as putting mechanisms in place to ensure that strict attention is given to the safety and health of workers. These discussions here will therefore be very helpful to us.

Regarding the promotion of cooperatives, Barbados considers this to be a laudable initiative, and hence supports the institutionalization of the new international standard on the promotion of cooperatives.

As we all know, cooperatives have the capacity to assist their members in improving their standard of living. They do this not only by encouraging saving but by engaging members in various programmes which enable them to realize their own goals through self-help and self-determination.

In this era of globalization, it is becoming more and more clear that cooperatives will now need to play a more proactive and significant role, particularly in relation to combating unemployment and underemployment. In this regard, therefore, the promotion of cooperatives must be supported.

The focus on social security is also a matter of critical importance. I am aware that international instruments adopted by the ILO affirm that every human being has the right to social security. This is understandable since, in many respects, social security contributes to economic growth by raising labour productivity and enhancing social stability.

Despite this understanding, a very large proportion of the population in most regions of the world, and particularly in the informal economy, does not enjoy any social protection, and is covered only very partially.

What is worrisome, however, is that there seems to be a growing trend where workers tend to be laid off under the guise of streamlining operations within organizations, as well as in the interests of increasing efficiency, especially in the light of the new global environment. More often than not, these workers are not covered by any social protection regime, and this has created problems for themselves, their families, and indeed the State.

It goes without saying, then, that this Conference must discuss strategies which address matters relating to extending the coverage of social protection, as well as exploring whatever prospects there are regarding implementation. This is a formidable challenge which will require major research and policy direction. In my view, the ILO is equipped to deal with this issue, and Barbados is pleased to be part of these discussions.

Original French: Mrs. AUSSEIL (*Minister for Labour and Modernisation of the Administration, Niger*) — I am honoured this afternoon to be called to address this august assembly, and I would like to begin by offering the President my warmest congratulations on her election to lead the work of this assembly. The election, indeed, is a strong signal which illustrates the determination of the ILO and its constituents to make equality between man and woman a reality.

The President's farsightedness and energy, which led to her election will, without any doubt whatsoever, ensure the success of the work of this session of the Conference.

Another reason that augurs so well for the success of this session is the relevance of the points on the agenda and the interest which they have generated, and may I begin here by congratulating the Director-General of the ILO for the quality of his Report on strategies to reduce the decent work deficit.

Apart from the Report, our Conference also will have to review such important matters as safety and health in agriculture, the promotion of cooperatives, and social security.

For a country like mine, the economy of which is essentially rural and non-structured, these issues are of great interest indeed. Social security, for example, is a major concern for most developing countries because, apart from the low social security coverage rate, the social security schemes have great difficulties in carrying out their mission.

Further, although delivering social security benefits to the other strata of the population has today become a necessity, it is still true that the consolidation of acquired rights is the fundamental concern of these social security institutions, which have so many managerial difficulties to deal with.

In the developing countries in general, and those of Africa particularly, the main thrust in the Director-General's Report can but be approved and encouraged.

These countries live on a daily basis with poverty and unemployment and they generate so many negative consequences for our societies and economies as to compromise attempts to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of everyone to decent work.

In Niger, we are engaged in combating poverty and unemployment and engaged in laying down the foundations for peace and effective social justice and prosperity.

In cooperation with our developmental partners our country has organized an anti-poverty pro-

gramme to which other specific programmes have been added and I mention the special 2001 programme of the President of the Republic, which is to build 1,000 classrooms, 1,000 basic health clinics and 100 or so mini-dams to stock the water necessary for agriculture, livestock and other domestic needs. These programmes will no doubt contribute to solving a great concern of our populations: namely, the lack of jobs.

In addition, so as to deal better with the matter of employment, we are working to redefine our national policies in this field with the participation of business and labour, which alone will ensure the success of such policies.

On human rights it is a pleasure to report to you that my country, which has ratified the eight ILO core Conventions, has just been able to benefit from the support project for the implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, which we call by its acronym PAMODEC.

On the same subject I would like to point out that the activities of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in Niger began effectively this year, 2001.

Finally, it is important for me to report to this august assembly that the promotion of tripartism has gone through significant development this year in my country with the institution of a National Commission for Social Dialogue, which has been given responsibilities for preventing and, if necessary, solving labour disputes.

Further, during the same year, training seminars for social dialogue have been organized for management and workers with the assistance of the ILO through its programme to promote social dialogue in French-speaking Africa.

As can be seen, all these activities match perfectly the basic objective of the ILO, particularly the objective of decent work, and show our country's endorsement of the principles and values which underpin the activities of our Organization.

This is the place for me to thank and to encourage the ILO for the constant solicitude which it has demonstrated with regard to Niger.

I have noted with interest that the Governing Body has proposed to reduce member States' quotas, particularly of the developing countries. Whilst I cannot but approve this initiative, may we yet hope that it will not lead to any reduction in the ILO's assistance to those States which require it.

It is on this note of hope, and with a call to all the constituents of the ILO, the Governments, the Employers, the Workers, to fully endorse the new ILO Programme, that I conclude these remarks and I thank you for your attention.

Mr. PETÖCZ (*Government delegate, Slovakia*) — I congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of the Conference and other Members of the Office on their election to their posts at the 89th Session of the General Conference of the International Labour Organization and wish them a lot of creative energy in their endeavours.

I would like to refer, on behalf of the Government of the Slovak Republic, to the four strategic objectives of the International Labour Organization formulated by the Director-General at the onset of the new millennium, namely the implementation of the funda-

mental principles and rights at work, employment and income, social protection and social dialogue.

Global markets need rules and thus must, inter alia, encompass core international labour standards through which trust in the multilateral trade system may be restored.

The Slovak Republic is bound by all eight core Conventions of the International Labour Organization which serve as the fundamental international labour standards.

In accordance with its policy statement, the Government of the Slovak Republic has been orienting its social policy and industrial and social relations in such a way that they stimulate social and economic development in the process of worldwide globalization.

The Act on Economic and Social Partnership, or Tripartite Act, has been in force in the Slovak Republic for two years now. The application of this Act has had the positive effect of enabling social partners to participate jointly in addressing essential problems of economic and social development, of strengthening social dialogue and social partnership and of maintaining its balance. This balance is institutionally implemented through the Council of Economic and Social Concertation of the Slovak Republic in which the State and the social partners have equal representation.

Last year the International Labour Conference adopted the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). The Slovak Republic was the first ILO member State to ratify this Convention. The length of maternity leave in the Slovak Republic is 28 weeks which is one of the longest in the world.

In order to enhance the social protection of agricultural workers, the Government of the Slovak Republic supports the adoption of new international labour standards in the area of safety and health in agriculture, for agriculture, together with the mining and construction industries, is deemed to be one of the economic sectors involving the highest risks.

The Government of the Slovak Republic welcomes the initiative of the International Labour Organization to include issues relating to the promotion of cooperatives into the Conference agenda. Cooperatives have considerable economic and social significance in the Slovak Republic. A cooperative is a community of a variable number of persons established for the purpose of doing business or meeting the economic, social or other needs of its members. There are agricultural, manufacturing, consumer, housing and other cooperatives in Slovakia. The establishment, dissolution, status, enterprise and activities of cooperatives in the Slovak Republic are regulated by the Commercial Code.

The Slovak Republic, similarly to other countries in transition of Central Europe, strives to achieve sustainable social security. Within the framework of social security, social insurance reform, particularly reform of pension insurance and complementary insurance, is the most complex area.

The concept of the social insurance reform in Slovakia was submitted to public discussion and public opinion polls were held on the principal issues relating to social insurance. The concept was approved in the year 2000 and a detailed time schedule was produced for the preparation and implementation phase.

The concept has created a framework for universal financially sustainable social insurance and retains the

goal of building social insurance, state social support and social assistance systems.

Within the general discussion on social security at this Conference, we accept that social security contributes to economic growth by enhancing social stability.

The Government of the Slovak Republic ascribes great significance to the role of the International Labour Organization in the area of technical cooperation. Conclusion of the Cooperation Agreement between the International Labour Organization and the Slovak Republic in February 2000 constitutes important evidence of this fact.

We appreciate the technical cooperation of the International Labour Organization and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic in resolving the dispute with the Trade Union Association of Railwaymen regarding the exercise of the right to strike and the amendment of the act on collective bargaining. In February this year, a very useful seminar on the importance of productivity and on social partnership was held in Bratislava, with participation of experts from the International Labour Organization, coorganized by the Budapest multidisciplinary team and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic.

As a regular member of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office for the term 1999 to 2002, the Slovak Republic has constantly advocated the needs and aims of the States Members of central and eastern Europe to the sessions of the Governing Body and other sessions of the International Labour Organization constituent bodies.

Original Arabic: Mr. ELAMAWY (*Minister of Manpower and Emigration, Egypt*) — I am delighted to have this opportunity to congratulate the President and her country, the Philippines, on her election to preside over the work of this session. I wish her full success in her work. This session is taking place at a time when much is happening on the international scene. While this holds promise for the future, it also involves many challenges. That is why we need to do all that we can to promote economic and social development.

Egypt welcomes the fact that the ILO is seeking ways to tackle the unemployment crisis as quickly as possible. It is very important that both men and women should have access to decent work, that an appeal should be made to the international community in this respect, and that this initiative should be given broad support. I would like to say how much we respect Mr. Somavia, the Director-General, and all the other ILO officials who have worked to find a positive response to the initiatives taken by the Group of 15 to make sure that the ILO takes a global initiative, and one that will be supported by the countries of the whole world as well. Thanks to their efforts in the Office, we are very pleased to see that this is a theme which is increasingly emerging as one of the priorities in the Director-General's Report.

The problems of unemployment should be effectively addressed during the summit next November. We need to strengthen the employment programme for Africa, and all African States must be prepared to implement this programme, to assess it and to develop it in a way that will be compatible with the growing needs of the continent.

We have studied very closely the Director-General's Report, a Report which stresses how important employment policy is and which emphasizes the need to strengthen the social networks which are very much a part of social and economic development.

We would stress that decent work is a development concept, and one which is of vital importance in the social and economic sphere. The Report shows how important it is to have dialogue and consensus at the international level so as to permit all nations in the world to achieve the goals it sets out.

We also need to promote the work of the ILO and use the tools that are available for development, and not for protectionism. Many fear that what has been called social classification, where exports from developing countries are supervised and monitored, is simply a disguised means of extending protectionism.

In the Programme and Budget for 2002-03, we need to emphasize the need to provide decent work. We are pleased to see that in the application of standards and the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work, trade union rights are very much a part of the picture.

Equality between men and women too is important, and we must encourage social dialogue and protect vulnerable groups, such as children and minorities. It is crucial that this concern should be reflected within the framework of technical cooperation and that the programme should be implemented consistently, with the participation of all interested parties. Experts sent to assist States should have specialized knowledge of the countries requiring their support. The multidisciplinary teams should be a part of this work.

The ILO needs to mobilize resources from its ordinary budget along with the extra-budgetary resources available in order to develop human resources and implement training programmes. Economic and social progress is very much dependent upon development programmes and training programmes.

The Supreme Council for Training in Egypt, which includes representatives of all the social partners, is now intending to establish a national strategy which will include a classification of job types and functions. In the coming years we intend to organize training and retraining courses for several different professions. At a later stage we will move on to other occupational categories.

There is currently a draft law before Parliament which will allow us to define minimum wages and minimum conditions of employment. These will be negotiated, with the participation of workers and trade unions.

It is important, of course, that programmes should be drawn up with the participation of the social partners, who must work together in order to create a real market. We call upon the ILO to do everything possible to improve living and working conditions for migrant workers, to make sure that there is no more discrimination against them and to ensure that they have easier access to employment and are covered by social security. We also need to have programmes that will integrate these workers in the host countries and make it easier for them to live together with their families.

We need to call on all countries to ratify those Conventions which cover migrant workers in order to make sure that working conditions are respected for them as well.

We support the principle of equality between the sexes in all sectors of the ILO's activities.

The Egyptian President has decided to establish a women's council which will promote women's rights and their employment so as to make sure that this half of our society can be as active as the other half, and to ensure equality between men and women.

We need to ensure equal access to employment, without discrimination. The only requirements should be competence and qualifications.

We welcome the ILO's efforts to eradicate child labour, and all projects and programmes aimed at ending the exploitation of children, protecting them, training them and including them in programmes for education and training. Such programmes must take into account how things stand in developing countries and provide those countries with support in accordance with their needs.

As far as the campaign against child labour is concerned, Egypt has ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and is now in the process of ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), so as to bring the worst types of child labour to an end.

