



Seventh sitting

Wednesday, 12 June 2002, 10.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Elmiger

GLOBAL REPORT UNDER THE FOLLOW-UP
TO THE ILO DECLARATION
ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK:
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Original French: The PRESIDENT — It is a great pleasure for me to open the discussion on the Global Report submitted under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

This is the third time that the Conference has been invited to examine a Global Report under the follow-up to the Declaration. The Report this year, *A future without child labour*, deals with the effective abolition of child labour.

As part of the follow-up to the Declaration, the Global Report will give us a dynamic global picture of the child labour situation. It should enable us to evaluate the effectiveness of the action undertaken by the ILO. Discussion should bring out the priorities for the future in the form of an action plan for technical cooperation that will be submitted to the Governing Body for adoption in November 2002.

Today's discussion is a first in so far as the Conference is called upon to discuss a principle, the effective abolition of child labour, which is already the object of one, if not the most important, of the main technical programmes of the ILO: the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). This programme began ten years ago.

As you know, IPEC has an international steering committee where many of your governments are represented, either as participating countries or as donor governments. Rest assured that today's discussion will be fully taken into consideration by the IPEC steering committee.

The arrangements for today's discussion have been examined by the Governing Body and accepted by the Officers of the Conference.

The two sittings today will be fully given over to this discussion, with the possibility of extending this afternoon's sitting, depending upon the number of speakers who wish to take the floor.

The morning sitting will comprise a general discussion; the afternoon sitting will start with an interactive discussion, which will concentrate on the proposals in the Global Report for future action. As you are aware, for the past two years, the arrangements for the discussion of the Report have been made to generate as interactive a discussion as possible. At the conclusions of the interactive discussion we will return to the discussion on the General Report.

Speaking time should be limited to a maximum of ten minutes for the groups' spokespersons and five minutes for delegates' speeches.

I would like also to draw your attention to *Provisional Record No. 6*, which deals with the follow-up activities by the Office under the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: freedom of association and collective bargaining, forced or compulsory labour. This document was established to respond to those who asked for up-to-date information on a regular basis with regard to activities being carried out under the Declaration.

I have the pleasure to declare the general discussion open.

Mr. POTTER (*Employers' delegate, United States*) — We begin by commending the Office for a substantially improved Global Report over last year's Report. We note that each Global Report gets a little longer; the first report was 87 pages, last year it was 128 pages, and this year 138 pages; so far, increased length has yielded increased quality.

Rather than taking it for granted, it is useful to remind ourselves about the basis for the Declaration and the basis for the Employers' group support. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work is a solemn commitment of all ILO Members to respect, promote and to realize the principles concerning fundamental rights that are the subject of the eight fundamental ILO Conventions.

This third Global Report, addressing the third principle on the effective abolition of child labour, looks at all ILO Members under the same lens, regardless of whether the relevant Conventions have been ratified by the Member. The Declaration's Follow-up, however, is something quite different, procedurally and substantively, from that involved under the ILO's regular supervisory machinery.

It is clear that Members have no obligation as concerns the specific provisions of the Conventions that they have not ratified. Last year's Report, at paragraph 33, highlighted that "the ILO Declaration is about principles and rights, not specific provisions of Conventions". The Declaration and the fundamental Conventions are not the same. The Declaration is not wider in scope than the fundamental Conventions, but at the same time does not encompass their legal detail. There would be no need for the International Labour Conference to adopt Conventions, or for countries to ratify fundamental Conventions, if this were not true.

At a minimum, the Declaration's follow-up procedures hold Members accountable to their commitment to seek to achieve the policies and objectives of

the fundamental ILO Conventions. The evaluative criterion is — has there been a substantial or pervasive failure of policy to respect, promote or realize the principles concerning fundamental rights? Of course, if the member nation has ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), they have an international obligation to implement the specific provisions of those Conventions. What the Declaration seeks to promote is a policy environment that seeks to eliminate unacceptable forms of child labour, over a period of time, if it cannot be accomplished immediately. Divorced of all the specific legal provisions of the Conventions, this is the central policy objective of the Declaration's principle on child labour.

Although less than in previous years, there continues to be a legal orientation to the Global Report; in particular, reliance on the definitions and provisions of the child labour Conventions. We cannot remind ourselves too much that what the Declaration is concerned with is the principles, not the provisions, of Conventions concerning the fundamental rights contained in the eight fundamental Conventions. For this reason, by relying on the actual provisions of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), in particular, the Report differentiates hazardous child labour from other worst forms of child labour. The principle we suggest should place hazardous child labour on the same level as other unconditional worst forms of child labour. If work is hazardous it cannot be acceptable, just as slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment of children in armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities are not, as they pertain to children.

Likewise, we think the differentiation with respect to “light work”, which is a legal concept under the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), is not relevant under the Declaration. It is unconditionally unacceptable for a child to work in hazardous conditions under any circumstances. The Declaration seeks to establish a promotional environment in which ILO Members can achieve the goal of abolishing unacceptable forms of child labour. That the elimination of unacceptable forms of child labour is a necessary policy goal for all ILO member nations, is illustrated by the astounding number of children working in unacceptable forms of child labour.

The Report tells us that out of nearly 246 million children engaged in child labour, almost 179 million children work in the worst forms of child labour. Now we would note as an aside that these numbers are an estimate but, frankly, it does not matter whether it is precisely these numbers or not. We know that it is in the millions. We know we are only solving the problem in the hundreds, if not the thousands, so we have a long way to go.

The first priority of the ILO and its Members should be the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. As it already has, the Employers' group stands ready to help. As the Report highlights in paragraph 292, the General Council of the International Organisation of Employers adopted a resolution in 1996 calling on all employers to raise awareness of the human, economic and social costs of child labour and to develop action plans to put policies into effect. The resolution was immediately followed up by the preparation of an *Employers' handbook on child labour: A*

Guide for taking action in 1998, which was revised and republished in 2001.

The Employers' group asks that the ILO provide additional assistance to strengthen employers' capacity to contribute further to national efforts in working towards the elimination of child labour. Considering the highly detrimental effect of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, both on the children affected and enterprises, we believe that this is a major area for the provision of technical assistance to employers' organizations and an area of cooperation between IPEC and the ILO's HIV/AIDS programme.

Child labour is first and foremost a product of poverty. A key prerequisite in realizing the goal of the elimination of child labour is the need for sound macroeconomic and fiscal policies that create an enabling environment for economic growth, job creation and the schooling of children. These are essential as part of any action for the elimination of child labour. The most effective way of combating poverty is generating productive and gainful employment. Job creation for adults should, therefore, be at the heart of the national policy response.

This Report clearly recognizes that poverty coupled with a number of developmental shocks — economic and financial crises, transitions to the market economy, HIV/AIDS, natural disasters and armed conflict — exacerbate the worst forms of child labour.

The Employers' group urges those countries with child labour problems to come forward and seek technical assistance from the Office. It is encouraging to note that there has been an increasing willingness on the part of governments with such a problem to acknowledge the fact and take positive action. We would also urge all those countries that have serious child labour problems to indicate what measures they are taking to eliminate it.

It is clear that national political commitment is the key to the effective abolition of child labour, for without it, as well as the resources to back it up, there will not be a strong foundation for the promotion and realization of the principle of the effective abolition of child labour.

Considering the extent and the global nature of the phenomenon, action will have to be taken both at the international and national levels. At the international level, the ILO and the United Nations agencies, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions, should strengthen their collaboration and the donor community should provide further support for IPEC as well as to national poverty alleviation programmes. The focus of action at the national level should be on the provision of technical assistance to further build up the capacity of the ILO's tripartite constituents and other actors.

There is a need for a holistic approach, with the elimination of child labour being integrated into the wider objective of poverty elimination. ILO action should involve policy advice and capacity building in the areas of improving legislation on child labour, strengthening the labour inspection system, job creation, education and training, entrepreneurship development, microfinance and strengthening systems of social protection.

We note from the Director-General's Report, *ILO programme implementation 2000-01* that the InFocus Programme on Child Labour has become the biggest single technical cooperation programme of the ILO, operational in 75 countries with 26 donors and a man-

aged portfolio of active and planned projects in excess of US\$200 million. Although we recognize the fact that addressing the issue of child labour will require the commitment of a significant amount of resources by the ILO, we would also like to point out that it should not be detrimental to the other strategic objectives of the ILO, particularly employment, or the implementation of other principles under the Declaration. Hence, the ILO needs to do more to attract donor support for employment programmes and the other principles under the Declaration.

Overall, when the three Global Reports of the last three years are compared, it is readily evident that there is a large gap in the promotional efforts under the Declaration with respect to the realization of the other principles, compared to the extensive resources devoted to the effective abolition of child labour. We should applaud what has been accomplished so far with respect to child labour and urge that equivalent promotional resources be devoted to the other principles.

Given the large scale of the child labour problem and the justifiable praise for the promotional activities under the Declaration, we note that these activities are directed to those governments that ask for help. Under the Declaration it is a constitutional obligation to aspire to achieve the principles. Given the large gap in realizing all four principles, the promotional activities of the Declaration need to begin focusing as well on strategies to stimulate those countries that do not voluntarily seek technical assistance to meet their constitutional commitment under the Declaration.

Mr. BRETT (*Workers' delegate, United Kingdom*) — I would like to start by commending the Director-General and the Office for the production of this quite comprehensive report. It is certainly an appropriate time to take stock of the progress in our common, global struggle to eliminate child labour.

I would also start by congratulating Mr. Potter. I thought it was a fine speech from the Employers and I am very tempted to simply second it and say no more. However, as we have deliberately, as a group, restricted our contribution to this debate to some three speakers, including myself, I think I may be criticized within my own group were I to take such a route. But I do say "Hear, hear" to every comment that the Employers made. It is a fine contribution and I would like to complement it in the contribution I make.

It is time we take stock. It is time because it will surely bring a new impetus to the campaign for ratification and application of the ILO's child labour standards. We have been successful, but we are not all the way through yet. It will also bring a new impetus to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up.

Just a few years ago, in this plenary hall of the Conference, we heard the resounding voices of children, child labourers, calling for the right to go to school, calling for an end to exploitation. They are entitled, more than anybody else, to ask just how far we have come since then.

Firstly, we can show that the global community is now agreed that urgent and comprehensive action is needed to eliminate all child labour. We all understand that not only does child labour deny these children their future — it also means that economic and social development cannot take place while tens of

millions are not getting an education. Their societies and their countries can never fully develop.

Secondly, we can show that trade unions, employers and governments are working together to tackle the problem.

Thirdly, we can show that tens of millions of dollars are being spent on ending the exploitation of children through the ILO's own IPEC programme and through other international projects.

However, we cannot show that there has been a dramatic drop in the number of child workers. The report concludes that there are cautious grounds for optimism, but the fact remains that there are, by any reasonable measure, well over 200 million. I agree entirely with Mr. Potter that whether it is 200 million, 199 million or 201 million, the figure does not matter; the size of the problem is enormous, and we need to redouble our efforts to ensure that we do not have children working in these numbers, in circumstances which violate child labour standards.

They are working, as we know, in mines, on farms, in factories, in homes, conscripted into armed conflict and abused in the global paedophile trade. We, the governments, the employers and the workers hold their future in our hands. If we do not redouble our commitment these children will remain without hope.

One hundred and eighty million of these children are working in the worst forms of child labour, in contravention of [Convention No. 182](#), an international standard which, with its sister [Convention No. 138](#), provides the beacon through which we can throw light on the problem and guide these children out of the workplace and into school.

Overall, the Director-General's Report brings a much clearer picture of the extent and nature of child labour than has been available to us in the past. Again, I agree with Mr. Potter that the Report has become better every year. It gives us a good basis on which to plan future action.

I want to touch on some of the areas which the Workers' group believes must be central to future plans. It is perhaps not surprising with 60 per cent of the world's population in the Asia-Pacific region that in absolute terms the largest number of children working between the ages of 5 and 14 are found within that region — some 127 million. But we have sub-Saharan Africa with 48 million, Latin America and the Caribbean with 17 million, 13.4 million in the Middle East and North Africa, and in Europe we have working children as well. So we have a global problem. We also have 2.5 million (1 per cent alone) of the total number of child labourers in industrialized countries, with a similar amount in transition economies.

We have seen a success rate for the ratification of [Convention No. 182](#) which is unprecedented — 122 countries by the beginning of this session of the Conference. We have also now seen 117 member States ratify [Convention No. 138](#). I recall that not even a decade ago many governments were saying that Convention No. 138 was impractical and could never be ratified, and I am grateful indeed that most of those voices that said that have now changed their tone. Better still, many of them have actually ratified it. We now call on all governments who have not yet ratified Convention No. 138 to do so without further delay. We further call on every government to bring its own laws and practice into line with this Convention. One of the key features in the Global Report is that it shows just how closely Conventions Nos. 138

and 182 are linked. While this may disappoint those who wanted a more limited Convention, the truth is that [Conventions Nos. 138 and 182](#) together provide that ray of hope for working children. As I said before, it does not matter what the numbers are, but it would appear that some three-quarters of all working children are engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Trying to deal with the worst forms of child labour in isolation from the overall struggle to get the world's children into school is not, we believe, a workable strategy.

The Report sets out many causes of child labour, and all of them must be addressed. Poverty is just one factor. There are many related causes such as political instability, discrimination, migration, criminal exploitation, traditional cultural practices, lack of decent work for adults, inadequate social protection, and of course in many cases a lack of schools and the desire for consumer goods. All of these play a part.

Other causes, mainly from the demand side, include a lack of law enforcement, the desire on the part of some employers for a cheap and flexible workforce, and the low profitability and productivity of small-scale family enterprises which cannot afford to pay adult labour.

We must also, especially in the ILO, think through and act upon these root causes of child labour. One thing we know for sure is that wherever trade unions are strong, employers find it more difficult to exploit children. When there are unions in the workplace, children by and large go to school. Where the rights of adult workers to organize and bargain collectively are violated, the children of those workers are more likely to have to work to help make ends meet. And the absence of unions makes it easy for the unscrupulous to use child labour and thus undermine the position of more responsible employers.

In the same way, where discrimination exists, child labour also exists alongside. When women are exploited and underpaid, their children end up carrying a greater part of the burden. Where ethnic or religious groups are discriminated against, it is often their children who end up in the workplace or in the fields. And we all understand the connection between forced labour and child labour, especially where whole families work together in bondage to pay off debts which can never be redeemed. So it is crystal clear to us that the package of rights set out in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work are an inseparable package. Where one right is undermined, the other rights are threatened. The major challenge for the ILO in the immediate future is to make this package work for all people in all countries. Too often, however, there are those who pretend that we can successfully tackle child labour while other fundamental standards are violated. So we expect and trust that the essential connections between these rights will be reinforced through all the activities of the ILO, including its technical programmes.

Of course the ILO alone cannot defeat the scourge of child labour. Lead the battle, yes. That is in essence what we call for, and it is in essence the nature of this institution. It is central to our mandate, but in a globalizing world, the institutions and the enterprises which have so much influence over the daily lives of people around the planet must join in that battle. The ILO can do everything in its power, but as long as the international financial institutions maintain policies which undermine education and public services, children will

always end up at work. When the poorest families have to pay money which they do not possess in order to send their children to school, then their children will never complete their education. Consistent and coherent rules and policies for the global economy are essential to the elimination of child labour. We as trade unions have our own part to play and our own responsibilities in tackling child labour as well. The Global Report touches on some of these. It points to the tip of an iceberg of practical initiatives which unions are taking at all levels and in all regions, often with governments, employers, NGOs and others.

The very good cooperation we have had with the Employers' group during the development of [Convention No. 182](#) has helped provide a basis for a constructive social dialogue with a number of individual employers, and this has brought some significant results. But there are still too many employers, not in this room but too many in the world, who tend to deal with child labour as much as a public relations issue as anything else. We need to break through this problem and to achieve a recognition that corporate social responsibility must be comprehensive and must be real. It must recognize that to deal with child labour without recognizing freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining is a road to nowhere.

We look to the Office, particularly to its technical programmes, IPEC and the InFocus Programme on Promoting the Declaration, to bring forward social dialogue at every level as an integral part of the fight to stop the exploitation of children. The Report details a wide range of IPEC activities. We recognize that progress has been made on linking the technical work of IPEC with the broader ILO agenda, but much still needs to be done.

The national processes under [Conventions Nos. 138 and 182](#), in particular the national programmes of action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, are a key to building the alliances necessary to get children out of work and into school. The trade union movement appreciates the efforts being made and the level of delivery of some NGOs involved in child labour issues. Nevertheless, trade unions do have some concern about the lack of consultation in the selection of NGOs. There is increasing cooperation of ILO programmes with NGOs, and in some cases the cooperation with ILO constituents in the activities of IPEC is unbalanced. The Report highlights that IPEC has been working with almost 150 NGOs as partners throughout the action programme. However, the Report does not show any figures concerning trade union organizations and how they have been involved. That is why IPEC, in cooperation with the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), should look for ways to enhance cooperation with trade unions. We would like to make some positive suggestions: regular coordination meetings between IPEC and ACTRAV; the organization of a briefing session with IPEC national coordinators on how to deal with trade unions; developing guidelines for IPEC staff on how to deal with trade unions; IPEC should earmark a certain part of its budget for activities with trade unions; it should publish, on a yearly basis, an overview of IPEC activities and collaboration with trade unions; ACTRAV field staff should be more involved in IPEC activities, and should assist IPEC in the regions.

We have a long way to go on our common road to the elimination of child labour. We need to approach

this task on the basis of two overriding principles — the right of all the world's children to at least a quality basic education, on the basis of the principle of universal education, and the right to achieve economic and social development. Every country which has joined the ranks of the world's developed nations started on the path to development by ensuring that all their children went to school rather than to work, and not by waiting for development to happen and then tackling the problem of child labour.

The challenge before all of us is to give to the quarter of a billion of the world's children who will go to work today a chance to fulfil their own potential and to take part in the full economic and social development of their countries. What we have done in the past three years is commendable. As Mr. Potter said, we have had a good start but there is a long way to go. And we commend the Report, and we commend the debate to you.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — Having listened to the introduction by the spokesperson for the Employers' group followed by the spokesperson for the Workers' group, I think we are now in an atmosphere which is frank and direct and I would like this atmosphere to be maintained in a most constructive manner for the day's discussions.

Ms. HEM (*Government adviser and substitute delegate, Norway, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries*) — The elimination of child labour has for a long time had a high priority in the Nordic countries' development policies. We see children as key resources upon which a country can draw in order to create sustainable, long-term development. The obligations in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are a direct point of departure for our efforts in the field of combating child labour.

For several years, the fight against child labour has been a priority area in the Nordic countries' technical cooperation with the ILO. In sum, our contribution to IPEC is quite substantial. This is because we attach great importance to the efforts made by IPEC. We do, however, also believe that the social partners, with their special knowledge of the labour market and their networks, have a key role to play in combating child labour.

The adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), is a major step forward in the fight against the worst and most intolerable forms of child labour. We have noted with satisfaction that the Convention is the ILO Convention with the fastest rate of ratification. We hope that the implementation of the obligations in the Convention will make a difference for the affected children and their families.

Now to the draft action plan. We have read the so-called contours of the action plan to abolish child labour with great interest. We support the contents outlined, but would like to underline the following. We believe there is a need for mainstreaming the effective abolition of child labour in the Decent Work Agenda. To mainstream the abolition of child labour, we believe there is a need to strengthen IPEC's role as a facilitator, catalyst and advocate. To reach the ultimate goal of abolishing child labour, there is a need for the ILO and its partners to base their strategies and activities on the Poverty Reduction Strategies, the PRSPs. Without national ownership, there will be no sustainable development in the field.

We attach great importance to the ILO working within the relevant existing cooperative mechanisms. Within frameworks like the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, partnerships are forged with other organizations in order to complement each other and thus be more effective. We would further urge the ILO to relate its activities concerning child labour to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The ILO's role in reaching the MDGs is not at all touched upon in the Report. We consider such an analysis to be a prerequisite in all major diagnostic and strategic documents on technical cooperation. We further consider it to be an obligation for the ILO and its partners to take into account the recommendations of the United Nations Special Session of the General Assembly on Children, especially those related to child labour.

In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the importance of putting the informal economy on the agenda for this Conference. Most child labourers are found in the informal part of the economy. A large part of these children work as a consequence of the lack of social protection for their families. Another important factor leading to child labour is the lack of good quality, low-cost, relevant education. We consider activities that promote social protection schemes and strengthen education systems to be among the foremost for combating child labour.

With these comments, the Nordic countries endorse the draft for an action plan on the abolition of child labour.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-JUMA (*Minister of Manpower, Oman, speaking on behalf of the Gulf Cooperation Council*) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! I am happy to speak before this august assembly as the President of the present session of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council on behalf of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, focusing on the position that the Arab group, including the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, has adopted.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude for the efforts of the Director-General of the International Labour Office in preparing this year's Report which is concerned in particular with the third principle of the Declaration — the effective abolition of child labour. We should like to make particular mention of the steps taken towards eliminating child labour through cooperation with national enterprises, starting with the elimination of the worst types of child labour. It is also important to take account of statistics on the elimination of child labour, a phenomenon which is a stigma on humanity. It has not been possible so far to eradicate poverty, disease and child labour, and this is why children continue to work in dire conditions where they are ill-treated and exploited.

