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Presidents: Mr. Parrot, Mr. Donato

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

The PRESIDENT (Mr. PARROT) — We shall now resume the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Mr. AHMAD (*Workers' delegate, Pakistan*) — On behalf of the working class of Pakistan and myself, I should like to offer sincere congratulations to Ms. A. Sto. Tomas on her election as President, as well as to the Vice-Presidents, including Brother Parrot, who is representing the Workers' group at this historic Conference and chairing this sitting.

I also take this opportunity to convey good wishes and fraternal greetings from the working class of Pakistan to all the distinguished participants of this Conference. May I also convey my deep appreciation of the work carried out by the members of the Governing Body under the able and delicate leadership of Lord Brett, assisted by Brother Dan Cunniah — Secretary of the Workers' group. The Chairperson of the Governing Body, Mr. Amorim, has submitted an admirable report for our consideration.

Mr. Somavia, the Director-General of the ILO, has also presented a thought-provoking Report entitled *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. He has rightly highlighted the importance of decent work, not only as a means of sustaining life and meeting basic needs, but also crucial to individual choice, to the welfare of families and to the stability of the society. But, as he has stressed, we need to start by confronting the global decent work deficit — expressed in the absence of sufficient employment opportunities, inadequate social protection, the denial of rights at work and shortcomings in social dialogue. The state of unemployment and poverty existing throughout the world, according to the *World Employment Report*, is some 1.2 billion; and more than 20 per cent of the population is living in absolute poverty at less than one US dollar a day. One-third of the world labour force, about 3 billion, are either unemployed or earn less than needed to keep their families out of poverty. At the same time, there are 250 million children working worldwide. Three thousand people a day die as a consequence of work-related accidents. In most low-income countries formal protection for old age and invalidity reaches only a tiny proportion of the population.

The Director-General's Report points out that two out of every five countries have severe problems of freedom of association. Ensuring decent work

requires great political will on the part of national policy-makers. They need to act with transparency and develop a democratic approach to invest in human capital so that people might be equipped with adequate skills and knowledge. Policy-makers must adopt measures to: provide for greater access to technology for national, industrial and agricultural development; eliminate feudalism; improve opportunities for women and children; promote participatory industrial relations to enhance the fundamental rights of workers; raise productivity; provide a safety network for workers in the event of restructuring and privatization of the public service at the behest of the IMF/World Bank; give priority to the dignity of work in society over wealth; and achieve economic self-reliance.

At the same time, there is a need to reduce the gap between the per capita GDP of the wealthiest countries and the poor countries; indeed, the GDP of the rich countries was 14 times higher in 1962 than that of the poor countries and this rose to 34 times higher in 1998.

The international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank have been responsible for the rise in poverty in the developing nations and have done nothing to eradicate it. Lay-offs in the public sector have been adding fuel to fire. International financial institutions, as well as the developing nations, must concentrate on bridging the unacceptable divide between the rich and the poor nations, by providing debt relief and development assistance in line with commitments made at the Copenhagen Social Summit; they must remove obstacles to trade between the Third World countries and industrialized countries and help in the transfer of technology — thus reducing the already widening divide between the technological “have” and “have nots”.

Provision must be made for a safety net for workers — and this should be an ILO priority to ensure decent work for all. Since the Declaration of Philadelphia, the ILO has maintained “that poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to the prosperity everywhere”.

We in Pakistan have established an apex body, the Pakistan Workers' Confederation, to strengthen the concerted struggle of the working class for the promotion of social justice, and dignity at work and to defend and promote their fundamental rights for the promotion of decent work.

We are grateful to the Director-General of the ILO for his efforts for the restoration of trade union rights. The Government of Pakistan has lifted restrictions on trade unions in Pakistan's largest utility — the Water and Power Development Authority within a peaceful context. However, we have been urging the Govern-

ment to bring labour laws into conformity with its international obligations by lifting the ban on trade union rights in other areas such as the gas, postal and banking services. We are seriously concerned about the suspension of trade union rights in the Pakistan International Airlines. We strongly urge the Government to respect the fundamental principle of freedom of association, to develop participatory mechanisms in industrial relations and to provide adequate safety nets for workers. We therefore propose a restructuring of the public sector, the naturalization of banks and a strengthening of dialogue between the representatives of trade unions and the United Bank where workers are facing the threat of redundancy. Our organization had been holding concrete discussions with the Government and we hope that the Government will honour its commitment to organize a National Tripartite Conference in July 2001.

Our organization has been playing an important role in developing information technology, establishing education facilities for the children of workers and negotiating with the National Workers' Welfare Fund; it has also undertaken collective bargaining with individual employers and participated in the national skills development programme. It has further opened a number of IT training throughout the country for the children of trade union members to prepare our new generation to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

We also convey our deep appreciation to the ILO for its cooperation in the areas of occupational safety and health, employment, migration, equality, social dialogue and HIV/AIDS — through the Turin Centre and the ILO Area Office in Islamabad. We should like to urge for a greater allocation of funds for workers' organizations so that they might promote the ideals of the ILO.

We wish the first Conference of the millennium every success in its deliberations on the important items on its agenda, namely social security, the promotion of cooperatives and occupational safety and health in agriculture. We hope that the outcomes will help to bring a better tomorrow for working men and women throughout the world. We thank the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, and his able team for their noble endeavours to promote the ideal of decent work in society for men and women, young and old.

Original Portuguese: Mr. PITRA NETO (Minister of Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola) — It is with great pleasure that we, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Angola, are taking part in this 89th Session of the Conference, in order to add our voice and our commitment once again to those of all governments and social and economic players who, in defence of the ideals of this Organization, are working towards a more developed and just society, and for a world with greater predictability, stability and solidarity.

I congratulate the President of the Conference on her election and the Director-General of the ILO and his team for the work they have done to revitalize our Organization so that it might rise to the challenges and cope with some of the uncertainties of our times.

Today, globalization, as an influential process in interactive cooperation, is an inevitable historic trend, though that does not mean that the form it takes and

the effects it has cannot be put under scrutiny. Reconciling the national interests of each State as well as the different needs of globalization, reforming our institutions and investing permanently and massively in education, adopting active employment and training policies for the workforce and establishing efficient regional partnerships are some of the tasks that need to be accomplished if this new reality is to be beneficial to us all. The mission of States and societies is to work towards enabling citizens to become the artists and actors of their own principles, rights, obligations and responsibilities, to attribute vital importance to the electoral legitimacy of institutions, to social stability, to education as an essential means of preparing to exercise one's freedom, and to the right to work as an important means of development.

The Republic of Angola is now moving closer to finding stability and to discovering its true self. It is ready to embark on a new and different era of lasting peace, maturing democracy and socio-economic reconstruction. The efforts made by the Government of Angola in the field of vocational training, active employment policies, working conditions and relations have continued despite the horrible consequences of a brutal war which has been the enemy of peace and democracy for the Angolan people, but which is fortunately, inevitably, drawing to a close.

Angolan society now has essential legal instruments such as the laws on general labour, social security, (still in the stages of development), health and safety at work and vocational training. Despite limitations and adversity, we have a network of vocational training and employment centres in all the provincial capitals and in some smaller towns. We have been strengthening the mechanisms of social dialogue through various tripartite bodies, such as the National Council for Social Dialogue, the Consultative Committee on Employment, the Labour Commission for the ILO, the National Council for Vocational Training, the National Social Security Council (in the process of being established) and the National Committee on Occupational Health and Safety.

Equally, we have already ratified more than 30 ILO Conventions, including in particular, the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

We are convinced that without solid and effective institutions, operating in stable and dynamic markets, it will be very difficult to establish justice, solidarity, social cohesion and development. These achievements will always be fraught with uncertainty unless they are the result of a systematic process of participation and full commitment to the values of democracy, respect for human rights and the legitimate aspirations of citizens.

The Government of Angola expresses its appreciation to the ILO and to supportive governments which have provided invaluable assistance in implementing projects to promote employment, social security and social dialogue. The economic and social reconstruction of Angola is a huge task faced with enormous challenges. We are sure that we can count increasingly on the support and solidarity of this Organization and on all the forces of stability and growth so as to help our country to achieve peace, solidarity and development which we believe we need to build for all the Angolan people.

Ms. COLETTI (*Workers' delegate, Italy*) — I will begin my remarks, as have many other delegates, by supporting the choice made by the Director-General to focus his Report to this session of the Conference on the decent work deficit. Nothing could be more appropriate.

Decent work is the paradigm under which all areas of ILO action are now being developed, based on tripartite consensus. It is therefore indispensable that our common understanding of this notion be absolutely clear; the Director-General reminds us, and rightly so, that this is not a new idea, since its foundation lies at the heart of the ILO mandate, expressed in the Declaration of Philadelphia. In 1998 the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work recognized the obligation for all member States to ensure the respect in practice of the rights expressed in the fundamental Conventions.

Unfortunately, the Global Reports produced under the follow-up to the Declaration provide alarming evidence of a serious rights gap, particularly of the extent to which the denial of freedom of association and of the right to bargain collectively continues to deprive workers of the prerequisite to achieve decent employment conditions. It is therefore indispensable that the promotion of these enabling rights be incorporated in all ILO initiatives in support of employment creation policies. In a globalized world where inequalities are growing, between and within countries, the ILO goal of ensuring decent work to all men and women may appear ambitious to some; however, within this house, the ILO constituents cannot, and must not, believe that this goal can be divided in two separate steps, work first, conditions for decency later. Some may believe that this is more reasonable. On the contrary, this would simply undermine the decent work goal.

