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Sixth sitting

Wednesday, 7 June 2006 – 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Adyanthaya

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

**RAPPORTS DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION ET
DU DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL: DISCUSSION (SUITE)**

**DISCUSIÓN DEL INFORME DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN Y
DE LA MEMORIA Y LOS INFORMES DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL: DISCUSIÓN (CONT.)**

The PRESIDENT

I declare open the sixth sitting of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. As you know, this morning we are to be honoured with the visit of Her Excellency Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who will address the Conference at about 12 noon. I shall therefore, suspend the present sitting at 11.40 a.m. and the doors will be opened to allow other delegates to come from their work in the committees and enter the Assembly Hall to hear President Sirleaf's address.

We shall now proceed with the general discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Mr. THAILUAN (Worker, Thailand)

It is my great pleasure and honour to report to you today on behalf of Thai Labour. May I express my sincere thanks to the President for giving me an opportunity to report on the labour situation in Thailand. This is the 19th year for me to be present at the International Labour Conference.

Since the first year until now, I have reported on Thailand's labour situation to the Conference and after the report, it is found that some labour welfare has been improved. The important Conventions are ratified and the Thai Government issues the labour law to provide more protection to Thai labour, es-

pecially child labour and women labour. However, many problems that I mentioned in the year 2005 have not been solved yet and some problems seem to be more serious for example, the type of employment that I called the double standard employment. Subcontracted workers are employed at the same time as permanent workers but the subcontracted workers receive a lower salary without any fringe benefits. Some of them have to prepare their own uniform, safety hat and safety shoes. These workers receive a low income and employers take advantage of them. The number of them is now increasing to more than 1 million and the Government never pays attention, even though leaders of labour unions request the right for them continuously.

In addition, there are still some interventions to the labour mission as I reported in 2005. It happened continually, for example, in the Ministry of Labour. The Minister of Labour has power and duties to appoint members in the tripartite committee. Therefore, the Minister intervenes in the appointment of many committees.

He appointed his team to be members of the committee. Moreover, for part of the employees' representatives, he appointed employees who do not belong to any organization in order that these employees can support him. For part of extraordinary experts in the various tripartite committees, he did the

same thing. All these committees are very important to the labour mission, such as the Social Security Committee, and the Labour Relations Committee, who have the responsibility of considering the labour disputes throughout the country.

The intervention of a tripartite mechanism in the Ministry of Labour currently is critical. It has never happened in the Ministry before. All leaders of the labour union feel worried about this matter.

What I report today needs an urgent solution. I would like to ask the ILO in Thailand to assign responsibility to the Thai Government and cooperate with Thai labour to solve this problem seriously.

Original Japanese: Mr. TOGARI (Vice Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan)

Once again, it is a great honour for me to have been given this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Japanese Government this year at the International Labour Conference.

First, I would like to express my condolences to the victims of the earthquake that occurred in Indonesia.

This year, the Director-General's Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, has been submitted to the Conference. I commend the Office's efforts, which comprehensively analysed the world of work from several perspectives in detail, such as the increasing income inequality and the rapid increase of young persons neither in employment nor education (NEETS). I am sure that this Report will be a good guideline for activities at the ILO as we move forward.

There is a poem in English which has recently come to be known in Japan called *A Thousand Winds*, author unknown: "Do not stand at my grave and weep, I am not there; I do not sleep. I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the diamond glints on snow, I am the sun on the ripened grain, I am the gentle autumn rain ... Do not stand at my grave and cry."

According to the Director-General's Report, unfortunately every year in this world 2.2 million people die from work-related causes. Whenever I read this poem I cannot help but think of the workers who have become a thousand winds and of the sorrow of the even greater numbers of their families. We, as representatives of governments, workers and employers, are expected to collect our wisdom to eliminate such tragedies that are repeated the world over.

Following the ILO Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health adopted at the ILC in 2003, this year we have been discussing the proposed Convention on the promotional framework for occupational safety and health. We consider the Office's proposed Convention to be well balanced. We expect the Convention to be a good one which many countries can support. We hope that the ILO, as the responsible body in charge, makes further efforts to promote the system approach to occupational safety and health management, which is the pillar of this strategy.

This year at the ILC, the issue of technical cooperation is also being discussed. This is a very important approach in the ILO which sets decent work for all as the most important goal, since technical cooperation is directly connected to securing decent work. Japan has engaged in technical cooperation through the ILO in Asia and the Pacific for more than 30 years. Special focus has been placed on

human resources development, and we have continuously supported the Asian and Pacific Skill Development Programme (APSDEP). Henceforth, we will support the Regional Skills and Employability Programme in Asia and the Pacific (SKILLS/AP), which is the extension and expansion of the aforementioned programme. We hope that many countries will actively contribute to this programme.

I would like to express our views concerning the Conference reform, which was proposed in the Director-General's Report at the previous session of the ILC and on which we have started discussions. The ILC, where tripartite parties gather together from all over the world to examine labour issues and design the future of labour, has a very important role in spreading decent work to workers all over the world. However, we must say that the way the Conference is being held now is not always effective. We have presented a reform plan from the viewpoint of effective use of resources and improvement of visibility. We look forward to a fruitful and flexible discussion for improved Conference reform.

In addition to this, as concerns the administration of the Office, it is indispensable that we systematically reduce administrative costs and make efforts so that the budget can be used for the ILO activities themselves. As the Office has expressed, we once again call upon the Office to identify the unnecessary expenditures to make a constant cost-saving effort.

Concerning the civil service reform in Japan, we recognize that sincere discussions between the Government and the parties concerned is essential and we have been holding ministerial-level dialogues with the labour side since the beginning of this year. On 29 May, both parties agreed on establishing a board of examination, which will discuss a range of government affairs, the categories of public service employees, and what they should be, as well as the shape of the labour and management relationships, including fundamental labour rights. They also agreed to hold the first meeting in the near future.

Thus, within Japan, the Government and parties concerned have been engaged in faithful discussions on this matter and we would like to invite the ILO to look patiently at the development.

Changing patterns in the world of work means changes in the ILO's role. The ILO has to change to maintain its *raison d'être*. The Office, as well as each Member of the constituents, must recognize this fact and must take a new step.

I will end my speech by saying that the Japanese Government, as a constituent of the ILO, promises to continue to support the ILO's activities.

Mr. KELLIER (Minister of Labour and Social Security, Jamaica)

The 11 per cent reduction in child labour globally, reported by Director-General, is both significant and encouraging. Jamaica is pleased to be part of the Latin American and Caribbean region, demonstrating the best progress in the reduction of child labour, showing only 5 per cent of children in employment. We are even more pleased to report that the most recent survey in Jamaica found that only 2.4 per cent of children in the 5-17 age group are engaged in economic activities. We have also enacted and are vigorously implementing the Child Care and Protection Act, 2005.

The Director-General's Report on the ILO's four major strategic objectives shows that much progress

has been made in strengthening tripartism and social dialogue, as well as enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection. However, much more work needs to be done in creating greater opportunities for men and women to secure decent work, as well as in the promotion and realization of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work.

I must inform the Conference that consultations between tripartite groups in Jamaica have resulted in the establishment of important Memoranda of Understanding. These MOUs have been of critical importance to both the industrial relations climate and the economic development of our country.

In order to intensify activities related to the four major strategic objectives, Jamaica supports the call by the ILO to international financial institutions, bilateral government agencies and the private sector for a significant increase in extra-budgetary support for effective implementation of the Decent Work Agenda.

