



Third sitting

Monday, 10 June 2002, 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Elmiger

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Original French: The PRESIDENT — I would like to extend a most cordial welcome to all, and it is with pleasure that I declare open the third sitting of the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. Before starting our work and moving on to the first item on the agenda which concerns the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body on the work of the Governing Body over the year which has just ended, I would like to say a few words to you.

I would like to begin my statement with a few words of thanks. You have elected a Swiss to head this Conference and I take this as a personal compliment but, above all, it is an honour that has been paid to Switzerland, a founding Member and the host country of the International Labour Organization.

As you all know, Switzerland is a country that is open to the world, and this tradition of openness has always been based on a deep-seated concern for social justice. Ever since it began to develop economically, Switzerland has been imbued with the fundamental values of the International Labour Organization and its mode of functioning: tripartism and the search for consensus, independence and neutrality. These values and these means of action are now enshrined in Switzerland's genetic heritage.

Over the years, Switzerland has persisted in its efforts to move closer to the various international players, for example, the European Union or the World Trade Organization. But this effort has been crowned by the recent decision taken by Swiss people to join the United Nations Organization. The message of hope and wisdom that is connected with this popular decision reflects the desire to play a greater role within the international community, particularly in order to promote human rights and social justice.

It is in this spirit of openness, service and availability that the Swiss presence within the ILO has been able to take shape and to find new vigour in the past three years, both on the Governing Body and at the International Labour Conference. Our major concern has been, and will remain, to contribute decisively to the mandate of the ILO in favour of peace and promotion of social justice.

In this respect, I would like to note that Switzerland has also responded to the ILO's expectations by ratifying recently all the fundamental standards and by setting up a national tripartite commission for matters concerning the activities of the ILO, in accordance with the terms of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144).

The globalization of the economy and the liberalization of trade are not new phenomena. What makes them even more sensitive is the speed of change and the adjustments that have become necessary, in particular as a result of the extraordinary development of information technology.

In view of this, the feeling that one is being overtaken by the acceleration of the economy or increased competition on the markets may give rise to another feeling, a feeling of being excluded or at least of being out of step in social and economic terms at both the national and international levels.

The Report of the Director-General on the activities of the ILO should reassure us about the quality of our Organization's work. For nearly one decade now, but more particularly over the past three or four years, the ILO has continued to hold its head high and to reaffirm its values and its mandate so that the social dimension of the globalization of the economy is duly taken into account when devising and implementing all policies.

I remain convinced that the work of the ILO in this field must not be considered from a short-term point of view but must be based on a broad global and strategic vision of the socio-economic balance of the world. It is absolutely essential that the Organization should continue to make its voice heard and should continue the work of the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization and the work that is being undertaken on as part of the World Commission.

If I had to use a metaphor, I would say that well-controlled economic development remains, whether one likes it or not, the locomotive that pulls the train of sustainable and fair social development. I believe that the ILO is there to make sure that the locomotive is properly attached to the carriages and that this attachment should not be affected by any weak link in the chain. Technical cooperation, social dialogue, promotion of employment and the fundamental rights of workers and adequate social protection are all indispensable to ensuring that the train of decent work should be able to travel in perfect safety.

Today we are going to start the substantive work and, from some aspects, perhaps the most difficult of our deliberations devoted to the various reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body. In this respect, I would like to inform you of some considerations. The year 2001, and the beginning of 2002, have in many ways changed the face of the world. Crime, risk of conflict, the feeling of injustice sometimes, and powerlessness or revolt when confronted by many innocent victims: all these words that we already know have taken on a new dimension

and have had an enormous impact on the world of work, on employment and on social justice.

Social justice and peace are indissociable. They are interdependent. The one reinforces the other, and vice versa. The safety of persons goes much further than simply a balance of forces. While physical safety is, of course, an indispensable element, the safety of persons in all senses also has an economic and social dimension. The tireless search for this safety is a duty of states and of every one of us, but I believe it is also one of the duties of the International Labour Organization. We have to be extremely clear on this. Without the search for a definite form of social justice, there will not be any genuine peace or stability, and even less will there be harmony among the peoples of the world.

That is why I believe we must always emphasize the essential role that the ILO has to play in order to ensure that the maxim that was on its former building is respected: He who wants peace prepares for justice. I believe that in order to ensure this social justice we can have full confidence in the Director-General, who is sitting next to me.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE GOVERNING BODY: SUBMISSION

Original French: The PRESIDENT — We will now continue our work, the next item on the agenda: the submission to the Conference of the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body for the year 2001-02. Mr. Tou has been prevented from attending by a meeting of the Government of his country which is being held today, we therefore regret the fact that Mr. Tou cannot be with us today but, in order to replace him, I suggest that Lord Brett, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body, will be able to present the report which I believe is in the *Provisional Record* No. 3. Lord Brett you have the floor.

Lord BRETT (*Workers' delegate, United Kingdom*) — In the absence of Mr. Tou, the Chairperson of the Governing Body, I have the honour to present to you the report on the work of the Governing Body during the past year. This is contained in *Provisional Record* No. 3, as the Chairperson has just mentioned. This report focuses on the highlights of the Governing Body's year and does not cover in detail matters otherwise before the Conference.

The Governing Body devoted much attention to the improvement in labour standards activities. It decided to apply a subject-based approach for reporting. A new two-year and five-year reporting cycle will begin in 2003 with Conventions grouped by subject matter for reporting purposes. Certain requirements for the submission of detailed reports will discontinue and give place to country-by-country assistance programmes aimed at resolving persistent problems in the application of Conventions.

The Working Party on Policy regarding the Revision of Standards concluded its case-by-case examination of the ILO Conventions and Recommendations adopted before 1985. It found that 71 Conventions and 71 Recommendations were up to date and should be promoted by the Office, amongst others, through their integration in publications of the Office and their dissemination to a wider public.

The Governing Body noted with satisfaction that the ratification of fundamental labour standards had

made further progress. There are now 74 States that have ratified all eight fundamental labour standards and 42 States that have ratified seven of the eight. This amounts to more than 65 per cent of ILO member States. The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), achieved the fastest rate of ratification in the ILO's history. By 22 May 2002, it had obtained 122 ratifications. By the same date the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), had been ratified by 117 member States.

During the period under review, the Committee on Freedom of Association examined 160 cases concerning freedom of association, collective bargaining and human rights issues. On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Committee, a tripartite round table discussion on the impact of the Committee's work on ILO's constituents was held in Geneva and a brochure was also published.

At its 283rd Session, the Governing Body had before it a report on the first session of the High-Level Working Group Maritime Labour Standards that was held in Geneva from 17-21 December 2001. It took note of the plans to develop a new instrument which would incorporate, as far as possible, the substance of all maritime labour standards that were sufficiently up to date.

At the same session, the Governing Body decided to give effect to the request of the Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization to place an urgent item on the agenda of the 91st Session in June 2003 of the International Labour Conference concerning improved security of Seafarers' identification with a view to adopting a Protocol to the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108), and it was also decided that the question would be governed by the single-discussion procedure.

In November 2001, the Governing Body examined the report of the High-Level Team sent to Myanmar in September-October of that year, and expressed profound concern regarding the very limited impact the legislation had had as well as the lack of criminal prosecution of persons who had committed violations. In March 2002, the Governing Body examined a report of the technical cooperation mission to Myanmar that had been undertaken in February 2002 as well as the understanding signed between the Office and the Government on the appointment of a liaison officer in Myanmar by June of this year. It considered the understanding as a first step leading to a full and effective ILO representation in order to achieve the aim of eliminating forced labour. The Governing Body requested the Office and the authorities to pursue the issue of the allegations referred to at its previous session as well as the appointment of an Ombudsperson in Myanmar.

The Governing Body expressed support for the Special Technical Cooperation Programme for Colombia and asked that governments contribute to its funding.

The Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization focused on the question of trade liberalization and employment and highlighted key policy issues. Mr. Mike Moore, Director-General of WTO, addressed the Working Party on the subject and recognized that all too often certain groups of workers were carrying the costs of adjustments to trade liberalization and that this problem has to be addressed. At the same session, Mr. Alfredo Atanasof, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs of Argen-

tina, spoke about the crisis in his country, as well as the measures taken to overcome it. The Working Party recognized that the ILO had much to do to help improve the national policies to minimize the negative and maximize the positive impacts of trade liberalization on workers. Policies related to social protection, education systems, active labour market policies, fundamental workers' rights and good governance were identified as particularly important.

The Working Party appreciated the rapid establishment of a World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and expressed the wish that it work closely with other interested organizations, draw on the expertise from various sources and consult with member States. It was understood that the Commission would prepare its report independently and that the Working Party and the Governing Body would be informed of its work, and that any subsequent ILO action would follow established procedure.

The Governing Body continued to monitor the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. It approved revised report forms regarding law and practice relating to efforts made concerning freedom of association and collective bargaining, forced or compulsory labour and discrimination in employment and occupation.

The Committee on Employment and Social Policy examined the Global Employment Agenda, a comprehensive employment framework prepared by the Office in response to the request of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000. This Agenda identifies those measures which need to be taken for countries to tap fruitfully the major forces of change inherent in the global economy, namely trade, technology, entrepreneurship, governance and investing in people. The Governing Body also considered the outcome of the Global Employment Forum which was held here in Geneva from 1-3 November 2001. At that event, 750 participants, including world political and economic leaders from over 100 countries, discussed the Global Employment Agenda.

Whereas the Global Employment Agenda sets out a strategic framework for employment policy, the paper on policy responses to address the employment and social consequences of the events of 11 September 2001 focused on the design of short-term responses. The Governing Body noted that there was still uncertainty about the recovery of the global economy and stressed the importance of global macroeconomic policy coordination and paying special attention to the situation of developing countries. It felt that a short-term stimulus was needed which could be applied in such a way as not to endanger long-term macroeconomic stability.

In November, the Governing Body reviewed the progress made in various areas of cooperation between the ILO and the Bretton Woods institutions. The main thrust of the ILO's efforts is to promote the Decent Work Agenda in cooperation with those institutions and to foster an integrated approach to economic and social policies, in order that its main components can become an integral part of national and international development strategies.

