

Note on the proceedings

Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment:
The Way Forward

Geneva, 13-15 October 2004



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Contents

Introduction	1
Part 1: Consideration of the agenda item	3
Report of the discussion	5
Introduction	5
Composition of the Drafting Committee.....	5
Presentation of the report and general discussion	6
Theme I: Defining the youth employment challenge.....	7
Theme II: National-level responses and specific policies and programmes targeting youth	11
Theme III: Youth employment in the international policy context	20
Consideration and adoption of the draft report and draft conclusions by the Meeting	24
Conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward.....	25
The youth employment challenge	25
Youth employment at the national level	26
ILO action	28
Part 2: Other proceedings.....	29
Panel discussion	31
Mobilizing partnerships for youth.....	31
Discussion.....	34
Closing speeches	36
Evaluation questionnaire	39
List of participants.....	43

Introduction

The Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward was held at the International Labour Office in Geneva from 13-15 October 2004.

The Office had issued a report¹ to serve as a basis for the Meeting's discussions. The report, available in English, French and Spanish, drew on extensive research carried out within the ILO and elsewhere to examine current knowledge of youth employment throughout the world. It reviewed the current debate on youth employment in the context of the Decent Work Agenda, the GEA and the recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network. It examined national-level initiatives which have been undertaken to promote quality jobs for young women and men, focusing on lessons learned and good practices and, in particular, on the role of tripartism in promoting youth employment. The report concluded by suggesting priority areas for discussion for the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward.

Mr. Kinley of the Government of New Zealand was elected as Chairperson of the Meeting. The Vice-Chairpersons elected by the Meeting were: Mr. Diop (Senegal) from the Government group; Ms. Awassi (Gabon) from the Employers' group; and Ms. Abeer Sameer Sawaqed (Jordan) from the Workers' group.

In accordance with the Governing Body decision, the Meeting was attended by a tripartite national delegation from each of the following five lead countries of the YEN: Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Senegal and Sri Lanka. The Employer and Worker representatives of these five countries had been nominated after consultation with their respective groups of the Governing Body.

The Meeting was also attended by ten Employer representatives appointed after consultations with the Employers' group and ten Worker representatives appointed after consultations with the Workers' group of the Governing Body, as well as ten Government representatives from the following countries: Argentina, Canada, Ghana, Jamaica, Jordan, Republic of Korea, Poland, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Representatives of the following member States attended as observers: Algeria, Bangladesh, Cameroon, China, Croatia, France, Hungary, Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, United States, Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

Representatives from the following non-governmental international organizations also attended as observers: International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU); International Co-operative Alliance (ICA); International Organisation of Employers (IOE).

The Secretary-General of the Meeting was Ms. Stewart, Officer-in-Charge, Employment Sector. The Deputy Secretary-General was Mr. Escobar of the Relations, Meetings and Document Services Department. The Executive Secretaries were Mr. Rosas of the Skills and Employability Department and Ms. Rossignotti of the Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department. The experts were Mr. Campbell, Director (ad interim), Employment Strategy Department, Ms. Lin Lim, Deputy Regional Director, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ILO, Bangkok and Mr. Pursey, Office of the Director-General. The Clerk of the Meeting was Ms. Pfeifferberger of the Publications Bureau.

¹ ILO Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward, 2004, *Starting right: Decent work for young people*, 50 pp.

Part 1

Consideration of the agenda item

Report of the discussion

Introduction

1. The Meeting met to examine the item on the agenda by way of five thematic discussions. In accordance with the decision made at the Meeting, the Officers presided in turn over the discussion.
2. The spokesperson for the Employers' group was Mr. Anderson and the spokesperson for the Workers' group was Mr. Patel. The Meeting held five sittings devoted to the discussion of the agenda item.

Composition of the Drafting Committee

3. In accordance with the decision made at the Meeting, a Drafting Committee was set up to draw up draft conclusions reflecting the views expressed in the course of the Meeting's discussion of the report. The Drafting Committee, presided over by the Chairperson, Mr. Kinley, was composed of the following members:

Government members

<i>Argentina:</i>	Mr. Deibe
<i>Senegal:</i>	Mr. Diop
<i>South Africa:</i>	Mr. Mhone
<i>United Kingdom:</i>	Mr. Weller

Employer members

Mr. Anderson
Ms. Awassi
Mr. Manrique Moreno
Mr. Pinomaa

Worker members

Ms. Corral
Mr. Laliberté
Mr. Patel
Ms. Tate

Presentation of the report and general discussion

4. The Secretary-General of the Meeting, Ms. Jane Stewart, Officer-in-Charge of the Employment Sector, welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia. She noted that governments, the social partners and the international community recognize the importance and urgency of responding to the youth employment challenge as a precondition for poverty reduction, sustainable development and lasting peace. She said that decent and productive employment for young people was a commitment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and, to support that commitment, the Secretary-General of the United Nations had created the Youth Employment Network (YEN), composed of the United Nations, the World Bank and the ILO.
5. The long involvement of the ILO in addressing the issue of youth employment was recognized, while a renewed effort was required. A clear understanding of effective national policies and programmes, international developments and the role of the social partners was crucial. In that context, the Governing Body had convened the Meeting with a view to strengthening the ILO's policy message and technical programme on youth employment, and to providing input to the general discussion on the topic at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC).
6. Mr. Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body, acknowledged the importance of youth employment and developing action-oriented outcomes. He noted the importance of promoting an environment that was conducive to job creation, attracting foreign investment, encouraging an entrepreneurial culture and bringing informal jobs into the formal economy. Education and training were seen as essential to improve the school-to-work transition and to meet the skill requirements of enterprises. Labour market information was seen as crucial for young jobseekers to identify the skills needed by employers; and employers could help by providing that information.
7. He noted that specific policy responses were needed to address the challenge of youth employment. The Global Employment Agenda (GEA) provided a basis to stimulate employment broadly. The central policy messages of YEN – promoting employability, equal opportunity, entrepreneurship and employment creation – provided a guiding focus. To promote democracy, a market economy and sustainable development, it was important to develop targeted solutions to youth un(der)employment.
8. Sir Leroy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body, remarked that the role of the Meeting was to confirm the Governing Body's commitment to respond positively to the United Nations Secretary-General's objectives of YEN. He stated that the greatest challenge they faced was how to address employment creation for youth.
9. Accepting the principle that business was the engine of economic growth, the Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body likened workers to the pistons of economic growth, noting that employers and workers needed to work together to address the youth employment challenge. It was important to recognize that there were jobs that angered and alienated people, while there were other jobs that empowered and embraced people. The Meeting was concerned with job creation for youth that provided decency and purpose to life, benefited employers and contributed to growth and prosperity for society as a whole.
10. Following adoption of the proposed plan of work, the Chairperson outlined the objectives of the Meeting – to strengthen the ILO's policy message and technical programme. The basis for discussion was the report *Starting right: Decent work for young people*, which served to build a shared understanding of the problems of youth employment, assess

progress and identify areas for improvement, reaffirm principles and values, and forge a consensus on how to provide young people with decent employment.

Theme I: Defining the youth employment challenge

- 11.** Ms. Lin Lean Lim, Expert and Deputy-Director of the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, presented an overview of the issues and concerns in defining the youth employment challenge. Citing recent statistics, she demonstrated that young people represented the world's greatest resource and asset for the future although they faced many challenges in realizing their potential as a result of illiteracy, HIV/AIDS, and discrimination and violence, particularly against women. One of the causes was the lack of access to productive and decent jobs. Halving the youth unemployment rate had the potential to contribute to the global economy while at the same time drastically improving the quality of life for millions of young people and their families.
- 12.** She noted that a wide range of factors influenced youth un(der)employment including discouraged jobseekers, globalization and its effects on labour markets, temporary jobs, work in the informal economy, where young people lacked adequate incomes, social protection, security and representation, and hazardous work. Youth formed the bulk of migrants; many, particularly young women, were working in exploitative conditions, and highly-skilled young people were seeking work elsewhere (brain drain). Young workers were often subjected to the "last-hired, first-fired" practice of employers and were thus more susceptible to labour market insecurity. There was little empirical evidence that lower minimum wage rates for youth contributed to improved employment opportunities for the young. Where wage employment prospects were few, self-employment could be a viable career option, but that was often viewed as a job of last resort, and young people faced a number of particular obstacles such as access to credit and a lack of support networks.
- 13.** She reiterated that education remained the pathway to decent work for the young. Given the high illiteracy, particularly among girls, the MDG of universal and primary education and gender equality in primary and secondary education by 2015 had special significance. While educational levels had increased in many respects, the relevance of education and training to address the mismatch between the skills of the young and those needed by employers needed to be addressed. One important challenge was how to engage the social partners in planning, monitoring and evaluating education and training programmes, and how to provide young people with the information needed to meet the needs of the labour market. Finally, an additional important challenge was how to ensure that the voice of young people was heard through such channels as representation in trade unions, employers' organizations or political parties.
- 14.** The Employer spokesperson welcomed the opportunity to work with Governments and Workers in identifying issues and practical solutions to the challenge of youth employment. It was important to recognize that discussions would build on a considerable range of national and international experience in that field, including the resolution on youth employment adopted at the 86th Session of the ILC, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the GEA and the YEN, as well as significant interventions supporting national efforts by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and ACT/EMP. He emphasized that the resolution on youth employment provided a good reference point in considering the youth employment challenge, noting the importance of overall economic growth for employment creation, a sound enabling environment for business and the crucial role of education and training. The report prepared for the Meeting was seen as a good basis for discussion, contributing to the report for the 2005 ILC general discussion. The magnitude of the challenge of youth employment was clear, and the Meeting's

deliberations would be important in identifying areas of common ground and differences in approach.