The ILO's technical cooperation programme has been of valuable assistance in helping us in important areas such as child labour, HIV/AIDS, promotion of management labour cooperation, labour market information systems and productivity. A shining example of the value of the ILO's assistance is the area of HIV/AIDS. The impact has been a greater awareness of the need to establish policies for the removal of discriminatory practices at the workplace. The ILO has done all this in collaboration with other agencies and institutions such as the United States Department of Labor.

Jamaica and other countries in the Caribbean region have also been the beneficiaries of the services of related ILO institutions such as the International Training Centre at Turin and the International Institute for Labour Studies. With respect to the latter, we are particularly pleased and honoured that the 2005 ILO's Nobel Peace Prize social policy lecture series was hosted by our University of the West Indies.

This provides a useful backdrop for expressing our gratitude, on behalf of Jamaica and other countries in the Caribbean region, for this type of assistance from the ILO, and especially for the support, help, guidance and expertise of the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean. We look forward to continued support from the ILO for our efforts, which seek to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of the objectives of the Decent Work Agenda.

This Conference has employment relationship as one of its major areas of work, which is at the heart of the needs of tripartite constituents of all member States. We recommend the incorporation and emphasis of two areas in resolving contentious issues and contending views that will arise in our deliberations on this subject, namely corporate social responsibility and the international exchange of information on good labour codes and practices.

In the area of employment relationship, Jamaica is in a continuous process of making adjustments to its Labour Relations and Industrial Disputes Act to deal with issues related to contract workers. For occupational safety and health, we have drafted a new act incorporating relevant ILO Conventions. We look forward to the outcome of the discussion on these subjects to help us shape and enact labour legislation.

Let us all resolve in this 95th Session to try to find solutions and strategies which will culminate in in-

ternational labour Conventions and Recommendations to facilitate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and here we urge emphasis on work which will contribute meaningfully to poverty alleviation, reduction of illiteracy, reduction of HIV/AIDS and increased job creation and employment within the framework of decent work.

Original arabe: M^{me} ARIF (ministre des Affaires sociales et du Travail, République arabe syrienne)

J'aimerais remercier le personnel du BIT pour les efforts consentis dans la préparation et l'organisation de cette Conférence, notamment M. Juan Somavia, Directeur général du BIT, auquel je voudrais exprimer mon estime pour sa compréhension des problèmes de mon pays, la Syrie, ainsi que pour l'assistance technique et les compétences proposées dans le but d'assurer les conditions d'un travail décent et de mettre en œuvre les principes et droits fondamentaux du travail.

Je dois malheureusement souligner la différence entre les territoires libres et indépendants dans mon pays et ceux qui sont encore sous occupation, cette occupation qui détruit les fondements même de la nature humaine. Lorsque vous lirez le rapport que nous avons présenté à la mission envoyée par le Directeur général, vous constaterez que les droits les plus élémentaires admis partout dans le monde restent malheureusement déniés à nos concitoyens syriens du Golan occupé.

Il est évident que cinq minutes ne peuvent suffire à décrire l'étendue de l'injustice et de la répression dont souffrent les travailleurs et les employeurs syriens de cette région occupée où la santé et les maladies deviennent un moyen de chantage exploité à des fins politiques et où divers moyens de pression sont utilisés. L'occupation israélienne est un exemple flagrant de violation des conventions des lois humaines et internationales. Nous remarquons cependant que notre Organisation, qui est la première à proposer les conventions régissant les droits et principes du travail, ne répond pas clairement à ces violations contraires à toutes les législations et les systèmes en vigueur.

En fait, aucune mesure pratique n'est prise par l'OIT ou par d'autres organisations internationales qui contribuerait à atténuer les effets de cette occupation non seulement dans le Golan, mais aussi dans les autres territoires arabes occupés où l'occupant est le même et les pratiques inhumaines similaires. Je pense que les discussions au sein des réunions pourront mieux montrer les souffrances endurées par les citoyens arabes qui subissent une telle occupation.

La Syrie ne s'est jamais résignée et ne se résignera jamais à cette situation. Elle a toujours soutenu ses citoyens et tenté d'améliorer leurs conditions de vie. Quoique nous fassions, nous restons cependant impuissants face à l'occupation qui affecte la situation de tous les travailleurs et de tous les employeurs qui restent à la merci de ses chars et de ses missiles.

Cette occupation dure depuis longtemps et la Syrie, à cet égard, a le droit d'attendre des organisations des Nations Unies une plus grande détermination dans le suivi et la mise en œuvre des décisions et conventions adoptées pour qu'elles soient réellement appliquées à tous les Etats qui les ont ratifiées. Les autorités israéliennes continuent pourtant à violer les droits fondamentaux, et notamment le droit à une vie décente et le droit à la liberté

d'association dans les territoires occupés. La condamnation de telles violations est le moins que l'on puisse faire.

Il faut préciser ici que les problèmes que vivent les travailleurs du Golan ne nous ont pas empêchés de poursuivre le développement des stratégies de l'emploi dans notre pays. Nous avons en effet modifié la législation du travail et de la sécurité sociale, développé les capacités institutionnelles dans les différents ministères et renforcé les compétences des partenaires sociaux dans le domaine du dialogue social. Nous avons mis en place une stratégie nationale visant à limiter le travail des enfants, nous avons également étudié les moyens d'étendre le réseau de sécurité sociale, institué un fonds de prévoyance sociale et des centres d'orientation et de formation professionnelle, et nous avons appliqué un programme de formation des femmes et d'aide aux groupes les plus vulnérables. Voilà quelques points qui méritent d'être soulignés au sujet des priorités appliquées par notre pays.

Il est enfin de notre devoir de rappeler que, malgré les programmes de réforme proposés par l'OIT pour la Syrie et pour d'autres pays arabes, nous attendons encore davantage et nous espérons que l'Organisation continuera d'œuvrer pour l'amélioration de la situation des travailleurs arabes et fournira un appui supplémentaire aux activités du bureau régional à Beyrouth afin qu'il puisse mieux répondre aux besoins des différents pays arabes.

Mr. GAN (*Government, Singapore*)

The global economic outlook for 2006 appears promising. The major developed countries and the economies of Asia have experienced good growth after several years of economic slow-down. The growth momentum is expected to continue for the rest of 2006 and beyond.

The Singapore economy achieved a robust growth of 6.4 per cent in 2005 following a strong rebound in 2004, when the economy grew by 3.4 per cent.

Strong economic growth, supported by the collective efforts of the Government, the National Trades Union Congress and the Singapore National Employers' Federation has helped to create many jobs and brought down the unemployment rate to 2.5 per cent as of March 2006. Workers also enjoy good wage increases, higher bonuses and better employment benefits.

While most workers now face little difficulty getting a job as a result of the strong economic recovery, there remains a small segment of our labour force who need more help. These are the low-wage and older workers whose long-term employability has been adversely affected by the increasing pace of globalization and technological changes. Helping these vulnerable workers is a national priority. In the past year, Singapore has set up a ministerial committee on low wages as well as a tripartite committee on the employability of older workers. The recommendations of the committees have focused on helping these workers, not with handouts, but by encouraging them to take up gainful employment. The key strategies are: to enhance job matching through employment assistance; redesigning jobs to increase their value and pay; and enhancing workers' employability through skills upgrading under the employability skills system and the workforce skills qualification system.

These are the key components of what we call "workfare", not welfare. Workfare encourages

workers to work so that they can help themselves and their families, rather than depend on welfare handouts. Workfare is implemented in collaboration with our unions through the Singapore National Trades Union Congress and with the support of employers.

On the occupational safety and health (OSH) front, Singapore welcomes the importance the ILO has placed on the need to protect workers against the risks and hazards they face every day at their workplaces. Every worker should have the assurance of being able to return home safe at the end of each day's work.

