

**Fifteenth sitting**

Saturday, 15 June 2002, 10 a.m.

*President: Mr. Elmiger*

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

*Original French:* The PRESIDENT — It is my pleasure to open this session. We shall continue with the discussion of the Report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Report of the Director-General.

*Original Spanish:* Mr. MALLCU CHOQUE-TICLLA (*Workers' delegate, Bolivia*) — I would like to discuss the trade union situation in my country and the opportunities we have to contribute effectively towards solving social and labour problems.

It is said of Bolivia that we have a stable democracy because of the country's economic growth, which is small but sustainable. It is also said that the fight against drug trafficking is a step forward and that Bolivia is making a contribution to the health of the world's population and to the struggle against drug addiction.

At present, State and Employer representatives are reaffirming and updating their previous official speeches by adding that a Bolivian Strategy for the Reduction of Poverty (EBRP) has been established. They are also adding that the Social Dialogue Act is bringing together the aspirations of the majority of the population and converting them into a "Social Control Instrument", to combat corruption and deal with social requirements.

This is all very well, but now let us look at the real situation in Bolivia from a worker's point of view. In reality, the essence of the current system is to reorganize the economic order, trans-nationalize the economy, open up the markets at the global level and create dependency on foreign investments.

Cutting-edge technology has not reached us as was hoped, and has only made a slight difference in some areas of production and communications. This has resulted in an increase in unemployment and a weakening of trade union organizations.

The most serious issue to which we wish to refer is that the code of trade union laws included in the Constitution (article 159) is not being recognized and that corrupt judges are being used so that legislation can be utilized as an instrument of coercion in the so-called "new labour discipline".

A State subject to the rule of law theoretically means the dialectic combination of understanding and coercion. In Bolivia, the State does not guarantee the independent nature of the legal system, which, through the judicial powers, should be an instrument for justice, and above all social justice. At present in

Bolivia, there is more coercion than understanding with regard to the social requirements of the population.

In addition to all this, the arrogance of employers is being bolstered by the State; a State where tripartism is being degraded by the joining together of the most powerful against the weakest, and where the rights of workers and their organizations are not being recognized — ironically in the name of a State subject to the rule of law. The following are examples of this: Workers in the health-care services are being subjected to ordinary jurisdiction for having denounced corruption in the hierarchy of the public health system; workers from the Telephone Cooperative (COTEL) who maintained a strike for over a month to contest the arrogance of a multinational enterprise are being dismissed under the pretext of "downsizing"; multinational companies are intimidating workers to prevent them from joining trade unions, and are also preventing national union leaders from coming into their premises to help organize union movements. As a result of this anti-union policy, workers do not have the right to organize, and of course this right is enshrined in the standards and Conventions of the ILO. For instance, in Santa Cruz, we have more than 500 enterprises, but we have only 37 trade unions. Freedom of association is basically forbidden, and those who dare to contravene these so-called standards lose their jobs.

In Bolivia, it is true that life expectancy has increased. It was through the Pensions Act that the retirement age was established at 65 years of age. Before this Act, the retirement age in Bolivia was 50 for women and 55 for men, after 25 years of work. This new legislation has set the retirement age at 65 years of age for both men and women.

In view of the above, we would like to take this opportunity to request that tripartism, which is a basic principle of the ILO, be practised fairly by all parties. We would also ask that the implicit ideological alliances, and interests of the neo-liberal States and the global business community not be some sort of vice which oppresses and exploits the workers of the world.

We would also like to ask the Conference to strongly urge the Government of Bolivia to comply with the principles and core Conventions of the ILO. All the problems we have mentioned should be a constant concern of the Conference and of the management and administrative bodies of the ILO, so that people, nations and member States adopt sovereign attitudes and discard the conditions imposed on the weakest countries by the strongest ones. The open markets of poor countries should be regulated *vis-à-*

vis the protectionism of the stronger countries. In the face of injustice, discrimination, the violation of trade union, social and political rights, we should establish more efficient mechanisms so that the ILO and those who are represented at this session of the Conference truly participate in building a fairer world.

Mr. MENDOZA (*Workers' delegate, Philippines*) — We congratulate the Director-General for the splendid work that he has put into his Report. We in the Philippine labour movement are inspired by the Report, the initiatives, and the commitments of the ILO and our social partners.

In the Philippines, we have completed our action programme for decent work. It is an ambitious programme, but with the help of the sectors concerned we will accomplish many things. We may not be entirely happy with the crafted programme, but that is what social dialogue is all about.