15. He recognized that governments were primarily responsible for ensuring the necessary enabling environment for employment creation, while employers, as providers of jobs, and workers, as direct beneficiaries, had important roles to play. It was the view of the Employers' group that, after six years of constructive policy discussion at the international level, it was time to put policy into action, drawing on successful national experiences. At the heart of implementing constructive action was the development of strong public and private partnerships in developing human resources. Ageing populations in many parts of the world were putting pressure on the welfare state, and that increased the importance of developing the human resources of the young as well as encouraging lifelong learning among all age groups. The pace of technological change was also an important factor, requiring education and training systems to adapt quickly. Given globalization and its capacity to strengthen or weaken economies through increasingly mobile labour and capital markets, countries could not afford to delay implementation of national programmes to support youth employment. The broad themes of the Employers' group approach in addressing the youth employment challenge were developing an enabling environment for job creation; education and training; and supporting entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) development.
16. The Worker spokesperson remarked that, for the Workers' group, the challenge of youth employment was at the heart of the development challenge and agenda. He questioned whether the traditional and desirable model of youth employment – the transition from primary to secondary education, to university, to initial employment where skills might be developed, to starting a family and obtaining a decent job – was really the experience of the vast majority of young people. He suggested that the unfortunate reality today was that too often today's unemployed and underemployed youth were yesterday's child labourers and became tomorrow's working poor. A key policy challenge was how to bring young people into decent employment without displacing adults from work. He emphasized the deep urgency in addressing the youth employment challenge, lest democracy and sustainable development be undermined.
17. The Worker spokesperson noted that the Workers' group endorsed the view that expansion of aggregate demand was a necessary but not sufficient means for resolving the problem of youth unemployment. He noted that there was a need for a combination of solutions, placed in a policy framework that prioritized employment, integrated into macroeconomic policy. Referring to the report, he questioned the suggestion that temporary work could be a foothold for the young in access to decent work. He noted that the OECD *Employment outlook, 2003* suggested that such employment could be a trap, condemning young workers to a longer period of low-wage, temporary work.
18. He highlighted the issues of demand, supply, opportunity, quantity and quality of work, and demographics as the main challenges in addressing the youth employment challenge.
19. Although action in the areas of supply and demand were important to tackle youth unemployment, training and vocational pathways were not the only approaches. It was important to look at employment opportunity and to facilitate a young person's first access to employment. Not only was the number of young people who were unemployed high and increasing, but young people were concentrated in poor quality employment, with low wages, and in the informal economy. Large numbers of young people worked in the informal economy, often in extremely difficult and arduous conditions, and were paid very low wages. The challenge was to help them meet their aspirations of attaining not only employment, but decent employment. The ILO was working to address the informal economy and to remove barriers to entering the formal economy. Age was a fundamental driving force: there were ageing societies in the countries of the North and very youthful

societies in the countries of the South; in the latter, large numbers of young people were entering the labour market in countries with developing economies.

- 20.** The Worker spokesperson noted that, to meet the challenges required, it was necessary to focus on three particular areas: dynamic intervention at the combined macro and microeconomic levels, action on both the demand and the supply of employment, and dynamic interaction to ensure both the quality and the quantity of employment. Referring to the report, he emphasized the importance of ensuring that the decent work objective was placed at the centre of economic and social policies, including the overall macroeconomic framework. It would be most effective if policies were coordinated and coherent, particularly because “many developing countries are in a low-level stabilization trap that constrains the macro policy role in stimulating demand”, as stated in the report.
- 21.** Unemployment and underemployment of young people was a worldwide phenomenon; however, the developing countries were facing the most substantial challenge in absorbing young people into the labour market. In light of that, he suggested that that should be a priority for the ILO. In conclusion, he noted that discussions around points 2 and 3 should assist in making clear the action that should be taken. A youth employment toolkit should include a range of different tools, some of which would be used across countries and some of which would be used in only one or two countries. National action was necessary but developing a global dimension was seen as crucial, which would be reflected in discussions of points 4 and 5.
- 22.** The representative of the Government of Spain, referring to national statistics on youth, noted that his Government had considered measures to address job creation, education levels and weaknesses in employment policies. Temporary work was often associated with poor working conditions and low pay, and, in particular, an increase in the number of temporary workers correlated to an increase in unemployment benefits paid by the State. He indicated interest in receiving advice on measures to address those challenges.
- 23.** The representative of the Government of Argentina stated that the high youth unemployment rate presented serious difficulties, including enormous waste to world output. It was important to devise policies to generate jobs, but he noted that job creation in itself was not enough to solve the problem. He cited the example of the European Union where employment policy was central to meeting the challenge of youth employment.
- 24.** He suggested the Office present policies to improve the interrelationship between social and economic policies, while at the same time addressing issues of poverty alleviation. He hoped that the discussions could lead to specific policies that would help young people break out of the “vicious cycle” and that would address the specific problem of young people moving into their first job. Development policies and meeting the MDGs were a challenge for all and would require employment policies that would increase the number of jobs and the productivity of jobs while also addressing the distribution of wealth.
- 25.** The Employer spokesperson, in his concluding remarks on point 1, stated that the Employers were in agreement with much of what had been said by the Workers and the Governments. Referring to the Worker spokesperson’s discussion of the youth population living in poverty, he noted that using education was one of the best ways to move young people out of poverty. Referring to the mismatch of supply and demand, he urged that the development of national action plans should not be delayed until the mismatch was resolved as that would lead to missed opportunities. Referring to aggregate demand, he agreed that it should be increased in a way that increased jobs for young people but did not displace older workers from employment; however, he stated that the issue of aggregate demand should also be addressed in relation to the issue of labour market flexibility.

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26. He concurred with the Workers' concern over the lack of empirical data on issues such as youth unemployment and conditions of work. However, to make credible national and international responses, efforts should be made to investigate empirically the cost barriers that employers faced in hiring and maintaining young workers. In that context, the issues of regulation could not be ignored.
 27. The Worker spokesperson was pleased with the level of agreement expressed by speakers. Referring to the comment made by the representative of the Government of Spain on temporary work in Spain and its connection to increased unemployment benefit payments, he expressed concern about further externalities associated with temporary work, including negative repercussions on safety and health. A high incidence of occupational accidents among temporary workers often stemmed from a lack of investment in their training.
 28. He agreed with the representative of the Government of Argentina that it was important to ensure greater equity in the distribution of wealth; the evidence showed that there was a decreasing share of wages as a proportion of national accounts, and that required a national response. He also shared the concern about the loss in potential GDP that accompanied the inability to absorb young people into the labour market.
 29. The Worker spokesperson expressed his appreciation of the quote by the Employer spokesperson that "employment is a transforming and empowering factor", but added it should read "ought to be". If young people were offered employment in bad conditions or had a greater incentive to enter into illegal activities, society would pay the cost. It was important, therefore, to reduce insecurity at work and precarious forms of work and rather provide increased opportunities for decent work. A job underpinned by education, good worker skills and decent work was a route out of poverty.
 30. Referring to the Employer spokesperson's discussion of the mismatch of supply and demand, he stated that they were not seeking a perfect solution but that they believed it important to address the challenge of making progress on both supply and demand at the same time. Referring to regulatory impediments, he stressed that regulations aimed at improving working hours and wages, among other issues, should not be viewed as regulatory impediments, although some regulations in product markets such as complicated business registration processes, may require reform. Referring to flexibility, he drew attention to the fact that in developing economies, where the informal economy was prevalent, and there was inadequate labour inspection and a failure to implement labour legislation, there existed almost complete labour market flexibility.
 31. The Worker spokesperson referred to the OECD background report *Giving young people a good start: The experience of OECD countries*, which showed that Austria and Germany – both countries with regulated labour markets – reported lower youth unemployment rates than those of other countries. In those cases, the regulatory structure constituted an opening rather than a barrier for young people to the labour market. He hoped that the Meeting could agree on increasing access to labour markets without lowering standards.
 32. The Chairperson briefly summarized that: the numbers of young people who were unemployed had increased over the past decade, even among those who had had a good education; youth unemployment was high and widespread; some young people were more affected, including ethnic minorities, rural groups, persons with disability and those suffering from HIV/AIDS; many young people were underemployed or discouraged; the quality of employment was a major concern.
 33. The important factors emerging were: the role of macroeconomic policies to increase aggregate demand; the need to understand demographic trends; the issue of labour market regulation; education and training; work experience requirements; promotion of enterprise

development; and the importance of the representation and voice of the young people themselves.

Theme II: National-level responses and specific policies and programmes targeting youth

34. Mr. Campbell, Director (ad interim), Employment Strategy Department, introduced points 2 and 3, noting that global decline in economic growth is behind the youth employment issue. Economic growth was important, but there was also a need to acknowledge youth-friendly macroeconomic policies. To that end, the employment objective had to be central to the macroeconomic and social policies, not residual of those policies. Employment intensity growth, rather than economic growth, should be the focus. To achieve youth employment intensity growth, the following were to be considered:
- access to credit and expansion of microcredit to ease the burden on young entrepreneurs;
 - private sector mentoring programmes to encourage and provide the right information for young people;
 - commercial regulations to facilitate the establishment of a business;
 - labour protection legislation to give business more flexibility, while giving workers the protection they need;
 - minimum wage levels which took into account the structure of labour costs;
 - active labour market policies to help to match jobseekers with job opportunities; and
 - sectoral policies to promote sectors that: appeal to young people; absorb labour; and have higher than average growth.
35. The Employer spokesperson emphasized the need for active, targeted labour market policies at the national level, accessible education and training, social acceptance of youth entrepreneurship, attention to labour market regulation and a coherent policy management in order to encourage decent work for young people. The 1998 ILC resolution concerning youth employment established a good starting point, identifying 16 specific areas of focus, which were reinforced by YEN's "four Es" (4Es): employability; equal opportunities; entrepreneurship; and employment creation, and which were complementary to the GEA.
36. Considering the amount of information available, the Employers expressed concern about why more progress had not been made. The spokesperson noted there were broad principles that commonly applied but national circumstance differed. He outlined the issues of concern for the Employers' group, including creating the right regulatory framework that did not hinder access to education and training and entrepreneurship development; labour market regulations that made it easier for employers to hire younger workers; and government focus on the medium- and long-term benefits of investment in education.
37. He remarked on the role of employers and workers to identify the growth areas of the economy so that appropriate skills training could be developed. Essential employability skills that were transferable were seen to be important as initial training, as was the concept of lifelong learning. Noting that education alone is not enough, he emphasized the need to engage with industry to design vocational training strategies for mutual gain. The

issue of migration and qualification recognition also needed to be considered in the debate about training and skill development and availability of jobs.

- 38.** The need to build entrepreneurship into the education system so that it became part of the everyday thinking of society was emphasized. Mentoring schemes to assist young entrepreneurs were seen as important and did not put a heavy burden on the State or on enterprises. He also highlighted the need for innovative schemes to access financing.
- 39.** The Employer spokesperson noted the importance for governments, employers and workers to work together to ensure that appropriate national responses were developed. In particular, employers could work directly with young entrepreneurs; establish structured links between educational institutions and the workplace; and create new jobs, in conjunction with governments.
- 40.** The Worker spokesperson noted the broad agreement on the need for a combination of measures that emphasized decent work, stimulating demand while addressing the constraints to addressing the youth employment challenge. He highlighted the importance of education, noting the value of core skills such as literacy and numeracy, as well as soft skills such as communication, all of which were fostered through schooling. In light of the time lag between education and employment, it is important to anticipate and identify what the skills of tomorrow will be especially in growth sectors. Government, employers and workers had a role to play in anticipating training needs. Apprenticeships were seen as a useful bridge between “learning and doing”, providing young people with initial experience.
- 41.** He remarked that some governments had experimented with subsidies and tax incentives, and he commented on the need to consider the distortions that could arise from those measures, such as substitution effect (youth simply substituting for older workers who are in turn retrenched) or cases where employment terminates when subsidies end.
- 42.** He commented on some good examples of labour-intensive schemes, such as public works projects; the creation of one-stop service centres for young people that provided information about working life, and opportunities for training, amongst other things; sectoral approaches in which governments identified potential growth sectors and focused on those. He pointed out the role that government, employers and workers could play in identifying sectors which were particularly promising for young people.
- 43.** Cooperatives were seen as an efficient means for absorbing young workers and, therefore, should be promoted and measures taken to reduce the concentration of youth in atypical work. Young people would have better opportunities if labour legislation and international labour standards were extended to atypical work. The Worker spokesperson noted the need to formalize enterprises in the informal economy.
- 44.** Fostering non-discrimination, especially with regard to young women, and its positive effect on the quality and quantity of employment was emphasized, as was the issue of addressing HIV/AIDS and young people through workplace education. Increased resources for preventive care and treatment measures related to HIV/AIDS were also emphasized.
- 45.** Addressing the presentation made by Mr. Campbell, the Worker spokesperson referred to the lack of policy space in many developing countries. In economies that were largely geared toward export, little energy was spent on sharing the wealth of economic growth. If such economies could increase minimum wages, that would lead to increased consumption by the poor on domestically produced goods and services thereby increasing economic and employment growth.