We would like to commend the International Labour Organization, for launching this campaign against child labour, and we are also pleased with the achievements of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in this respect.

Wishing to focus on the values of Islam and our heritage, the Gulf Cooperation Council countries have established policies that protect the child against indignity, exclusion and exploitation. We have focused on the importance of the family and on protecting it against fragmentation, providing guarantees to

families and children, offering services that enable families to raise their children in health and dignity, thereby giving children the possibility of flourishing and developing and becoming a positive force in society.

Appropriate legislation has been drawn up in order to implement the abovementioned policies and prevent children from falling prey to poverty and exploitation. Social benefits are extended to the head of the family in cases of sickness and death, orphans are protected, and children receive moral and physical protection and measures exist to enable them to benefit from health and education programmes.

Labour legislation has laid down detailed measures relating to the work of minors, in order to safeguard their rights. We have adhered to the various United Nations Conventions, we have ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), and our region is now free from the worst forms of child labour. In Islam as in the other religions, children are the most precious treasure that God has given us. Our countries give special attention to the needs of children, and we make sure that disabled children can also lead a life of dignity and are able to receive the education they need to be an integral part of society.

We believe that this work should continue and expand in order to meet the challenges found all over the world and to build a more prosperous future, which will enable children to live in dignity, develop their creativity and sense of belonging to society and be aware of problems to be faced as a citizens of the world. Achieving this requires a collective effort and here we request technical assistance from the International Labour Organization and other specialized agencies. In this way we can build a generation devoted to peace and charity as advocated by all religions.

With the whole world concerned about the life and dignity of the child, I would like to remind you of the mistreatment and suffering of the Palestinian children whose lands are being confiscated, their homes demolished, who are facing all forms of terrorism, who are being killed, humiliated, orphaned and deprived of their most basic rights.

We would like to request this august assembly to take a firm stand with regard to these inhuman policies and ask Israel to stop these policies and respect international charters and international agreements in order to preserve the life and dignity of children.

We sincerely support any action that seeks to protect the world's children. We are also aware that certain developing countries are faced with the phenomenon of child labour for economic and social reasons. The international community should do all it can to alleviate the suffering of these children and remove the source of local and regional conflicts by asking donor countries to cancel these countries' debts as the burden of such debts sometimes falls on the children. We must work together to build a prosperous future for all children and must help developing countries which are unable to meet the needs of their people, in order to protect the children and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Let us all work together to achieve peace and stability and a dignified life for all peoples of the world, without exception, and to combat all situations that harm children and expose them to dispersion and exploitation — because where children are working, their future is lost.

Original French: Mr. NORDMANN (*Secretary of State, Directorate of Labour, Federal Department of Economy, Switzerland*) — The persistence on such a great scale of the violation of the most elementary rights of children is shameful for all of us.

The Swiss delegation was deeply concerned to read in the Report that 180 million children aged between 5 and 17 years are endangered physically, mentally, morally by being in jobs which are considered as among the worst forms of labour.

One hundred and eighty million children is the equivalent of one in eight children throughout the world, 73 per cent of the 246 million working children, do work which is banned by the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), a figure which is both enormous and unacceptable.

Today we have a very complete view of the phenomenon of child labour throughout the world thanks to the quantity and quality of information contained in the Global Report, for which I would like to express my gratitude to the authors of the Report.

One of the merits of the Report is that it corrects some of our false impressions of the reality of the situation.

Although the forms of work which are most reprehensible — slavery and prostitution — are in the media spotlight and known to the public at large, the majority of the 180 million children undertaking the worst forms of work are not involved in those activities. They carry out dangerous work, i.e. more conventional types of jobs, mostly in agriculture, which are sometimes intrinsically dangerous but which may also be jobs undertaken without any difficulty by adults. The work is dangerous for the health and safety of children because they cannot cope with the same work burden as an adult.

We need to ensure that measures to be taken are not determined on the basis of an incorrect view of reality. Even if they receive less press coverage because they are not so spectacular, efforts to combat these dangerous forms of work should be given special attention because of the very high number of children concerned.

I would also further like to point to a considerable change in mentality which has taken place since the adoption in 1989 of the Convention on the rights of the child. Ten years ago child labour was either considered to be an inevitable cultural phenomenon or was simply denied. Children are no longer seen as passive beings but as persons with rights, which they often declare themselves, as seen at the recent Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on Children. Since the preparatory work and the adoption of [Convention No. 182](#) there has been a growing trend towards combating child labour both by political authorities and within society at large.

The recent work of the United Nations General Assembly's Special Session has shown that there are still difficulties, particularly with regard to what States are ready to accept as child labour. In the future, measures should not simply be based on the lowest common denominator which is below what many States are prepared to implement.

With [Conventions Nos. 138](#) and [182](#), Switzerland believes that the international legislation is now in place, at least in the short and medium term.

Although progress has been made, the problem of child labour is still not completely documented. We

do not have much information on the involvement of children in illicit activities and also on the impact of the AIDS pandemic on child labour.

The decision-making mechanism which leads parents to send their children out to work has been studied. However, the reasons why children themselves decide to find work remain unknown.

The Swiss delegation also believes that it is important to stress two aspects of follow-up: monitoring the workplace and monitoring the children themselves — those who are still working and those who have been able to get out of the jobs market.

Finally, Switzerland fully supports the three key components of the action plan, particularly the strengthening of IPEC which Switzerland has supported since 1988 and will continue to support in the future. As regards the enhancement of partnership arrangements it seems to me that cooperation with a number of United Nations agencies such as UNICEF and UNESCO and with the World Bank, should also be clearly mentioned in the action plan because partnerships inevitably involve these institutions.

The alarming reality of the figures means that the international community must invest all its energy and resources into ensuring that a future without child labour becomes a reality. And we have to act now. Switzerland intends to pursue its commitment to ensuring a decent childhood and a decent future for every child, wherever he or she may live.

Original Portuguese: Mr. BĂGAO FÉLIX (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Portugal) — On behalf of the Portuguese Government, I would like to congratulate IPEC and the ILO for the excellent work which has been done to combat the worst forms of child labour, particularly in those regions of the world where this is a widespread phenomenon and an affront to basic human rights.

In particular, I would like to congratulate Mr. Somavia, the Director-General, for the Report which we now have before us. This is a thorough, exhaustive piece of work, and it offers a challenge to the international community, prompting its indignation and serving as an incentive for all of us to undertake effective action to remove this scourge to human dignity throughout the world.

We cannot solve a complex problem without being thorough. If we ignore it, we are necessarily accessories to what is going on. Portugal intends to combat this phenomenon on a national basis. It is in fact a priority in the present programme of the Government. The country's commitment has already borne significant results. Portugal is now fully aware of the phenomenon and rejects it. The present legislation strongly discourages any form of business, from using child labour, and the number of children working in our enterprises has now been considerably reduced. There has been a strong downturn in this form of exploitation. Between 1997 and 2001 it fell sharply as compared to the first year measures were introduced. The cases which do exist are less serious. Statistically speaking, we have no records of the worst forms of child labour. There has been a considerable reduction in the phenomenon, and now fewer children leave school, fewer children work for other people, fewer children work outside their family circle and there has also been a reduction in their daily hours of work.

I would like to highlight, in conclusion, the fact that Portugal is applying many of the recommendations

contained in the Global Report, namely the existence of partnerships with other entities, particularly unions and employers' organizations, the quantification of the situation and apparent trends, and an evaluation of the results of measures taken to combat such labour. There is also the direct participation of the children themselves — because surveys are conducted which allow them to report on their own situation. We work very closely with the ILO and IPEC and we take measures to combat child labour as part of the Government's general strategy to tackle poverty, social exclusion and failure at school.

There are other areas in which the Government is active, where workers, employers and their organizations can participate in this absolutely necessary work. In addition to legislation governing child labour, the social partners can make contributions by way of collective bargaining or by agreements or codes of conduct they might develop.

Until this phenomenon has been completely eradicated we cannot sit back with our arms crossed. The problem is still not fully solved. There are still complex areas such as domestic work, where pockets of resistance remain, which are often of a cultural nature or are conduct-based.

However, we can state before the world that there is a model of intervention in Portugal to combat child labour. This model is being evaluated, adjusted and adapted to circumstances as time goes along and our efforts will not cease until we have completely eliminated this practice from our country.

Mr. SHENOY (Government delegate, India) — The Government of India welcomes the Global Report and endorses the need to abolish all forms of child labour, while keeping national legislation in mind. We feel that the national situation, development patterns and targets should dictate the pace of strategies to achieve the goal of the elimination of child labour.

We strongly endorse the need to eliminate the unconditional worst forms of child labour. The national policy on child labour in India provides for the abolition of child labour through a sequential process beginning with the worst forms and thereafter moving to hazardous and less hazardous forms of child labour. The process to examine [Convention No. 182](#) is also progressing, keeping this strategy in mind.

The number of children in India who were working as child labourers was 11.28 million as per the 1991 census. While the figures of child labour for the 2001 census are yet to be released, the national sample survey figures of 1999-2000 have shown a significant reduction.

We feel that the urge to eliminate all forms of child labour should not be allowed to obscure the need to eliminate its more pernicious and exploitative forms. International definitions should be limited to defining unacceptable forms of child labour. National governments should determine the definition of hazardous work. We also agree that child labour and poverty are inextricably linked. India has been mentioned in the Report in the context of having shifted work from factories to homes for some products. While we lay down very stringent conditions through legislation for any unit employing children in hazardous occupations, we also feel that children who regularly attend school but thereafter assist their families in augmenting the family income, or who are learning traditional skills

which, in some cases, are hereditary, should not be defined as child labour. We also agree with the Report that the minimum age for any kind of work should be specified in national legislation.

We have made concerted efforts over the years to follow a proactive policy in tackling the problem through constitutional, legal, statutory and developmental measures. The country has a very active judiciary, and a vibrant and active civil society which takes a keen and active interest in the elimination of child labour. In 1996 the Supreme Court of India gave very specific directions to the Government on this issue. Following these interventions, this has been included as one of the priority areas to be addressed in the National Agenda for Governance. The Prime Minister of India has also underscored the Government's commitment and its endeavour to eliminate child labour in its most hazardous and pernicious forms over the next few years.

Our national policy on child labour, drafted in 1987, was a major landmark in India's fight against this problem. The policy envisaged a multi-pronged strategy for addressing the problem. Under the area-based component of the strategy, a scheme of National Child Labour Projects was formulated and is currently being implemented in 100 districts spread over 13 states of India where child labour is endemic. The Government allocated an amount of \$50 million for the five years between 1997 and 2002 for use on these projects.

These projects cover various occupations, including the match, precious stones, glass, brass, carpet industry, etc. The project societies, in collaboration with voluntary agencies implementing these projects, engage in activities which include ensuring the strict enforcement of labour laws, running special bridging schools, mainstreaming children into the formal education system, income and employment-generating activities, conducting surveys and carrying out evaluations. In the last two to three years, the special schools have already succeeded in mainstreaming 150,000 children into the formal primary education system.

The Government has constituted a working group for formulating policies for the next national plan. These broadly include an expansion of the NCLP scheme to cover all districts in the country where child labour is endemic and linking the programme directly with the "Education For All" scheme launched by the Government of India. The scheme follows the acceptance of our national Parliament to make education a fundamental right for children between the ages of 6-14. The strategy also aims to secure convergence with all self-employment and poverty-alleviation schemes being implemented in the country. Budgetary allocations at a level of around US\$100 million and more are being sought for the next five years.

The Global Report has not mentioned the detailed initiatives of national governments in Part II of its Report. This is criticism of the Report, which is well written. Part III of the Global Report very rightly explains that problems cannot be tackled by the IPEC and the ILO alone, without the cooperation of national governments. The IPEC has incurred expenditure in the range of US\$5.5 million in the country over the last decade. I am happy to learn that the ILO has a budget surplus and take this opportunity to reiterate the need for the ILO to augment its core budget for the IPEC in India and all developing countries, at

least to the level of funds being spent by national governments.

To conclude, the financial assistance provided by the IPEC roughly enabled the elimination of 1 per cent of child labour in ten years. This implies that it will take a very long time to eliminate child labour completely. In saying this, I do not mean to belittle the indirect beneficial aspects of the programme. Hence, the IPEC has to increase its budget substantially to all the developing countries in order to help them to eliminate the scourge of child labour.

Original Arabic: Mr. EL AMAWY (*Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Egypt*) — Child labour is a major challenge to decision-makers in various countries, particularly those in the developing world, because of its complex economic and social dimensions. This requires concerted efforts at the international and domestic levels to overcome this problem, with its destructive effects on the physical and psychological effects on children.

Egypt has therefore taken all the necessary measures to protect children and spares no effort to ensure the enforcement of the laws governing child protection. Egypt has already ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the two fundamental Conventions in this respect, making it one of the countries which have ratified all eight of the fundamental ILO Conventions. President Mubarak declared the decade 1989-1999 a decade for the protection of the Egyptian child and has announced that the decade 2000-2010 would be a second decade of the Egyptian child.

Reflecting the great importance attached by Egypt to eliminating child labour, starting with its worst forms, Egypt's First Lady participated in the event held in Egypt for the Arab region to publicize the Global Report on Child Labour which we are discussing today.

Egypt, of course, has always played a pioneering role both internationally and regionally in the domain of protection of children, starting with its accession to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989. It also hosted the World Childhood Conference in 1990, issued a law on the child in 1996 and has participated effectively in organizing the Arab Conference on the Rights of the Child and the African Congress on the Child.

The Report notes that there are about 246 million working children, most of whom are in the developing countries. This is a reason for concern and an incentive for serious action in order to check this phenomenon that threatens developing societies and has a negative impact on their progress and development.

Eight million of those children work in the worst forms of child labour which are prohibited by Convention No. 182. Egypt recently ratified that Convention, out of a firm conviction that it covers the most odious work that a human can perform, let alone children, including practices prohibited by the divine religions before they were prohibited by conventions, laws and customs.

The first part of the Report makes it clear that the problem of child labour is one that has economic and social ramifications and that varies from country to country.

We should therefore take all these various circumstances into consideration when we confront this

phenomenon, because one solution cannot be applied to the various situations. There is a need for coordination by all governments with the social partners and ILO, to undertake studies of the various causes, economic and social, with the purpose of the final elimination of child labour, in accordance with the conditions prevailing in various countries.

The second part of the Report presents complications of experiences in various countries, and I believe that we can all benefit from these experiences and study the possibility of the application of some of them in our own countries — as we have done in Egypt — in cooperation with the three social partners. For example, we have established a national steering committee to combat child labour; we have organized inspection campaigns to follow up the enforcement of the child labour laws; we have organized information and awareness campaigns and we have attached particular importance to the education of active members of society, such as clerics and social workers with regard to children; raising the awareness of children themselves; expansion of vocational training centres and their development, to provide training programmes for children.

As regards the various recommendations and proposals listed in the third part, particularly those about an international plan for cooperation with international organizations, governments and civil society, we feel that these recommendations do contain a number of ideas which could be adopted, while others may involve certain serious consequences which may imply the imposition of new conditions previously rejected by Egypt and by many developing countries as they would not be helpful in finding solutions to a complex problem with its own social and economic dimensions.

This year's Global Report is a step forward in our efforts to curb the phenomenon of child labour and to eliminate it. Implementation is dependent upon the extent to which countries and peoples are convinced with regard to the seriousness of the problem discussed in the Report, and the recommendations and proposals it sets forth. Their implementation requires the provision of additional resources for the development and technical assistance needed by various countries.

We are certain that our concerted efforts by governments, employers and workers, in cooperation with ILO will bear fruit and will achieve the objective we seek, the total elimination of child labour in the near future.

Ms. LUNDBY-WEDIN (*Workers' adviser, Sweden*) — *A future without child labour* is the title of the Report, and I think it would be difficult to find a better title that formulates our common goal. We must never waver or allow for any ambiguity when it comes to this goal and, depending on the different roles we have, we must ensure that this future becomes a swift reality.

It would be all too easy to feel resignation in the face of the new figures on child labour presented in this Report — 211 million child labourers worldwide, and of these, 180 million toiling in the “worst forms” of child labour, which we all agree must be eliminated without delay. These are the facts, and they are facts that we cannot and must not turn a blind eye to, facts that must not be allowed to paralyse us by their magnitude. On the contrary, they present us with a chal-

lenge, they call for concrete and tough action if we are to achieve effective, lasting and quick results.

A century ago child labour was a major problem in Sweden. How did we, at that time, tackle this problem? Actually we did the same things that are needed today. In those days the first trade unions were created in Sweden. It was also, at this point in time, that the first school reform was introduced, a reform that made schooling compulsory and free for every child. This was a true revolution in Sweden at that time, but it was above all an effective means of building a modern country that could provide welfare for all its people. The elimination of child labour was one of the key factors in the development of Sweden, it is still the key factor in the fight against world poverty today. It remains the key factor in establishing sustainable social and economic development.

If we are to be able to eliminate child labour, we need to recognize the fact that there is both a class and a gender dimension. Workers' children are those found to be performing child labour, the girls are those most affected. The absence of child labour in many countries is due, in great measure, to the existence of strong and independent trade unions, to a developed civil society, a democratic system of government and the existence of the political will to provide women and children with the right to education. Education provides women with a passport to the labour market, and this in turn enables them to provide for themselves.

We must, in the developed countries, put more effort into supporting the IPEC and all other ILO programmes in order to support the fight against child labour, including assisting those countries where child labour exists.

I would claim that one political goal, above all others, is decisive in this regard, and that is the goal of full employment. The universal right to a decent and safe job that enables one to provide for his or her children is a fundamental human right and should be regarded as the highest priority by the ILO and its member States. One of the most important questions is the right of developing countries to have access to the international market. It is our view that a well-developed system of free trade, based on common rules and the fundamental ILO human rights Conventions, provides a necessary and effective platform for the struggle to achieve sustainable development. Another key factor is the promotion of free social partners and of a social dialogue. We know from our trade union development cooperation programmes that local trade unions function as watchdogs at workplaces. We know, from experience, that this work constitutes an effective protection against child labour. Sweden is one of the 43 member States of the ILO that have ratified all eight core Conventions. We are, of course, satisfied with this, but the Swedish trade union movement also wants to see these fundamental human rights in working life being actively promoted within our government development assistance policy and indeed in the policy of the European Union.

Let me summarize: We need strong and free trade unions, compulsory and free schooling of high quality for all children, a developed system of free trade based on common rules with a social dimension, and effective assistance to the developing countries. But, above all, to eliminate child labour we need genuine political will.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Minister of Labour, South Africa*) — Let me commence my intervention by commending the ILO for its efforts in the progressive elimination of child labour, particularly the successes achieved through its International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour. The ILO is finding that tens of millions of children work in most abhorrent conditions which rob them of their childhood, health and sometimes even their lives. This poses a formidable challenge to all of us who are committed to the protection of the vulnerable and most precious resources of every society: its children. If not rooted out, child labour also poses the greatest threat to the Decent Work Agenda that we all espouse and seek to promote.

A month ago my country was honoured to be selected as one of the sites across the globe for the launch of the third ILO Global Report, *A future without child labour*. This launch served not only to give recognition to South Africa's efforts to fight the scourge of child labour, but also highlighted the importance we attach to our partnership with the international community in general and the ILO in particular.

Our child labour action programme has benefited immensely from technical assistance provided by the ILO. In our endeavour to eliminate child labour, we have not only ratified the various core ILO and UN Conventions, but have also developed the necessary legislative framework to give practical expression to what we believe in. As I speak, the South African Child Labour Action Programme has identified five key focus areas where action needs to be taken. These are: monitoring and enforcement of employment laws; appropriate educational policy and implementation; adequate provision of social security; programme for the creation of employment; social mobilization and education programme for the public, employers, parents and children.

In conclusion, allow me to re-emphasize that the progressive elimination of child labour requires renewed efforts from all of us at local, national and international level. As a country we will continue to stand firm against child labour. We will continue to highlight the importance of the involvement of our social partners in this significant effort and the strengthening of the ILO's role in ensuring that we can indeed create a future devoid of child labour — a future where children are not exposed to undue hardships that force them prematurely to take upon their fragile shoulders the crushing burden of adulthood that robs them of their right to play, to learn, to dream and to develop.

We owe it to posterity to create a future where children shall not be required to be anything else but children.

Mr. HYDER (*Employers' delegate, Bangladesh*) — We commend the Office's Report, *A future without child labour*. We share the concern expressed in the Report and support the viewpoint that there are no blueprints or ready-made, universal solutions for abolishing child labour.

We endorse the ILO's action plan based upon: (a) reinforcement of the work being done under IPEC; (b) mainstreaming abolition of child labour effectively across other ILO programmes; and (c) forging closer partnerships with employers' and workers' organizations for addressing the problem.

Happily, the worldwide response through direct actions to efforts for the abolition of child labour, especially in its worst forms, has been improving. There is increasing recognition that the problem cannot be left untackled and that children must be taken out of work and helped to develop a better future.