In March, the Governing Body had before it a paper on the *Follow-up on the Promotion of the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy Promotional and re-*

search activities, technical advisory services and the Tripartite Forum on the Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises. The Governing Body endorsed the holding of the Multinationals Forum and requested the Office to provide a synopsis of the views expressed. It was also agreed to discuss further the format and focus of the next survey on the Declaration.

In November 2001, the Governing Body set up a small tripartite Working Party to review issues related to sectoral activities. In March, it approved the recommendations of the Working Party concerning a new approach to the sectoral activities programme which will maximize the impact of available resources through meetings and non-meeting components. The Governing Body will further define various aspects of this new approach in its November 2002 session.

The Governing Body examined, in November 2001, the annual report on technical cooperation. It noted the ILO's move towards greater coherence in linking technical cooperation activities to the operational targets of the Office, its cooperation with new development partners and its priorities for the year to come. It also took note of the achievements and future priorities of IPEC, its successful "Red Card to Child Labour Campaign" during the African Cup of Nations, the improvements made in the data collection instruments and research on various topics, including the impact of HIV/AIDS and the gender dimensions of child labour, and the development of the time-bound programme approach which aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labour within a defined time frame. The Governing Body re-emphasized the role of workers' and employers' organizations in the eradication of child labour and endorsed IPEC's aim to strengthen its cooperation with the social partners.

In November, the Governing Body took note of the Thirteenth Asian Regional Meeting which was held in Bangkok from 28-31 August 2001. In March, it considered reports on forthcoming events such as the International Conference on Financing for Development which was held in Monterey in Mexico from 18-22 March 2002, the Second World Assembly on Aging held in Madrid from 8-12 April 2002, and the upcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio + 10) to be held in Johannesburg from 26 August-4 September 2002.

With regard to financial questions, the recommendations of the Governing Body appear in section XIII of my report to the Conference.

In March 2002, the Governing Body decided that, in addition to the standing items, and taking note of the scheduled second discussion of the item "Human resources and training — revision of the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 1975 (No. 150)", the agenda of the 92nd Session of the Conference should include the following subjects: (i) a comprehensive standard (Convention supplemented by a Recommendation) on work in the fishing sector; and (ii) migrant workers (general discussion based on an integrated approach).

The Governing Body also placed on the agenda of that Conference an item relating to the withdrawal of [Recommendations Nos. 2, 12, 16, 18, 21, 26, 32, 33, 34, 36, 43, 46, 58, 70, 74 and 96.](#)

Before concluding, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to my two fellow Officers, Mr. Tou, Chairperson — an excellent Chairperson of the Governing

Body this last year — and to my good friend Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body, for all their cooperation and friendship over the past year. Their valuable support has allowed the Office as a team to facilitate the accomplishment of the Governing Body's manifold tasks, and I would particularly like to thank the Director-General and all his staff for their constant support and assistance. This has been invaluable in the face of a consistent and constantly challenging workload.

RATIFICATION
OF AN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTION
BY THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
AND CAMEROON

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE — Following the information which has just been communicated to you on behalf of the Chairperson of the Governing Body concerning the number of ratifications as of 22 May 2002 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), it is a pleasure for me to announce to the Conference that at the end of the month of May, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was added to the list of countries which had ratified this Convention; and as of 5 June of this year, the Director-General recorded the ratification of Cameroon, which brings to 124 the total number of ratifications obtained for this instrument.

Original French: THE PRESIDENT — I would like to congratulate all the Governments who are continuing to ratify these fundamental standards. I would like to appeal to them to continue their efforts not only to ratify these instruments but also — and above all — to continue with their implementation.

INVITATION FOR AN IGO TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE
AS AN OBSERVER

Original French: THE PRESIDENT — We shall now turn to our next item on the agenda. After consulting my colleagues — the other officers of the Conference — the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (the ACP Group) has been authorized to participate in the work of the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference as an observer.

We shall now move on to the item connected with the presentation of the Report of the Director-General.

STATEMENT BY MR. SOMAVIA,
SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE

Original French: THE PRESIDENT — Before starting the general discussion of the Report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Report of the Director-General, it is an honour for me now to give the floor to Mr. Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, so that he can present his Report entitled *ILO programme implementation, 2000-01*.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL — The Report before you responds to a challenge that we all decided to tackle together three years ago: the challenge of strategic budgeting, which was to transform an administrative programme and budget mechanism into a

strategic policy tool to manage change in our complex, globalizing world.

We agreed on decent work for all as the vision to guide the ILO into the twenty-first century. Its implementation has been a team effort of the Governing Body, our management and staff in Geneva and the regions. I welcome your frank and honest assessment of how we are doing, and your guidance for the future.

Let me begin by saying that something I have felt very strongly is that this institution has always shown extraordinary resilience and adaptability. Now, once again, a fresh breeze of creativity is blowing through the ILO. Let me give you a sample of the innovative products, initiatives and opportunities coming from this new energy; a new energy that I see in this room and that I see every time I visit the regions and the countries. Just some examples: we have just completed the first gender audit of our work, and the senior management team will be discussing the recommendations later this week. This participatory self-assessment is the first of its kind in any United Nations body.

As you know, we have forcefully promoted the notion that the workplace is one of the most effective spaces to combat HIV/AIDS, and we developed a practical tool — our tripartite code of practice — which I was proud to present to last year's United Nations AIDS Conference. I must report to you that recently, when the heads of agencies met with the Secretary-General, they decided to endorse this instrument as a basis for their own work. It is now a system-wide instrument, not just an ILO instrument.

In the aftermath of the terrible terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, the airline and tourism sectors chose the ILO as the relevant place to meet and work out a global response to the crisis threatening hundreds of thousands of jobs, and the survival of many businesses, and we continue to be involved. The question was raised where such a critical issue should be discussed, and it was decided to do it in the ILO.

Our major report on health and safety at the workplace showed that in the year 2000, 2 million farm, construction and other workers were killed on the job, that is 5,000 every day. For these workers in the most hazardous industries every day is a September 11th — their families can never be sure whether they will come home. The Conference Committee on Occupational Accidents and Diseases will further reinforce our SafeWork activities and this is no doubt the one area in which there is a joint interest in reinforcing productivity by reducing accidents and ill health at the workplace.

In August last year, in Bangkok, our Asian Regional Conference launched the idea of national plans of action for decent work, including indicators for regular monitoring and evaluation. The Philippines adopted the first one. Bahrain and Bangladesh have expressed their interest to follow. China is the first country to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the ILO based on the goal of decent work and its four strategic objectives. Other countries are increasingly using the Decent Work Agenda as a mobilizing and organizing frame for their development plans. I must report to you that we are receiving a strong demand to make national decent work programmes a central feature of our strategic planning with many, many countries.

We have deepened our partnership with the Organization of African Unity's tripartite Labour and So-

cial Affairs Commission. A few weeks ago in Ouagadougou we continued the process of including a strong decent work focus in regional development initiatives, notably in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). This also features prominently in the agenda of our American Regional Meeting to be held at the end of the year in Lima.

My Report covers the first two full years of follow-up to the *ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* and indicates its positive impact worldwide. Ratification and reporting compliance are up; so is demand for advice and technical cooperation. This new openness is a first step towards greater progress. The global reports under the Declaration — we are now into our third one — have become the authoritative and up-to-date source of information and analysis on basic human rights at work.

This year's Report entitled *A future without child labour* attracted exceptional attention worldwide when it was launched simultaneously in 17 different countries. We will be discussing it in detail on Wednesday, and we must use our first World Day against Child Labour on 12 June 2002 to renew our commitment to the eradication of child labour, and scale up and spread our IPEC programmes.

After years of painstaking work, the opening of a liaison office in Myanmar ("Burma") just a few weeks ago marks a breakthrough which should enable the ILO to work closely with the authorities and all relevant parties to ensure that forced labour is finally eliminated from that country.

Our successful Global Employment Forum last November, to which the Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body referred, inaugurated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, showed that the ILO is able to convene major actors to formulate the contours of a much needed comprehensive new global employment framework. The next step, of course, is to move the ILO into a position of policy leadership in this matter.

We have friends in many places. Still, I must say that it was quite stimulating that the Director-General of the ILO was invited to both the Davos annual World Economic Forum, this year held in New York, and the Porto Alegre World Social Forum, to speak on the same issue, our Decent Work Agenda. It shows that our voice is perceived to be relevant by people with diverging perspectives on the economic and social dimensions of globalization. I believe that we can play a bridge-building function. Our Governing Body Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization can take credit for creating space for debate within the multilateral system about new approaches to globalization. It has been addressed by the heads of UNCTAD, UNHCR and WTO, as well as the Labour Ministers of Argentina and Afghanistan, who analysed their critical national situations.

We have now gone a step further and brought together 25 eminent personalities in our World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. This ambitious project has started under the leadership of two co-chairs, President Halonen of Finland and Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania. This is the first World Independent Commission ever headed by two Heads of State. The Commission aims to deliver its report within 18 months. It has already met twice, and it began by addressing an inventory of issues, analysing different perceptions on

them, and agreeing on a process for wide consultation.

This year we celebrated 50 years of the work of the Committee on Freedom of Association. We cannot really quantify all the lives saved, prisoners released or doors opened towards democratic freedom by its work. And yet, as Belarus, Colombia and other countries to be analysed by the Committee on the Application of Standards, show, the struggle continues.

We cannot rest on our laurels. We must move forward in the standards field. The new integrated approach to standards developed by the Governing Body has, I believe, tremendous potential. Next year's session of the Conference will review the range of occupational safety and health Conventions and Recommendations with a view to updating and consolidating the whole package. The idea is to build on past progress and to make our standards more user-friendly, easier to apply, wider in coverage and more effectively implemented.

As we move forward with the integrated strategy for standards, we will extend and strengthen our links with Parliaments who ratify ILO Conventions and translate our standards into national laws and regulations. We have recently published a joint handbook on the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), with the Inter-parliamentary Union.