We are happy with the correct references to fundamental principles and rights at work, but it will take much effort to right many things on child labour, freedom of association and collective bargaining, forced labour, and non-discrimination.

They kidnapped a staunch union leader in the Cavite zone last week. They continue to harass our women in the factories. They persist in forced overtime, to the detriment of our workers' health. Our cases still grind slowly through the government mills.

Despite this, we believe that our decent work programme will substantially reduce our concerns in the next five years.

We support a proposed Recommendation on co-operatives. Cooperatives are an instrument of the poor, and for the poor. Cooperatives are important in distributing wealth, harmonizing and rationalizing government programmes at grassroots level, providing workers and their families with alternative sources of income. Cooperatives are worker empowerment.

Sadly, cooperatives have also been used against unions. There are management-run groups posing as cooperatives to prevent unions in the enterprises. They take advantage of our law, which prohibits worker members from organizing unions in cooperatives. Worse, a successful workers' enterprise in Cebu province, owned by the workers, is under attack from cheap politicians. Some people are unable to reconcile themselves to worker-run entities.

We are confident that, through social dialogue, with the help of progressive employers and our champion, the Labor Department, we will win in the end.

We are gratified that attention on the informal economy is increasing. We are proud that the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) helped to put together the biggest informal sector group in the Philippines.

The sector needs urgent help. In the search for the lowest cost, the sector is over-exploited, and pitted against their comrades in the formal sector. The impact on workers and the economy is deadly.

This year's session of the Conference takes place when the whole world is faced with many other challenges: peace, terrorism, uneven trade, the ever-widening gap between the poor and the rich. These have taken a heavy toll in many countries, on communities, lives, properties, workers, women and children.

I take this opportunity to encourage everyone to call on the leaders of the world to intensify efforts for peace. All this strife is pushing more people to

poverty and to desperate measures. The world where we live and work is in danger. Let us all in the ILO, and in the world, give our all for peace.

Mr. MOYO (*Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe*) — Since I am taking the floor for the first time, allow me to preface my remarks by congratulating the President and the three Vice-Presidents on their election to the presidency of this important Conference. My delegation has confidence in their leadership and pledges its support to them as we deliberate the key issues in the coming days.

My delegation wishes to congratulate the Director-General for producing the first biennial report on programme implementation based on strategic and results-based budgeting concepts and tools. We see this as a step in the right direction, and worthy of support.

As indicated in the Report of the Director-General, it was not all rosy. There were setbacks, some because of inadequate resources and others due to institutional handicaps.

The main challenges confronting Africa include economic empowerment through the acquisition of assets, such as land, and ownership of the means of production by indigenous people, wealth creation, poverty alleviation through employment creation, ensuring social security schemes in all sectors of the labour market including those in the informal sector, the elimination of child labour and fighting the AIDS pandemic, and dealing with globalization and the casualization of labour.

My Government is confronting all these issues and has made commendable strides for some, particularly HIV/AIDS, where we have set up a national AIDS fund through the levy of a tax. In the area of economic empowerment, through the acquisition of assets, my Government has taken far-reaching measures in resettling its citizens deprived of land for generations.

No longer can we talk of 4,000 whites owning 80 per cent of the land, but of a land that belongs to the majority of its citizens. The initiative of the ILO on decent work and employment creation through the Jobs for Africa project, while well spoken of, has not yet taken ground in many countries, including my own. It is hampered by inadequate funding and operational problems which need to be addressed.

Zimbabwe has a comprehensive social protection system which includes social security, pensions for workers in industry and a social safety net for vulnerable groups implemented through government and civil society structures. In this year of drought engulfing southern Africa, workers, peasants and society at large depend on the social protection structures that have worked so well in the past to ensure that nobody will die from the effects of the drought.

Through the United Nations system, of which the ILO is a part, humanitarian appeals have been made in order to assist vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe and southern Africa in general.

We note, regarding the organizational structure, that in order to move the Decent Work Agenda forward, there is a need to improve and restructure the field operations of the ILO. This restructuring is overdue and is beginning to hamper the good work that the ILO can do in member States.

In conclusion, Zimbabwe remains committed to the ideals of the ILO, among which is the very critical

issue of social dialogue. Together with the ILO and its structures, we believe that social dialogue will succeed in solving the challenges that confront all developing countries, and the world at large, in this era of globalization.