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46. In conclusion, the Worker spokesperson noted that: equal and fair opportunities to join trade unions were an important aspect, enabling young people to articulate their needs; youth-friendly macroeconomic policies needed to address decent employment and not just employment; higher employment intensity did not necessarily lead to lower productivity and hence lower wages; political constraints should be considered when looking at youth-intensive policies.
 47. The representative of the Government of Brazil noted that, for a country such as Brazil, where administrative decentralization had been taking place, one could not talk about a single policy for all the territories. Policy measures across the regions needed to be responsive to different realities within the country.
 48. She shared the experience of the First-Job Programme for young people. That “permanent” policy targeted 5 million young people between 16 and 24 years who, on average, had 11 years of schooling and earned half the minimum wage. The First-Job Programme consisted of three different components.
 49. The first component was providing training for young people, particularly the most vulnerable. That component had been developed with the participation of civil society, who carried out activities in the poorest neighbourhoods of Brazil. The training programmes included literacy programmes, computer training and access to ICT and would help bring young people into formal workplaces or apprenticeship programmes.
 50. The second component consisted of stimulating entrepreneurship programmes for young people. In that regard, the Government had established a special line of credit with low interest rates, called a sponsorship fund. Young people were allowed access to credit once their projects had been approved, followed by some technical support.
 51. The third component consisted of providing six-month subsidies to employers who were willing to provide jobs to youth. In order for employers to be eligible for that incentive, they had to demonstrate their social responsibilities and guarantee that no adult workers would be fired. Companies were expected to maintain subsidized workers for one year. She noted that the assessment of the Programme had not yet been undertaken.
 52. The main objective of the Programme was to provide youth with a possibility to enter the world of work with dignity. She stressed that the Programme was well coordinated with a tripartite council and an inter-ministerial committee. Civil society was also well represented, including youth groups and NGOs working on youth programmes. She noted that the Programme received the full support of the other governmental bodies, and was coordinated by the President. She also noted that the ILO was an observer on the Programme, as the country’s Constitution did not allow the participation of an international organization.
 53. She concluded by noting that the current greatest challenge was to inform employers about how the Programme worked and its intentions and objectives with respect to apprenticeship. She noted that the apprenticeship mechanism in Brazil was set through legislation under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour. The legislation needed further acceptance by employers, to convince them that more support for youth was necessary. In addition, more territorial dissemination of the Programme would still be necessary to adapt the Programme to national circumstances, through closer dialogue with universities, business owners and the workers.
 54. The representative of the Government of Senegal reflected on the need to encourage other partners, especially the financial partners, to invest in sectors that created jobs. In the context of Senegal, infrastructure and agricultural sectors had strong employment potential. In addition, he noted that enterprises needed to “delocalize” training and extend

it to the public at large. He reiterated the general problem of economic growth and employment, noting the significance of developing specific strategies aimed at young people. Many countries in the region had set up ministries specifically to address youth affairs.

- 55.** In terms of the specific experience of Senegal, he noted that until the year 2000 most initiatives to promote youth employment had failed. In recent years, major changes in youth employment policy had been made. As a result of these changes, a specialized agency for the promotion of youth employment, as well as funds for youth micro-enterprise development, had been established. In terms of sectoral development, he noted that the Government needed to develop those sectors with large potential to provide jobs, such as agriculture.
- 56.** Regarding entrepreneurship, there was further scope for developing the spirit of entrepreneurship and to increase funding. However, he expressed concern that the risk rate of credit provision was about 80 per cent among young people, which meant that most of the microcredit schemes for youths did not work. He noted that the Government had set up a national fund for use for young people in response to that. At the same time, vocational training and in-house training on access to credit had been provided. He emphasized the limitation of public funding mechanisms to provide credit for young people to set up their own business. In that regard, he noted the importance of ensuring private sector involvement. He noted the importance of an AIDS protection strategy.
- 57.** He concluded by noting that a national strategy for youth employment, within the context of the national employment policy and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), was in the process of being validated.
- 58.** The representative of the Government of Argentina explained that in the 1980s and 1990s his country had implemented a process of liberalization and deregulation, and restructuring of state enterprises, which also meant restructuring the whole production capacity of the country. That restructuring had taken place within the macroeconomic policy framework of the IMF and the World Bank.
- 59.** He noted that such macroeconomic policies, followed over decades, had resulted in a youth unemployment rate that had increased from 19 per cent in 1999 to 32 per cent in 2002. At the same time, the distribution of wealth in society had become less equitable, with more than 50 per cent of the population living below the poverty line in 2001.
- 60.** He noted that Argentina's experience in specific policy for young people took place as part of an income policy. That income policy covered 2 million people who were receiving half the minimum wage. Of that 2 million, 300,000 young heads of families with children were receiving income support. He noted that the programme had been initiated to include the young recipients of the income support in training programmes of young entrepreneurs. He concluded, noting decent work for all must be guaranteed to raise the standard of living for all.
- 61.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom, outlining his country's focus on active labour market policies in addressing the youth employment challenge, presented a number of national programmes, based on the premise that unless people are looking for work they will not find work. In that regard, he noted his Government's "jobseeker allowance" programme for the unemployed who were actively seeking work.
- 62.** He described "New deal for young people", a programme that sought to reduce the duration of unemployment through active labour market policy intervention. The programme offered unemployed youth a range of options such as one-on-one assistance in building a CV, acquiring job skills, job placement subsidized by the Government, joining

an environmental task force or entering into full-time training. In conclusion, he stated that in the United Kingdom resources are now focused on helping the disadvantaged youth, including youth who leave education early.

- 63.** The representative of the Government of Spain highlighted his Government's activities to address the youth employment problem, including the increasing number of young people in temporary employment. To address that issue, the Government was revising local ordination for temporary work, sharing information about the correct use of temporary contracts, modifying the cost structure of contracts to make temporary contracts less viable and improving the conditions under which temporary workers were engaged. He noted that local administrations should shoulder the responsibility of reducing the temporary nature of work in the public sector. Additionally, Spain had created a commission of experts that would introduce reforms necessary to better regulate temporary employment.
- 64.** He addressed the issue of weak employment policies and the need to increase the efficiency of regulation, which required increased investment in human resource development, improved collaboration among public employment services, improved systems of social protection of the unemployed and those with special needs, and forming an agency that would advocate employment and training policies.
- 65.** Remarking on the relatively low level of training in Spain, he stressed the need for a new model of vocational training in relation to the national qualification system, a model that would stimulate training of workers within the enterprise. He confirmed the Spanish administration's commitment to improving the efficiency of labour markets, with an aim towards allowing for greater development of Spanish society.
- 66.** He discussed four factors that affect the access of young people to employment today: technology factors which have changed the structure of employment; the increased time that young people spend in education; the changing hiring strategies of enterprises; and the intervention of public administration in establishing mechanisms aimed at easing the transition of young people. He detailed the Government's measures to address these including: updating training policies; promoting "practical contracts" which adjust to the level of education and offer higher than the minimum wage; promoting contracts that allow for professional training and that ensure contributions to social security; revising training contracts that extend to part-time workers; and developing a Youth Action Plan 2005-08 which would focus on promotion of quality jobs for young people while addressing issues of housing and leisure.
- 67.** A Worker member from Spain, responding to comments made by his Government representative, emphasized the need to increase social dialogue to facilitate the implementation of measures by the Government. He noted that the situation facing youth in Spain had not improved. In comparison with other European countries, Spain had one of the highest rates of youth unemployment, with many youth in insecure temporary work. He concluded that one important means of enhancing young people's access to the labour market and to increase job security was through the active participation of governments, employers and workers.
- 68.** An Employer member from Spain, in response to comments on the issue of social dialogue made by the representative of the Government of Spain and the Worker member from Spain, referred to the "Declaration on social dialogue" (July 2004), which provided an opportunity to improve competitiveness, stable employment and social cohesion. In ratifying the Declaration, the Government and the social partners recognized that the Employment Stability Agreement of 1997 had boosted the level and stability of employment in recent years, and pledged to search for consensus on legislative and other measures that would promote job security for workers and flexibility for employers. She

also noted that it was necessary to improve vocational training, given the shortage of young workers with intermediate skill levels and high drop-out rates.

- 69.** The representative of the Government of South Africa addressed the issue of the persistence of youth employment problems even in a country such as South Africa, which has implemented numerous and extensive policies aimed at improving the situation of youth. He questioned whether the persistence suggested there was a structural problem that the current policies were unable to resolve. He agreed on the necessity for coherent and integrated policies that are developmental, employment absorbing and youth-friendly. South Africa had followed international prescriptions (trade liberalization, strict macro policies, etc.), yet the policies had shown no effect.
- 70.** He suggested that forming integrated policies required: the State to take a proactive role, influencing both the supply and the demand for labour; strategic planning and coordination within government (across ministries) and between spheres of government; an ability to steer the market toward particular outcomes by influencing market indicators and behaviours; and social partnerships. Meeting the demands required new institutions and organizational capacities within the Government, greater strategic planning and implementation capacities, mobilization of finances for development and accommodating the global environment.
- 71.** The representative of the Government of South Africa expressed reservations about the State's ability to meet the stringent qualifications needed, or at least cautioned that the State's ability should not be explicitly assumed; he expressed the desire to see the Government's role more explicitly defined.
- 72.** An Employer member from Gabon noted that, in the African context, the employers' position needed to be further strengthened. She noted that youth employment should not be treated in isolation, as it was the symptom of the general employment situation. She shared the experience of the Gabon Employers' Confederation, which was party to the "National Employment Pact", a tripartite agreement. That Pact placed youth employment at the heart of state policies.
- 73.** She explained that article 3 of the Pact urged the national employment offices to develop a database on vacancies. In that regard, she noted that most jobseekers, including many young jobseekers, sent through the employment services did not have the profile required by the enterprises. Furthermore, roughly 90 per cent of the jobseekers sent through the employment offices were men. She stated that articles 6 and 8 of the Pact provided a framework for incentives for enterprises hiring youth; however, in practice, the incentives did not reach the enterprises due to lack of financing by the State.
- 74.** She recommended that the ILO, through technical cooperation, strengthen the capacity of employers' organizations so that they could effectively implement programmes for young entrepreneurs. She noted the need to strengthen the capacity of agencies administering SME development, especially with respect to youth entrepreneurship. With respect to youth entrepreneurship, she shared the failed experience of FODEX, an organization specialized in microfinancing, which gave grant loans to young entrepreneurs who were unemployed. She noted that repayment rates were extremely low and most businesses set up through such support ended up in bankruptcy, as the beneficiaries did not receive the necessary entrepreneurship education and training. She concluded by stressing that entrepreneurship involved risk-taking and that there was a need for capacity to appraise such risks.
- 75.** The representative of the Government of the Republic of Korea noted that his country placed youth employment high on the social agenda. He shared his understanding of the main causes of youth unemployment through analysis of the structural changes in the

labour market. First, he noted that the capacity of the economy to absorb labour had been reduced, with the biggest impact on youth. He noted that employers often preferred to hire experienced workers to reduce recruitment and training costs. As a result, the opportunities for decent work for youth were reduced, with the quality of employment deteriorating and increasing numbers of youth in temporary and daily employment.

