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President: Mr. Elmiger

GLOBAL REPORT UNDER THE FOLLOW-UP
TO THE ILO DECLARATION
ON FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK:
INTERACTIVE SESSION
ON SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE ACTION

Original French: The PRESIDENT — We now come to the second stage of our discussion of the Global Report, *A future without child labour*.

At its 283rd Session in March 2002, the Governing Body adopted a certain number of ad hoc arrangements pertaining to the discussion of the Global Report at this session of the Conference. The purpose of this being to provoke a discussion that would be as interactive as possible in nature.

As I indicated this morning, when I opened this sitting, it was agreed that the Conference would proceed firstly to a general discussion and would then, in the afternoon, embark upon a thematic discussion; this would last around two hours. Once the thematic discussion has come to an end then the general discussion will resume in order to allow those delegations that did not have an opportunity of speaking during this morning's meeting to take the floor.

For the purposes of our thematic discussion, the Governing Body has made a certain number of changes to the procedures that are followed by the Conference and it has invited the Officers of the Conference to specify the modalities of these changes. First, the Director-General will conduct interactive discussion.

Second, when he addresses questions to the delegations, the Director-General will not be bound by the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the Conference, and in this way he will be able to put his questions in the order that is most appropriate for an interactive discussion. Third, delegations will be able to take the floor during the interactive discussion even if the representatives of a particular group, for example, the minister or the person appointed to speak on behalf of a country, have already made statements during the morning's sitting or will speak when the general discussion resumes this evening.

The maximum duration of five minutes for speeches also applies to this discussion. This may be reduced to three minutes if the time scheduled for the interactive discussion turns out to be too short.

So that has given you an idea of the general context in which we are going to have this thematic discussion. I would urge everyone, even the children, to participate actively in this discussion. Even the children who I see opposite me. If there is something you would like to say, if you would like to participate, to

make your contribution to the discussion, you have microphones, the microphones are working and you can take the floor on the same basis as everyone else in this room. You are very welcome and I would like to thank you, children, for coming. I, myself, saw the demonstration on the IPEC programme and I was privileged to be there. I heard some of what you had to say. I was deeply moved by what I heard and I would like to thank you for your message of hope and courage.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — I have to be absolutely frank with all of you — I have no idea how this is going to work out! I have said that I believe in innovation and risk taking and a lot of other things, so I was not myself in a position to say “No” when they said “Look, could you organize an interactive debate?” What could I say? I said “OK.” So this is an effort at something a little more informal and less rigid than the normal procedures of the Conference.

Let me begin by briefly summarizing what I heard this morning as a sort of background, and then I will try to see how we can move forward into specific issues. I think that from what everybody has said, the goal of abolishing child labour involves free and compulsory education, productive and gainful employment for parents, some form of basic social protection to which children can have access, and the monitoring and enforcement of laws and regulations. Labour inspectors were mentioned, as was the fact that we must pay special attention to girl children, and must not forget that child labour occurs mostly in the informal economy. Although all these things are necessary, we need to act now because some of them may take time and that means we will need rescue and rehabilitation services to be available when children are freed. That is the goal, and I would say it is basically shared by everybody who agrees on the instruments.

The second thing that was clear is that this can only happen on the basis of national ownership. It has to be presumed to be a national responsibility, a national commitment; there has to be the conviction that each society wishes to achieve the elimination of child labour, and there has to be the political will to make it happen. This is not something that is imposed from outside, it simply will not work unless the society itself and the actors themselves, and, in the case of the ILO, the governments, the employers, the workers and all other sectors of society, want to do it. In pursuing this aim there is no “one size fits all” solution. The phenomenon is similar, in the way it expresses itself, the spaces where it occurs, the manner in which it takes place, are different, and that obviously requires different solutions adapted to local realities. It can only

be done through the specificity and the priority-setting of the local stakeholders. Here there is somehow the feeling that we need to move from ratification to implementation. We have done really well with the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), the principles and the rights, we all agreed to them. Well, how do we make them happen? It has to begin at the national level.

This is part of the poverty reduction strategies, and I think a very important element of the Report. Countries which are equally poor have different results in eliminating child labour; so you can be poor and reduce child labour at the same time, it depends on the type of policies that you put together, and that is probably one of the most important conclusions of the Report; it is not inevitable. Must poverty equal child labour? No. It is very much a reason for it, but there are ways and means, within even poor societies' to deal with it if the right policies are in place and if there is a national commitment to do so.

The third element is international cooperation. There is a very, very strong feeling that it should be mainstreamed into the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations bodies, the bilateral donors, and that it should be linked to the poverty reduction strategy papers. But that is simply not happening. Child labour is not a priority of the International Monetary Fund, or the World Bank. You well know that many governments are involved to some extent with IPEC, but if you take a look at the volume of international cooperation and the meagre amounts that are dedicated to child labour, you will see that it is not a priority of international cooperation today.

If I heard correctly what was said this morning, we need to find ways to take concrete action, because there has been a lot of talk but, at the end of the day, there has to be an international cooperation counterpart to the national commitment and to its ownership. Very clearly, we do need international cooperation, we do need conditionality. National ownership will establish the manners, the ways and the forms in which this will take place. What we need from outside is policy advice, policy advice on good practices from which countries can choose and see what others have done and what other experiences are out there.

Finally, the issue of resources is linked to the international cooperation part. Many references have been made to international resources, but the logical consequence of national ownership is that countries also have to be able to mainstream the child labour issue into national budgets, and child labour on the basis of national ownership is not going to be eliminated through international cooperation. So national resources are extremely important to back up national ownership and national will. But international resources are also necessary. On the one hand, we see that this matter is not being mainstreamed, and the whole set-up, since it is based on voluntary contributions, is always very unstable because situations can change, governments can change, policies can change, and a voluntary contribution that was relatively stable may become unstable a year later. So the whole thing does not have a truly strong international basis. At the same time we heard in Monterey that there is considerable new commitment for international cooperation for the future. Maybe that is the scenario within which the international resources relating to national ownership can establish a much higher level of commitment on this issue. For the moment, the ILO is of

course very proud of IPEC, but we have to acknowledge that IPEC is a minute programme in relation to the dimension of the whole problem.

I just wanted briefly to summarize what was said this morning. I suggest that we now take a look at certain aspects mentioned in the Global Report to see how you feel about them, how you react. Allow me to present the following one to you. There is an idea in the Report, which I think some of you mentioned this morning, which is both visually and politically attractive. It is the idea of saying, look, we are going to declare a particular economic sector free of child labour. We are going to work on that sector. We will reach agreement with the local authorities, and normally once a decision has been taken by the local authorities a given community or a particular city will be free of child labour. Rather than attempting to deal with the whole problem at once, does the idea of seeking to create child-labour-free spaces in particular sectors, communities, cities, etc. sound like something that could begin to show that it can be done? This is, of course, just one approach. I think that the biggest issue here is the enormity of the problem. We have to find examples which are feasible within reasonable periods of time that show that one can move forward. I just want to put that question to you. Do you feel that this is something feasible, the idea of child-labour-free sectors, enterprises, communities, cities, etc.?

Mr. VAIDYA (*Employers' delegate, Nepal*) — I am with the Employers' Council. To try to answer your question, we believe that to totally eliminate child labour is an immense task that will take time. This is mainly because of the cultural background in a country like Nepal, which is still very small and has social problems and low literary rates, and where poverty levels are very high. However, I tend to agree with the idea being formed here, namely that we need to look at certain reasonable areas, and first of all the area of industry.