*Original Arabic:* Mr. AFFILLAL (*Workers' delegate, Morocco*) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! Allow me first of all, on behalf of the General Union of Workers in Morocco and the Moroccan delegation, to congratulate the President on his election to preside over the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. He is doing a very successful job.

The session is being held at a time in which great troubles and an increase in extremism are manifest. This situation risks sapping human values. These values which, unfortunately, could give way tomorrow to ethnic and ideological conflicts, as well as to the egotistical desire to kill our neighbour. If this were to happen, we would certainly have a very dark future. No military might can solve the problems that we are facing. We can only improve this situation if our decision-makers decide to share the wealth of our planet in a fair and equitable manner and to try to avoid the disadvantages of globalization.

This session is being held as the Palestinian people are being massacred and the rights of the Palestinians are being trampled upon. Serious violations of human rights are taking place in the occupied Arab territories, perpetrated by the occupying Israeli forces.

We are merely spectators. We content ourselves with condemning these massacres to which the Palestinians are being subjected. We all know that the Palestinians have the right to self-determination and to an independent State. These rights are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as in the Declaration of Philadelphia, the Dakar Declaration and all the other international declarations regarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers.

This session is being held at a time when there has been a surge of the extreme right, and poverty and hunger are spreading. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, nearly 800 million people are living in inhuman conditions and are condemned to hunger. Their income is continually falling.

We have read with great interest the Report of the Director-General, *ILO programme implementation 2000-01*. We have the following comments to make. We see that the budget for technical aid to North Africa is just 0.8 per cent of the overall budget for technical assistance. Secondly, the activities being carried out in Morocco continue to be less coordinated than is required. These are two matters which are of great concern to us. We would call on the administration to revise its priorities in respect of Morocco, and to strengthen employment assistance programmes for the unemployed and training programmes, so as to help the workers and enterprises of our country and our region.

Morocco has always strived and still strives to combat child labour, and the Government has ratified the Conventions on this question and taken a series of practical measures, although they require great sacrifices on the part of many families.

We shall continue to fight in order to guarantee and strengthen tripartite representation so that there is a

true partnership between the social partners, by urging the Government to ratify [Convention No. 87](#). During the last social dialogue session, in May 2002, the Government undertook to study this Convention and to seriously consider its ratification. We are also working for the creation of a compensation fund for dismissed workers and for the creation of a health system that will cover the needs of the entire Moroccan population.

We assure you that we are actively fighting to improve the lives of workers. To do so, we need more attention and more support from the Organization.

Mr. LOLLBEEHARRY (*Workers' delegate, Mauritius*) — On behalf of my organization, the Mauritius Labour Congress (MLC), I take pleasure in taking the floor at the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

First and foremost, I would like to commend the good work done by the ILO under the able leadership of its Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, in the course of the year that has elapsed.

Special mention has to be made about the follow-up programme that has been established concerning the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which has led to the ratification of core Conventions by many countries of the world.

In my own country, my organization submitted the Declaration at the level of the Labour Advisory Board where it has been discussed at length and we are happy that the Government decided to ratify [Conventions Nos. 100 and 111](#) at the end of last month. In terms of ratification, however, we firmly believe that our Government is taking the wrong decision by refusing to ratify the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 ([No. 87](#)). For almost 30 years our Government has maintained the Industrial Relations Act which denies us the right to strike and the right to organize freely, in spite of the fact that a report has been prepared and handed over by the ILO to the Government in this connection.

This year a fresh attempt is being made by the Government to abolish wage determination mechanisms or bodies, that is the National Remuneration Board (NRB) and the Pay Research Bureau (PRB), which have been put in place after years of struggle by workers and unions and which help to assure protection from the cruelty of the present economic system.

The National Wage Council, which is being proposed to replace the NRB and the PRB, will include representatives of multinationals and investors and its report or recommendations on salary revision exercises will not be mandatory. The National Wage Council which is being proposed aims at deregulating salaries and conditions of work and at dismantling the rights of workers. As a result of the rise in the cost of living the existence of the National Tripartite Committee on Salary Compensation is also seriously threatened.

In so far as fiscal policy is concerned, the contention of the workers and the trade union movement in my country is that all sorts of exemptions have been granted to employers and the burden of tax has been shifted to the population with a rate of indirect tax that brings the Government more than 80 per cent of its revenue, and there is every indication that value added tax is being further increased to 15 per cent

because, apparently, this policy is the most recent prescription of the World Bank.