These very diverse activities that I have summarized are just a sample of the new energy in action of the ILO, and there is much, much more to share. But I wanted to give you a feeling, a sense of the sorts of things that have happened since our last meeting. All of these things occurred between last year's session of the Conference and this year's, as you can see in the very wide array of ILO activities. I believe that the fact that we are dealing with relevant questions, and that the activities are seen to provide relevant solutions to those questions, gives us strength and hope for the future.

Let me ask you to pause a moment to reflect on the widespread humanitarian crisis of the Palestinian workers in the occupied Arab territories. The report before you tells it straight. We have gathered the facts in an objective way.

More than that, a particular effort was made to address the deeper, subjective aspects of the situation: the humiliation and frustration felt by Palestinians as a result of the combination of closures and military action by Israel.

The notion of "collective punishment" seems to explain best the underlying anger. The report also reflects the sense of insecurity in Israel owing to the suicide bombings and the economic crisis.

The present situation cannot continue and only dialogue can lead to peace.

Let me appeal to Palestinian and Israeli constituents to take the risk of embarking on social dialogue across the present divide in their specific areas of competence. We shall assist and support you in all possible ways.

With your backing, I commit the Office to put in place urgently an expanded technical cooperation programme for Arab workers and other constituents in the occupied Arab territories as I have proposed in the report. It will be guided by our constitution, which states that "universal and lasting peace can only be established if it is based upon social justice".

The whole of the ILO has a responsibility and we cannot shirk it. Beyond the ILO, the international

community must respond to the aspirations of all families in the region: families at work, children at school, security in the streets, peace in the community. This remains the deepest hope of the large majority of Palestinians and Israelis and we, and the world, must help them to get there.

Let me move on to say that I believe that a different form of globalization is possible, and that there is a key role for the ILO in it. In the ILO, our discussions have not focused on whether there should be more, or less, globalization, or that it should stop altogether. For us, it is about what sort of globalization we want, for whom and how to get there.

Few of us come to our debates with the presumption that we must throw overboard open economies and open societies. All of our countries are moving in that direction.

Rather, it is about fairness, accountability and transparency. It is about enterprise and productivity. It is about getting the balance right. But it is also about new ideas, out-of-the-box thinking and imaginative solutions.

Fundamentally, we need a concept of globalization that commands legitimacy in the eyes of the voters around the world because they feel that it responds to their fears and aspirations. This cannot be a one-size-fits-all model but rather a broader approach within which choices can be made through democratic decision-making.

The ILO has a key role to play. We have a unique perspective that links how globalization is seen through the eyes of people to how people's lives are interconnected by commerce, investment and integrated chains of production.

We should not be shy about our strengths. Of course, we have our arguments between ourselves when we meet, but we are specialists in the art of constructive consensus building. Tripartism is an under-used asset. We have a responsibility to use it more often and better.

We must aim to build as large a consensus as possible within and beyond the ILO around an inclusive form of globalization based on a level playing field, on fair rules of the game and real opportunities for families and countries. We all know that this is not easy, but we also know that it can be done. The ILO is a privileged place in which to try this, as was recognized by the International Conference on Financing for Development, held recently in Monterey, Mexico.

Do we have the will, the character, the ideas to show that globalization can be oriented in a way that gives people opportunities, and that gives countries a reason to back it?

So, let us look to the future. I believe that the present form of globalization has not produced enough jobs for all who seek them or in the places where they are most needed. This is probably its biggest failure. There are a lot of things said about globalization, but, when all is said and done, it is the fact that it is not producing the jobs that the world needs that is the fundamental reason why people feel uncomfortable with it. They are told that this is extremely good for them and when they look at their life at work they cannot see the results.

Currently, more than a billion women and men are unemployed, underemployed or working poor. A direct consequence of this is the decision of a 120 million migrant workers and their families to leave their

home countries in the hope of finding a job somewhere else.

Furthermore, we will need 500 million new jobs almost entirely in the developing world over the next decade to absorb new entrants to the labour market, largely youth and women.

No-one is projecting a scenario for the next decade based on the need to fill this yawning decent work deficit, but we know that a sound combination of public and private policies can make it happen.

Let me suggest five areas to explore.

First, we need to concentrate much more on local development, on local markets, on local entrepreneurship, on basic networks of organization and social protection, on local capacity to cope. International trade and foreign investment are of course important, but experience shows that only around 15 developing countries have captured the major share of those benefits. For the rest, the results are meagre, particularly for the least developed commodity-exporting countries. We must creatively foster the potential for social mobilization of sustainable local economic development and enhance appropriate global linkages. It is not a question of withdrawing, it is a question of having the right linkages towards the outside. We must also explore strategies for balanced community investment. Think of the community when you think of development. The new Convention being worked on by the Committee on the Promotion of Cooperatives is a vital tool in this effort. There is tremendous scope for pooling together the range of our country-level projects and, through social dialogue, developing them into national decent work programmes for poverty eradication rooted at the local level. ILO has a lot of experience in these matters. We will be sending a tripartite delegation to the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development to ensure that ILO action is integrated with the global sustainable development strategy it is expected to adopt. We need the right balance among economic, social and environmental objectives.

Second, we must release the creativity and productive potential of women and men trapped in the informal economy. It is central to the ILO's commitment to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals. A new approach to governance and the way public institutions interact with workers and small private businesses is central to any effective strategy for moving the world's most disadvantaged through and out of the continuum of informality described in our Report to the Conference. The Committee on the Informal Economy has a large and complex task. I am confident that they will deliver guidelines to expand our work in ways that are perceived to be relevant by the people living in the informal economy. If we want to have the right conclusions we need to connect with the people living in the informal economy.

Third, we should examine avenues for basic economic and social security for all people and their families. Employment continuity is an increasingly fragile foundation for the social protection system, especially for the most vulnerable who are likely to be in constant flux between precarious low-paid jobs and periods of unemployment. If we are to extend social protection to the billions of people in the informal economies of the developed world, as called for at last year's session of the Conference, we will need to think creatively about how income and other forms of support to the poorest should create a pathway towards

decent work. South Africa and Brazil are experimenting with providing a basic minimum income to ensure that children are in school and parents can find productive work. Other countries are pursuing other routes that are worth tracking, like the earned income tax credit in the United States. But if I raise this issue it is because I want to suggest that the ILO needs to position itself at the fore of this discussion.

Fourth, we must demand policy coherence on the goals of our system of international organizations, but promote policy pluralism on the means to achieve those goals. I believe this is very important. Let us have coherence on where we want to go. Let us have policy pluralism while we can actually do it. We need a broad consensual framework that is large enough to allow for a reasoned debate and democratic choice about the balance and pace of policy reform and the best options for poverty reduction and employment creation. For example, as our Global Employment Forum suggested, with a strong policy framework for the labour market we can have faster growth and more decent work without accelerating inflation or unsupportable budget deficits. We can also open markets more successfully because we can sequence and manage the necessary adjustments better. We need to build on these insights and reflect the value of policy pluralism. Countries and societies have the right to review their options and make their own choices. It is not up to the international system to go and tell countries what they are supposed to do in their own house. Today's single-minded globalization has a price for everything but it has nothing to say about basic human values. The ILO, on the contrary, is living proof that universal values do not mean homogeneity or cultural domination. Indeed, our pursuit of freedom from poverty, discrimination and oppression has created a space for diversity and creativity, from standard setting to enterprise development. Decent work itself is a vision that links shared values to practical policies to improve people's and family lives. It provides a development framework for choice and for setting priorities on how we can respond to changes in the global economy and the world of work. It can become, if we debate it, discuss it and promote it internationally, an integrating goal for a new type of globalization that responds to people's needs.

Fifth, let us keep up the rhythm of change in the ILO. All sorts of institutions — international agencies, governments, corporations, trade unions, NGOs, churches and others — are engaged in processes and dialogue to formulate the reform strategies needed to ensure public trust and confidence. As you know, throughout the world there is a growing lack of trust of institutions and of authorities of any sort. New movements of market activism are creating new frameworks for corporate, social and environmental accountability, for which our Declaration on Multinationals is very relevant.

I have to bring to the fore of this Assembly that accountability of international organizations is a key issue in the global agenda of today. We score well because of our tripartite structure and open methods of work. But few people outside our halls know for example that the sessions of our Governing Body are open to the public or that we do not impose Conventions on any country. They are voluntarily ascribed to through ratification. Yet, we must never become complacent.

As we approach our 85th anniversary in 2004, we must test our ideas by listening to a wide range of opinions, from those who like our work, and also from our critics. Not to do this would be a sign of weakness. On the contrary, listening to new voices in society is a sign of the strength of tripartism and our confidence in its durability.

Our capacity for absorbing ideas, developing them through social dialogue and coming up with policy innovations to meet the needs of working people and enterprises is a tremendous asset to address the problems of globalization.

But when all is said and done, it is you, all of you here representing governments, representing workers, representing employers, it is you, the constituents, who are the real strength of the ILO. It is your personal commitment to make the values and instruments of the ILO work back home. That is the crucial difference. Dialogue in Geneva is essential, but dialogue back home is the real test of our relevance. I want to invite you to be daring, to innovate, to be risk-takers, to try new solutions, to respect each other.

We are all heirs of a magnificent tradition. We are challenged to find the answers of today. Let us stand up and hand in hand deploy the strength of our consensus-building energy for all the world to see.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — You have just been applauded by the assembly and this is all the more deserved because in speaking about programme implementation for 2000-01, you have given us a message of hope and spoken of the challenges which we must meet. I have said that our institution must have a broad, global and strategic vision of the delicate socio-economic balance in the world.

You have shown us that you have such a vision and this is of crucial importance for our institution. Thank you very much for your presentation and for your unflinching commitment to the work and the objectives of the Organization.

Before beginning the general discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General, I should like to make a statement on my own behalf and on behalf of the Officers of the Conference in order to remind you of the principles that will guide us in our debate. These are set out in paragraphs 54 to 58 of the Fourth Report of the Working Party on the Programme and Structure of the ILO, as adopted by the Governing Body and submitted to the Conference in 1967. You will find them summarized in the memorandum concerning the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference, copies of which I am sure you will all have received.

