



First sitting

Tuesday, 3 June 2003, 10.15 a.m.

Presidents: Lord Brett, Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office and Mr. M.C. Wamalwa

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Lord BRETT (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*) – I have the greatest pleasure in declaring open the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference and our first task is the pleasant one of electing a President of the Conference. I therefore call upon the Chairperson of the Government group, His Excellency Mr. Wisnumurti, Ambassador of Indonesia, to propose the candidature for the President of the Conference.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. WISNUMURTI (*Government delegate, Indonesia*) – On behalf of the Government group, I have the honour to inform the meeting that the Government group decided to nominate His Excellency Mr. Michael C. Wamalwa, Vice-President of the Republic of Kenya, as President of this session of the Conference. Mr. Wamalwa's distinguished career and achievements as a parliamentarian, lawyer and as an academic specializing in international law, attached to his wide-ranging experience and abilities, as well as to his thorough familiarity with the political and legal issues of our times. As an active politician of long standing, Mr. Wamalwa became leader of the opposition in 1994. Following the Kenyan elections in December last year, he was elected as Vice-President. Through his convictions and interest, he has been very much involved in the reconstruction and development programmes of the Kenyan Government. His present office gives him extensive responsibility in this area, in which public welfare and humanitarian issues play a prominent part. In view of his impressive record, the Government group believes that Mr. Wamalwa is eminently suited to the task of leading work of the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference on the very important issues on its agenda, and for the achievement of the common goals that our governments and social partners have set ourselves. To this end, we very much hope that the Conference will endorse his nomination.

Lord BRETT (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*) – I thank the Ambassador for the nomination of Mr. Wamalwa of Kenya. I now give the floor to the spokesperson of the Employers' group, Mr. Funes de Rioja, Employers' delegate, Argentina, on behalf of the Employers' group.

Original Spanish: Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*) – It is an honour for me,

as spokesperson of the Employers' group, to second the candidature of Mr. Michael Christopher Wamalwa, Vice-President of Kenya, to preside at this august assembly. We are sure that, under his leadership, we are going to have a Conference that will set an example for societies at this very special time of the history of mankind.

Lord BRETT (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*) – I thank Mr. Funes de Rioja, on behalf of the Employers' group. I now give the floor to Sir Roy Trotman, spokesperson for the Workers' group and Workers' delegate from Barbados.

Sir Roy TROTMAN (*Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*) – We thank you very much for your introduction. Like our previous speakers, we are of the view that this Conference is a very challenging one for all three sectors in these discussions and we think that what we require, therefore, is a person with significant integrity – firm but understanding – who is going to be able to lead us through the debates before the International Labour Conference.

We in the Workers' group are therefore very happy to second the nomination of His Excellency, Mr. Michael Christopher Wamalwa.

Lord BRETT (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*) – The nomination of Mr. Michael Christopher Wamalwa, Vice-President of Kenya, has been duly proposed and seconded. In the absence of other proposals, I declare Mr. Wamalwa President of the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference. His many qualities include the fact that he has climbed Mount Kilimanjaro – of his many qualities that may be the one that helps him most at this Conference. I invite him to take the President's Chair.

(Mr. Wamalwa, Vice-President of Kenya, is elected President of the Conference and takes the President's Chair.)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The PRESIDENT – On behalf of the people of Kenya, and on my own behalf, I want to express my sincere gratitude to every one of you for the great honour you have bestowed upon me, upon my Government and upon my country, by nominating me and accepting me to preside over this distinguished assembly of the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference.

My special thanks go to the African group who, without any reservations, unanimously endorsed my country for this coveted position. Equally to be thanked are the distinguished delegates of all regional groups, and the Ambassador of Indonesia, His Excellency Mr. Nugroho Wisnumurti, spokesperson of the Government group, Mr. Daniel Funes de Rioja, spokesperson of the Employers' group, and Sir Roy Trotman, spokesperson of the Workers' group, for their expression of support on behalf of their respective groups. I bring to you warm greetings and cordial felicitations from His Excellency, Mwai Kibaki, CGH, MP, President of the Republic of Kenya, the Government and the people of Kenya.