We feel that this realization must be supported at the global level, so as to translate such efforts into national action programmes. Child labour should not be treated as a problem of the developing countries alone; it is a universal challenge. As such, national action programmes must be given universal support, both in terms of resources and institutional ideas.

Based on the experience of Bangladesh, may I submit that sector-specific and time-bound programmes are essential for tackling such problems. It is through such efforts that child labour could be eliminated from the ready-made garment sector in our country. Another programme to identify some other sectors which include the worst forms of child labour is now being implemented. Once the problems are identified, time-bound programmes will be required to tackle the problem.

Child labour is caused by, among other things, poverty and social sector deficits. Endemic poverty forces families to put their children to work to help the family survive. As such, until poverty issues are addressed it will not be possible to reach the roots of this scourge.

We support the emphasis by the international development organizations on poverty reduction, but this should not be just another item on the list of conditionalities for development assistance. Similarly, social sector investment is an issue of high priority. Child labour has been caused by persistent indifference to social sector issues.

In our country, and for that matter, in many of the least developed countries (LDCs), parastatal organizations take a large chunk of national resources. Scarce resources have to be spared to subsidize their losses. We have persistently moved our Government to phase out subsidies and spend the resources saved on social sector programmes. Regrettably, most of the trade union colleagues have so far opposed such a move by the Government, as it would involve job losses. It is true that job losses will only aggravate the problems of poverty, particularly in the LDCs which are not getting a fair share of new investments. It is well known that the globalization process has not been able to ensure equitable distribution of investments and flow of capital. Today the LDCs stand marginalized, very alarmingly, in terms of their share of world investment. On the other hand, the terms of trade have also deteriorated for most of the poor countries. Their development efforts are threatened more than at any time before.

This trend will inevitably undermine, among other things, the universal goal of achieving a future without child labour. The ILO, being a unique body in the United Nations system, should be an active agency shaping the international development plans and programmes in the coming decade, so as to ensure balanced development in the world. An efficient economy is the most effective system against poverty and for ensuring a stable and welfare-orientated society. There is a direct and immediate relationship between an efficient economy and a decent world of work. This will be the ILO's contribution to the improvement of the lives of millions of children, and at

the same time will redeem millions of families from the scourge of poverty.

Original Spanish: Mr. PÉREZ-VILLANUEVA Y TOVAR (*Government delegate, Spain*) — We have asked to take the floor here regarding the Global Report, submitted by the Office, in order to point out that on page 31 of the Spanish text and page 28 of the English text, there is a reference to Spain that does not correspond to reality. The figure on under-14-year-old workers in our country has been taken, according to the footnote of the same Report, from a document of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council Europe. I am referring to document 7840, drawn up by the European Council in 1997. The information contained in document 7840 was taken from articles published in 1980 and 1989.

We believe that it is not acceptable to provide data on a country that goes back, in the best of cases, 13 and 22 years. Any document published officially that claims to be rigorous and reliable must necessarily be based on up-to-date data taken from reliable sources. The Spanish Minister of Labour and Social Affairs has up-to-date statistics from the Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security that could have been used in the Global Report. However, the Office does not seem to have requested from the Spanish Government the available information, as seems to have been the case with other countries cited in the Report.

Therefore, we would like to denounce both the out-of-date nature and the inaccuracies of the information put forward by the Office in referring to Spain.

Indeed, in accordance with the information provided in an official memo by the Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security of Spain, which we have provided to the Office, the work of minors in our country is basically restricted to situations of an isolated nature, in many cases linked to occasional activities of a family or domestic nature. Specifically, the Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security, in the year 2000-01, has established infringement reports which affect only 217 minors. This figure indicates the total number of minors working, which is radically different to what was quoted in the Report.

Likewise, I have to highlight that currently there are very few submissions of trade union complaints before the Inspectorate of Labour and Social Security for employment of minors, which proves the idea that the infringement of labour standards for this cause is of a very isolated nature.

As is well known, my country has ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Spain is also one of the biggest donors to the IPEC Programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, contributing to the activities of the programme, particularly in Latin America.

Therefore, my Government requests that the Office delete the reference to Spain on page 31 (Spanish version) of *A future without child labour*.

Mr. HUSSAIN (*Federal Secretary, Ministry of Labour, Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, Pakistan*) — In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate! I would like to begin by congratulating the ILO for presenting the excellent Global Report, *A future without child labour*. The Report is correct in its thrust towards the total elimination of child

labour, which can only be a long-term goal in most parts of the world. The Report has properly underlined the need for immediate action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

We all understand that the big leap in human development is possible only if a child has the best possible start in life. We cannot realistically expect sustainable socio-economic growth in countries where children continue to waste their productive energies in hazardous, or other forms, of labour. Nations cannot build their future by keeping their children away from schools. However, each country has a specific situation which must be borne in mind when evolving strategies to combat the problem.

The problem of child labour in Pakistan is deeply rooted in poverty, socio-economic compulsions, population growth, unemployment and a lack of adequate educational facilities.

Pakistan is, however, determined to eliminate child labour from the country by overcoming these obstacles. Our commitment to this cause can be seen in the large number of initiatives the Government has taken in close collaboration with the ILO, our social partners and civil society.

We have worked out a comprehensive and integrated strategy to meet the challenges. The broad parameters of Government policy include: the collection of relevant and accurate data concerning child labour in various economic sectors; in this context, a national survey on the child labour situation has been planned to ascertain the exact impact of the steps taken so far, and to redefine future priorities; immediate action towards the withdrawal of children from the worst forms of child labour, the prevention of children entering into child labour and rehabilitation measures under the National Action Plan on child labour and other proactive measures such as the expansion of social safety nets, poverty reduction strategies, a national employment plan and mainstreaming of children in educational institutions; the development and promotion of economic alternatives for adult family members, so as to prevent circumstances which could push children into work; the provision of vocational training for children withdrawn from both the informal and formal sectors; awareness-raising programmes; and integrating the eradication of child labour in the national poverty reduction strategy.

Our National Plan of Action puts emphasis on the immediate withdrawal of children from hazardous forms of child labour. In consultation with the ILO, we have carried out the exercise of identifying hazardous occupations.

Following the ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), we requested the ILO to launch a preparatory process for initiating the Time-Bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Pakistan. Consultations to this effect are scheduled for July of this year, which would also involve ILO/IPEC.

In addition, the Government has substantially increased its monitoring and vigilance activities with respect to the implementation of the Employment of Children Act, 1991. During the past two years, the labour inspectorates in the four provinces have carried out more than 23,000 inspections and prosecuted more than 9,000 individuals for violating the Employment of Children Act. I can assure you that Pakistan will not be complacent in its efforts.

As recognized in the Report, combating child labour is often restrained by the lack of resources. Widespread poverty in developing countries remains the main challenge in combating, and eventually eradicating, child labour. Household poverty, in particular, pushes children to earn money in order to supplement the income needed to survive. Legislation alone is not a panacea; it will work only if accompanied by measures that create a conducive national environment which promotes the eradication of child labour.

In an increasingly globalized world, creating a conducive national environment is linked to having an enabling international environment. An equitable international economic, financial, and trading system which discriminates against, and marginalizes, the developing countries, can only cancel out the national efforts and undermine their ability to promote economic growth, reduce poverty and generate viable employment opportunities.

The consequences of the inequitable functioning of the international economic and financial systems are alarming. The Report confirms that countries having low per capita income have a large number of child labourers in their workforce. Similarly, the economies of these countries with low per capita income also highly depend on agriculture.

As contained in paragraph 196 of the Report, only a “combination of economic growth, respect for labour standards, universal education and social protection” can bring a significant reduction, or else the phenomenon will reappear in new and often unanticipated ways.

Creating an international indicator is a complex undertaking, given the diverse economic and social development in various parts of the world. We need to be wary of the “one-size-fits-all” approach. Thorough groundwork, in close collaboration with member States, would be necessary to identify the various ingredients which would comprise such an indicator. We look forward to this work being undertaken, and assure the ILO of our full cooperation.

I would once again like to reiterate Pakistan’s firm resolve to continue and strengthen our efforts towards eliminating child labour, and to work for its global abolition.

Let me conclude by quoting the United Nations Secretary-General, who said “We were all children once — and we are now the parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts of children.” Hence, it is not difficult to understand that children have “the right to the best possible start in life”.

Original French: Mr. YLIEFF (*Commissioner of State, Belgium*) — The Belgian delegation would like to congratulate the International Labour Organization on having produced such a high-quality Report. It gives an excellent description of the different forms of child labour, the scale of the problem and its many and complex causes. It is very important to assess the situation accurately and I hope there will be a consensus on that. We take note of the workplan proposed for the future.

Among the various roles to be played, the first role required from governments in combating child labour would appear to be to draw up and be willing to apply national legislation establishing a labour code that imposes a minimum age for admission to employment coinciding with the end of compulsory schooling.

This code should contain regulations on occupational safety and health which also cover young people who, research has shown, are involved in many accidents because they are inexperienced and less aware of the risks. Furthermore, legislation presupposes that implementation thereof will be properly monitored by the labour inspectorate, *inter alia*, which requires adequate human and material resources. Technical cooperation can be provided here in order to develop resources and provide training.

As poverty is both the cause and effect of the worst forms of child exploitation, governments have to develop effective ways of combating poverty and social exclusion. Social security and an active policy for creating decent jobs are needed here. Belgium is following with great interest the work that the International Labour Office is doing at the moment on a broader concept of social security for all workers.

Any strategy for combating child labour, is largely based on access to compulsory schooling, which should preferably be free or inexpensive, and to vocational training appropriate to the local context. Encouraged by technical cooperation, these initiatives should also foster equal opportunities to ensure that girls have access to training and thus to decent work.

For the fight against child labour to be successful, there has to be a real political will on the part of governments to provide good governance. This principle should also be applied by international organizations with which the ILO has to cooperate. Child labour can feed off inconsistencies in different policies and the disastrous effects of adjustment policies which make inadequate provision for expenditure on social security and education.

The Global Report that we are discussing at this Conference contains many examples of good initiatives taken by representative employers’ and workers’ organizations, but for these organizations to be able to act effectively against child labour, social dialogue must first be established.

I would also like to take up the unexpected scale of the worst forms of child labour. It is not a North-South debate. I believe that no country that takes the ILO Conventions to heart can rule out the possibility that the worst forms of child labour might exist in its own backyard. In the context of a country like Belgium, I am thinking of unaccompanied minors who are seeking political asylum. Recent surveys have shown that a large number of these young people disappear without trace while their asylum requests are being processed. Given their precarious situation, these young people are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in work that is hazardous or, worse still, belongs to the worst forms of child labour.

Finally, as regards technical cooperation, I have taken due note of the interesting developments described in the Global Report and I would like to make a plea for sustainable action so that children subject to the worst forms of economic exploitation are not replaced in the same situations by other children.

Original Spanish: Mr. INSUA CHANG (*Minister of Labour and Human Resources, Ecuador*) — The Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work makes it possible for us to monitor a process that has been particularly beneficial. A large number of countries can now know of the advantages that come with the ratification of the core Conventions of the ILO.

The reason for the successful adoption of these standards is perhaps attributable to the technical cooperation and in some cases economic cooperation rapidly provided by the ILO to ratifying countries with a view to the implementation and promotion of the Conventions.

The choice of child labour as a topic for the Global Report this year demonstrates the magnitude of this problem, which has led to structural crises in our countries and it has affected countries of all types in the world. One of the keys to guaranteeing the eradication of child labour in political programmes and in long-term development, is the establishment of inter-institutional labour and support networks in the affected circles and in the institutions involved, so as to empower them to prompt the authorities to adopt national policies. Those will in turn sustain and maintain the labour networks. In the same way, we should connect the application of [Convention No. 182](#) and projects related to it with the general application of the core Conventions, linking them and emphasizing their complementarity, and seeking mechanisms as part of a comprehensive approach.

By way of conclusion, we have to point out with emphasis that the setting up of labour networks, the reallocation of national development investments, the creation of an inspection system for child labour and the strengthening of accessible and high-quality education, will enable us to create a sustainable national practice. This will enable us to see to it that national expenditure and international cooperation will not be squandered or used incoherently. Ecuador has ratified all the core Conventions of the ILO. It has signed two memorandums of understanding with the International Labour Office and is currently preparing a time-bound programme. Political support and the decisions of the State play a fundamental role in initiating this work. This should be supplemented through the setting up of networks and the awakening of national awareness of the existence of this problem. None of this can be done without the strong support of the ILO through the IPEC programme. The Government of Ecuador would like to thank that programme once again for its cooperation and for its support.

Mr. RAMPAK (*Workers' delegate, Malaysia*) — The Global Report, entitled *A future without child labour*, traces very accurately the ILO's historical concern to banish child labour from the world of work. Since its inception, the ILO has given child labour high priority in each of its social agendas. In 1919 it adopted the Minimum Age (Industry) Convention ([No. 5](#)), and in 1999 it adopted the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention ([No. 182](#)).

We note that the Report addresses the issue of child labour from three key standpoints: first, from an objective point of view; secondly with regard to the economic implications of child labour; thirdly from a legal and procedural point of view in order to ascertain what can be done. No country has said anything on this subject so far.

It is very alarming to note that more than 246 million children are engaged in employment worldwide, of whom about 180 million (or 70 per cent) are involved in hazardous work. This means that, throughout the world, one child in eight is engaged in hazardous work, thus endangering their personal safety as well as depriving them of a normal childhood, which should include education.

There can be no doubt that the ILO has made a great contribution towards the elimination of child labour worldwide. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), a highly specialized functional arm of the ILO, has been sensitizing world opinion to the serious economic implication of child labour on the national, subregional and regional levels since it was first introduced in response to [Convention No. 182](#). We welcome this development.

However, the ILO will be able to play a pivotal role in the elimination of child labour only if the IPEC is further enhanced in scope and if more donor countries encourage this initiative by providing additional resources. At the same time, trade unions should cooperate more closely with national steering committees.

This project would benefit from a more efficient use of resources by recipient countries, especially when they implement programmes aimed at the effective reduction and ultimate eradication of poverty. It is a highly commendable objective which deserves the full support of all ILO member States regardless of their political affiliation or ideological orientation, in keeping the spirit of [Conventions Nos. 182](#) and [138](#).

Forced globalization has brought opportunities as well as challenges to the world of work. One highly disconcerting trend is that free and unregulated trade promoted by globalization is proving to be so strong that it might well be leading to the unregulated exploitation of child labour worldwide. This is attested to by the fact that in 1992, it was reported that there were 110 million child workers worldwide then. Today that figure stands at 246 million, which is an increase of 223 per cent over ten years.

What is most disheartening is that while many ILO member States have ratified ILO Conventions [Nos. 182](#) and [138](#), the spirit and objective of this ratification has yet to be translated into implementation and enforcement in the national setting.

We urge governments and employers not to regard child labour as merely competitive advantages to keep labour costs low, but instead to consider that the employment of young children seriously undermines the future of the country. Both ILO Conventions [Nos. 182](#) and [138](#) call for enhanced international cooperation and for assistance, including support for socio-economic development alleviation programmes and universal education.

We are here in our personal capacity and as persons responsible for the future of the rising generation who is entitled to a life that is free of exploitation and oppression. Let us mobilize our collective resources to effectively minimize and ultimately eliminate child labour throughout the world.

Mr. NGUTU (*Minister for Labour, Kenya*) — My delegation welcomes the opportunity to take part in the discussions on this year's Global Report, *A future without child labour*, as part of a follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

This year's Global Report clearly shows how the abolition of child labour has become a global cause for the new millennium. The Report indicates how millions of children worldwide are engaged in "the worst forms of child labour that cause irreversible physical or psychological damage, or that even threatens their lives".

It was disheartening to note that in many parts of the world, poverty continues to be the cause of various forms of child labour, besides other factors such as lack of education and legislation that is not adequate or forcefully applied.

However, we of course acknowledge the fact that the problem of child labour remains quite enormous in many parts of the world today, and that not all countries are institutionally or financially equipped to tackle it at once due to poverty. This means that the most logical strategy would be to focus scarce resources first and foremost on the most intolerable forms of child labour.

In our efforts to eradicate all forms of child labour, the Kenyan Government has ratified and is actively implementing both ILO [Conventions Nos. 138](#) and [182](#). Combating child labour has received top priority from the Government and has a prominent place within the framework of Kenya's Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme.

A national policy paper on child labour has now been completed and contains most of the provisions of the new ILO Convention on child labour. Kenya has also enacted the new Children's Act, which took effect from 31 December last year. This Act encompasses, among other things, the establishment of a family court that will address child-related problems in the judicial system, and the harmonization of all national laws pertaining to children. A review of the country's labour laws is also under way. The ILO's International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has also facilitated the enhancement of capacity building among key actors in combating child labour, such as government officials, NGOs, and employers' and workers' organizations.

With regard to the four suggested points of discussion, my delegation has the following comments to make:

Kenya believes that in order to integrate the abolition of child labour into the broader national policy agenda, it is by first of all making sure that there exists the necessary political will and national commitment. A comprehensive national policy on child labour must also be in place whose provisions must be fully reflected in the country's National Development Plan. A national commitment to eradicate child labour should also be backed by time-bound programmes of action aimed at ending child labour within a specific time frame.

Priority must be given to the immediate suppression of all extreme forms of child labour. To this end, the provision of protection and rehabilitation schemes would be absolutely essential. However, the problem can be addressed on a lasting basis only if short-term action is conceived and measures such as the provision of free, universal and compulsory education are taken.

Regarding the best division of respective roles and responsibilities between national partners and the ILO in the context of implementation of time-bound programmes for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, Kenya is of the view that both parties (national partners and the ILO) have a complementary role to play. The national partners — government, employers' and workers' organizations — must all come together and demonstrate their commitment to the effective and total elimination of child labour.

The ILO should continue to extend technical assistance, advisory services and financial resources

during the implementation of the time-bound programmes on the worst forms of child labour. It must be clearly understood, however, that such programmes must ultimately remain the responsibility of the country concerned in terms of ownership and integration into the country's socio-economic national agenda.

On the issue concerning the best ways of ensuring effective participation by employers' and workers' organizations in the fight against child labour, Kenya has the following to say: Child labour is a complex issue which cannot be separated from other related problems of economic development such as poverty alleviation, job creation, etc. All the above issues will take time, and concerted action will be needed on the part of the stakeholders to address them. Both the country's employers' and workers' organizations in particular are uniquely placed to understand and to change the realities of the workplace so that child labour has no part to play.

On the alarming increase in the number of children in the worst forms of child labour, this actually sends a very serious message to both the policy-makers, employers' and workers' organizations that more action is needed at the national and international levels to address the problem. There is also a clear need to commit more resources to address the issue. In particular, national governments have to practically translate their political commitment into concrete policy change, backed by resource allocation in favour of children in addition to providing the right legal framework.

In conclusion, the Kenyan delegation is generally of the view that, where there is a political will on the part of the government and with total collaboration of the employers' and workers' organizations, NGOs and stakeholders, it is possible to eradicate all forms of child labour and hence attain "a future without child labour".

Original French: Mr. NEGROTTO CAMBIASO (*Government delegate, Italy*) — The importance of the battle against the worst forms of child labour is now universally recognized. Italy makes a strong contribution to all aspects of the IPEC programme because the world must be made aware of the size of the problem of child labour.

The Global Report, *A future without child labour*, has a fine title and evokes a world where the children of tomorrow will have an effective right to education without having to do any form of work as is sometimes necessary today for the survival of the family, a factor which places an unbearable burden upon them. Although dealing with the worst forms of child labour should be a priority, it is not enough. To eliminate the phenomenon we must first have a full understanding of the size of the problem and the way it exists.

We are aware, for example, of the difficulties of compiling an accurate census of the number of children who are working illegally or clandestinely, and we support any initiative which can improve our knowledge in this area. The lack of reliable statistics on child labour is a concern which has already been discussed within the ILO, particularly by the Governing Body of the IPEC programme.

Italy has launched a very careful research programme on child labour in the country on the basis of a cooperative agreement between the ILO and the Italian National Statistical Institute (ISTAT). This

research programme should enable us to evaluate the methodology being used to collect data and set an example to be followed by other developed countries where the situation is somewhat similar to that in our country. This research could also be used to elaborate uniform legal instruments in member countries.

A first abstract from the research under way was published in Italy today to mark the World Day against Child Labour and we would like to have this circulated as quickly as we can. We have noted with a mixture of relief, surprise, and concern that the data on the problem of child labour in Italy is very different from the figures appearing in the ILO Report. I am not going to press the point of the discrepancy between the two sources of information; however, I would like to point out that we were relieved to learn that the number of children working irregularly or as casual labour in Italy is about 30,000. Although still a high figure, it is a far cry from the 400,000 11-14 year-olds defined as economically active in the recent ILO Report. I would like to express a reservation concerning methodology, given the lack of any reference in the Report to research currently being carried out in Italy in cooperation with the ILO. We wonder how this omission could have occurred?

In conclusion, I would point out that the ILO-ISTAT research shows very varied results so far. The merits of this research are that it demonstrates the multifaceted nature of the problem. Cases are complex and so varied that it is impossible to draw just one or two conclusions which are universally applicable to all of them. Other data from research under way shows that violations of Italian legislation on child labour are distributed fairly evenly throughout the country, with Lombardy, Tuscany and Apulia heading the list, which is a somewhat surprising result when compared to the Report which states that most violations occur in the south of the country.