- 76.** On the supply side, he noted that the college entrance rate had increased dramatically in the last 20 years. He stated that the problem was that the education had not been adjusting sufficiently rapidly to the changing situation in the labour market. In this regard, he cited findings from a recent study that showed that the average time gap between finishing school and getting a first job was 11 months. He noted that the Government provided systematic support for career building and employment of young people by providing opportunities for them to experience and explore jobs, increasing vocational guidance at schools, expanding on-the-job training programmes and supporting overseas training and education.
- 77.** He described the long- and short-term measures taken by the Government to tackle the above problems. He noted that the main component of the long-term measures was to foster new growth sectors and to encourage SMEs to improve working conditions through provision of financial support. He stated that such long-term measures also induced companies to reduce working hours and to strengthen the link between corporate demands and education. Short-term complementary measures were implemented at the same time such as labour-intensive projects, internships and other temporary jobs both in the private and public sectors.
- 78.** He concluded his intervention by stressing the critical role of social partnership. In this context, he noted that the workers, employers and the Government had reached a “Social agreement on job creation”, an agreement that would strengthen the cooperation among the tripartite partners.
- 79.** The representative of the Government of Canada expressed her country’s commitment to building a comprehensive strategy to help young people make a successful transition to employment. She noted that, under the umbrella of the Youth Employment Strategy, the programmes implemented were targeted, tailored to individual needs, linked to work experience and represented a longer term investment. She noted that the critical element of the programme was that each youth was case-managed for up to three years. She also noted that Canada had developed an on-line information service on career and labour market requirements, which had proved to be effective.
- 80.** She noted that one of the country’s challenges was disadvantaged youth who required additional support to make the transition to work. At the same time, she noted that more than 60 per cent of all 25-29-year-olds had higher qualifications, yet too many post-secondary graduates had low-paid and low-skilled jobs. The country’s current policy focus was to ensure that disadvantaged youth had appropriate support to make the transitions to the labour market and to ensure that youth employment policies and programmes responded to the changing labour market requirements. In this regard, she noted that policies provided strong support to lifelong learning.
- 81.** The representative of the Government of Sri Lanka noted that high youth unemployment in rural areas represented a particular challenge in Sri Lanka. He also reflected that the unemployment problem was not about a shortage of jobs as such, but that currently available vacancies in the manufacturing sector were not being filled. Hence, he concluded that the high unemployment rate was more a result of skills mismatch than about lack of jobs.

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- 82.** He expressed concern about the social unrest associated with long-term unemployed youth. This led to the creation of jobs in the public sector; Sri Lanka had one of the highest numbers of public sector workers in the region, representing a heavy cost.
- 83.** He outlined a number of labour market measures that had been adopted to address the long-standing labour market issues: amendments to the Factory Ordinance of 1942 which increased the number of overtime hours for women workers; the amendments made to the Industrial Disputes Act of 1950 and the Termination of Employment Act of 1971; and the amendments to the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act of 1956 which increased the penalties for employers in violation.
- 84.** He noted that the Ministry of Labour and Employment had a national employment policy to harness and educate unemployed youth, through provision of employment-oriented training funded through the Skills Development Fund. He remarked upon the reference in the report to entrepreneurship as a career choice of last resort in Sri Lanka. A recent survey finding that around 20 per cent of youth preferred to be self-employed, the majority of them living in the rural areas was referenced.
- 85.** He concluded by noting that in the context of globalization and interdependent economies, there was a need for a long-term plan for the implementation of human resource development policies. He noted that an employment strategy that included various policy elements to enhance economic well-being was under preparation by the Government.
- 86.** An observer from the Government of the Philippines highlighted a number of national laws and programmes that address youth employment in her country, including: the Republic Act, which includes a comprehensive coordinated programme for youth development; encouraging youth patriotism, family values and dignity and adherence to truth and justice; encouraging youth involvement and contribution to civic society; promoting abilities, talents and skills to redirect creativity and incentives in the hope of a better future; providing technical and vocational training through expanded apprenticeship programmes; providing productive opportunities for out-of-school, out-of-work youth; and providing labour market information for job matching, a facility also available to employers.
- 87.** An observer from the Government of the United States supported the comments made by his Canadian and United Kingdom colleagues particularly with regard to the need for sound macroeconomic policies. He reviewed the federal policy on youth employment, which focused on disadvantaged youth. The current youth policy is balanced between assisting youth in the maturation process, while preparing them for the labour market through internships, occupational skill development and access to labour market information, and developing a youth pipeline that meets the needs of employers, particularly employers in emerging industries. He noted the employers' need for core skills for employability (leadership, teamwork, communication), as well as technical skills.
- 88.** A Worker member from Romania informed the Meeting of a new law providing subsidies for employers hiring recent school leavers. While this was a positive action in support of youth employment, it was unfortunate that many employers using this subsidy maintained wage rates at a level just above the national minimum, even for highly skilled young people.
- 89.** An Employer member from Indonesia shared Indonesia's experience as one of the first YEN lead countries and the details of its recently adopted National Youth Action Plan for 2004-07. A key challenge of youth employment in Indonesia was providing universal and quality education and training. The current vocational education system was too fragmented and supply driven. A national employment strategy needed to focus on job creation in the formal sector, through appropriate investment and trade policies, as well as through gradual formalization of the informal economy. Concerning entrepreneurship

development, he remarked that the time needed to acquire a business licence was more than six months, an excessive amount given the speed of change among SMEs. He concluded by summarizing the four principal policy recommendations of the National Youth Action Plan: (1) preparing youth for work; (2) creating quality jobs for young men and women; (3) fostering entrepreneurship; and (4) ensuring equal opportunities.

- 90.** An Employer member from Mexico stressed that his organization wished to eradicate extreme poverty, exclusion and unemployment, and to treat underlying structural causes. He urged further action in helping young people start their own businesses through education, provision of necessary support and advisory services. Additionally, much could be done to improve an enabling and competitive environment for enterprise development through suitable structural reforms.
- 91.** A Worker member from Indonesia, in response to the statement made by the Employer member from Indonesia concerning the National Youth Action Plan, remarked that the Plan introduced a special minimum wage for young people that his organization was opposed to. Youth minimum wages should be equivalent to those of adult workers as a principle of decent work. He noted his union was not involved in the process of developing the Plan.
- 92.** A Worker member from Ghana described the difficulties his country had faced as a result of the structural adjustment policies of the IMF and the World Bank that compelled the Government to reduce public spending, downsize public sector employment, and remove subsidies. Such actions negatively affected young people in particular, forcing them into the informal economy with low wages and long working hours. In response, his organization had begun organizing actors in the informal economy and encouraging them to contribute to the social security schemes.
- 93.** A Worker member from Brazil emphasized that efforts to increase employment among the young should not result in the displacement of adult workers. Brazil had established an office for youth issues as well as an inter-ministerial group to advise on youth concerns; the Government had in the past year held regional conferences and a national conference to enable youth to voice their concerns and participate in government initiatives.
- 94.** An Employer member from India stressed that implementation of national economic, political and employment policies in advanced countries should also consider the impact on employment policy in other countries. For example, creeping protectionism by certain governments passing legislation to reduce outsourcing abroad was threatening jobs for young people in many areas, including information technologies, a growing sector in India. Additionally, he noted that improvements in education and literacy could have far-reaching impacts on regional development, drawing increasingly educated young people in less developed areas to more developed regions in search of jobs. He concluded by noting that the growing importance of improved technology called for more retraining of trainers to adapt to newer technologies.
- 95.** The Worker spokesperson, in summary, highlighted some of the important points that came from the rich examples provided: negative experiences of the effects of deregulation on youth unemployment (Government of Argentina); the need for the State to take a proactive role in policy-making (Government of South Africa); government lack of capacity to implement policy due to insufficient resources (Employer member from Gabon); constraints faced in matching supply and demand (Governments of the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Sri Lanka); good practices, such as the United Kingdom's Gateway Programme and Brazil's First Job Programme for Young People, which could be important tools to showcase; valuable sectoral approaches (Governments of Argentina and Senegal); and the limitations of entrepreneurship (Government of Senegal and Employer member from Gabon).

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- 96.** The Employer spokesperson stated there was a cause for optimism based on the encouraging interventions shared by colleagues. It was clear that much was being done nationally and there was a need for a mix of measures pertaining to both supply and demand. He noted that there was a golden thread evident in the presentations, revolving around two common goals: to create opportunities for employment in the context of the “four Es” and facilitate the creation of an environment that promoted youth employment and youth entrepreneurship, which was important for the broader development of young people.
- 97.** Drawing on the work of the OECD, he stated that regulatory issues must be considered, as they were not inconsistent with decent work. Regulation should not be seen as an automatic vehicle for decent work, as examples presented had shown that it could be an impediment. The key was appropriate regulation. He concluded by highlighting the importance of clear goals and tools, which were adaptable to national circumstances.

Theme III: Youth employment in the international policy context

- 98.** Mr. Pursey, from the Office of the Director-General, introduced the discussion on youth employment in the international policy context. He drew attention to Chapter 4 of the report, which recalled ILO work on youth employment in the past and, in particular, the ILO resolution concerning youth employment adopted by the ILC in 1998. International action on youth employment was connected to the broad GEA and to the goal of decent work for all. There was tremendous potential in the lifecycle approach to youth employment with a perspective of intergenerational solidarity that was proposed in the report. That approach provided a means of organizing priorities and focusing on critical issues.
- 99.** The work of employers’ organizations and trade unions, both separately and together, was highlighted. The ILO was unique in that it tapped into the two biggest global networks of non-governmental organizations, each able to generate action from the local to the global on the issue of youth employment.
- 100.** The report described the origins and development of the YEN, which provided a great opportunity for the ILO to energize the multilateral system. Mr. Pursey referred to the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, which endorsed the ILO’s idea of decent work as a global goal and an essential means to achieving fair globalization. The report of the World Commission suggested that greater synergies in the multilateral system could be achieved and exploited by partnerships. In youth employment, partnerships already existed within the YEN; for the ILO, working with the World Bank and the United Nations was essentially a partnership of a partnership, although that placed some strains on the ILO’s own tripartite agreements and understandings. It was vital for these organizations to learn to manage the partnerships especially for the young generation. The availability of productive work would provide young people with opportunities to escape poverty, and would contribute to meeting the MDGs.
- 101.** Mr. Pursey concluded with some suggestions for improving the way the ILO tripartite networks functioned and how they interacted with other networks such as the YEN. Those included: improved sharing of information and analysis, especially of policies and initiatives that had proved successful; using the Internet to connect national networks; offering support to ILO constituents in the ten lead countries in the YEN (YEN-10); and strengthening the link between the global tripartite network and the YEN.
- 102.** The Worker spokesperson, in considering point 4, suggested that combining the elements therein would bring coherence to the ILO approach: decent work was the paradigm; the

GEA, the pillars on which it was built; and the YEN, the energy network providing high-level support.