It appears to us that our welfare state, which is one of the most performing ones in Africa, is in serious danger of being dismantled. We have for many years resisted proposals such as the extension of the retirement age, the increase in contributions to superannuation funds and, more recently, the proposal to introduce selective pensions.

These days primary school teachers are engaged in a major confrontation in my country with the Government, because the latter has refused to honour its commitment relating to an important agreement signed in 1990 and, more importantly, because a report on the improvement of teachers' salaries and status is not being released and implemented, though the Minister of Education made a statement to that effect in the National Assembly in November last year. This is an illustration of the fact that the Government has no respect for collective bargaining which is why teachers are going on strike in a matter of weeks or days.

Some six years ago, the MLC proposed the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) for discussion on the agenda of the Labour Advisory Board and this eventually led to the ratification of the Convention by our Government, as a consequence of which the National Economic and Social Council was set up. Trade unions do not want this Council to be used as a rubberstamp to approve World Bank and IMF policies and, for this reason, the MLC has proposed motions to prevent the increase of VAT and the maintenance of the PRB, NRB, etc.

Unions, NGOs and civil society at large in the country also resent the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PoTA), which was recently voted in by the National Assembly. This repressive law represents a dangerous drift towards a police state and it infringes fundamental human rights. We are continuing our struggle for the repeal of this law.

In the EPZ sector, salaries are low and conditions of work very difficult. Entrepreneurs, seeing that profits are decreasing, easily opt for receivership. Recently foreign workers from China could not bear the exploitation to which they were subjected, and protested massively at the Chinese embassy.

In the sugar industry the voluntary retirement scheme was introduced without proper consultation with unions, and the implementation of the 40-hour week, during crop season, is still being awaited, in spite of a favourable decision in court.

In spite of all the problems, the MLC has been open to dialogue and we acknowledge the role played by the Minister of Labour, especially in the resolution of conflicts. He has responded positively to our request and helped to find solutions, especially in the EPZ sector.

To conclude, I will say that our objective is to continue our struggle against the impositions of the World Bank, the IMF and the WTO. We want to reinforce and consolidate our democracy and preserve the sovereignty of our country. We also want to see Mauritius really start to comply with the ILO. We hope to succeed in our struggle with the help and guidance of the ILO.

*Original Portuguese:* Mr. MANJAZE (*Workers' delegate, Mozambique*) — Allow me first of all to express, on behalf of the Workers' Organization of

Mozambique (OTM-CS), very fraternal greetings to the President, Vice-Presidents, the Director-General and indeed all the distinguished delegates and guests attending this historic 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report which has been presented for discussion by delegates attending this annual Conference. The Report in itself bears witness to the important and timely themes to be debated in this session, in particular the implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, which was adopted in 1998 by the 86th Session of the International Labour Conference, the promotion of cooperatives, the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases and the informal economy.

The Workers' Organization of Mozambique has made the effective implementation of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work a priority, and this will help improve the working and living conditions of workers. Nowadays the world of work is undergoing major changes and is indeed facing the challenges of economic globalization and technological change. This brings with it new challenges to the concept of the defence and observance of fundamental rights which are enshrined in the eight core Conventions of the International Labour Organization. It is important to highlight that Mozambique has already ratified five ILO core Conventions — Nos. 87, 98, 100, 105 and 111, as well as the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). We are very happy to inform this distinguished Conference that the remaining three ILO core Conventions, the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), were submitted to the Mozambican Parliament in 2000 and all efforts are being deployed for them to be ratified. The Workers' Organization of Mozambique wishes to underline, however, that the ratification of these Conventions is not an end in itself; what is important is their effective implementation and follow-up by all the social partners in a spirit of tripartite social dialogue.

I would also, on behalf of the Workers' Organizations of Mozambique, like to congratulate the Director-General and the Governing Body on placing the promotion of cooperatives and the informal economy on the agenda of this session. The informal sector is increasing on a daily basis, particularly in the developing countries. This sector needs to be addressed with a view to providing a legal framework and proper working conditions for workers and operators involved in it, and such action will be conducive to the creation of cooperatives in this expanding sector. The Workers' Organization of Mozambique has created in the city and Province of Maputo a pilot association of informal sector operators and workers called ASSOTSI. It is our profound desire and ambition to be able to organize workers in this sector throughout our country.