I hope this Conference is a full success and enables us to fulfil all our noble aims.

Mr. PARTAP (*Minister of Labour, Manpower Development and Industrial Relations, Trinidad and Tobago*) — On behalf of the delegation of the twin-island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, I would like to congratulate the President and her colleagues on their election to these eminent positions at this the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I take this opportunity to thank the ILO and in particular the Caribbean Regional Office headed by Mr. William Momm, located in Port-of-Spain, for their assistance to my country and our CARICOM partners in our efforts towards improving the quality of life of so many of our citizens.

I would also like to express my appreciation to our CARICOM colleagues for their role in facilitating my country's participation in the Governing Body. It has been a rewarding experience to interact with our colleagues from the Americas and we look forward to further strengthening our relationship in the future.

My delegation would like to commend the Director-General and his staff for the progressive and critically relevant piece of scholarship that the Director-General's Report represents, seeking as it does further to clarify and develop the dimensions of decent work.

In our view, decent work is probably the most profound concept to have emerged in recent times. It constitutes an excellent bridge for the ILO to cross over in the twenty-first century. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago fully endorses the concept and my Ministry has sought to give focus in our new strategic plan as we strive for modernization and renewal.

It is possible for every single State Member of the ILO, whatever its level of development, to embrace decent work, for, as the Director-General has so rightly pointed out, decent work has a floor but no ceiling. It allows for continuous improvement in quality of life for workers everywhere.

We in Trinidad and Tobago are also seeking to establish such a floor. We are endeavouring to do so in consultation with the social partners, with due regard to our own state of development and conscious of our

vision for the type of society we would like to evolve into. We anticipate that the placement of a decent work team in the region would be beneficial to our own decent work agenda.

Trinidad and Tobago supports the Director-General's call for a new global architecture that would have a built-in social dimension. We feel that the international environment is such that the international institutions are ready to consider a more holistic integrated and inclusive interpretation of globalization. We see the Governing Body's Working Party on the Social Dimensions of Globalization as an important vehicle in the process.

I must commend the Director-General and his staff for the initiatives towards modernization, renewal and a new relevance in this new century as evidenced by the structure and content of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2002-03. We do recognize the constraints that the proposed budget poses to both the Organization and to contributing member States. We wish to commend Members for acceding to the greater good as demonstrated by the Finance Committee's recommendation for adoption submitted to the plenary.

Further, my Government wishes to record its support for the programme and budget as recommended by the Governing Body in March of this year. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the extra-budgetary initiatives of a number of donor countries that continue to make it possible for us and other CARICOM member States to benefit from significant technical assistance.

Since the last Session of the Conference in 2000, my country has sought to consciously promote our Decent Work Agenda. We have as one of our nine national strategic objectives the creation of more and better jobs. We achieved a milestone in November 2000 with the historic signing of the Social and Economic Compact by the social partners. You may wish to note that the current chairperson of our 144 Tripartite Committee is the former President-General of the largest trade union in our country.

In keeping with our decent work focus, we now provide on-line access to our labour market information and our national employment service. We are seeking to transform our labour-intensive employment programme into one that would empower our disadvantaged workers by providing a strong training component. We are also actively addressing the constraints that hinder our ratification of the remaining two fundamental Conventions, namely Conventions Nos. 138 and 182.

Our legislative agenda is centred around decent work. We have already instituted minimum wage and maternity protection measures. A comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health Legislation is before our Parliament. A revised Industrial Injury and Benefits Bill and a Basic Conditions of Work and Wage Bill are currently under tripartite discussion. Ours, too, is essentially a work in progress but I would like to assure you that, like the ILO, we are steadfast in our commitment to decent work.

Finally, we wonder whether the time has come for the ILO to review the centralization of training in Turin and Geneva. We recommend that the ILO decentralize training to other regions, particularly in the Caribbean. This will mean that more of our people can benefit from the ILO's training programmes. Our multicultural, multiracial society in the Caribbean

would welcome the opportunity to play host to international groups of trainees.

Closing on that note, I thank you for the opportunity to address this august assembly.

Mr. JORDAN (*Representative, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*) — I would like to congratulate the President on her election and commend the Director-General's Report, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. In June 1999, he said that "the primary goal of the ILO today is to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity". Decent work has now become the main purpose of this Organization today. It is the converging focus of all the four strategic objectives of the ILO. The real challenge now is the implementation and realization of decent work in all workplaces and in all countries.

The core labour standards and fundamental principles and rights included in the ILO Declaration represent a floor and not a ceiling in the evolutionary concept of decent work. Those standards included in the ILO Declaration, together with a reasonable level of social protection, decent wages and occupational health and safety standards, are the basic requirements of decent work.

There can be no two-step approach, where jobs of any kind are created first, with the hope that their quality will improve later. Both quantity and quality must be addressed from the beginning.

This is not a new mandate for the ILO, but it is certainly a redefinition of its goal. It is a modern, timely restatement of its message in a world where secure employment becomes rarer, and the centre of gravity in the world of work moves remorselessly towards informal work. Therefore, the ILO is confronted with the formidable task of making sure that the work of millions of people is decent and dignified. The Director-General is right in saying that there is a huge decent work deficit, which is visible in workers' rights, social protection, social dialogue and employment creation. All these things should be the natural rights, but are absent.

This Conference provides an opportunity for the ILO to start seriously dealing with this deficit. The adoption of a Convention on safety and health in agriculture, which is one of the world's biggest employers, will be an important step in this direction.

It will also be an opportunity for the Employers in this Organization to demonstrate their commitment to the health and safety of millions of workers.

The drafting of a new Recommendation on the promotion of cooperatives, to replace the present one, is also an indication of the determination of the ILO to modernize and update its standards. The general discussion on social security will, I hope, reaffirm the fundamental universal principles governing this important issue in the increasingly interdependent and globalized world.

However, there are other serious challenges for the ILO at this session of the Conference. The Conference has been asked to take steps to ensure the enforcement of the measures it adopted last year under article 3 of the ILO Constitution against the Government of Burma (Myanmar) concerning the widespread use of forced labour. In this connection, yesterday, the Committee on the Application of Standards endorsed the Office proposal to send a high-level

team to carry an objective assessment of the situation of forced labour within that country.

Appropriately, this week, there will be a special sitting for the discussion of the Global Report 2001: *Stopping forced labour*, prepared under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. It is estimated that some 25 million people in the world are trapped in forced and bonded labour, particularly women and children. The ICFTU, therefore, strongly supports the setting up of an international programme for the elimination of forced labour.

There is also a grave and urgent decision that the Governing Body will be called upon to take immediately after this session of the Conference. This is whether or not to finally set up a commission of inquiry on the situation of the violation of rights in Colombia.

Let me remind you that the Director-General appointed a Special Representative last year, and, in spite of his efforts, there has been no improvement in the situation. Last year, 132 trade union leaders and activists were assassinated in Colombia. An additional 63 trade unionists have been killed since January of this year. The ICFTU believes there can be no justification to delay any further the setting up of a commission of inquiry.

The ICFTU, with its 156 million trade union members, fully supports the ILO in all its endeavours to promote the observance of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, and its determination to achieve decent work and decent living standards for all.

(*Ms. A. Sto. Tomas takes the Chair.*)

Ms. FILATOV (*Minister of Labour, Finland*) — Allow me to present my sincere congratulations to the President upon her election. I would also like to pay tribute to the delegates of the 34th International Labour Conference who adopted the equal remuneration Convention 50 years ago. This Convention has gained 150 ratifications. In spite of this it seems that we all still have work to do to fulfil its goals.

The framework of decent work is a remarkable achievement. It has also been well marketed and the call of the ILO has been heard. For this the Director-General deserves full credit. The more difficult task of moving on from words to deeds in the framework of decent work is still ahead. The message has to be repeated frequently, loudly and clearly, and its outcome monitored.

We expect the ILO to become a beacon, guiding its constituents in the transformations of working life. In this emerging knowledge society, the policy challenge is to improve the benefits of globalization while minimizing the costs. So far, only rough estimates have been presented about the long-term relationship between globalization and social progress. Much more analysis is needed. Capacity development and adequate resources are also needed.

From the excellent ILO country studies recently completed, I wish to draw attention to two findings.

Firstly, in contrast to the view that national governments are powerless in the face of globalization, domestic policies can have a strong bearing on the relationship between globalization and social progress when based on transparent and democratic decision-making.

Secondly, some data suggest a link between the growth of non-standard employment and globalization. The growth of informal, unprotected work creates dangers for formal and informal economy workers alike. Therefore it seems to be essential to put in place some regulatory framework that gives social protection to workers in non-standard forms of employment.

It is also necessary to look into mechanisms for extending social insurance.

Social development today is largely determined by the ability to establish synergic interaction. The ILO has been looking for creative ways of outreach within the United Nations family and in the wider world. In this, we fully support the efforts of the Director-General.

Managing change is a joint effort. It is all about choices in economic and social policy. Globalization has to be managed to our common good.

In the course of the developments in the last decade, the rapidly widening gap between the affluent and marginalized individuals, regions, countries and even continents, has made it strikingly clear that the special attention to the needs of the most vulnerable groups that is an essential component of the ILO's heritage has not lost its relevance.

Moreover, it has to be stressed time and again that freedom of association is at the heart of these values. Without working life democracy that is firmly based on real trade union rights, there is little hope that globalization will work for everyone. Can the ILO and its constituents do more to make globalization work for everyone?

The ICT-based third industrial revolution is still gaining momentum and poses a new challenge to the ILO. There is a universal consensus that education and training are an important long-term response to the challenges of globalization. There is now an urgent need for policies that bring education and skills development to the reach of those who otherwise would be left without access to the possibilities offered by the information age. The achievement of decent work and distribution of wealth in this new environment are becoming more and more dependent on the progress made in the development of these new skills. The ILO must step up its activities on this front.

Original Hebrew: Mr. VAKNIN (Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Israel) — Firstly, on behalf of the Government of Israel, I congratulate the President on her election to this session of the Conference. I am certain that under her guidance this will be the most productive session that will surely advance the all-important goals of the Organization and contribute to promoting human rights, social justice and equal opportunity. Allow me to congratulate also the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, for his important contribution to the work of the Organization and all the delegates to the Conference.

The ILO deals with issues of prime importance to the promotion of human rights, social justice and equal opportunities. The items on this year's agenda, namely safety in agriculture, promoting cooperatives, assuring social security for workers and the elimination of forced labour, are of the greatest priority, and of the latter it is said in our sources: "There is nothing harder for a human being than to be under the servitude of another human being."

We are living in a world of global technology and hi-tech. Advanced technologies have a great impact on the structure of the labour force.

Given the nature of these advanced technologies, the need to invest correctly in human capital in this field is of critical importance in order to create a balance between the skills of the individual and employment opportunities.

In this new area, the involvement of governments in seeking a balance between economic developments and social rights is of increased importance. Equally important is the special contribution of NGOs, which preserve a unique spirit of solidarity and form the vanguard of assistance to needy populations.

Some countries and societies are in constant competition to move rapidly along the road of progress, while others that cannot make such rapid progress may even regress, posing a threat of increased unemployment and poverty.

The main answer to this new reality is technological education, which may be the most effective means of raising the level of human capital, reducing unemployment and eradicating poverty. Technological education and training create conditions of more equal competition among societies, thus raising productivity and per capita income. I believe that investment in technological education and training is the vehicle that will, in the future, ensure technological progress and the social justice that is the foundation of the ILO.

Here I must emphasize that we, in the State of Israel, are ready to learn from the experience of other countries and, at the same time, to share our experience with others. There is no doubt that cooperation in sharing knowledge and experience, in order to raise the level of human capital, is a solid and appropriate basis to reducing tensions among countries and societies, and to strengthening ties amongst peoples and helping to bring about peace.

We call on the ILO to work together with us to expand activities designed for promoting this field. Activities of this kind could attract investment from industrialized countries, thereby enabling the ILO to contribute to the elimination of hunger, poverty and unemployment.

I would like to reiterate that the State of Israel is more than ready and willing to participate in activities to achieve these goals. For example, Israel has provided, within the framework of a special project, training for Palestinian labour inspectors in the area of occupational safety and hygiene. The project was carried out successfully with the cooperation of the Danish Government. Cooperation in the field of developing advanced agricultural technologies is also being carried out with Egypt. Assistance of this kind is vital to the struggle against poverty. We are certainly ready and willing to continue such cooperation in the future.

Raising the level of human capital also requires protecting workers' rights and ensuring social benefits and equal opportunities in the labour market. In addition to the existing legislation in force in Israel, which is aimed at removing all forms of discrimination in the labour market, we have recently adopted a law which provides equal opportunities in the labour market to people with disabilities.