We are all aware that the practical results of the exercise of the right to organise and bargain collectively are determined by the situation existing in each country; however this cannot, and must not be confused with the denial of these rights. I welcome the Director-General's reaffirmation that these rights — and not just the ideal principles behind them — are valid everywhere.

I also welcome the stress put on decent work as a necessary element of the development agenda. The focus on the economic dividend of decent work is very appropriate. In fact, the ILO is the unique institution in the position to provide both the international community and individual countries with instruments that are indispensable to their development toolbox. This is particularly the case, though not exclusively, in developing countries; 27 million workers are estimated to work in export-processing zones worldwide, in employment conditions that certainly cannot be an example of decent work. A growing number, impossible to estimate, is in completely unprotected employment (a definition that I very much prefer to that, often used, of the informal sector, which I believe is very dangerous as it might suggest the idea that it is just another productive sector); 250 million children are estimated to be working worldwide instead of being at school. The ILO priority can only be that of ensuring that these men, women and children enjoy their fundamental rights. Should this not be our clear policy option, our decent work agenda would be just a nice slogan to catch media attention.

For this purpose, the training provided by the ILO Training Centre in Turin is an invaluable tool, particularly its programmes on the promotion of fundamental labour standards and human rights and of freedom of association, which should be further developed to better meet the needs for training of governments, employers and workers.

With regard to the translation of the decent work paradigm into practice, I would like simply to say that decent work is affordable, is a universal and feasible goal, and can and must be an integrated policy framework. Quality jobs must be its goal, not a redistribution of poverty. High profile strategies to create quality employment are needed to ensure sustainable growth and development. Access to work is certainly the best way out of poverty. However, work without rights is the best way into poverty, for individuals and for countries.

It is true that: "Reducing the decent work deficit is the quality road to poverty reduction and to greater legitimacy of the global economy." This is where the ILO's role in the multilateral system is unique and indispensable. For this to become a concrete and credible agenda it would be urgent to see more tangible results of the very welcome ILO contribution to the definition of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers produced by the Bretton Woods institutions.

On the globalized economy, the Director-General refers to the heated debate around trade and labour standards. I would like to comment very briefly on one specific aspect of this controversial debate. I have no doubt about the illegitimacy of using labour standards for protectionist purposes just as I have no doubt about the illegitimacy of their denial for competition purposes.

It is true that the promotion of better employment conditions for women and the protection of their rights have become cross-cutting objectives of all ILO activities. However, results are still far from being adequate, and renewed efforts are indispensable. A campaign to strongly promote universal ratification of the revised Convention and Recommendation on maternity protection should be an urgent priority.

The Global Report, which is being dealt with at a specific sitting of this assembly, refers this year to forced labour. In this context, Myanmar continues to provide an intolerable example of violation of a fundamental human and labour right. Let me conclude by reminding this assembly that, unless all ILO constituents commit themselves, sincerely, to do everything possible to eradicate this crime in that unfortunate country, the credibility of the ILO, as well as member States' individual credibility, will be completely undermined.

Mr. MOUSHOUTTAS (*Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus*) — The topic of the Director-General's Report is indeed very well chosen. Reducing the decent work deficit poses a global challenge that requires international attention. In this age of trade liberalization it is becoming increasingly difficult for any country alone, even a large, rich and powerful one, to achieve the goal of decent work for all.

It is widely acknowledged that globalization of industry and trade has rendered socio-economic policy at the national level more complex than in the past. In some cases it has even reduced its effectiveness. We fully agree, therefore, with the observation of the

Director-General that international action is indispensable in the fight against the most pressing problems facing our societies. There is an urgent need to address a whole range of issues resulting from the decent work deficit; these include poverty, unemployment and underemployment, denial of basic rights, unsafe working conditions and income insecurity, as well as inadequate representation structures.

Globalization brings about an almost continuous reorganization of industry worldwide. This reorganization benefits both the consumer and the economy. At the same time, however, globalization increases inequality, as well as causing silent frustrations and open crisis in various parts of the world. This situation endangers social cohesion within each country, and international peace. It brings to mind the 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia, according to which “poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere”.

International cooperation is needed more than ever before. Action by the ILO, through the promotion of international social norms, the support of structure for social dialogue, the protection of fundamental rights and the provision of information and technical aid to those who need it, is of vital importance for the promotion of decent work for all and the improvement of people’s lives throughout the world. The Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization can indeed assume a new strategic direction which will inject the ILO values into the new global economic architecture. As acknowledged at the Governing Body by all three sides, this Working Party is well placed to promote the integrated approach between the ILO and the international community in dealing with the interaction of economic and social issues within the globalization process.

Very rightly, the Director-General underlines in his Report the crucial role of social dialogue in dealing with the serious problems of society and the world of work. Each country should re-examine the role of the State in labour relations in order to maintain a fair balance of power between the workers and employers, and to develop social partnership rather than antagonism. Moreover, at regional and international levels the behaviour of the giant multinational corporations should be regulated through concerted action in which the ILO should play a leading role.

We in Cyprus have long supported international action, along with tripartite cooperation and voluntarism in labour relations. Indeed, we have ratified all core Conventions contained in the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, as well as a significant number of other important Conventions. ILO principles and guidelines have long been adhered to in Cyprus; they have greatly contributed to the admirable recovery of the economy from the heavy blow it suffered as a result of the invasion in 1974. These principles have paved the way for the very good labour relations situation, high employment levels and low unemployment that the country has been enjoying.

Focused as we are on maintaining and promoting a stable microeconomic environment and a favourable business climate, at the same time we are reinforcing our overall policy on labour relations and the protection of the worker within the framework of our efforts to harmonize our legislation and practices with those of the European Union. This approach helps us also cope with the effects of globalization which we are

experiencing. We are pursuing these objectives within a successfully functioning tripartite structure, and we are optimistic that the dialogue will lead to the best possible results for our society.

The ILO, on the basis of its own successful tripartite structure, should continue to offer the wide range of valuable services to its Members and promote a variety of activities and programmes in order to respond to these great challenges.

We congratulate the Director-General for his inspiring Report, and assure him that Cyprus will stand firm by the decent work agenda established two years ago.

I do hope that the general discussion on social security, taking place now, will take this ILO agenda one significant step forward. This can be done by elaborating a new vision for the ILO and its constituents that will reflect a set of principles to which all member States can subscribe. Social security is a key issue in people’s lives; it must be recognized as a basic human right.

This longed for vision must be ambitious and feasible, one that will lead towards a global decent society for the twenty-first century. On this optimistic note I conclude my address.

Original German: Mr. RIESTER (Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany) — Fifty years ago yesterday, in this forum, the Federal Republic of Germany was admitted to the International Labour Organization putting an end to 18 years’ absence from the ILO caused by the Hitler regime. For me this is a reason to look back in gratitude. It was, after all, not a foregone conclusion that Germany, only six years after the end of a world war it had caused, should be given an opportunity to make its contribution as part of this Organization to securing world peace. Let us not forget that this accession, which was controversial, was strongly advocated by the Workers’ group.

We have, in the last 50 years, done our utmost to ensure the important role of the ILO in aiding workers and promoting social justice. I will quote two examples of this: the struggle against exploiting child labour, and social support of the reform process in former socialist States. The title of the Director-General’s Report is an ambitious programme, reducing the decent work deficit. One could also say, providing more decent work. The term that you have coined *decent work* is an umbrella term to describe the ILO’s work and mission. The Report identifies worldwide challenges: there are not enough decent jobs; basic workers’ rights are continually violated. Safety at the workplace and protection against social risks are beset with shortcomings and lack funding. Social dialogue in many ways is still in its infancy.

These deficits vary in extent and focus throughout the world but the ILO has to try to reduce the deficits in *all* areas, not just in some. The ILO, however, cannot remove the identified deficits on its own. The ILO and its players, governments, employers and workers need the cooperation of others, and that means that the ILO needs to conquer the hearts and minds of others and take account of what others want. This includes a willingness to consider the offers of the voluntary private initiatives of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Special recognition is due to the Director-General for having addressed a most controversial subject: trade and labour standards. With the best will in the

world, I cannot understand why international trade should be a kind of social no man's land. Social standards in the services sector are broadly accepted, but when it comes to producing and selling goods, many want to ignore social standards. That is not only incomprehensible to me but unacceptable too. Here again, fundamental workers' rights must be protected. It is good that the Director-General has pointed out that there must be consensus in this debate on important points such as: definition of the basic labour standards, the ILO's responsibility for those standards, the unacceptability of infringing those standards for the purpose of protecting trade, and also the fact that these standards are an integral part of development.

The Director-General has called for greater efforts to ensure that the world economy is based on a social structure, a structure which will be to the benefit of industrial and developing countries. I can agree to that. Germany will support this process to the best of its abilities, outside and inside the ILO.

Original Spanish: Mr. NIETO MENENDEZ (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, El Salvador*) — The Republic of El Salvador has been severely affected by the tragic earthquakes of 13 January and 13 February this year, which devastated a great part of our country's infrastructure and made it necessary to reassess our national needs. In the face of this major challenge, we will be able to rebuild El Salvador by uniting the efforts of all our peoples.

While we are aware of increasing difficulties attributable to these natural disasters, we also know and trust in the ability and the will of our people to work steadfastly, day by day, to build a country of peace and progress. The opening up of markets brings with it both great opportunities and great challenges. In terms of job creation, reducing the decent work deficit is, as Mr. Juan Somavia has said, the great global challenge, involving a common vision of how to bridge the employment gap, promote adequate social protection and ensure that labour rights are respected.