Just three months ago, Singapore introduced a new OSH regulatory framework centred on a new Workplace Safety and Health Act which came into effect on 1 March 2006. Our aim is to halve our occupational fatality rate within ten years and to become one of the safest places in the world to work in.

In this regard, I would like to thank the ILO for featuring Singapore's new OSH initiatives on the ILO online web site. We would also like to thank Mr. Jukka Takala, Director of the ILO's InFocus Programme on Safety and Health at Work and the Environment, for his support of our initiatives. Unions and employers have been actively involved in the formulation of this new framework. They have given their strong support, as it will benefit both workers and employers. Workers will perform better in a safe and healthy environment and this, in turn, will translate into higher productivity.

To help achieve safe workplaces, we have set up a workplace Safety and Health Advisory Committee with representation from unions, employers and the medical community. We have also set up an international advisory panel for occupational safety and health to advise the Government on OSH-related issues and help us learn from the experiences of other countries, in order to raise OSH standards in Singapore.

Safety and health are also important concerns for ASEAN as a whole. At a recent ASEAN labour ministers' meeting in Singapore, OSH was adopted as an additional priority area for the ASEAN labour ministers' work agenda. An ILO OSH expert gave a presentation to the meeting on how ASEAN as a whole could collaborate with the ILO in labour-related projects. Such collaboration would benefit more than 200 million workers in the ASEAN member countries. ASEAN looks forward to a greater ILO contribution to help bring about safe and healthy workplaces in the region.

We also take note of the Director-General's Report, *The end of child labour: Within reach*. Singapore strongly supports the abolition of child labour. We believe that children should spend time receiving education, acquiring skills and enjoying their childhood. For this reason, Singapore has ratified two ILO core Conventions, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), in 2001, and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), last year. We welcome the ILO's continued efforts to eradicate child labour in all forms. We believe investing in the education of children and creating hope for their future is the best way forward. In Singapore, child labour does not exist. Our children and young people receive education and training in schools or vocational institutes to the age of 16 and beyond. Through the constant enhancement of our education system we encourage and help our chil-

dren and young people to gain knowledge and prepare them for fulfilling and gainful employment when they complete their education.

Mr. President, the Singapore delegation looks forward to a fruitful discussion on the various issues on the agenda. I am confident that under your able leadership the 95th International Labour Conference will be a successful one.

Original German: Mr. ANDRES (Parliamentary Secretary of State, Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany)

For some years now I have been participating on behalf of the German Federal Government in the International Labour Conferences, and I am therefore happy that I can be with you again this year, in Geneva, to exchange views on the progress that we are making together towards decent work throughout the world and also about the challenges and tasks still facing us. For me, the International Labour Conference is a sort of inventory of where we stand in the international context of the world of work.

This year, alongside the Report of the Director-General, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, we also have another particularly important report on the agenda, that is the Global Report which concerns progress in combating child labour.

A detailed discussion on this Report took place on Friday and today, with your permission, I should like to make a few comments on that.

In Germany, the Report has sparked considerable interest in the media, and quite rightly so, because it bears the optimistic title *The end of child labour: Within reach*. Together, we can be proud of the fact that our efforts in the struggle against child labour were successful and that certain progress was made.

The figures and positive examples presented in the Report show a reduction in child labour throughout the world, and a drop of 11 per cent over the last four years. This is major progress, which gives us grounds for hope. We also know, however, that our fight against child labour must continue unabated. We must, in fact, strengthen and intensify our efforts in order to eliminate child labour altogether.

Child labour is not a marginal problem. In 2004, 218 million children were caught up in child labour situations and 126 million were involved in dangerous work. Child labour affects the youngest and most vulnerable members of our societies and ruins any prospects they may have of a good future.

The Report, despite its optimistic view, nevertheless makes it clear to all of us how difficult it is to combat child labour. In many countries the close link between poverty and child labour represents a vicious circle for the families concerned. Often, the work of the children is a major component of the family livelihood and, frequently, their only means of survival. We must break this vicious circle. We have agreed on two major components in our fight against child labour: our agreement and a targeted support programme.

As representative of the German Federal Government, I am particularly proud of the fact that the initiatives of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1992 have led to the adoption of the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). The former German Minister Norbert Blum through his persistence, made a significant contribution to this. Together with partner countries and the International Labour Office, we developed a truly

successful programme. By now, some 30 donors finance programmes to eradicate child labour in 86 countries. IPEC is the leading International Programme for the elimination of child labour and the largest programme of its kind within the International Labour Organization. Since it was established in 1992, US\$350 million have been spent, and since 2002 it has reached about 5 million children. These are very respectable figures. The Report makes it very clear that we have, in fact, taken the correct approach.

The most important outcome, however, cannot be measured in monetary terms: it is the worldwide proscription of child labour, which is manifested at the political level and finds a broad consensus in society. This is the sustainable success of our projects. However, we must not rest on our laurels. The millions of children involved in child labour require a strong commitment to promote the worldwide proscription of child labour. In the introduction to the Director-General's Report, it is stated that it is within our capacity to make this world a world without child labour. The Report ends with our goal of consigning child labour to history. I expressly welcome this goal and we consider this Report of major importance. One practical example is the disclosure of child labour practices in football production. In Sialkot Pakistan, we have succeeded in bringing child labour to an end in this area, in cooperation with FIFA. In the year in which the World Cup is held, in fact it will start on Friday of this week, we feel that this is a very important signal. Germany wishes, of course, to become football champion, world champion, but we must not forget that there are much more important goals and one of these is, of course, the elimination of child labour.

There are two other Reports, of course, and we offer our support to Director-General Somavia in his efforts to deal with the social consequences of globalization. We will be conducting a follow-up conference on this Report in Berlin and I invite you all most cordially to participate in this conference in order to discuss how we can make globalization more socially acceptable.

Ms. BATTSETSEG (Employer, Mongolia)

It is a great honour and at the same time a great opportunity for us, the Mongolian Employers' Federation, to give interventions on the third part of the Director-General's Report and to share with you comments on several paragraphs where there are some issues that need to be focused on and raised.

Since 1990, in a historically short period of transition from a centralized economy to a market economy, the Mongolian Employers' Federation has actively joined in ILO activities in different areas of its policy-making procedures. We have achieved very good partnership in our cooperation with the ILO but we would like also to recommend some special issues which have yet to be resolved.

First, we wish the ILO to deal with the world of work as characterized by employers and workers engaged in work, and not to look beyond this remit. Secondly, decent work does not require some type of social upheaval. More importantly, it requires jobs to be created. There are no rights at work if there is no work. Therefore, decent work can be realized only with our tripartite equal partnership and sustainable support from the ILO. Finally, the ILO needs to focus its limited resources on the world of work. This means it needs to bring relevant

expertise to its constituents. We would suggest that there are deficits in certain key skill areas such as industrial relations and of skilled staff such as practitioners from the world of work.

The Mongolian Employers' Federation has a very strong desire to support the ILO in Mongolia. In order to achieve close cooperation with excellent achievements, the Mongolian Employers' Federation suggests that the ILO set up a Regional Office in Mongolia. We think it is the right time to start. We will be able to point to many more weaknesses if an ILO Regional Office is not set up in Mongolia, while, on the other hand, having an ILO Regional Office in my own country will have an excellent regulating effect.

Let me say a few key things that the Mongolian Employers' Federation is looking for from the ILO, which form the basis of our request for programmes and activities within the ILO. I think that the Employers' delegates will also agree with what we say.

Firstly, the ILO needs to improve its relevance to the real world of work, and particularly to the employer community, by addressing key areas of skills development, human resources management, industrial relations practice and productivity.