Child labour in Italy, which is now, I believe, better documented, is still a problem. There is also one further specific aspect which is a matter of great concern and that is the international trafficking of children, associated with the worst forms of exploitation. It is a challenge which requires cooperation between Governments, social partners and civil society as a whole, and which demands extensive institutional, political and cultural solidarity on all sides.

Mr. MOORHEAD (*Government delegate, United States*) — I have read with interest this comprehensive and generally informative Global Report. For ten years, the ILO has undertaken a massive world-wide campaign against child labour, enhanced by the establishment of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). We are indebted to the Government of Germany for their foresight in creating IPEC, and for their continued support and funding.

The United States Government attaches great importance to the issue of child labour. Since 1995, we have contributed more than US\$112 million to IPEC to support programmes aimed at removing children from exploitive work, providing them with education and rehabilitation and providing their families with viable economic alternatives. By September this year, our total contribution to IPEC will reach almost US\$157 million.

Whilst significant progress has been made, much still remains to be done, and I encourage as many

countries as possible to become donors to the IPEC programme. Every contribution is important.

The headline of the press release for the Global Report indicated that an alarming number of children were trapped in the worst forms of child labour. That number was 179 million.

I was then astounded to read in the Global Report that 171 million out of the 179 million are in hazardous work. These numbers concern me, because I do not see how they can be accurate.

The sheer size of the estimate of hazardous work in comparison to the relatively small number of children — 8 million — reported to be in prostitution, drug trafficking, pornography and other illicit activities is bound to affect policy priorities. Most likely it will lead to funnelling resources towards hazardous work and away from other worst forms.

If the numbers were true, this might be very well appropriate, but since the numbers cannot be true, we run the risk of short-changing children simply because we were swayed by faulty data.

As we know, it is Article 3(d) of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Convention, 1999 (No. 182), that refers to “work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children”. This is the so-called hazardous work referred to in the Global Report.

But the drafters of the Convention understood that circumstances differ in each member country and included Article 4(1) which states that “the types of work referred to under Article 3(d) shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards”.

While 124 countries have now ratified Convention No. 182, the Convention has only come into force for slightly over half of them. In fact, in 2001, only five countries were required to report to the ILO’s supervisory machinery on their implementation of Convention No. 182.

Most Governments have not, as yet, informed the ILO on what types of work have been designated as hazardous in their countries, so a precise definition cannot exist at a global level. With no definition, it is impossible to quantify the issue.

It is really much too early to attempt to give a global estimate of children in hazardous work.

No one is denying the magnitude of the problem of child labour, and the significance of the work being done by the ILO, but inaccurate data are detrimental to our tripartite efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

Since the data have been released in a very high profile manner, through both a press release and the Global Report, it would be appropriate for the Office to find a similar high profile manner in which to qualify the data.

We cannot let the political campaign detract from the important work of focusing resources where they are most needed. It is the children who suffer from our mistakes.

With these concerns in mind, I have a few comments on Part III of the Report concerning the development of an action plan for the effective abolition of child labour.

The Office suggests three pillars on which to base an action plan. They are: to reinforce the work of IPEC; to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration and

policy integration; and to forge closer partnerships with the social partners and civil society. I agree with these pillars.

In designing the plan, however, we must remember that the ultimate goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour can only be achieved at the country level. Each pillar of the action plan should be designed to support and enhance the efforts of individual member States and to bolster their political will.

The major steps, practical suggestions and actions presented in paragraphs 379-392 are excellent ones, with one exception. I am not in favour of organizing a [Convention No. 182](#) plus five, as those types of international conferences are expensive and contribute absolutely nothing to ending child labour.

Part III of the document succinctly captures the necessary work to be done and it provides an excellent framework for the Governing Body's discussion in November.

Mr. BOTHA (*Employers' delegate, South Africa*) — I was the Employer Vice-Chairperson during the two years of discussions on the Convention and Recommendation on the worst forms of child labour. I am also the Employers' spokesperson on the IPEC steering committee.

I mention this not only to emphasize my own personal commitment and concern with the effective abolition of child labour, but also to say that the Employers are determined to play a meaningful, active and constructive role in promotion and action.

Mr. Potter, our Employer spokesperson, has already highlighted the basis for the support of the Employers' group for the Declaration and the substantial improvements in the Global Report. In the field of child labour, the Report marks a significant improvement in getting to grips with the figures, the statistics. For a wide range of reasons, not least the encouraging trend towards transparency, evidenced by the growing number of country surveys, the disturbing dimensions are becoming more accurate. This is true of my own country, South Africa, where a survey has been done.

The Report highlights the fact that "the term 'child labour' does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18" and that "many children, in very different national circumstances, carry out work that is entirely consistent with their education and full physical and mental development."

The truly alarming reality is that of the more than approximately 200 million working children, 180 million are engaged in the forms to be abolished, namely 111.3 million between 5 and 14 years of age, about three times the population of my country, and 59.2 million between 15 and 17 are in hazardous work situations, 8.4 million are in the unconditional worst forms, namely enforced and bonded labour, forced recruitment into armed conflict, prostitution and pornography, other illicit activities and trafficking of children. I repeat these figures, and I know they are being highlighted over and over here, because the size and scope of the problem must become part of public conscience in the same way that we used to talk about 250 million working children. We must all recognize that the numbers of children engaged in hazardous work are far higher than previously thought.

I support our spokesperson in offering the Employers' commitment to work closely with the ILO in

focusing its efforts on eliminating these forms of child labour.

During the debate on the worst forms of child labour in 1998 and 1999, we focused on the relationship between poverty and the existence of child labour and noted its complexity. This is borne out by the Report. The need for consistent and focused policies should be recognized, in particular the need to improve education systems. This is particularly true for developing countries.

Also, during the debate on the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 ([No. 182](#)), attention was given to the hope that we could achieve universal ratification if all concerns of ILO member States were incorporated, and that is what we tried to do. We recognize that there has been an unprecedented ratification response to Convention No. 182 but we still believe that universal ratification should be the objective of the ILO and IPEC programmes where possible. It is disappointing that technical reasons still present obstacles to ratification in some of the countries that participated in the debate where ratification would indicate even greater commitment to the effective abolition of child labour.

I will conclude by noting the Employers' appreciation for the work done in IPEC. We now have ten years of experience in this programme and we praise the transparent way in which lessons learnt have been highlighted and built upon. This is a dynamic programme which improves with each experience.

The crucial role of IPEC in the proposed ILO action plan is supported, as is the plan.

Original Arabic: Ms. AL-JABI (*Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Syrian Arab Republic*) — I would like to thank the Director-General of the International Labour Office for having prepared this Global Report entitled *A future without child labour*. We find it useful and important, and we believe that it reflects some real efforts. It is objective, practical and future-oriented. We would like to refer to the following points which we consider particularly important for the elimination of child labour.

First, it is imperative that there should be a political will at the country level. There must also be free basic education and an improvement in living conditions to ensure that children can attend school and are not obliged to work.

The ILO's experience in this field is a valuable resource. In addition, we must promote social dialogue and narrow the gap between the developing world and the developed world in the wake of the Social Summit in Copenhagen.

We would also like to see the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization take up these matters.

On page 52 of the Arabic text (page 44 of the English text) there is a reference to armed conflict and child labour. This is particularly important because in war, children are exposed to many forms of suffering. They often become orphans or are abandoned. This is true as well in countries subjected to occupation. Such children are forced to begin work very young. They are left to their own devices. This leads to the employment of children. These children need to work because they are often their families' breadwinners. This occurs in every country under occupation. We, and the entire world, can see this in the occupied Golan, in occupied Lebanon and in

occupied Palestine. Regions are subjected to sieges, and in them children are exposed to disease as well.

There are also populations suffering from boycotts, such as the people of Iraq. We would like to express support for the children of Iraq who have suffered enormously because of the embargo. We would also like to call for the lifting of the embargoes imposed on such countries as Somalia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Sudan. We must take this into account in our strategy.

I would like to point to the importance that President Assad attaches to children and youth. In the Syrian Arab Republic it is illegal to employ a person under the legal age. The Syrian Arab Republic has ratified all the international Conventions on this subject, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), will soon be ratified. We have already drawn up the legal texts necessary to prohibit employment under the legal age, and we have also taken the measures required to assist and rehabilitate children. The labour inspectorate plays an extremely important role in this context.

I would like to conclude by saying that the children of today will one day ask us to account for what we have done. They will ask what kind of world we built for them.

Original Turkish: Mr. OKUYAN (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Turkey) — I am honoured to address this distinguished audience here on this special day at this special plenary sitting of the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would like to congratulate the Director-General and the Office for the preparation of the Global Report on child labour, which is very comprehensive, informative and enlightening. I hope it will contribute to the elimination of child labour in its worst forms all over the world.

Almost 80 years ago, just two years after the foundation of the ILO and only a year after the proclamation of the Turkish Republic, one of the acts passed by the newly established Grand National Assembly of Turkey included provisions regarding the prohibition of child labour. This was a clear indication of the positive approach of the State and Turkish society toward this matter. And ten years ago, Turkey signed the Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO to participate in the IPEC as a demonstration of its commitment to eliminate child labour. Turkey has continued to work with the IPEC since then.

On behalf of my Government, I would like to extend our thanks to the ILO for its assistance and support, which helped us intensify our efforts towards the elimination of child labour. IPEC's success in Turkey was based on the willingness of the Government and the employers' and workers' organizations to work together in combating the problem.

Our ten years of experience with IPEC has taught us that child labour is a phenomenon which prevails throughout the world, having deep roots in society. Many social and economic factors lie at the bottom of this phenomenon, which include poverty, unbalanced income distribution, high rates of population growth, rural/urban migration, deficiencies in the system of education, limited employment opportunities, a lack of awareness and many families' low-level of education. The solution to this problem requires multifaceted approaches and integrated programmes. New legal arrangements and an effective system of super-

vision are necessary. There should also be an efficient system of education accompanied by measures to combat poverty, which is the main source of the problem.

We believe that solving this problem would also contribute significantly to the social and economic development of the country. When children are exploited through labour, an important potential of the country is also lost. Eliminating child labour would enhance employment opportunities for adults, and at the same time for children who, withdrawn from work and oriented toward education, would contribute to the improvement of the country's future economic productivity and human resources.

My ministry recently took two important steps to combat child labour. The first is the draft Bill on the "Minimum Age for Admission to Employment", which aims to fill in legal loopholes in the existing legislation, to introduce some new arrangements and to bring national legislation into conformity with the requirements of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The second is the preparation of the "National Time-bound Programme to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labour". This programme envisages an integrated approach toward activities aimed at the elimination of child labour, with the participation of all relevant governmental organizations, workers' unions, employers' associations, voluntary organizations and other related parties.

I believe that it is possible to make substantial progress, in a relatively short span of time, to eliminate child labour through a jointly developed, well-designed programme. I am fully convinced that Turkey has the experience and potential to do this. A 51 per cent decrease in the number of working children in the five-year period between 1994 and 1999 is proof of this.

We believe that child labour, especially its worst forms, constitutes a serious violation of human rights in general and of the rights of children in particular. Having this in mind, I would once again like to stress that we are determined to eradicate child labour in our country.

I wish that this day, dedicated to the elimination of child labour, has fruitful results for children all over the world.

Original French: Mr. JOHANSSON (representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Union) — The ILO Global Report, *A future without child labour* and the IPEC statistical report that completes it demonstrate the size of the problem of child labour, especially in its worst forms. These two documents show this is not just a juridical problem, above all it requires a political response. This political response presupposes a certain vision of society and development, and that all of the data relating to the problem is taken into account. Obviously this includes economic data, but also data relating to society, cultures and civilizations.

In spite of the adoption and ratification by a large number of States of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), a great deal remains to be done, not only to recognize the scale of the problem and to understand it, but, above all, there has to be a real will to face up to it in a realistic and sustainable manner.

In this context, it is clear that politicians and parliamentarians have a major role to play. This role of

parliamentarians is dual, it is a political role. In fact, it would be the parliament's role most usually to ratify [Convention No. 182](#). It would also be down to parliament to assess and approve the programmes, legislation and budgets proposed by the government to give effect to them, and it is also for parliament to monitor the action of the public authorities on a daily basis.

Parliamentarians also have a role to play in the field. They are in direct contact with reality and with people, particularly in their constituencies. They can intervene directly to deal with specific cases. They also have a strong power of conviction and can pass on ideas to the population. It is important for parliamentarians to act as quickly as possible to achieve the objectives of [Convention No. 182](#).

The international organization for national parliaments, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, that I am representing here, is therefore particularly pleased to associate itself with the struggle that you have undertaken to achieve the elimination of child labour.

Last March, together with the ILO, we published a practical guide for parliamentarians on eliminating the worst forms of child labour, which is available in this room. We also organized a panel on the issue in order to make the world's parliamentary community aware of what is at stake and of possible solutions. But we are only at the beginning of a long-term process. The guide is aimed at informing parliamentarians and providing them with instruments for working effectively against child labour. Obviously the ILO and the IPU hope that this will also be a precious tool for all those who wish to make progress in sustainable development and human rights, for example, governments, employers' and workers' organizations, civil society organizations and all those who aspire to participate in the movement aimed at putting an end to the exploitation of children.

The IPU is convinced of the importance of establishing room for dialogue and consultations between the political and social stakeholders so as to produce effective and economically viable solutions. It is only by combining all of these forces that we will be able to find solutions. At present, tens of millions of children are employed in intolerable types of work which deprive them of their childhood and threaten their dignity and health, and sometimes even their lives. None of these children can make the most of their potential unless decisive action is taken today, and this requires particular attention to the situation of young girls. I can assure you that the Inter-Parliamentary Union will continue to mobilize parliaments and their members, as it has during the last few months, particularly at the recent Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, and we have great hopes for today's discussions so that together with the ILO we can implement a concerted strategy for the years to come.

Mr. CHETWIN (*Government delegate, New Zealand*) — First of all, I would like to say that the New Zealand Minister of Labour, the Honourable Margaret Wilson, has asked me to offer you greetings and express her deep regret that she could not be here at the Conference. I know she would have been particularly keen to participate in the discussion today.

New Zealand is delighted to be able to mark the first World Day against Child Labour and we congratulate the ILO on its leadership of the international campaign against child labour over the last

ten years. New Zealand commends the ILO for bringing the problems associated with child labour into the international spotlight, for providing a standard in the form of [Convention No. 182](#), that creates a legal and practical obligation for ratifying States to address the worst form of child labour, and for the phenomenal expansion of the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour over the last ten years.

The New Zealand Government is deeply concerned about the exploitation of children and is committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of children. Over the last year, New Zealand has demonstrated its commitment by ratifying the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 ([No. 182](#)) in June 2001. In meeting the practical requirements of the Convention, the Government has established a 12-month workplan of action to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour in New Zealand.

The Government's planned programme of action includes education campaigns such as a campaign called "Keeping Ourselves Safe" which will profile [Convention No. 182](#) in schools throughout New Zealand.

In ratifying [Convention No. 182](#), New Zealand heralded its international commitment to the effective abolition of child labour. We are now also working towards ratifying the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, as well as the Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

The New Zealand Government is very pleased to be supporting ILO activity in the Asia/Pacific region and is delighted to be funding the first IPEC programme in the Pacific. The IPEC programme, if approved, will take the form of a subregional training workshop on ratification/implementation and reporting on [Conventions Nos. 138 and 182](#). It would aim to provide practical skills and advice to tripartite delegations from Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Samoa. We hope that this will be the first of continuing IPEC programmes in the Pacific.

While New Zealand is actively working at the domestic, regional and international levels to eliminate harmful forms of child labour, we do not believe that all forms of child work are harmful. In New Zealand, there are restrictions on the employment of young persons through education and occupational safety and health legislation. However, there is a long-established practice of employment of children in a range of work including newspaper rounds and fruit picking. We consider that the employment of children in this type of work is not harmful and indeed is socially desirable, since it prepares them for independence and greater responsibility in a way which complements their formal education.

Therefore, we strongly agree with the ILO's acknowledgement in the Global Report that "the term 'child labour' does not encompass all work performed by children under the age of 18". As the Report states, by undertaking work appropriate to their age and level of maturity, children learn essential skills and add to their families and their own well-being.

New Zealand is grateful to the ILO for providing an in-depth analysis of global child labour in the Glo-

bal Report and commends the Office for providing more detail than we have previously seen on the issue. We would, however, caution against sacrificing up-to-date and accurate information for detail. For example, the statistic on adolescent injury rates in construction in New Zealand, in paragraph 99 of the Report, is over ten years old and refers to an unofficial study undertaken in a single New Zealand city. The Report acknowledges “the critical role of good information as a basis for effective action”. We urge the ILO to develop its information resources on child labour and support action to promote effective baseline analysis of child labour.

New Zealand supports the ILO in developing a three-pillar action plan for the effective abolition of child labour. We believe that practical programmes of action tailored to the different circumstances of child labourers are necessary to provide solutions to the exploitation of our young. As the Report acknowledges, these programmes must remain flexible to respond to different and constantly changing circumstances. Projects must be appropriate to the gender, age and culture of the child. Furthermore, as poverty is a major cause of child labour, practical programmes to alleviate poverty must be a major goal for future action.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you of New Zealand’s continuing support for the ILO’s leadership of the protection and promotion of children’s rights through the elimination of all forms of child labour.

Mr. TZANCHEV (*Government delegate, Bulgaria*) — At the outset, please allow me, on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election and the assumption of their important duties, and to express our confidence that under the President’s able guidance this Conference will be a success.

Today, the ILO observes the first World Day against Child Labour. Accordingly, based on this year’s Report of the Director-General, we need to focus on the measures to be taken aimed at the effective elimination of child labour in the contemporary world, through the adoption of the necessary legislative, organizational and administrative initiatives and the elaboration of respective national policies and plans for action.

The child labour phenomenon deprives more than 200 million children of the brightest period in life — childhood — and at the same time represents a significant barrier to the qualitative reproduction of the labour force as a whole. Consequently, it is no wonder that the tripartite constituents of the ILO, acting together on international, national and local levels, reached an unprecedented agreement of viewpoints and actions concerning that striking problem.

As explicitly stated in the Global Report, countries with economies in transition such as my own country, increasingly face the child labour problem. The social cost of transition to a market economy is high, but it is not comparable to the cost paid for the transition by families and children. The impoverishment of the population creates an informal labour market, often involving children and youngsters. Only ten years ago my country had no experience whatsoever in the regulation of child labour. However, under the present conditions, the Bulgarian Government endeavoured to adequately address this new challenge

through a new legislative base aimed at the prohibition of child labour and prevention of its worst forms. Bulgaria was among the first ILO member States to ratify the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The Convention entered into force for Bulgaria on 28 July 2001 and, according to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, it is a part of the national legislation and has priority over those norms of the national legislation that might contradict it.

Under Bulgarian legislation, persons under the age of 18 are considered children. The basic provisions on child protection are stipulated in the Constitution, the Labour Code, the Child Protection Act, the Penal Code, and some other relevant secondary legislation. For instance, regulation of child labour is governed by the Special Protection of Under-aged Section of the Labour Code, the Ordinance on Occupations of Persons Aged Under 15, and the Ordinance on Occupations Prohibited for Persons Aged Between 15 and 18. Furthermore, the Constitution and the People’s Education Act set the age of 16 as the age for obligatory free primary education and thus create a serious barrier to child labour under this age. Hence, all parents have to ensure school attendance for their children. The non-compliance with this obligation may result in fines. Children from poor families receive free-of-charge text books, their transportation costs are reimbursed, their families get targeted social assistance and, subject to certain conditions, scholarships are provided to pupils most in need.

However, when persons under the age of 18 have to work in order to earn their living or assist their families, Bulgarian legislation provides for special regulations, in particular, a reduced seven-hour working day, lighter working conditions and prolonged paid annual leave of not less than 26 working days. Night and overtime work is prohibited for those under age. The last amendments to the Labour Code, enforced as of March 2001, prohibit work for those children who are under age that is beyond their physical and mental ability, related to exposure to any dangers and risks from employment accidents.

As reiterated on many occasions, even the best law, national or international, remains just a sheet of paper if the competent state authorities do not exercise active control over its implementation. The Bulgarian General Labour Inspectorate, through its territorial administrative structures, exercises permanent routine or special control over compliance with acting labour legislation. The analysis of the data available shows that there are no serious violations of labour legislation related to child labour. Nevertheless, we are well aware that there is more work to do to increase employers’ knowledge of their obligations and awareness of those children who are under age, *vis-à-vis* their rights.

Bulgaria participates in the most large-scale programme for technical cooperation within the framework of the ILO — the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Under this programme, and following the two missions headed by Mr. Klaus Gunther, responsible for IPEC in Central and Eastern Europe, a team of sociologists carried out quality research on the scope, territory distribution and characteristics of child labour in my country. The results showed that the majority of those children who are under age are employed in the tailoring industry, public catering, tourism, commerce, agriculture and forestry. A National

Report on Child Labour in Bulgaria was prepared and presented to, and discussed with, all national authorities concerned, the social partners and NGOs at a seminar organized with the financial support of IPEC. The conclusions reached show that the problem of child labour in Bulgaria is not so acute as it is in some other countries. Nevertheless, an interinstitutional working group was set up with the task to elaborate, by the end of July 2002, a National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

Finally, I would like once again to emphasize the importance of the present Global Report of the ILO Director-General and to call upon all member States of the Organization to make the maximum efforts to achieve the total elimination of this phenomenon.