The concerns and problems that this involves call for ever greater efforts on our part to develop appropriate institutional mechanisms to make it possible to bridge the gap between the reality in which we work and the aspirations of our people for a better life. Our Government is counting on attracting investment as a means to create jobs. We promote productivity and a work ethic among wage earners to permit them to improve their standard of living, while maintaining basic labour standards. We as employers, workers and governments should think about what the opening up of markets means. It is only through unity and stronger social dialogue that we will be able to rise to this great common challenge of globalization. In our unity as employers, workers and governments lies our strength. If we have clear rules for settling disputes, we can have hope that globalization will turn out to be an opportunity for us.

In El Salvador, 35 per cent of the population is under the age of 18, and after a 13-year-long internal conflict we now have a large number of young people of working age who lack any vocational training. We must develop a national apprenticeship scheme to give these young people skills, knowledge and abilities so that they are quickly able to join the labour market.

In our view, the micro- and small-scale enterprises that have proven to be and indeed remain major partners in the training of our human resources face a great challenge, and represent an enormous resource. With the assistance, of course, of training policies, they will enable these young people to bring their training and qualifications up to par as quickly as possible. Within this framework, it is vital to create job opportunities, particularly for the most disadvantaged sectors and the disabled. We also need to reduce migration and promote the integration of women in the labour market in circumstances of equality and equity. In our society women are the foundation of the family and are also in many cases the heads of household. We therefore have to continue to implement programmes that will make it possible for them to pursue this dual role as working women and as heads of household. This, we believe, will lead to a more integrated family, with the principles and values which should underpin the reconstruction of our society, making it more just, more dignified and more fairly balanced. Lastly, I should like to stress that the tripartite bodies in our society, including El Salvador's Supreme Labour Council must continue to be strengthened in order to achieve consensus in implementing policies to reduce the decent labour deficit. This is after all our greatest challenge.

Mr. HAIVETA (*Minister of Labour and Employment, Papua New Guinea*) — On behalf of my delegation, let me first of all congratulate the President on her election to preside over this year's session of the Conference. Allow me at the outset to convey my Government's support for the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General on the work of the Governing Body over the past year and on the issue of decent work deficit as a global challenge, respectively.

Papua New Guinea gives its commitment, through the National Tripartite Consultative Council, to discuss the call by the Governing Body to promote social dialogue, improve our statistical baselines and to work closely with the ILO in realizing the fundamental principles and rights at work, including raising awareness of the Declaration.

The Government also supports the Governing Body's intention "to pursue the examination of the merits of developing groups or 'families' of instruments at its November 2001 session".

Papua New Guinea stands with those member States that have ratified the eight fundamental Conventions concerning human rights at work. As a matter of principle it believes that this is the only responsible thing to do. The Government has already communicated to the ILO its desire to take up the challenge of a decent work agenda and now we make the same commitment to the challenge of the decent work deficit.

The Pacific Islands region is an important part of our neighbourhood and Papua New Guinea, like all the other island nations in the region, faces unique constraints to development and integration with the world economy. We are committed to the principles and institutions of democracy and to this end we will continue to take full advantage of our unique strengths and natural resources to overcome the disadvantages of isolation, vulnerability to natural disasters, and swings within our economies.

There is, however, a strong continuing need for governments, employers and workers to strengthen and promote social dialogue and tripartism in our region.

Whilst our attention must refocus on such issues, we are mindful that equal consideration must be given to building the capacity of our island countries and their institutions, including the ministries of labour. Improved capacities of these institutions will ultimately enable Papua New Guinea and its smaller Pacific neighbours to manage their resources sustainably, modernize education systems, enhance economic growth and improve the quality of life of their people.

We recognize that the decent work agenda bears living testimony to the real problems and difficulties people and families worldwide are facing every day, especially in developing countries. Papua New Guinea is no exception. Because we are small in size and population and so far away from the nearest ILO office, there is a tendency not to attend to our ILO country programme needs.

Reforms by the Government are well advanced and include a review of the workers' compensation system, employment conditions and human resource development, completion of national industrial relations and occupational safety and health policies, creation of a national trade testing and certification system, approval of a national skills development authority and the translation of the eight core ILO Conventions and the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work into the two other *linguae francae* of our country, Motu and Pidgen.

At the same time, efforts are being made for small and medium-sized enterprises to be strengthened and supported by wide-ranging, integrated, skills development and training programmes.

We believe these measures lend support to the Government's economic policies where emphasis is placed on job creation, to curb the current high levels of unemployment and underemployment. Globalization and changes in technology and work organization have implications for youth, women, the long-term unemployed, older displaced workers, and workers with disabilities, and it would appear that this group of workers is going to be further marginalized.

My delegation places great importance on, and looks forward to, the outcome of the agenda items of safety and health in agriculture, promotion of co-operatives and social security during this year's Conference deliberations.

It is inevitable that the ILO must continue to maintain its relevance and play a pivotal role by virtue of its unique position as an international institutional reference point for knowledge on employment and labour issues, as a centre for standard setting in the world of work, and as a platform for informed international debate.

I would like to convey to the Director-General, my Government's expression of deep gratitude for the leadership and foresight that he has demonstrated, not only in reforming the ILO, but also for continuing the efforts to create better understanding and cooperation corporation with the Bretton Woods institutions to be responsive to the needs of our constituencies worldwide. We can only ask that the Bank and the Fund are committed to work together with the ILO and us on all programmes effecting Papua New Guinea.

We gratefully acknowledge the advice, technical assistance and cooperation provided by the South-East Asia and the Pacific Multidisciplinary Advisory

Team (SEAPAT) in Manila, Philippines, and the ILO Suva Office in Fiji.

In conclusion, I reaffirm Papua New Guinea's continuing commitment to the principles and objectives of the ILO.

Original Russian: Mr. SAKHAN (Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Ukraine) — First of all, I would like to congratulate our President on her election to this high office and wish her every success in leading our deliberations.

The Director-General's Report on reducing the decent work deficit covers many issues faced by the ILO and also by its States Members relating to the provision of decent work in conditions of freedom, economic security and human dignity in this era of economic globalization. We regard this document as another step forward towards the modernization of the ILO, in response to the new challenges of this changing world and the direct consequence of implementation of the new ILO strategy proposed by the Director-General.

The subject of decent work is predominant in all ILO programmes and is present in all four strategic goals to be addressed by the Organization over the next few years and in the longer term.

In our view, the ILO's new focus on addressing these strategic priorities should promote both the adaptation of national economies to global economic changes and the application of the results of globalization to help meet the needs of all workers.

Of course, economic globalization is accompanied by some difficulties and risks in the social sphere, and overcoming these effects must remain one of the most serious concerns of our Organization for the years to come.

It is no secret that the advantages currently offered by globalization can be enjoyed only by the developed countries, whereas most of the countries of eastern and central Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America are deprived of that opportunity.

In Ukraine, as in other countries with economies in transition, we are living through a constant and often painful process of adjusting to the conditions of the global economy and world trade within a very high level of competition. In this process, we need international support, including from the ILO.

The President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, and the new Government are taking strong measures to accelerate economic reform nationally, accompanied by greater attention to the social aspects of market reform. This consistent approach by our leadership has now begun to yield positive results.

Last year was the first year, not only since Ukrainian independence but since the late 1980s, that we achieved economic growth, with an increase in GDP in practically all economic sectors. We reduced our national debt for the first time, completely paid off the pensions backlog and for the first time adapted and executed a budget that had an excess instead of a deficit. Employment increased and there were positive trends in total domestic demand. We managed to return to the real income level of early 1997.

Take-home pay increased by 3.6 per cent last year against 1999 levels. We also managed almost to halve the backlog of salaries, cash allowances, student grants and maternity allowances.

The Government has increased pensions eight times since last January, totalling an increase of

almost 50 per cent. Six million pensioners, who for a long period had to subsist on very low pensions, are now benefiting from this increase.

Positive economic trends can be seen this year also. During the first quarter, GDP growth was 8.5 per cent, industrial production growth was 18 per cent, the inflation level was 4.3 per cent and take-home pay increased by 13.9 per cent.

The Government has prepared a concept of salary reform and social insurance is being introduced. We are drawing up a strategy to reduce poverty in Ukraine.

Overall, the Government of Ukraine values the activities of the ILO very highly. We would like to develop our cooperation with the ILO further and increase the operative element of the technical assistance that we receive.

We anticipate successful completion of the many important technical projects currently being conducted by the ILO in our country and the execution of new programmes of assistance in the next few years.

I am pleased to inform you that in April of this year, our Parliament ratified the Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132). This brings to 54 the number of ILO instruments ratified by Ukraine, including all the eight fundamental Conventions on basic labour rights.

Original Spanish: Mr. ALFARO MIJANGOS (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Guatemala) — The Government of Guatemala extends its greetings to all participants in this session of the Conference and reiterates the importance of the ILO which, with its tripartite membership, can contribute to making a better world in which poverty and social exclusion will no longer exist.

The Report of the Director-General presents to this Conference fundamental issues, including the question of reducing the decent work deficit, which in other words means ensuring a better standard of living for all.

Reducing the decent work deficit is particularly significant for our country, where 60 per cent of the people live in poverty, with an income of less than \$2 per day. Among them, some 30 per cent are living in extreme poverty, with an income of \$1 per day. Since we will be discussing social security at this session, I should point out that only 21 per cent of the economically active population in our country is covered by social security. As far as the workforce is concerned, 60 per cent of workers are engaged in the informal sector or are affected by open or hidden underemployment, with a daily minimum wage of under \$4. All this means that the Government does not receive the necessary tax income to respect its commitment to improve the economic and social situation of the majority of the population.