It is therefore with profound honour and humility that I accept this challenging responsibility and make a pledge to serve you to the best of your best expectations. I am fully conscious of the heavy tasks that lie ahead of me as the President of the 91st Session of the Conference, but I know that I can count on your support to achieve the objectives that we have set for ourselves.

At this point, may I take this opportunity on behalf of this assembly to congratulate most sincerely Mr. Juan Somavia for his overwhelming re-election as the Director-General of the ILO for a second five-year term. We all appreciate his pledge to "work together for a new social contract based on decent work for all and a globalization that leaves no one behind". In this commitment we all wish him every success. As we look forward to beginning the serious business of the Conference, I am not in any doubt that your participation in the various committees that will be set up by the Conference will be guided by the true tripartite spirit of cooperation. This spirit is a unique feature of the ILO, which builds dialogue and consensus and helps bring together the actors capable of identifying problems in the world of work and, above all, finding possible solutions to the many challenges that we face.

This session of the Conference has been called upon to provide the necessary guidance for the ILO's general policy and its future activities. Such policy guidance will as a matter of course touch on the main theme for this year's session. This is the relationship between decent work, poverty reduction and development. It is in this respect that I hold the view that this session of the Conference has an important responsibility to engage in serious and constructive debate on all the issues. This will enable us to accomplish the Conference agenda in a manner that will uphold the noble principles of this Organization.

In conclusion, let me call upon all of us to give our best in the work of this noble Organization and once again wish all of you a very productive and successful Conference.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The PRESIDENT – Without much ado we will go straight to work and, in accordance with article 25, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the Conference, we shall now elect the Vice-Presidents of the Conference. I now call upon the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE – The nominations to the posts of Vice-Presidents of the Conference are as follows:

Government group:

Mr. Muhaisin, Minister of Labour (*Jordan*)

Employers' group:

Mr. Noakes (*Australia*)

Workers' group:

Mr. Wojcik (*Poland*)

The PRESIDENT – May I take it that the proposals are now adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

NOMINATION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GROUPS

The PRESIDENT – I again call on the Clerk of the Conference to read out the names of the persons that have been elected as Officers of the various groups.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE – The groups have chosen their Officers as follows:

Government group:

Chairperson: Mr. Wisnumurti (*Indonesia*)

Employers' group:

Chairperson: Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*)

Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*)
Mr. Botha (*South Africa*)
Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*)
Mr. Potter (*United States*)
Mr. Hoff (*Norway*)

Secretary: Mr. Peñalosa (*International Organisation of Employers*)

Workers' group:

Chairperson: Sir Roy Trotman (*Barbados*)

Vice-Chairpersons: Mr. Attigbe (*Benin*)
Ms. Burrow (*Australia*)
Ms. Triana (*Colombia*)
Mr. Shmakov (*Russian Federation*)

Secretary: Mr. Cunniah (*International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*)

The members of the Officers of the Workers' group, apart from the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are: Mr. Wojcik (*Poland*), Ms. Lekang (*Norway*), Mr. de Vits (*Belgium*), Mr. Ahmed (*Pakistan*), Mr. Ito (*Japan*), Mr. Zellhoefer (*United States*), Ms. Anderson (*Mexico*), Mr. Ghandour (*Sudan*), and Ms. Rantsolase (*South Africa*).

CONSTITUTION AND COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

The PRESIDENT – The next item on our agenda is the establishment of the various committees that will consider the matters before the Conference. This con-

cerns the following committees: the Selection Committee, the Finance Committee, the Committee on the Application of Standards, the Committee on Human Resources, the Committee on the Employment Relationship, the Committee on Occupational Safety and Health, the Committee on Seafarers.

A list of the nominations made by the groups for the compositions of these committees is available at the distribution desk and will appear in a forthcoming *Provisional Record*.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals are adopted.

(The proposals are adopted.)

COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

The PRESIDENT – I would now like to ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups for the composition of the Selection Committee.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE – The appointments for the Selection Committee, in accordance with article 4 of the Standing Orders are as follows: the 28 Government members are the titular members of the Governing Body of the following countries: Argentina, Bahamas, Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Mali, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, United Kingdom, United States.

The Deputy Government members are: Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, New Zealand, Niger, Oman, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam.