Our sages of the Talmud declared: "The world exists on three foundations — the Torah (the five books of Moses), work and loving kindness." We believe

that these foundations represent the highest values that should be deeply rooted in society based on the principles of law, work, social justice and mutual help.

In order to implement these values, we call upon governments to take responsibility for pursuing macroeconomic policies that encourage growth, generate jobs, create a climate for entrepreneurship, defend workers' rights and promote social solidarity. In this process, partnership with employers' and workers' organizations is crucial to the construction of the desired social, ethical and economic balance.

Not so long ago, in this room, towards the end of the ILO Conference last year, we expressed the dream of peace in our region. Against all our hopes and desires, we find ourselves today in a situation of deteriorating relations with our Palestinian neighbours. The framework of mutual confidence that was gradually being built up has been eroded in the field of employment and economic cooperation.

From this podium, I call on our Palestinian neighbours, and to other governments of the Middle East, to move towards cooperation in all fields, so that we might raise the living standards of all the inhabitants of our region and fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah (Chapter 2, verse 4): "And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Mr. FULLER (*Government adviser and substitute delegate, United Kingdom*) — This has been a good year for the ILO. The British Government, particularly, commends the work done in following up the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the successful campaign for ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

I am glad to report to the Conference that the United Kingdom has entered into a four-year, 15 million pounds sterling partnership agreement with the ILO. This focuses particularly on how the decent work agenda can help eliminate poverty.

As the Director-General says in his Report, "the debate about globalization is by no means only about standards; it is also about employment ... Access to work is the surest way out of poverty, and there are no workers' rights without work". At this Conference last year we called for the ILO to take a lead in formulating an international strategy for employment and employability. So we welcome the holding of the ILO's Global Employment Forum in November, and we want the Global Agenda for Employment to be made to work and thus to improve the lives of millions of people.

As the Director-General points out, every country has its own "decent work deficit". During the last four years, the British Government has concentrated on investing in education and training. It has introduced the first ever national minimum wage. It has helped to make work possible by providing better childcare and it has done much to promote work opportunities for disadvantaged groups. It has created a new joint agency to meet working people's employment and benefit needs.

The new Government will work to ensure: fuller employment over the next ten years with specific targets on numbers of single parents in work; the halving of child poverty in the United Kingdom and the eradication of it within 20 years; that most young people go

to university or to further education; better literacy and numeracy skills for adults; and a focus on better employment rates for ethnic minorities, and other disadvantaged groups.

Those are the objectives. We look forward to discussing the problems we have encountered and how we have tried to tackle them with other delegations at the Global Employment Forum. We know we can learn from each other. To take just two examples, the benefits of micro-finance projects are not limited to developing countries; and the need for training of skilled workers is universal.

Finally, a point raised in the Director-General's Report. The British Government supports voluntary private initiatives including the development of codes of conduct promoting respect for core labour standards. Consumers are increasingly aware of the way in which goods are produced and are demanding higher standards from manufacturers. The British Government consider that this is an important area of work for the ILO in the coming years. We believe that the ILO should strive to help resolve issues around the monitoring and verification of voluntary private initiatives and we hope that the Director-General will use his increased budget for 2002-03 to reinforce ILO programmes in this area.

Finally, we are sorry that our national statement this year is being made by a bureaucrat; ministers would certainly normally be here, but, as you may have seen in the press, they have had some other distractions in recent days, and this is a price we pay for the democratic process.

Lord BRETT (*Workers' delegate, United Kingdom*) — The Director-General has provided a most stimulating Report. The Trades Union Congress of the United Kingdom supports the decent work agenda. Indeed in our international solidarity work and our work in corporate codes of labour practice, it has been a very helpful tool to convince companies and NGOs that fundamental rights at work are a prerequisite for sustainable development and for stable and fair business.

We agree that the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is an important component in the decent work concept but it can never substitute for the obligations arising from ratification of the fundamental Conventions. In a special session on Burma (Myanmar) in the Standards Committee yesterday, the Employers rightly praised the ILO's unique supervisory system. Were we to replace those obligations and that supervision with soft law we would be weaker and the less effective for it.

I welcome the Director-General's assurances that the tripartite Constitution of the ILO is not under threat. Nor can it be, because the Workers' group for one will not agree to any dilution of tripartite governance. That, however, does not mean that the ILO should not work with the NGO community, such as those on the Global March, who share the decent work and core labour standards agenda. Nor does it mean that the international trade union movement is not acutely aware of the challenge of extending organization to workers in the informal sector. Even though its aim remains to extend the protections of formal employment to those who are in informal work, we have to organize workers wherever they are. This does not mean abandoning our members in the formal sector. It is rather a recognition that globaliza-

tion is increasing informal employment. These are not developments we welcome, but workers in precarious and unprotected employment can only have one voice, as the Director-General describes it, namely through self-organization.

The Director-General makes reference to the Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA), an excellent example of an organization of workers in the informal economy. Not an advocacy NGO, but an informal workers' union and that is an example that should be encouraged and replicated.

There are only two ways to protect workers sustainably: through good law, properly enforced, and through the empowerment of self-organization. Not through voluntary initiatives, though they may help promote a culture of compliance with good law and positive attitudes to modern industrial relations, and certainly not through paternalism, which can only act as a dead hand on the development of independent social partners.

By social partners we mean employers and representative workers' organizations. The TUC has developed innovative alliances with non-governmental organizations which share our agenda for core labour standards for workers everywhere. Embodied in that common agenda must be a recognition of the distinct roles of democratic, representative and free trade unions and of non-governmental organizations — the fundamental differences between representivity and advocacy. Representivity gives trade unions their unique legitimacy in negotiations. We welcome the support of NGOs in our campaigns, but if they present themselves to multinational companies as alternatives to trade unions, then they undermine freedom of association.

The Report itself makes much of voluntary initiatives. Much interest has been shown in this house and amongst the constituents in the TUC's work in the United Kingdom's Ethical Trading Initiative. The ETI is an alliance of companies, development NGOs and British and international trade union organizations united in a rights-based and developmental approach to promoting observance of international labour standards — in particular the core labour standards — in global supply chains and development of credible systems of monitoring.

It is in that aspect we believe the ILO has a key role to play in promoting good practice in the field. There is an urgent need for it to develop benchmarks to measure the competence of social auditors, otherwise there will be an anarchic free-for-all in which private auditing companies will develop competing, and almost certainly insufficient, auditing standards. Such confusion will benefit neither the companies that want credible monitoring of their codes, nor the workers whose rights and conditions those codes seek to improve.

I agree with the Director-General about the need for gender mainstreaming throughout the ILO's four sectors. However, I will make an equal plea and argue that we should be doing much more to mainstream social dialogue also.

Yes, the Governing Body and the Conference remain tripartite, bringing social dialogue to the heart of policy direction, to standard setting and to supervision. But inside the house there is still insufficient interdepartmental communication, and while we have multidisciplinary teams in the field, the multidisciplinary approach in the Office is not always evident.

Last year's Global Report highlighted the depressing fact that the majority of the world's working people do not enjoy the right to organize in free trade unions. In numerous States and export processing zones, free trade unions are forbidden by law, and in others anti-trade union discrimination persists, sometimes in the form of paternalism, sometimes through employer-dominated solidarismo-style facades.

If the decent work agenda is to prevail, if core labour standards are to be realized universally, social dialogue is a vital vehicle. But in many countries the social partners lack capacity, a capacity to serve their members, and the capacity to engage one with another and to deal with the policies of the international institutions, in particular. The ILO recognizes its role in that regard, but there is much to be done, even in developed countries like my own, the United Kingdom, where, despite ratification of the Tripartite Consultation (Activities of the International Labour Organization) Convention, 1976 (No. 154), and despite the existence of competent social partners, the Government still opposes establishing a national ILO committee or, indeed, any formal tripartite mechanisms in economic policy-making. If we want sustainable just and democratic developments, protecting workers' rights and supporting their empowerment through self-organization, through social dialogue, the answer is that these must remain the top priorities within the ILO.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-THANI (Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing, Qatar) — In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! On behalf of the State of Qatar, I sincerely congratulate the President on her election to preside over this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. We wish her every success in carrying out her tasks.

We are here today to discuss the Report of the Director-General, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. We would like, first of all, to state that this Report contains an objective analysis and a clear framework representing a qualitative improvement in the work of the Organization towards achieving defined objectives that constitute the basis of decent work. This is the result of an enriched dialogue carried out over the past years. In the Organization, and outside of it, we need to highlight a number of issues on which we must base our objectives and goals. The standard-setting activity of the Organization is an indispensable guide in the development of policies and programmes for workforces and production in countries throughout the world. This must continue to be the light which guides us in setting standards on work conditions, and not simply a tool that we never use.

Social dialogue, by its very nature, is carried out among different parties, but in consultation, in order to reduce dissent or dispute, and in order to serve the better interests of all.

Among the important issues that we have to face in the future is globalization; we have noted the justified fears of developing countries, and other countries, following the economic development on the international scene. We feel we must be realistic in order to work in a positive way to correct the errors, establish a basis from which to work and strengthen the social aspect of the world economy so that it can respond to the aspirations of our people for a dignified life.

We do not speak from a theoretical angle but from our own experience. Based on a far-sighted and realistic vision of our young country headed by His Royal Highness, Sheik Hamad Ben Khalifa Al-Thani, we tend to face changes with a positive and open spirit. Opening up markets and encouraging investment are important in achieving the development to which we all aspire, giving us opportunities in all economic sectors. However, at the same time, we must assume our responsibilities to do away with investment for a “quick fix” at any price.

The role of the State remains central to our economic and social development as it is the State that can take on the role of guide and monitor in society’s march toward progress on a global level.

The State must also take responsibility for its citizens and provide them with the means to use their employment and development capabilities in the various spheres. We should not forget that we all have a responsibility to participate in the development and progress of the society in which we live.

From the point of view of progress as an indivisible whole, the State has concentrated on instituting broad dialogue in all sectors of society and has provided it with the facilities necessary to elaborate ideas on the form and content of development and how this will take place. Within this framework, we believe that the family is particularly important as it is the nucleus of society and reflects social life. We have established a family council to develop and implement a national plan to improve the situation of families on all fronts: social, economic, cultural, health, education; and to ensure protection for women, children and vulnerable members of society.

In the sphere of decent work, we are working towards guaranteeing the right to work, equality and social protection. We believe that training qualified workers who are capable of high-quality output is important and we hope to benefit from the ILO’s experience in this area, especially in training for women and providing them with greater professional opportunities.

The guidelines presented by the Director-General for a common approach from the social actors on the international scene are worthy of approval and encouragement. We are confident that this Organization will continue to reflect the aspirations of our people, for a free and dignified life.

In conclusion, I wish the Conference every success.

Mr. RYBÁR (*Employers’ adviser delegate, Slovakia*) — I am greatly honoured to address you at this representative gathering of significant personalities from all over the world. Allow me to greet you in the name of the large cooperative family on housing, agricultural, consumer and producer cooperatives from Slovakia. The traditions of our cooperative movement are all more than 155 years old. They go back as far as 1845 when, in the small village Sobotiste, Samuel Jurkovic founded the first credit cooperative in Slovakia and in the world.

We are proud that our country was one of the rare cradles of the cooperative movement which has gradually grown to its present state as a large global movement.

Yet, under the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, the cooperative movement of Slovakia was present at the setting up of the International Cooperative Alliance in 1895 and its affiliation was never interrupted.

Since its establishment up to the present time, our cooperative movement has passed through several phases in its development. It has justified its existence and been able to adapt itself to the new social conditions. The movement has survived three social structures, two world wars but has always participated actively in the economic and social development of the country. The cooperation played a role during each of its phases. It has ensured employment and has helped to develop a business sense in thousands of small-scale entrepreneurs who not only made a living but also found education, training and a social life in the cooperative. The movement enjoys the support of the current parliamentary, governmental, non-governmental, employers and trade union structures of Slovakia.

Nowadays in Slovakia, which has about 5 million inhabitants, there are some 800 cooperative organizations in the cooperative movement accounting for more than 750,000 members and employees. These cooperative societies are associated in the four cooperative unions that make up the Slovak Cooperative Union of the Slovak Republic.

Present global economic restructuring creates new possibilities. It forces the cooperatives to respond effectively to the forthcoming challenges and opportunities. In this context the cooperative movement set out, its perspectives and principles for the twenty-first century at the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) Centennial Congress held in Manchester in 1995 on the occasion of the ICA centenary.