Mr. AHMED (*Workers' delegate, Pakistan*) — On behalf of the Workers' delegation of Pakistan and myself I take the opportunity to convey deep appreciation to the Director-General of the ILO and his able team for publishing this Global Report entitled *A future without child labour*.

We, the spokespersons of our group, Lord Brett and my other distinguished colleague, have spoken in depth of our support for the cause of the fight against child labour and we fully support this. We, as in the Declaration of Philadelphia affirm the principle that all human beings have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development against a background of equal opportunity. We believe that without equal opportunity the problems of poverty and child labour will persist. The Report rightly states that there are almost 250 million children employed in child labour, while 186 million, that is 73 per cent, are engaged in the worst forms of child labour. Sixty per cent of the children engaged in child labour come from Asia and the Pacific and 10 million children die each year due to malnutrition and preventable diseases. There are almost 600 million children in the shackles of poverty, while 100 million are kept out of schools, 60 per cent are girls and 70 per cent of child labour exists in agriculture. In such a situation it requires both national and political commitment as well as international action to reduce poverty in the Third World, including by taking action at the international level through debt relief, a fairer system of international trade and transferring the best training practices. At national level an integrated approach is needed to translate into action the child labour policy pursued by the ILO, actively involving the social partners. We also believe that in order to translate these policies to national level more resources must be allocated for children and social protection must be provided to the destitute. There should be awareness of the importance of proper family planning, employment opportunities should be increased, special measures should be taken to promote the female labour force, civil society should be made aware of the need to abolish child labour and the social partners should promote the campaign to abolish child labour.

In Pakistan we have been pursuing a policy of taking effective measures against this scourge and we are glad that the ILO has been providing useful assistance in such areas as the soccer-ball industry, carpet manufacturing and the surgical industries. We appreciate its contributions in these areas, as we do the Italian initiative. Experience in certain spheres has provided

good examples of how children can be withdrawn from work and can be rehabilitated with meaningful education. This is just one aspect, however. A large number of children are still involved in child labour, particularly in the agriculture sector. We in the trade union movement have been offering our full support to a national plan to combat child labour. Our trade union organization has been contributing in a modest way to providing free text books to orphaned children as well as computer training facilities to low-income groups, enabling them to have access to meaningful education. We have also taken measures to build awareness among our members and are giving special importance to various measures to help provide for children's education.

Last year our centre specially arranged a programme to launch this Report which was attended not only by ministers but also by other sections of civil society and given wide coverage. We assure you of our full support for this noble struggle for the cause of our future humanity, society and children.

Original Spanish: Mr. PONCE MUÑOZ (*Employers' delegate, Ecuador*) — We have gone through this document and we consider that it is a report which has many positive aspects. It raises awareness of the problem. The problem of child labour is not hidden in the Report. It conveys a positive attitude to combating it and improves our knowledge of it. The Report includes strategic and budget planning, and it is possible to make an assessment based on results. It clearly points out that poverty and inadequate education are essential elements in the increase of child labour. In short, it is a good report because it gives a general overview of the problem and immediate and future activities related to it. However, all this will merely be a statement of good intentions if we do not deal with the problem fundamentally.

From our point of view, the problem lies generally in poverty and deficient education. Poverty, the threat of seeing one's children perish, is what makes a father force his children to work in order to make ends meet and survive. Such children cannot have access to a good education. But poverty is multi-faceted, and is influenced not only by poor economic management in developing countries, but also by the policies of the developed countries. In these policies, we can point out that there is unfair trade.

This unfair trade means that import restrictions are imposed on products from developing countries. Trade treaties and conventions are constantly violated, and the developed countries strongly subsidize their primary production, making it almost impossible for products from developing countries to compete.

International lending institutions do not play a very positive role. For them, payment of the foreign debt is the priority. We are not against the payment of the foreign debt, but obviously each country can only go so far. There is a need to establish a new framework for the payment of the foreign debt.

Restrictions are imposed on social investment. Credits are handled by remote control by the international monetary institutions, through advisers from NGOs that they qualify. In the end it is they who determine where one should buy or use machinery for capital investment works.

The scourge of drug trafficking makes it possible to exploit children. This should not occur. But unfortunately the drug-consuming countries, the developed

countries, seek only to control production of drugs, and do not attempt to control consumption. Drug consumers have many comforts and are looking for new emotions through the use of drugs. If there are no buyers, there will be no production. If there are no buyers there is no drug trafficking. If there are no buyers, then logically there will not be the possibility of using children to carry out drug trafficking.

On the other hand, there are laws against migration. These laws are becoming increasingly stringent. It is precisely because of poverty in the developing countries that people with some training or education must emigrate to try to overcome the problems of poverty in their own countries. But behind them they

leave their children, who fill the ranks of street children, drug addicts and delinquents.

In short, the developing countries are saying that the eradication of child labour can begin with transparent, fair trade, that people should be free to work, that international loans should be handled independently and that drug consumption in the developed countries must be controlled. Lastly, there must be a legal framework for globalization. Only with fair treatment will we be able to see a reduction of poverty, an improvement in education and a decrease in child labour.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.05 p.m.)

Ninth sitting

Wednesday, 12 June 2002, 5.15 p.m.

President: Mr. Elmiger

GLOBAL REPORT UNDER THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE ILO DECLARATION ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK: DISCUSSION (*cont.*)

Original French: The PRESIDENT – We shall now resume the general discussion on the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, *A future with child labour*.

Mr. VERMEEND (*Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands*) – Some 180 million children are caught in the worst forms of child labour. There still is a very long way to go.

How can we come closer to a world without child labour? The Government of the Netherlands believes that an action plan, as proposed in the Report, is required. Reinforcing IPEC sounds like a solid approach for getting children out of work and into schools and also providing the parents with employment and income-generating alternatives to child labour.

The overwhelming ratification rate of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) has reconfirmed the commitment for action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency. At the same time, the more than doubling of the ratifications of Convention No. 138 reflects the growing consensus on the effective abolition of all forms of child labour. This growing consensus should be the basis for action by all relevant partners for joining hands and building alliances in order to put words into action.

We, the Netherlands, have taken up this task by organizing an international conference in February this year focusing on hazardous child labour. The conference was held together with the meeting of the International Association of Labour Inspection, and some 300 participants from 42 countries attended, representing governments, trade unions, employers' organizations, international organizations, NGOs and labour inspectorates. I will now inform you of the main conclusions of the conference.

During discussions, the need to acknowledge the different risks for boys and girls concerning hazardous child labour came up several times. It is therefore of great importance that women and girls are actively involved in fighting hazardous child labour. Also, the composition of the labour inspectorate should reflect the diversity in gender.

The Conference agreed that labour inspection is an important source of information in the struggle against child labour, and suggested that partnerships

among national labour inspectorates should be established in order to exchange experience and best practices. Furthermore, regulations should ensure access to all workplaces.

The Conference also urged effective measures to stop the recruitment of new child labourers and to pay special attention to the informal sector. You can find the conclusions of the conference in the room.

Let me finish by congratulating IPEC on its ten years of existence. In these ten years it has become the leading programme in this field. Because my country believes in the IPEC approach of getting children into school, the Netherlands will donate an additional 2.5 million euros for education-related projects.

We wish the programme much success, wisdom and support for the many challenges that lie ahead. A lot has been achieved but we also have to face the fact that there is still a long way to go. The Netherlands has been committed to supporting the ILO in its struggle against child labour, and we intend to stay committed in the future.

Original French: The PRESIDENT – I would like to pay tribute to the exemplary commitment of your country to the struggle against child labour and to thank you for your constructive participation in our general discussion.

Mr. JESTIN (*Government delegate, Ireland*) – The Irish delegation welcomes the new Global Report for its clear statistical analysis and its presentation of the forms contemporary child labour takes, its causes and its consequences. The Report also highlights the areas where there are gaps in our knowledge, particularly on the worst forms of child labour. This area, given the number of children involved and the deficit in data availability and reliability, demands our particular attention.

The Global Report indicates that while the total number of child workers in the world is less than estimated in 1995, there are now thought to be significantly more of them in the worst forms of child labour.

According to the Report, of 246 million children engaged in child labour, 179 million are in the worst forms of child labour. This figure constitutes 73 per cent of all child labourers, or one in every eight of the world's children aged from 5 to 17. Some 8.4 million children are caught in the unconditional worst forms of child labour including slavery, trafficking, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and other illicit activities. Of this figure, the bulk of children are in forced or bonded labour (5.7 million or two-thirds), 1.8 million are in prostitution and por-

nography, 0.3 million have been forcibly recruited into armed conflict and a further 0.6 million are engaged in illicit activities such as drug smuggling.

As regards the future actions to be taken by the ILO to address these problems, the Irish delegation has a number of practical suggestions to make, namely that the Organization should firstly construct research tools which breakdown data not only by gender and by age but by ethnic and social group, socio-economic status and family status, for example child-headed household, eldest child etc. Secondly, we feel the ILO should mainstream the response to the worst forms of child labour across all ILO programmes, in particular IPEC and the special action programme on forced labour. Thirdly, the ILO should, as regards forced and bonded labour, ensure that ILO-supported programmes to abolish forced and bonded child labour address this type of child labour as part of a wider family poverty issue. The ILO should also undertake independent surveys to establish the extent, causes and impact of child, forced and bonded labour, improve legislation where necessary to criminalize the use of forced or bonded labour, adopt effective measures to implement existing legislation and penalize exploiters of child forced and bonded labour, train all relevant government officials and agents in the relevant legislation and best approach to realize the rehabilitation of children in forced or bonded labour, and adopt prevention measures which address the immediate and underlying causes of forced and bonded labour.

Finally, as regards prostitution and pornography, we feel the ILO should develop a specific programme of technical cooperation, based on the Yokohama Declaration from the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in December last year, to address child prostitution and pornography at regional and local levels.

The Irish delegation would wish to echo a point that was made during the discussion today that, together with poverty alleviation, education is, in our view, a frontline weapon in the battle to eliminate child labour. Access to basic education is a fundamental human right that has been denied to millions of children, condemning them to a downward spiral of poverty and despair. Not only is poverty a cause of child labour, child labour also causes poverty. Education is the best way to break this vicious cycle and is the linchpin of any sustainable programme to eliminate child labour, ensuring that all children can avail of their fundamental right to attend school, educating their families and communities, and raising awareness of the rights of children within the broader spectrum of human rights, both within the countries where child labour is prevalent and throughout the world. In this way, young people take a more active role in society and take control of their destinies and those of their peers and are not only seen by the rest of society as a passive group requiring protection.

In this context, the Irish delegation fully supports the SCREAM initiative announced last evening at the ILO ceremony launching the first World Day against Child Labour. The acronym SCREAM stands for Supporting Children's Rights through Education, the Arts and the Media.

The SCREAM initiative recognizes that young people can be a powerful force for social mobilization. Through innovative and creative teaching methods, it sets out to equip them with the means and the

tools to make their own impact on the world in which they live and to take their message out to the wider community. Its educational resource package introduces young people to the complexities surrounding the issue of child labour and helps them to develop appropriate responses and to channel their creative energies in a positive and constructive way.

The Irish delegation hopes this initiative makes a valuable contribution to the active involvement of youth and children against child labour.

In conclusion, the Irish delegation believes that the goal of eradicating child labour must be integrated across ILO programmes and national policy agendas, and encourages all States in a position to do so to honour Article 8 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), which states that Members shall take appropriate steps to assist one another in giving effect to the provisions of the Convention through enhanced international cooperation and/or assistance, including support for social and economic development.

Ireland is currently examining how Ireland aid, the Government Development Cooperation Division, can mainstream this commitment into its programme undertakings. In this way we would hope to make an effective contribution to international efforts to address this issue.

Original Spanish: Mr. CHAHIN LUPO (*Minister of Labour and Microenterprise, Bolivia*) – Bolivia welcomes the progress which has been made and is reflected in the Global Report on child labour. We have listened carefully to the statements made by the different countries, we share the visions of those who are tackling social realities and we agree with all initiatives which have as their sole goal the development of plans and projects aimed at the rapid reduction of social inequalities. We encourage people to have faith and hope in the fight to establish basic rights for the protection of our children. Let us make their dignity a global issue.

Bolivia treats it as a priority to give protection to one of the most vulnerable sectors of society. Out of population of some 8 million inhabitants, 800,000 children and adolescents are working below the minimum admissible age in the informal sector, in family enterprises and in precarious situations. They are involved in a vicious circle where they have to opt out of school, they are cut off from their families, their health deteriorates and they are involved in delinquency. We are committed to the development of the State and its democratic institutions, and in this context legal and judicial reforms have included a new code for children and adolescents, with programmes designed to support and assist this section of the population. We are involving civil society and seeking to create alternatives for the integration of these young people into our society which is multilingual diverse and culturally rich in its cultures. Our social philosophy is geared to improving education, health and the right to housing and recreation, and generally seeks to recognize the social rights of individuals.

The political constitution of Bolivia, the general law on labour and associated decrees provide the necessary guarantees for the protection of young people. In this context, the Ministry of Labour and Microenterprise, together with other state bodies in a strategic alliance with civil society and international

cooperation, promotes intensive programmes aimed at eliminating child labour.

We are involved in tackling long-standing, accumulated poverty which is difficult for State-sponsored action to eradicate. A revealing figure is that 26 per cent of young people are engaged in work, children in the rural areas consider agricultural work as a normal part of their lives, and a high proportion of children and adolescents are subjected to the worst forms of labour, including agriculture, forestry, the rubber industry, and mining.

This dreadful situation must be rectified. We are committed to eliminating child labour by 2010 using the prefectures and municipal authorities to disseminate programmes for the eradication of poverty. These involve access to health services and education, providing an opportunity to live a life of dignity, and we need the commitment of your institutions and call for international economic cooperation to ensure that projects are sustainable in the long term. To eradicate this unacceptable evil in human society we need the commitment of the whole political community.

We have to have a more human view of things. We have to avoid spending money on weapons for useless wars and instead money has to be spent on education and the care of children. They deserve to be treated as the children they are, with free and pure spirits who have the right to smile, to dream and to play, and perhaps in this way we might avoid an increase in the delinquency, marginalization and poverty which represent a real threat to our global village.

As long as children are sleeping on the streets, and growing up hungry, governments and States cannot have a clear conscience. We have a real responsibility to act with love and to hear the silent cries of the children who are telling us "enough is enough". This is how we must protect them, the only resource that matters.

Mr. HASEGAWA (*Government delegate, Japan*) – Speaking as a Japanese Government representative, I would like to make three comments.

Since the adoption in 1998 of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the most important instrument which sets the direction that ILO activities should follow, the present report is the third under the Declaration's Follow-up. The Report has a lot of worldwide information on the situation of child labour and measures to tackle this problem.

The Report will also be a useful guideline for the ILO and its constituents as they carry out their technical cooperation. Therefore, we highly appreciate the Report, together with the present ILO activities for the elimination of child labour.

The Report says that many child labourers laws are found in the informal economy. During this session of the Conference, under the item "Decent work and the informal economy", the characteristics of this economy and the expansion of social protection are being discussed. We also praise this timely selection of the agenda item with a view to the elimination of child labour.

Ever since the unanimous adoption of [Convention No. 182](#) at the 87th Session of the Conference in 1999, this Convention has been ratified with unprecedented speed by many member countries. This shows a high awareness of the issues shared by people all around the world and the success of the ILO's ratification campaign.

We too ratified [Convention No. 138](#) the year before last and [Convention No. 182](#) last year. Hence, we believe that the objective of the ILO is appropriate. The ILO achieves support from many member countries, and favourable results.

According to the Report, there are as many as 179 million children engaged in the worst forms of child labour, such as slavery and prostitution, which jeopardize the child's physical and mental well-being.

In order to promote the efforts of the international community to abolish child prostitution and child pornography, last December we held the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Yokohama, Japan. In Yokohama we shared the awareness of the issue and reaffirmed the need to reinforce the commitment with more than 130 countries, governments, NGOs and representatives of international organizations who participated in the Congress.

Furthermore, we have held seminars on child labour in the Asia-Pacific region since 1998. This year, we are seeking to co-host a seminar with the Government of the Republic of Korea.

While it is stated in the Report that the Asia-Pacific region has the largest number of working children, we are determined to contribute to the solution of this problem. We strongly support and hope to develop the ILO activities in this field.

Let me finish my speech with an emphasis on the Office's continued efforts for intensive and effective implementation of child labour programmes for a future without child labour.

Mr. TAMBUSAI (*Government adviser and Substitute delegate, Indonesia*) – Ever since the creation of our country, the Indonesian people have opposed the use of child labour. This is reflected in the Indonesian Constitution. By extension, this principle supports the idea that poor children should be given the widest opportunity to enjoy the rights to education and to children's benefits.

In order to effectively regulate child labour, the new Indonesian Government established the National Steering Committee on the prevention of child labour, following an agreement reached between the Indonesian Government and the ILO in 1992. This marked the beginning of the involvement of ILO/IPEC in Indonesia. In affirmation of its commitment to abolish child labour, Indonesia ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 ([No. 138](#)) which states that the minimum working age for children is 15, in accordance with a nine-year compulsory basic education scheme.

Indonesia has also ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 ([No. 182](#)). This has been followed up by the establishment of the National Action Committee on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. This committee comprises government and non-governmental institutions, and has been mandated to establish an action plan on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour and to monitor its implementation.

Aside from this, economic and geographic reasons as well as socio-cultural considerations have also led the Government to oppose child labour.

There is a dualism in society regarding the existence of child labour which makes its eradication a difficult challenge. On the one hand, we are aware of the very good reasons why children should not be allowed

to work. Indeed, they should be given the opportunity to exercise their right to education and thus maximize their chance in future life, in order to acquire basic skills and to break out of the first barriers of poverty. On the other hand, due to economic circumstances and poverty, children often have no choice but to become employed in some kind of work to complement their family's meagre earnings. Thus, for many children, work either combined with school or as its replacement is the only real option. This is particularly true in Indonesia, where the country's worst economic crisis caused millions of workers, mostly in the construction sector and in labour-intensive industries, to lose their jobs, thus driving tens of thousands of children to give up school at a young age.

The crisis jacked up prices, and the rupiah fell dramatically.

Four years later, although the Indonesian Government and the social partners have made numerous efforts to cope with school drop-outs, malnutrition and child abuse, there is still a lack of cohesion and a lack of any integrated and comprehensive policies to combat the worst forms of child labour.

In this regard, the modification of legislation on child issues is certainly needed. A first step in the right direction is the Bill currently under review by the House of Representatives, which guarantees children's rights and their court protection against all action depriving them of their rights in childhood.

To conclude, the problem associated with the worst forms of child labour are of a magnitude which calls for concerted worldwide action.

Technical cooperation is indispensable, bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally. All countries must unite in fighting this scourge, particularly to combat trafficking in persons, drugs, prostitution and pornography. Otherwise the consequences are first and foremost economic. Developing countries are already burdened by poverty. Globalization must give them the same opportunities to compete in the free market, in order to encourage investment and job creation. In this regard, we are convinced that the ILO has a crucial role to play as a coordinator, and that its vocation is to advance the cause of social progress and justice for all, particularly for children who are at the forefront of the bodies engaged in this effort. Together we should spare no effort to address the complex problems facing children, for by ignoring them we are destroying their lives.

Mr. SWEENEY (*Workers' adviser, United States*) – I wish to comment on the ILO Global Report, *A future without child labour*, and I do so on behalf of the AFL-CIO and more than 13 million men and women who are members of unions affiliated to our Federation.

Because this is my first opportunity to be with all of you since the awful events of 11 September, I want to frame and preface my remarks by thanking all of you for your expressions of solidarity and offers of support. Within hours of the attacks in New York and Washington, thousands of faxes and telephone calls came pouring in from our brothers and sisters around the world. Those expressions and offers helped us to overcome unbelievable grief and on behalf of America's working families I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

On 3 September, just a few days before the attacks, I delivered a Labor Day speech at the Washington

National Cathedral in which I noted that our nation was at peace, but that the just and inclusive nation we had worked so hard to build was in need of repair. "The time to fix the roof is when the sun is shining," I noted, and I suggested we get busy while there was some daylight left. Let me recall what I went on to say on that day. "And when we think of the roof over our heads today, we must think of a home that is now global, because never have the peoples of the world been more connected –and my Labor Day list of repairs included this badly broken 'winner-take-all economy.'

"We believe the ultimate test of globalization is whether it increases freedom, promotes democracy and helps lift the poor from poverty, whether it empowers the many and not just the few, whether its blessings are widely shared, whether it works for working families in America and in all countries."