Finally, my Organization has mandated me to appeal for ILO assistance for the organization of the informal sector in my country as a way of promoting employment, reducing social exclusion and absolute poverty.

I wish every success to the deliberations of this august 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Mr. RAUT (*Workers' delegate, Nepal*) — We are in the twenty-first century, in which globalization and free market policies have become the national policy of all countries. Meanwhile, the vast number of countries are also facing an economic crisis due to increasing terrorism whether a small country like Nepal or a big country like the United States. Most countries are supporting privatization and foreign investment, as well as membership of the World Trade Organization. These initiatives have left many workers jobless and many industries are merged with others for their survival. We think that the ILO as per its mandate has a big role to play in the creation of new employment in its member States, especially in the light of current labour market situations and in line with its new concept of promoting decent work.

Nepal is facing many problems that include under-employment and unemployment. Due to increasing violence and insurgency, most of the economic sectors have been set back and many workers engaged in these sectors have lost their jobs. The highest labour-absorbing sector — agriculture — is also one of the victims. Fundamental principles and rights at work are a very far cry for many workers engaged in the informal sector. The formal sector workers, who are organized, are also not enjoying all their rights at work, as most of the labour legislation is not implemented effectively in Nepal. Social security and other retirement schemes are just a dream for the workers of Nepal. The occupational safety and health situation, especially in the informal sector, is vulnerable; “safety is first” is therefore the main slogan in all occupational safety and health campaigns and we are constantly promoting occupational safety and health in all sectors through education and training.

The situation of child labour in Nepal is alarming — as indicated by the ILO Global Report on child labour. Since 60 per cent of the world total of child labour is in the Asia-Pacific region, Nepal is one of the major countries in this respect. Indeed, the rapid growth of the informal economy and the recently developing violence and insurgency, are resulting in an increase in child labour. It is estimated that around 2.6 million children are economically active in Nepal and, amongst these, around 50 per cent are working in various occupations. The most worrying aspect of all this is that among the total child labour, around 65 per cent are girls.

Faced with these facts, we are committed to taking strong action for the elimination of child labour from all sectors and we need to start with the worst forms of child labour. We are implementing various programmes for prevention and the rehabilitation of child labourers in various sectors with the help of the ILO, and with our own resources. The activities undertaken by the ILO have been most supportive in this area. The activities of ILO/IPEC and recently the selection of Nepal for time-bound programme implementation, are significant contributions to Nepal's initiatives to eliminate child labour — and this has strengthened our resolve. The Government's policy to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2007 and all forms of child labour by 2010, is another milestone.

As I have already mentioned above, the situation of workers in Nepal has been deteriorating and they have been deprived of their fundamental rights at work. Although HMG/Nepal has ratified many ILO fundamental Conventions (except Conventions Nos. 87 and 105), the implementation of national laws

and regulations is very weak. HMG/Nepal might have ratified most of the international instruments but it lacks enforcement and its people need to be educated with respect to the legal instruments adopted. As a trade union representative, I urge the ILO to provide all necessary technical support to the Ministry of Labour and Transport Management to help it enforce all labour-related laws and reform all non-labour friendly laws. I hope this will improve the condition of workers in Nepal and that a system will be established to monitor all labour-related issues.

In concluding, I would like to congratulate the ILO for launching different programmes that are directly related to labour issues in Nepal concerning gender, child labour, occupational safety and health, etc. On behalf of the trade unions, and especially on behalf of my trade union, DECONT, I extend all possible support for the programmes that have a direct link with workers and employment.

Mr. BOUTSIVONGSAKD (*Employers' delegate, Lao People's Democratic Republic*) — On behalf of the Employers' Organization of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to thank the Conference for allocating me time to speak at the plenary session today.

As you may know, Laos is a young and small least developed country located in the middle of the Indo-China peninsula. Our country became a full member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 27 July 1997 and we will join the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) in the year 2008 with a very young and weak industrial sector. We have, in our country, the infant manufacturing industries such as garments for export, wood-processing, cement, steel bars and zinc for construction. We are facing now the challenges of globalization and the phase-out of GATT quotas. We have a big fear that we will be faced with outstanding competition that we did not know of before, after the year 2004.

As an employers' organization our biggest concerns are how to help our young industry to survive and develop in a competitive condition after the year 2004 in the AFTA period.

At the same time, we should have to comply not only with our labour law, but also with the industrial codes of conduct and other safety conditions from the customers. To minimize the bad impact of the new trade conditions on our industrial sector, our employers' organization has joined with international organizations in an effort to inform our entrepreneurs and recommend that they adapt themselves to the new situation step-by-step.