I would like to share with you our experiences in the carpet industry in Nepal. In the 1980s, carpets were one of the most important products in terms of employment creation. We had close to 700,000 people working in this industry. Sixty per cent of total exports were in the carpet industry itself. In the early 1990s, the international media drew attention to child labour and the conditions of work in the industry itself. This created a tremendous amount of problems for the industry. We found that with all this media attention focused on the child labour issue in the carpet industry of Nepal, many industries subsequently went bankrupt. A large number of people lost their jobs. The Government also lost a lot of revenue in this area. To be honest, this caught the employers totally flat-footed. We were not prepared for this and did not see it coming. However, we decided that we needed to look at this sector which was employing so many people and was an important area for the country. A series of mergers were carried out by the employers and the social partners in Nepal, and I would just like to share some of them with you.

We conducted a survey in which we found that 18 or 19 in the factories that were surveyed, there were about 3,000 children working in difficult conditions. Most of them were between 12 and 13 years of age. We worked closely with the ILO/IPEC and many other organizations in Nepal. We took up issues such

as advocacy and raised the employers' awareness on the effects of having child labour in the industry. We have also been able to work towards sending about 400 children to different rehabilitation and vocational training centres. Today we have over 1,000 children receiving formal education in the carpet industry. We have about 500 children that receive vocational training in the carpet industry itself. We have about 205 children that left the carpet industry to be reunited with the families. Also, for the carpet-workers, five health clinics were set up and five formal vocational schools were set up.

These were initiatives that focused on one area. We know that child labour is a very large area of work, but we have focused on one industry because it had the maximum impact on the country's economy and on employment. The Rugmark system, which certifies "child labour-free" carpets has been successfully implemented. With all of these activities, the country's industry has come back into better shape. Employment has increased. Government revenue has increased, and therefore this approach has been a good exercise for the country itself. This success story is now being duplicated in other areas of industry, and I think that the way forward is to focus on one sector, generate support and create a more focused agenda.

Original French: Mr. BLONDEL (*Workers' adviser, France*) — I would like to begin with a comment and confess something publicly. When you mentioned the most intolerable forms of child labour, I reacted to this instinctively, as I personally consider that child labour is by definition intolerable. But I later realized, once I gave it some thought and saw how the term was used in practice, that this subject calls for us to be a bit more responsible.

We had become accustomed to hearing grandiose statements denouncing child labour. As you pointed out a little while ago, we have our programme. I certainly do not wish to underestimate the effort that is being made by some countries, but it is a drop in the ocean.

The IPEC programme will not solve this problem on its own. I am quite happy to pick up the discussion where you left off. Perhaps it is too ambitious to try to deal with child labour all at once. Perhaps we do need a sectoral approach.

But if we adopt the sectoral approach, first of all we have to choose the sector. I can propose one. I feel that we cannot directly attack such a large sector as agriculture, for example, even though this might be desirable, because it would have a chain reaction. But the mining sector, for example, is perhaps a sector where for various reasons we could concentrate our efforts. But how can we find effective allies with whom to work? I think we need to use our imagination. What if we agreed to hone in on the mining sector, without, however, losing sight of the general objective? How could we call upon the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to help by requesting to take steps? In other words, would we have to ask the IMF to take into account the ILO's approach in moving towards the eradication of child labour in this sector? At the same time, we need to ensure that there are resources — which we ourselves cannot make available — but which are required to complement the abolition of child labour, for example for investment in education. If the IMF is prepared to help us, we might have a means of doing this. While the mecha-

nism does not yet exist, I think it might be necessary to make IMF aid conditional upon the eradication of child labour in the sector in question. I should be clear: this would include conditionality. I think we need to go that far, and at the same time we would have to say that money must be earmarked to education, specifically to send children to school, so that we will be preparing people who are responsible and aware of their country, rather than using only part of their potential.

I am aware of the sweeping nature of what I am saying when I say that the IMF aid should be conditional upon our recommendation. I think that is a new element, which might go somewhat against normal practice. But I really do not see how, even with the agreement of the countries in question, we could make satisfactory progress unless we consider education and unless we put in this important condition of financial aid to a country.

So, these are some of my thoughts about your suggestion. I have not, of course, finished my thoughts, but anyway this is a contribution, because you wanted this to be interactive, and now we can perhaps listen to everyone else's reactions.

Mr. AHMED (*Workers' delegate, Pakistan*) — You have outlined very precisely this great human problem, which only a combination of national and international political will can eliminate. Coming from Pakistan, a developing country, I think that international pressure and cooperation can also play a positive role. In my own country, the world's leading manufacturer of soccer balls, the soccer ball industry was nearly boycotted by consumers because the balls were being produced by child labour. But international pressure from both consumers and the trade union prompted manufactures to enter into an agreement with the ILO, which will provide educational assistance for children in the soccer ball industry. The pressure also resulted in a code of conduct to which FIFA and the manufacturers committed themselves. The trade union also played a positive role. That is one good example of international cooperation.

We workers advocate independent trade unions, freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and a code of labour standards. Trade unions are concerned not only about the welfare of their members but about the community as a whole. They promote social justice and try to have it enshrined in national legislation. They have the power to influence policy-makers, employers and society at large in ongoing efforts to eliminate child labour. In many countries, however, particularly those that export heavily but other countries as well, trade union activity is hindered. I think freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining need to be respected, which would soon lead to social justice and the elimination of child labour.

There is another area that developing countries like Pakistan feel ought to be addressed. Policies by the IMF and World Bank have led to reduced public expenditures on education. Children in developing countries, where the bulk of child labour exists, are denied basic education because they are born unequal on account of their parents' poverty. I think the ILO should play a more important role in this area. We in developing countries must be allowed to spend more on education. It would be an investment in a better future for the whole of mankind.

Mr. KHAN (*Government delegate, Pakistan*) — I think we are having a very good debate, and also, perhaps for the first time since the process of the follow-up started, a debate in an interactive mode.

I will begin, before taking up a few of the points which the Director-General himself has listed, by agreeing with Mr. Blondel that all child labour is intolerable. That is true, but eliminating child labour, as we all know, can only be a very long-term goal. That is why we must distinguish between intolerable and other forms of work. We must also look at what is happening because of poverty. Admittedly, we say that all child labour is intolerable, but there is a theme that regularly crops up in international debates, that is to say extreme poverty. Now if you look at extreme poverty as distinct from just being poor, it is normally difficult to say that if we eliminate extreme poverty, we are making the very indigent into the badly off. So the distinction between extreme poverty and poverty is something that should not exist. Poverty in itself is intolerable. But somehow we have this distinction. There are people living on one dollar and others living on two dollars. There is a difference, even if we do not see much of a difference between earning one dollar or two dollars a day.

Secondly, we agree with the Director-General that poverty and these socio-economic problems cannot be equated with child labour, or are not synonymous with child labour.

I have a slightly different perspective, although I do not in any way disagree. Yes, poverty is a major feature which does force a child to work, either to supplement the family income, or merely to survive himself.

The Global Report that we have in front of us, shows that, according to the most recent research done by the ILO, the main sector where child labour is found is the agriculture sector. We know that most of the developing countries, since they are not developed, are very largely based on agriculture. At the same time, we are moving into a globalized world where the distinction between the national and international dimension is rapidly disappearing.

If we look closely at the agricultural sector, we find that producers in the developing countries cannot sell their products on the international market. They have a market within their own countries but the potential of the agricultural sector in developing countries for eliminating poverty and its consequence, which mean that we could make progress in eradicating child labour, is non-existent.

We find, and this may be considered as a political argument, that most of the industrialized agriculture sector is being subsidized to the tune of one billion dollars a day, if I am correct. This is six times the total development assistance that is being provided to the developing countries.