I then noted that speaking from the same pulpit, before he was murdered, the civil rights hero, Dr. Martin Luther King Junior, dramatically articulated the challenges we face when he said "No individual can live alone, no nation can live alone, and anyone who feels that he can live alone is sleeping through a revolution". Certainly the truth of that statement is even more true today and it provides a useful context for my comments on child labour.

Men and women of goodwill may differ on the precise solutions to the challenges that this global economy has thrust upon our shrinking planet. But there should be no argument over whether we must work assiduously together to eliminate the horrendous poverty which envelops so much of our world, and scourges like child labour that bloom in fields, fertilized by poverty, ignorance, starvation and disease.

As long as millions of children are at work in fields and factories instead of in school, as long as millions of children are living in slavery, and are involved in trafficking, debt bondage, prostitution and pornography, our world will never know peace. So as we lay plans for building a future without child labour, let us do so with a profound sense of urgency and commitment.

This Report equips us with the knowledge we need in order to understand the problem and what must be done. But the only way we can reach our goal of abolishing child labour completely is to make it our foremost priority and then insist that our countries do likewise.

Our challenge is a great one, but the moral imperative is even greater. I said last September, and I repeat now, that another world is possible, it may take years of unceasing efforts, but we have changed the world before against impossible odds. It is possible to eliminate child labour and we must move forward confidently, since Dr. King taught us that the moral arc of history is long, but it bends towards justice.

Original Arabic: Mr. AOUN (Government adviser and Substitute technical, Lebanon) – I wish to greet you on behalf of the national committee against child labour in Lebanon, which groups together the three parties represented here. We salute the part being played by the Organization in this area vital for a humankind free of child labour in the future. The participation of all countries and all peoples of the world means that we must work together to shape a future on the basis of social principles which will contribute to well-being and social peace, thereby strengthening the lasting international peace aspired to by the Constitution of the ILO. The Declaration of the Organi-

zation on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work embodies the two Conventions relating to minimum age and the worst forms of child labour. This Declaration constitutes an “executive” programme for the International Bill of Human Rights, as regards social issues. It has also become a path to social justice and progress. The Global Report issued as a follow-up to the ILO Declaration under discussion at this special session, is a stage which necessitates a review of the global situation as regards combating child labour, and studying the causes which impede the achievement of our goal.

Participation of the richer North with the poorer South has not in fact led to social justice among nations. Quite the contrary the disparity between the rich industrial North and the developing South has created distinctions between nations, exacerbated by globalization. It was therefore necessary that the international organizations of the international community, particularly the ILO, endeavour to establish norms and develop activities that would contribute to diminishing this disparity.

If poverty is the principal cause of the spread of child labour in developing societies, I believe that we can say that wealth enjoyed by societies in the industrialized countries, is responsible for the effects of poverty foremost among which is child labour.

In the light of this international equation, it could be said that holders of capital and investors should be involved in combating the effects of poverty and, especially child labour. The national responsibilities of the social partners place them all in the same boat in the face of prevailing globalization.

It is paradoxical that child labour is predominant in societies where there is high unemployment among the young and adults. It is even more paradoxical that we should address the results while ignoring the causes. The major cause, aside from poverty, is that many peoples have lost their sovereignty over their national resources, and the submission of many peoples to military occupation or economic blockade.

While we look forward to a future where there is no child labour, we should pause to contemplate the image of convoys of Palestinian children being taken to Israeli concentration camps and torture. We must also open our eyes to the sight of the thousands of Iraqi children dying every year because of the blockade and the lack of medicines and food. We should also conclude that ethics at the international level are an essential support in the march towards the elimination of child labour.

In Lebanon, we have taken great steps to combat child labour, in cooperation with IPEC, such as the creation of a national committee which comprises various ministries as well as the workers’ federation, the industrialists’ association and NGOs. Its task is to formulate and implement the national strategy for the achievement of this objective.

We ratified [Convention No. 182](#) two years ago and [Convention No. 138](#) a few weeks ago. The Ministry of Labour has drafted a labour law which reflects all the international labour norms relating to children, particularly as regards the minimum age, raised to 15 years, which prohibits child labour harmful to health and morals, and which aggravates the penalties imposed on persons violating provisions on the employment of children.

Our experience in Lebanon, although recent has begun to bear fruit and now represents a model

in conformity with proposals made by the Director-General in his Report as regards the responsibilities of the social partners and the ILO for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Finally we wish to say that child labour is an obstacle to a better future, life and work. The conditions for achieving a future free of child labour are the very same as those for human dignity in a life of freedom and independence aspiring to progress and well-being.

(Original Spanish): Ms. LAU VALDÉS (*Government delegate, Cuba*) – The Government delegation of Cuba very much appreciates the efforts which are being made by the ILO with a view to eradicating child labour. It considers this task to be an inevitable part of the work of the Organization and of governments’ economic, political and social programmes. The Report states that there are 211 million children in the world who are working to the detriment of their education, their health and the development of their personalities. The magnitude of this figure indicates that efforts made so far, are insufficient.

In Cuba there is no child labour, let alone in its worst forms, which we condemn. In our country, the right of all children to well-being and all-round development has been a priority. For more than 40 years now the elimination of child labour has represented one of the major achievements of the Cuban Revolution. All children in the 5-11 age-group go to school and 100 per cent of them enjoy the guarantee of being able to continue their studies. The national education system covers the entire country.

In Cuba expenditure on education is defrayed from appropriations from the state budget and more than 60 per cent of that budget is devoted to education, health, social security and housing.

Medical services in the preventative, curative and educational fields and in stomatology are guaranteed in all educational centres, in addition to general services covering the entire population.

Parents also have and exercise various rights and enjoy the requisite protection for themselves and their children. Children who do not have parental protection are especially protected by the State.

Social service programmes as a whole, including employment programmes, mean that in fact we have no abandoned children working on our streets or children working in order to contribute to the informal economy or family purse. These achievements show the political will of the Government of Cuba and these facts are, unfortunately, incorrectly described in paragraph 129, part I of the Report, in spite of the fact that our country sent in the relevant information. We trust that, in the future, the objective reality and particular features of our country will be faithfully depicted.

The eradication of child labour calls for huge, joint efforts by a number of parties, but primarily it requires political will on the part of governments. From the point of view of the country as a whole, these actions have to ensure that there is employment for everyone who is fit to work and that there is real and effective social protection for all and that this is seen as a responsibility of the State, as well as free education, healthcare and respect for human dignity from childhood onwards. The way we treat our children is the yardstick with which history will measure the way we have fulfilled our responsibility to the future of humanity.

(Original German): Mr. KOBERSKI (Government delegate, Germany) – The very title of the Report before us leads me to reflect on a future without child labour. Is this Utopia or is it something we really can achieve?

In my eyes, this Report contains a number of very important positive points. There is a clear distinction made between legal child labour and three other kinds of child labour which should be eliminated: children who have not reached the minimum age, who are involved in the worst forms of child labour, and who are performing hazardous labour. Secondly, in the Report there are new insights as regards the number of children involved in child labour. I am not reassured, however, when the Report refers to child labourers between the ages of 5 and 1 and says there has been a drop from 250 million to 211 million.

In the Report, the argument is often repeated that the statistical figures are not absolutely right, but we have these 211 million children who are working and they have to be seen in the appropriate category. Finally, the Report also gives certain figures as regards working children between the ages of 5 and 17. What is even more important are the figures relating to the distribution of children in the various economic sectors. There is a clear indication that agriculture is where the largest number of children are involved, and this is an area where we have to recognize the dangers and hazards. This applies to working with chemicals without the necessary protective measures, or when machinery is used that is obsolete and dangerous. Only 30 per cent of child labourers work other in areas, but they are nevertheless very important.

We also think it is very important to know what the Report has to say regarding the causes of child labour. We recognize the link between child labour and poverty, but I do not think we can say that poverty equals child labour and that no poverty would mean the eradication of child labour. The Turkish Minister of Labour spoke this morning about the variety of reasons for and causes of child labour; among the causes mentioned were questions of demand, family circles and family requirements, and social circumstances. I support what was said by my Swedish colleague, who spoke about the need for schooling, and access to schooling, which would strongly contribute to eradicating child labour. The recognition that there is no model as regards child labour, and that there can be no solution, no general solution, to combat it and eliminate it is not something new; but, for the first time, I think, there have been very many facts which have clearly indicated the realities.

I believe that this Report represents a sort of handbook, a manual, so that each country can look at it in order to find the appropriate model in order to try to combat child labour on its soil. At the same time, those countries that wish to help, can use this Report to help find appropriate measures to combat this phenomenon.

I believe it is also very important to think in terms of the need for cooperation among the various players. The battle against child labour should not be, and cannot be, a monopoly – a monopoly of the State, of the employers, of the workers, or of civil society. Not even the international community has a monopoly here. All these players have a responsibility in the battle against child labour; none of these players should be excluded. In Part 3 of the Report, there is an action plan for the effective abolition of child

labour. One proposal speaks of reinforcing the work of IPEC, another of taking up the issue more actively in the ILO with more joint activities between IPEC and other ILO units, a third of forging closer partnership with associations representing workers, employers, and other groups and institutions having the same goals of eliminating child labour.

I give my full support to this, and hope that it will lead to a broad consensus among the Members of the ILO. Let us take this excellent Report, and breathe new impetus, new life, into the battle against child labour. In this connection, we might think in terms of the appropriate Convention.

In reading this Report, I am reassured that this is not a utopia, but it is something which can become reality. A future without child labour *can* become a reality if everyone plays his or her role. Children are our future, they represent a potential, and we should not endanger this potential of our children. We should protect children, they should be allowed to play, they should have the right to education, schooling, and access to vocational training. If this is achieved, then we are on the right path.

(Original Chinese): Mr. LIU (Government adviser, China) – We would like to express our appreciation for the work done by the Director-General in submitting his report entitled *A future without child labour*, in which he gave a comprehensive description of the phenomena of child labour worldwide.

Children are the hope of mankind and the future of the world. Child labour is a challenge to the civilization and dignity of mankind. The sustainable development of society will be impossible without the abolition of child labour. To care for children means to care for human civilization, and to protect children means to protect their future. At present child labour involves a huge number of children, and causes serious damage to them. The ILO has been making unremitting efforts to eliminate child labour.

Fifty countries have participated in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour since its launching in 1991. The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, adopted in 1998, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) have clear provisions on the elimination of child labour. In order to further protect the rights and interests of children, the ILO prepared a Global Report entitled *A future without child labour* in 2002; this indicates that the elimination of child labour has become a global task in the new millennium. The fight against child labour is getting more and more responses and support from member States. The Chinese Government appreciates the objectives and activities of the ILO relating to the fight against child labour, and supports the efforts of countries and regions to take specific measures to tackle this problem.

China always attaches great importance to the protection of the rights and interests of children, and has formulated a series of laws and policies. It is clearly provided in the Constitution that children shall be protected by the State, by labour law, the law on the protection of minors. Provisions on the prohibition of child labour strictly forbid government agencies, social organizations, enterprises, public institutions, individual businesses, rural households and urban residents from employing children under 16 years old in paid work or private work that will bring them income.

The Government of China has ratified Convention No. 138 and is accelerating the process to ratify Convention No. 182 as a priority. At the same time, the provisions of criminal law cover the exploitation of child labour, and also provide for the penalization of individuals and entities that use child labour. Judicial authorities will impose criminal penalties if the case is particularly serious.

As the country has a huge population and a vast geographic area, and because of the constraints of economic and social development levels, there are still difficulties and problems facing children's development in China.

Therefore, based on the analysis of the situation, of the 350 million Chinese children, China has formulated and promulgated the outline for children's development in China 2001-10, which will lead to a further positive development of activities for children in China.

The Chinese delegation believes that economic development and education is the foundation for the eradication of child labour, and international co-operation may also help in this regard. The ILO should continue to focus on the protection of children and the prohibition of child labour, with more human and financial resources given to this area. The developed countries need to take responsibility and assume the obligation of supporting the developing countries. They must fulfil their commitments concerning finance, debts and trade, so as to build a sound external environment for the developing countries and mitigate the gap between the North and the South so that developing countries will have more resources for the protection, education and the development of children. The Chinese Government will continue to devote efforts to the development of activities for children, and to contribute to the promotion of international activities for children, together with the ILO and all other countries in the world.

Mr. DREVER (*Government delegate, Australia*) – The Australian Government wishes to thank the Director-General for providing a comprehensive and informative Report on the nature and incidence of child labour throughout the world. It is particularly fitting that discussion of the Report is taking place on the day designated as the World Day against Child Labour; a day on which we are invited to reflect on the enormity of the child labour problem, and consider how best to give hope to many millions of children throughout the world.

The Australian Government strongly opposes the exploitation of children through work, and is absolutely committed to the abolition of the worst forms of child labour. Australia has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has signed the optional Protocol to the Convention on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.

Australia's law and practice implement these treaties, as well as the principles and objectives of the two core child labour Conventions. The fact that Australia has not ratified the ILO Conventions does not imply a lack of commitment to these standards or that a child labour problem exists in Australia. It merely reflects the fact that Australia has some technical compliance issues with these particular instruments.

Australian authorities promote the protection of children through a range of legislation providing for

compulsory education to at least age 15, minimum ages for employment in selected occupations, child welfare and occupational health and safety. These legislative provisions are supported by a range of government agencies, public and private organizations, an Australian culture characterized by protective attitudes towards children, and news media which is strongly predisposed to reporting instances of the exploitation of children. This combination of laws and cultural factors protects children against admission to harmful employment and promotes their fullest physical and mental development.

In the light of these factors, the governments of Australia's constituent states and territories have not been prepared to legislate for a general minimum age for employment as required under Article 2 of Convention No. 138. This is because current law and practice are sufficient to protect children from harmful or exploitative forms of child labour and there is no obvious need for additional legislation. This means Australia cannot meet all the prescriptive requirements of Convention No. 138 for the purposes of ratification. However, I would like to reiterate that Australia unequivocally meets the objectives and principles of this core Convention.

The Australian Government strongly supports the principles of Convention No. 182 and is confident that domestic law and practice effectively promote the abolition of the worst forms of child labour. The Australian Government is currently unable to ratify the Convention due to domestic policy that no international treaty be ratified unless domestic law and practice, including that of the states and territories, is in full compliance with its provisions. Unfortunately, a study of the interaction of federal and state law and practice has revealed a possible technical compliance issue that needs to be resolved. That said, there is no evidence of any domestic problem falling within the scope of this Convention.

The Australian Government is committed to supporting international efforts to eliminate exploitative child labour. Through its aid programme the Government has supported region-wide efforts to create and increase public awareness of the exploitation of children. These efforts support NGOs active in preventing sexual abuse of children and support regional workshops and seminars as part of the Stockholm Agenda for Action. Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with the Governments of the Republic of the Philippines and Fiji to cooperatively combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Australia's aid programme focuses on sustainable development, strengthening educational systems and building human rights institutions. Specifically, the aid programme targets intervention and rehabilitation programmes for those children in most need. Examples include programmes to support and help keep extremely poor children in school, support for national and local initiatives to address the problems of street and working children, support for delivery of basic services to street children, and support for the return and reintegration of women and child victims of trafficking, as well as strengthening governments' institutional capacity to address this problem.

The Global Report begins with a statement that "the effective abolition of child labour is one of the most urgent challenges of our time". The Australian Government believes that this Report will provide a

useful basis for developing practical responses to this challenge. We have reached the stage where the nature and extent of the child labour problem have been identified, universal acceptance of the principle of abolishing exploitative child labour has been achieved, and the benefits of firm, positive action to eliminate this problem are widely agreed. It is now incumbent upon the ILO and its Members to ensure that significant real progress is made. The Report pays due regard to the fact that there are no ready-made solutions to the child labour problem and the policies and programmes must be flexible in order to respond to different national conditions. The Australian Government agrees with the view expressed in the Report that the most useful focus for action over the next four years would be to strengthen the ILO's support for national stakeholders in their efforts to abolish exploitative child labour.

The proposed three pillars of an action plan, reinforcing the work of IPEC, mainstreaming the abolition of child labour across ILO programmes and forging closer partnerships, provide a sound strategic basis for approaching this task. For this approach to be fully effective, it would be important to ensure that IPEC is up to the task and has proper mechanisms in place to ensure accountability to members. The Australian Government considers that the IPEC programme must be strongly outcomes-focused if it is to ensure the effectiveness of country programmes. Inevitably, the managers of the programme, governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other participating parties at country level will have some successes and some failures as they try to learn by experience which approaches will be the most effective. This is a necessary but worthwhile learning experience which, when coupled with effective evaluation processes, will help to ensure that in 2006 the ILO will be able to report real and substantial progress in eliminating the child labour problem.

Three years ago at this Conference delegates gave their unanimous support to the adoption of Convention No. 182. This support has been reflected through the very high number of ratifications achieved in such a short time. In actual fact, as Convention No. 182 is a core Convention, all Members are committed to supporting its principles. I advise the Conference that Australia will ratify Convention No. 182 as soon as possible. The Director-General has shown real commitment and leadership and the Office is to be commended for the work it is doing. Together we can all contribute to making a real change for the better. The onus is on us all to get on with the job.

Mr. MACIEL SANTOS (*Government adviser, Brazil*) – Ten years have passed since IPEC was created and since its very beginning Brazil has provided rich soil for it to flourish in. However, the Global Report lacks important information on the Brazilian case which is why I would like to try and fill in the gap now, in order to provide information for those countries that might be willing to adapt the Brazilian model to their realities.

In 1992, Brazil had 5.4 million children aged between 5 and 15 who had worked for at least one hour during the reference week of the National Household Survey. In 1999, the same survey revealed that this number had decreased by about 30 per cent, to a total of 3.8 million, or 2.9 if we consider only those who worked for at least 15 hours a week. What did we do

to achieve this result? In 1994 the National Forum for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour was created, through which governmental, workers', employers' and non-governmental organizations, as well as international agencies could integrate their actions to increase the combined effect. Labour inspection bodies were urged to pay close attention to combating child labour. Inspectors in each state were designated to monitor child labour. Special studies and research were produced and brochures and books published on the subject. Later on, several workshops and seminars were held on a comprehensive range of topics covering many aspects of child labour which helped to raise awareness of the problem throughout the country in conjunction with national and regional campaigns against child labour.

Three years before the adoption of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999 (No. 182), Brazil had already launched a national programme to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. Initially the national programme reached 145,000 children but by the end of 1999, the year of the most recent National Household Survey available, there were 800,000 children receiving grants from the federal Government to stop working, go to school and participate in a set of activities designed to prevent them from going back to work in their spare time.

Moreover, many States and municipalities have their own programmes, which increases the number of children receiving grants. Brazil was perhaps the first country to define hazardous forms of child labour damaging to the safety, health and morals of children in a tripartite manner, as demanded by Convention No. 182. The final list, published in January 2001, was extremely comprehensive, consisting of 82 hazardous forms of child labour prohibited to all children under 18. In March 2000, the Brazilian Labour Inspectorate launched a new strategy against child labour. Since the vast majority of working children were employed in the informal sector of the economy, which is not adequately covered by traditional inspections, the Labour Inspectorate issued instructions that labour inspectors should act in each and every case of child labour identified, even if they could not prosecute because the employer was not identifiable. In such cases they were to inform those authorities who had the competence to intervene, for example prosecutors who could bring the case to court, lawyers for the defence of children's rights, and so on. Supervision of the national programme was also entrusted to the Labour Inspectorate, and the coordination and planning of the action carried out at each stage was conducted by special groups to combat child labour set up under each regional office. Last but not least, the Brazilian federal Government struck a major blow against child labour last year when a preventive programme was set up to benefit children attending school, irrespective of whether they worked or not. This huge programme currently provides monthly grants for 8.5 million children. Based on all this, we are highly confident that the 2001 National Household Survey, whose data should be released by September this year, will show an even greater reduction in the instance of child labour in Brazil, as already indicated in the preliminary data for the 2000 national census.

Interpretation from Arabic: Mr. DERBY (*Government delegate, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*) – In the

name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! The Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2002 is the source of our debate today on Convention No. 182, which is concerned with the worst forms of child labour.

The Report is detailed and includes statistics from the whole world. The statistics for 2002 show an increase in the number of children employed in any kind of activity between five and 14: this figure is about 211 million, of which 186 million are engaged in child labour to be abolished (including in its worst forms). Of the 141 million children aged 15-17 engaged in economic activity, 59 million children are engaged in child labour. These are alarming figures. It means that we have to make concerted efforts and allocate resources, we have to work together to eliminate the worst cases of child labour, and this can be done only by supporting the ILO and IPEC. We agree with the three categories of child labour for abolition, encompassing various forms of work that are physically, morally and psychologically harmful.

If children benefit from health and education programmes, they will form a generation which can carry responsibility and can contribute to the economic and social development of their countries. But if the experience of childhood has been denied, as in the cases cited in the Report, we will have a generation which will be a burden on society.

Our country has ratified all the Conventions concerned, and the special importance we attach to children is reflected in our national legislation. Paragraph 20 of the Green Book deals with the rights of children in society. We place emphasis on education, considering that this should primarily be within the family, and we stress the special link between child and mother, especially at the time of breastfeeding.

Existing legislation includes provisions to ensure the care of the child from birth to age 16, and the labour legislation has stipulated that no child may be employed in our country before he or she is 16. Vocational training and education in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is free of charge and the nine years of compulsory schooling, from age six to 14, are also free.