The cooperative unions and cooperative enterprises in Slovakia identified completely with these conclusions and they creatively put them into practice everyday. It is, therefore, extremely important that the ICA position to the Co-operatives (Developing Countries) Recommendation, 1966 (No. 127), which is the result of the large global cooperative discussion receives the full support and becomes a part of the conclusions of Recommendation No. 127 on this issue.

It is right that, exactly at the present time of globalization-related changes the ILO, whose mission is to focus on employment and labour policies, provide the cooperative movement issues with such a forum. We highly appreciate and respect the efforts of the International Labour Organization to solve cooperative issues. I am convinced that the conclusions of this session will assist us in many ways to promote the cooperative policies in the individual regions and at national levels while dealing with economic and social development.

We believe that the conclusions will help to develop the cooperative movement worldwide and that the majority of governments will support them and consistently apply them.

Mr. KWELAGOBÉ (*Minister of Labour and Home Affairs, Botswana*) — May I, on behalf of the Botswana delegation and on my own behalf, begin by congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to guide the deliberations of this session of the International Labour Conference.

I welcome the discussion of the Director-General’s Report *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. Two years ago, this forum endorsed decent work as a relevant policy agenda for the ILO. In his Report to the 1999 session of the International Labour Conference, the Director-General described the

primary goal of the ILO as being to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Indeed, decent work forms an essential component of the mandate of the ILO, for the Organization owes its existence to the world of work. Decent work therefore remains an important yardstick for determining the success or failure of the Organization. The comprehensive analysis of the gap between reality and the aspirations of people to live a better life presented in the Director-General's Report provides an excellent basis for the discussion of progress made, obstacles encountered and opportunities available to member States in their endeavour to fulfil their obligations as contained in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The reality is that a significant portion of the ILO constituency, including a large majority of the workforce in developing countries, is still battling under difficult circumstances characterized by few job opportunities, poor wages, low productivity and inadequate social protection. In many member States the pursuit of decent work is circumscribed by high unemployment, abject poverty, disease and squalor. In a majority of developing countries, the informal sector remains the lifeline of a significant portion of the population. Under these circumstances, the quest for decent work becomes secondary to the quest for jobs.

In any case, it goes without saying that the creation of productive employment is a *sine qua non* for decent living standards, social and economic development and personal fulfilment. In the words of the Director-General, "Access to work is the surest way out of poverty and there are no workers' rights without work". The ILO's decision to allocate more resources to employment creation is therefore a step in the right direction.

The debate on the reduction of the decent work deficit must recognize the diversity of needs and challenges among member States. I subscribe to the view that notwithstanding the commonality of the underlying principles across countries, the practical application of the decent work agenda will depend on national situations and priorities. Clearly an effort to fill the decent work deficit requires well-targeted and multifaceted programmes. The new initiatives by the ILO aimed at developing integrated policies for decent work are commendable. The difficulties encountered by member States in their endeavours to realize decent work require the streamlining of ILO technical cooperation to constituents, particularly as it relates to the opportunities for making decent work a reality. For this purpose, ILO institutions in the field need to be better resourced to enable them to live up to these challenges.

We made a commitment to pursue the goal of decent work two years ago. The objectives we set for ourselves are not easily attainable but with the firm commitment and cooperation of the constituents of this Organization, nothing is impossible. Let me assure you that Botswana supports the ILO vision, as clearly stated in the Director-General's Report, and we are committed to making it a reality.

Original Serbian: Mr. MILOVANOVIC (Minister for Labour and Employment, Republic of Serbia, Yugoslavia) — It is my honour and pleasure to see that following its recent accession to the International Labour Organization, the Federal Republic of Yugo-

slavia is present as a full-fledged member at the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. Permit me to inform you that in their statement on succession, the new democratic authorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia accepted their responsibility for the further implementation of all the Conventions of the International Labour Organization that had previously been ratified by the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At the same time they initiated the ratification of the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), along with the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190).

By actively joining in the work of the Organization, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is showing that it attaches great importance to efforts exerted by the ILO to establishing social justice, particularly by highlighting the promotion of international standards, the fundamental principles and rights at work, the promotion of employment, the strengthening of social security and the development of social dialogue. Huge political and social changes took place in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on 5 October 2000. The people put an end to the oligarchic regime and vested their confidence in democratic forces. The necessary conditions were thus created to permit profound changes. These are reflected in the strengthening of democratic institutions, economic development, the harmonization of domestic development regulations with those of other European countries, the establishment of an independent judiciary and the transformation of ownership through clear-cut forms of property.

It is our profound belief that this will contribute to overall stability in the region. In the endeavour to make our country a factor for regional cooperation and to find its place among the world's developed countries, measures are being undertaken and programmes adopted to solve urgent economic and social problems.

Low standards of living and high unemployment are bound to impose the need to set up and encourage social dialogue on a tripartite level, particularly within the new legal framework in the field of labour, employment, labour protection and other social rights. Our strategic priorities are transparent and fair. Privatization, the establishment of modern management structures at enterprises, to create new jobs through flexible forms of employment, education of the labour force and a just social insurance system that will contribute to creating the conditions necessary for decent work. We very quickly introduced a new tax system that paves the way for financial discipline, monetary stability and thereby security for our society. For the first time in the history of our country all the social partners are participating in drawing up the law on labour and employment. An initiative has been undertaken to create tripartite social councils that will help resolve the key economic and social problems facing the country. The first forms of technical cooperation with the International Labour Organization emerged in the legislative areas. Further technical assistance is expected in normative, scientific, research and practical methods to ensure speedy economic and social development. May I finish by expressing confidence that through our joint efforts and cooperation we shall achieve our objectives of developing international labour principles and standards while preserving social

dialogue and consensus at all levels. May I once again welcome the commitment of the ILO to preserving the fundamental principles of social justice, and hence to achieving overall and lasting peace.

Mr. LAMBERT (*Employers' delegate, United Kingdom*) — It is an honour to address this august assembly, where so much history has been made over so many years. What we are talking about in these days is how we can make the history of the future about which our successors will speak for many years to come?

This is the first time I have spoken in this forum, so I would like to start by reiterating what others have said before me, and that is that I welcome the Director-General's Report. In particular, I want to commend the Report for its emphasis on the importance of fostering enterprise and employment. I also think that the Report is right to draw attention to the need for a healthy productive relationship between the ILO and multinational enterprises. After all, in order to promote decent work we need to make sure there are jobs available in the first place.

Having agreed on the principles of decent work, the challenge now for business is to transform those principles into a reality in the workplace. In order to do this companies will want take stock of what is happening on the ground. What are the barriers to realizing this agenda, and, crucially what types of management practices can we develop in order to deliver it? One initiative that holds considerable promise for developing and spreading of practice is the United Nations Global Compact. And it is this that I would like to draw the Conference's attention to now. Launched by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1999, the Global Compact challenges business to "embrace and enact policies on key human rights, labour and environmental standards". This of course, includes the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

I believe that the Global Compact offers a unique opportunity for the promotion of the ILO Declaration. Why is it unique? Principally, because of the warm endorsement it has received from the international business community. Rather than setting down a rigid set of rules, the Global Compact recognizes the need for flexibility in companies. It is up to each organization to work out how to implement the principles of the Compact within the particular circumstances of their business. These experiences are then shared and disseminated, via the Internet, as an example for other businesses to learn from and draw upon as they seek to implicate good practice in their organization. It is still early days, of course, but the signs look promising. For example, the IOE is producing a guide for business on the Global Compact and running a series of regional workshops for national and local employer federations on what the Compact means for employers. The first of these were held in Zimbabwe and Tunis, and another is planned for Japan later this year.

We have got off to a good start, and we hope these initiatives continue to grow and grow. However, there are a number of key issues which the Employers' Groups want to draw to the attention of the Conference, and which we believe will be critical to the success of the Compact in the long term.

First although this is primarily a United Nations initiative, the Compact would be strengthened by

greater ILO involvement. The ILO needs to be more visible and take control of its own principles. Why is this of importance? Well, firstly because it is the ILO, not the United Nations, that has the labour standards expertise, and it is right that the ILO should continue to set the agenda in this area. Second, because we must avoid a situation where other bodies that do not have the expertise start to reinterpret ILO principles. Otherwise we run the risk of a proliferation of initiatives, which at best duplicate each other and at worst contradict one another, and if this happens it will be harder to sustain business enthusiasm and commitment.

Large business survives by being decisive and getting things done, and if we vacillate, we damage the potential relationship in the future with big business.

But it is not just the ILO that should seek to clarify and set up its role. Governments, too, need to play their part. The principles of the Global Compact arise from international instruments which are, first and foremost, the responsibility of governments. Employers, of course, have a critical role in promoting core labour standards, but their influence only reaches so far, and business should not be expected to take over what are ultimately government responsibilities.

I said earlier that one of the reasons that IOE members support the Global Compact is because of its flexibility. In this context, I urge the ILO to recognize that there are a myriad of company responses to the new international environment. It is often said, but it is certainly worth repeating — no one size fits all! Not all companies progress at the same rate, and businesses need to have the flexibility to enact the Compact in a way which is compatible with the particular needs and circumstances of their organization. The ILO should monitor these developments, disseminate the lessons learned, but certainly not fall into the trap of advocating one particular response. This applies not only to the Global Compact, but to other company-led initiatives, working in partnership with the ILO.

An example of a flexible approach is the commitment of the Fiat Group to support the drive to increase youth employment, by offering experience from what it learns from building a green-field site at Amalfi, near Naples, in Italy. In that site, at inception, the average age of its employees was 24, so they had great experience of harnessing the talent of young people. This is one example; there are many others.

Which brings me to my final point, which is that, as long as the developments in this field remain constituent-led, and focused on the core task of developing and spreading good practice, then it will sustain and strengthen the commitment of business.

Mr. SAKTOR (*Workers' delegate, Slovakia*) — I would like to extend my sincere greetings on behalf of the workers' representatives attending this Conference and of all Slovak trade unionists and congratulate the President on her election to chair this session of the Conference. I wish her every success in this demanding work.

The Confederation of Trade Unions from the Slovak Republic considers the ILO an institution that brings, by its tripartite nature, real benefits for trade unions, governments and employers. Its expertise is much needed and in great demand.

Let me mention the following example: the Slovak Republic has amended the act on collective bar-

gaining based on recommendations of experts from the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards, and as a result of a complaint from our affiliate, the Railway Workers' Association. Last year, this affiliate submitted its complaint to the ILO in the matter of violation of fundamental trade union rights concerning freedom of association and the right to strike. After many discussions and tripartite meetings, the Slovak Government accepted the demands of the railway workers. It reduced the quorum needed to vote for strike action and withdrew the obligation to submit the list of strikers to the employers.

The Slovak Republic and the ILO have signed an agreement on mutual cooperation for the period 2000-01. Within the four social pillars of the ILO, this agreement supports the priorities of mutual cooperation. The most recent event within this cooperation was the seminar prepared by our organization and the multidisciplinary team of the ILO from Budapest that dealt with pension reforms in the Slovak Republic. This activity was aimed at our trade union representatives and focused on pension reform in Slovakia compared with those being implemented in central and eastern European and other countries. The seminar was a big success thanks to the outstanding contribution of the ILO experts, who jointly with trade union experts from Hungary and the Czech Republic, greatly contributed to the overall orientation of our representatives on the above issue.

Social dialogue, one of the pillars of this Organization, enjoys a good institutional background in Slovakia. However, it is somewhat too formal. This was the reason why the Confederation of Trade Unions took the decision not to conclude the general agreement with the Government for the year 2001, as it is convinced that it is better to have no commitments rather than formal ones. Nevertheless, there is much to be made from our side as well.

The objective of decent work is a highly precious aim of this Organization, and should be the credo of every organization representing the interests of individual groups.

We appreciate the approach and cooperation of the ILO with other international and European organizations tackling the issue of decent work. We find linkage of the ILO effort with the manifestos of different institutions the best way we have to reach decent work for all, and to eliminate shortcomings in this field.

I would like to thank this Organization for its work to the benefit of all.

Mr. HAMDY (*Minister of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia*) — First of all, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia and the members of my delegation, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Ms. Sto. Tomas on her election as President of this session of the International Labour Conference, as well as to the other Officers of the Conference on their respective election. I am confident that under her able leadership this 89th Session will make substantial progress towards an outcome which can benefit all Members of the ILO. To this end, Indonesia would like to assure you of its support and cooperation.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO, who have prepared comprehensive and informative reports to guide us in our work.

Recently the Government of Indonesia and the ILO held a series of meetings at the national level designed to promote the four strategic ILO objectives, grouped together under the heading "decent work". As a result, the Indonesian social partners have been assessing the best approach and strategy to adopt at the national level in order to respond to, and promote, these four objectives.