The 14 Employer members are: Mr. Barde (*Switzerland*); Mr. Dahlan (*Saudi Arabia*); Mr. De Regil (*Mexico*); Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*); Mr. Heinzemann (*Germany*); Mr. Jeetun (*Mauritius*); Mr. Lambert (*United Kingdom*); Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*); Mr. M'Kaissi (*Tunisia*); Mr. Noakes (*Australia*); Mr. Potter (*United States*); Mr. Sasso Mazzufferi (*Italy*); Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*); Mr. Tabani (*Pakistan*).

The Deputy Employer members are the following: Mr. Anand (*India*); Mr. De Arbeloa (*Venezuela*); Mr. Eremeev (*Russian Federation*); Mr. Ferrer Dufol (*Spain*); Mr. Hilton-Clarke (*Trinidad and Tobago*); Mr. Hoff (*Norway*); Mr. Horvatic (*Croatia*); Ms. Knowles (*New Zealand*); Mr. Makeka (*Lesotho*); Mr. Nathan (*Malaysia*); Mr. Oshinowo (*Nigeria*); Mr. Owuor (*Kenya*); Mr. Ricci Muade (*Guatemala*); Mr. Wade (*Senegal*).

As far as the 14 Workers members are concerned, the nominations are the same as those of the Officers of the Workers' group which I read out previously.

The Deputy Workers members are Mr. Bennett (*Canada*); Mr. Cortebeek (*Belgium*); Mr. Orrel (*United Kingdom*); Mr. Patel (*South Africa*), and Ms. Yacob (*Singapore*).

The PRESIDENT – If there are no objections, may I take it that the composition of the Selection Committee is adopted by the plenary?

(The proposals are adopted.)

The PRESIDENT – We shall now move to the next item which concerns the suspension of certain provisions of the Standing Orders to implement recommendations made by the Governing Body at its 206th Session, last March, regarding the discussion of the Global Report.

In order to implement these recommendations, the President and the three Vice-Presidents unanimously recommend, in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders, that the Conference decide that the discussion on the Global Report should not fall under the limitation concerning the number of statements by each speaker in the plenary, but that within each Government delegation, interventions be made either by the minister or by the Government delegate and that, to that extent, article 12, paragraph 3, of the Standing Orders should be suspended; and that the Conference decide that the discussion should not be governed by the provisions regarding time limits to speeches and, to that extent, suspend article 14, paragraph 6, of the Standing Orders; and that the Conference decide not to apply, to the extent required, the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders on the sequence with which the floor is given to speakers, in order to facilitate an exchange of views.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals pursuant to article 76 of the Standing Orders will take effect, with the agreement of the Conference, as from its next plenary sitting which will be held next Monday, 9 June. As I can see no objections, I take it that the proposals are adopted.

(The proposals are adopted.)

The PRESIDENT – Before moving on, I should like to highlight a matter of which you are all aware. In view of the recent outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) the World Health Organization has recommended certain preventive measures, and these have naturally been followed in the arrangements made for the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference.

I would stress that this is a public health problem which concerns everybody. You have all been called upon to submit a statement concerning your state of health to the ILO Medical Service and to obtain a clearance sticker to place on your identification badge.

Under article 13, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, the President of the Conference is responsible for maintaining order throughout the proceedings. It is therefore my decision that any person wearing a badge without this clearance sticker will not be granted access to the conference rooms and will be referred immediately to the medical services. Thank you all for your understanding and cooperation.

PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF THE DRAFT PROGRAMME AND BUDGET FOR 2004-05

The PRESIDENT – This year the Conference is called upon to examine and adopt the Programme and Budget for 2004-05. As the programme and budget is discussed in the Finance Committee, which is

made up of Government representatives only, the next item on our agenda therefore this morning is the preliminary discussion of the draft programme and budget proposals for the year 2004-05 and other financial questions. The purpose of this discussion is to allow Employers' and Workers' delegates to make their statements on the proposals.

Mr. BOTHA (*Employers' delegate, South Africa*) – I very recently visited the President's beautiful country, and I would like to thank him and his countrymen for the magnificent hospitality that I received. I would also like to congratulate the President on his election to preside over this session of the ILO Conference.