Secondly, the ILO needs also to be seen as the specialized UN agency that focuses on enterprise employment development.

Thirdly, we need to avoid the ILO becoming merely a talking shop on global issues when the needs of its constituents remain in the practical world of work as it is experienced at the national level.

Fourthly, the Mongolian Employers' Federation is recommending that the ILO needs to contribute to poverty-reduction goals through enterprise development and job creation. The Global Employment Agenda is the policy vehicle developed by the constituents for this purpose and the ILO needs to support it with programmes. We would like the ILO to focus on this issue, especially in Mongolia.

Fifthly, skills development is an under-resourced area of activity. Education and skills are repeatedly seen and recognized as essential to poverty alleviation, but still resources are not found to make a meaningful contribution in this crucial area. In this case, the ILO needs to focus on doing things rather than just talking about them. There are so many meaningful activities implemented by the country initiatives, and many of them done by employers. We wish the ILO would support all these existing activities at national level rather than supporting only state- or ILO-run programmes; employers have all achieved results in reality.

Sixthly, laws and regulations on OSH need to be refined, especially to make clear the responsibilities of businesses and employees. Most of these businesses are small enterprises with fewer than ten workers. So, there should be legal regulation which reflects the specifics of both big and small enterprises. For example, it is impossible to organize a council on OSH issues at an organization with fewer than ten workers. In this case, it should be stipulated that the director of a small business with fewer than ten workers shall be personally responsible for occupational safety and health. In addition, preventative measures against industrial accidents and occupational diseases, ways to regulate these measures and issues regarding financial resources should be regulated by law.

Lastly, an effective and flexible labour monitoring system is required. Although there is an existing professional inspection system at the appropriate level, there are difficulties in using this system in many small organizations. We should therefore pay more attention to studying and implementing a new inspection mechanism with a combination of professional and public inspection.

Finally, the Mongolian Employers' Federation would like to wish you very great success on completion of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference and very warm success in policy and implementation of ILO activities with all our partners.

Original arabe: M. CHAOUCH (Ministre des Affaires sociales, de la Solidarité et des Tunisiens à l'étranger, Tunisie)

Le rapport du Directeur général sur les changements dans le monde du travail est l'un des rapports les plus importants présentés à la Conférence, et nous voudrions faire part de nos remerciements et de notre considération à M. Juan Somavia pour l'esprit analytique et réaliste de ce rapport.

Nous exprimons également notre satisfaction pour l'approche stratégique globale préconisée par l'Organisation qui place le travail décent au premier plan de ses priorités.

L'adoption du principe du travail décent par la communauté internationale en tant qu'objectif mondial pour réaliser les objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement est le meilleur témoignage de la justesse des choix de l'Organisation et du renforcement de sa place au sein du système des Nations Unies.

L'inscription de cet objectif avec ses différentes composantes dans l'Agenda mondial et l'appel à son inclusion dans les stratégies nationales de développement durable sont susceptibles de contribuer à la réalisation d'une mondialisation plus juste et plus humaine, et ce en sus de son rôle essentiel dans la lutte contre la pauvreté et la création d'opportunités de travail pour tous. Pour cela, il ne faudrait pas occulter les défis énormes auxquels fait face la communauté internationale, en particulier les pays en développement qui souffrent de la pauvreté, du chômage et de l'accroissement de la concurrence et des conflits qui constituent une entrave à la réalisation des objectifs du travail décent.

L'Organisation internationale du Travail, à travers ses programmes de coopération technique, est appelée à trouver des formes nouvelles et novatrices en vue de concrétiser le travail décent dans les pays Membres, en particulier dans le domaine de la promotion de l'emploi et de la garantie d'une protection sociale pour tous.

Face aux multiples transformations et évolutions que connaît la conjoncture économique mondiale, la Tunisie, grâce à la vision prospective de son Président de la République, M. Ben Ali, a adopté une politique de développement global, basée sur la complémentarité entre les dimensions sociale et économique du développement et axée sur les valeurs de consensus, de dialogue, de solidarité, d'égalité des chances et de participation des différentes composantes de la société civile.

Notre pays a pu, grâce à cette politique, réaliser des progrès notables dans tous les domaines, en particulier dans le domaine du développement humain.

Convaincus que la paix sociale représente une composante essentielle pour réaliser le développement global, nous œuvrons en vue de garantir la

protection et les arrangements nécessaires qui facilitent le travail des représentants des travailleurs dans les structures de dialogue au sein des entreprises dans le respect de la législation du travail et des conventions internationales du travail ratifiées par notre pays, actuellement au nombre de 57, y compris les huit conventions relatives aux droits fondamentaux du travail. Le gouvernement tunisien a entamé également les procédures de ratification de la convention n° 135 concernant les représentants des travailleurs, et ce conformément à la décision de Son Excellence, le Président de la République.

Cette politique de dialogue, de consensus et de concertation entre les partenaires sociaux a permis de consolider la politique contractuelle en Tunisie, et ce notamment à travers les révisions successives des conventions collectives sectorielles qui ont lieu de façon régulière tous les trois ans depuis 1990. C'est ainsi que notre pays a connu, en 2005, un nouveau round réussi de négociations sociales qui a concerné tous les secteurs.

La Tunisie a également veillé, dans le cadre du Code du travail ou par le biais d'une législation spéciale, à garantir une protection législative plus large des travailleurs et des employeurs, et à organiser les relations de travail dans les secteurs public et privé dans les différentes activités économiques.

L'emploi demeure au premier plan des programmes et priorités nationales de notre pays, et ce partant de notre conviction que le travail est une composante essentielle de la dignité de l'individu et l'une des conditions de l'équilibre et de la stabilité de la société. L'évolution vers une économie libérale basée sur le marché, le progrès technologique, la mise en place d'une société du savoir et l'émergence de nouvelles formes de travail sont des facteurs qui nécessitent, outre l'accroissement de la productivité et l'amélioration des compétences, de doter les cadres spécialisés de la haute qualification requise.

Notre pays a veillé à ce que les orientations de la prochaine décennie de développement prennent en considération ces défis afin d'atteindre des niveaux supérieurs de création d'emplois, de manière à atténuer le taux de chômage et à intégrer le plus grand nombre possible de demandeurs d'emploi au circuit économique.

La situation des travailleurs en Palestine et dans les autres territoires occupés, telle que présentée dans le rapport annuel du Directeur général, demeure une source de grande inquiétude et de préoccupation. En effet, le rapport met en relief la grande souffrance endurée par le peuple palestinien dans toutes ses catégories, ce qui est contraire aux droits fondamentaux les plus élémentaires de l'homme.

Nous souhaitons, dans ce contexte, que l'Organisation internationale du Travail ait un rôle plus important, notamment à travers la dynamisation du Fonds palestinien pour l'emploi et la protection sociale, en le dotant des moyens financiers nécessaires.

La Tunisie, comme a souligné à plusieurs occasions Son Excellence le Président de la République, exprime son attachement à la légitimité internationale et à la paix comme choix stratégique, et renouvelle son appel à la communauté internationale et à toutes les parties influentes, et, en premier lieu, au Comité du quartette afin qu'ils poursuivent leurs efforts en faveur de l'instauration d'une paix juste, durable et globale au Moyen-Orient pour permettre au peuple palestinien frère de recouvrer ses droits

nationaux légitimes et de fonder son état indépendant.