- 103.** He quoted section 4.1.2 of the Meeting report and highlighted the importance of extending a decent work framework to youth employment at the same time as to employment in general. Previous discussions had highlighted a decent work deficit among young people. He reiterated that quantity and quality of jobs should be addressed simultaneously, rather than sequentially.
- 104.** The GEA, with its underlying principles and core elements, provided firm tripartite-endorsed “pillars” for employment, which could be extended particularly to the challenge of youth employment. He elaborated on the core elements and their relevance to the youth employment challenge.
- 105.** The Worker spokesperson presented eight areas where the ILO should act to promote youth employment: providing advocacy and information with which to set and monitor targets; providing a policy message of decent work, including through a well-resourced promotional campaign for youth-related international labour standards along the lines of the core labour standards campaign; addressing supply-side constraints; expanding aggregate global demand; promoting cohesion and coordination in the multilateral systems, including promotion of the inclusion of decent work concerns in the policies and programmes of the international financial organizations; focusing on developing countries’ specific difficulties; encouraging social dialogue to hear what young people had to say; and fostering greater internal coordination at the ILO itself, particularly to combine similar programmes in different areas and bring to bear the critical mass of knowledge and expertise available in a common focus.
- 106.** The Employer spokesperson stated that, in addressing how youth employment could be promoted within the decent work paradigm, the question should be further broken down. He explained that the ILO decent work paradigm became relevant only when it was part of a credible international and national approach that was promoted and understood by all; participants needed to understand the benefits that would accrue to them in making the effort to implement the model. The paradigm also needed to build the confidence of the authorities. He pointed out that if the message was to be credible it needed to be flexible enough to adapt to national circumstances. It was crucial to identify the benefits of youth employment and to establish the circumstances where the “rubber hits the road”.
- 107.** He stated the key elements that the Employers’ group felt were necessary for inclusion in the ILO policy message. The youth employment message should be a guiding instrument that focused on the “four Es”. The GEA should be implemented at the national level according to specific national circumstances. He emphasized that the GEA and the “four Es” were mutually complementary; the fact that both were endorsed by the Workers’ and Employers’ groups added potency to their message.
- 108.** He agreed with the Worker spokesperson that the decent work paradigm was at the heart of the GEA. He quoted paragraph 11 of GB.286/ESP/1(Rev.) from the Governing Body session of March 2003 in which the GEA was reviewed. That paragraph showed the context in which the Employers’ group saw the capacity of the decent work paradigm and national programmes to make a difference.
- 109.** The Employer spokesperson urged that national action plans be kept simple, first stating the challenges and then serving as a call to arms for the participation of all relevant stakeholders. The ILO mandate was consistent with all the tasks laid out in the “terms of reference” for this Meeting. Those terms of reference reflected a fourfold ILO role: the Meeting was called upon to highlight the political, economic and social significance of youth employment; to place youth employment in the context of the Decent Work Agenda,

the GEA, and the recommendations of the High-level Panel of the Youth Employment Network; to review national policy frameworks and policies conducive to the creation of quality jobs for young men and women; and to distil country-level experience and lessons learned. He hoped that the ILO would concentrate on the areas where it had a comparative advantage, namely job creation and enterprise development.

- 110.** He cautioned that the ILO should not act alone on issues of youth employment but should rather integrate with other international organizations on the issue. He mentioned specifically the recent Youth Employment Summit in Mexico.
- 111.** He seconded the statement of Mr. Pursey that the ILO had a powerful infrastructure, expressing his belief that the advantage of the tripartite structure, which allowed for social dialogue, would help the ILO achieve an effective outcome. He urged the ILO to focus on its core strengths – information, ideas, technical assistance and coordination. However, the ILO needed to ensure that it did not supersede national policy-making; responsibility also had to be taken at the national level.
- 112.** The Employer spokesperson concluded by stating that the work of the Office in producing the background report for the upcoming ILC discussion on youth employment was to provide good information that should serve as a powerful tool in the discussion, and the Meeting would help to fill in the gaps where information was needed for the forthcoming report.
- 113.** The representative of the Government of the United Kingdom emphasized the importance of tackling the challenge of youth employment at the international level, as highlighted in the ILO report *Global employment trends for youth*, because of the consequences of youth employment for economic and political stability in many countries. Her Government welcomed the inclusion of an agenda item on youth employment at the ILC in 2005, which would provide ILO member States with an opportunity to address the issue. She noted that there were a number of other international opportunities in 2005 to tackle the challenge of youth employment.
- 114.** As the IMEC group had stated in other forums, it was important to consider carefully the best way to achieve a credible and substantive outcome beyond a negotiated statement.
- 115.** The United Kingdom believed that the ILO should seriously consider a new approach for the general discussion on youth employment at the ILC in 2005 to generate high-level, interactive debate. She proposed a panel of experts and round-table discussions, with presentations of good practice. She stated that the United Kingdom would send a minister to showcase the successes her country had had in tackling long-term youth unemployment. A parallel plenary might be held, with youth participation. She noted that the representatives of the Governments of Canada, the Republic of Korea, Poland and Senegal supported the proposal.
- 116.** The Government representative of Senegal stated his support for the suggestion of the representative of the Government of the United Kingdom concerning proposals for the ILC in 2005.
- 117.** The Government representative of South Africa endorsed the points raised by the Worker and Employer spokespersons. He mentioned that the President of his country often spoke of the “first world” versus the “second world” situation. This terminology could be extended to the international arena and he drew attention to the need to look at the interdependencies between the “two worlds”. He mentioned that part of the solution could be to change how the first world facilitated and accommodated changes in the second world.

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- 118.** He noted that the GEA and the Decent Work Agenda were both implicitly development agendas. He wished to point out that the globalization process was reproducing the situation of marginalization of the second world and that most policies implemented to date had had little impact on changing that fact. He also pointed out that merely explaining how other countries had escaped from the second world trap was not sufficient because there was no one-size-fits-all remedy.
- 119.** In discussing how to pursue the ILO messages, he mentioned that a global regime needed to accommodate different national situations. He noted the constraints in the prescribed macroeconomic management approaches for Africa, and he emphasized that such approaches should not pre-empt the development approach. It was necessary to consider how the GEA-proposed macroeconomic policies could accommodate development policies. He expressed his concerns as to whether the paradigms proposed were compatible with development regimes – the North/South difference should be taken into consideration – and he also noted that the GEA prescribed an active approach which could often run up against constraints at the national level.
- 120.** The representative of the Government of South Africa urged the ILO to cooperate with other international organizations in formulating policy messages. He wished to see a more proactive role by the ILO in developing a paradigm that could serve as a reference at both the national and the international level.
- 121.** The representative of the Government of Jamaica supported the call of the representative of the Government of the United Kingdom regarding the ILC in 2005. In this regard, she informed the Meeting of the establishment in her country of a youth development centre to advise policy-makers on youth concerns, and that the centre's focus was to promote the broad participation of youth in policy formulation.
- 122.** An observer from the Government of Venezuela stressed that it was important to tackle the underlying causes of youth employment, such as aggregate demand, and not their consequences. Of particular concern was the need for debt relief among many developing countries. Such relief would assist in the creation of decent jobs. Job growth in Venezuela during the 1980s was severely restricted by the structural adjustment programme proposed by the IMF and this pointed to the need for a policy framework supportive of employment creation. Changes were needed in the economic and education systems. Programmes aimed at promoting youth employment should not overlook the State's responsibility to provide quality education for all.
- 123.** The representative of the Government of Indonesia endorsed the view of the Employers' group that global partnerships were needed to encourage youth employment and the view of the Workers' group that labour standards should be abided by in the employment of young people. He remarked that products marketed in his country were produced elsewhere with limited impact in domestic employment.
- 124.** The Employer spokesperson agreed with the statement by the representative of the Government of South Africa that development policy needed to be considered in tandem with economic policy to support youth employment. He stressed, however, that it was also necessary to have targeted national programmes that deal with the specific issues of youth employment. It was encouraging that governments accepted their responsibility in this regard while at the same time seeking guidance and expertise from the international community, and support from the social partners. He endorsed the recommendation of the representative of the Government of the United Kingdom that national panels of experts, meeting on a regular basis, could assist in the more effective development and coordination of activities through the presentation of best practices.

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- 125.** The Worker spokesperson remarked that there was notable agreement between the Workers' group and the Employers' group on a number of issues. The Decent Work Agenda, the GEA and the YEN were complementary in supporting youth employment, with decent work as the paradigm, the GEA as pillars, and the YEN supplying the energy and a network for dynamic action. Both micro and macro interventions were needed. The statement by the representative of South Africa concerning efforts by the IMF to undermine employment security regulations reinforced the notion that the international community needed to speak with one voice in support of decent work for all. The issue of debt cancellation for developing nations raised by the observer from the Government of Venezuela was significant, as were the concerns raised by the representative of the Government of Indonesia that multinational corporations needed to invest more in job creation in the developing world.
- 126.** The Worker spokesperson, referring to suggestions made by the representative of the Government of the United Kingdom, proposed that a more innovative approach to the 2005 ILC general discussion on youth employment could be recommended to the Governing Body. A series of panel discussions could be held concomitantly with the general discussion to inform the debate and its conclusions. Additionally, member States could be encouraged to include young people in their tripartite delegations to ensure that youth concerns were more fully reflected.
- 127.** The Employer spokesperson reaffirmed that international institutions had a major role to play in influencing national policy-making and programme implementation. Additionally, the Employers' group was not opposed to regulatory orthodoxy, but there should be mechanisms to review and update the regulatory framework.
- 128.** The Worker spokesperson, referring to Part II of the Declaration of Philadelphia, reminded the Meeting that it was a responsibility of the ILO to examine and consider all international economic and financial policies and measures related to the fundamental objective of social justice and decent work. This clear mandate should be carried out in close collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions.

Consideration and adoption of the draft report and draft conclusions by the Meeting

- 129.** The Drafting Committee submitted its draft conclusions to the Meeting at the latter's fifth sitting.
- 130.** At the same sitting, the Meeting adopted the present report and the draft conclusions.

Geneva, 15 October 2004.

(Signed) Mr. S. Kinley,
Chairperson.