The point I am trying to make is that in a globalized world, and given the fact that we have identified agriculture as an important sector and that child labour does exist, can we distinguish between national and international dimensions? Can we focus alone on the national dimension and feel that our efforts would enable us to eliminate, or would enable us to rapidly take decisive measures to eliminate child labour?

The second related point is: whether technical assistance is enough to eliminate child labour, or whether we need related measures, in other words incentives, to boost economies. This may be a purely theoretical argument, but suppose a person in a devel-

oping country, who is able to sell his goods, who is able to raise produce on his agriculture land and obtain enough money to finance his children's education, would that person basically want his children to work on his holding? Surely not. That is what the Report suggests. At least, if I were a farmer — all right I am rather more educated than other people in my country — but I do not think so.

So, is technical assistance alone the panacea? Is the notion of international cooperation limited to technical assistance or do other factors play a role as well?

Finally, I think you did identify particular sectors, for example free-trade zones. I do not have to go into details. One of our workers' delegates has already identified the sectors. I think that approach has worked pretty well. We need to revisit them and see whether an impact assessment study should be done regularly, by the Government and, of course, by the ILO. This is one of the things that interest us.

Now we come to the question of whether it is a priority for the Bretton Woods institutions to mainstream the notion of poverty eradication in their policies. I think that most countries like Pakistan have made an effort to include that notion in their PRSPs.

While the World Bank and the IMF still base their work on economic principles, which of course are important, it is a fact that the world is gradually is being globalized, that the distinction between social, international and economic dimensions is gradually disappearing. That is perhaps why we have created the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization to study all these linkages, to define what exactly we need to do.

I think these are good practices, which should be promoted. At least on our part we are trying to do that. We are happy that, of course, the ILO has been with us in most cases.

Mr. S. KAILASH (*representative, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*) — I am convinced that there are enough reasons to be optimistic that we are going to win the battle against child labour.

The emerging demand and understanding towards education as a fundamental right is a very fast-growing trend throughout the world. The drive by the ILO, particularly from IPEC, for [Conventions Nos. 182 and 138](#) is another reason to be optimistic and hopeful.

A general urge for protection of human rights and civil rights everywhere will also eventually lead to the elimination of child labour.

I should also like to say that consumers have also played a very important role. When talking about the carpet industry, or the football industry of Pakistan or India or Nepal we must recognize the importance of consumers concerned in a positive spirit.

As one of the initiators of the consumer campaign in the carpet industry, I feel that there has been a positive result, as was mentioned by my colleague from Nepal. But it was not through publicity alone, because we had over a million children, and most of them were bonded labourers in the South Asian carpet industry. It was not Nepal alone, but India and Pakistan as well. That has resulted in a strong consumer movement.

We have tried to use this movement in a more positive way; instead of going for sanctions and boycotts and blanket bans, we have come up with the idea of a voluntary monitoring mechanism and social labelling, that is, "Rugmark". The Rugmark gives not only choice to the consumers but also to the industry to

improve themselves and also takes care of the rehabilitation and education of the children affected. We also address the community's and family's requirements in that area. That has brought about a result in Pakistan, India and Nepal as well.

Another case is the football industry. We have seen wonderful results such as the initiatives from the ILO and others in Pakistan, but much work remains to be done everywhere. This sector-oriented approach has definitely yielded good results and created some good examples. That is my understanding.

I should also like to give an example of my own organization's initiative in India, creating child-friendly villages. We are not confining ourselves to child-free villages but we have identified the villages where we wanted to create an entire community that was child friendly.

We are working in over 70 villages where the first step is taken with the persuasion, the motivation and the involvement of the community that we are withdrawing child labourers from work in that community.

The second stage is to ensure that all the children are enrolled in school, if there is any government school. If not, then the community has to open up a school as the second stage.

The third stage is that all the village children, the former child labourers, and the school-going children, form a village parliament. It is more a kind of democratic orientation with the participatory orientation of children.

Finally, the elected official village parliament has to recognize the children's parliament so that the children can share their problems in the schools or problems in the former working place, and health problems and other matters with the community, through the elected village parliament.

If all these four steps are completed then we have a child-friendly village which becomes a source of pride for the entire community.

We have also started something similar at the brick kilns; making the brick kilns child-friendly means no child labour. All the children attend school. Such things are certainly a good example of what can be done.

Mr. SHENOY (*Government delegate, India*) — First of all I should like to congratulate the Director-General on this innovative approach. I had the impression that the plenary sessions and interactive sessions were a contradiction in terms, but you have achieved a miracle by turning this contradiction into synthesis and harmony. We welcome synthesis and harmony because in the Indian culture we believe in unity in diversity.

I also thank you for supporting the argument I put forward previously — namely, that during the last decade IPEC has been in a position to affect only one per cent of those involved in child labour through its programmes and projects. At this rate, it will take a very long time to achieve its objectives — I hesitate to say a thousand years, but it will take many many years.

Furthermore, the previous speakers have spoken eloquently of the need to provide additional funds without any strings attached.

The developed countries, the developing countries, the Employers' group, the Workers' group and the ILO: we all recognize the need and the urgency to eliminate child labour from our midst. Having the

same ultimate goal, we must decide how to proceed towards this objective. We think that this is best achieved by mutual consultation and development cooperation, with the technical and financial assistance from global institutions, and also through additional budgetary support from national state or regional governments, rather than by being prescriptive, judgemental and inclined to penalize.

Various speakers have referred to the industry-based approach. However, a village-based approach exists too. A group of 85 villages in a major state of India, Andhra Pradesh, has been made child labour-free, through several proactive approaches, from one foundation. I thank the authors of the Global Report, *A future without child labour*, for mentioning the Andhra Pradesh programme. A future without child labour sounds wonderful. It is our dream today but to make it a reality a lot more has to be done with all the developed countries, the developing countries and in particular, the international funding agencies providing assistance without strings attached.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — Thank you very much. I am going to wind up this part with a couple of other interventions.

The question was "is the sector, the village, the community approach viable?" The answer seems to be coming out "yes". It is something viable; it has been tried and it has been successful, although sometimes there have been complications; but, it is one of the avenues that we can concentrate on.

Mrs. COLETTI (*Workers' adviser, Italy*) — My name is Carla Coletti. I am from the Workers' delegation of Italy. Yes, you are right in understanding that this is not the first time there is a lot of attention being put on a sectoral or community-oriented approach. Still, I think we ought to be aware of the risks or at least of the implications, because obviously we are not looking for something just for the sake of catching media attention. Though sometimes that is useful, it is not the goal.

We as workers are certainly extremely concerned also about all the repercussions for the workers and enterprises in a given sector. We do not want to be blind in that sense. So let us be very clear. Reference has been made to the need for broad alliances. My colleague, Mr. Blondel, referred to the example of the mining sector. I would agree with him but I can hardly think of any action targeted in that sector without thinking of involving in the initiative the production chain in its farther steps. In other words, I understand the employers will say there are risks involved in this.

In our opinion there are two key elements to avoid those risks. First, we must have the business and the workers' community on board. I put the stress on the business community and the responsibilities of employers in other sectors, because we cannot create a situation where targeting a given sector can create unfair competitive conditions. This is certainly not what we want. On the contrary, we want positive multiplying repercussions in other sectors. So this is a first point, which brings me to stress once more the importance for ILO initiatives, in particular IPEC initiatives, of genuine involvement by the social partners. Not of society or civil society, but of the social partners-employers' and workers' organizations. Having said this once more, let me also say that it has to go together with the visible and concrete promotion of basic rights.