It is the responsibility of the Officers of the Conference to draw your attention to paragraph 58 of this report, which reads as follows: "In periods of acute political tension the ILO has a twofold responsibility to uphold the values of human freedom and dignity enshrined in its Constitution, and to circumscribe rather than extend the area of international tension by ensuring the fullest possible degree of continued cooperation in pursuit of the objectives of the ILO. Every delegate to the International Labour Conference therefore has an obligation to the Conference to keep these considerations constantly in mind, and the President has an obligation to ensure that the Conference does not lose sight of them."

It is worth remembering here that the debates of the International Labour Conference must not encroach on what is being discussed by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, which have responsibility for political decisions under the United National Charter. Thus I should like to ask all delegates to comply with these principles; we, the Officers of the Conference, are committed to ensuring that these principles are upheld.

I should also like to say that I rely on you all to conduct our discussions with both the openness and the dignity which are appropriate to the highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters.

Freedom of expression is the vital element of the ILO. However, in order to be able to exercise this right with mutual respect, it is essential that all delegates use parliamentary language and limit themselves to the matters under discussion without raising other questions which are completely unrelated. We must exercise discipline if we wish our work to be harmonious and successful.

Each and every delegate will have the right of reply if he or she feels there is a need to respond in the event that his or her government has been challenged. In such cases, delegates must inform the President before the end of the meeting, of their desire to take the floor. Such requests must be submitted to the Clerk of the Conference, not during the meeting in the form of a request to take the floor.

Allow me to remind you here of procedures relating to the right to reply. The reply must deal solely with the point under discussion, it must be brief and not exceed two minutes. The delegate must also present his reply in appropriate, parliamentary language. I should also like to stress the fact that there will be no right of reply to the reply itself, as this would create a vicious circle that would completely obstruct our discussions.

I should also like to draw your attention to the decision taken by the Conference during its second plenary session last Tuesday to limit to five minutes — I repeat: five minutes — the time allowed for statements concerning the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. As you know the Conference runs on a very tight schedule. I should therefore like to ask ministers and delegates to abide by allotted five minutes and bear this in mind while preparing their speeches, to avoid the risk of being interrupted before the end of their presentations, should they exceed the allotted five minutes.

I should also like to remind you that the list of speakers for the general discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General will be closed at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 June. Let me repeat the list of speakers for the plenary discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General will be closed at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, 12 June.

Let me continue by saying that, for the third time a Global Report, drawn up under the responsibility of the Director-General, will be submitted to the Conference as a follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The Report this year deals with the eradication of child labour.

In conformity with the decision adopted by the Selection Committee, the Global Report will be the sub-

ject of a plenary discussion, separate from the one planned for the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General. In the plenary sittings devoted to this, which will be held on Wednesday, 12 June, the discussion will be organized as follows. The morning sitting will start with a general discussion, during which ministers, delegates and spokespersons for non-governmental and regional groups will make introductory speeches. In the afternoon a thematic discussion of limited duration will be chaired by the Director-General himself. The general discussion will then continue, in order to allow as far as possible any speakers who were unable to take the floor in the morning to do so in the afternoon. So that the largest possible number of constituents have the chance to speak, the Conference has decided that the number of statements by each speaker will not be limited, but that within each government delegation a statement by a delegate should not be followed by a speech by a minister. The provisions of article 14 of the Conference Standing Orders, which limit the length of interventions and establishes the order of speakers will not apply to this discussion.

In order to enable the Officers of the Conference to organize as effectively as possible the time available for the general discussion, ministers, delegates and other speakers are requested to inform the Clerk of their wish to speak before 6 p.m. today. Those wishing to do so will still be able, however, to add their names to the list during the meeting. Further information on this may be found in the *Daily Bulletin*.

These are the main points we should like to keep in mind during our discussions. I am sure that, with your help, we shall duly perform the tasks entrusted to us and together will ensure that this session of the Conference runs smoothly and successfully.

Thank you very much in advance for your cooperation and understanding.

After this general statement, which I hope had shed some light on the rules which will apply to our general debate, we may go on now to our discussion.

REPORTS OF THE CHAIRPERSON
OF THE GOVERNING BODY
AND THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL: DISCUSSION

Original French: The PRESIDENT — After this general statement, which I hope has shed some light on the rules which will apply to our general debate, the discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General is now open.

Original Arabic: Mr. EL AMAWY (*Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Egypt*) — I congratulate the President on his election and wish him and the other Officers every success in their task of directing the work of this session, which is meeting at a time of numerous successive regional and international developments which require the adoption of effective policies in support of economic and social development.

I should like to express the appreciation of Egypt to the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, and to the Office for all their efforts in the area of employment, and the positive results achieved by the Global Employment Forum which was held last November. We look forward to the translation of the results of the

Programme developed by the forum from the level of ideas to that of deeds. In this context I wish to emphasize the need to give the highest priority to creating jobs and alleviating poverty.

Egypt welcomes the establishment of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, composed of politicians, experts and intellectuals representing various cultures and fields of knowledge, who will discuss and study the impact of globalization on our societies. It is important that the Commission deal with the subject comprehensively, covering all aspects of importance to the developing countries, especially the impact of globalization on the development process and the untiring efforts of our societies to confront and alleviate poverty. We stress the importance of not using standards as instruments of protection and of respecting the comparative advantages of the developing countries.

We have studied with great interest the Report of the Director-General on ILO programme implementation, 2000-01. One of the most important achievements in this period may have been the impact of the Organization in important world debates and the progress achieved in the implementation of the four main strategic objectives. However, there are areas in technical cooperation that require greater concentration, such as the Jobs for Africa Programme and the social security programmes, which are of great importance to the developing countries, through advisory services and technical assistance.

Egypt welcomes the debate on the informal economy. Our Ministry devotes particular attention to this sector in view of its rapid and continuous growth, absorbing a large number of workers, and accounting for 40 per cent of the labour force in Egypt. It also contributes a high percentage of Egypt's GDP, particularly in agriculture and the services sector, as well as in industry and trade. The Ministry is working to promote decent work in the informal economy and to introduce social regulation and protection into that sector.

The theme of promotion of cooperatives is one of the most important and appropriate solutions for the developing countries which are going through a phase of economic and social transition. Cooperatives serve the purpose of development, while giving due consideration to the social dimension.

Our Organization expresses the will of peoples and of the international community as regards freedom, development and social justice. If we meet here every year to discuss the application of international standards and their violation at group or individual levels, what then is the situation when an entire people, the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab territories are suffering such flagrant injustice? They are suffering from oppression imposed on them shamelessly by an occupying force bristling with the most up-to-date weapons, in full sight of the entire world. The ferocious campaign of oppression and subjugation to which the Palestinian people are being exposed are about to destroy the confidence of peoples in the effectiveness of the international system and its ability to impose right, justice and peace.

Israel does not respect its international obligations in accordance with the 4th Geneva Convention and its obligations in the domain of human rights. Israel, on the pretext of self-defence, is engaging in terrorism. But what defence justifies the indiscriminate murder of innocent children and civilians in their houses? The

human and economic damage is tremendous in the wake of this Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people. The blockade of the territories where thousands of Palestinians work has caused great damage to the Palestinian economy.

We have studied with interest the Director-General's report on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. The report refers to the Israeli practice of sealing Palestinian towns, murder of civilians, destruction, and looting of property by the Israeli forces, and confiscation of land for the establishment of settlements. The report also refers to proposals for urgent assistance to the Palestinian people to help them to cope with the deteriorating situation.

The main objective we are striving for is to put a stop to Israeli occupation of all the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Chebaa farms and the Golan Heights.

Original Spanish: Ms. GONZÁLEZ FERNÁNDEZ (*Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Security, Cuba*) — First allow me to congratulate the President on his election to this office and to wish him every success in leading this session of the Conference. Cuba has always cooperated with the International Labour Organisations and agreements designed to promote fundamental principles and rights at work, social protection, equity and social justice.

It recognizes the work carried out by the International Labour Organization in pursuance of its strategic objectives, its technical assistance, the initiatives developed in favour of the Global Employment Agenda, its efforts to eliminate the scourge of the worst forms of child labour and its positive influence on reflections on complex problems of the modern world, be they problems arising from globalization, or problems which have dragged on for centuries.

But it sees with deep concern a world which is growing accustomed to consuming virtual images, where it is common to see reality invented, where euphemisms are devised and where the unjustifiable is justified, by rich countries which do not adopt the measures necessary to stimulate the growth of the developing countries.

It is said that unemployment is the basic cause of the persistence of poverty, that the information technologies can help to raise levels of productive employment; that flexibility in the workplace is a new battle won for workers and that the ageing population makes the labour markets more stable.

But there is no mention or acknowledgement that, in reality, the unfair international economic order imposed by rich countries, has been the real cause of the calamities and suffering experienced by millions of people throughout the world.

Today, decent work continues to be a dream for millions of people in the world. Globalization, which is neoliberal and discriminatory still gives rise to unemployment and the growth of the informal sector, labour instability and reduced social protection in almost all regions of the world.

In Cuba, sustained growth of the economy is reinvested for the benefit of all. Suffice to say that last year we reduced unemployment to 4.1 per cent and we are working towards further reducing it below 3.5 per cent this year. Forty years ago the depressing sight of children begging on the streets or working to live was eliminated. Workers' incomes are protected

from economic swings, necessary restructuring and severe weather. No workers have been left unprotected or abandoned to their fate; 23.8 per cent of the gross domestic product is used on social spending. Social security covers the entire population, and a million and a half people receive their pensions punctually.

The advances made by Cuba in all areas could be even greater without the economic, financial and trade blockade imposed by the United States, which is now intensifying and is accompanied by false accusations and shameful fabrication.

Cuba denounces the stepping-up of the aggressive policy designed to destroy the Revolution, reiterates its confidence in the International Labour Organization, reaffirms the values of social justice and calls on the international community to eliminate trends which are exclusive, selective and determining and which prevent progress and social justice for all.