Conclusions of the Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward

The Tripartite Meeting on Youth Employment: The Way Forward,

Recalling the ILO decent work paradigm, the Global Employment Agenda (GEA), the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the Declaration of Philadelphia, international labour standards including those relating to the promotion of employment, and the resolution concerning youth employment adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1998,

Having met in Geneva from 13 to 15 October 2004,

Adopts this fifteenth day of October 2004 the following conclusions:

The youth employment challenge

1. Achieving decent work for young people is a critical element in poverty eradication and sustainable development. It is a challenge shared around the world. Globally the youth unemployment rate and level have increased during the past decade; in 2003 about 88 million young men and women were unemployed, accounting for 47 per cent of the global unemployed, reaching a level more than double the overall unemployment rate. While there has been some growth in overall employment, between 1993 and 2003 youth employment levels have not grown. In many countries, female youth unemployment rates are higher than those for males. A higher number of youth are in education today than during the past generation. Particular groups of young people, especially socially disadvantaged youth, are more prone to unemployment than others.
2. Unemployment rates, however, reflect just one facet of the youth labour market. Many young people in countries across the world often work unacceptably long hours under informal, intermittent and insecure work arrangements. They can be and often are exposed to serious deficiencies in decent work, such as in terms of low wages, poor and precarious working conditions, lack of access to social protection, and lack of freedom of association and access to collective bargaining. In many developing countries, youth represent the bulk of the underemployed and those working in the informal economy both in rural and urban areas.
3. The youth employment challenge is bound to the general employment situation, while it has its own dimensions, which require specific responses. In developed economies, the youth employment challenge may be linked to the transition into employment, discrimination, social disadvantages, cyclical trends, and a number of structural factors, while in developing economies it is linked to the problem of promoting growth and development, and to the uneven impacts of globalization. The particular dimensions of the youth employment challenge are such that employment prospects for young people vary according to sex, age, ethnicity, educational level and training, family background, health status and disability, amongst others. Some groups are, therefore, more vulnerable and face particular disadvantages in entering and remaining in the labour market. The challenge is to bring young people into decent work without displacing adult workers from employment.
4. The opportunities for young people to obtain decent work are influenced by a number of factors, including demographic trends, the level of aggregate demand, the employment

intensity of growth, and the policy space for pro-employment policies at the national level, an enabling regulatory environment for both workers and enterprises, education and vocational training outcomes and quality, work experience and entrepreneurship options. Meeting the youth employment challenge calls for an integrated and coherent approach that combines interventions at the macro- and microeconomic level, focuses on labour demand and supply, and addresses both the quantity and quality of employment.

Youth employment at the national level

5. A number of the approaches and structural adjustments adopted over the past decade have not produced the expected results in terms of improving employment prospects for young people. In certain cases these structural adjustments have also restrained the ability of States to play an active role in the promotion of youth employment despite the existence of a pool of young people.
6. While recognizing that there is no one-size-fits-all approach and that interventions vary within and across countries, the Meeting agreed to the necessity to promote decent work for young people at the national level through the Global Employment Agenda, including:
 - (a) through an integrated pro-employment and pro-youth growth approach that combines macroeconomic development frameworks geared at expanding aggregate demand, productive capacity and employment opportunities, with targeted interventions aimed at overcoming disadvantages, while promoting equality, social inclusion and an equitable society;
 - (b) by placing decent and productive employment at the heart of economic and social policies, and targeting youth employment as a key priority based on national circumstances. Among other initiatives, governments, employers' and workers' organizations can play a major role in identifying, in the short, medium and long term, sectors that have strong potential for employment of young people;
 - (c) through appropriate national legislation based on international labour standards and good governance of the labour market, that continues job creation for young people and ensures that all young people, including those in temporary employment, enjoy and exercise their rights at work, and in particular their fundamental rights;
 - (d) through a combination of policies and programmes, including those that encourage public and private enterprises and cooperatives in the creation of productive and decent jobs for young people, specifically those in vulnerable situations. Policies for young people should not prejudice the quantity or quality of jobs for adult workers. These include:
 - access to universal, free, quality public primary and secondary education and investment in vocational training and lifelong learning that enhance the employability¹ of young people. Literacy and numeracy, alongside core work

¹ Employability is defined broadly. It is a key outcome of education and training of high quality, as well as a range of other policies. It encompasses the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off, and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills, learning to learn skills, and competencies to protect themselves and their colleagues against

skills, constitute basic skills that are fundamental for working life. There is a need to foster measures and partnerships that link education and training with the world of work, and to anticipate skills that will be required in the labour market, especially in growth sectors;

- targeted initiatives and incentive schemes to raise labour demand for young people, especially disadvantaged youth without decreasing the quantity and quality of work for others. Employment-intensive approaches in infrastructure, public works programmes, promotion of high employment-absorbing sectors and methods of production, particularly in developing and transition economies, work placement and other innovative schemes can increase employment prospects of young people;
 - entrepreneurship and productive and sustainable self-employment as career options and sources of decent employment for young people. A comprehensive youth employment strategy should also promote an entrepreneurial culture, small and medium-sized enterprises, enabling policies and regulations, and support services. Cooperatives and social enterprises are an important means of promoting job opportunities for young people and should be promoted through comprehensive national and international strategies;
 - employment services, guidance and career advice such as labour market information and career counselling should be made available to young people and more intensive assistance should be provided for youth who have experienced lengthy periods of unemployment;
 - wage policies that ensure that young people receive fair and adequate incomes for productive work, policies that promote freedom of association, collective bargaining, safe and secure working conditions and appropriate hours of work, and policies that promote the creation of jobs for young people on a sustainable basis;
 - strengthen existing networks of young entrepreneurs and young trade unionists around the world;
- (e) close coordination between government institutions and agencies, both at national and local levels. To increase job quantity and quality, initiatives investing in young people should be supported by adequate human and financial resources;
- (f) the involvement of the social partners in the design and implementation of policies and programmes promoting decent work for young people;
- (g) promotion of gender equality at all stages of the life cycle and elimination of discrimination against youth are imperative. The creation of more and better jobs for adults and, in many countries, the abolition of child labour are key to the promotion of quality jobs for young people;

occupational hazards and diseases. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work. Employability also covers multiple skills that are essential to secure and retain decent work. Entrepreneurship can contribute to creating opportunities for employment and hence to employability. Employability is, however, not a function only of training – it requires a range of other instruments which results in the existence of jobs, the enhancement of quality jobs, and sustainable employment. Workers' employability can only be sustained in an economic environment that promotes job growth and rewards individual and collective investments in human resources training and development.

-
- (h) encouraging efforts by governments to create a conducive environment for significant, sustainable and inclusive economic growth, decent work and the development of public, private and social enterprises.

ILO action

- 7.** The Meeting further agreed that the ILO should play a major role in mainstreaming the decent work paradigm into the international development agenda. In this context, the ILO should strengthen cooperation with multilateral institutions and other international organizations to promote a coordinated approach that makes the achievement of full employment and decent work a priority through policies that ensure adequate aggregate demand and an expansion of productive capacity. The Meeting called for improved coordination within ILO's advisory services and technical cooperation activities to ensure policy coherence based on the GEA across existing national initiatives, such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), and the Youth Employment Network (YEN). In regard to ILO work on youth, the Decent Work Agenda provides the paradigm, the GEA, its ten core elements, and cross-cutting themes provide the policy pillars. These include the "four Es" of the YEN. The YEN can also assist through high-level support and networks to ensure the success of the strategy.
- 8.** The Meeting recommended that the ILO's future work should focus on expanding the knowledge base on the nature and magnitude of the youth employment challenge, developing measurable indicators of decent work, establishing benchmarks and goals for achieving increases in decent work for young people, and documenting country-level experience that has achieved these objectives without displacing adult employment. The ILO should promote tripartite forums for the exchange of national experiences on youth employment.
- 9.** The Meeting requested the ILO to develop a set of tools that could be used flexibly and adapted by member States in the formulation of youth employment policies and programmes to bring young people, including young migrant workers, into productive and decent employment. These tools, which include active labour market policies, vocational training, employment services and career guidance, should promote, inter alia, all the relevant international labour standards and best practice, employability, job creation and entrepreneurship, cooperatives, small and medium-sized enterprises and social dialogue.
- 10.** The Meeting agreed that a combination of educational, preventive, care and treatment measures related to HIV/AIDS is needed to decrease the impact of the epidemic/pandemic on the youth employment force. This could include the integration of the promotion of the ILO code of practice, joint initiatives devised by employers' and workers' organizations and partnerships with international institutions in the ILO's activities on decent work for young people.
- 11.** The Meeting recommended the Office to ask the Governing Body to consider innovative ways of exchanging national experiences related to youth employment, possibly through a panel of experts and round-table discussion, in the general discussion on youth employment at the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2005. Such a panel or round-table discussion should be designed to assist in the practical implementation of policies and programmes beneficial to youth employment, based on national circumstances. Furthermore, it was agreed that governments and employers' and workers' organizations should strive to ensure a strong participation of young people in the Conference.
- 12.** The Meeting agreed that the central objective of this discussion was to identify initial areas of agreement and to act as a framework for a more complete discussion of this issue at the International Labour Conference in June 2005, where more comprehensive conclusions will be decided. These conclusions have been drafted and agreed in that spirit.

Part 2

Other proceedings

Panel discussion

Mobilizing partnerships for youth

<i>Moderator:</i>	Mr. M. Levin, Employment Sector, ILO, Geneva
<i>Panellists:</i>	Sir Leroy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the ILO
	Mr. J. Carlstedt, Director of Entrepreneurship Policy, Confederation of Swedish Enterprise
	Ms. M.-E. Chavez, Deputy Director-General, International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)
	Mr. O. Lobo San Juan, Youth Officer, Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT), Spain

The panel discussion started with a short film presentation *Youth voices from Kosovo*, which introduced the Youth Employment phase of the ILO project “Skills development for the reconstruction and recovery of Kosovo” that is funded by the Italian Government.

The presentation showed that the lack of decent work among today’s young people mirrored and perpetuated the vicious cycle of poverty, inadequate education and training, poor jobs and the intergenerational transmission of poverty. Decent and productive employment for youth was a commitment of the Millennium Declaration. Within the international community, the ILO had taken the lead in meeting that commitment.

The ILO’s project in Kosovo promoted an integrated approach to youth employment. It addressed both labour demand for and employability of young people. Pilot initiatives and lessons learnt from implementation were mainstreamed into policy development. That work involved a large number of stakeholders, under the coordination of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and in cooperation the social partners.

Responding to questions from the floor, Mr. Rosas, Skills and Employability Department, provided further information on the project. The project had begun in the 2001 post-war period with the aim of helping to rebuild the physical and human infrastructure and establish a skills development system in the United Nations administered area of Kosovo. Its objectives were to reduce the skills deficit, rebuild the capacity of the public employment services and promote self-employment opportunities for young people.

The project had prioritized the most vulnerable young people: those with an education deficit or other disadvantages and those excluded from the labour market. The project worked to help develop skills and also measured labour demand; the information provided in Chapter 3 of the background report prepared for the Meeting reflected some of the approaches taken in the phase on youth employment. The entire project funding amounted to US\$2.3 million, with US\$700,000 going to the youth employment phase. The overall long-term impact of the project for young people was difficult to measure; however, as an indicator, in the past eight months, some 3,000 young jobseekers had received training. The film presentation had shown that, in one of the centres belonging to the network of eight regional training institutions of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, employment placement rates were higher than 70 per cent.