Faced with this situation, the Government of Guatemala and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare consider the struggle against poverty and the fight to boost sustainable human development to be priorities. This means stepping up our programmes to adapt labour legislation, consolidating the plan to eliminate child labour, which is already in operation, and completing our occupational health and safety protection programmes and programmes on technical training, vocational training, job creation, self-employment and the promotion of small enterprises. Another priority is the enforcement of labour laws.

To that end, we have increased our inspection capacity and strengthened the labour inspectorate.

To complement efforts at the national level, Guatemala is playing an active role in the work of the ILO, helping to strengthen the international legal framework for important issues such as those we have on our agenda at this session of the Conference: social security, the promotion of cooperatives, and safety and health in agriculture. The discussion and adoption of these texts will help make it possible to take effective measures at the national level so as to increase current levels of protection.

On the subject of the draft Convention on safety and health in agriculture which is now in its second discussion, while we consider that its adoption is of great importance, we would like to draw attention to the fact that its aim should be to increase protection for workers, and not to provide a veiled form of trade protection at the international level, with adverse effects on the smallest countries.

Guatemala, like other developing countries, is facing serious problems in competing in equitable conditions and in actively taking part in and benefiting from the process of globalization. The issue of the social dimension of globalization should continue to be a subject of study within the ILO. We therefore support the strengthening of the Working Party created by the Governing Body. Considered solely from an economic point of view, globalization represents major obstacles for developing countries. Raising the standard of living of the population should lead to more equitable circumstances in which all people can benefit from the globalisation process. The example of how certain European countries have dealt with the banana trade provides a case study in how not to achieve decent work. There are other similar cases.

We would urge all delegates to this Conference not to allow trade issues to be isolated from labour issues. Experience has shown that when business is taken up separately, without any consideration of the social dimension, it leads to a growing gap between the poor and the rich. We therefore support the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, in his continued efforts to promote decent work for all.

The Government of Guatemala appreciates the technical cooperation provided by the ILO to enable us to make progress towards these goals, and hopes to be able to count on this indispensable support when it takes the measures it has programmed. We also hope to continue to be able to count on international financial cooperation and to obtain better access to markets, which will then make it possible for us to finance the sustainable human development required to improve the standard of living of our people.

Ms. SAHLIN (Minister of Industry, Employment and Communications, Sweden) — Allow me, first of all, to extend to the President and the other Officers my congratulations on their election.

The twenty-first century's growing interdependence signals a new era, both for good and for bad. Complex new political and economic interactions and new actors release new opportunities for development but, at the same time, globalization opens the market, and brings openings and possibilities, perhaps only to those who have the instruments to benefit from it.

Solidarity and responsibility are necessary values to integrate poor countries and poor people into the global economy. Governments, workers, employers and civil society have to act together, as a whole, to shape globalization and to restore the balance of market and democracy. That means strengthening and, where necessary, creating the institutions and the roles needed for development and for securing the fundamental freedoms for all.

The ILO is both a meeting place and an important instrument for these endeavours and the Director-General's Report demonstrates the commitment of the Organization and the Office to this course. We need to be very focused and I want to share with you some of my own considerations in this regard.

To my Government, the Swedish Government, employment should be at the heart of the agenda for both developed and developing nations. I therefore want to express my very strong support for, and also expectations of, the Global Employment Forum to be held at the end of this year.

Apart from their bearing on poverty, employment and labour market conditions also have a strong influence on income distribution and gender relations. Consequently, we have to promote a sustainable working life where every individual — woman and man — is regarded as a resource and is protected against discrimination.

The second aim of the Forum is to build strategic alliances with other international organizations. Partnerships and cooperation are not a question of imposing one's view on others, but rather of taking responsibilities jointly and working to achieve the goals that have received universal endorsement. The International Labour Conference is a good practical example.

Secondly, all development goals are intertwined and gender equality is an important aspect in all of them. Inequality between women and men places a dead hand on all economic potential. The international community has to address discrimination in order to empower women, increase our abilities, open up new opportunities and foster a broad and solid understanding of the rights of women.

It is equally important to change the attitudes of men, to make men understand the need for, and benefits of, equality. In addition, men need to be taught, encouraged and empowered to carry out and actually enjoy the work and responsibilities women have always taken care of.

Gender mainstreaming requires the incorporation of a gender equality perspective in all policy areas and activities and the explicit commitment of leaders to a clearly articulated policy. This has been the case in the ILO and I honestly applaud the direction this Organization has taken to this end.

Thirdly, and finally, I would just like to touch upon the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and, in particular, this year's specific issue on forced labour. Slavery, the oppression and exploitation of society's most vulnerable members — again, often women and children — is unacceptable always and everywhere.

The link between respect for the principle of the elimination of forced or compulsory labour and the abolition of child labour is pointed out in the Report. I am therefore pleased to inform the Conference that Sweden has now ratified the Worst Forms of Child

Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). I wish you all well and thank you for your attention.

Original Korean: Ms. KIM (Government delegate, Republic of Korea) — Let me begin by congratulating the President on her election as President of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, and by extending my regards to the Vice-Presidents.

I would also like to pay tribute to the effort made by the Director-General and the officials of the ILO to prepare this excellent Report.

The ILO is currently seeing success in its activities as a result of efforts made during the last two years to reinforce its role. This was possible due to the brilliant leadership of the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia. We take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of the ILO, led by the Director-General, and congratulate its achievements.

Globalization is posing new challenges for both developed and developing countries, and workers and employees alike. It also translates into a tremendous amount of tasks for the ILO. The ILO has worked hard to actively respond to globalization, especially for the last two years under the theme of "decent work". The Republic of Korea fully supports these efforts.

In relation to this year's Director-General's Report, I shall first of all reaffirm the support of the Korean Government for the 1988 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

In addition, we agree with the point made in the Report that the ILO's supervisory system needs to be modernized to make it less cumbersome, more efficient and more effective. We want to stress that the ILO Conventions which have been adopted and adjusted for the last 80 years need to be under constant review to meet the rapid changes of our times.

This year's Report also stated that the ILO should closely cooperate with international organizations, including international financial institutions. The Republic of Korea agrees with this view and supports the efforts made to implement it. Through these efforts, we will pursue economic and social objectives at the same time.

The Republic of Korea is directly affected by globalization as one of the countries which is highly dependent on trade and human resources.

When the financial crisis hit the Republic of Korea in 1997 as a global force, the Republic of Korea established the Tripartite Commission, a social dialogue mechanism, as a measure to cope with the problems in the aftermath of the crisis.

The creation of the tripartite body shows that the Korean Government has endeavoured to overcome the difficulties arising from a restructuring process through social consensus.

As a result of these efforts, we have revitalized the economy and further turned the crisis into an opportunity to develop society by expanding the social safety net, including employment insurance.

We have also promoted labour rights by allowing teachers the right to organize and the political activities of trade unions. These achievements, of course, did not come without difficulties. During the last three years of restructuring unemployment increased and protests against restructuring occurred, which is one flip side of the face of globalization.

The Republic of Korea will actively participate in the activities of the ILO to promote decent work, and

will share the experiences of other countries in dealing with the effects of globalization.

I take this opportunity to announce that the Republic of Korea ratified three ILO Conventions this year, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). It is a reflection of the Korean Government's strong commitment to ILO activities. We will continue to review and refurbish our laws and regulations so that we can ratify more ILO Conventions.

Original Spanish: Mr. ZAVALA COSTA (Minister of Labour and Social Development, Peru) — It is an honour for me to participate in this august assembly of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference, not only as a representative of the constitutional transitional Government of Peru as the Minister of Labour and Social Development, but it is also a personal honour given that I have been here for many years participating as a technical adviser and, over the last ten years, as an Employers' delegate.

We would like to applaud the Director-General's excellent Report entitled *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge* which looks at the ways decent work can be addressed in individual countries within the globalized economy. The Director-General does well to remind us that work is the very essence of the ILO mandate. We face the difficult task of trying to find solutions geared to productive growth, which must have the commitment of political leaders, enterprises and society as a whole.

In Peru, the economically active population is made up of 11,912,000 Peruvians, of which 640,000 are unemployed and over 6 million are either underemployed or in precarious employment. At the same time it is estimated that the poorest half of the population earns on average less than 90 dollars per month and each year more than 300,000 young people enter the workforce. This situation shows us how imperative it is to generate not only more, but better jobs. At the same time we have a workforce which, without a substantial improvement in levels of education and occupational and technical training in order to create qualified workers to raise our level of productivity and competitiveness to the international level, we will not be able to integrate into the labour market. An investment in human capital is not only an obligation but a shared responsibility between the State, enterprises and the workers themselves.

Tackling this decent work deficit implies adopting an appropriate labour policy which covers basic rights at work, social protection, equal opportunity, employment promotion and what has been called the deficit of representation or social dialogue which we are in no doubt will contribute to social peace and with it economic and political stability and the strengthening of democracy.

Within this framework, and as a major axis of the constitutional transitional Government's labour policy, we would like from the outset to express our will to ensure and respect in legislation and practice the fundamental rights and principles at work that the ILO universally promotes. As a gauge of this commitment, we have sent to Congress for approval the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The first one has been approved by the legislature and ratified by the constitutional President. At the same time, the second is awaiting approval; once approved

Peru will have incorporated into its legislation the eight core Conventions of the ILO. In the same way, we recently submitted to Congress a draft law which amends some of the articles of our Collective Labour Relations Act relating to freedom of association, collective bargaining and strikes, so as to comply with the observations made by the ILO supervisory bodies in relation to this instrument since 1993.