This is the second key point. Our colleague from the Employers' benches, from Nepal, referred to the great effort that his country has made and is making for this multi-tooled strategy. And we know how difficult the conditions in Nepal are. I refer, with great respect, of course, to an example which is not from my country. That example shows that when the problem is not just linked to poverty, but to a variety of cultural and traditional factors, there is going to be a host of difficulties. There needs to be a coherent approach where the ILO has to give a clear message.

Each IPEC initiative needs to show that the same project which is trying to target child labour in a certain area is also doing something visible and measurable to promote freedom of association and collective bargaining, in that same area, in that same sector. This is what I call an effective and coordinated strategy, which then may easily have repercussions for the ILO's role in the poverty reduction strategy process, by putting pressure on the international financial institutions. Who else could do that, if not the ILO? But concretely, we need now to see to it that in a visible and measurable way the ILO message, especially as it is conveyed through IPEC action has clear targets and is not part of a logic of inappropriate conditionalities. It must clearly target the various phases of the same problem, which is to encourage reallocation of national budgetary resources to accessible and affordable universal education, labour inspections, and all the tools to properly implement laws so that what is an illegal phenomenon, child labour, can be combated properly and eradicated gradually.

Third, we must show that the eradication of child labour is a development goal for a country. Again, only coherent ILO action can show this in the various bodies of the international community. You invited us to give some concrete advice. I think that, for instance, improving the indicators-setting system in IPEC would be very useful in this sense. I am not reinventing the wheel of course, but it is useful to remind everybody here of the need to see indicators measuring improvements in basic rights, in implementation, in the involvement of the social partners, and in the availability of formal education. That is the other big risk. We are very happy, as you know, as everybody knows, that IPEC is being given a lot of attention. But we need to see IPEC increasingly integrated in the ILO's activity, in the ILO's regular budget and in the standard promotion activity of the ILO in order for this to be a coherent and effective message. I agree that it is inadvisable to impose conditionalities. It is a question of coherence of goals, so it is a different way of putting things. You are absolutely right when you say there needs to be national ownership, and that otherwise it does not work. But the ILO message needs to be clear, because it needs to be coherent with its basic statutory goals.

I have one more comment on the question of the causes of child labour. Of course, poverty is a major cause. Of course the speaker who said any reasonable person who has money to send children to school would not send them to work. This is just obvious, as it is obvious that there would not be any child labour if there were not employers who found it profitable to employ children. Let us not forget this please, even if it is obvious.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — Let us now move to the next issue and give the floor to some of

the people who have asked for it. You will be able to speak on this issue, and also on the one that I am now going to raise. Let me say here that it is clear that the sectoral or the community approach is all right, but of course it is part of a whole, so if you try to solve it using that process it is not going to work. That is what the whole development problem is about — that every issue of development is linked to some other issue. And that process will be never-ending, so we do have to concentrate on some things that we can show that happen, even though we know that intellectually, analytically and politically they are linked to other things, and this is a fundamental practical problem of decision-making in terms of budgetary decisions of where are you going to invest your resources.

So, from our discussion I can conclude that this is useful and that it is linked to other things that depend on development issues or on actions by the International Monetary Fund, among other issues. We have to be aware of that, but this does not mean that you do not move ahead and do them.

Let me add a second question. Those that have asked for the floor on this first question can refer to it, but I want to move on to the next area. I think that what was just said about the commitment of employers and workers is true — we meet here and we agree. I remember that I said in my speech that social dialogue in Geneva is essential, but social dialogue back home is the real test of our relevance.

So, could we concentrate a little bit on that? It might be possible that, as a result of our agreeing here today, employers and workers of a particular country, making the most of the opportunity of the Conference, get together and decide to do something back home on the question of child labour, be it sectorally or in another way mentioned in our Report, which is full of suggestions.

So, might it be possible to think that, out of the dynamics of this debate and as a result of the discussions in the Governing Body on a plan of action later on, we will be stimulating employers and workers to take action back home, and to tackle certain issues together? Let me just put that question to you. Is that feasible? Would it be conceivable that out of this Conference the employers and workers of maybe ten countries who, besides participating in the debate of the Conference, sat together and decided to meet back home to take this Report and to see what they could do together to implement the conclusions on which we agree.

There may be conclusions in this Report that employers do not like or that workers do not like, and they will not work on those, but they may agree on a number of them. Would something like that be feasible? Could we get those types of energies going as a result of a debate of this nature?

Mr. GETMAN (*representative of the World Vision International*) — Perhaps an NGO voice would be useful at this stage, pertinent to this second question.

I think, from our experience, in our hundred countries and as co-chair with UNICEF in the global movement for children, that the only way what you are suggesting can happen is if there is a true strategic alliance.

It is often the case that employers and employees need additional members at the table in this strategic alliance to make it happen.

We have discovered in a research project in Thailand, India and the Philippines that in fact we can even begin to access multilateral funds, not only bilateral funds. We can begin to crack the World Bank and get them involved in things like this, and to help implement what the employees and the employers want to do.

Nike is a good illustration of this, where the NGOs have worked with the company to help set up educational experiences and alleviate the worst forms of child labour.

I would like to commend the process you have begun. In fact we even had an illustration at the launch last night of the World Day against Child Labour, when we had entertainers, educators, NGOs and many other people besides the usual participants in this Conference together to affirm the process. This study is available to the delegates. It is on the tables outside the doors, if people are interested. I trust that whenever there is a need, the employers and workers will feel free to call on the local NGO communities and the civil society structures to help facilitate this very important process.

Original Arabic: Mrs. AL-JABI (Minister of Social Affairs and Labour, Syrian Arab Republic) — This dialogue is extremely useful, dealing with an issue which is of extreme importance so far as we are concerned, and I should like to refer to the second question which you have just put to us. I should like to say that I think it is possible and it would be possible to create national committees in which employers, workers and even governments would meet to study these issues. This would be possible in all countries, and then it would be possible to put forward adequate and acceptable solutions. The Report which you have prepared for us would be a basis for our discussions, and I am sure that we could benefit from the results achieved by this meeting.

The governments, the employers and the workers could be involved in drawing up legislation, which would be discussed later, particularly when it deals with child labour. It would be beneficial for any such legislation to be discussed in parliament; in our country we have representatives of the three groups there, so that all sectors of the population are represented. This was my reaction to the second question you put to us.

Now, to come to our response to your first question, I should like to say that it is extremely important to improve the level of income of these countries, with a view to helping the developing countries to draw closer to the developed countries, to enable the developing countries to increase investments and the funds made available for education, for compulsory education. Obviously, if this were improved, it would be then a measure to ensure that there is no child labour. This is what we say, this is our reaction in Syria, this is what we said when we merged the two levels of education. Primary education up to nine years of age is compulsory and free of charge, and in Syria we are developing a child friendly society.

We are working to provide children with an appropriate environment and framework to ensure their development, so that they can enjoy a good education and good health. We are working to create a community and a society where it will not be permitted for children to work. We are working hard to provide education for children, including girls, particularly in

the rural areas. We have a series of courses for vocational training for girls from 13 to 19 years of age to enable them to work and generate an income, through employment in non-traditional sectors. This is very important, and popular committees, women's associations, among others, would be involved. I invite my colleagues here to give particular attention to formal training and organized education for girls. Potentials must also be developed so that medical care can be provided, in collaboration with the various ministries and the local authorities, in order to improve the health level of children, to enable them to receive appropriate education and training in the future.

Very gradually we will be making progress, we believe, but the question is how to convince parents not to send their children to work at too early an age, and we feel that offering children education and vocational training at an early stage is one of the solutions to this problem.