Mr. NG (*Minister of State for Education and Manpower, Singapore*) — The Singaporean delegation extends its heartiest congratulations to the President on his election to the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Allow me to congratulate the Director-General on his enlightened address and on the many achievements under his leadership over the last year. Singapore agrees that the ILO remains relevant as a body for solving global problems related to globalization. Singapore too has had to respond to new challenges in the new economic environment driven by knowledge and innovation. We have to focus our efforts on developing and enhancing our human resources. To keep up with the pace in this knowledge economy Singapore, like other countries, is in the process of transforming its economic framework. We aim to develop a globally competitive workforce by upgrading skills, retraining and moving up the value-chain.

Thus, an essential strategy is to encourage lifelong learning. This is done using a two-pronged approach: transforming our existing education system to build the workforce of the future and developing a comprehensive system for continuing education and training to sharpen the competitiveness of our workforce.

A more immediate task is to ensure that our less skilled workers re-tool themselves with new skills and knowledge so that they too can share in the fruits of this new global economy.

Whatever the economic environment, we will continue our efforts to strengthen the tripartite nexus involving Government, employers and trade unions. Tripartite partnership has been a competitive advantage and a cornerstone of our economic and social development over the last 30 years. It has brought to Singapore industrial harmony, strong teamwork and higher productivity, and created an environment favourable for investment and economic growth.

The 90th Session of the International Labour Conference is holding a second discussion on the promotion of cooperatives. In these difficult times of greater economic hardship and uncertainty in employment prospects, the role of cooperatives has become even more important in Singapore. Our workers' cooperatives, set up primarily by the labour movement, cover a wide range of economic and social activities. They provide consumer goods, insurance, health care and dental treatment, childcare and care of the elderly,

transport and housing, and play an important role in meeting the basic needs of the working population at affordable prices. Our cooperatives help to enhance the economic and social well-being of workers and their families, particularly those in the lower income group. Workers' cooperatives continue to form an integral part of the social safety net in Singapore.

We also note that this year the International Labour Conference agenda includes a discussion on the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases. Singapore too is constantly reviewing and updating its efforts to ensure that we maintain a high standard of occupational safety and health in the face of rapid changes in our economic environment.

Following Singapore's ratification of the ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), at the last session of the International Labour Conference, I am pleased to announce that we have just ratified another ILO core Convention — the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), at this session. The ratification of this Convention is an affirmation of our belief in the fair and equal treatment of men and women at the workplace for work of equal value.

My delegation looks forward to a fruitful discussion of the various issues on the agenda. I am confident that under the able leadership of the President, this Conference will achieve fruitful and rewarding results.

Original French: The PRESIDENT — I should like to thank you Minister for your intervention. We have all taken good note of the fact that your country will ratify a new fundamental Convention. We are all very happy to hear this.

Original Spanish: Mr. ABASCAL (*Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Mexico*) — The establishment of decent work and all that it means for humanity is an ILO objective that Mexico shares and promotes in the new culture of labour. For the Mexican Government and productive sectors, our participation in this Conference is crucial to progressing together towards truly humane labour relations.

The Global Report, *A future without child labour*, makes it quite clear that we can have no peace and no future as long as boys and girls are exploited.

Under our national law, Mexico is committed to the eradication of child labour, which is harmful to children's health, safety and moral integrity. We have, together with the ILO, begun drawing up a project focusing on combating one of the worst forms of child labour, sexual exploitation for commercial gain. However, we would like to go further still. During pregnancy, a conceived child is subjected to the same working conditions as his or her mother. We are trying to instil a culture of respect for and promotion of the child from the moment of conception, as President Fox stated last May before the United Nations, so as to achieve meaningful and lasting results.

Mexico is committed to the ethical goal of decent work. We must reflect upon ways to bring a growing number of workers from the informal economy into the formal labour market. Through training schemes, better regulations and creative means of allowing employers to meet their fiscal and social security obligations, we will be able to achieve a labour market based on respect for the law.

The draft recommendation on cooperatives bears witness to the potential of such an approach. In Mexico, the cooperatives movement is rooted in indigenous experience, and has been part of our age-old history. Cooperatives represent a part of our economy that is characterized by solidarity, and the ILO can be a potent tool for their promotion.

We subscribe to the strategic objectives of the ILO presented by the Director-General in his Report, and we agree with the concepts of responsibility and strategic planning that should permeate the management of any organization. That is a commitment that the ILO has clearly taken with its constituents based on strategies and policies that foster dialogue and the rule of law.

The Mexican Government has embarked on the path of change. The objective is to transform enterprises into genuine productive human communities where the talent of the workers, together with that of the managers and shareholders, can contribute to generating better and more equitable individual and social welfare.

Productive work is the ideal means by which to consolidate a prosperous and fair democratic society. The dialogue between the productive sectors that we have now been fostering for over a year is continuing, with the aims of bringing our labour and entrepreneurial culture, work institutions and labour legislation up to date and of preparing them for the future. Despite the difficulties inherent to the creation of a genuine culture of consensus in a democracy, despite the historical mistrust between the various players in the world of work and which result from a political culture that we have not yet overcome, despite the risk of politicization of such efforts, despite the temptation to impose unilateral solutions, despite all this, we are making great strides in these efforts.

Just as the labour authorities have respected the independence of the productive sector, they have also firmly promoted respect for basic labour principles and a social approach to labour.

In particular, we have taken concrete steps to ensure that *maquiladoras* do not make employment of women workers conditional upon their not being pregnant and to ensure that such workers are offered flexible working hours and child care services at the workplace. The work of women, with or without remuneration, is now being given its due in Mexico. There is no place any longer for discrimination.

Similarly, the Mexican Government believes that in a world where borders are vanishing the economy must be at the service of the human being. Healthy competition can only take place with full respect for worker's rights, in particular decent pay in all corners of the world. Competition based on cheap labour will only worsen injustice in the world. Only the growth of knowledge can bring all human beings closer together.

We want a world in which human valour and human dignity, regardless of the origin or migratory condition of the worker, are fully respected in the legal systems of every country, in accordance with the universal principles which protect the human person. We are pleased to see that we are not alone in this view. We refer to the Joint Ministerial Statement of the United States Department of Labor and the Mexican Secretariat of Labour signed last April, in which both Governments expressed their political will to paying due attention to migrant workers, who are among the most vulnerable.

Mexico is concentration not only on the demands of the present, but also on those of the future. Now more than ever, it is necessary to globalize solidarity as a consequence of human unity. History has shown that human imagination and creativity are boundless. Let us have the strength to build a new world of labour, commensurate with the uplifting values of humanism, in order together to build a lasting and sustainable foundation for the common good.

Original French: Mr. BENFREHA (Government adviser and substitute delegate, Algeria) — On behalf of the Algerian delegation, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to the President on his election to preside over this session of the Conference. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the elected Vice-Presidents. I am convinced that we will achieve the goals assigned to the work of this session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to pay a special tribute to the Director-General of the International Labour Office for the quality of the Report submitted to us which outlines the parameters of strategic budgeting and results-based management techniques. This approach was developed with the involvement of the ILO's constituents following a sustained effort in which the Algerian Government played an active role.

The achievements made in implementing the 2000-01 programme clearly shows the validity of this new approach, which we would do well to pursue further in light of the lessons learned from this conceptual undertaking with the aim of a greater integration of the priorities of future ILO programmes.

The issues addressed during this session of the Conference are of great importance to us, given the major multifaceted changes which characterize the world economy. Because of our interest in these issues, we support the ILO taking a central role in order to deal with the social implications of globalization through the promotion of employment, the respect of core labour standards, the establishment of tripartism and social dialogue and the quest for improved social protection.

We are proud of the quality of the debate under way in the ILO concerning the social face of globalization. In this context, the underlying problems concerning the impact of trade liberalization on employment highlight the challenges that the ILO will have to meet to improve social policies and to contribute to the promotion of a world governance that can take into account social needs.

With this in mind, the implementation of the priorities contained in the Global Employment Agenda will be helpful for softening the blow of the social implications of globalization and for helping to strengthen universal social justice against any reductionist mercenary approaches. Therefore, work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization should, in our view, be guided by the principles of equity and social justice, in order to help developing countries to deal with social constraints arising from the globalization of markets.

The informal economy which is developing at breakneck speed in our societies is a result of the current form of globalization which is still too rigidly defined by Washington.

This permanent focus on productivity has had negative effects on the conditions of work, and the level of social protection of salaried employees, who

in some situations accept the worst conditions of work, and social. Despite subsistence incomes which can be earned in the informal sector by thousands of workers, it nevertheless remains a major handicap for us in promoting social justice and challenges the basic principles of decent work.

Therefore, we need to carry out further research into finding the appropriate measures to reduce the alarming levels of informal work in our countries and to undertake the implementation of an action plan with the support of the ILO.

The integration of the cooperative movement into the vast array of our Organization's concerns would undoubtedly enable us to ensure levels of social protection to people working in cooperatives in compliance with core labour standards.

The multifaceted crisis affecting our national economies under the effects of globalization are forcing our economic players to carry out economic and financial restructuring, in order to maintain their viability and to survive in an international environment where the rules of fair trade still need to be defined.

The current trend today of enterprises which systematically reduce cost has negative effects on the level of health coverage in the workplace. Indeed, the prevention of occupational hazards tends to take up an ever smaller place in the workplace. The increase in occupational diseases and accidents reported in the workplace reflects this sad reality. Furthermore, the social goals of economic activity are being reduced. For this reason, we must establish specialized study and research bodies as scientific and technical instruments.

I could not finish my intervention without making an appeal to the international community and reminding them of the inhumane conditions inflicted upon workers and the population in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories. This is a consequence of Israeli segregationist practices which remind us of the dark history of the Second World War and colonization. These practices, which undermine international legitimacy and have been condemned and denounced by the international community, are by nature contrary to the founding principles of our Organization and go against the core labour standards towards which we are working.

It is now the duty of the ILO to act swiftly in order to mitigate the effects of occupation and Israeli attacks on the working conditions of workers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories.

Mr. GWADABE (*Government delegate, Nigeria*) — My delegation notes with delight the wealth of experience and demonstrated competence that the newly elected President brings to this 90th Session of the International Labour Conference. Permit me also to congratulate the other elected Officers of the Conference and the Director-General for the direction of activities of the Conference.