Along the same lines, and as part of the policy to achieve national unity and to strengthen the democratic institutionality of the constitutional transitional Government, at the beginning of our administration we restored tripartite social dialogue which takes place through the National Council for Labour and Social Promotion as a consultative body. This is the ideal forum to begin a process of democratization of labour relations, which will encourage the active participation and cooperation of the social partners. As a starting point the National Council unanimously adopted a declaration in which we commit ourselves to work to achieve a social climate in Peru characterized by the recognition of human rights, respect for national and international laws, democratic social dialogue, productivity, competitiveness, cooperation, mutual respect and an awareness of the problems peculiar to Peru. Furthermore, we have approved by consensus a diagnosis of vocational training in Peru and a working document on employment in Peru from 1990-2000.

In the framework of employment promotion and the need to ensure equality of opportunity, the Ministry, during its few months in office, has made major efforts to broaden the scope of coverage of its social programmes of youth training, measures for low income women, support to micro-enterprises and the system for the placement and employment of workers.

Furthermore, we have strengthened the role of the Ministry of Labour in monitoring respect for labour standards in respect of occupational safety and health in order to protect the rights of workers. Thanks to the legislative measures provided by the Congress of the Republic, we have passed the General Act respecting labour inspection and worker protection which is the result of the democratic and full participation of unions, guilds, specialized educators and representatives from civil society; its content is entirely in compliance with the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81).

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity, from this international podium, now that the constitutional transitional Government has brought the country back to a democratic system and introduced a free and transparent electoral process, acknowledged by national and international observers, to congratulate the recent President-Elect Mr. Alejandro Toledo Manrique, and express the hope that the constitutional Government, which will take up its functions on 28 July, will keep these issues on its agenda and together with the social partners define strategies for the creation of productive jobs and improved employment conditions and income, which are vital and priority areas in the economic, political and social spheres.

Mr. KIM (Employers' delegate, Republic of Korea) — On behalf of the employers of the Republic of Korea, I take great pleasure in extending our sincere congratulations to Ms. A. Sto. Tomas on her election

as President of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I believe, in this age, the priority of every good society is to provide decent work for everyone. Decent work means productive work that provides an adequate income and social protection, and where human rights are protected.

However, the seemingly obvious fact must be pointed out: could there be decent work without work itself? Without productive employment, the goals of decent living standards, social and economic development and personal fulfilment remain illusory.

Some people see a negative trade-off between the promotion of employment and the protection of labour rights. Others see a negative trade-off between employment promotion and social protection.

However, neither of these perspectives addresses current socio-economic problems. On the contrary, we need to develop a working environment in which there are close linkages between employment, labour rights, and social protection.

How can we reduce the decent work deficit at the national level while reaping the benefits of globalization? The answer is tripartism and social dialogue.

The evolving global economy offers opportunities from which all can gain but these have to be based on legitimate and sustainable socio-economic policies. In this respect, we believe that tripartism and social dialogue, as participatory social institutions, are an indispensable means of obtaining decent work.

Within this framework of social dialogue, employers, workers and governments should accommodate their different interests in creative ways to respond to the demand for decent work.

First, the business community should be aware that good labour relations, workplace health and safety, equitable income distribution and recognition of workers' rights contribute to long-term stability and a better bottom line. Above all, employers should bear the social responsibility for creating employment and expanding opportunities for people to find productive and decent work.

Second, workers also have the responsibility to make their work decent. They should recognize that productivity and competitiveness are directly related to their own best interests. They should endeavour to develop adequate knowledge and skills to promote employability. They should join with employers in labour-management cooperation schemes and other forms of social partnership to advance general societal interests.

Third, governments should commit themselves to a development strategy that recognizes employment creation as the most effective policy instrument of reducing the decent work deficit.

The best social safety net is provided by full employment. Hence, governments should prioritize developing comprehensive policies to generate full employment.

Governments should also strengthen human resources development policies, and tailor them towards the global knowledge-based economy. Policies and institutions should focus on promoting rapid, sustained, human-centred and sustainable economic growth.

Globalization is not likely to disappear simply because it causes many problems. Indeed, at this point globalization can be viewed as a quasi force of nature.

We should not draw the simplistic conclusion that globalization itself is the problem. The real problems

are unemployment, poverty, inequality and non-sustainable growth.

In order to address these socio-economic problems while reducing the decent work deficit, we must seek to enlarge the labour market and to create an environment that facilitates enterprise development.

Mr. SWEENEY (*Workers' adviser, United States*) — I rise to express the support of the AFL-CIO and the 40 million members of union households in the United States for the ILO and for its objective of making decent work a central demand throughout the world. I compliment the Director-General for this Report that so clearly describes the profound importance of the decent work agenda and details how far we have come and how much further we have to go.

As the Report states, focusing on decent work forces us to see the economy as working people see it. Working men and women do not measure the economy by the Dow Jones average for selected stock prices, nor by the gross national product that treats the production of everything, both a disease and its cure, as an asset, nor even by average income, which too often masks growing disparity. No, our members and people across the world judge the economy by their opportunity for work and income, for safety and self-expression, for the freedom and opportunity to express the full measure of their potential.

Decent work calls upon us to measure our economies through the eyes of the workers who make them run. As the Report suggests, focusing our gaze in this way we can make a profound contribution and not simply to organizing the agenda of the ILO. The priority on decent work should transform the agenda of multilateral institutions like the IMF and the World Bank, capture the idealism of human rights campaigners and reform the politics of national planners, of corporate managers and of worker representatives.

While we witness once more the gulf between promise and performance, the nations, employers and workers of the world have forged a widespread consensus on what constitutes decent work. Yet, we witness a continuing, many would say soaring, decent work deficit: an employment gap with more than one in five workers across the globe unemployed or working in abject poverty; a rights deficit with core workers' rights to reject child labour, to refuse forced labour, to work free from discrimination and to organize and bargain collectively, routinely abused; a growing social protection deficit with four out of five workers lacking protection from sickness, old age, workplace injury and/or disability. The sharp contrast between right and reality engenders cynicism.

It is easy to dismiss the ILO as a gathering place for words not deeds, to argue that the global ideals are merely distractions from injustices that cannot be defended.

At the AFL-CIO we do not share that cynicism. We applaud the efforts of the Director-General to give new urgency and new legitimacy to the ILO and its agenda. We support the initiatives that push the focus on decent work and workers' rights into the deliberations of the IMF's economists and onto the global conversation from the mountain resorts of Davos to the plant floors of companies, large and small, across the world.

But hope grows from action not analysis. Consensus on goals is not enough. Embrace of principles is a

prelude to action, not a substitute for it. The focus on decent work, the commitment to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work must be put into action. Here I salute the Director-General's effort, not only to inform senior ministers of the fundamental principles but also to inform workers of their basic rights.

The ILO fundamental rights poster listing these rights, which has universal support from States, employers and workers' organizations alike, offers a stunning promise. It calls upon us to ensure that in every workplace in every country, workers can learn in their own language that they have rights and can be empowered to find their own voice in the struggle for decent work. Surely empowering workers to argue their own case is the first and essential step of any initiative to close the decent work gap. I salute the Director-General for undertaking this education campaign. I reaffirm our support of it. I urge governments and employers alike to put aside their doubts and fears and to join workers in making the ILO statement of fundamental rights as universal, as widely known as Coke bottles or MacDonaldis' golden arches.

We are challenged to act in a time of dramatic change. A new global economy is being forged and in response across the globe people are stirring; they are demanding a fair deal — basic dignity, basic rights, decent work. The expression of this stirring is visible everywhere. This stirring makes the ILO agenda on decent work timely and compelling. It can help guide, inform and inspire these efforts. We have come a long way in a short time. No one said the road would be easy. I salute the Director-General, Ministers, employers and workers of this body for setting the course and starting the journey.

Original Spanish: Mr. RAY GUEVARA (Secretary of State for Labour, Dominican Republic) — Lying as it does along the path travelled daily by the sun, the Dominican Republic is building step by step a new culture of labour, based on consensus and social dialogue. The behaviour of our employers and workers is characterized by maturity, a sense of responsibility, pragmatism and understanding of the current labour situation. The new Government of President Hipólito Mejía, barely three months into office, demonstrated his attachment to contractual labour policies by encouraging an agreement on social progress with the National Council for Trade Unions. Under this instrument, which is now in operation, workers undertake to stimulate social dialogue and the executive branch of government undertakes to meet important key demands by the trade union movement. The national Government, favouring an economy with a human face, last month promoted and enacted a social security law — the first ever in our country — which will benefit the entire nation.

This law is based on three pillars. Individual contribution-based financing, subsidized contribution and the subsidies themselves. The governing body of the system is tripartite and will be presided by the Secretary of State for Labour. Implementation will be progressive, universal and generally applicable.

We must stress that in less than ten months in office the Government's national committee on salaries has approved eight minimum salary scales on heavy machinery, construction, agriculture, EPZs, flour-milling industry, the hotel and restaurant sector and others.

This has led to salary increases between 12 and 40 per cent. For us a fair wage is one of the essential components of decent work.

In a climate of hard work and optimism, the Department of Labour is working to its utmost towards the gradual elimination of the worst forms of child labour, in the hope that Constanza will be our first municipality that is free of this scourge. We have made great strides towards this. The National Committee for the Elimination of Child Labour has been reactivated. The Department of Labour has given material and institutional support to these programmes. The results of the first national survey on child labour will be out in July and a bill is under preparation to combat sexual and commercial exploitation of children and adolescents.