I believe that we can here perhaps focus on the following: we have to create an appropriate environment so that we can provide education for children in rural areas, for example by increasing family income, thereby preventing a situation where children have to help their parents in the agricultural sector. We feel that we have to create a positive environment and then wait for results. We are experimenting and innovating, and we have a number of projects of a kind we think would be very important, particularly with significant external involvement. We thank you, sir, for your attention and hope that our contribution has been a useful addition to what has already been said.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — I think that the second element is very clear and we do not need to go back to it — education is key. By the way, when I mentioned that countries of the same level of poverty had done differently in terms of reducing child labour, the major difference was education. The poor countries that concentrated resources on education had much better results than those that did not. So, education is obviously at the heart of the issue.

I raised the question about cooperation between employers and workers and I would like to concentrate on that. The danger of having very little time for our discussion is that we make general presentations on the issue and then the interactive part of it is lost. So, could I ask Mr. Echavarría, representing the employers to take the floor on the question of cooperation between employers and workers and, in the context of each society, with the other actors that play a part in that society.

Original Spanish: Mr. ECHAVARRÍA (Employers' delegate, Colombia) — We believe that social dialogue and tripartite discussions are a fundamental element in finding solutions to this issue of child labour, in whatever form it exists. As an employers' organization, we believe that any form of child labour is something that should be rejected.

Particularly in Colombia, in the light of the internal conflict taking place in the country, we consider this an important issue. Some armed groups are engaging child soldiers; around 30 per cent of the fighters are child soldiers. Therefore dialogue, not only among the social partners but also with those who are outside the establishment, is of paramount importance in order to find a political solution to an internal conflict.

Now, there are two forums in which we can strengthen the ideas put forward: there is a tripartite body with a constitutional and legal character, where we can discuss the subject and implement activities that are bigger than those we already have; and there is an international committee in which IPEC has placed its special attention and which involves various sectors of society.

That is where we believe tangible specific action could be taken, in particular in our country and in Latin America.

In conclusion, I would very briefly like to say that since 1997 our employers' association has had its own voluntary code of conduct, not only to prevent the use of child labour, directly or indirectly, amongst its members but also to ensure that it does not exist elsewhere in our society, or in the informal sector of the economy.

Therefore, we have developed a direct-action plan, through a pilot project developed together with non-governmental organizations, in which we demonstrated that 97 per cent of the children in this pilot project are today secure for health, education, family affection and the possibility of enjoying their childhood. In other words, it can be done. However, we believe that it is absolutely fundamental that there be international cooperation to back efforts such as these. Actions taken at the national level, on a tripartite basis, similar to actions implemented with international cooperation, are key to making progress in this fight in which we are all involved.

Mr. HYDER (*Employers' delegate, Bangladesh*) — I personally feel that we need actors, and whatever has happened in the social sectors has rotated around actors, the quality and the level of their abilities. So to find actors on the employers' side and the workers' side is very desirable. But then the identity should not be that of an employer and a worker. The meeting point should be the cause and the people who are prepared to work for the cause. They are the real actors.

The institutions can provide the stage, the support and the lighting. But actually it is the people who are these actors, who must act in the centre stage and make it a movement. We are the meeting points for the employers and the workers, and we must inform them, so as to establish the righteousness of the cause. Once that is done, I think the rest will follow. But you are quite correct that we need actors to start with. We need actors and these actors are very important in delivering the result.

Mr. SALMENPERÄ (*Government delegate, Finland*) — Just trying to answer the question. I think the case of Finland very clearly shows that if social partners get together and really agree on targets, the results will surely be achieved. This has been our experience over the past 50 years. I must say, however, that on the child labour front, the result was achieved through parliamentary decisions, and those were on education. Of course it is always a question of whether a party's social partners agree or not, but I think that on this front, this agreement is clearly there.

Mr. ANAND (*Employers' delegate, India*) — I have been fascinated by this debate, particularly after participating in the side events yesterday and last evening. Having been a silent player, as Vice-President of the 1998 Conference, in the evolution of the

Declaration and the consequent Conventions, having been a part of the national steering committee in my own country, India, and having participated in the debates of the last few years in this hall, I feel called upon to stress the relevance of points two and three of the programme. Work must be intensified in regions such as South-East Asia, East and West Africa, and there must be greater involvement of the social partners.

Success stories such as those in Nepal and Ghana must be extended to inspire and motivate other States and peoples in the neighbouring regions. In particular, this requires the allocation of greater opportunities and resources to employers' organizations, particularly in the abovementioned regions, as the problem of child labour largely persists in the informal sector and in SMEs. These institutions are poor men's clubs, and governments generally look at resources through their official bureaucratic channels, with no margin left to tackle situations where the incidence of child labour is heavier and more concentrated. There is therefore scope for those responsible for IPEC and the Declaration at headquarters to give thought to these aspects and, through international employers' organizations, to support demands, for greater participation and appropriate allocation of resources.

In closing, I honestly feel that the hitherto unused potential for constructive work by social partners, employers' organizations and trade unions, has lost some of its vitality in recent years. Government bureaucracy and money has not really been geared to action, so I think over-reliance on this as the only tool for social development must be avoided in future. The unused resources of the social partners need to be galvanized by an aggressive ILO policy with a view to involving them more actively as equal players in social dialogue and social development.

Mr. STEYNE (*Workers' adviser and substitute delegate, United Kingdom*) — I would like to make a few comments about the issue of social dialogue and the role it plays in galvanizing the social partners into action. I would, of course, remind colleagues that Convention No. 182 requires tripartite consultation in the development of national plans of action and indeed in determining the list of occupations referred to in the Convention and Recommendation. I think it is difficult to make a blanket distinction between social dialogue at the national and international level, in so far as it pertains to unions and employers, because social dialogue between unions and employers happens at both national, regional, international, sectoral and company level and we are seeking and finding joint responses with employers at all those levels.

For example, I might mention the framework agreements which have been negotiated between some multinational enterprises and the global union federations, the actions that have arisen from joint discussions between the global union federations and industry associations or, more recently, the decision to establish here in Geneva a joint foundation to eliminate child labour in the tobacco industry, or another foundation, which is in the process of being established, to eliminate child labour in the cocoa industry — matters which we discussed yesterday in the Committee on the Application of Standards. But, Secretary General, as I remember, when we were together in New York at the United Nations General Assembly, Eveline Herfkens, the Minister from the

Netherlands who shared the platform with you during the discussion of the role of education, also pointed out that simply the presence of trade unions is a key to the elimination of child labour, and she repeated the oft-used adage that where trade unions are present, child labour is least prevalent. So, again I come back to this central question, which turns precisely on social dialogue and its role in the elimination of child labour. We must reiterate and recognize the indivisibility and mutually reinforcing nature of all four strands of the eight Conventions, which are our fundamental human rights standards.