In cooperation with the ILO Office in Jakarta, an integrated country programme framework is currently under preparation which may soon be applied under a national programme forming part of the national agenda for 2001-05. In this regard, Indonesia has committed itself to supporting the implementation of all ILO objectives and programmes.

If I may now turn to the current labour and employment conditions in Indonesia. Our country is facing crucial problems, most notably a relatively high rate of unemployment, limited employment opportunities and less than harmonious industrial relations. These problems stem largely from the ongoing economic difficulties with which the country is still at grips. In a bid to improve efficiency and productivity many employers have resorted to reducing their workforce and some have even been forced to close down their businesses. To compound matters new investments which were expected to absorb large numbers of workers have grown disappointingly slowly or are, in fact, stagnating.

However, in a bid to reverse the situation, the Indonesian Government to date has accepted several measures designed to reduce unemployment and expand employment opportunities, notably by giving the unemployed access to new entrepreneurial projects and making micro- or small business programmes a priority. Moreover, both a provident fund for the unemployed and a programme for the restructuring of the social security system are currently under study. An employment-creation framework is also being formulated to adapt to the present climate of decentralization and to take into account autonomous regional development.

As a follow-up to the ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the new Act No. 21 of 2000 relating to the trade unions has been promulgated, while two other Bills dealing with labour disputes and with manpower development and protection are now being discussed by the House of People's Representatives. Meanwhile, regulations are also being drafted for the implementation of these new laws.

In respect of the right to organize, the number of workers' unions throughout the country has been growing steadily, with the Federation of Unions now numbering 40 members, thereby indicating the Government's serious determination to apply the principles of freedom of association. However, this union group has also brought with it some tensions, particularly with regard to the best negotiating practices, which have occasionally resulted in less harmonious industrial relations. Nevertheless, the Government has continued to advocate dialogue as the best way to solve this impasse, although no substantial progress has yet been achieved.

The time has come for us to seek the most practical solution for adjusting our labour and employment policies to the ILO's four strategic objectives at all levels — national, regional and international. At this juncture it is essential that the ILO standards and

related activities continue to improve. In this regard, the ASEAN member countries and the Asia and Pacific group have consistently called on the ILO to review its supervisory mechanisms on the grounds that such mechanisms should refrain from adopting an adversarial approach. These mechanisms should be transparent, objective and promotional in nature, and help member States identify problems of application and ways to overcome them.

I would like to conclude by urging the ILO to maintain its assistance and to support all its Members consistently, particularly by promoting its four strategic objectives at the national level in such a way as to ensure they are implemented. Indeed, if these objectives are to be realized, it is of the utmost importance that the Organization continues to work in close collaboration with all member States to improve the situation of workers worldwide.

Original French: Mr. DE LA HAYE (representative, World Confederation of Teachers) — The World Confederation of Teachers (WCT) welcomes the fact that the Director-General of the ILO has devoted his Report to the issue of decent work.

In its reports to the Joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the 1966 and 1997 Recommendations concerning the status of teachers, the WCT has already highlighted the general downturn in the working conditions of teachers in recent decades.

In today's society of knowledge and learning, lifelong education is an essential condition for social inclusion. Society's expectations of the education system and of the staff working in that system are therefore rising constantly.

We would like to stress the importance of both high-quality initial teaching and lifelong training in order to ensure the employability and successful integration of young people into today's and tomorrow's society, at a time when the industrial age is making room for the knowledge based economy.

Education is a labour-intensive sector and in most countries the share of the budget allocated to staff expenditure amounts to 75-80 per cent of the total. It is therefore quite clear that any debate on the quality of teaching must not leave out teachers themselves. No reforms or changes to the education system can succeed unless they are supported by teachers. Given that teachers' working conditions have deteriorated over the last three decades, that is precisely the problem.

The important international forums concerning education in which the ILO has been involved, such as the World Education Forum in Dakar in the year 2000, have highlighted education's role in trying to achieve greater social justice and in fostering inclusion in the employment market, two goals which are often intrinsically linked.

The Joint Meeting on Lifelong Learning in the Twenty-first Century and the report by the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers have stressed the need to improve working conditions for teachers as well as the importance of initial and lifelong learning.

Expectations of teachers to be increasingly professional often disguise reproachful demands for greater commitment.

In our view, professionalism goes hand in hand with adequate, high quality, initial and lifelong training.

Without decent working conditions and socially appropriate remuneration, it is impossible for teachers to lead a decent life with their families without having to resort to other activities in order to survive.

Social and professional recognition of teachers as experts on education and social partners is also essential. They need to be valued as partners that should be listened to carefully, both in the debate on teaching and in social dialogue. The WCT is convinced that the concept of teachers' professionalism, provided these three conditions are met, is a necessary and, indeed essential element in improving the quality of teaching.

Access to information and communication technology plays an important role in the education of today's children. The digital divide and integration of these new technologies into teaching are still not given sufficient recognition, in spite of their importance to teachers' professional development.

The need for greater professionalism is also relevant in efforts to combat child labour and the AIDS pandemic, where education must play a primary role. Once again, the activities of teachers and of their representative organizations cannot be fully effective unless they receive high-quality training themselves, they have decent working conditions and can participate fully in the educational debate.

In too many countries, teachers are only allowed to meet in associations and not as proper trade union organizations. This is prejudicial to the development of social dialogue and to the establishment of high-quality educational systems, which need to be accessible to all young people, the marginalized in particular. The quest for quality teaching must not allow us to forget the essential mission of education, namely to provide training and education in order to ensure social integration for everyone as individuals aware of their responsibilities and with a sense of solidarity. Young people must be trained to become responsible citizens, with a healthy critical outlook in an evermore complex society, while adults must have permanent access to training and education in order to keep up or build on their cultural, social and economic level. With that in mind, the concept of decent work as a universal objective, as described in the Report of the Director-General, acquires greater potency and meaning.

This is the basic approach that WCT wants to develop at its 8th World Congress in 2002, for which the theme will be: the teacher, educational professional and agent in social inclusion. There is no doubt that public and private investment in training are far from adequate in many countries where the informal economy plays an important role. In the same countries, efforts are being made to fill the gaps left in the formal education sector due to a lack of resources with non-formal education initiatives. This development opens up some prospects for marginalized young people and WCT feels that particular attention must be paid to the working conditions of teachers who operate in this area.

Finally, the WCT would like to stress the importance of decent working conditions for teachers and the fact that there is a long way to go before we achieve this goal. We reiterate that decent working conditions are essential for greater professionalism on the part of teachers and consequently for high-quality education for all. That means high quality, lifelong education for everyone, which in the know-

ledge-based economy is the passport to social, cultural and professional inclusion.

Mr. VARELA (*Employers' delegate, Philippines*) — We take pride in the election of Ms. A. Sto. Tomas as President of this session of the Conference. As our Secretary of Labor and Employment, I need not extol her competence and qualifications to preside over this session as these are amply reflected in her curriculum vitae. I therefore join the delegates of this session of the Conference in extending my congratulations to her and all the other Officers of the Conference.

The Report of the Director-General for the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference provides a timely and much-needed focus on a most urgent universal concern. We are heartened to know that efforts to promote decent work as the new global strategy of the ILO are now making progress and gaining momentum.

However, as noted in the Report, progress has not been easy and straightforward. This is not so much due to the scarce resources of the Office but more to the complexity of the different regional and national contexts in which the specifics of the process have to be spelled out.

Moreover, while decent work reflects the historic but timely mandate of the ILO, its articulation and development must be reconfigured in view of the changes brought about by globalization.

We also agree with the Report that there indeed exists a global decent work deficit of immense proportions. The level of decent work that is available and accessible to workers, particularly in the informal sector, both within national boundaries or on a global scale, leaves much to be desired based on what is a wide gap between realities and aspirations.

What we are seeing here in the agenda of reducing the decent work deficit is a call to reflection and action. It is important that we relate economic development with social justice. GNP figures alone do not reflect the true development of any nation; development must wear a human face. As the Director-General aptly put it, there is a need for an "integrated approach to social and economic goals". This ideal, admittedly, cannot be realized easily. There are old habits and mindsets that must change. There are narrow sectoral interests that must be overcome.

We need a unifying vision. In this light the agenda of this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference can be a moral compass that can lead to the humanization of work.

Given the challenge of making decent work operational on as wide a scale as possible, the question then is how do we reduce the deficit? How do we improve the level of decent work prevailing both globally and nationally within the context of the new world economic order premised on competitiveness, free market forces and production and distribution efficiencies?

In many marginalized societies where poverty is too glaring, the opportunity to make a living is not readily available, such that the pressure of sheer survival would make the poor grab every means to meet basic needs. Those in desperate need for work are all concerned with the here and now. Decent work is a dream to many.

The Philippine experience in the promotion of decent work may be worth sharing. First of all, the right of Filipino workers to form organizations for the protection of their rights is well established. We have con-

sistently promoted industrial harmony through the application of the principle of tripartism whereby the major stakeholders try to look for win-win solutions to cases of industrial dispute. At the same time civil society and the national government conduct regular dialogues to address social concerns. Despite this, the lack of decent work continues to be a problem. This was exacerbated by the effects of the recent Asian financial crisis.

To counter this, the past administration embarked on a poverty-reduction programme that would have reduced the decent work deficit but unfortunately resulted in further widening the budget deficit. Matters were further made worse when unemployment soared to a record high of over 11 per cent which translated into a higher incidence of poverty.

In spite of this, I am happy to report that our President, Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, rose to the occasion. She deftly mobilized scarce resources and achieved critical consensus in the formulation of a pragmatic poverty-reduction programme aimed at narrowing the decent work deficit. The reduction of poverty is the pivot of the development strategy of the government strategy of the Arroyo Government.

The new medium-term development plan, for instance, is premised on the belief that economic growth per se does not guarantee employment growth.

In crafting the plan, both government and the private sector agreed that the promotion of decent work is the primary means to relieve if not eradicate poverty. This requires no less than a unified policy framework and deliberate strategies that all key sectors should support.

The new plan also outlines policies and programmes that will protect workers' rights, provide adequate income, guarantee social protection and promote worker participation through tripartism and social dialogue.

Moreover, no less than the President of this session of the Conference, Ms. A. Sto. Tomas who is also the Philippine's Secretary of Labor and Employment, is deeply and actively involved in implementing decent work policies. She has also tapped external assistance, including the ILO, to ensure its successful implementation.

In addition, there are government agencies mandated to facilitate in the development of small enterprises and entrepreneurs by way of entrepreneurial skills, training programmes and credit assistance. These include the Department of Trade and Industry, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, the Department of Science and Technology, the Department of Social Welfare, the Agricultural Training Institute and the Cooperative Development Authority.

In the private sector, there are a number of people's organizations engaged in various self-empowerment initiatives. Major business entities, for instance, formed a consortium for social outreach projects through the Philippine Business for Social Progress. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry through its regional chapters nationwide and the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), implement specialized programmes for the development of small enterprises.

In conclusion, we in the employers' sector support the global agenda of the ILO to make decent work the heart of development strategy and bring it to reality through normative action.

We also commit to support the national agenda of poverty reduction by mobilizing employers and the business community to expand opportunities as well as access to decent work. We shall endeavour to expand the outreach of our services and representation, not only to the formal sector enterprises but also to those belonging to the informal economy.

All these partnerships and dialogues have heightened public awareness of the magnitude of the social problems and have led to specific programmes on the ground. Still the challenge remains as formidable. We may look at the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda in all its ramifications as a long and arduous journey. The Report of the Director-General, however, serves as a valuable signpost.

Original French: Mr. ZAJAC (Employers' delegate, Poland) — I would like to start by congratulating the President on her election to the 89th Session of the Conference. My congratulations go, too, to the Director-General for drawing up the document we are discussing.

It is a great honour for me to be able to speak to you on behalf of the Polish employers and give you our view of the Director-General's Report. First, the Report is well constructed and well written. It goes without saying that the foundation for decent work is to be found in the principles set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. This approach has been supported by employers in the past. We take it for granted that once people have the minimum, they will aspire to more.

The Report states that decent work is a concept belonging to all nations and that it is up to each one to define the term. Polish employers support this basic concept, but it is hard to grasp the idea of decent work deficit, as it is not clearly defined.

We believe that decent work should entail job creation by encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit, providing training and developing human resources.