The spokesperson for the Employers' group, Mr. Funes De Rioja, will speak and give the Employers' group's reasons for supporting a budget sufficient to complete its programme of work. I make the same plea, of course to the Government members of this house, namely to support a budget which meets the needs of all its constituents, rich and poor, developed and developing, first world and third world. The Governing Body as a whole has proposed this budget.

In March, all speakers made proposals for improvements which were incorporated as far as feasible, and rich and poor members equally face increased contributions.

What are the Employers' priorities for the next biennium?

Firstly, employment and job creation. In our view, this should be the cornerstone of the ILO's work. Better working and living conditions, improved health and poverty reduction will be the result of employment creation. The creation of an enabling environment for the establishment and development of enterprises is part of this first priority. Youth employment is also a key component.

Secondly, the continued modernization of the International Labour Organization's standards.

Thirdly, the promotion of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the promotion of IPEC, the InFocus Programme on Child Labour. It is of major concern that the promotion of ratification of Convention No. 182 appears to have been put on a backburner. Surely we are not abandoning the objective of universal ratification of this important Convention on the elimination of the worst forms of child labour.

Fourthly, social security: the implementation of the conclusions of the general discussion adopted by the 2001 session of the International Labour Conference.

Fifthly, safety and health: prevention and support for the excellent work achieved and the continuing need to promote and support the ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. The Employers give strong support to promoting the expansion of the InFocus Programme.

Sixthly, the strengthening of the social partners and sectoral activities, and in particular support for the United Nations Secretary-General's global compact initiative.

These priorities require that the ILO should remain focused on its own objectives, as defined in the four pillars, and support international goals, such as the Millennium Development Goals, only in so far as they coincide with the ILO's objectives. The support of other international organizations should be elicited to achieve employment creation goals, but the needs of the ILO's constituents should be kept paramount.

The Employers strongly support and recognize the work and sacrifices of donors in financing activities that cannot be covered by the regular budget, but would encourage primary support for the regular budget.

The Employers support the increased allocation of funds to the regions, with a necessary greater involvement of local constituents and an increased focus on effectiveness.

The Employers oppose cuts in the ILO's finances in the Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05. We therefore appeal to and call upon the Governments to support at least a zero real growth budget, particularly as a means to support the developing world and maintain the mandate of the ILO.

Original French: Mr. BLONDEL (*Workers' delegate, France*) – Before I begin my statement, I would like to offer the President and the Vice-President our warmest congratulations, and to everyone our best wishes for the work of this Conference.

The agenda at this first sitting of the Conference deals with budgetary matters and it is as Chairperson of the Workers' group in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee of the Governing Body that I want to speak now. I am familiar with the data that have been submitted, and they have been thoroughly discussed, in often long and difficult discussions. They have shown the effectiveness of tripartite dialogue and indeed of tripartite management.

That is my initial observation, but I think it is an important one. I would like to thank the Director-General for having opened up this discussion, for having both officially and unofficially consulted the various elements of the Governing Body. We support the proposals submitted, which should allow the Office to operate with the maximum efficiency. We strongly support a zero growth in real terms budget.

Members of the Governing Body will recall that during the discussions on this matter, the Workers' group had emphasized the comparative weakness of our budget, devoted to labour problems around the world, by comparison with the budgets of other international organizations which are part of the United Nations system. It is therefore not feasible or desirable for the budget to be undermined by zero nominal growth. The resources which we sometimes receive from extra-budgetary resources, while welcome, are no substitute when it comes to coping with the normal commitments of this Organization, which arise from our responsibility for monitoring observance of international labour standards, from representation and sanctions procedures, and from the complex and ambitious task of promoting our fundamental standards.

Bilateralism does not exist in this particular area. It is a matter of a general commitment to make sure that our institution functions well; an expense which we are to some extent obliged to assume and for which irregular or arbitrary sources of funding are inadequate. What is important is regular payment of contributions.

The Workers' group again appeals to governments to face up to their responsibilities, not only to avoid losing voting rights in this assembly, but also to avoid the consequences of late payment – consequences with regard to programmes and the rational use of surpluses, which, I repeat, are only notional.

We welcome the fact that a system has been established which should avoid unnecessary debate, but

which above all is intended to convince late payers that this is not in their own interests.