I would also like to say just a little about other areas of employer/worker cooperation, which are not at the company level, not at the sectoral level, but are based on voluntary social initiatives which, I think, one of our employer, and one of the government colleagues have already mentioned. There are several examples around the world and, as you know, I am particularly active in one in Britain, the ethical trading initiative, which has been supported very strongly by our Government, in which we brought together a very significant number of British high-street companies, the largest supermarkets and so on, which together have an annual turnover of over £100 billion, that is US\$140 billion, a very significant sum of market leverage in the global market. We are working with those companies to identify some good practices in the monitoring and implementation of a code of practice on their global supply chains, which is based firmly on ILO standards. One of the issues that arises both for us in workplaces around the world and in voluntary social initiatives, such as the ethical trading initiative, and, indeed, in other social dialogue agreements between unions and employers, is the need for cooperation with the public authorities who have the primary responsibility to protect their citizens and the children in their countries. I am speaking, of course, of the fundamental role of labour inspection. Bill Brett said, and I am sitting here as his substitute this afternoon, Bill Brett said in his speech to the plenary on Monday, there are only two ways to ensure the protection of working people, and that is through good law properly enforced — and by good law we mean law based on international labour standards, of course — through effective labour inspection services and through social dialogue by effective social partners. It seems to me that one of the issues we might also discuss — which governs the ability of social dialogue to function and also the contribution that it can make to the elimination of child labour — is the nature of the relationship between voluntary initiative, which is collective bargaining and social dialogue, and the enforcement of law by labour inspection services. What is the nature of that relationship? How can we act in a complementary way which reinforces law and does not undermine the responsibility of the public authorities, or privatize the responsibility of the public authorities to protect their citizens.

I just want to say one thing in conclusion, and you will not be surprised at what it is — monitoring, and doing monitoring that is complementary to the work of labour inspection services, monitoring in global supply chains, monitoring at the sectoral level, monitoring at the national level, require skills, and these skills do not fall off trees, they need to be learnt. One of the problems that we certainly have in getting accurate pictures of where, in global supply chains, we face problems of child labour, is that actually the skills you

need to monitor child labour are very specific. Now, clearly, if you walk into a factory and the employer does not know you are coming — and this is an employer who happens to use child labour — you may be lucky enough to find the children working. But it is very likely that the employer will know you are coming and what you may see is a pile of unfinished garments and a workstation that is several inches lower than the norm, and the children may be on the roof, as my colleague Neil Kearney has often found.

These are special skills. The skills you need to interview working children about their experiences — if you can catch them in the workplace or in their communities — are specific skills. The skills we need to identify the ages of children without being intrusive, these are special skills and they can be learnt. Part of our problem is (and I say this with the best of will, of course) that some multinationals with whom we are working — although I have to say less so within the ethical trading initiative, because part of our purpose is to develop some good practice in this field — some multinationals are using commercial social auditing companies who, with all the best will in the world, simply do not have those skills, and frankly there is no reason to expect that they should. They could learn those skills. The problem is that at the moment we have no internationally agreed benchmarks against which to measure this competence. Now Bill said on Monday morning, and my colleague Guy Ryder — the General Secretary of the ICFTU repeated it, I believe, in his speech — that we do need to develop some internationally agreed benchmarks against which we can measure the competence and skills of those engaged in social auditing, including in the field of child labour.

Now, this is an attempt to help that very large commercial service-providing social auditing industry, as well as those of us involved in voluntary initiatives, to be able to measure whether our skills are up to the task and, indeed, to help multinational companies, and others who employ them, to know, or have a good chance, that the reports they are receiving are credible, verifiable and useful information that can be used to target strategies to eliminate child labour and promote the other fundamental rights at work. This is still something that you know we have on the table, we still call on the employers to work with us in this regard. We believe it is in all our interests, including those of the employers — after all they would not employ somebody to do their financial accounts who was not qualified. We believe they should work with us to develop some internationally agreed benchmarks, so that they can employ commercial service providers in the social auditing field with some confidence.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — Yes, I think that you raised a number of very important, and very complementary, issues, and the last one is probably a very key one. It is one that applies to all of us — do we really collectively have the competencies and the skills needed to deal with the problem? This is a very major question.

I have some requests for the floor, but I would like to move — we still have 25 minutes — onto a third question. I think that the answer, by and large, even though we did not really give that much time to the issue, is that naturally a number of examples came out of things that are already going on. Maybe it would

not be a bad idea if employers and workers from specific countries would like to sit down and say look, why do we not utilize the fact that this debate went on, to go back and decide to do something in our own context — that might be a very practical and a very concrete result of this discussion.

The question I wanted to put was the following — what is the link between poverty and child labour? As Carla was saying, child labour is also a cause of poverty; but the linkage, one way or the other, we have all agreed to. Could we then agree that we want to make the reduction of child labour an indicator of the reduction of poverty? Because since the reduction of poverty requires a number of interconnected issues — and I come back to what Carla said — you need education, you need to be able to export your products, you need a number of things to happen if you want poverty to be reduced. Could we decide that one of the key indicators that we want to look at in poverty reduction is if, with all of those things coming together, we are able to reduce child labour in a more structural way, not just simply by taking some children out of a particular situation in which they find themselves?

Let me say that this is a particular question for the Bretton Woods institutions, because you know that the ILO is engaged in a debate with them over the PRSPs. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers do not contemplate employment creation as an instrument to reduce poverty. We know that parents who have a job do not normally have children who work. So, if we take our decent work strategy, and we confront it with the PRSPs, we are faced with the very fundamental question of how to reduce poverty while ensuring employment in the decent work context of the ILO. We also know that children who go to work have parents who are probably not working.

So this is a very fundamental question, and one which hinges on the linkage between employment and child labour. I am just raising this issue because of the very fundamental question of how to measure, how to judge, reductions in poverty. Maybe the reduction of child labour is not a bad indicator. In the whole of the international community we will agree at least on the basic, fundamental element that if parents get jobs child labour will be reduced. That is clear. We want an international economy that works in such a way that it can deliver the jobs that it is not delivering today.

I am just raising the question of how could we move towards the reduction of child labour serving as an indicator of the reduction of poverty.

Original French: Mr. BLONDEL (Workers' technical adviser, France) — I do apologize for taking the floor again but I believe that that is actually part and parcel of an interactive discussion. Had we not been working interactively I would have waited until the end of the discussion and made a general statement, but I think it is good that I try to respond to some of the points that have been made in the course of the discussion and to some of the things that you have said.

Although I do not wish to offend the Director-General, I would say that sometimes people have a tendency to state the obvious. You ask how we can have an alliance between employers and workers in order to try and actively reduce child labour, but how else can we do it? Who is it that employs children? It is the employers. The employers have to be

with us and to accept that they are not going to employ children anymore. If they do so then we will already have solved a part of the problem. Provided that they make a commitment here at the ILC, in their countries, in their companies and in specific branches of industry.

I referred to the mining sector earlier on because one of my colleagues asked “Well what are the other workers going to think about this?” I know for a fact that adult miners would very much like to ensure that children do not work themselves to death alongside them. So this situation would not be so difficult to regulate.

That is all very well but let us think about the economic consequences of not having child labour in that sector. It seems to me that if work is not going to be done by children it will be done by adults and, without any kind of proof to the contrary, that seems quite logical. It could even be that adults would do the work and try to get paid a bit more for it. That is not something that we as trade unionists would object to, however, this immediately raises the question of economic consequences and this is where the international community can play a role. This is where there could be a need for compensation and where we would have to look to the IMF and other financial institutions. It is also stating the obvious to point out that children would also need to receive an education and that we have a responsibility to pay for their education, set up schools and other educational establishments where required, and so on.

Coming back to the point about an alliance between employers and workers I would point out that, in principle, for the core standards in each country, what we have to do is to initiate a social dialogue through the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). I certainly believe that if we now start trying to focus on specific issues and establish targeted programmes and, if we look at the issue in detail and tell ourselves that we are going to stop child labour in a particular sector and really make a concerted effort to do so, then we will. I would certainly be ready to go down that path or at least consider it, particularly having heard what was said by our NGO colleagues.

I am particularly keen on the idea of a social dialogue that would not just be tripartite but in which the NGOs would also have a complementary role to play. I think this could be useful. It is not enough just to say “Mines must be closed to children”. That is all very well. You can turn around and say “OK, mines will be closed to children as of tomorrow”. But that is not enough. We need a whole system to be established, so that children can find a rightful place elsewhere and do something else such as go to school. This requires a concerted effort to across the board and it is not something that trade unionists can do alone. We need others to go down that path with us and we can work alongside NGOs here, which I believe would be positive and effective.