M^{me} BITOUGAT (*ministre du Travail et de l'Emploi, Gabon*)

Je constate que, de l'avis général et à en juger par les interventions précédentes, le rapport intitulé *Changements dans le monde du travail* interpelle à plus d'un titre. D'abord, en ce qu'il situe les perspectives de création d'emplois en général et surtout parce qu'il estime que plus de 400 millions d'emplois nouveaux seront créés au cours de ces dix prochaines années, notamment dans les pays en développement qui concentrent 80 pour cent de la main-d'œuvre mondiale pour se maintenir au niveau de croissance de la population active dans cette région du globe.

Ensuite parce qu'il relève, avec pertinence, bon nombre de défis tels que la pression croissante de l'exode rural qui est réellement d'actualité.

Aux flux migratoires s'ajoutent d'autres facteurs non moins importants, tels que la faiblesse des capacités de production et l'aggravation de la pauvreté dans certaines régions du monde, notamment en Afrique.

La conséquence logique, pensons-nous, je dirai même, partageons-nous avec bon nombre d'acteurs politiques et économiques, c'est qu'à l'optimisme des uns répond le pessimisme des autres. Nous devons donc agir ensemble; agir dans le monde qui se veut global et où il n'est point besoin d'être un expert avisé pour soutenir qu'il est plus qu'impérieux que des mécanismes de correction de gestion de l'économie mondiale soient recherchés, et surtout que les principes de justice sociale, d'équité et de solidarité à l'échelle du globe ne demeurent pas au stade d'intentions ou de simples slogans.

Faire du plein emploi et du travail décent un objectif fondamental des politiques nationales et internationales nous engage dans la bonne direction, et c'est là notre intérêt, en tout cas celui partagé par mon pays.

Comme je viens de le souligner, le Gabon est résolument engagé à intégrer l'objectif du travail décent au cœur de sa politique de l'emploi en tant que stratégie de développement et de réduction de la pauvreté.

C'est dans ce contexte, bien que n'étant pas éligible à l'initiative des PPTE, que le Gabon, à l'instar d'autres pays, qui connaît également les problèmes d'accroissement de la pauvreté, s'est doté d'un plan stratégique de croissance et de réduction de la pauvreté (DSCRCP). Ce plan vise à terme le plein emploi qui demeure un objectif majeur assigné au gouvernement par le Président de la République, Son Excellence El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba.

Pour atteindre cet objectif, certes ambitieux mais réalisable, nous entendons concrètement impliquer les partenaires sociaux, avec l'appui desquels nous avons élaboré aussi bien le DSCRCP que le plan national du suivi du Sommet de l'Union africaine sur l'emploi et la lutte contre la pauvreté.

Les conclusions du Sommet de l'Union africaine sur l'emploi et la lutte contre la pauvreté (auxquelles je faisais tantôt référence) restent dans ce contexte des actes de premier plan pour notre politique d'emploi et de réduction de la pauvreté.

Naturellement, ces efforts et stratégies nous commandent de nous tourner aussi vers la coopération internationale en général et vers les partenaires du développement en particulier.

Au sujet de la santé et la sécurité au travail, il est indéniable que les nouveaux instruments, s'ils sont adoptés et rapidement appliqués, permettront aux nombreux travailleurs exclus de toute protection d'être mieux pris en charge.

Evidemment, le Gabon y voit un motif d'encouragement dans le processus de restructuration en cours de son dispositif juridique et opérationnel.

Je ne voudrais pas terminer mon propos sans évoquer la question de l'inspection du travail et de l'administration du travail qui, dans un pays comme le mien, doivent être adaptées en raison des mutations rapides du monde du travail.

Mr. RYDER (*representative, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions*)

Congratulations to the Officers of the Conference on their election and also to the Director-General for his Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*. The Report is comprehensive, touching on the key issues facing all of us in the world of work and, if the Director-General is right when he says that it raises more questions than it provides answers, that is perhaps inevitable and in any case not cause for complaint because, and this is a key message of the Report, it is us, the ILO's constituents – governments, employers and trade unions – which have the capacity, opportunity and responsibility to work together to construct responses to those questions.

That is what we all need to be doing all of the time in our countries and internationally. The ILO of course provides an arena and support for those efforts, but the first responsibility for action lies with us, and the cost of inactivity – as the Report shows – is enormous and, for some, devastating. Record world unemployment, enduring mass poverty, growing inequality, totally unprotected work for the majority of the world's workforce engaged in the informal sector. Despite the ILO's increased prominence and focus in recent years, under the leadership of the Director-General, the evidence is that the world is not moving forward decisively in the execution of the ILO's historic mandate for social justice and decent work for all.

That the challenges ahead are formidable is incontestable, but equally to entertain the illusion that the ILO's mandate is unobtainable would be irresponsible and wrong. The drivers of change in the world of work identified by the Director-General are indeed powerful and complex, but they are the results of human action, not forces of nature and as such they are susceptible to human intervention and can be changed.

The first question is whether we are ready collectively to commit ourselves to work to direct the dynamics of the world of work towards the fulfilment of ILO goals. I think the answer should not be taken for granted. There are alternative projects and competing interests and they have their defenders. If the answer is yes, then we, together, face the other challenge of constructing and implementing action for change.

I think that it is here that the Report provides some important pointers as to how we must proceed, and I want to just pick out two, which seem particularly instructive, to serve as specific examples to make a more general point.

The first comes from what is said about pension reforms. The Director-General is right to recall that, from the outset, the ILO has pointed out the dangers

of the trend towards privately funded pension schemes, and to point out also that those warnings are now being borne out by events. The point here is that the ILO had an important insight into a key policy issue. It should have been listened to but it was not, or not enough, and the lesson is that the ILO, whilst not having a vocation to stand out against prevailing policy orthodoxies, must sometimes do so. Our societies will benefit from our Organization's determined embrace of enduring principles, even at the price of being ruled out of touch or outdated by those with more flexible objectives and horizons. It is, I believe, a lesson with particular resonance in current discussion of the governance of globalization, of international labour standards, and of labour market reform.

It is the Report's particularly insightful treatment of trends in labour legislation which provides the second pointer, and that is that the key debate on reconciling flexibility and security at work does not need to generate outcomes somewhere along some unilinear spectrum between total freedom to hire and fire at one extreme, with employers as imagined winners, and total job security at the other, with trade unions and their members supposedly emerging triumphant. Rather, through dialogue and bargaining, with the State picking up the role that it must – the quintessential added value of ILO process – results can be had which, if it is too trite to call them win-win outcomes, can at least get us out of the impasse of zero-sum games.

I should add that the Director-General has once again reported objectively and within the ILO's mandate on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. For our part, in the ICFTU we continue in our efforts with our affiliates in Palestine, the GPFTU, and in Israel, the Histadrut, to bring about positive change to the benefit of all workers. Never have those efforts been more important than they are today.

Let me finish by saying that I fear that I misled last year's session of the Conference, inadvertently I assure you, when I suggested that that would be the last time that a secretary from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) would speak to the Conference. Well, here we are again! But this year I can repeat the same statements without incurring the risk of misleading you a second time, which might look careless.

On the last day of October this year, the 19th and last ICFTU Congress will meet to dissolve our Confederation. The following day, our affiliates will meet with those of the World Confederation of Labour and with non-affiliated national centres who share our goals, our principles, our vision, to found a new united international, bringing together all of the forces of the world's independent and democratic trade union movement. We have the ambition to make it a powerful instrument in the hands of working people everywhere, a new international for a new trade union internationalism.

Part of that ambition is to be a committed and effective actor here in the ILO, a partner to our employer and government counterparts. This trade union rebirth comes at the moment when, as the Director-General says, the ILO is readying itself for its 90th anniversary, and it is fitting, I believe, that the last word of an ICFTU general secretary to the International Labour Conference should be to express our confidence in, and our commitment to, this Organization and its mission, which we make our own

and which we are ready to continue fighting for in the years ahead.