The Report of the Director-General on *ILO programme implementation, 2000-01*, clearly confirms positive results in strategic budgeting.

My delegation is happy to be associated with this development and is particularly delighted that ILO programmes positively complement national labour policy in Nigeria as they relate to the fundamental principles and rights at work.

I am happy to state that my Government has in principle ratified all eight core Conventions and sub-

mitted the instrument, early this year, for the ratification of the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Ratification of these core Conventions was achieved principally through the active tripartism that now characterizes the Nigerian labour scene. A tripartite body, the National Labour Advisory Council, is currently entrusted with examining all extant labour legislation in Nigeria with a view to making recommendations on how it may be effectively harmonized with the core and other labour Conventions of the ILO.

It is pertinent to express, at this point, our appreciation of the active association of the ILO Declaration project in my country, which the National Labour Advisory Council benefits from. We also acknowledge the crucial support of donor countries for this and similar projects that enable countries like mine to play a meaningful role towards achieving the ILO's broad strategic objectives.

My delegation notes the Report of the Director-General as it relates to the twin objectives of creating jobs and reducing poverty. We are happy at the performance of the Office, which has more than met its set targets. We are concerned at the level of technical cooperation funding as a result of the continuing decline of United Nations Development Programme resources. My delegation shares the hope of the Director-General and urges him to do his utmost to attract new approval for technical cooperation in the 2002 biennium. We also welcome the promise of new emphasis on eradicating poverty. My country recently adopted a new national employment policy whose prime objectives are creating jobs, enhancing citizens' employability by teaching them new skills and providing a decent work environment as well as social security. In fact, the new employment policy is a product of the intense consultations among stakeholders, the ILO and United Nations Development Programme, all of which actively participated in preparatory workshops and seminars.

I wish to conclude by commending the innovative efforts of the Director-General and his able lieutenants, especially the Regional Director for Africa, towards implementing the ILO's agenda on the African continent. We are hopeful that the role of the ILO on our continent will not only be a complement, but also the catalyst for the development of more responsive socio-economic policies by national governments.

Please be assured of Nigeria's deep commitment to the democratic principles and social responsibilities that underpin the ILO's global agenda.

Lord BRETT (*Workers' delegate, United Kingdom*) — I speak on behalf of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), which represents some 7 million workers in Britain.

The first session of the ILO Conference that I attended was in 1992, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, when the world was waking up to the realities of globalization. Despite the uncertainties and rampant neo-liberalism of this new world order, there was at least some optimism that the prospects for peace were good. Ten years later, in the face of regional conflicts and growing racism and xenophobia, such optimism is hard to justify. Peace, social justice and sustainable development are all facing great challenges.

The ILO plays a central role in promoting multilateralism and the rule of international law. The Director-General's Report indicates progress towards universal ratification of the ILO's eight core human rights Conventions, which are an indivisible and indispensable foundation for decent work, democracy and sustainable development. The ratification rate of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), has been unprecedented. But there is still work to do.

The TUC believes that two pillars sustain the protection of working people: good law, properly enforced, and social dialogue between effective social partners. For us, that means organization in free trade unions and the right to effective collective bargaining. That is why the campaign for universal ratification and the implementation of the core labour standards must remain a priority until its aim is reached — for working people empowerment flows from those rights. This is also why the TUC pays so much attention to the need to extend the reach of collective organization to unprotected workers in informal employment.

We also recognize the global power of multinational enterprises. We work with the global unions to challenge those who ignore their responsibilities, and work in a spirit of social partnership with those who wish to develop effective monitoring of, and improvements in, their supply chains. Here, too, the ILO has an important part to play in supporting that work by developing agreed benchmarks of competence for social auditors. That is in all our interests, including those of the companies themselves.

We believe that social dialogue is also a key to conflict resolution and peace-building. I was proud that my nomination as Chairperson of the Workers' group for this session of the Conference was moved by the Workers' representative of India and seconded by the Workers' representative of Pakistan. Working people know that, despite the destructive policies of governments and elites, our only interest lies in peace and friendship.

The TUC has paid great attention in the past year to the appalling situation in Colombia. Strengthening social dialogue in Colombia will contribute directly, we believe, to conflict resolution, but that requires an end to the calculated campaign of violence against trade union leaders and their members — 192 were murdered last year. Our belief is that only a commission of inquiry will uncover the mechanisms and persistent impunity and thus allow the ILO to target technical assistance needed by the Colombian Government to deal with the problems they face. We say this as friends of Colombia. We see a commission of inquiry not as a threat or a punishment, but as a powerful means of assisting the Government and the social partners in that country.

So, while the TUC is developing bilateral solidarity activities in close cooperation with the ILO, we also support the proposal to use part of the available cash surplus to strengthen the ILO protection programme in Colombia. This is extremely urgent as the Interior Ministry's protection programme closed for lack of funds on 31 May.

As Chairperson of the Workers' group, I am also seeking to promote an agreement with my Employer colleagues to call, as a matter of urgency, for a substantial part of the ILO's cash surplus to be used to support reconstruction, employment and the exten-

sion of social dialogue and social protection in Palestine.

I wish to make very clear the TUC General Council's deep concern at the continuing violence in the Middle East. We call on the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority immediately to implement a real ceasefire, to renounce all acts of violence, and to resume negotiations on a political settlement in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions. The TUC demands an immediate withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian territories and a resolute step-by-step approach to stopping the terror bombings against Israeli citizens.

We are particularly concerned at the refusal of the Israeli Government to accept a United Nations mission to investigate the recent events in the Jenin refugee camp. That refusal can only fuel speculation that the Israeli defence forces acted in breach of international standards in time of conflict.

The TUC has called for an international response to the humanitarian emergency requirements of the West Bank and Gaza and is itself raising funds among its affiliates. We are also seeking how best to assist our brothers and sisters in the Palestinian trade union federation — the PGFTU.

The recent joint visit to the region of the General Secretaries of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the European TUC, and the expression to them by Histadrut and the PGFTU of a commitment to peace, a genuine concern for those suffering on the other side of the conflict and a desire to end violence and terror, offer tangible support to the Director-General's recommendation that social dialogue could be an important component in the re-opening of negotiations for peaceful coexistence of two sovereign States within secure and recognized boundaries. We also endorse the call by the Director-General for the setting up of a special Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection and we urge all governments to make generous contributions to it.

I have concentrated on social dialogue and peace-building because they are the prerequisites for social justice and sustainable development. Without peace we have nothing. Without social dialogue we are denied the freedom to preserve peace.

Original Chinese: Mr. LI (Government delegate, China) — First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election. I am confident that under his wise leadership, this session of the International Labour Conference will be a complete success.

Entering the new century, in spite of the unexpected incidents in the world, peace and development remain the themes of the times in this new century. World peace, people-to-people cooperation, national development and social progress are trends of our time. As multi-polarization and economic globalization pick up speed, and science and technology progress day by day, the world of work is faced with golden opportunities for development on the one hand, and grave challenges on the other. Global questions, however, need to be tackled through the joint efforts of all countries, and world challenges need to be met by state-to-state cooperation. In this context, the ILO should face up to current realities and conform to historic trends and the developments of the times by appropriately controlling the impact

of economic globalization on the world of work so as to promote common development among the nations.

The activities of the ILO within the last two years have been given a comprehensive review in the Report of the Director-General. It is satisfying to note that the ILO has given an active response to the tripartite appeal to promote employment and cooperation against a backdrop of globalization, and successfully held the Global Employment Forum in 2001, when the Global Agenda for Employment was established. It is our belief that the actions taken by the ILO for implementing this agenda will help achieve the goal of decent work.

China has made unremitting efforts for economic development and social progress since it adopted its reform and opening-up policy over two decades ago. Its overall national strength has increased remarkably, and its people are living an increasingly better life with a very stable political situation. Today China is enjoying political stability, economic development, ethnic unity and social progress. In the economic restructuring and reform of recent years, the Chinese Government has integrated economic development with social progress by adopting a series of policies and measures to improve the social security system and promote employment.

Nevertheless, the country is faced with a grave employment question at present due to such reasons as economic restructuring and a big population. In this context we will continue to work for sustained, rapid and sound economic growth, further reform the economic and employment structure and develop employment services. We are ready to continue our cooperation in this regard with the ILO and all other member States to share and draw on each other's experience in promoting employment, improving the social security system and enhancing the cause of labour and social security in the world.

The urgent task apparent for countries throughout the world is to promote employment, eradicate poverty and strengthen social integration. The Chinese Government holds that, first, it is imperative to work for the establishment of a national, international, political and economic order so that the developing countries may enjoy, on a just basis, the benefits of economic globalization and scientific and technological progress and the gap in wealth between the North and South may be bridged. The ILO could work with the tripartite constituents to reduce the negative impact of globalization and extend the benefits of it to all workers in the world.

Second, The ILO should respect the diversified cultures, social systems and values of different countries as well as the common will and interests of all the parties in the member States. Efforts should also be made to enhance communication, promote dialogue and safeguard the democratic consultation mechanism of the Organization so that the goal of social justice contained in the Constitution of the ILO may be achieved in the real sense.

Third, the ILO should pay more attention to the specific requests of the developing countries and further strengthen technical cooperation. It is the Organization's obligation to take concrete measures to promote employment, eradicate poverty and protect the rights and interests of the workers so as to enable all workers in the world to enjoy secure, productive, and sustainable decent work.

Mr. FUTRAKUL (*Government delegate, Thailand*) — On behalf of the Government of Thailand, I would like to congratulate the Chairman on his election to preside over this session of the Conference. I am confident that under his able guidance our discussions will yield productive and fruitful results. I also wish to thank the Director-General for his excellent and thought-provoking address.

Thailand supports the promotion and realization of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work. In this connection, Thailand has, in the past four years, ratified two more fundamental Conventions, namely the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Our next goal is to ratify the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), as soon as possible. We hope to cooperate closely with the ILO in its technical assistance programme, in meeting the challenges of ratifying new Conventions through awareness building, strengthening of institutions and authorities concerned, training of personnel, as well as increasing cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders.