The Department of Labour is increasing its inspection work, has increased the number of inspectors, and is stimulating the Department of Hygiene and Employment to the same end. In a few weeks we will be beginning a programme of modernization and vocational training for young people. At the same time we are preparing a national plan for employment, and next year is going to be declared the year of technical training.

To serve the most dispossessed of our society, a programme of legal assistance has been provided free of charge, extending throughout all regions of the country, and the training directorate has done a lot of work. On the agenda of social issues we have themes such as consensus reform of the labour code, reorganization of working time, new forms of contracts, strengthening of the freedom of association and collective bargaining and various others.

The Consultative Labour Council, a tripartite body with its own budget, will be the forum for negotiating the reforms.

We want to stress that the Dominican Republic believes that decent work for all is an appropriate goal for the world economy and that it is possible to harmonize economic efficiency and social efficiency. This is why we reaffirm our vigorous support for the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization. We would like to say that we are grateful for the cooperation afforded us by the ILO and by the Inter-American Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, the Spanish Agency for Cooperation, and indeed the German Agency.

We welcome the election of the President of this session of the Conference and support the fruitful management of Dr. Juan Somavia.

We shall move forward, fighting poverty, mindful of the words of our poet Héctor Incháustegui Cabral: "For as long as man drags disease and hunger in his wake, and his offspring spread across the world like a plague of insects travelling over mountains and plains, foreigners in their own land, for all this time there must be no peace, no rest, and abundance and idleness will be considered a crime."

Original Arabic: Mr. DJILANI (Employers' delegate, Tunisia) — In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! It is a pleasure for me, on behalf of Tunisian employers and on my own behalf, to congratulate the President on her election to preside over this session of the Conference. I would also like to wish her assistants and the other Officers every success in their work.

I am pleased to extend greetings to Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General of the International Labour Office, on the occasion of this session of the Conference, which gives us the possibility to discuss questions and challenges of interest to us all. We are all very much aware of the importance of this session's agenda because of the changes the world economy is undergoing. The world has become a global village where distance has disappeared. People have the same concerns everywhere.

In its development process and in a context of economic and social change, Tunisia has had to adopt a strategic approach which takes into consideration internal factors and changes resulting from globalization and the new order that it has created.

The triad of employment, investment and training is a priority concern for the Tunisian Federation of Industry, Trade and Traditional Industries, because of their impact on the development process and integration in the world economy.

Employment remains a major concern in our country, as it is a factor of economic and social stability. Education, training and health services are considered the most important investments in human resources because they make it possible to develop the skills and competencies required to ensure economic recovery and rejuvenate national institutions, as is dictated by economic and technological changes.

As part of the new orientation in Tunisia and with the opening up of various sectors and the emergence of young employers, our role has evolved. Where we used to be principally the defenders of traders and industrial leaders, we are now active partners seeking to find solutions to the fundamental problems of our national economy.

I would like to emphasize that employment is the main theme of our future programmes. We are leaving behind the concepts of class and region in favour of the idea of the national collective. In general terms, we now look at employment as a means of development. The same is true for investment, which we support with a view to achieving development objectives, so as to become more competitive and to create new jobs. The latter ensure social harmony and alleviate unemployment in Tunisia. This is the employers' point of view concerning what is at stake nationally and challenges at the international level.

In this context, we must bear in mind the need to increase wages, to control prices, to increase the standard of living and to improve workers' purchasing power, with a view to creating new resources and restoring economic health.

Vocational training must be considered in its economic context, as a function of needs and in complete harmony with the education system. Training has thus been developed in all fields, in accordance with a training plan. Some highly qualified staff have taken part in this training. A special mechanism has been developed so as to revive the partnership between training services and production. This has made it possible for enterprises to define their needs for qualified personnel, and for young people to gain access to decent work. It has become imperative for establishments to take part in the training of their human resources if they are to have the necessary competencies on board. They must also adopt concepts ensuring a scientific approach, upholding the work ethic and providing for high quality if they are to adapt to the demands of a permanently changing economy and

globalization. We are aware that investment and employment are the best defences against poverty and unemployment. We would like to thank the international community for supporting the initiative of the President of the Republic, Mr. Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali, to set up a World Solidarity Fund.

The ILO works to improve relations between all the social partners. In Tunisia, we have already defined our options. The entire country, thanks to the President of the Republic, is doing everything it can to help the productive sector.

In concluding, I would like to say that I am proud to be among you in this Organization. We are in a body which makes consultation and positive dialogue possible, and which allows us to prepare a brighter future.

Mr. EDSTRÖM (*Workers' delegate, Sweden*) — I would like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*. It contains many aspects to which I would subscribe: for example, the necessity to create in reality a global integrated approach to tackle the decent work deficits and the key role played by governments both at national and international level in this respect.

The Report stresses the necessity to have a broad national discussion on economic and social policies, but, in my view, does not sufficiently emphasize the need to have functioning tripartite structures established at national level where such a dialogue could be held. Globalization requires such a dialogue, but in many countries there are no available forums where this might take place. My conclusion is that in the ILO we need to consider further action, as the Consultation (Industrial and National Levels) Recommendation, 1960 (No. 113), has apparently demonstrated its shortcomings in practice.

The Report discusses the various private and voluntary initiatives that have been taken and advocates further work in this area. I do not disagree, but nevertheless I would like to stress that it can never replace the role of standard-setting activities in the ILO. Our existing system already makes it voluntary for governments to ratify ILO Conventions, but once a member State has ratified a Convention, the ILO's supervisory procedures come into play and this gives trade unions the opportunity to raise their opinions and concerns.

The impression given by the Report is that governments, employers and workers are three equal partners, each with a responsibility to reach out to civil society. We may be seen as equals here in Geneva, but that is definitely not the case at the national level in many countries. The numerous violations of freedom of association and, in many cases, the absence of tripartite structures, rather points to the need of governments and employers first of all to reach out to the trade unions and recognize them and their right to organize and bargain collectively in law and in practice — both essential elements of decent work.

Most of the topical matters in the ILO are covered in the Report, with the exception of our standard-setting activities. It is indeed surprising to read in Chapter 3 that ILO Conventions and Recommendations, which we have elaborated since 1919, in general are categorized as of low value since they are fragmented and non-universal in character. This statement is difficult to grasp but my response nevertheless is that the problem with some exceptions does not primarily lie with the standards adopted by the ILO's tripartite structure, but rather with a lack of action in

many countries to implement nationally decisions of the International Labour Conference, and, in addition, insufficient support by the Office itself in promoting the ratification and implementation at national level of ILO standards. I hope the new integrated approach will correct this deficit.

There is no recognition of the work done in the Committee on Legal Issues and International Labour Standards (LILS) and its Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Labour Standards. Seventy Conventions have been identified so far. As Workers we, of course, expect these standards to be promoted actively by the Office as they all form part of the decent work that we aim to achieve.

The Report rightly points out the need to find ways to extend minimum social protection to the informal sector. Let me, in addition, stress that a priority for the ILO is the need to reach out to those member States that in reality are not able to participate in, and benefit from, ILO activities. Most of these countries are least developed countries or war-torn countries, which makes the challenge even greater but of no less importance.

In Chapter 3, a proposal is made to introduce a voluntary register of countries respecting the ILO Declaration in export processing zones. As all member States have already committed themselves to respect the ILO Declaration within their borders without exceptions, I suggest that such a voluntary register be introduced for the multinational enterprises investing in these export processing zones — such a register would be a concrete complement to the Global Compact initiative.

Let me conclude by saying that I think that in the ILO in the future, we need to discuss ways and means of an empowerment of trade unions in order for them to be able to make a substantial contribution to securing global respect for workers' fundamental rights, as outlined in the ILO Declaration.

Mr. KITT (*Minister for Labour, Trade and Consumer Affairs, Ireland*) — It is a great pleasure for me to be here in Geneva on behalf of the Irish Government. First let me congratulate Her Excellency, Ms. Patricia Aragon Sto. Tomas, Secretary of Labor and Employment of the Philippines, on being elected President of the 89th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Let me, at the outset of my presentation to the Conference, give Ireland's full endorsement to the Director-General's Programme and Budget proposals for 2002-03. The proposals set out by Mr. Somavia provide a major challenge to all of us over the next two-year period, and Ireland will play its part in progressing the programme in an efficient and effective manner.

Turning to the Director-General's Report, *Reducing the decent work deficit: A global challenge*, I want to congratulate Mr. Somavia for bringing this item to the centre of the Conference agenda. The Report highlights a number of gaps: the employment gap, the rights gap, the social protection gap and the social dialogue gap.

The policy goal and challenge is to reduce these deficits so that social justice will become a reality for us all. Each country can set its own goals, having due regard to its specific circumstances and possibilities, and its historical and cultural heritage.

The question is how do we make this happen?

The Report identifies four challenges: one, affordability for countries with a consequential economic dividend to enhance productivity in firms; two, universality whereby all who work will have equal rights; three, the necessity of an integrated coherent approach; and four, the joint consideration of economic and social goals and policies.

This may sound great in theory. However, I can tell the Conference that it is not that long ago that Ireland was faced with the type of problems outlined in the Director-General's Report. In order to begin a process of turning around the Irish economy, which in the late 1980s had high levels of unemployment and low economic growth, a period of social partnership involving Government, Employers' and Workers' representatives began, with the objective of providing decent work and improving living standards for all.

This was no easy task. However, I am very proud to say that the results which have accrued from this process have totally transformed not just the way we work now but how we see ourselves as a nation. There is no reason why Ireland's success cannot be mirrored by other ILO countries through a partnership process.