Original Arabic: Ms. ABDEL HADY (Minister of Manpower and Migration, Egypt)

This session of the Conference comes at a time when we witness many developments and changes in the international arena that directly affect the world of work.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Director-General for his short, yet successful visit to Egypt, which has had a positive impact on the social partners. I further wish to thank him for his moral and technical support and for giving us the opportunity today, in the framework of our debate on his excellent Report entitled *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, to examine the important work accomplished and the objectives attained.

Concerning the decisions adopted by the International Conference during the last two sessions, I would like to highlight several issues.

Firstly, the capacity of the Organization to meet its objectives and fulfil its functions effectively is largely linked to the scope, diversity and effectiveness of its technical cooperation programmes, which seek to strengthen developing countries' capacity to achieve sustainable development. This requires coordination between the International Labour Organization and the other United Nations agencies concerned, especially UNDP, implementing the commitments contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action of the 1995 Social Summit. The aim is to work towards a global vision of development, in cooperation with the various international bodies, in order to create employment and improve working conditions. All of this can only be achieved through of successful policies aimed at reducing poverty and creating new jobs in decent working conditions.

Secondly, in order to expand and improve technical cooperation activities and programmes, a periodic assessment of the Organization's active partnership policy is crucial. Furthermore, multidisciplinary teams must be provided assistance and specialized experts. This would be an effective tool to bring together different viewpoints, exchange information and establish a constructive dialogue between the Organization and the social partners, in order to identify the precise needs of States and provide them with the requisite support.

Thirdly, the International Labour Organization must allocate funds from its regular budget and other sources to respond to the needs of member States, especially developing countries, with regard to human resource development and vocational training. This is a key factor of social and economic development, in particular in African countries, in the light of rising poverty and decreasing living standards.

Fourthly, the adoption of a global employment strategy by the Organization is important and necessary to respond to the concerns of both developing countries and the international community as a whole. Meeting the goal of decent work is crucial. However, striking a balance between economic and trade liberalization promoted by technologically advanced countries, on the one hand, and social stability and social guarantees, the most important of which the employment generation, on the other, is not always easy. In the light of these challenges, decent work as a global goal can only be achieved

by coordinating efforts to create an international economic enabling environment and employment and poverty reduction strategies.

Egypt endeavours to develop a long-term strategy, taking account of this century's changes and developments, in the framework of a policy of economic reform and social development that focuses, inter alia, on fighting unemployment and formulating legal provisions to facilitate the transition to a market economy. In this context, emphasis is placed on the need for social protection for workers, especially those in informal sector employment.

Egypt has also fostered a favourable environment for investment with a view to creating additional jobs for young persons. In this connection, we are proud to announce that Egypt is an active member of the Youth Employment Network; a relevant national strategy is currently being formulated in cooperation with the ILO and a large number of international and national bodies concerned.

The Report refers to the efforts made to enhance social dialogue and to strengthen the principle of tripartism.

In Egypt, we have adopted social dialogue as a method of improving relations between the social partners. This is best demonstrated by the "Declaration of partners in work", published in Egypt at the end of last April under the aegis of the President of the Council of Ministers and with the participation of the Ministers of Manpower and Emigration, of Trade and Industry and of Investment, not to mention the representatives of the Federation of Egyptian Industries, the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce and the Confederation of Egyptian Workers' Unions. Egypt has a particular interest in the situation of women. We consider that they have an important role to play in the development process and that there is a need for them to participate in the various fields of work. The national Constitution and laws therefore recognize their right to equal opportunities, free of any distinction or discrimination, except that based on competence. Policies and programmes have been established which take account of the role of women and ensure that they participate in the development of society in general in an effective and efficient manner. With regard to the fight against child labour, we should like to highlight the Declaration on the Strategy for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and the National Campaign against Child Labour, which was launched in January 2006 under the slogan "Red Card to Child Labour", at the time when Egypt was hosting the Africa Cup of Nations. This campaign was actively backed by the wife of the President of the Republic, in collaboration with the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood and the ILO Subregional Office for North Africa in Cairo. We would like to highlight the significant contribution of the wife of the President of the Republic in the fight against child labour at an international level, a contribution which was warmly welcomed throughout the world.

I should like to thank the International Labour Office for the follow-up to the decisions of the International Labour Conferences of 1974 and 1980 with regard to the dispatch of a mission to assess the situation in the occupied Arab territories. This mission visited the occupied territories in Palestine and the Golan during the period between 25 March and 5 April 2006.

The Report submitted by this mission confirmed that the economic and social situation of workers and their families in the occupied Palestinian territories has indeed deteriorated in the wake of the policies implemented by Israel with regard to the Palestinian people. The aim of these policies is to isolate, starve and oppress the Palestinians. The Report also confirms the urgent need for the international community to assume its responsibilities in order to put an end to this catastrophic situation and to the continued violation of the most fundamental and basic rights which are guaranteed to all peoples.

In this respect, we call on the International Labour Organization and all the specialized agencies to redouble their efforts regarding all measures aimed at improving the difficult and inhumane situation of the Palestinian workers and to apply the resolutions of the international legality. We also call on the Organization, taking account of the principles and objectives of its Constitution, to intensify its contacts with the Palestinian Authority and the social partners in the occupied Palestinian territories; to increase its support for the broader technical cooperation programme by helping the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection to organize a meeting of donor countries as soon as possible, in order to guarantee the necessary financial assistance for the Fund; to support and enhance the capacities of the social partners and to focus on development projects concerning vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, children and women, with the aim of achieving social justice and participating in the re-launching of peace efforts in the region.

Finally, we call on the Organization to establish a body in the form of a working group which will be responsible for examining the recommendations and conclusions of the mission sent to the occupied Arab territories every year by the Director-General. This group's proposals would be submitted to the Conference for discussion, prior to the adoption of programmes promoting economic and social growth for the Palestinian people.

In conclusion, I should like to point out the reference in the Report on the visit of the high-level mission to the difficult living conditions endured by the Arab populations in the occupied Golan and to the continued discrimination against them in all fields. We call on the Organization and the member States to assume their responsibilities in this regard.

Original Chinese: Mr. XU (Worker, China)

Focusing on the changes in the world of work, the Director-General has submitted to the Conference an informative Report, which provides a good basis for our discussions. As the Report rightly points out, increased economic globalization has brought about unprecedented transformations in labour relations in all countries. This is a grave challenge that all governments, social partners and the ILO must face up to.

Since the introduction of reforms and a policy opening up, China has enjoyed economic growth, social stability and the constant improvement of people's lives. Recently, China put forward the people-centred concept of scientific development and set the strategic goal of building a harmonious society, thus drawing a blueprint for all-round progress for the country in the new century. In the meantime, there has been growing diversity in socio-economic compositions, organizational forms, employment patterns, interest relations and distribution modes.

Economic and labour relations have become increasingly complex. New changes have also taken place in the composition of the workforce. Consequently, the Chinese trade unions have taken on an ever-arduous task in defending the workers' legitimate rights and interests. In this context, the Chinese trade unions have defined "Organizing for better protection" as their work principle. Consequently, trade unions have intensified their organizing efforts, sparing no efforts to improve trade union mechanisms for protection of the workers and adopting practical and effective measures to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of workers, including rural migrant workers. They have also worked constantly to increase union density and union cohesiveness, so as to better coordinate labour relations and mobilize the broad masses of workers to play a role as the main force in building their country into a well-off and harmonious society.

Against the backdrop of the changing world of labour, working people across the world are faced with both opportunities and challenges. Only by keeping up with the times, shall we be in a better position to take advantage while avoiding disadvantages and effectively protecting workers. To this end, we would like to make the following comments.