In the past three years, the ILO has made a big contribution to organizing workshops and seminars about the ILO core Conventions and has signed, with our Government, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of ILO/IPEC with regard to trafficking in women and children.

These activities contributed to raising awareness about industrial relations, social dialogue and child labour protection among high-ranking officials, business and social communities.

During the phase of implementation of this MOU, our tripartite committee has cooperated with regional ILO/IPEC to identify the source of child labour. We are now focusing on the worst forms of child labour and the rescue of trafficked women and children.

We are very grateful to the ILO for supporting us with financial and technical assistance to set up the social security system for the private sector in our country. With the experience gained after one year of test operations, we have registered 107 enterprises and insured 26,652 employees among 80,000. The schemes are now extended to all enterprises with ten, or fewer, employees.

We are confident that with the support of the ILO for the second phase of social security development, the public and private social security scheme will become the best social insurance for our workers.

To make this second phase successful, to harmonize better industrial relations and give better services to promote investment and job creation, we need to reorganize the employers' representative unit inside our Chamber of Commerce and Industry. We request the ILO to help us with technical and financial support for this purpose.

Regarding the preparation of our industrial and services entrepreneurs for the competition in ASEAN and world markets, we need to organize continuous workshops and training at management level, medium level and skill training. We need also to amend some articles of our existing labour law to better comply with the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and codes of industrial conduct, as one of the least developed countries.

We hope we will get technical and financial support for our important and crucial mission.

*Original Spanish:* Ms. CHIRENO GARCIA (representative of the World Federation of Clerical Workers) — Please accept our special greetings from the World Federation of Clerical Workers, which welcomes the initiative of the ILO and its Director-General to take up the enormous challenge of dealing in tripartite meetings with such controversial topics as the informal economy, decent jobs and the exploitation of child labour.

The World Federation of Clerical Workers, together with its regional organizations in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America, is tackling these topics with great concern, along with such problems as the increase in movements of migrant workers and the deterioration in living and working conditions of men and women non-salaried workers in commercial activities who are obliged to work very long hours, including on holidays and Sundays. This situation has compelled us to conduct an international campaign against work on Sundays, and to defend a 40-hour working week for these workers.

The growing number of workers who are dismissed from their jobs without any new work opportunities significantly increases the flow of men and women into the informal economy. This circumstance leads to the worst forms of human exploita-

tion, because these men and women workers are regarded as trash. They are not covered by labour legislation. There are no mechanisms for including them in social security schemes, and even when such schemes are drawn up, they are required to pay the full costs, without any contribution from governments and employers. No solidarity funds or special subsidies are provided.

In many countries these workers are regarded as trash. They are accused of all kinds of crimes and are prohibited from fully exercising the right to work. For example, in El Salvador, 17 workers were arrested for exercising the right to work in the streets of that poor country, which unlike other countries does not offer much in the way of alternative forms of employment. Their conditions really are sub-human, for apart from the difficult circumstances in which they work, they do not enjoy any legal or social protection. This situation is very familiar to the ILO. It is described in its studies, and discussed at length in the Director-General's Report.

In these circumstances, the statistics speak for themselves. We are talking about a very large percentage of workers engaged in these activities. ILO Conventions do not cover their very real needs for legal protection. This applies to a very large proportion of the world's economically active population. There is an urgent need to study the possibility of the ILO adopting a new Convention providing special and specific protection for workers in the informal economy, with specific responses to meet their needs, and clearly establishing the obligations of governments and employers to begin by respecting as a fundamental value and principle the right to stable work in decent and human conditions, which is the essence of decent work.

It is essential to encourage member States to enact legislation to enable workers in the informal economy to be covered by national laws with constitutional rank. They must thus be accorded the right to work, including stable jobs on the basis of consensus, with respect for local and national characteristics; sufficient income to meet their basic needs with a workday of eight hours and a workweek of 40 hours, rest days on Sunday and annual holidays; as well as stable, regulated and healthy conditions for decent work in a clean and pleasant environment, the organization of credit systems and a comprehensive education, health and housing programme with full state support, full trade union rights and the right to be represented, a decent childhood for their children and enhancement of and respect for the dignity of women workers. In all these areas, our world federation offers its support and collaboration in the interests of decent work for adults and education for children.

*(The Conference adjourned at 11 a.m.)*

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