We are now working in an integrated way – a “holistic” approach to management, as the Director-General would say. Failure to maintain a particular programme has an indirect impact on other activities. By integrating our management approach, we can produce knock-on effects since one activity will affect others. This could provide a useful stimulus, although there is a downside. If financial constraints force us to abandon one of our activities, we may actually unravel the rest of the fabric. So I must emphasize that adoption of the budget implies commitment, and contributions must be paid when due.

Some other speakers from my group will also focus on certain areas of the programme and budget and certain activities in particular. I would not like to conclude without making it clear that at the suggestion of the Director-General we are making an effort to decentralize our resources, which of course has to be confirmed. Tomorrow, we will also have to deal with many unforeseen requirements: missions and programmes will be required in the Middle East, for example, and in countries affected by natural disasters or armed conflicts.

I therefore call on all delegations, and in particular Government delegations, to adopt the programme and budget as submitted. It is better to devote money to the world of work, which is a world of peace, than to the armaments industry, which is a world of war.

Mr. AHMED (*Workers' delegate, Pakistan*) – We are at the beginning of the twenty-first century, in a phase of economic globalization, which poses multifaceted problems to the world of work. People living in the ILO's 176 member States have great expectations and aspirations with regard to meeting their economic and social needs, to improving their quality of life and employment.

The Workers' group, as our spokesperson, Mr. Blondel, has indicated, in its discussions during the Governing Body's March session, supported the Programme and Budget proposals submitted by the Director-General. We endorsed these proposals in response to the aspirations of people at work in the Asia and Pacific region, which is the largest continent. It contains more than half the world's population, and faces very serious problems. These include problems of employment, poverty alleviation, skills development, gender equality, safety and health and social protection, and child labour. In order to confront these problems, we need to build the capacities of employers and workers and their organizations.

We therefore urge the Government representatives to approve the programme and budget proposals in order to ensure that the ILO can carry out the activities proposed by the Director-General and approved by the Governing Body.

Original English: Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employers' delegate, Argentina*) – As Mr. Botha, our spokesperson for financial issues has mentioned, I will take the floor on behalf of the Employers' group and as Chairperson of the group. First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election.

I have some points I would like to make in order to give our full support to the approval of the programme and budget.

In March 2003 the Governing Body held a discussion on the Programme and Budget proposals for 2004-05. The Employers' group stressed its priorities, and my colleague, Mr. Botha, has mentioned them. In March, a consensus was reached. Certainly, it was not 100 per cent as we expected but it is part of the negotiations to build up that consensus. Now that we have this consensus on the programme, we have to ensure that the budget is adequately approved.

For a long period the ILO has known zero nominal growth, which means that in real terms the budget has decreased, with fewer activities being undertaken by the ILO. Now we can see the effects on the constituents. The Director-General has made savings several times, and committed himself in March to continuing to identify more ways of achieving savings.

But now the ILO is at a turning point in its history. Globalization has given a new visibility and credibility to the ILO, while technical cooperation programmes for constituents are still urgently needed. If an inadequate budget is adopted, technical cooperation will further decrease and the impact of the ILO will be less felt. This will affect social life in a number of developing countries which will no longer be able to receive the support they need from the Office. For us, technical cooperation is a key issue.

As an employer we represent the private sector, together with the workers. On behalf of the private sector we call on governments to take their responsibility to ensure that the Organization is given the budget it needs to complete its programmes of work. Zero real growth is not sufficient to ensure all the activities that the ILO should carry out, but at least the level of activity could remain the same.

Therefore, I suggest on behalf of the Employers' group that the budget for 2004-05, as proposed by the Governing Body, should be approved. I call on those who have the final government responsibility in this area to realize that this consensus between workers, employers, the Office, government and the members of the Governing Body cannot simply be a precarious agreement that could be undermined, because if that were the case we would in fact be weakening the very essence of how the Governing Body operates and of the ILO itself. I am convinced, that this is not what we all want.

Original French: Mr. ATTIGBE (*Workers' delegate, Benin*) – Mr. Blondel, the spokesperson for the Workers' group in the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee of the Governing Body, has underlined the main concerns of the Workers' group with respect to a zero real growth budget. Allow me briefly to review the situation of Africa.