In the context of a changing world of labour, employment promotion and poverty elimination remain the primary concerns of working people from various countries, especially the developing countries. As economic globalization expands constantly, the developed countries should adopt a more positive attitude in helping the developing ones to shake off poverty and create job opportunities, thus contributing towards the harmonious development of the world of work.

Peace and development constitute a prerequisite for the effective protection of workers' rights and interests. While promoting economic growth, governments and employers of all countries should pay adequate attention to the issue of the distribution of the fruits of economic development among the vulnerable groups, in order to achieve social fairness and justice. Trade unions in various countries should get actively involved in the process of economic development and make sure that, throughout the entire process, the rights and interests of workers all over the world, especially those in the developing world, are safeguarded in an effective manner.

Trade unions from different countries should make concerted efforts to facilitate a harmonious development of the international trade union movement. The world is diverse and colourful; national conditions vary from country to country and trade unions differ in terms of organizational and operational modes. Therefore, all trade unions should choose their own path towards development, according to the realities and aspirations of workers in their country, so as to achieve a "win-win situation" for all workers in the world.

Only in this way will the international trade union movement emerge as a powerful and dynamic force in pushing changes in the world of work.

In the face of a changing world of work, the ILO, as the common organization of the working people across the world, may assume a greater role. The ILO should better reflect the diversity of the present world of work. It must show more concern for the

vital interests of workers, particularly those from the developing countries, as well as allowing workers from the developing countries a role in international labour standard-setting activities and pushing forward the democratization process in a constant manner.

Peace, development and cooperation are the themes of the times. In the history of the world of work, the working people throughout the world have never been so closely connected as today. Shared goals tie us together and common challenges require common responses. Let all workers of the world transcend ideological differences, treat each other respectfully and, as equals, pursue mutual gains and peaceful coexistence and work hand-in-hand toward a just and harmonious world of work.

Mr. KARA (*Worker, Israel*)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General for his Report and to talk about some of the items he dealt with. The importance of the fourth and fifth items of this year's session of the international Conference cannot be exaggerated. Promotion of occupational safety and health and employment relations are of the highest importance, and the Histadrut, as well as other unions in Israel, support and encourage any initiative aimed at promoting and particularly ensuring enforcement of these two important issues related to the working populations, both employers and employees.

A new, atypical form of employment, increasing international competition, labour migration, outsourcing, economic dominance of multinational corporations, institutional restructuring, decrease of the impact of the welfare state and many other elements resulting from the accelerated rhythm of globalization cause the two items to be more complex to deal with.

The two proposed texts contain very important principles and means designed to be implemented in all the member States. Nevertheless, implementation and enforcement of these principles and rules are the main issues.

In my country, we have advanced and detailed legislation concerning employment relations and occupational safety and health. Above all, we have two basic laws, entitled "Human Dignity and Liberty" and "Freedom of Occupation", that have a direct influence on the items we are dealing with. Other laws, such as employment service, foreign workers, employment of employees by manpower contractors, employment of women, wage protection, male and female workers, work safety, and labour inspection are of high regulatory importance.

However, the implementation and enforcement of these laws make up an Achilles heel. The principles are good and the means relevant but when it comes to implementation, particularly in these times of a changing world of work, things become more entwined and leave much to be desired.

The world is moving more and more towards an economic direction to the disadvantage of social considerations. The labour market is becoming more and more an employers' market, and in many cases labour is paying a high price.

Consequently, all the principles and means of the two proposed texts pertaining to implementation and enforcement should be given overriding attention.

We do understand and agree that this is mainly the Government's responsibility. On the other hand, the contribution of the social partners can help very much in achieving the goal. Social dialogue and tripartite efforts must be made. Workers' unions and employers' associations can be instrumental in enforcing the necessary steps, and we warmly recommend considering ways of encouraging these cooperation avenues.

In this regard, I want to emphasize that for many years cooperation has existed in the Israeli economy, which was based on the principles of accordance between the social partners.

The Histadrut Secretary General, Mr. Ofer Aini, believes that the social partners have an interest in cooperating, which would help the economy to recover and accelerate growth. For the time being, we are witnessing high cooperation between workers' organizations and employers' organizations.

I also want to emphasize that the Histadrut supports the peace process and wishes to maintain the ongoing relations with Palestinian trade unions. The Histadrut is aware of the strong connection that exists between the Israeli and the Palestinian economies and hopes that the upcoming bilateral meetings of our respective leaders will promote the prompt resumption of the peace process.

The PRESIDENT

The time is now fast approaching for us to listen to the presidential address by Her Excellency Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Consequently, I hereby declare that the sixth sitting of this session of the International Labour Conference closed.

(The Conference adjourned at 11.50 a.m.)

(La séance est levée à 11 h 50.)

(Se levanta la sesión a las 11 h.50.)

Eighth sitting

Wednesday, 7 June 2006 – 12.50 p.m.

President: Mr. Sajda

RATIFICATION BY LIBERIA OF THE MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION, 2006

RATIFICATION PAR LE LIBÉRIA DE LA CONVENTION DU TRAVAIL MARITIME, 2006

RATIFICACIÓN POR LIBERIA DEL CONVENIO SOBRE EL TRABAJO MARÍTIMO, 2006

The PRESIDENT

I now declare the eighth sitting of this session of the International Labour Conference open, and I give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference to make an announcement.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

I am pleased to announce that the ratification by Liberia of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 has been registered on 7 June 2006. This represents the first ratification of this historic Convention. Thank you.

Original anglais: Le GREFFIER de la CONFÉRENCE

J'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer que la ratification par le Libéria de la convention du travail maritime, 2006, a été enregistrée le 7 juin 2006. Il s'agit de la première ratification de cette convention historique.

Original inglés: El SECRETARIO DE LA MESA DE LA CONFERENCIA

Gracias señor Presidente. Me complace comunicarle que la ratificación por Liberia del Convenio sobre el trabajo marítimo, 2006 ha quedado registrada el día 7 de junio de 2006. Es ésta la primera ratificación de este convenio histórico.

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

RAPPORTS DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION ET DU DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL: DISCUSSION (SUITE)

DISCUSIÓN DEL INFORME DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN Y DE LA MEMORIA Y LOS INFORMES DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL: DISCUSIÓN (CONT.)

The PRESIDENT

We shall now resume our general discussion of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

Original Russian: Mr. EREMEEV (*Employer, Russian Federation*)

The Director-General's Report, *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, which has been prepared for this session of the Conference, is the third in a series of such documents. It is an excellent illustration of how the values and principles of the ILO, as reflected in international labour standards and in tripartism, can be implemented in practice in the day-to-day lives of ordinary people – men and women, adults and children, employers and workers worldwide. This document can, I think, be regarded

as a "road map" on the road towards the achievement of decent work.

We are pleased to note that, despite various objective difficulties, including difficulties of a financial and a personal nature, the cooperation between the Russian social partners and the ILO is continuing to develop. Many parameters for that cooperation are reflected in the Report. The forthcoming signing this week of a cooperation programme for 2006-09 will be a guarantee for the further enhancement of sound partnership between the Russian Federation and the ILO.

We share the concern expressed by the Director-General at the level of funding available for ILO activities in recent years. It is true that money is never abundant, particularly when we are talking about tackling such global problems as combating poverty, job creation, training, promoting rights at the workplace, effective social protection, gender equality, labour migration, and so on.