The project represented a pioneering exercise for the ILO because Kosovo had limited policy-making power. Demonstration programmes on specific issues, such as cooperatives, had been effective in the development of policies. Referring to a query about

the place of cooperatives in youth employment and employment creation, Mr. Rosas stated that the ILO had a specific programme to promote cooperatives throughout the world and that information was available for those who were interested.

Sir Leroy Trotman, in his introductory speech to the panel discussion, reiterated his opening remarks from the first sitting that there were jobs that alienated people and jobs that motivated people. As the Indonesian participant's question indirectly pointed out, not all jobs were attractive to all people. It was important to establish a level of job-matching to avoid creating the societal disruption countries were trying to avoid. It was crucial to give developing countries a chance to compete in an uneven market, and employment played an important part in providing that chance, particularly for young people.

The Social Partners' Forum and the African Union's Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, held in Burkina Faso in September 2004, showed an exciting, different approach, with the Employers and the Workers presenting a joint position to the Extraordinary Summit – a development that he hoped other regions would follow. That showed that working in partnerships was possible in the world of work and that there was no reason why the Workers, the Employers and Governments could not track and evaluate programmes jointly, in particular those designed for young people.

He listed the conclusions of the Social Partners' Forum, which overall highlighted the concern to create jobs that motivated young people and to show the benefits that could be derived from working. It was important to build on community experience. Globalization had led to enterprises being bought up and closed down, thus destroying jobs. Large businesses had what he termed "entrepreneurial fatigue" and were not always useful in providing assistance to the poor. Successful small and medium-sized enterprises should make their financial resources available so that demand could be created. Resources should be used directly to create wealth by increasing demand; job creation would follow. It was important to look at new ways of creating employment, such as the cooperative movement: trade unions should promote workers' cooperatives, as they were important for pooling resources. Small and medium-sized enterprises could also help in that area. He hoped that the panel discussion would challenge and extend that issue.

Mr. Carlstedt emphasized that entrepreneurship education was critical for developing young entrepreneurs. Such education, through "learning by doing", allowed young people to improve their self-esteem, knowledge, practical experience and network building outside the education system. It also led to a change in attitude and allowed young people to develop their own future. Many young people had started their own businesses or had become more sought after by employers following entrepreneurship education.

Currently, many young people moved through the education system without having any exposure to or knowledge of how business worked, and were then expected to find a job. The education system needed to work more closely with trade and industry to prepare young people for future employment. There was a need to educate employers as well as potential employees.

In Sweden, entrepreneurship education was seen as the "red thread" running through the education system. The current work of the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise was to promote entrepreneurship education throughout the whole education system in the country. The main objectives were to change attitudes towards entrepreneurship and to stimulate learning about the importance of trade and industry for Swedish society and welfare. That would help increase the number of start-up companies in Sweden, create more jobs, decrease unemployment and generate economic growth in the future. The education system also recognized the need to have entrepreneurial education.

In the current economic situation of Sweden, 42 of the 50 largest companies had been established before the Second World War. Those large companies would cease to be the biggest employers in the future; despite the recent economic upswing, some 74,000 jobs had vanished in the past four years due to increased productivity and globalization. There was a need to encourage new businesses.

In Sweden, a number of joint projects by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Education had been implemented with varying degrees of success. Further evaluation was necessary to have a clearer idea of what was still required in the educational system. Requirement analysis was important for the different levels in the education system. For instance, young primary-school students aged 6-7 could learn about society and how companies worked in society; secondary-school students could learn how to start up their own companies in a simulated educational manner; university students could learn about venture capital, seed capital and network building. Teachers also needed extra training to implement entrepreneurship education. Various non-profit organizations should be involved to help the education system develop the entrepreneurial concepts to be used.

He concluded by summarizing the results of the entrepreneurship education project, which involved the active participation of 10,000 students. The average age of participants was 19 and more girls participated than boys. In a survey covering 190 participants, 98.5 per cent of the respondents would recommend entrepreneurship education to others. Research covering the 1980-98 period showed that 20 per cent of students had started their own businesses before they were 30 years old with each company employing five to six people on average; very few of the students were unemployed.

Mr. Oscar Mario Lobo San Juan, Youth Officer of the Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) in Spain, spoke about the difficulties in recruiting young workers into trade unions in his country. Drawing on his experience, he noted that the nature of employment for young people – temporary work, precarious employment or jobs in the informal economy – made it difficult to reach them. Secondly, the lack of respect for trade union rights by many companies, such as freedom of association and the right to strike, meant that many young workers trying to exercise their rights ended up on the streets. He appealed to the ILO to ensure that these rights were respected.

Mr. Lobo San Juan stated that trade unions served as an important instrument for young people to harmonize their personal lives with their working lives. Trade unions provided the opportunity for young people to protect themselves against precarious work and to prevent the cycle of being trapped in this form of work generation after generation. The challenge, therefore, was to include young people in the trade union movement. Recognizing that 40 per cent of Spain's salaried workforce was under the age of 35, recruitment projects were established to involve young workers. He cited an example of a large strike in Spain in June which involved many young people who acknowledged that trade unions were the instrument that allowed them to claim their rights.

Mr. Lobo San Juan stated that his union advocated youth policies rather than trade union policies in favour of youth. He expressed the UGT's desire to see real participation of young people through involvement in the decision-making mechanisms. He noted that the resolutions and statutes of the UGT clearly stated the need to provide solutions for young workers in temporary and precarious work. As a result, a Youth Department had been created to specifically deal with the issues of youth employment and youth participation within the various sectors of the union. He remarked on the two objectives of the Youth Department: to make more visible the trade union policies that are geared towards youth employment; and to ensure that youth policies are integrated with all union decision-making bodies and sectors. The union was evaluating its policies and developing good practice guidelines on collective bargaining and youth employment policies.

Ms. M.-E. Chavez, Deputy Director-General of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), described how cooperatives differ from other enterprises and why they are more attractive to young people. As cooperatives were autonomous organizations where people voluntarily met their common economic, social and cultural needs through democratically controlled organizations, they put people, not capital, at the centre of their business. They followed a broader set of values than those typically associated with profit-making – self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. As they were owned and organized by their members, the decision-making process balanced the need for profitability with the needs of members and the wider community. Young people cited these values and principles as making cooperatives an attractive model.

The ICA, the representative organization for cooperatives, with 228 member organizations in 91 countries and 800 million members, had increased its attention on youth, including by: encouraging youth participation in cooperatives; promoting youth representation on its Board; and organizing a series of conferences and seminars, leading to the creation of the International Youth Co-operation Network. Cooperatives provided young people with opportunities to find employment, make the transition from school to work through entrepreneurial training, and services such as how to access housing, credit, and saving schemes.

In conclusion, Ms. Chavez recognized that young people are insufficiently exposed to cooperative forms of enterprises and therefore the ICA intended to reach out to youth through new partnerships especially with governments, workers and employers. The ICA hoped that the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193) would foster a better understanding of cooperatives as well as policy environments that would allow cooperatives to be established, grow, prosper and enable young people to find decent employment and create their own enterprises.

Discussion

The Employer member from Jamaica remarked on government efforts to address youth unemployment and associated issues, noting that resources were stretched and indicating a need to build partnerships, in the widest sense. In Jamaica, those partnerships were illustrated in the National Youth Policy, created through tripartite consultations. The policy focused on education and training and creating opportunities for employment through entrepreneurship. The National Strategic Action Plan targeted relevant education and skills training opportunities in the formal and NGO sector, promoted on-the-job training and placement programmes, fostered direct linkages between the education and employment sector, promoted incentives for employers who employ inexperienced youth and fostered the environment for the creation of self-employment through loan programmes and training.

The Jamaica Employers' Federation was a partner in implementing several objectives of this strategy, including: providing guidance for students who are preparing for post-secondary education life; encouraging and facilitating a mentoring system; providing training; expanding the role of the Jamaica Business Development Centre; and, in conjunction with the Scientific Research Council, expanding opportunities for business development. She emphasized that collaboration and partnership with a wide variety of interest groups was central.

The Employer member from Senegal drew attention to a national convention between the Government and the private sector, the objective of which was to establish a reciprocal relationship with regard to youth employment. The accompanying programme of action focused on internships and apprenticeships, reskilling and practical diplomas, financial assistance for qualified workers wishing to find independent jobs and financial assistance for enterprises to develop growth potential through on-the-job training.

The Employer member from Spain, commenting on efforts to address the issue of temporary work amongst young people in Spain, noted that a collaborative framework had been established between the private and public sectors to promote youth employment and entrepreneurship, paying special attention to training.

The Worker representative from Bahrain stated that the high unemployment rate in his country was a consequence of the education and training system; the wages system; and current labour laws. Extensive discussions had taken place amongst the social partners over the last ten years, which would result in new labour laws. He also mentioned the initiative undertaken by the Government to sponsor a review of the labour market, the economy and the education and training system of the country. The review suggested opening markets to allow free mobility of workers; and increasing taxes of expatriates and their families, using the additional funds to train Bahrainis.

The Worker representative from Senegal characterized the employment situation in Senegal as one in which there is a low supply rate, high overall unemployment rate and high levels of unemployment and chronic underemployment among young people. The situation had led, in part, to an exodus of young people from rural to urban areas. He remarked that the current policies had resulted in a loss of jobs in the private sector with an accompanying increase in the number of young people moving into the informal economy. He stressed that in order to solve the general employment problem and youth unemployment problem, the country needed to have strong voices. To that end, the country had started to organize its workers into cooperatives – a system he felt should give workers a stronger voice.

The Government representative from Brazil raised the issues of cooperatives, self-employment and job creation as potential means of getting more young people involved in the world of work. She mentioned three challenges that needed to be overcome in order to further develop these initiatives: the need to get beyond the idea that jobs equal employment; the need to better develop policies of micro-training, enterprise development and microfinance; and the need to emphasize the importance of an initial period of support for young people entering gainful employment.

The Worker representative from Jamaica, noting that slavery and colonialization had delayed the natural rate of growth in developing countries, asked the ILO to clarify its position on the topic of debt forgiveness and lobbying for debt forgiveness with other international organizations such as the IMF.

In response, Sir Leroy Trotman noted, with regret, that the ILO “wore different hats”, a difficult position to reconcile. He stressed the importance for countries to come to an agreement on the need to present one view on issues in the international arena. The ILO would like to see greater coherence amongst its constituents but, until that time, it could not give a single ILO position on such issues.

Closing speeches

Following adoption of the amended report of the Meeting, the Employer spokesperson remarked on the general satisfaction of the Employers' group with the conclusions, noting that they reflected a common understanding of how best to move forward. He recognized that the conclusions were a "work in progress", as well as a product of compromise, that would be refined in the 2005 ILC general discussion. He expressed some reservations concerning paragraph 8, noting that it was difficult to establish objective comparisons of the decent work deficit across countries which could lead to misleading judgements. He noted that there were no universally accepted or objective standards of decent work, and "deficits" implied an optimal "decency" against which jobs could be measured. Measurement, therefore, would tend to be subjective. While the Employers' group supported knowledge-gathering and establishing benchmarks on youth employment, it was important to take into consideration the vastly differing social and economic realities among countries and recognize that indicators of decent work would vary depending on national context.