The stagnation in official development aid to Africa and the fall in foreign direct investment in Africa have hampered poverty reduction efforts in developing countries and in Africa in particular. According to the World Bank, many developing countries, and hence African countries, cannot reach the poverty reduction goals set in the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations for the year 2015. The economic slowdown in the last two years has also led to a drop in employment worldwide. The International Labour Office has estimated that there were 180 million people out of work at the end of 2002 – a 20 million increase since the beginning of 2001. The number of working poor at the end of 2002 was 550 million – the same figure as in 1998. In sub-Saharan Africa the number of people

living in poverty is expected to increase from 300 million in 1999 to 345 million by the year 2015. To halve poverty by 2015, the African economies will need to grow at an annual rate of 7 per cent – twice the growth rate of 3.1 registered in 2000.

Given the very high rate of infection with HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, Africa is heavily dependent on commodity exports, and continues to suffer from political and economic instability. Africa is the region with the lowest rate of completion of primary education. In sub-Saharan Africa open unemployment increased from 13.7 per cent in 2000 to 14.4 per cent in 2002. For many years now, poverty has been an abiding concern of African working men and women.

African trade unions are convinced of the need for economic reforms in Africa to be accompanied by a concerted policy to combat poverty effectively throughout the continent. African trade unions aspire to see Africa free of underdevelopment, armed conflict, poverty, disease, ignorance, undemocratic practices and lack of respect for trade union human rights. The African trade unions have always called for development centred on democracy, participation, debt cancellation, strengthening social dialogue and social protection, and promotion of peace and regional integration as a step towards gradual integration into the rest of the world.

Africa needs a decent and sustainable employment policy in order to eliminate poverty, and it is within this context that the ILO, through its technical assistance to constituents, has introduced in the Programme and Budget for 2004-05 strategic objectives to take into account the concerns of Africa. However, these strategic objectives cannot be attained if adequate resources are not allocated to the various programmes. In order to do so, last March, the Governing Body, true to its tripartite spirit, came to a consensus in adopting a zero real growth budget. The recommendation that is submitted to you for adoption supports this decision, and we urge you to give it your unreserved support, so that the Office will have the means to implement its technical assistance programmes for 2004-05.

Original Spanish: Ms. ANDERSON (Workers' delegate, Mexico) – The workers of the Latin American region feel that the ILO, since its foundation in 1919, has contributed much to unity in the world of labour through its tripartite structure, which brings together governments, workers and employers. It has established labour standards, contributed to mutual understanding between employers and workers, training, and done much of value in a fundamental form of support to countries in need of assistance. Industrialized countries, through the ILO, have extended a helping hand to the less developed countries.

This understanding between the social partners represented in the International Labour Organization has earned the world's respect for the way in which it has benefited workers and benefited companies by improving productivity, as well as helping governments to preserve social peace.

We feel that the agreement reached in the Governing Body on expanding the budget should be respected by all countries. The countries of the Third World need this measure. As has already been mentioned here, the developing countries face many prob-

lems and are putting out urgent calls for improved training and education, better job creation, the elimination of discrimination and all forms of exploitation and forced labour, and better protection of young people and children from the worst forms of work. That is why we are calling upon all donor countries to understand the need to approve the expansion of the budget, as approved at the last meeting of the Governing Body. For the sake of all countries, of workers, of higher productivity and world peace, we call upon the Conference to approve this expansion of the budget which is so important at this time.

It is a great honour for all of us here today to be here with the ILO, one of the world's most respected organizations.

Sir Roy TROTMAN (*Workers' delegate, Barbados*) – First of all, allow me to congratulate Mr. Wamalwa on his election to preside over this 91st Session of the Conference.

The work of the International Labour Organization has taken on new dimensions in response to the paradigm shifts resulting from global developments within the last ten or so years. The search for democracy, sometimes accompanied by armed conflict, and the need to provide basic capacity building to provide the means for social interaction – and thus for social development – have been a major source of demands which fall clearly within the mandate of the International Labour Organization, and have called for a significant increase in the Organization's resources.