In finishing I would like to say that we also want a future in which no more Palestinians are killed by Israeli bombardments and the actions of the Israeli army. This is crucial for the future of our children and for the honouring of Convention provisions that concern them. Nor must they be allowed to die of hunger. Therefore we must be able to punish those who violate children's rights and the relevant provisions, including those contained in the appendix to the Director-General's Report concerning the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. I also think it is important to set up a fund for financing social services in the occupied territories.

Original French: Ms. AGUESSY (Government delegate, Benin) – The Government of Benin would like to congratulate the International Labour Office on the Global Report, *A future without child labour* and the useful information it contains on child labour throughout the world.

I would like to reaffirm that my country is absolutely committed to combating child labour. Aware of the fact that child labour stops economic and social development in a country, Benin was one of the

first countries to adhere to the IPEC Programme in 1997. During the first year of this programme's implementation in Benin, several studies were carried out to assess the scale and complexity of the phenomenon. With regard to this, I would like to express my gratitude to IPEC and the ILO for their financial support.

Most of the studies carried out on the question have revealed that the phenomenon of child labour exists in Benin and is found in agriculture, fisheries, and in all the activities of the informal economy, and is related to illiteracy and poverty. Many areas where the trafficking of children takes place have been identified throughout the country, and awareness campaigns have been stepped up in these regions. These publicity campaigns need to be strengthened by community development programmes. For this reason, civil society which is broadly associated with all of the work carried out as part of the IPEC Programme, has started many concrete campaigns in the last few months that are subject to the approval of the IPEC Programme in Benin. All of this action is aimed at reacting to the causes identified during the studies that have been carried out.

I would like to mention some of the action that demonstrates the political will to combat child labour in Benin.

Firstly, the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Also primary education is free of charge for girls; an inter-ministerial committee has been created for harmonizing national legislation in this area; and the national budget has a credit line of FCFA 450 million, which is US\$650,000 for the purpose of eliminating child labour. It should also be highlighted that the action taken on the national level fits perfectly into the sub-regional strategy for combating child labour and the trafficking of children.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our cooperation with neighbouring countries, particularly Côte d'Ivoire which last month helped twenty-five Benin children to return to their country and escape exploitation. Thanks to the mechanisms set up by the Government and civil society, these children were able to go back to their families.

I hope that the ILO will encourage the efforts made by countries to increase effective and concrete action. I also hope that if all States join the effort to combat child labour as a priority, we will be able to work together to build a future without child labour.

Mr. STEYNE (*Workers' adviser, United Kingdom*) – First let me say that the new figures in the Report illustrate just how important Convention No. 182 has been for us all as a complementary instrument to Convention No. 138 in identifying the extent and nature of child labour, including in its worst forms.

I would like to start by thanking the Director-General for the Report and for this afternoon's interactive debate. It was a useful start, and I am sure that it will provoke further discussions here at the Conference, as he wished, and perhaps lead to more active and productive discussions at home.

We in the United Kingdom have work to do still to implement both Conventions: immediate action must be a priority, for example, on the work of under 18-year olds in our sex industry. Trafficked children must be treated as victims and not as criminals.

I made the point in the interactive discussion that the TUC believes, as Bill Brett said on Monday in the plenary, that there are only two ways to protect working people sustainably – through good law, properly enforced by effective labour inspectorates and judiciaries, and through social dialogue between effective social partners. For us, that means organization in free workers' organizations and the right to effective collective bargaining. I would like to return to those two points. First, labour inspection services have a key role to play in monitoring the incidence of child labour. Indeed, under the law, it may be the key responsibility in child labour legislation.

I would therefore have liked to have seen even more space in the Report devoted to the contribution labour inspection services can make and the innovative methods already in use. There are many. There might have been greater space for more north-south and south-south exchange.

Now, it is a truism that labour inspection services are underfunded in almost all countries, and lack capacity in many. Redressing both those challenges must be a priority for governments and for the ILO. The fact that labour inspection services deal with other labour standards apart from those on child labour should not be a reason for resigning from that task. On the contrary, if we recognize the indivisibility and mutually reinforcing nature of the eight fundamental human rights Conventions, an indivisibility stressed in the Declaration, there should be no reason to hesitate. If labour inspection services, in combating child labour, contribute to promoting decent work and vice versa, then that is absolutely complementary. I would urge Governments and the social partners, as they consider their national plans of action on child labour, to examine closely the recommendations of the first High-level Tripartite Meeting of Experts on Child Labour, held here in Geneva in September 1999, and those of the Regional High-Level Tripartite Meeting of Experts from the African Region on the same subject, held in Harare in September 2001.

The representative of UNICEF seems to be labouring under the misapprehension that trade unions do not care about workers in the informal economy, including child workers, have no contacts with workers in the informal economy and know little about the informal economy. We know full well that child labour is most prevalent in the informal economy. That is also a truism because one characteristic of the informal economy is that it is rarely subject to labour inspection.

The need for governments to ensure that labour inspection legislation is amended where necessary to ensure universal coverage was a key recommendation of both meetings.

So long as sectors of the economy remain excluded from the possibility of inspection, for example in some countries domestic service, or agriculture, or export processing zones, we will do less than we can to uncover hidden work. This is particularly true in the case of domestic service, in which the girl-child in particular is at special risk.

But labour inspection services cannot inspect all workplaces regularly, not even in most of the industrialized countries. We only wish they could. When we call for companies to develop credible supply-chain monitoring systems in voluntary social initiatives such as the ethical trading initiative, we are not calling for the privatization of labour inspection services. That

would be an unthinkable approach for the trade union movement. But we are recognizing the power and responsibility of multinational enterprises for their supply chains. No, we see voluntary social initiative monitoring systems also as part of a complementary network of support for labour inspection services, just as collective bargaining agreements are. The simple fact of a union presence in the workplace and in the country, the presence of community-based organizations in communities, the work of the education services and so on can all contribute to supporting the work of labour inspection services in developing proactive strategies to combat child labour and to enforcing the law when needed.

On the one hand, as my friend and colleague, Mr. Mdladlana, the Minister of Labour of South Africa has often said, these various actors can help promote a culture of compliance with the law among employers. He was referring specifically to the Ethical Trading Initiative.

What complementary relationships can such voluntary social initiative monitoring systems develop that support the public labour inspection services, and what can voluntary social initiatives do? That is a question we are seeking to answer in a variety of pilot projects, including a new project on child labour carried out with local partners in the garment industry in Tamil Nadu, and another in the South African wine industry which we have just concluded, with the establishment of a new multi-stakeholder body in the winelands. The latter will provide workplace monitoring initially to British retailers.

Just as poverty is one cause of child labour, child labour also causes poverty, so the battle against child labour cannot be won without universal, free, accessible basic education. And universal education cannot be achieved without the elimination of child labour.

We are committed to poverty elimination, social uplifting, social dialogue, sustainable development, just terms of trade and a fundamental change to the Bretton Woods policies and public expenditure. We know that with political will, even poor countries, and poor regions of poor countries can make progress in eliminating child labour.

I remind you of the words of Julius Nyerere, "A fair share of the little of what we have". Let me reiterate, to conclude, that we are for a fair share for all, of the big cake that is the global economy. That is why I referred to just terms of trade, but the message remains inequality, discrimination, oppression, lack of political will and the willingness of employers to exploit children. These, too, must be addressed at the national level.

I close there. Our belief remains that fundamental rights at work are indivisible and mutually reinforcing, and that education, social dialogue, decent work and equity, nationally, and internationally, are the keys to the effective elimination of child labour.

Original Arabic: Ms. ABD EL HADY (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Egypt*) – Let me thank the Director-General for his excellent Report on child labour. I would also like to thank him for having chosen Egypt to make the declaration on behalf of the Arab world.

Child labour has human and social dimensions that are of great importance because children should enjoy the right to education. There are many negative effects that child labour tends to have on societies, both economic and social, but also in trade relations.

Egypt is among the first countries in the world that stood up to oppose child labour, and its representatives have attended a large number of international gatherings on the issue. But more action is needed at both the international and regional levels.

We all want a world for our children that is free of suffering. That is why we need international solidarity in order to protect children, particularly the children of occupied Palestine, who are threatened like everyone else in the region.

Poverty, of course, is the major reason for child labour. Also, the tragedies befalling our region have forced many children out onto the streets to work in order to make up for the loss of revenue resulting from parents lost in Israeli onslaughts.

We have certain organizations, particularly the council headed by the First Lady, which supervise the monitoring of child labour. And I am very happy to note that Egypt, last September, ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). It also ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) which means that Egypt has ratified all international instruments on the child.

Egyptian authorities are trying to check child labour. But child labour is mainly a result of poverty. I would like to point to a certain number of achievements, including awareness campaigns and cooperation with the IPEC as well as with a similar American programme.

I would like to note the tremendous efforts that are being made by the ILO through the IPEC, and particularly the support that the Egyptian worker movement receives from the IPEC.

All this, of course, has included the environmental protection groups. Training courses have also been organized for small farmers, and young farmers as well, in addition to awareness workshops.

Finally, I would like to say that we are doing our utmost to eliminate child labour. But like all developing countries we need help for families so that they can establish small and medium-sized enterprises to face up to the economic pressures, particularly in the face of deteriorating economic conditions.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL KUHLANI (Workers' delegate, Yemen) – In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! On behalf of the Yemeni General Federation of Trade Unions, I would like to extend our thanks to the Director-General for his excellent preparation of this document.

Child labour in Yemen is a problem that requires an immediate solution and which has made the Yemeni General Federation of Trade Unions pool all its resources in order to meet this challenge.

Ever since 1999, the Yemeni General Federation of Trade Unions has been undertaking studies and research on child labour, as well as organizing workshops and training courses in cooperation with IPEC and with the Bakhour project, which has also received support from more than country and more than one organization. It has also set out to meet the challenge of poverty and the main reason for poverty.

Forty-seven per cent of the population of Yemen happens to be under 14. The annual increase in the labour force amounts to about 40 per cent and the very fact that children are working is affecting attendance rates in schools. Attendance rates have, in fact, fallen to a mere 60 per cent, particularly owing to work in the informal sector.

At present, the minimum age for work and for recruitment to the armed forces is 18. Yemeni labour law provides for a minimum wage, but there is a real gap between legislation and practice.

We have been coordinating with the social partners and thanks to support from the ILO and certain NGOs we have been able to undertake a number of studies and projects. What we have been able to achieve, however, has been minimal in view of the magnitude of the problem.

The efforts to protect children have led the ministry to publish a manual on the subject in order to promote awareness. We are also seeking assistance from financial institutions throughout the world. We have amended our legislation in such a way as to align it to international standards. We have organized special teaching sessions for children who have had to leave school. We have placed a special focus on education for female students. All the efforts that are being made in this field are being supported as far as possible by the Government.

However, we are looking to international organizations for further help and resources, while mobilizing all our own. What we have to remember is that Palestinian children are being subjected at present to the worst forms of oppression. Many of them have lost their parents and so they have to work to survive. The international community cannot stand on the sidelines: it has to help the Palestinian children.

We would also like to mention here the conditions of children in Iraq. We hope that they too will get the support they deserve, from the international community.

Original Chinese: Ms. XIA (Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, China) – For this Conference, the Director-General has prepared a report entitled *A future without child labour*. It demonstrates the determination of the ILO to take up the elimination of child labour as a global cause of the new millennium and it puts forward the proposal that the elimination of child labour should be mainstreamed in Poverty Reduction Strategies.

The Chinese trade unions have expressed their appreciation of this goal and these efforts. As a populist-developing country, China has always attached great importance to the prohibition and abolition of child labour. Actually, China was among the first countries to sign the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Chinese trade unions have been playing an active role in the prohibition and elimination of child labour. The Constitution and other laws such as the Labour Act and the Act on the protection of minors clearly state that the use of child labour is prohibited.

In the workplace, the Chinese trade unions have helped the public authorities to conduct inspections of child labour. During such inspections, Chinese trade unions always fight resolutely against child labour. At present, Chinese trade unions are urging the Government to ratify the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), as soon as possible.

In order to facilitate the effective implementation of global strategies on the abolition of child labour, I would like to put forward the following proposals. Firstly, we hold that poverty is the root cause of child labour. Therefore it is of vital importance to include the subject of child labour in poverty reduction

measures, if child labour is to be abolished. The international community and governments should integrate the elimination of child labour into their poverty reduction strategies. Secondly, against the new backdrop of globalization, the large-scale reduction of poverty poses a severe challenge to the developing countries. The international community, including the ILO and the developed countries, should pay more attention to, and provide more support for, the underdeveloped countries. The ILO should strengthen cooperation with the developing world and especially with their trade unions. Thirdly, child labour is a social issue. We should be aware that social partners and tripartite collaboration have a major role to play in this regard.

Trade unions have always been active in all moves to abolish child labour. The ILO should give full attention to the unique role of these actors.

Mr. MAMMADOV (*Employers' delegate, Azerbaijan*) – On behalf of myself and Azerbaijan's Employers' delegation I would like to congratulate the President on his election and express my gratitude to the organizers of the 90th Session who have made it possible for us to participate in what I hope will be a very successful Conference.

Azerbaijan's employers have read with a keen interest the Director-General's Report on the effective elimination of child labour *A future without child labour*. This Report has provided a realistic picture of the implementation of one of the four categories of fundamental principle and rights.

Azerbaijan has implemented a number of consistent and effective measures to abolish child labour in the country. The Republic of Azerbaijan has ratified 14 international Recommendations and Conventions, 11 of which are ILO Recommendations and Conventions relating to the application and elimination of child labour. Azerbaijan's Cabinet of the Ministers has approved the list of industries, professions and clandestine forms of employment in which child labour is prohibited. More than 300 indicated jobs in hazardous industries in 35 sectors of the economy are included on the list which are prohibited to those under the age of 18.

The Labour Code of the Azerbaijan Republic, which came into force on 1 July 1999, prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15. Together with the Government and trade unions, employers have also accepted important responsibilities to minimize child labour.

Today, as a result of the economic reforms implemented on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, 71 per cent of GDP is generated by the private sector. The number of people employed in the private sector amounts to 70.3 per cent of the total workforce. Azerbaijan's National Employers' Confederation, the national organization of employers in Azerbaijan, is ready to participate in the organization and implementation of all activities in respect of ILO fundamental principles and measures undertaken by the Government of Azerbaijan to eliminate child labour.

The 2001-02 cooperation programme between the ILO and the Republic of Azerbaijan anticipates the implementation of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, aiming to promote conditions which would enable the participating bodies to progressively regulate, restrict and prohibit

child labour with the view to ensuring full compliance with international labour standards on the minimum age for employment and work.

I would like now to focus on two issues extensively described in the Report of the Director-General.

Firstly, the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on child labour. As mentioned in the Report, there is need to analyse the effect of the pandemic on child labour. In order to avoid such negative factors, we need to increase our efforts and implement preventive measures, particularly in the former Soviet republics. The seminar on HIV/AIDS being organized by the ILO in September in Baku represents a first step in this direction.

The second issue concerns military conflicts and child labour. As indicated in the Report of the Director-General, military conflicts not only cause sacrifices but also increase the numbers of orphans and homeless children and lead to child labour. At present, 20 per cent of the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic is occupied by Armenia, 1 million people, including hundreds of thousands of children, have become internally displaced persons or refugees. As a result of the occupation, more than 300,000 jobs have been lost.

Our activities are currently taking a new direction and we are experiencing certain difficulties in informing communities of certain activities and disseminating them in the regions. Although there is sufficient theoretical basis for the realization of our goals we consider that the theory should be accompanied by practical steps in order to be effective.

I would like to submit to the ILO some suggestions from the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation which I represent.

Firstly, regular seminars could be organized for employers on the elimination of child labour. The Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation is implementing a number of measures in employers' training, but we need ILO support to extend these to the regions.

Secondly, poverty can be reduced by providing the means for self-employment of women, solving gender problems, developing female entrepreneurship, and organizing seminars to strengthen social partnership which will promote the improvement of social dialogue among the participating bodies and the coordination of their activities.

My final suggestion or request is for support of a pilot project entitled "Elimination of child labour" soon to be launched in our Republic.

To conclude, I want to return to the idea of a future without child labour and call on employers in all countries to abolish child labour. Let us not forget that we are also parents and that we too have children.

Ms. MUKADI (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, Indonesia*) – It is my honour on behalf of the Indonesian Workers' delegation to congratulate the President on his election to chair this 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The Indonesian Workers' delegation to the International Labour Conference would like also to convey its warm greetings and best wishes to all delegations.

Today, the discussion of the Global Report, *A future without child labour*, provides an opportunity to examine past activities, to get a better understanding and to learn a lesson so that we can move forward for better children's protection in the future.

It is our hope that concrete action can emerge from the discussion, and show how the elimination of child labour is becoming a global cause for the new millennium. Lasting peace can only be achieved if there is social justice for all.

For Indonesia, child labour is a major problem in which at least 2.3 million children aged between 10 and 14 years and 3.8 million children between 5 and 8 years have to work in order to support their families. Indonesia has ratified ILO [Convention No. 138](#) and incorporate it into Law No. 20 of 1999, in which it bans, among other things, the employment of children under 15 years.

However, we have found that many Indonesian children who are under 15 years old are still being employed. Some of them in fact are engaging in either hazardous work of the worst forms of child labour, namely in plantations for boys, as domestic workers for girls, in the fishing industry, in construction, as street vendors, in child prostitution and in drug trafficking.

We have also found that another form of child labour also appears in the informal economy, particularly in home-based industries such as the production of fireworks, matches, clothing, weaving, brick-making, stone-carving and furniture.

The efforts to eliminate child labour in the country have been undermined due to the economic hardship and political instability that Indonesia is facing today.

Child labour in Indonesia is closely linked to poverty, poor health and a lack of educational opportunity. Although the Indonesian economy was severely hit during the Asian financial crisis, the aggregate impact on child labour has been limited. One possible reason is that child labourers have moved to work in home-based industries. Home-based industry involving subcontracting appears to be increasing nowadays in Indonesia. This shows that production cycles have shifted from factories, to homes, for merchandise such as leather goods, rotten and hybrid seeds. Some enterprises are doing this because they want to reduce their labour costs by exploiting women and children, particularly girls.

In some cases all the children are working between 20 and 30 hours a week, which causes back problems and muscle pain because of poor working conditions.

Based on the above mentioned explanations, several measures should be taken and adopted in the action plans for the effective abolition of child labour, as follows. The Government must focus on law enforcement and labour inspection to solve this matter. The number of labour inspectors in Indonesia is still not sufficient – 1,000 inspectors for the whole country. There is a need to strengthen law enforcement and intensify inspections so that it can reduce or hopefully eliminate, child labour, especially work in poor conditions which deteriorate children's physical and mental development.

We need to have Government political will and to create good governance to abolish child labour. Government, trade unions, and employers should work together with other stakeholders, namely teachers and educators, to mobilize efforts to combat child labour. One of these efforts is now focusing on designing a teaching kit, which we call in Indonesia Paket Kejar. It is a programme that combines basic education with practical life and work skills. This programme is very useful for former child labourers,

as it enables them to re-enter the labour market for better jobs in the future.

Children in the workforce should have time to study by reducing their work time. Manuals should be developed for employers and their organizations by collaborative efforts between the InFocus programme on skill, knowledge and employability, to initiate, to expand action and to promote productive employment for youth.

Disseminating laws on labour, particularly child labour, is very important in order to raise awareness and legal literacy among children, families and communities about their rights.

Collective bargaining is a means for trade unions and employers to come together in social dialogue for combating child labour.

The ILO should implement measures as well as enhance its programmes for technical cooperation. IPEC could render its assistance and support in campaigning against child labour in Indonesia through advocacy and social mobilization at all levels, by involving local partners. It provides services that enable community-based groups in developing social protection.

Child labour undermines national development by keeping children out of school, preventing their education and depriving them of skills that they need to enable them to contribute to economic growth and to the prosperity of the country when they are adults.

Original Russian: Mr. MEHBALIYEV (Workers' delegate, Azerbaijan) – The effective abolition of child labour is one of the most urgent tasks of our time. Child labour undoubtedly harms every child and prevents children from enjoying their childhood. It hinders their development and causes physical and psychological damage for life. It also damages families, communities and society as a whole. In Azerbaijan a great deal of attention is being paid to this question. In 1998, a law on the rights of the child was adopted in Azerbaijan. In 2000 Azerbaijan undertook a study on the implementation of the decisions of the World Summit for Children. A national report was submitted to UNICEF on the results of ten years work. In May 2002 Azerbaijan adopted laws which made it possible to accede to the optional protocols to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, respectively relating to trafficking in children, child pornography and prostitution, and children in armed conflicts.

Over and above the law on the rights of the child, we can also mention the Labour Code which entered into force on 1 July 1999, and which includes many provisions regulating labour relations appropriately for children from the ages of 15 to 18.

The Code stipulates that a labour contract can be concluded only with a physical person aged over 15. Contracts with persons from 15 to 18 can be concluded only with the written consent of the parents, adopted parents or guardians, as laid down by law. People under 16 are entitled to paid holidays of 42 days, and from 16 to 18, the entitlement is 35 days.