The Thai Government also wishes to thank the ILO for its contribution to create opportunities for its people to secure decent employment and income after the 1997 financial crisis that created nearly 2 million unemployed. The Country Employment Policy Review (CEPR), the first joint framework between Thailand and the ILO since the 1997 financial crisis, developed into the key guidelines and recommendations for the introduction of active labour market policies in Thailand.

Youth employment workshops and discussion on areas relating to small and medium-sized enterprises and skill development in Bangkok, jointly organized with the ILO, was also another success. Another important step regarding gender equality is the implementation of the Expansion of Employment Opportunities for Women (EEOW) Project, with a view to empowering and generating decent work for Thai women.

Thailand is seeking to remedy the decent work deficit by strengthening its social protection system through the expansion of the social security scheme, to cover all enterprises, including those with only one worker. Moreover, the Thai Government is planning to provide social security for workers in the informal sector and homeworkers. The Thai Government is also studying the introduction of the unemployment insurance scheme. In this connection, we are grateful to the ILO, as well as to the World Bank, for the substantial technical assistance rendered to us. The outcome of the research and workshops, as well as the recommendations of the ILO experts, will be used as guidelines for sustainable schemes of social protection.

Lessons from the 1997 financial crisis taught us that the informal sector is an important element for our economic growth, as it has become an important vehicle for absorbing a large number of retrenched and unemployed workers. In this connection, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) Labour Ministers' Meeting last month addressed the issue of providing this sector with adequate protection, and commissioned an ASEAN Regional Project on Informal Sector Development.

The Thai Government places high priority on the issue of social dialogue and has put it in its 9th Na-

tional Economic and Social Development Plan, which came into effect last year. Our experience in the aftermath of the 1997 financial crisis has taught us that social dialogue helps to mitigate and cushion the adverse socio-economic impacts of the crisis.

Finally, Thailand wishes to reiterate its support for the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and its implementation of the four strategic objectives. We believe that they will contribute to decent economic development. As a developing country, Thailand believes that, in addition to its mandate on international labour standards, the ILO also has a developmental mandate based on the Declaration of Philadelphia. In this connection, we look to the ILO's recently created World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization to come up with a new development paradigm that will put people and their basic needs at its centre. We also look forward to increasing coherence in policy and implementation among the ILO, the World Trade Organization (WTO), World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other international economic organizations in their mission to help developing countries in a holistic manner.

Mr. RYDER (*representative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*) — Congratulations to the President on his election, and to the Director-General for his Report; it covers a period of important progress for the ILO. Indeed, if our Organization is to be successful today in pursuing its mandate, it must make a difference to the process of globalization; it can have no lesser ambition. Decent work has to become an explicit and central goal of national and international policy-making. An international system that generates decent work will win popular support and legitimacy, and this is crucial for sustainability and for stability. The World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization has important opportunity, and important responsibility, and the ICFTU is confident that it will prove equal to them, but for this we need to ensure that its outputs feed into the work of all international institutions with relevant mandates because the Commission will be judged by its impact more than by its wisdom.

Trade unions insist on the ILO's obligations to working people. The corollary is our commitment to work constructively in a spirit of cohesive tripartism to take this organization forward. Firmly grounded in its established values of tripartism, social justice and international labour standards, the ILO has, and must continue, to innovate; standing still as the world of work is transformed cannot be right, and one consequence is that the ILO has to find better ways of engaging enterprises which are, more than ever, key actors in the issues we face. We need them here, and the explosive growth of interest in corporate social responsibility is compelling evidence of their wanting to take a place. If the ILO is unable to engage them, then it risks marginalization precisely where it needs to be centre stage.

The ILO has the normative framework which is needed to give direction and credibility to voluntary initiatives. This Conference provides further evidence of the enduring centrality of standard setting and supervision. Our procedures are vitally important because they work. They have done so in the unfinished challenge of ending forced labour in Burma, where our supervisory system, allied to real political com-

mitment and perseverance, has enabled the ILO to do what others could not. The ILO's capacity to contribute in the most difficult of circumstances is being put to the test elsewhere. Next week, in its annual survey of trade union rights violations, the ICFTU will again document the continuing massacre of trade unionists in Colombia. We call on the ILO to bring the same determination, the same commitment, to ending this tragedy as it has done in respect of Burma.

The Director-General has reported to us the unendurable conditions being suffered by Palestinian working people. The ILO has a pressing responsibility to act to the limits of its capacities and its mandate, to build peace, security and a better future for all in the region. The ICFTU assumes this as a joint responsibility. We have been working to build bridges and to mobilize solidarity.

In my two visits to Palestine in recent months, our colleagues of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions have told me of, and they have shown me, the urgent need for practical solidarity. The Director-General has challenged us to take this path of practical solidarity. It may not be the easiest for all, but it is surely the one that circumstances compel us to choose together. And so the ICFTU supports strongly the creation of a Palestinian fund for employment and social protection, and we warmly welcome ILO initiatives for dialogue and cooperation. This is work which commands the highest priority.

The Director-General has rightly insisted that this Organization must be relevant to all workers, and that all workers have rights. Indeed, it has a particular duty to those who are denied their fundamental rights, are subject to extreme exploitation, or who work in danger. So this Conference is to be congratulated on highlighting the plight of those who are unprotected and unrecognized in informal work settings, of the millions of working children covered in this year's Global Report, and of those subject to repression. Bringing decent work to them is the task before all of us, and the ICFTU pledges to play its part.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Minister of Labour, South Africa*) — We join those who have spoken before us in congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents of the Conference on their elections.

When the Director-General first presented the strategic budgeting dispensation in 2000, we supported his vision as we believed that the Organization was adapting to changing times and accompanying challenges.

The Director-General assumed office at a time when the budget process posed a formidable challenge. My delegation is of the opinion that not only did the Director-General rise to the challenge but he acquitted himself with unquestionable distinction. We note with tremendous admiration the innovativeness displayed in reorganizing and reorienting the work of the ILO into measurable strategic objectives.

It is common knowledge that the pervasive hurricane of globalization that blows through the lengths and breadth of the universe has brought about unprecedented challenges in the world of work and in society as a whole. These challenges include the widening digital divide, the skills gap, and the indefensible income inequalities between rich and poor. In other words, the economic prosperity heralded by globalization promises has hitherto been enjoyed by a privileged few while the phenomenon continues to conjure

up ugly images of joblessness and socio-economic insecurities in developing countries.

In response to the challenge presented by globalization, the ILO's Decent Work Agenda remains an important tool for bridging these gaps and promoting sustainable development. In our view, the ILO is now in a better position to assist African countries to address the decent work deficit. This can be achieved by supporting the goals of the New Partnership for Africa's Development. To this end, we beseech the ILO to deploy its resources and capacity in ensuring that Africa achieves the goals defined in the Global Employment Agenda.

The ILO's initiative in defining the social pillars of sustainable development and influencing the Bretton Woods institutions to take account of the social dimension of globalization has placed it in a strategic position for streamlining employment and labour issues into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers process.

We concur with the observation that this historic report on strategic budgeting will provide a useful baseline for benchmarking and for measuring the impact of programmes at country level, as we believe that the performance of the ILO should be judged by the impact it makes in changing the lives of ordinary people.

It would be remiss of me not to comment on the Director-General's report on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. My delegation rallies behind the ILO and my country reaffirms its commitment to the promotion and the protection of all workers everywhere, including those under siege in Palestine.

The Director-General's declaration that the ILO's strength "lies in the values of social justice and human dignity upon which its Constitution and Declaration of Philadelphia are founded" will only have meaning for Palestinian workers if translated into action by providing technical assistance to ameliorate their plight and offer them the opportunity to earn an income for themselves and their families.

Let me conclude by thanking the Director-General for his Report and wishing him success in his quest for implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

Original Arabic: Mr. GUIDER (representative of the Arab Labour Organization) — In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! I would like to congratulate the President of the Conference as well as the Vice-Presidents on being entrusted to preside over the 90th Session of the Conference, and I wish this Conference full success.

A look at the world of labour today shows that work is fundamental for one and all. However, throughout the world, the lack of decent dignified work is to varying degrees a subject of concern. We know that enormous disparities exist. We all know how much working conditions have a direct impact on family life and family relations. When neither parent works there is tension and violence, with repercussions on the children. They are often exposed to crime, drugs and the worst forms of child labour.

I would like to thank the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Juan Somavia, for the remarkable work done by the ILO under his leadership, which is described in the Report submitted to the present session, and also for his cooperation with us at the Arab Labour Organization and for his support for technical cooperation programmes.

I would like to assure the Director-General and the President of the Conference of our commitment to technical cooperation. It benefits the social partners in the Arab regions and helps in realizing the objectives and principles for which the ILO was established.

I would, however, like to stress the following: the share of ILO expenditure in the Arab States represents under 3.8 per cent of all ILO technical cooperation expenditure. This is very low compared to the other regions.

Secondly, the activities devoted to the Arab States are not linked and are not complementary from the point of view of approach and implementation.

Thirdly, there is no precise definition of priorities either for the Arab region or for each Arab country. The Arab Labour Organization could provide useful advice in this respect.

Fourthly, we believe that the ILO could greatly contribute to targeted programmes for the Arab region, such as the Arab Technical Programme for Youth Employment, which addresses the problem of unemployment.

Fifthly, it is important to have a realistic understanding of child labour in the Arab countries. In most Arab countries child labour is not widespread. In the few where it does exist, it does not include the worst forms of child labour, which have dire psychological, social and physical effects on children.

The silence which surrounds the killings and massacres in our region has already led to enough damage. This opinion is supposed to be objective and realistic, but to me it seems that its realism is and its objectivity hides a complete indifference.

