



## 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 charities 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.)*

## CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Seventh sitting:</i>	
Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Presentation and discussion . . . . .	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Potter, Lord Brett, Ms. Hem, Mr. Al-Juma, Mr. Nordmann, Mr. Bagão Félix, Mr. Shenoy, Mr. El Amawy, Ms. Lundby-Wedin, Mr. Mdladlana, Mr. Hyder, Mr. Pérez-Villanueva y Tovar, Mr. Hussain, Mr. Ylieff, Mr. Insua Chang, Mr. Rampak, Mr. Ngutu, Mr. Negrotto Cambiaso, Mr. Moorhead, Mr. Botha, Ms. Al-Jabi, Mr. Okuyan, Mr. Johnsson, Mr. Chetwin, Mr. Tzanchev, Mr. Ahmed, Mr. Ponce Muñoz	
<i>Ninth sitting:</i>	
Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work: Discussion ( <i>cont.</i> )	22
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Vermeend, Mr. Jestin, Mr. Chahin Lupo, Mr. Hasegawa, Mr. Tambusai, Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Aoun, Ms. Lau Valdés, Mr. Koberski, Mr. Liu, Mr. Drever, Mr. Maciel Santos, Mr. Derby, Ms. Aguessy, Mr. Steyne, Ms. Abd El Hady, Mr. Al Kuhlani, Ms. Xia, Mr. Mammadov, Ms. Mukadi, Mr. Mehbaliyev, Mr. Zarcone, Ms. Lindenfors, Ms. Giusti, Mr. S. Kailash, Ms. Cecchetti, Mr. Potter	