Labour force growth in Ireland of about 2.25 per cent per annum is expected over the period 2000-02. While this remains well above the European average in the near-term, it does, however, represent a marked slowdown on recent growth. Natural increases in the labour force will be augmented by further increases in participation and continuing net immigration. The extent to which we address labour and skills shortages in the coming years will be crucial to the continuing success of the Irish economy.

I should, of course, acknowledge how Ireland's membership of the European Union has had a positive influence on Ireland's social, economic and employment policies.

Furthermore, the current social partnership arrangement, named the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness, will underpin economic activities in Ireland until the end of 2002. One of its key objectives is to ensure that those in work have a fair share in our increased national prosperity and that substantially increased resources are allocated to social inclusion.

In the last year, as part of my Government's commitment's under this Programme, we introduced three innovative pieces of social legislation which reflect the economic dividend of social partnership and they are: a National Minimum Wage Act, a Carer's Leave Bill and a Part-Time Work Bill.

All of these will enhance workers' rights and improve their quality of work.

As I mentioned earlier, Ireland, because of our economic success, is experiencing a new phenomenon of severe labour and skills shortages. To address this need, increasing numbers of non-national and non-EU workers are coming to Ireland by means of work visas and work permits. As Minister for Labour Affairs, I want to take this opportunity to assure this Conference that all workers, irrespective of whether they are Irish, EU or non-EU nationals, enjoy the same employment rights while working in our country.

I believe that the goal of decent work is a realistic and achievable one. It will, however, take time and tough decisions involving a consensus approach by governments, employers and workers. This approach has already worked for Ireland. The targets and objectives set out in the Director-General's Report

are, I believe, pragmatic first steps on a long but worthwhile road. I wholeheartedly support our making that journey together so that we will meet the challenge set for us by the Director-General — the timely and achievable challenge of reducing the decent work deficit.

(Mr. Donato takes the Chair.)

Mr. WINN (*Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Myanmar*) — It is an honour for me to have the opportunity to address this august session of the International Labour Conference. I also wish to heartily extend our congratulations to Ms. Patricia Sto. Tomas, on behalf of the Myanmar delegation as well as on my own behalf, on her unanimous election as President of this year's session of the International Labour Conference. We are fully confident that her vast experience, wisdom and foresight will enable us to successfully conclude our work.

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly appraise the distinguished delegates of our positive responses to the actions taken by the International Labour Organization concerning the issue between the Organization and my country. As you are all aware, at the 87th Session of the International Labour Conference, held in June 1999, it was alleged that Myanmar did not comply with the provisions of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and that there continued to exist widespread use of forced labour, and thereupon an emergency resolution was adopted under relentless pressure from certain powerful Western nations. Again at the 88th Session of the Conference held in June 2000, another punitive resolution was adopted on the premise that Myanmar had not yet taken concrete or tangible steps to fulfil its obligations under the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).

This resolution represents the most extreme measures ever taken against a member State in over 80 years' history of the ILO.

There were objections by ASEAN member countries and other friendly countries sympathetic towards Myanmar, to this highly biased and extreme course of action. They counselled dialogue rather than drastic measures. They also urged the Conference to give Myanmar adequate time.

There was concrete and visible evidence of Myanmar's positive cooperation with the ILO during the abovementioned period from 1999 to 2000. For example, a five-member ILO technical cooperation mission was invited to Myanmar twice, first in May and then in October 2000, and the differences between Myanmar and the ILO were discussed in a friendly and very frank manner. A careful analysis of the reports of the technical cooperation mission will demonstrate that Myanmar has fulfilled in all sincerity and with good intentions the requirements of the ILO.

Moreover, within that short span of time, Myanmar had put in place a framework of legislative, administrative and executive measures. The Ministry of Home Affairs issued Order 1/99 on 14 May 1999. Based on the results of the discussions between Myanmar and the second ILO technical cooperation mission, the Ministry of Home Affairs further issued on 27 October 2000 an order supplementing Order 1/99. Moreover, the State Peace and Development Council, the highest organ of state power with the legislative authority, issued a supplementary directive

on 1 November 2000 on the strict observance of the two abovementioned orders. These measures represent a positive development in legislation. It may be observed that the second order that supplements Order 1/99 is fully compatible with the requirements of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29). This is a fact clearly reflected in the reports of the ILO technical cooperation mission, and it is also accepted as a statutory basis by the Committee of Experts.

In addition, from an administrative viewpoint, the said orders and directives have been conveyed by the higher authorities to all levels of local authorities, further instructing them to ensure that these orders are strictly observed, not only by civil service personnel, but also by members of the armed forces from officers through the other ranks down to privates.

Executive measures have also been taken to prosecute, under the existing laws, those who do not abide by the orders prohibiting the requisition of forced labour. If local residents are forced to provide labour, they can file complaints, either to the township judicial office or the township police station concerned.

In addition to these comprehensive and concrete measures, a ministerial committee to monitor and ensure the total elimination of the practice of forced labour and a national-level Implementation Committee on ILO Convention No. 29, have been established. This Implementation Committee is monitoring compliance with the orders and the incidence of the practice of forced labour. In spite of these extensive measures adopted within a short, specified time frame to comply with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), unilaterally judging that these measures were "too little, too late", action was taken in a most biased manner last November, which clearly constitutes high-handed treatment against a member State.

Very recently, in May of this year, the National Implementation Committee undertook five missions, led by officials of Director-General rank, to conduct field trips to certain areas in Myanmar to observe the situation. The function of these missions is to verify whether there is an awareness of Order 1/99 down to the grass-root level of the rural populace, to observe first-hand whether there have been requisitions of forced labour in the areas concerned, and to report their findings to the National Implementation Committee.

These missions also made every effort, as far as possible, to verify the allegations of the ICFTU mentioned in the report of the Committee of Experts. According to the findings of these field missions, the allegations of the ICFTU were found to be untrue. I want to stress that we shall continue to conduct these field missions on our own to be able to ascertain the true situation.

Although Myanmar has taken legislative, administrative and executive measures in such a way as to comply with the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the issue between Myanmar and the ILO remains unresolved. It is principally because these complaints and allegations stemmed not from the 52 million people of Myanmar, but from fabricated complaints by remnants of insurgent groups fighting the Government, expatriates and self-serving political entities. As such, these complaints have nothing at all to do with labour affairs and they rather assume the form of political attacks on the Government.

The issuance of orders with the force of law to eliminate the practice of forced labour, the existence of a

supervisory mechanism to monitor and ensure compliance with these orders and the administrative and executive measures in place to take legal action on violations of the orders are powerful proof of our goodwill and cooperation with the ILO.

Moreover, if I am to be allowed to submit the situation of job opportunities in my country before and after 1988, I wish to indicate that we have been able to create over 7.16 million new jobs in domains such as industrialized zones, major projects and construction works that result from the market-oriented economy. This is indeed a feat previously unaccomplished in 50 years of independence.

In our endeavours to build a modern and developed nation, in the interest of the State and in our path to the objectives of peace and prosperity we are confronted with a number of obstacles, both internally and externally. Despite these difficulties and challenges, we will continue our endeavours with perseverance and determination to serve the long-term interests of the entire population, including the national races. I wish also to emphasize that at the same time we will steadfastly strive in our own way for the total elimination of the practice of forced labour.

Furthermore, allow me also to inform the Conference that in the course of our constructive cooperation with the ILO we reached an understanding in the negotiations between Myanmar and the ILO on 19 May last on the ILO objective assessment of the situation of forced labour in my country. I now wish to add that it is high time for the ILO to end its unilateral harsh measures taken against a member country like Myanmar on the basis of fabricated and concocted information provided by expatriates and unlawful associations. Allow me to remind the Conference that, in fact, these complaints have never been expressed by the 52 million people of the entire nation.

In conclusion, I wish to state that it has always been our wish to see that the ILO stands as an independent organization, free from outside influence and control, treating all its member States on an equal footing and fulfilling its principal objectives resolutely.

Original Spanish: Mr. GONZALEZ (Workers' delegate, Guatemala) — On behalf of the workers' organizations of Guatemala, I would like to express our support for the Director-General's Report. I would like to take this opportunity, in the light of his Report, to refer to some aspects which are particularly pertinent to Guatemala today.

Forced labour, in the form of coercive recruitment, is a reality in many countries of Latin America and parts of the Caribbean as well as in other regions. This abusive practice particularly affects indigenous populations which, in Guatemala, represent 65 per cent of the population. Serious abuses have been denounced, mainly concerning indigenous workers in the rural sector. Specifically the accusations relate to a form of coercive recruitment which we call *enganche*, or enlisting, where subsistence is given to indigenous workers through a loan, which they must then work off through the production of goods for the provision of services. In Guatemala each year rural workers, along with their entire families, most of them illiterate, are hired on six month contracts, or simply for harvest. They come from the west and are driven down to the south coast using trucks which the *enganchedores*, or recruiters, have rented, thereby guaranteeing that the workers will not go and find

another job or go to another plantation. Often the weigh scales are tampered with in order to pay less for each load of sugar cane, and the workers do not receive a minimum wage. Workers have no access to justice, nor can they organize in unions, for union leaders are often fired when they do organize.

In Guatemala an investigation carried out in the mid-1990s found that the majority of recruitment takes place this way. At times the indigenous villagers themselves receive a commission for each worker recruited, despite the fact that this practice is prohibited by law, and loans or advances are widespread, even today.

The fact that there is no collective bargaining for workers in the rural sector constitutes an obstacle for union activities. Union representatives have met with different Government representatives to ask that legislation complying with recommendations from ILO experts be adopted. Unfortunately, the result is that we have amendments to articles of labour legislation limiting the right to strike during harvest and giving the President of the Republic power, through the Cabinet, to suspend the right to strike if deemed necessary.