On the whole, the principal positions of the Employers' group were reflected in the text: job creation as a fundamental priority was included; recognition of the importance of an enabling environment for enterprise growth and entrepreneurship education for youth; and investment in education, training and skills. The proposal to develop a "toolbox" of possible technical interventions in support of youth employment was an especially promising suggestion that should be examined further at the 2005 ILC.

The Worker spokesperson remarked that the conclusions were a helpful basis for the 2005 ILC general discussion. He concurred with the Employers' spokesperson that the conclusions were a good compromise of the viewpoints expressed and provided a balanced discussion of the issues. Demand and supply concerns were addressed, as well as the macro and micro aspects, all indicating the need for a coordinated approach to the youth employment challenge. With the Decent Work Agenda as a foundation, the GEA as pillars and the YEN network as a basis for supporting action, the Office was well positioned to move positively forward. He also drew attention to the need for greater coherence in the work of the Office on employment and youth employment issues. He noted that the Office was conducting work at the country level through a variety of programmes, including GEA country activities, the PRSPs, the decent work country programmes and also through the YEN. The Office required a consistent and coherent approach in all these activities. The conclusions of this Meeting should be the guiding principles in all ILO country activities on youth employment.

The representative of the Government of Senegal, speaking on behalf of the Government group, commended the quality of the discussions and the usefulness of the work conducted throughout the Meeting. He noted that the conclusions of the Meeting constituted an important reference framework for the 2005 ILC general discussion. He stressed that decent work was the central issue in promoting youth employment as decent incomes were the principal tool for poverty alleviation. The participation of young people in the 2005 ILC general discussion was crucial to define the challenges of youth employment at the national level.

The representative of the Government of Canada proposed that a meeting of young people be held in advance of the 2005 ILC general discussion to inform the debate and seek solutions that reflect the views of young people. Young people should also form a significant proportion of Conference delegations, a proposal supported by all representatives to the Meeting.

The Director-General acknowledged the presence at the Meeting of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, Mr. Philippe Séguin, as an indication of the importance the Office attached to the issue of youth employment. He welcomed the report to the Meeting as well balanced and forward looking, remarking that the Meeting's discussions were timely in the context of the strategic planning process of the Office. It was important to view the debate at the Meeting and its conclusions in the current political context. The development of collective security and democracy was directly linked to the ability of national governments to support employment creation, particularly jobs for young people. In many respects, the global community was falling short in meeting the employment expectations of young women and men and the current situation was untenable in building an inclusive society. Young people sought a fair chance at a decent job, and global security depended on realizing this hope. A wide range of alliances was needed to meet the objective of reducing youth unemployment. Employers' and workers' organizations represented the largest network in the world of work, and such organizations had an immense capacity, and responsibility, to assist young people to be economically included in society. He thanked the participants for their active engagement in the process of building knowledge and identifying priorities, and expressed optimism that the Meeting's deliberations would form part of a wider process of promoting youth employment globally.

The Chairperson closed the Meeting thanking the participants for the consensus reached in developing a strong set of conclusions that would inform the 2005 ILC general discussion.

Evaluation questionnaire

A questionnaire seeking participants' opinions on various aspects of the Meeting was distributed before the end of the Meeting.

1. How do you rate the Meeting as regards the following?

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
The choice of agenda item (subject of the Meeting)	22	7	3			4.59
The points for discussion	9	21				4.30
The quality of the discussion	6	17	4	3		3.86
The conclusions	8	11	4	2	2	3.29
Panel discussion on mobilizing partnerships for youth	3	13	7	3	1	3.51
Opportunity for networking	5	16	9	1	1	3.71

2. How do you rate the quality of the report in terms of the following?

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
Quality of analysis	9	19	2	1	1	4.06
Objectivity	8	17	6		1	3.96
Comprehensiveness of coverage	7	18	5			4.06
Presentation and readability	14	14	4			4.31
Amount and relevance of information	11	15	4	1		4.16

3. How do you consider the time allotted for discussion?

	Too much	Enough	Too little
Discussion of the report		23	8
Panel discussions	1	20	7
Groups	4	22	6
Drafting Committee	4	12	11

4. How do you rate the practical and administrative arrangements (secretariat services, translation, interpretation)?

	5 Excellent	4 Good	3 Satis- factory	2 Poor	1 Unsatis- factory	Average score
	18	9	5			4.40

5. Respondents to the questionnaire

Government	Employers	Workers	Observers Government Others	Total	Response rate (%)
8	9	12	3	32	35

6. Participants at the Meeting

	Government	Employers	Workers	Technical advisers	Observers		Total
					Government	Others	
	15	14	14	15	31	4	93

7. Delegates/technical advisers

	Government	Employers	Workers	Observers (Government only)	Total
Delegates	15	14	14	31	74
Technical advisers	7	0	0	8	15

8. Female participation

	Government	Employers	Workers	Observers (Government only)	Total	% female delegates
Delegates	6	5	4	8	23	31
Technical advisers	3	0	0	1	4	

List of participants
Liste des participants
Lista de participantes

Members of the Governing Body
of the International Labour Office

Membres du Conseil d'administration
du Bureau international du Travail

Miembros del Consejo de Administración
de la Oficina Internacional del Trabajo

Sr. Daniel Funes de Rioja, Vicepresidente Empleador, Consejo de Administración de la OIT

Sir Leroy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson, Governing Body of the ILO

Members representing Governments
Membres représentant les gouvernements
Miembros representantes de los gobiernos

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Sr. Adolfo Enrique Deibe, Secretario de Empleo, Ministerio de Trabajo, Empleo y Seguridad Social, Buenos Aires

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Mrs. Gladys Andrade, Diretora de Políticas de Juventude, Ministério do Trabalho, Brasília

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Advisers/Conseillers techniques /Consejeros técnicos

Mrs. Margo Craig Garrison, Director, Active Employment Measures Policy, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Gatineau/Québec

Mr. Don MacPhee, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Canada in Geneva

EGYPT EGYPT EGIPTO

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GHANA

Mr. Alexander Awotwi, Senior Labour Officer, Regional Labour Office, Takoradi

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Mrs. Etaf Halasseh, Director of Employment, Ministry of Labour, Amman

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Mr. Guy Mhone, Professor, University of Witwatersrand, Witwatersrand

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Members representing the Employers

Membres représentant les employeurs

Miembros representantes de los empleadores

Mr. Atul Prakash Anand, President, EFI Shonkh Technologies International Limited, New Delhi

Mr. Peter C. Anderson, Director – Workplace Policy, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Melbourne

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M^{me} Félicité Awassi Atsimadja, Conseillère, Affaires sociales et internationales, Confédération patronale gabonaise, Libreville

Mrs. Jacqueline Coke-Lloyd, Executive Director, Jamaica Employers' Federation, Kingston

M. Charles Faye, Administrateur de société, Conseil national du patronat du Sénégal, Dakar

Mrs. Zodwa Maila, Skills Development Projects Manager, Business Unity South Africa, Johannesburg

Sr. Ariosto Manrique, Presidente, Comisión Nacional de Empresarios Jóvenes (COPARMEX), Tijuana

Mrs. Aisha Oozeer, Training Manager, Mauritius Employers' Federation, Port Louis

Mr. Ravindra Peiris, Deputy Director-General, Employers' Federation of Ceylon, Rajagiriya

Mr. Simo Pinomaa, Senior Economist, Confederation of Finnish Industries, Helsinki

Mr. Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno, Managing Director, Small Medium Enterprises Division, Employers' Association of Indonesia (APINDO), Jakarta

Sr. André Vanoni de Godoy, Director, Federação das Indústrias do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

Sr. Roberto Villamil Alvarez, Gerente General, Cámara de Industrias del Uruguay, Montevideo

Members representing the Workers

Membres représentant les travailleurs

Miembros representantes de los trabajadores

Mr. Ahmed A. Hussain Al-Khabaz, AGS for Labour, Culture and Training, General Confederation of Bahrain Trade Unions, Manama

Mrs. Maria Cristina Corral, Diretora, Central Única dos Trabalhadores (CUT-Brazil), São Paulo

M. Séckel Gning, Membre du Bureau exécutif, Confédération nationale des travailleurs du Sénégal (CNTS), Dakar

Mr. Sang-Min Jun, Assistant Director, Federation of Korean Trade Unions, Seoul

M. Pierre Laliberté, Economiste principal, Congrès du travail du Canada, Ottawa

Sr. Oscar Lobo San Juan, Responsable Confederal Dpto. De Juventud de UGT, Unión General de Trabajadores de España, Madrid

Ms. Oana Mirea, Vice-President, National Youth Commission, National Trade Union Confederation (CARTEL ALFA), Bucharest

Mr. Mohamed Faizer Musthapha, M.P., Vice-President, Ceylon Workers Congress, Colombo

Mr. Clayson Panton, Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions, Kingston

Mr. Ebrahim Patel, National Labour Convenor, Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Woodstock

Mrs. Abeer Sawaqed, General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), Amman

Mr. Bismo Sanyoto, Vice-President, K-SBSI, Confederation of Indonesian Prosperity Trade Union, Jakarta

Mrs. Alison Tate, International Officer, International Department, Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), Melbourne

Mr. Isaac Kweku Yanney, Acting Head, Policy and Research Department, Trades Union Congress (Ghana), Accra

Others

Autres

Otros

Representatives of member States present at the sittings

Représentants d'Etats Membres présents aux séances

Representantes de Estados Miembros presentes en las sesiones

ALGERIA ALGÉRIE ARGELIA

M. Lakhdar Boumedmed, Directeur régional, Caisse nationale de l'assurance chômage (CNAC), sous tutelle du ministère du Travail et de la Sécurité sociale, Oran

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Mr. Nayeem Uddin Ahmed, Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of Bangladesh in Geneva

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Mr. Mohammed Al-Kadi, General Director, Alsaleh Social Foundation for Development, Sana'a

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Mr. S. Chatiza, Acting Secretary for Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation, Causeway

Representatives of non-governmental international organizations
Représentants d'organisations internationales non gouvernementales
Representantes de organizaciones internacionales no gubernamentales

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
Confédération internationale des syndicats libres (CISL)
Confederación Internacional de Organizaciones Sindicales Libres (CIOSL)

Mrs. Anna Biondi, Assistant Director, Geneva Office

Mrs. Yvonne O'Callaghan, Youth Officer, Brussels

International Co-operative Alliance (ICA)
Alliance cooperative internationale (ACI)
Alianza Cooperativa Internacional (ACI)

Mrs. Maria Elena Chavez Hertig, Deputy Director-General, Grand-Saconnex/Geneva

International Organisation of Employers (IOE)
Organisation internationale des employeurs (OIE)
Organización Internacional de Empleadores (OIE)

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