Unemployment is becoming more and more of a pressing issue in many countries in the world. Once unemployment has reached a certain level, the idea of decent work loses importance. Therefore, Polish employers believe that the priority is job creation and that should be emphasized in all ILO programmes and policies. The ILO should look more closely at the preconditions for the creation of sustainable work and the obstacles preventing businesses from providing decent work.

Regarding the decent work deficit, we cannot solve all problems from one day to the next and this cannot replace good governance and good macroeconomic and fiscal policies in providing a basis for enduring employment. The ILO has a part to play by encouraging a healthy mix of policies. Polish employers are concerned by the time and resources that the ILO is investing in becoming a knowledge organization, at the same time making funds available to constituents. We feel that the ILO should concentrate on implementing top quality technical co-operation projects. The decent work project cannot just become national.

In the time available to me as a speaker, let me make a few comments about globalization.

We are aware of the situation in the third chapter of the Report, namely that there are both those who are for globalization and those who are against. We feel it is not for the ILO to take sides. It needs to adopt a balanced view. We do not want the ILO to be against

globalization. We cannot share any view that suggests that globalization is the start of a downward trend.

Globalization is here to stay and of course the ILO needs to look at the paths to follow and to see what response is necessary. Why are some countries not integrated into the world economy? Perhaps the ILO could find a niche for the social aspect of globalization.

The Polish employers feel that the social dimension of globalization is a natural part of the mandate of the ILO as shown by the initiative of employers in accepting the 1998 Declaration. We support the ILO in finding its part in the multilateral system but only if the ILO offers a credible political approach. If consensus can be found on the path to follow by the tripartite constituents of the ILO, then the ILO will be able to send out a stronger message in multilateral forums.

Mr. AGUBUZU (Representative, Organization of African Unity) — It is an honour for me to address this august Conference, whose tripartite character is unique, and unique also in terms of its decision-making process which deserves to be emulated at all levels of society. Democracy in the ILO is perhaps second to none.

It is the ILO's uniqueness that gives me the honour and pleasure of speaking here in the name of Africa and its continental organization, the Organization of African Unity, which today stands on the verge of a historic transition, seeking to transform itself into a more effective vehicle for addressing the manifold problems that plague the continent of Africa. The African Union is the result of a new awakening, a renaissance, a new awareness and a burning determination to respond more effectively to the challenges facing Africa. The Union will seek to give impetus to a broader unity, transcending ethnic and national boundaries in respect of the aspirations of the African people for solidarity and brotherhood.

The leaders of Africa recognize the need to be in the forefront of the struggle for the second liberation of Africa — a liberation from economic degradation — and are determined more than ever before to find home-grown solutions to our socio-economic problems. Their leaders also recognize the need for external support — just as they did during the years of liberation — to supplement their efforts. During this period of transition to democracy, economic revival and political stability, Africa would like to count on the support of its development partners.

The ILO has long been a traditional partner of the OAU and its member States.

We recognize, with appreciation, the numerous technical cooperation projects that the ILO has mounted and continues to mount in Africa. We also recognize with appreciation the decision of the ILO to join in the struggle against the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the workplace. At an institutional level, that is the ILO and OAU, cooperation between the two organizations is satisfactory. We note in particular the efforts that have been made in the area of human resources development. However, a lot more needs to be done in terms of increasing technical cooperation. The ILO must be more visible in our countries.

Africa is noted for its poverty and unemployment, and the ILO is a factor for reducing poverty. The ILO's profile in this area needs to be strengthened. The Jobs for Africa programmes must be given more

means to prevent the project from becoming an empty shell. The multidisciplinary teams also deserve attention.

It is obvious that demands on the ILO are increasing. That, by itself, is a measure of the confidence that the international community has in the Organization. Regrettably, we are informed that resources are not keeping pace with the demands, in spite of the house-cleaning exercise that the Director-General has embarked upon.

There is a need for reflection on this so as to strike a careful balance between the two. In any case, the maintenance of zero nominal growth for more than a decade gives rise to legitimate concerns as to how effective we want the ILO to be. At all costs, the ILO must be given the necessary means to fulfil its mandate.

Mr. ZHARIKOV (*Representative, World Federation of Trade Unions*) — I congratulate the President and her colleagues on their election to these very important positions.

The Report of the Director-General this year has made interesting proposals on how the ILO should reorient itself to meet the new challenges. The World Federation of Trade Unions also welcomes the fact that the agenda of the Conference includes such important questions as safety and health in agriculture, the promotion of cooperatives and social security issues, all of which call for urgent steps to deal with the emerging problems.

We are not, however, sure whether such concepts as “Decent Work” and “Global Compact” and the various activities which are built around them are fully adequate to the real issues faced by today’s world, especially by working people and the trade union movement, as they confront the extremely negative consequences of neo-liberal globalization. For example, while this Conference examines how social security should be further strengthened, the neo-liberal policy makers want to liquidate the existing schemes and cut pensions. They want social security funds to be invested in the stock market and run by private agencies.

Even though the tall claims that “markets know best” are now largely discredited, the pressure continues on governments to liquidate all forms of state intervention and to impose privatization of state sector industries and services. In such a situation, we wonder how such initiatives as a Global Compact, which is a private arrangement between the United Nations Secretariat and some such transnational companies and one international trade union organization, could be useful. Many NGOs have already expressed strong reservations about this Compact. We do need social dialogue, but this should include all social groups and organizations, and especially organizations that are committed to the standards and values established by the United Nations and the ILO and not those who totally ignore these principles.

The principle issue before the ILO is the implementation of the Ten Commitments adopted in Copenhagen in 1995 and reiterated by the United Nations Special Session on Social Issues last year. The Report itself states that these issues have remained in tact during the last two decades while the policies of neo-liberal globalization have drastically increased poverty and marginalization, accelerated unemployment, worsened working conditions and destroyed trade unions and enterprises, demolishing entire societies everywhere. These policies brought in finan-

cial crises in some parts of the world, but did not deliver the promised economic growth. Now, under the same slogan of economic efficiency, the tendency is to jeopardize vital environmental accords or to annex the weak economies of small countries to the biggest and strongest economy without looking into the consequences of such measures.

We welcome the fact that the ILO is convening a World Employment Conference this year. There must be a clear programme of action on the implementation of the commitment to full employment. This is urgent, since we cannot fail to notice that this century is beginning with huge job cuts by employers who want to maximize their profits at the expense of working people, whilst squandering real resources for development on destructive speculation and profiteering.

We find that the Report does not deal adequately with the negative policies of the employer groups in the various countries that have seen a decline in the employment situation recently. Nor do we find adequate analysis of the obstructions and obstacles to the exercise to the right of association and collective bargaining, the most important international labour standard set by the ILO.

On the other hand we regret the fact that the report presented to the Conference on the Review of Annual Reports and the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work contains highly questionable and one-sided conclusions. In fact, the report argues against the very principle of trade union unity. For example, on page 3, paragraph 14, the report of the experts states “Thus we encourage countries to abandon the position of single trade union structures”. This idea is a façade disguising an evident attempt to divide the trade union movement and destroy the unity of workers at all levels. The idea is totally wrong and designed only to weaken the workers’ organizations further. It goes against the very principles upheld by the trade union movement, such as one union for one industry and one trade union centre for the whole country.

It will be recalled that some of the formulations contained in a similar report presented to the last session also contained highly controversial conclusions alleging that the right of association was not compatible with the political order in some countries. This amounts to the imposition of viewpoints on which there could be no consensus within the International Labour Organization. Before the ILO experts wrote such one-sided conclusions, they made no effort to consult the trade union centres in those countries that are members of the Workers’ group at the ILO.

The World Federation of Trade Unions considers that the ILO should not thus identify itself with a certain political system and denounce other political systems. It amounts to interference within the internal affairs of specific countries. It was agreed that the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work should not be misused for protectionist purposes, and think that it should not be used for political purposes either.

Such assessments are not only attempts to divert attention away from the real issue that the basic rights of working people are not being recognized by company managements and employers in many countries. In fact we could even say that these political overtones seek to cover up the basic issue that the reports do not adequately analyse the real extent of non-

implementation of basic ILO Conventions, especially Nos 87 and 98, by employers and some governments. By failing to observe the spirit of these Conventions i.e. by not recognizing trade unions or not allowing trade unions to be formed, the employers and ruling circles are creating a situation in which trade union membership is declining. Union-busting has become an organized industry, for example, in the United States, which has not yet ratified even Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. As a result, in that country, more than 85 per cent of the labour force in the private sector has no trade unions and hence no opportunity to exercise the right to organize and bargain collectively.

The same situation is being presented in Western Europe — the birthplace of trade unionism — where trade union membership has significantly fallen. The majority of workers and employers are not members of trade unions. I will conclude by reiterating that the Report should be made to promote more democracy and participation within the ILO. Elections to the ILO structures and representation in the ILO Workers' group in the Governing Body should be based on the principle of universality with proportional representation of all trades and trade union movements, regions and countries at various levels of development as well as economic and social systems. The same principle should be applied to the distribution of available resources. I would also like to say that the credibility of international institutions comes into question when there are double standards and open discrimination. This is clearly seen in the Middle East where the genocide of the Palestinian people continues through occupation, aggression and violation of human rights, including the destruction of places of work.

This Conference should strongly condemn killings of trade union leaders in Colombia, where the situation has also become intolerable. We support the Commission of Inquiry for Colombia and a permanent body for Palestine. We reiterate at the conclusion that the ILO should uphold its founding principles and not let itself be raped into the neo-liberal model of unipolar world. This means that we have to find solutions that correspond to the basic principle established by the International Labour Organization.

Original Arabic: Mr. YOUSUF (*Workers' delegate, Bahrain*) — In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! First of all, on behalf of the Bahrain Workers' delegation, I greet the President and all participants of this session of the Conference. Our workers take great pride and place great hopes in this Conference and look forward to seeing the agenda put into practice.

We congratulate the President on her election here. Since we know that you have a great deal of experience in this area, we are sure that our work will be successful. I would also like to express my thanks to the Director-General of the Organization for the excellent efforts he has put into the reports before us, which reflect the ILO's attempts to address the aspirations of workers and apply our international commitments in this difficult context. These constitute real challenges for the ILO as it carries out its mission.

I would like to say something about the changes taking place in my country. His Royal Highness, Sheikh Hammed Benissa Al Khalifa, Emir of Bahrain, recently passed a decree encouraging the creation of

trade unions in our country in order to protect workers' interests and the rights already secured, and to usher in a development process in order to strengthen civil society in our country on the basis of the Constitution of Bahrain and the National Labour Charter, which was adopted by popular ballot, with 98.4 per cent in favour.

Thanks to the courageous initiatives taken by his Highness, our country has undertaken a process of socio-economic reform. His Highness has thus ordered a general amnesty of all political prisoners and has authorized persons in exile to return home. His Highness has also ordered the repeal of the State Security Act that had been in force since 1975, i.e. since the National Assembly was dissolved. With the political climate improving, society has become more dynamic. Institutions of civil society have developed and begun to play a role in the country's modernization and reforms.

Workers have been at the vanguard of this movement thanks to their organizations and thanks to materialization of the aspirations of our people.

While labour organizations are very happy to see official initiatives, they are also endeavouring to strengthen unionism among workers on the basis of international principles and standards. The General Committee of Workers in Bahrain has participated in the drafting of a new Act on unions, in line with international standards and principles.

This is a very important session. I think it will be decisive, in particular as regards safety and health in farming, cooperatives and social security. The challenges faced by workers are the same in all countries, despite differences in the social conditions, and are caused by globalization. Decent work must be promoted to bring about economic and social development. In this regard, the Director-General's Report highlights notable progress over the last few years with regard to meeting the objectives of the 1999 session of the Conference concerning decent work. This shows that there is a real need to intensify our efforts in order to attain the other aims set out in the Report. We need to adopt new concepts which are adapted to the current situation. Moreover, understanding globalization and giving a social dimension to privatization implemented in many developing countries is extremely important. Thus, issues such as social security cannot be forgotten at present, since the intensification of competition is leading enterprises as well as governments to carry out mass redundancies or turn to temporary employment, which deprives the workers of social security and subjects them to psychological pressure caused by this hostile competition. At the same time, redundancies and the increase in unemployment is a substantial deficit for decent work, which is the issue we are addressing.

We need to face up to major challenges. Enterprises in the private sector which should be involved in the process of sustainable economic and social development perceive decent work as an obstacle to competitiveness which causes them instead to look for cheaper manpower. This is where the difficulty lies of reconciling the interests of a private sector looking for fast profits and those of workers seeking economic and social stability.

In the short term the private sector might gain the upper hand and be productive with limited costs, but from a strategic viewpoint the future of this sector would be threatened if workers did not have the

wherewithal to consume. For this reason it is important to establish acceptable minimum wages and to provide social security; this constitutes an important step towards achieving the objective of decent work.