I must confess that I was a little startled by what I heard from the Colombian representative. With all due respect we claimed that children do not work in Colombia. Although it may be true that they do not work I have unfortunately seen too many of them with weapons in their hands which is regrettable and deplorable.

Once again, in concluding, I would like to apologize for taking the floor again.

Mrs. NELSON (*representative of the United Nations Children's Fund*) — On the issue of using a child labour indicator to measure poverty, UNICEF finds this indeed a very interesting suggestion. We would see some problems related to the lack of good data, as was pointed out this morning, but perhaps the very fact of introducing that indicator would help to stimulate more and better research in this area. The kind of research, for instance, that UNICEF, the ILO and the World Bank are already carrying out together, through the project that is called "Understanding Children's Work", based in Florence.

Perhaps, also, it would help to stimulate more action in this area. Concerning the entire area of action, I wanted to come back to the whole issue of the usefulness of employers and workers working more together. We would definitely support that idea of more cooperation in this field because it enters very much into the whole concept of the importance of national ownership, being important to both long-term commitment and to long-term action, which is so necessary to real progress.

We would emphasize, though, the importance of broadening that social dialogue beyond government, workers and employers, to include other actors. I think those of us who were at the Special Session on Children in which you yourself participated three weeks' ago saw that there are many others actors that are very keen on making a contribution. These are religious leaders, parliamentarians, as well as NGOs. Most importantly, though, I think are the children themselves. Many of the worst forms of child labour actually take place in the informal sector and in the illegal sector. They are not going to be raised in a dialogue that is only held between workers and employers. These areas are liable to be overlooked if the dialogue is limited to just a tripartite discussion.

Involving children in the discussions is particularly important for other reasons. You referred to the importance of seeing linkages between the different causes of child labour and the different ways of addressing the issue, and also the need for targeted action because governments do not have unlimited budgets. In UNICEF's experience, children and young people who are caught in these situations see very clearly themselves the linkages between the factors that lead to their place in the workforce, and they see very clearly the major obstacles to their getting out. Also, many of these children are struggling on their own. There have been several references here to the fact that if children are not in the labour force, they will be replaced by adults. This is true in many cases but, unfortunately, in Africa you have many children going into the labour force because they happen to be AIDS orphans, and so they have no adults to speak on their behalf, nor adults to support them. This is why, then, we would emphasize the importance of including child workers themselves in the dialogue, in order to be sure that the different forms of child labour are not overlooked, but also most importantly to be sure that when we make a decision on the priority actions to be taken, that we really are making the best possible use of our resources and our energy. We must truly address those obstacles or those causes that the children themselves have identified, and that they recognize very clearly as being the reason why they find themselves in the labour force.

Because of the linkages between these various areas, UNICEF over the next decade will be working

in an integrated way on AIDS, education and child protection. We see very strong linkages in these three different areas, and we look forward to working in partnership, as we already are, with the ILO, as well as with governments, employers, NGOs and the children themselves.

Original Spanish: The SECRETARY-GENERAL — The representative from UNICEF said it would be a good idea to hear from the children who have been, or are, victims of child labour. And, as we are celebrating, yesterday and today, the first World Day against Child Labour, there are some children who have come to Geneva for this and who have been listening to our discussions. One of those children is Reina, who comes from Peru. She has been listening to us and has said that she would like to say a few words. Reina, you have the floor.

Original Spanish: REINA (*Child, Peru*) — I would like to begin by thanking the UNICEF representative for acknowledging our rights, including the right to have an opinion. I think that it is extremely important that children and adolescents participate in this debate, which is also very important.

I would like to tell you about what we are doing in Peru to eliminate child labour. With the CESIP programme, which is one of the programmes belonging to the Global March against Child Labour, we are helping children who work by giving them fellowships so that they can overcome their difficulties, and to try to raise their self-esteem, which is very low.

With the support of the private company Bell South, which has been supplying children who are unable to purchase their own school equipment with books, etc., we are helping to eliminate child labour in Peru. Enterprises, governments and us, the children, are all affected by this, and I hope that the same steps are being taken in other countries, because we are making progress. In Peru, over 1,500 children who were not going to school have been able to return to school and are doing very well, thanks to the support from enterprises and CESIP and thanks to the help we have given each other. My message is the following: there have been discussions about the various forms of child labour, and I would like to say that all children who work, regardless of what the work may be, suffer in some form or another. But, if we take action we can eliminate this problem, which is one of the biggest in the world.

Original Spanish: The SECRETARY-GENERAL — Thank you Reina for sharing your experiences with us here today. And we thank you and your friends and all the children for coming to celebrate with us the World Day against Child Labour.

(The speaker continues in English.)

We have very little time but I would like to look at one last question. We have been talking about international cooperation and other similar issues and I would like to have an opinion of a donor country. Maybe Ms. Robinson from Canada would speak to us about how donor countries see this issue. Very clearly, there are things that need to be done nationally, there are local actors that have to act, we have discussed all of that. But in the end, there is always the international cooperation part of it, and if that is not present

many of the things that we are discussing here will probably not happen. My final two speakers are Mr. Maenda from the United Republic of Tanzania, and maybe he could also reflect a little on the experiences of a recipient country, and Ms. Robinson. If Ms. Robinson could take the floor first. If there is any other donor country that would like to make an intervention, they are welcome to do so.

Mr. MAENDA (*Employers' technical adviser, United Republic of Tanzania*) — I hoped I was not going to speak about international cooperation, so I am a bit more comfortable now. I just want to mention these subjects briefly. First, the one on which you have just been collecting views, with regard to poverty reduction and child labour. One underlying factor is that the poverty reduction strategy papers must be a result of consensus. It has been our experience that tripartite consensus was achieved on poverty reduction strategy papers, and at a certain stage child labour was included as a component of poverty reduction strategies. There was emphasis, and this I think has also been covered in the Report, on the linkage between child labour, poverty reduction strategies and the macroeconomic policy environment, in particular the priority of job creation and employment generation, as this has a direct impact on child labour.

The other point I wanted to mention was with regard to an earlier point which you had discussed or on which you had solicited views. This is the role of employers' and workers' organizations. Our experience dates back to 1992, when we had the first tripartite national workshop on child labour. At this workshop, we were able to identify the extent of child labour and the priorities of action to combat child labour. There was tripartite consensus on this problem of child labour and the action plans were adopted with specific roles for the employers' organizations, specific roles for the trade unions and other actors from civil society and government departments. As our experience at such times in the employers is that we first had to initiate internal dialogue, within the membership, and ensure that all members understood that child labour is an issue that has to be addressed by corporate policy. Therefore, our main task between 1995 and 1999 was to organize employers in commercial agriculture to adopt corporate policies within their own entities to combat child labour. Between 1995 and 1999 we were able to organize 14 workshops for owners, managers and supervisors of commercial agriculture, and we had 415 people, owners, managers and supervisors who went through this programme and have all adopted corporate plans in their respective companies to address the issue of child labour. The rapid assessment which was made in 1999, specifically in May, showed that child labour had been reduced by 70 per cent in the plantations that we covered. That was a very encouraging result and members have become more supportive of our action.

The final point which I wanted to make was with regard to mainstreaming of child labour in national policies and national budgets. We had a heated debate on this, and I was pleased that, as a result of dialogue, the time-bound programme on the elimination of forced child labour has now been elevated from the Ministry of Labour to the Prime Minister's office as the coordinating office. So it is now being granted the highest priority by the Prime Minister, who is personally chairing the coordination committee and physi-

cally following up the plans that have been laid down for the implementation of the time-bound programme.