It is also important to note that the right to strike in the public sector is not even taken into account, despite the fact that there have been recommendations made by ILO experts. Decree No. 35-96 is still in force. Although some advances have been made in the past and even recently, in the rural zones specifically, it will be necessary for us to make a more concerted effort if we seriously want to counter these different forms of forced labour.

We have to break the vicious circle of impunity which often goes along with forced work. Fortunately, recent events at an international level can be of assistance to us in achieving this goal. However, the rulings of judges in Guatemala are delayed, or not complied with, as has recently been the case with the BANANERO SITRABI Union, whose leaders had to leave the country to protect their lives and the lives of their families. We firmly believe in the ILO policy on rural and agricultural workers expressed through three key aspects. We refer to the right to the freedom of association, a call to governments to facilitate the establishment of rural workers' organizations with a solid and independent base. For reforms to be effective, human rights and hence freedom of association must be respected. Since 1990, charges contained in representations have been made under article 24 of the ILO Constitution concerning the non-observance of Conventions on forced labour in Guatemala. These are the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and these Conventions continue to be violated because this type of work exists in rural areas of the country. It is important that the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations and the Committee on the Application of Standards of the Conference turn their attention to the case of Guatemala to continue monitoring and providing technical cooperation and assistance to assist the State of Guatemala to eliminate all forms of forced or compulsory labour. It is important that we launch a campaign to raise awareness within the State of Guatemala so that forced labour can be eradicated and so that core Conventions can be adopted and implemented.

Original German: Ms. ENGELN-KEFER (Workers' delegate, Germany) — Like many other speakers,

I would like to emphasize the significance of the ILO's work to uphold human rights at work.

The reports before us on freedom of association and forced labour show that there is a global danger of violation of basic rights, in particular as regards free choice of work and working conditions. This is also part of a long list of unforgivable crimes that were perpetrated in my own country half a century ago by the Nazi regime.

Forced labour and racial discrimination have caused innumerable deaths and untold suffering. So we are relieved that finally we have managed to find a way to pay compensation to former forced labourers in Germany. However, even the DM10 billion which will finally begin to be paid in the next few weeks after endless prevarication, cannot erase the immeasurable pain former forced labourers. In future, similar crimes must be loudly condemned by the entire international community. For even now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, millions of people in this world are victims of forced labour and slavery. The action taken against Myanmar shows that the ILO has very effective instruments to implement its standards, and I venture to hope that we shall also succeed in our endeavours in Colombia.

The German Federation of Trade Unions (DGB) is also participating in the European action to overcome the effects of slavery and forced labour. Jointly, we have submitted proposals to our national Parliament to intensify the struggle against these extreme forms of exploitation of human labour. Forced labour is now taking on a new form, namely trafficking in human beings. The Report of the Director-General emphasizes that an international action programme and awareness programmes are needed to address this problem. In particular, the industrial countries should make extra resources available to the ILO.

Multinational companies are those who benefit most from globalization. Many are also introducing codes of conduct, often voluntarily. However, ILO studies indicate that voluntary codes are problematic in many ways. The Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning multinational enterprises and social policy needs to be developed further and monitoring of MNE's behaviour should be stepped up. While multinationals may make voluntary commitments, they should be subjected to international inspection following adoption. This would be a useful step forward, not least for the 27 million workers in Export Free Zones, where even national social standards are frequently flouted.

The Director-General rightly states in his Report that the debate on social clauses is very often misunderstood. However, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work has led to a consensus that these principles may not be used for purposes of trade protectionism. We continue to support this position.

Numerous studies have shown that basic labour standards can be implemented without negative economic effects. With the exception of China, countries that violate basic labour standards receive only a low level of direct international investment. It should be our common goal to ensure that these worker rights are upheld by the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The lively protests we witnessed during the WTO meetings in Seattle have shown both the developing and developed countries how strongly people

feel about the globalization of trade and social standards.

Original Japanese: Mr. WATANABE (Vice-Minister for Policy Coordination, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan) — I am very happy today to have this opportunity to address the International Labour Conference at its first session of the twenty-first century. Today, under the influence of accelerated globalization, increased instabilities and growing inequalities in the world of labour are progressively raising concern. As stated in the preamble of the ILO Constitution of 1919, this Organization has the mandate of achieving universal peace through the improvement of "conditions of labour involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperilled".

Today, the role of the ILO, aspiring to achieve decent work through "making globalization work for all", is becoming ever more important. Japan, as a Member of the Organization since its creation in 1919, has been actively contributing to the realization of the ILO's high objective.

We welcome the views expressed in the Director-General's Report, as they give essential guidance for the future development of the ILO. As identified in the Report, one of the challenges emerging from globalization is the question of trade and labour standards. This issue will probably also be examined at the WTO Ministerial Conference on global trade this November in Doha, Qatar. However, we consider that the ILO has a central role to play in addressing the social dimensions of the liberalization of trade, in collaboration with other international organizations. As the only agency specialized in labour matters, the ILO will need to constantly work on enhancing its presence.

The current globalization process is a consequence of the rapid development of information technologies. It is no exaggeration to say that the countries that have promptly integrated information technology have accordingly achieved rapid development, while on the other hand countries that have delayed introducing IT have been left behind. The achievement of the new economy has made the development of human resources a crucial challenge for all member countries. Focusing on these trends, the ILO needs to promote even more employment creation through human resource development as this will, in our view, constitute the basis for decent work. Our country is well aware of the importance of the development of human resources, is consistently and actively supporting the Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme APSDEP, and will host the 4th APEC Human Resources Development Ministerial Meeting in Kumamoto, Japan from 27 to 30 September of this year. We trust that this ministerial meeting, that will gather all ministers from the Asia-Pacific region responsible for human resources development, will contribute to the achievement of decent work in the world.

Also on the agenda of the APEC meeting is the role of human resources stakeholders, and the active participation of employers and workers on this essential issue is expected. As demonstrated in the Asian crisis, the promotion of social dialogue is a critical element of sustainable economic development.

The issue of HIV/AIDS in the workplace is receiving increasing attention from a labour point of

view, and there is growing awareness of the urgency of addressing this extremely serious issue. In our country, the Minister of Labour, traditionally responsible for labour matters, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare, traditionally responsible for health matters, merged in January 2001 into a new single Ministry — the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Under this new framework, health policies by region and labour policies by professional sector can now address the problem of contagious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, in a unified manner. Our country has been leading debates regarding contagious diseases policies in the 2000 Kyushu Okinawa Summit, and intends to remain active in addressing issues of HIV/AIDS in the workplace.

The development of globalization has increased the importance of the role played by each international organization. In order for each of them, particularly the ILO, to respond to these expectations, it is necessary to obtain full understanding and acknowledgement from the populations of their member States. Economic growth has slowed down in numerous countries. It is important that the ILO bear in mind that its activities are being supported by each member country's contribution, which is the precious fruit of the work of each country's people.

Our country will, in order to achieve a consensus within the ILO, support the draft programme and budget containing a \$5 million increase. However, by keeping an attentive eye on the way the budget supporting the ILO's activities is being used, we trust that it will be used in a way that contributes greatly to the achievement of social justice and universal peace.

Original Arabic: Mr. MAZHAR (Employers' adviser and substitute delegate, Egypt) — In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful!

On behalf of my delegation I would like to congratulate the President on her election to preside over this Conference and to wish her all success in her work. On the occasion of this International Labour Conference in its 89th Session, it is my pleasure to greet the participants on behalf of the Workers of Egypt and to wish them too every success in their work.

All of these subjects discussed during this session are extremely important, and especially the subject chosen by the Director-General, namely decent work based on education and training, the creation of employment, adequate pay and job security. We had the opportunity to discuss these issues with the Director-General when he came to Cairo last year.

We also attach great importance to social security and social insurance and are encouraging the establishment of an integrated network of social security as an effective means of promoting development, espe-

cially in countries where individual income levels are low.

The Federation of Egyptian Industries attaches great importance to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and is making every effort to ensure the implementation of its principles. Egypt has ratified all of the Conventions relating to this Declaration and our Federation takes this opportunity to reaffirm the importance of the Global Report, which this year looks at the different forms of forced and compulsory labour. We would however, like to make some comments which we hope will interest the Conference and its specialized committees.

I would like first of all to refer to a number of paragraphs of the Constitution of the Organization, particularly paragraph 5 of the annex to the Declaration of Philadelphia, which affirms that the manner of application of the principles set forth "must be determined with due regard to the stage of social and economic development reached by each people". This paragraph is especially relevant in today's context in view of current developments and the new world order, as well as the increasing calls to link the liberalization of trades to international labour standards, which could expose the developing countries to serious risks.

In pursuing the objectives of the ILO, namely human and economic development, we emphasize the need to take into account the situation of the developing countries.

The call to link international labour standards to the liberalization of trade will be detrimental to economic development and hence social progress in developing countries and lead to huge losses for the peoples of most of those countries. The proper way to protect them is to link trade, not to standards but rather to economic development so that everyone can have a reasonable share of the products of the world's economy. So we feel it is necessary to agree that the globalization of standards and their application should be conducted in stages rather than in one fell swoop. For developing countries, it should be linked to economic reform and there should be a transitional period.

Such a gradual approach will allow the ILO to improve its performance by readapting international labour standards on the one hand and assembling the resources it needs to fulfil its role as a technical partner on the other. We can follow closely the implementation of standards and the social progress achieved by developing countries through their legislation and practices, basing our approach on the annual Report and the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.45 p.m.)