The occupied Arab territories are currently being subjected to a war of attrition being waged by the Israeli occupying forces which recalls the Nazi period. Since last September, and following the provocative visit of Ariel Sharon to the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the occupying forces have intensified their operations of oppression and repression, even using internationally prohibited weapons. Houses have been demolished, the landscape destroyed, unfair travel restrictions imposed and people have been deprived of their jobs. The General Committee for Bahrain Workers, while wishing this Conference every success, asks your Organization, in the difficult circumstances currently facing my country, particularly its workers, for increased support to help it achieve its objectives and to meet the challenges of globalization.

Mr. PREWARE (*Government delegate, Nigeria*) — Permit me to extend my congratulations to the President on her election to lead the deliberations of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference. My congratulations also go to the other officers of the Conference. I also take this opportunity to express to the Director-General and to the Chairperson of the Governing Body the appreciation of the Nigerian delegation of the excellent work done in developing and refining the strategic budget concepts designed to achieve efficiency and effective service delivery in the four priority areas of decent work, gender-sensitive employment, social protection and social dialogue.

No one is in any doubt today as to the broad mandate of the ILO. The specific and the various social challenges facing our individual countries may determine individual country priorities, but the four strategic objectives which will determine the thrust of the ILO activities in the 2002-03 operational year and shape our collective concerns for decent living and working conditions in our various national societies.

Nigeria's commitment to the broad and the specific goals of the ILO is self-evident in the socio-political programmes of the present administration in Nigeria. Nigeria has ratified five of the eight core ILO Conventions. The ratification process has commenced in respect of the remaining three core Conventions, namely the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

The National Labour Advisory Council, a tripartite body charged with the responsibility of examining and recommending action on labour and labour-related issues of national and international consequence, has unanimously recommended the ratification of all these three outstanding Conventions in accordance with the constitutional requirements of our country. In Nigeria we are actively aware of the need to go beyond ratification; the Government is actively engaged in the provision of the institutional framework and a logistic infrastructure to sustain the implementation of ratified Conventions.

Nigeria will keep faith with the ILO. Nigeria urges that even within the rather innovative zero-growth strategic budgeting and its constraints, sustained efforts be made to achieve economies for the benefit of service delivery in critical areas. For Nigeria, for all

the countries of the developing world, unemployment, poverty and the HIV/AIDS pandemic remain major challenges. Only last month, Nigeria hosted an African summit on HIV/AIDS. The summit produced the Abuja Declaration which urges all governments, organizations and peoples to join in sustained plans of action to fight this pandemic. AIDS sufferers need support and sympathy, not exclusion from our homes and workplaces. The attainment of the goals of decent work, decent living and decent societies will suffer a setback if enough resources and effort are not devoted to fighting the war against AIDS.

Nigeria remains a team player in the ILO family. She recognizes that this Organization has more than a catalytic role to play in the achievement of stable, prosperous societies where decent work opportunities are available to all.

Mr. NGUYEN AN (*Workers' delegate, Viet Nam*) — First of all, on behalf of the Vietnamese workers and trade unions, I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election and wish this session of the Conference every success.

The socio-economic development policy and strategy of Viet Nam at present is defined as follows: to push forward industrialization and modernization, build an independent and autonomous economy, and turn ours into an industrialized country; to give priority to developing the productive forces while shaping corresponding production relations along socialist lines; to promote to the utmost domestic resources, while taking advantage of external resources and proactive international economic integration with a view to rapid, efficient and sustainable development; to gradually improve the material and spiritual well-being of the people; to achieve social progress and equity; to protect and improve the environment; and to combine socio-economic development with the enhancement of national defence and security.

As an organization of the workers and for the workers, the Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour supports the abovementioned policy and strategy of Viet Nam.

The Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour highly appreciates the efforts made and the achievements gained by the ILO in the last year by concentrating on core and urgent issues, especially on the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, which attracted much attention from the world's workers and traded unions and from the Vietnamese trade unions as well.

We also consider that an item entitled "Safety and health in agriculture", an item on the promotion of cooperatives and on social security needed to be included in the agenda for discussion at this session of Conference.

The twenty-first century will see more opportunities, science and technology will make leaps forward, the knowledge-based economy will play an ever more remarkable role in the development of productive forces. Economic globalization represents an objective trend involving more and more countries and containing both positive and negative aspects.

The world is confronted with many global issues, which cannot be solved by any single country without multilateral cooperation. In this context, trade union leaders have to bear great responsibility towards working people of their respective countries and the world trade union movement as well, to cope with

difficulties and challenges placed before them, to join together in taking action and to unite all workers in the common struggle for peace, well-being, democracy, development and social progress — all this in order to establish stable and equitable relationships throughout the world without imposition, discrimination and exploitation.

The international organizations, and the ILO as well, play a very important role in the twenty-first century. Vietnamese labourers believe that the voluntary character of ILO labour standards remains one of the fundamental and outstanding features of the ILO Constitution. This means that matters of the implementation of standards for each country should be in accordance with its level of economic development, with its social preferences. The ratification should be based on the principles of voluntariness and flexibility, including technical and financial assistance to developing countries, so that they can narrow the big gap between international labour standards and national ones in the short term. In this field, the ILO can play a major role rather than using any binding and imposing approaches regardless of the inequality in levels of socio-economic development of member countries.

In the spirit of active partnership, the Vietnamese trade unions are focusing their attention on multi-sided cooperation with the ILO; on technical assistance in particular in order to strengthen the support of trade unions to the workers in the formal and informal sectors; on the establishment of tripartite mechanisms and implementation of programmes on poverty alleviation; on job creation, occupational safety and health; and on training activities at all levels.

On this occasion I would like to express our high appreciation for the effective technical cooperation from the ILO and other friendly trade unions in the world, and thank you for this.

Mr. FALBR (*Workers' delegate, Czech Republic*) — It is now more than ten years since I first attended the Conference as the delegate representing the workers and employees of my country, and that allows me to compare and analyse what in my eyes looks different, and what is really different, what is better and what is worse.

The Report of the Director-General is much better than those we used to hear a couple of years ago. It is a real analysis of what has been done in the two years since the ILO set the four strategic goals to reduce the deficit of decent work for all in the globalizing world.

Although I have a problem with the expression “decent work” (what is decent work in any corner of our new globalized world?), I fully understand there must be an attractive slogan. From “justice” to “decency”, then.

What we really identify with, however, is one of the strategic objectives mentioned, namely the development of social dialogue. We know what it is, and after our short historical experience with the neo-liberals, (the Czech neo-liberals are more neo-liberal than any others), we also know what it is not.

In the Czech Republic now, the social partners are living a long period of grace. We have a Government which has developed, together with the social partners, a real structured social dialogue. Since it came to power in 1998, a lot of work has been done to improve the economic and social situation of the country (by our Government). For those who know the story

of the countries with economies in transition, it is possible to add that it happened in an atmosphere of social peace and mutual understanding.

Some seem to find it hard to understand that social dialogue is also about enterprises and shop floor organizations of the workers' representation in the form of the unions. This was one of the conclusions of the National Seminar on Social Dialogue organized in Prague with the ILO three weeks ago. I should emphasize the constant need to watch the attitude of the multinationals. It seems that some of them do forget that our country has a tradition of 150 years of industrial development. When they do forget, we are here to tell them to respect the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.

Global capital needs a global union response. Split unions can achieve little at either national or international level. Let the ILO continue in the good path it chose two years ago, and let us be supportive. The ILO deserves it!

Original Spanish: Mr. DE REGIL (Employers' delegate, Mexico) — I congratulate the President on her appointment to preside over this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The challenge of reducing the decent work deficit should be identified in general terms; however, it is essential to have a uniform definition of the concept of decent work. Indeed, decent work is a subjective idea, and we will try to contribute to its understanding. We consider it to be “decent” in terms of treatment, clean and safe in its environment, stimulating and satisfactory in terms of remuneration, productive, freely chosen and with facilities for collective bargaining, but also favouring the development of enterprises.

In his Report, the Director-General distinguishes “consensus” as a possible outcome of action by the social partners, by means of which, and through tripartism, it is possible to find positive solutions to labour problems.

Mexico has been able to progress towards tripartite consensus by identifying the social partners within the framework of a new labour culture and a new draft Labour Code, developed with the participation of the social partners.

The success of any consensus needs to be based on defining and involving the social partners, in other words on with the participation by workers' and employers' organizations which are truly representative nationwide, or involve at least the majority of industries.

We are certain that our successful legislative experience will be continued by our new Government in order to achieve a consensus for integral labour reform, which will improve the country's competitiveness in the context of economic globalization.

Any excessive or irrelevant standards become inapplicable or are systematically updated because they fail to meet the needs of society. It is therefore essential to find a mechanism which will make it possible to modernize the voluminous and sometimes obsolete set of ILO standards, without disregarding the basic principles, which will thus be rendered more real and objective.

Because of its tripartite nature, the ILO regards worker and employer participation as part of its

essence. The prospect of establishing individual contacts at the level of enterprises, even at national and multinational level, may confuse and undermine the existence of the Organization. And the same would happen if it were linked individually to each worker. It is the organizations of employers and workers, the social partners, who join together and represent workers nationally and in this institution.

Now, if any company were individually to adapt a measure or practice, it could not be considered binding on others, nor should it be used as an example to make it, or attempt to make it, generally acceptable. And we would have to revise the whole concept of tripartism which underpins the ILO.

Economic globalization has given rise to considerable investment mobility throughout the world and one of the results of this process has been the emergence of the free export zones. Their presence is positive in that they create jobs, which are considered valid in as far as they apply the same rules and legislation as other companies, thus avoiding precarious work and unfair competition.

It is vital to make every effort to generate sustainable, productive, freely chosen jobs. For this reason, we emphasize that we must channel sufficient ILO resources into technical assistance, especially for the activities of ACTEMP, which are intended to promote employment and favour the creation and strengthening of small and medium-sized companies which worldwide make it possible to create more jobs.

We would like the ILO increasingly to ratify its own basic principles, and in particular those contained in its Constitution, which confirm its essential tripartite nature.

Mr. KEARNEY (*representative, International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation*) — Impressive changes have occurred at the ILO in the past few years. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work has focused attention on the key issues facing workers. Internal structural changes have sharpened the responsiveness of the institution. Morale appears better and the ILO once again has a visible presence in the United Nations family.

But institutional change at the ILO cannot, on its own, eliminate the decent work deficit. Governments are the key to results on the ground but commitment and action are too often lacking. The abysmal response of governments to ILO initiatives on forced labour in Burma were shameful and cast doubt on the claims of opponents of trade and labour standards linkages that the ILO be the sole agency where worker rights issues should be addressed.

According to the ILO Director-General, two in every five countries have serious or severe problems of freedom of association. Why are governments — and not just developing country governments — failing to respond in this key area? One would expect leading States Members such as the United States to respect the Declaration and give a lead by extending to their own workers the rights they have long demanded for workers elsewhere. And why are member States continuing to maintain and expand export processing zones where workers are denied the protection of national labour law and where freedom of association is forbidden?

When will workers in Central America, Mexico, Viet Nam and China be freed from the tyranny of their Korean and Taiwanese transnational em-

ployers? In Central America's clothing industry, workers who attempt to organize to improve their working conditions face violence from security guards, death threats, mass firings, plant closures and the prospect of being blacklisted and denied future employment. This is a decent work deficit writ large.

And when will the thousands of migrant workers in Saipan be released from slavery in the Korean-owned clothing factories which dominate the island's export industry? Forced to work in unhealthy, unsafe and overcrowded factories from 12 to 20 hours a week, they live in barracks, up to 20 to a room, in rooms infested with vermin and insects. The barracks are patrolled by guards and surrounded by barbed wire.

Their contracts routinely prohibit them from asking for salary increases, looking for alternative employment, from union organizing, from engaging in social or church activities, and even from dating or marrying. This is more than just a decent work deficit. When will companies like Thai Durable Textiles, who ignore Thailand's labour laws and the decisions of its courts, be reined in and prevented from abusing their workforces and undermining their competitors?

Ten days ago in Sialkot, Pakistan, the world's football stitching capital, the leather field labour unions sought registration. We have just been informed that this morning its president, Nadin Daar, was abducted by the company owner, his driver and others. At pistol point he was ordered to stop organizing and to sign a blank piece of paper, or he would be shot. When he refused, he was physically tortured. "Decent work deficit" is too weak a term for this brutality.

Governments could prevent all this. However, today they are contributing to the decent work deficit rather than reducing it. In the process, they are disadvantaging workers, undermining labour standards and retarding development.