As a result of this dialogue, I am pleased to report that we have now agreed that the time-bound programme is going to start in August, and my organization, the Association of Tanzanian Employers, is specifically working in an area which has been identified as having some of the worst forms of child labour. We have already made the initial contacts, and we believe that we are going to achieve a similar impact.

I wish to conclude by saying that whatever we do in the area of child labour, towards poverty reduction, dialogue is indispensable and there has to be a consensus. Secondly, for employers' organizations, the approach of fault finding has always been met with resistance, but dialogue within the membership, on the best business practices, on the business implications of child labour, has been more positive and has given more results, by the members understanding that it is good business to have no child labour.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — Thank you for your intervention, which I think is very clear. It reminds us that, with all the difficulties and the problems, there are certain countries that have decided to tackle this issue head on.

Many of you may remember that President Mkapa was with us last year and he explained, in what I would say was an extraordinarily moving statement, the internal difficulties in the United Republic of Tanzania of making these things happen. And even with all those difficulties, they had still, in consultation with the tripartite structure in the society, decided to have a time-bound programme for the elimination of child labour.

So, as we come to the end of our meeting, it is also good to recall that, with all the difficulties, political will and the decision of employers, workers and the rest of society to act does make an enormous difference, and that is probably *the* difference. Here I will come back to the first issue of ownership.

The President has been kind enough to give us a few more minutes to wrap up, and I think that it is important to have some perspective from those countries that are committed to continue to provide resources. I have called upon Canada to take the floor but maybe there is also someone else in the room that might want to talk on this issue.

Ms. ROBINSON (*Government delegate, Canada*) — I do appreciate this opportunity to say a few words about where we would perhaps see the ILO and IPEC going in the future, in terms of priorities.

First of all, I think that one of the great values of the Global Report, and also of the discussion here today, is the fact that we have shared many examples of innovative approaches to combating child labour that have involved partnerships — partnerships among and between Governments, workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs, and international organizations. I think that it is very important for the ILO to generate discussion and encourage the sharing of views, so that we can build on these innovative approaches and learn from each other's practices.

Secondly, I think that the ILO and IPEC have been highly successful in their campaigns to raise awareness of child labour and to mobilize constituents,

donors and others, and I think that this work should continue, along with the campaign for universal ratification and implementation of [Convention No. 182](#).

The Report also indicates that IPEC has been doing some excellent work in the areas of research and data collection and this, of course, has to continue so that we can obtain a better understanding of child labour, where it occurs and what forms it takes. In particular we would like to see more information on the hidden forms of worst forms of child labour, and also more data to enable us to better understand the different impacts on girls and boys.

However, overall, we feel that there should be more focus on concrete actions, such as the time-bound programmes and programmes aimed at providing alternative income opportunities for families; the removal of children from the worst forms of child labour; improved access to basic education and capacity building, to assist countries in developing and implementing or enforcing their labour laws. In addition, greater efforts should be made to prosecute the perpetrators of the worst forms of child labour, such as bonded labour and the sexual exploitation of children.

We support the proposals in the Report aimed at reinforcing the work of IPEC, in particular its technical cooperation activities and we would like to see more focus on the development and implementation of comprehensive country-specific programmes. We have heard very often during the discussions today how important it is to have ownership at country level.

Of course, the ILO cannot do this in isolation which is why we would endorse the suggestions in the Report concerning strengthening and extending ILO partnerships. This is particularly important in areas where other agencies are already working, such as HIV/AIDS and trafficking.

Finally, we also heard in the discussion how important it is for the ILO to work with the Bretton Woods institutions to ensure that the elimination of child labour is integrated into their policies, and particularly the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

Ultimately, I think that we have to work in partnerships and we have to work together. We have limited resources, although donors have been very generous, and some of them have been acknowledged, including some of the major donors such as the United States and Germany, but we do have limited resources. This is why it is essential that we ensure that these resources are used effectively so that the greatest number of children and families possible can actually benefit from them.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — We have completed the time allocated and we have all heard the discussions, so I do not need to provide a summary. I would just like to say that what I have drawn from these discussions is a very, very strong desire to move into concrete questions. We have defined the nature of the problem well, and there is a list of seven or eight key things that need to be done: education, employment, social protection, the right to organize in order to defend oneself, monitoring of the situation, labour inspectorates, etc.

So, we do not have a problem as to how to go about it. The fact is that we have to move on to the next stage of action. Action is already taking place. One of the most important points that is apparent from what

we have heard is that a lot of things are already being done. Given the enormity of the problem, however, these things are not making a dent. Nevertheless, in ten years we have moved from denial to consciousness, to acknowledgement, and to a number of different levels of action.

This was not an issue on the global agenda ten years ago. It was not an issue on the national agenda ten years ago. The fact that we can produce this Report now is because we have become aware of the complexity of the problem. This Report would have been impossible ten years ago because the response would have been: “what do you mean, child labour? No, we don’t have that problem.”

Honestly speaking, the majority of us did not truly comprehend the depth and extent of it. There were, as always, some people who were at the forefront of things and called our attention to it at a time when the mainstream of the international community was not worrying about it. It is today. There is now a major movement in place and an enormous amount of activities have been set in motion by governments, employers, workers, religious organizations, parliaments, etc.

The question for us at the ILO is to follow up on what Ms. Robinson said. In relation to the dimension of the problem we really have very few resources. And, as I said at the outset, they depend on a number of things, meaning that long-term planning is not really possible.

The objective of this type of meeting and the discussion to be held in the Governing Body in November on the basis of the Report, which contains many concrete suggestions, is really to be able to zero in on the problem. Where is it that we can make a difference? There is a risk of going all over the place with projects that do not necessarily fit together properly. That is inevitable during the first stage because it is a matter of trial and error. You have to try different solutions out.

I think that ten years down the road we now have a much more integrated view. We can much more accurately make the connections that so many of you have made — this is connected with this, and this other thing, so which way next. We can mainstream child labour — first of all within the ILO, but it is not something that stands alone, rather something that weaves through the four strategic objectives. These three or four areas are the key ones. There are a number of other ones we could be involved in, but if we concentrate on these, they would seem to be the value added that the ILO can bring to this.

That, I think, is the challenge that was raised this morning, the one that we will continue to address now in this interactive process will leave with us so that we will be able, when we take up this issue again in November in the Governing Body, to be as precise as possible and respond to the questions: where is the ILO value added? Where can we make a difference?

There is a range of different issues on the table. We need to devise initiatives to pull them together and to set the wheels in motion at the national level, with the commitment of the national actors.

Thank you so much to all of you. Numerous ideas have been aired. If we went on for another two hours a lot more ideas would be raised. This has been an experiment, I think a useful one, and an approach we might want to use again on some other occasion,

either on this or on other issues. As we go along we will learn to make it better and better.

Thank you very much for the effort involved in trying this out.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — I would like to thank the Director-General and also his entire team in charge of the Declaration. I would also like to extend my thanks to all the participants in this discussion because one thing has emerged from this interactive debate. We have talked about a serious problem, child labour, without making the subject taboo.

We have shown, during the course of this discussion, that we can make headway and that we want the ILO to act, but that we are not trying to criticize. Indeed, this is a key part of the spirit of our Declaration.

May we enable the constructive and tripartite dialogue begun here today to continue and bear fruit at the national level in order to enable States to make good choices in the framework of their economic and social policies.

(The Conference adjourned at 5.15 p.m.)

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