Section 10 of the Labour Code devotes a chapter to workers under 18. It defines the main provisions relating to recruitment, working conditions, medical services, remuneration and dismissal. The Republic of Azerbaijan is among the 116 states that have ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 ([No. 138](#)). Today Azerbaijan has every possibility of ratifying

the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). At the same time, the situation of child labour is cause for concern. It is mainly the result of the poverty of families with children, owing to the armed conflict with Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh and the difficulties of transition to a market economy. The military conflict and the subsequent occupation of 20 per cent of the national territory has caused death, injury and destruction. Schools and kindergartens, have been destroyed, as have clubs, libraries and sporting facilities. There have been considerable human and financial losses in both the formal and the informal sector, and expenditure has had to be shifted to military expenditure. More than 300,000 children under 15 have been displaced and have suffered the consequences of the conflict. The transition to a market economy also has had a negative impact on children.

Despite this, we are taking effective measures against poverty in the Republic. We believe I consider that child labour has got to be one of the priority areas for technical cooperation by ACTRAV and the ILO as a whole. We must elaborate national and international strategies for combating child labour, in particular using education and vocational training.

Mr. ZARCONI (*representative, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*) – Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Bank during this extremely important discussion on the Global Report, a future without child labour. Thank you also to the people who are still in this room listening to the speakers.

Alleviating child labour, especially in its most harmful forms, is crucial to efforts to reduce poverty and is therefore of particular concern to the World Bank. We are very glad that this issue is being discussed before the International Labour Conference. We also want to congratulate IPEC for preparing such a comprehensive and informative document to serve as the basis for the deliberations, and the ILO Director-General, Mr. Somavia, for his commitment and dedication.

In order to develop policies and programmes aimed at targeting child labour, the first step must be to understand the nature and scope of the problem. Through attempting to develop more precise and detailed estimates of child labour, this Report provides us with such information. Another important contribution of this Report is that for the first time evidence has been provided about the extent of hazardous and other of the worst forms of child labour.

While it is heartening to know that the number of economically active children has declined from 250 million to 111 million since the mid-nineties, the data provided in the Report on the number of children engaged in hazardous work and the worst forms of child labour are extremely worrisome.

It is clear that significant challenges need to be overcome in order to have a measurable and sustainable impact on reducing child labour. It is also clear that no institution acting alone, no matter how well funded, has the capacity to solve this daunting array of complex inter-related problems. Our work towards the eradication of harmful child labour must be a collaborative effort between the international agencies, civil society and the national and local communities, based upon inclusion and participation. As with all agendas for development, the efforts to reduce harm-

ful child labour must combine a long-term perspective with a sharp focus on achieving measurable results on the ground, by creating effective and comprehensive partnerships for change. In this context, the World Bank and the ILO and UNICEF, as our colleague also mentioned, established the project for developing new strategies for understanding children's work and its impact, with the support of the Governments of Finland, Sweden and Norway. The UCW Project through a variety of data collection research and assessment activities, is broadly directed at increasing global and local level understanding of child labour, its causes and effects, how it can be measured and how it can be addressed.

Under the framework of the UCW Project, the agencies have been able to more effectively link ongoing activities and promote the sharing of information which lead to the development of a common analytical base. Hand in hand with this activity, the partnership is addressing the crucial need for capacity building with other countries.

Our partnership with the ILO has made great steps towards utilizing the comparative advantages of each agency in the fight against child labour. However, as the Report aptly captures, there remains much to be done to provide effective solutions for these vulnerable children. No country will grow economically and reduce poverty while its people cannot read or write and its children struggle with malnourishment and sickness. This is not just a moral issue, it is a major impediment to poverty reduction and economic development.

Since its funding first began in 1963, the World Bank has provided US\$30 billion in loans and credits and it currently finances 153 projects in 79 countries. Working closely with our partners, the Bank helps developing countries in their efforts to achieve the goal of education for all in order to establish universal primary education for all children by 2015 and reduce the education gap between boys and girls by 2005. In order to reach these goals, we effectively promote the elimination of user fees in schools.

A final point relates to the discussion on the PRSP. On 8 July 2002, Mr. John Page, the Director of the Poverty Reduction Group at the World Bank, will be in Geneva to discuss these issues with ILO staff and will start a debate with the civil society in Geneva.

We look forward to expanding our partnership with the ILO in order to work to identify key strategies to combat child labour and to promote the protection of children, who are the key to our future.

Ms. LINDENFORS (*representative, the International Save the Children Alliance*) – I am speaking on behalf of the NGO subgroup on child labour. We congratulate the ILO on their thorough analysis of children's work in the world today and share many of the conclusions drawn in the Report. We feel that our complementary approaches to children's work offer many opportunities for enhanced collaboration in the future.

We have a few comments on the contents of the Report. We share the view that harmful child work is a persistent problem, with alarming numbers of working children engaged in harmful forms of work. We also share the view that significant progress has been made in response to children's work. In particular, we welcome the shift away from simplistic abolitionist responses to approaches that recognize the

complex realities of work in children's lives and focus on the best interests of the child.

Much remains to be done when it comes to moving from theoretical discussions to positive changes for working children. We agree with the ILO that we must distinguish between different forms of work and recognize that some kinds of work are more harmful than others. Responses therefore need to be tailor-made and must also include strategies to prevent children from entering the worst forms of work. In addition to the economic contribution highlighted in the Report, the important contributions made by children, primarily girls, through their unpaid housework, childcare activities and as a part of family subsistence strategies should be recognized.

We congratulate the ILO on their emphasis on child and community participation in the Report and the recognition that community ownership is crucial to the success of intervention. In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, we believe that children have the right to be fully and meaningfully involved in the decisions that affect them. We strongly recommend that, in the future, greater emphasis is placed on the role of children, communities and families. We agree that the causes of children's work are multifaceted and that we must address the root causes if we are to solve the problems of harmful child work. We also support the view that the lack of access to education is an important root cause of children's work. Therefore attention must be paid to the quality and relevance of education, as well as to the number of children actually attending school.

We would particularly like to develop greater engagement between the ILO and NGOs at every level, from the international to the community level. We have the following recommendations for cooperation that would enable more effective action against harmful forms of child work.

When it comes to reinforcing the work of IPEC we can engage in advocacy by assisting IPEC's clearing house function by establishing mechanisms for routinely sharing samples of documented good practices with the ILO and IPEC. We can participate in the proposed Convention No. 182+5 event. In research and policy work we can, for example, engage in collaborating and enhancing research capacity, including the use of participatory tools and the development of gender-sensitive methods for exploring less visible forms of work, as well as training staff in sharing research findings. We can also engage in collaborating and finding appropriate ways to end the exploitation of working children in the informal economy. In technical cooperation we can share lessons learned in addressing harmful forms of child work and could help to formulate national development policies to combat poverty, such as the poverty reduction strategy papers. We can also assist the ILO in their desire to mainstream the effective abolition of child work and the Decent Work Agenda by, for example, sharing knowledge of how child work relates to the other fundamental principles and rights at work. When it comes to forging a closer partnership, the engagement of NGOs in the above activities will in itself help the ILO to forge a closer partnership with civil society and to some extent with children in communities.

We hope that these recommendations give an indication of what a closer working relationship might look like and we hope for continued and enhanced cooperation between NGOs and the ILO.

Ms. GIUSTI (*representative, Defence for Children International*) – I speak on behalf of Defence for Children International. We welcome and praise the detailed analysis and the new global estimates on child labour provided in the Global Report. We would like to encourage the continuous improvement of data collection criteria and techniques so the disaggregated data can also lead to isolating the youngest and hidden groups of child labourers.

We congratulate the efforts committed to the elimination of child labour and agree that not all forms of economic activities fall under the category of child labour. However, we think that in defining child labour the Global Report is lacking a human rights perspective. It is neglecting that child labour is not only a labour problem but is above all a problem of the violation of human rights. Although the Report briefly mentions Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, we believe that this Convention should be adopted as the permanent framework for defining child labour and developing strategies for its elimination, since it is through such a framework that we can guarantee the full exercise of the rights of those below 18 years of age. Thus we recommend that child labour be identified as an activity which threatens the full exercise of the rights of the child and in particular the right to education and the right to complete development, defined in the Convention as physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. In so doing, we agree that international instruments and national legislation which rely on a minimum age for employment should be adopted as important tools and criteria when addressing the question "What is child labour?"

The approach to child labour should be a complementary one, which integrates ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 and other ILO instruments with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. We stress the need to understand child labour as a multifaceted phenomenon produced by several interacting factors, of which poverty is the main one. Through such an approach the best strategy may be developed. We particularly encourage mainstreaming child labour within poverty reduction strategies or enhancing the level and quality of education services, but we urge that it be recalled that multifaceted strategies are more often a better solution to the elimination of child labour. We acknowledge the consideration given to cooperation at every level in the fight against child labour and congratulate the importance granted to civil society in achieving the target.

Although the role of NGOs in advocacy and in the promotion of the rights of the child is recognized, we would like to emphasize the importance of collaboration with NGOs and the success stories highlighted in this Report. This suggests that the tripartite structure which features the ILO policies and actions should be made more flexible. At different levels NGOs can provide important input to help understand and address child labour as a human rights issue by developing strategies at the advocacy, social mobilization and intervention levels. Many NGOs have a long history of involving communities and, most importantly, children. Child participation is an important right, as well as an asset, and although it is mentioned in the Report as an aspect to be developed, we believe it should be emphasized as a priority in the strategies at different levels. We thus recommend the following: a human rights perspective should be a guiding framework in

tackling the problem of child labour in order to address the best interests of the child. We encourage commitment to involving civil society, including NGOs, in cooperating with IPEC and the vertices of the tripartite structure for the development of interventions at different levels, in particular advocacy, mobilization and awareness creation. We recommend making the commitment to child participation an effective element in actions against child labour.

Finally, we would like to announce that our movement as a whole, and through its national sections, is willing to cooperate with all actors and to coordinate actions to implement all of the above.

Mr. S. KAILASH (*representative, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*) – I would like once again, to congratulate the ILO for advancing the fight against child labour, publishing the Global Report and proclaiming today as the first World Day against Child Labour.

I want to emphasize the sense of urgency of this matter. The very first Article of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 [No. 182](#) called for member States, to “take immediate and effective measures to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour as a matter of urgency.” Things are moving, definitely, as I said this afternoon, but in most countries the efforts have not met this standard.

Every minute, children are being bought and sold like animals, they are trafficked for domestic labour, prostitution and abuse, they are confined to workplaces, locked into factories and mines as bonded labourers. Children are taken from one to another country to be camel jockeys, they are tied to the backs of camels and screamed at “to make the camels run faster”. We cannot delay for days, months or years: it is urgent that we act now.

Only last evening, during the cultural celebrations of the ILO, Raju, a 12-year-old Indian boy, issued a challenge to the whole world – what are you doing to secure childhood, freedom and education, for 250 million children like me? He asked this question urgently because his own brother is still enslaved somewhere. Raju himself worked as a bonded labourer, along with his family, at a brick kiln; he used to take out the hot-baked bricks and complained of skin burns, headaches, and other problems. While working he had a dream that one day he would live in a brick house; his family has always lived in the shanties. Now he is free, living in a rehabilitation centre and is studying in third grade. When he grows up he wants to become a doctor. While travelling to Geneva he not only flew in a plane for the first time, it was the first time he had even seen a plane. He was very thrilled with the speed of the plane. Yesterday he asked me why we could not eliminate child labour at the speed of a plane. That was his question: why were we so slow?

Most of the children who were suffering the in worst forms of child labour when [Convention No. 182](#) was adopted two years ago have not enjoyed any relief and rehabilitation since then. The world community has not even managed to stop the fresh recruitment of child labourers. That does not mean that things are not changing; we see very promising results in a number of countries, despite poverty and other problems. There are inspiring models and examples, but these models and examples should not remain just

that; they should become part of the national agendas, mainstream agendas and the people’s movement.

We are passing through a very important time, when several initiatives have the potential to change the future of the world. These include the strong and proactive implementation of [Convention No. 182](#) and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 ([No. 138](#)) under the ILO’s leadership, the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action for Education for All under UNESCO’s leadership, enhanced funding through the Education for all action plan under the World Bank’s leadership, and the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative under UNICEF’s leadership. It seems that most of these actions have moved ahead in parallel, so it is a high time that we combine these efforts.

We definitely require a serious amount of political will at the national and international levels, greater collective action and coordination between department and ministries, and concrete interagency joint action to combat the worst forms of child labour as a top priority, and the steady elimination of child labour, ensuring free, compulsory and quality education.

To address these issues, I would like to propose the formation of an international task force on child labour. This high-level body, led by the ILO, should be composed of heads of the relevant United Nations agencies, selected heads of state from developing countries with encouraging track records in the elimination of child labour, selected heads of state from industrialized countries who have shown leadership in mobilizing political will and resources for children, and the heads of employers’, workers’ and civil society organizations. Such an international task force can help in converging the fragmented efforts and mobilizing the highest amount of political will and resources for the cause of the most vulnerable and exploited children.

We are ultimately accountable to the future of the whole of humankind. The generations to come should not remember us as the promise-breakers. Let us pull together all our wisdom and compassion, all our knowledge, behind one single goal – to make this world free of child labour.

Ms. CECCHETTI (*representative, World Organization Against Torture*) – The World Organization against Torture welcomes the Director-General’s Report *A future without child labour* and salutes the ILO’s efforts to produce such a comprehensive picture of the nature and causes of child labour today. According to the Report, the total estimated number of economically active children aged between 5 and 14 in developing countries has decreased since 1995. OMCT would like to recall that according to Articles 6 and 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, “State Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child” by ensuring without any discrimination the protection of every child from economic exploitation. OMCT strongly believes that there is no acceptable form of work, no justification of any kind, for a child working while still below the minimum age of employment, as established by ILO [Convention No. 138](#). Extreme poverty, low family income, lack of schooling opportunities, poor quality education, lack of future job opportunities, cultural or traditional attitudes or practices can never justify child labour. Furthermore, what

is utterly disturbing is that according to the Report the estimated number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labour is believed to amount to 180 million, and to constitute 73 per cent of all child labourers. This situation urgently calls for an enhanced effort from the ILO, its constituents and partners, to strengthen their human rights approach and to put an immediate end to this violation of children's rights. In this context, a human rights approach, given the causes and the nature of child labour, requires that particular attention be paid to the enhancement of economic, social and cultural rights and to the fulfilment of States' obligations in this respect. Indeed, the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, along with the ones that OMCT considers to be unacceptable forms, remains illusory without rights, such as the right to education, the right to health and the right to adequate housing being secured. Similarly, without the protection of groups and individuals engaged in the defence of all human rights, this goal cannot be effectively achieved. Too often trade union members and representatives face harassment and threats or even extra-judicial execution for having denounced breaches of basic labour and human rights. In this era of globalization and the whole range of impacts that this process has had on the enjoyment of human rights and labour rights, it is urgent that the ILO, notably through its World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, ensures the inclusiveness of this process along with basic rights.

At the International Conference on Children, Torture and Other Forms of Violence that OMCT organized in November 2001, with the support of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it was concluded that under certain circumstances bonded labour and slavery might amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, and even to torture. Consequently, the responsibility of the State for such violations becomes evident. In most situations, the suffering endured by children meets the definition given in Article 1 of the United Nations Convention against Torture and has both limited and long-term consequences for the physical, psychological, social and intellectual development of the child.

Slavery and bonded labour cause pain and suffering to child victims. The deprivation of labour generally linked to physical constraints, such as being treated as an object or a simple commodity of exchange, and the lack of future prospects, are forms of violence inherent to every kind of forced labour. However, the intensity of such pain and suffering also depends on various factors, such as the type of work given to the children, the conditions in which they must perform it, and the risks or abuse to which they are exposed in their activities.

Children, and especially the youngest ones, are particularly vulnerable both to exploitation as forced and slave labour, and to physical, chemical and other hazards to which they might be subjected in the workplace. Children endure physical suffering *inter alia* through work that is beyond their physical capacity, dangerous tools or machinery, exposure to toxic chemicals, motorized equipment, excessive noise levels, damaging vibration, harsh climatic conditions, and by carrying heavy loads or sitting for long periods in unnatural positions. Children subjected to slavery and bonded labour are also generally prevented from attending school. Even when attendance at school is

permitted, the excessive time dedicated to work and the psychological trauma related to the condition of exploitation directly affect their capacity to learn. The demands of their work often leave them with neither time nor energy to attend school regularly or to keep up with their studies.

The OMCT considers that States' responsibility includes an obligation of due diligence to prevent, stop, investigate and punish slavery and bonded labour, irrespective of whether the perpetrators are acting in an official capacity or as private individuals. Furthermore, in some cases state agents are complicit in slavery or bonded labour practices perpetrated by private actors. This happens, for example, when police officers bring runaway children back to their employers or when police or labour inspectors accept bribes for not investigating a case.

The OMCT welcomed the plan of action for the abolition of child labour and the commitment of the ILO to further announce its partnership with key partners. The OMCT will strongly call on the ILO to formally commit itself along with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF and the WHO, to contribute to the United Nations study on violence against children that the United Nations General Assembly recommended at its Special Session in 2001. The study constitutes a unique opportunity to make all violence against children visible, this being an essential step in the development of strategies to effectively reduce and end it.

The OMCT recommends and urges that the study be carried out in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and that it cover, among other things, violence against children in the street and in work situations. It is certain that the ILO could make a great contribution to the study by bringing to it its knowledge, research capacity and expertise. Its active involvement and support will be key to the study's success.

Mr. POTTER (*Employers' delegate, United States*) – One last stab at interactivity here. Several hours ago Mr. Brett endorsed, on behalf of the Workers' group, the Employers' statement on this Global Report and we would like to return the compliment. In particular, we think the recommendations that the Workers have made relating to the Workers' group and ACTRAV and IPEC are equally applicable to the Employers' group and ACT/EMP.

We would note that there has been more concreteness in this Global Report debate, the first part particularly, than we have had in previous years although I think we have a long way to go. This concreteness is due to the fact that the ILO technical assistance activity in this area is far more advanced than the other areas of the Declaration. With respect to the interactive discussion, it was in fact interactive and I think it was really a good first start at this kind of thing. We would have liked to have had more discussion from actors who are in the trenches on this issue, from government, workers and employers. We certainly tried to do our part in that regard.

You have previously been the chairman of a committee that would meet late into the night and I just would ask you to think about the visual image of the room that we are in now, given the relative importance of the Declaration to this Organization and we would suggest that we need to think, in terms of this

global follow-up procedure, of some way of bringing closure to it in a way that is meaningful, that will cause people to be here at the end.

Overall, we can conclude that this Global Report has helped provide a building block for a future without child labour and, as we said, we still have a long way to go, particularly in terms of coming up with means to stimulate those governments which have not availed themselves of ILO technical assistance, including participation in the Global Report follow-up.

Mr. STEYNE (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, United Kingdom*) – I would echo all of Mr. Potter's conclusions but it is not surprising because the global campaign against child labour has created a social alliance the like of which we have rarely seen and which I am sure will be enduring. I would like to reiterate unequivocally, in the light of some of the comments made this afternoon, the workers' attachment to [Conventions Nos. 138 and 182](#) as the normative framework for the effective elimination of child labour. IPEC is the leading instrument in the struggle against child labour with a tripartite approach and social dialogue as keys to that support.

We will work with anyone who will support both Conventions and the ILO's mandate to achieve the effective elimination of child labour. We especially welcome support from the Employers' group for greater involvement and coordination with both ACTRAV and ACT/EMP and we also believe that there can be greater interdepartmental cooperation, for example in the field of monitoring. We also repeat our request for the ILO to develop benchmarks of competence for social auditors, including those with the specific mandate of monitoring child labour. We repeat the need for inter-agency cooperation to ensure that other multilateral agencies support and do not undermine the ILO's mandate on child labour. Public expenditure on education should be supported

rather than undermined because universal education is a key to the effective abolition of child labour and we would point out that core labour standards are indivisible and mutually reinforcing and that the application of relevant legislation, social dialogue and decent work are also fundamental keys to the effective elimination of child labour.

Finally, with regard to Mr. Potter's comments on the modalities of the debate, there was clearly insufficient time for the formal statements by delegates. It is now nearly 8 p.m. and perhaps a longer interactive discussion would have included more viewpoints in a less formal and more productive way. However, I do agree with Mr. Potter about the lack of practitioners and although I understand why we have chosen the plenary, the general assembly room, for such an important debate, I also wonder if an interactive discussion should not take place in a room in which we could see one another. Having said that, the chairs in room XVII are a great deal less comfortable than they are here.

I would like to thank the Mr. Chairperson for his concluding remarks on today's remarkable event, but I do agree with Mr. Potter, when I look around the room I wonder about the importance that our colleagues attach to such a significant event.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — We might not be many of us left in the room; as I said earlier in jest, there are probably more interpreters and Office officials than participants here. But the fact remains that when undertaking to do something, it is worth doing well. We must go to the end — and I believe we have worked in this spirit.

I thank you for the way you have participated in this discussion which paves the way to the decisions the Governing Body will take in November.

(The Conference adjourned at 8 p.m.)

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