Torture, humiliation and severe violations of human rights and human dignity are clearly being carried out in the Arab land of Palestine before the eyes of those who call themselves peacekeepers and who claim to fight against terrorism, and who fly the flag of freedom and human rights so that people can live in dignity. The events occurring on the Arab land of Palestine as a tragedy for which all humanity is responsible. It is our duty here at the ILO, this free international platform, to state firmly the need to stop these violations without delay. Peace signifies life, and decent work which respects the human nature of all human beings without discrimination based on colour, race and religion. Such an approach is not only consecrated by all international agreements, but also by all the divine religions. There is only one God and he loves good, and in all religions he calls for the elimination of all forms of evil, so that mankind may live in peace and harmony. Our brothers, families and workers in Palestine are suffering yearly from direct violations and the economic embargo inflicted upon them. Reports clearly show the seriousness of the damage and losses these people are experiencing.

An economic embargo is an inhuman act which causes dire effects wherever it is applied. There is an enormous amount of suffering for children, the elderly and women in Iraq and Palestine on a daily basis and this is undeniable proof that the sanctions of an embargo, whoever the authors are, are inhumane.

The dire social effects of the embargo bring about an increase in unemployment and lead us to call for the abrogation of such sanctions and for serious action with a view to offering a decent life to Arab citizens whose rights are infringed in all of the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, south Lebanon, in the

Golan area. Similarly, the suffering experienced in Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Sudan or in Somalia leads us to ask why this happens specifically in the Arab world? Why in Arab countries in particular? Is it not time to put an end to arrogance, colonization and discrimination?

We certainly hope that we will see the application of the proposals made by the Director-General in the following months concerning Palestinian workers in the Occupied Territories in Palestine, and particularly the creation of the special fund for Palestinian workers.

Original Spanish: Mr. JIMÉNEZ AGUILAR (Employers' adviser, Spain) — May I congratulate the President and also the Vice-Presidents on being elected to direct the work of this session of the International Labour Conference. I would also like to congratulate the Director-General on his Report to the Conference and express to him our gratitude for his recent visit to Spain, during which we had the opportunity to talk to him about the main themes relating to the present economic situation in the country. These visits are important to bring the Organization closer to its Members and to give the Organization a higher profile in the respective countries, thus replying to the aspiration of the ILO to play a more active role.

Many debates now have an international dimension. The fact that they have the support of the social partners is a valuable instrument to strengthen the pillars upholding the principles and values that guarantee peace and international development.

Four years ago we undertook to improve the effectiveness of the principles underlying this Organization, and to avoid inertia making us overload our activity with new instruments that are often out of touch with the real problems they attempt to tackle. We are aware of the difficulties of adaptation that can affect such an established organization as the ILO. However, our credibility could be called into question if we do not react as soon as possible to the real requirements of a different and much more dynamic society. We therefore think that employment should be the constant objective of the actions and programmes developed by the ILO, which is what is happening in most of our countries.

Spanish entrepreneurs have come to this Conference with the satisfaction of having taken some action in the last few months to improve the environment in which enterprises have to work in spite of the world economic slowdown. It was this circumstance that prompted the Spanish employers' and workers' organizations to sign an agreement on collective bargaining where, inter alia, we drew a close link between wage moderation and employment this year so that the crisis would not jeopardize the important achievements of the last few years.

Last year another agreement was signed which consolidates the funding structure of social security, constitutes reserves and introduces flexibility and staging in retirement, promoting older workers being kept on after normal retirement age.

Within the sphere of the European Union, the social partners have also made certain contributions. For example: the joint contribution to training made at the Barcelona European Council and a forthcoming agreement to promote telework.

As the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia recalled in his recent visit to Spain, the world of work is

changing. The conflict relationship which underlay most labour relations is being replaced by cooperation. Workers have greater independence in exchange for a greater level of responsibility in their decisions.

Most of these achievements reflect the exercise of responsibility which would have been impossible without a tradition of social dialogue and without an open and constructive attitude.

In Spain, social dialogue has made it possible to deal with extremely complex matters and has achieved some aims thanks to the responsibility of the social partners. It would have been desirable, therefore, for the reasons that have made the Spanish trade union organizations call for a day of strikes on 20 June to have been addressed through dialogue instead of them taking such drastic step.

In any case I would like to express the hope that this does not cut off the consultation process that has contributed in the last few years to the competitiveness of our enterprises, to employment and to general well-being in Spain.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-NAHEDH (Employers' delegate, Kuwait) — In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful! I would like to extend the sincere greetings of the employers' federation in my country and join the previous speakers in congratulating the President and the Vice-Presidents, on their election. This is the 90th Session of your august Conference and although the ILO and the International Labour Conference have achieved excellent results in the field of values, social justice and law, they have hesitated in taking up the obligations of their universal social conscience when it comes to political considerations. However, international conflicts today have become so intermingled and interdependent that it is no longer possible to separate social policy or fundamental human rights from the other issues. When a territory is occupied and colonized, when there is a war of extermination or genocide, when a population is massacred and deliberately excluded from infrastructure, it has serious repercussions on all aspects of employment and labour because it affects both employers and workers. The machine of destruction does not distinguish between trade unions, factories and shops. That is why I appeal to the Conference to return to its former historic positions which are more in conformity with its nature and noble objectives.

In his Report the Director-General has reviewed the achievements of the ILO over the last two years. It would appear that the good news he announced when he took office with regard to reforms to correct the course of the ILO and to set a different order of priorities for its work have not yet been translated into practice. The question of standards continues to predominate the ILO, as does decent work, introduced by the Director-General and made the priority of priorities over the last three sessions. The only difference is that its objectives have changed slightly, and it is being dealt with in the context of standards and application rather than in connection with employment and the fight against unemployment.

In order to cope with the scourge of unemployment and labour market stagnation affecting both developed and developing countries, we have to continue to satisfy basic human needs and in this respect any form of productive work must be considered decent work. Many countries cannot afford the luxury

of decent work and decent work standards and are unable even to finance a decent social security system. Cooperatives have been very successful and have reinforced economic and social development in many societies and succeeded in recreating a balanced approach to investment, linking needs and profit to the demands of development. Although there are some negative points here and there. These are the result of internal gaps which are specific to each experiment. The Conference should continue to take this balanced approach, without giving too much priority to standards or making cooperatives bear the social burdens. Cooperatives are economic projects which are governed by the law of supply and demand and their efficiency is judged by their competitiveness which runs counter to the idea of discriminatory practices or preferential treatment.

We wanted to draw attention to the necessity of subjecting informal economic activity to the formal economy, bringing it into the mainstream economy and under the scope of legislation. This would affect all informal workers and would mean imposing more constraints on their activity and restricting their expansion. Many new and unconventional jobs are created in the informal economy, helping to absorb unemployed workers and to create income in both developed and developing countries. We would like to see a certain amount of leeway given to informal economic activities because in many cases they are either the beginning of projects that can encounter difficulties and disappear or develop and eventually become part of the formal sector.

In conclusion, my organization congratulates the Conference for having placed human rights high on its list of priorities so that might, assume the defence of these rights by adopting the resolution concerning the role of the ILO in addressing the devastating effects of Israeli occupation and hostilities on the working conditions and the workers of Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories.

Original Arabic: Mr. OULD SIDI (Minister of the Civil Service, Labour, Youth and Sports, Mauritania) — In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate! It is a great honour to take the floor on behalf of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania before this august assembly, meeting on the occasion of the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I should like to take this opportunity to express to the President and the Officers of the Conference my congratulations on their election to preside over this session and to wish them every success in guiding the work of the Conference. In this regard, I must commend the great efforts exerted by the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, for the preservation and development of the achievements of the Organization, and to enable it to respond to the aspirations of the member States.

The international situation today, arising from globalization and the various challenges which accompany it place our Organization and its member States, particularly the developing countries, at an unprecedented turning point.

In this context and in accordance with the instructions of President Moawiya Ould Tayeh our country has placed high on its list of priorities the creation of appropriate conditions which would enable workers to control their own destiny and reinforce their ability to influence events.

Promotion of a pluralist democracy and trade union freedom throughout the country has contributed to giving an impetus to collective and individual initiatives and to the cooperative movement, and to a stimulation of civil society organizations.

A campaign for knowledge for all, alongside awareness-building campaigns have given large segments of our society the necessary information and basic skills to enable them to adapt to the rapid changes taking place in our country and the world.

In the context of vocational training we attach great importance to increasing and diversifying our capacities so as to cover the entire country and all our requirements. Mobile training teams have played an important role in achieving this objective.

Our efforts have had their positive effects on unemployment, and the humanitarian rights commission has played a positive role in this regard, as well as various initiatives aimed at promoting investments in manpower. Our development policies are centred around our labour policies.

For the next 15 years the national programme against poverty will be a vital element in our development policies.

Main indicators, such as unemployment rates, social coverage, health coverage, education and literacy rates, make us optimistic with regard to the implementation of this ambitious programme.

As regards labour legislation, we have recently ratified four of the core Conventions of the International Labour Office, thereby ratifying all of the fundamental instruments of the Organization.

Furthermore, in cooperation with the ILO, we are modernizing the labour management institutions, to enable them to keep abreast of current developments and the economic and social changes arising from national policies and the requirements of the age. We are also cooperating with the ILO, in the preparation of important studies aimed at modernizing our social protection system, and establishing new policies in this domain.

I should like once again to thank the International Labour Office for its support and for the technical assistance provided to us to adapt our labour legislation and structure to the world of today.

The report of the Director-General on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories has shown the scope of the social and economic collapse suffered by the Palestinian workers and of the resultant acute humanitarian crisis. We need to find immediate solutions to this problem, in addition to an expanded programme of technical assistance, in accordance with the recommendations of the Director-General.

In conclusion, I should like to wish every success to the International Labour Conference at its 90th Session.

I would like, on my own behalf and on behalf of the Officers of the Conference, to thank you for having conducted this first stage of the debate with the dignity that I asked of you. You have respected the time limit and have adopted the principle that, if you want to be well understood, you should be clear. I would like to thank you for contributing to the success of the debate. In fact it seems that you are even more Swiss than the Swiss President, because everything has worked like clockwork this morning.

This afternoon the electoral colleges will be meeting for the elections to the Governing Body. All of the necessary information is in the *Daily Bulletin* and I

should like to ask all of you to read this so that the elections to the Governing Body may proceed as smoothly as possible.

Our next plenary will be tomorrow morning.

(The Conference adjourned at 12.40 p.m.)

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