The ILO must, if it is to discard its image as a well-meaning but toothless institution, confront government in action head-on and insist that every member State activate the Declaration.

The ILO must also resist the dead hand of those who present it from responding to initiatives spurred by its past failures to contain worker exploitation. It is truly amazing that the ILO has not picked up private initiatives such as corporate codes of conduct and help mould them into instruments capable of complementing the application of international labour standards. It must now begin that task.

Ensuring that export processing zones be included under the ambit of labour law and of global companies, whether manufacturers, merchandisers or retailers, be forced to respect international labour standards must be other immediate priorities for ILO action.

Workers are patient but their patience is not limitless. The very welcome rejuvenation of the ILO must soon produce real results on the ground. If it does not, the ability of the ILO to garner the respect of workers and of civil society will be lost forever.

Original French: Mrs. HOFERLIN (representative, Social Alert) — Since the ILO was set up in 1919, this Organization's constituents have recognized that the world can live in a situation of social peace and stability if it does not create and support freely chosen employment and conditions, which respect the essential principles of dignity and justice. And, in accordance with that, they have affirmed that human labour is not

a commodity. More than 80 years later, these principles, which were guaranteed over the years in an arsenal of conventions on labour, that have made it possible for humanity to make progress, are being gradually eroded. The obligation to live up to them appears to be disappearing, ceding to indifference, ignorance or even contempt regarding the rights which have been acquired over time. Full respect of these rights also appears to be argued for on the basis of the criteria of economic and social efficiency. However, we are talking here about a moral, ethical and legal obligation on the part of the players in current society. This is right, an obligation with respect to current and future generations.

The principles guaranteed in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and, in general, in the ILO Conventions are not a concession, but basic rights for workers throughout the world. The same applies to access to a complete social security system for all men and women, and for consistent payment of decent wages.

The world today is affected by a huge deficit in decent work. The information presented by the Director-General of the ILO, in his Report to this Conference, tells us that more than 1.16 billion people do not have a job, 160 million of them are unemployed people proper and the rest, that is around about 1 billion, live, or rather survive on independent, insecure activities without any social protection at all. Among those workers who are considered to have some kind of employment, conditions are also not always what you could call decent. We can even say that they are getting less and less so. On the pretext of saving their jobs, many workers are subjected to pressure to lower their standards at work.

During the course of an investigative trip made by our Organization to look at plantations where pesticide is used intensively, someone who was suffering from cancer and had become sterile after using these dangerous substances without protective apparel, told us bitterly that she preferred to die working than to die without work. Like this peasant, there are thousands people across the whole world who are terrified by the spectre of joblessness and are forced to resign themselves to indecent activities in order to avoid the risk of endangering their job.

Our international coalition "Social Alert", composed of various organizations, looks favourably upon the emphasis placed on the importance of creating and supporting decent work, as this is something of vital importance to billions of men and women. This is the great challenge of this new millennium and we all need to work together as hard as we can to face up to it. We are convinced that this objective is possible, but in order to attain it we need more than a simple, positive approach on the part of those concerned. We particularly need a strong political will and a legal framework which makes it possible to ensure that workers rights are legal, moral and ethical rights. As a tripartite organization, ILO should continue to play a fundamental role. Its Conventions, in particular those which are enshrined in the Declaration, should remain the minimum basis and a point of reference for the progress of humankind. To neglect these points would endanger social peace and stability.

Mr. SUPARWANTO (*Employers' delegate, Indonesia*) — I am honoured to have been given the opportunity to address this Conference today and would

like to commence, if I may, by citing a phrase which I believe summarizes the direction which our modern world is taking: "If we do not change we die". Therefore, the questions we must ask ourselves are, if we are to change, *what* should we change and *how* should we set about it in order to survive?

I think that most people would agree that the pressure to change comes from the present dynamics of globalization, which cannot be resisted. Indeed, our surroundings have altered drastically in recent years and are in process of constant and rapid evolution. Dramatic advances in technology, information technology and communications are transforming our environment and forcing the world of industry and business to become more and more competitive. Yet although information can be accessed instantly, its sheer volume and the speed with which it becomes obsolete pose a considerable challenge to our modern societies, which are forced to adapt or to fall behind. Nowhere is this more true, or more difficult, than in the developing countries.

Great hopes have been placed on the concept of globalization. However, for all too many countries, and Indonesia is no exception, it has not fulfilled its promise of bringing greater wealth and a better quality of life, but rather has engendered a feeling of disillusionment bordering on "globophobia". Indeed, the panacea is beginning to threaten the environment and to crush the millions whose lot it was expected to improve. The only winners seem to be the wealthy few and the large corporations and institutions, which are getting richer, to the detriment of the poor, who are getting poorer.

In this context I believe the first and foremost change we must effect involves the mental attitude of the players themselves. By this I mean that we must rethink the relationship between employers and workers, and more particularly the relationship between trade unions and employers, if we are to achieve decent working conditions and a better standard of living for workers and employers alike.

In this regard it is imperative that the relationship between employers, workers and trade unions be based on trust and mutual respect as well as on transparent and responsible accountability. Only when such a spirit of trust and transparency has been established between the various parties can they focus their attention on setting up collective labour agreements. This is a prerequisite which will mark the decisive turning point of reducing the deficit of "decent work", thus paving the way for negotiation on wages, safety and health, and for the more favourable working environment and other improvements in working conditions which are urgently called for. In this way many difficulties could be overcome, not least those currently faced by the workforce of firms represented by multiple unions, for instance, which would be significantly reduced if a single representative could be chosen from their midst to negotiate with the employer. By the same token, public laws, and especially labour laws, would be more widely respected by all parties, thereby reducing the incidence of trade unions declaring wildcat strikes or of employers resorting to lockouts.

With regard to the recent initiative by the ILO to foster social dialogue in Indonesia, in my view the success of such a dialogue will depend on its ability to resolve the specific labour problems that the country is currently facing. Furthermore, the latter will have

to be resolved within the framework of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). Therefore, if social dialogue is to succeed in improving labour relations, it is imperative that it be underpinned by efficient planning and organization.

At this point let me conclude this address by extending to the President, in her capacity as a representative of an Asian country, my warmest congratulations on her election to preside over this respected Conference. I feel certain that under her wise and experienced guidance, the work of this 89th Session of the International Labour Conference will be crowned with success.

Mr. LARSSON (*Representative, International Commission on Occupational Health*) — The International Commission on Occupational Health warmly greets the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, and in particular the initiatives in relation to decent conditions of work and child labour.

At the heart of the modern economy, as in all previous economies, is the human being. Today, we recognize the central importance of knowledge, and knowledge management. It is human knowledge that is the wealth of nations, embodied in people.

It is all too easy for major corporations, and even governments, to forget or minimize their share of the responsibility for the moral infrastructure that underpins the civilized modern economy. This responsibility cannot simply be outsourced.

A defining test of these principles is child labour. The involuntary underage worker typically forfeits the chance of developing knowledge, and risks his or her health and welfare under duress, in the cause of commercial gain for others.

We need to see the workplace in terms of “health chains”, not just “value chains”. Work processes carry consequences for those involved, and these are frequently excluded from consideration by the accountants. Healthy work is fundamental to sustainable economics, and protecting the health of workers is a matter of human rights. The fundamental occupational health research has been done, but needs to be applied. Child workers have their health to regain, and “nothing to lose but their chains”. Societies are judged by the way they treat their weakest members, and future historians may judge us poorly.

The International Commission for Occupational Health Congress in Brazil in 2003 will address “The Challenge of Equity in Occupational Health and Safety”. We can start our preparations now, taking child labour as a focus. ICOH expertise, comprising 2,000 international experts, organized through 35 scientific committees and four international networks, is available. The recent appointment of occupational physician Doctor Gerry Eijkemans, formerly of WHO, to a senior post in the ILO concerned with child labour, is a cause for optimism, and we look forward to continued collaboration.

ICOH is concerned with healthy ethical work. As discussions in relation to the triple bottom line, and ethical investment, become more applied, the ICOH network of occupational health physicians and other specialists represents a useful source of information on local issues of corporate performance in the globalized economy. Such information can, and will, be used as input into different emerging types of performance rating systems, covering aspects of sustainability, social

responsibility, occupational health and safety and a good working environment and human rights.

Members of ICOH can be actively involved in providing such information, and ICOH can advise the ILO and IPEC on which work-related hygiene and ergonomic factors represent especially harmful exposures to children. ICOH could co-work when launching epidemiological health studies and compiling facts about harmful exposures at work for children. Thus, ICOH welcomes these initiatives by the ILO and IPEC, and sees good possibilities for future collaboration.

Mr. SEN (*Representative, Trade Unions International of Public and Allied Employees*) — At the outset, I express my gratitude to the ILO Governing Body for providing me with this opportunity to address the plenary session of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Today, the workers of the world are passing through an unprecedentedly difficult period. Never before have the jobs of workers and employees been so jeopardized and the workers rendered so completely insecure.

After about a decade of being put into practice, the World Bank/IMF-dictated structural adjustment programme has proved to be definitely anti-worker. Our Trade Unions International is concerned primarily with public service employees. Public employees in general, either in the developing countries or in the advanced capitalist countries, have become direct victims of the neo-liberal economy and the structural adjustment programme.

The basic concepts of neo-liberal globalization are privatization and drastic cuts in public expenditure. In the scenario of the heavy debt burdens of the developing countries and the reappearance of economic recession in the developed capitalist countries, the IMF/World Bank-dictated structural adjustment programme was based on the basic condition of privatization of public enterprises, even public services, and drastic cuts in social security measures like health care, education, housing, pension benefits, etc., and above all reductions of staff.

As the reforms dictated by the IMF/World Bank are implemented and public sector industries are closed down or privatized, thousands of workers and employees are rendered unemployed. Employees in banking, insurance and the entire financial sector are hard hit, as governments in the developing and developed countries take mindless steps for privatization. The workforce in this sector is being hastily reduced, there is no new employment, and joblessness has assumed formidable dimensions. Moreover, the deepening economic crisis is also resulting in banking crashes, as has recently been evident in Japan and in some other South-East Asian countries.

Privatization of other government departments and enterprises are also taking place in different countries, from telecommunications to postal and railway services. Many government departments in several countries are either being privatized or simply closed down. Casualization of staff, increases in home-based workers, steady reductions in regular and permanent employment in the public services are the order of the day in all developing and developed countries.

The public employees have therefore started resisting this onslaught. Recent strikes of public em-

ployees and other sections of the working class in different parts of the globe are indications that the workers are determined to resist this offensive.

The situation in the former socialist countries like Russia, other CIS countries, and the Eastern European countries seem to be the worst. Not only rampant privatization and sharp reductions in staff, but also non-payment of salaries to existing employees are new phenomena in these countries.

Unfortunately, the governments in various countries, particularly the developing countries, are desperately trying to stall these rising struggles through draconian anti-worker measures. In some countries, like the Republic of Korea, anti-employee enactments have already been made. In India, retrograde amendments to existing labour laws are on the agenda of the Government. In Pakistan, the authoritarian regime is suppressing all lawful trade union activities, as a result of which employees are unable to effectively voice their protests.

It is against this background that the Report of the Director-General of the ILO for 2001, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, which advocates a consensus on globalization, seems to be an unreal suggestion. While globalization is directly directed against the working class and the poor to serve the profit interests of the MNCs and the governments of the advanced capitalist countries, there is practically no room for consensus. On the contrary, the unprecedented economic offensive of capitalist globalization should be stopped forthwith, and the ILO is expected

to protect the interests of the workers from this onslaught.

TUI recognizes the important role played by the ILO at the present time and desires further strengthening of its role in the formulation and implementation of international labour standards for protecting social issues which should be taken in all economic decision-making. At the same time, we do not wish that it is neutralized because of the policies and activities of the dominant economic powers and neo-liberal forces. We desire to have an ILO which is more effective in enforcing international labour standards through its Conventions and Recommendations. There should be more consensus-based functioning and decision-making of the ILO with the involvement of all segments of the trade movement. Like UN bodies, the ILO is also subjected to financial and other forms of pressure on the part of neo-liberal forces and governments and those who seek to impose their hegemony. We are therefore witnessing negative developments to which TUI has to call the attention of the world trade union movement.

On behalf of the Trade Unions International of Public and Allied Employees, representing 20 million public employees of different countries, I appeal to the ILO Governing Body and delegates to the Conference to pay proper attention to the problems raised here so that appropriate remedial steps are taken to set right this worrying situation.

(The Conference adjourned at 8 p.m.)

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