There is also the question of the maturing of democracies. The work of the International Labour Organization, taken in conjunction with that of the other United Nations agencies, has helped to take communities well beyond the mere practice of national processes of electing the political leadership every three, four or five years. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization is still giving new meaning and a new dimension to the word "democracy". Since the March 2003 session of the Governing Body, we have been seeking to come to grips with our new responsibilities while exploring the theme of "governance, social partnership and globalization".

Apart from the resources required to put together adequate bodies of information and guidance, the International Labour Organization has to provide the means for lifting conclusions from its initial inane, nice-sounding phrases and dynamic life-supporting programmes for the betterment of all communities.

The Workers, therefore, wish to emphasize that this requires further resources because this stabilization work is global. All countries are benefiting from new approaches to governance. All countries are benefiting from the revised social partnership approaches to many of the new demands of liberalization. All countries are benefiting from the offer of peaceful means through which these resolutions are being accomplished. It is our hope that nobody who has seen the changes falling into the routine activities of communities today has made the error of taking them for granted. Change is known to bring its own set of responses. Some of those responses are ever present today and bring their own brand of challenges. We saw this in Seattle and Genoa. We have also seen it elsewhere, and now, of all places, in the international centre of consultations, we have seen it in Geneva. The ILO has provided a forum, indeed it has provided

the only forum through which governments may be assisted by other significant actors to see a broader picture. Put more pertinently, it provides the only forum through which labour, with the assistance of progressive governments, is able to speak to the social responsibility of capital.

The International Labour Organization, additionally, has in recent times been entrusted with the task of dealing with urgent questions in the informal economy. Time does not permit me to address the full significance of that new role and responsibility which is tasked to the ILO, but time does permit me to indicate that this requires more resources, not less.

Coming as I do from a small agricultural-based economy, now freeing itself from the bonds of colonialism, I know of the significant work that has been done by the International Labour Organization for small economies, and I know that such work is far from over. Coming as I do from a country whose economy is based on tourism, I know of the value of the ILO's efforts to deal with the question of HIV/AIDS in the world of work. I also know of the interaction between the tourists from a visitor's and a host's point of view, so I know there is need for more resources.

Speaking for all workers everywhere, I urge governments to note the great debt owed to organized labour organizations – indeed to organized employers' organizations – since they have endeavoured to function in their own countries to bring about stability and help with national, and indeed global, development.

We think of order. We think of uniformity within those communities. We think of the cohesiveness, and we realize that the ILO is important to all these areas, especially since it has provided assistance in the use of dialogue, rather than in the use of guns. Let us therefore recall the words of His Excellency President Lula da Silva yesterday regarding the war against hunger and poverty; the war that is worth fighting for.

In short, we feel that our work is far from over. We feel indeed that our work needs increased financial support. We therefore urge support for the budget, as is.

The PRESIDENT – As there are no more names on the list, I declare the preliminary discussion of the programme and budget and budget proposals closed.

The PRESIDENT – The fact that the next plenary sitting will not be held before 9 June implies that the everyday tasks related to the organization of the Conference will be carried out by the Officers of the Conference, if the Conference wishes to confer on them the necessary powers to do so. I shall now ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out, for your approval, the delegation of authority.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE – 1. The General Conference of the International Labour Organization hereby delegates to its President and three Vice-Presidents authority to take any decisions or perform any functions within the competence of the Conference with respect to any matter that needs to be dealt with before the Conference resumes its plenary sittings, unless the Officers consider that the Conference should hold a sitting to discuss such matters.

2. Decisions taken under this authority will be set out in the *Provisional Record* of the work of the Conference.

3. This delegation of authority shall take effect at the end of this sitting and shall terminate when the Conference resumes its plenary sittings.

The PRESIDENT – If there are no objections, I take it that the delegation of authority is accepted.

(The delegation of authority is accepted.)

RATIFICATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR
CONVENTION BY BELGIUM

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE – I have the pleasure to announce to the Conference that on 2 June of this year, 2003, Belgium deposited the instrument of ratification of the Holidays with Pay Convention (Revised), 1970 (No. 132). This Convention will enter into force in that country on 2 June 2004.

The PRESIDENT – I now declare closed the first sitting of the 91st Session of the International Labour Conference.

(The Conference adjourned at 11.30 a.m.)

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