As a rule, when people have to face and overcome problems in their lives, they normally put aside everything that is of lesser importance so as to bring their abilities and their competitive advantages to bear on tackling the most critical issues. That principle applies equally to our Organization, the ILO, whose unique mandate is based on the need to tackle problems in the world of work and the possibility of doing so. We believe that if we focus accurately and steadfastly on solving these priority problems which are critical to the ILO, and avoid wasting our financial and analytical resources on other issues which may in their own way be no less important, then we will succeed in achieving more with less.

In our opinion, an appropriate response to the funding problem could also lie in enhancing the effectiveness of project preparation and implementation, by improving the Office's cooperation with the tripartite partners, really taking into account their point of view and adopting a more focused approach to project planning and implementation. Specifically, we propose the following steps. Firstly, ensure that reports reflect an assessment of project implementation not only by the Office but also by the tripartite partners; and adopt a feedback mechanism which would enhance the objectiveness of such documents and the effectiveness of the action undertaken by the ILO. Secondly, we should more clearly reflect in reports on results the direct input of the Office in terms of project planning and achieving specific outcomes. Thirdly, we should ensure that the opinion of tripartite partners is taken into account when projects are planned and drawn up.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Director-General of the ILO for the very interesting Report he had produced on *Changing patterns in the world of work*. We particularly appreciate the contribution the ILO has made to analysing problems in the world of work related to globalization. No one can remain indifferent to the fact that, despite the efforts that have been made, the official worldwide level of unemployment, especially among young people, was considerably higher in 2005 than it had been ten years before. The problem of international labour migration is becoming more acute. We still have unacceptable numbers of people who earn barely enough to survive. For too many people the aim of achieving decent work is still as far away as it seemed to be ten years ago.

There is no doubt that in the conditions of globalization many problems affecting the labour market are becoming more complex. The ILO, as has rightly been mentioned in the Report, cannot remain a neutral observer. However, it should not and cannot try to tackle all the problems. Whatever the impact of globalization on various aspects of human life, the emerging problems have to be dealt with, first and foremost, at the national level. We expect that the ILO will increase its activity in the area of its competence at the national level.

Confidence in the ILO by the tripartite partners and their need for the ILO will depend to a great extent on how effective the Organization is in tackling practical problems. We believe that the ILO should concentrate, above all, on job creation through incentives and support for business, training and the human resources development.

As to the more general problems of globalization, these should be dealt with by joint efforts made by all the competent international organizations, and we welcome the ILO's activity on developing partnerships with these organizations.

Ms. KNUSSERT (*Worker, Denmark*)

When preparing for the International Labour Conference, especially when going through the proposals for the committee work, it quickly becomes clear that proposed Conventions and Recommendations were not born yesterday.

Getting an issue included as part of the agenda of the International Labour Conference is often a process that takes several years. If I were to characterize the ILO in only a few words, they would be that it is "slow but reliable". This is meant as a positive characteristic. The decision process is time-consuming, but experiences confirm that we can count on the ILO to follow up on its decisions. The ILO is reliable.

The country that I come from is one of the richest countries in the world. At the moment, we practically have full employment in Denmark. We have a long tradition of democracy, and, if I may add, the Danish trade union movement has contributed considerably to this positive development. The organization I represent has always believed in the relevance of the ILO. We believe in the necessity of international cooperation that includes industrialized and developing countries. We consider the ILO as an important platform for the trade union movement all over the world.

The annual labour Conference is absolutely necessary in order to develop the ILO's fields of activity and to ensure that the Organization has the adequate political support. However, the penetrating

power of the ILO is entirely dependent on member countries implementing ILO initiatives at the national level.

I will briefly point to some examples of how the Danish trade union movement makes use of the ILO's work. We have only used the ILO system for handling complaints on a few occasions when the Danish Government has introduced limitations to our right to negotiation and freedom of association. We have exercised our right to complain to protect our interests as a trade union movement. Meanwhile, we also use the system to demonstrate to the ILO that we respect the Conventions adopted by the majority of ILO member countries.

Unfortunately, the trade union movement and the Danish Government have very different views on whether or not a government is under an obligation to observe the decisions taken in, amongst others, the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association and the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations. The Danish Government interprets the obligations and decisions of the ILO's system for handling complaints rather freely.

The most grave example of this is probably the case of Danish International Register of Shipping (DIS), according to which foreign seafarers working on board Danish ships cannot be covered by Danish collective agreements.

The ILO has clearly called attention to the violation of ILO Conventions Nos. 87 and 98. In spite of the ILO's decisions and objections from the Danish trade union movement, the differential treatment continues. The European Commission has questioned whether the DIS Act is in accordance with European Union rules on equal treatment. Among other things, the problem has been accentuated in cases where Polish seafarers have been working on board Danish ships.

The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work plays an important role in the Danish trade union movement. Among other things, we use this ILO Declaration in connection with the relocation of Danish companies. As a minimum, these companies should respect the ILO Declaration when moving their company to another country.

A number of Danish multinationals have acceded to the United Nations Global Compact. This is a positive development. However, as it turns out, some of these companies do not believe that they are under any obligations to respect fundamental workers' rights.

The ILO Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94), plays an increasingly important role in Denmark in connection with public procurement. It requires that subcontractors observe the ILO's Conventions concerning freedom of association and the right to negotiate.

In connection with Danish development policy, it looks as if the Danish Government accepts the setting up of terms and conditions that are in accordance with the ILO Declaration. This is definitely progress in the area of Danish development policy.

As our Minister for Employment told you yesterday, the Danish Government set up a Globalisation Council, and we were represented at the highest level.

The conclusions of the Globalisation Council contained many necessary and sensible proposals. We in the trade union movement had expected a much clearer intention to develop international coopera-

tion. Workers' rights are mentioned, but the Government's proposal does not mention the ILO's globalization proposal with one single word.

Small countries are dependent on widely ramified international cooperation. This is also the case for Denmark.

The Danish Government expresses its hope that Denmark will be a world champion when it comes to research, innovation, training and a number of other areas.

When it comes to development aid, the Danish official policy is not nearly as ambitious. From having been among the leading countries in the world in terms of development aid, and having been close to the one per cent aim, the Danish Government is now content to drop to fifth or sixth place. The ILO has also felt this fast and surprising change in Danish development policy as the grants for the ILO were strongly reduced in 2002 and 2003.

In my view, the ILO's decent work programme is particularly successful. It is very positive to note that the impact of this programme has been visible in a United Nations context. Many industrialized countries are using – or plan to use – the decent work concept in their own development programmes.

On 24 May, the European Commission published its communication: *Commission promotes decent work in the world to fight poverty and promote fair globalisation*. The timing is almost perfect and it clearly demonstrates that the ILO plays an important role – both regionally and internationally – when it comes to promoting awareness of social and democratic values.

Mr. VERSTRAETEN (*representative, Social Alert*)

Social Alert International is a coalition of organizations active in the field of human and workers' rights. Our focus has always been on ensuring respect, protection and fulfilment of economic, social and cultural rights.

For a number of years now, we have been campaigning for, and advocating the cause of, informal economy workers. In particular, for their access to social protection. During the last World Social Forum in 2006 we adopted the Bamako Declaration, which urges all stakeholders at the national, regional and international level to extend social protection to those working in the informal economy.

It is encouraging for us to see that the ILO takes the issue of the informal economy so seriously. In 1991, the 78th Session of the International Labour Conference discussed the dilemma of the informal sector.

In 2002, the 90th Session of the International Labour Conference held a general discussion on decent work and the informal economy. Today, again, laid in front of us, is the Report of the Director-General, Report I(C), *Changing patterns in the world of work*.

Having clearly analysed this Report, we agree with many elements that the Director-General has enumerated in this Report. We agree with the basic underlying assumption that work is central to our

lives. Work does indeed constitute a source of dignity, fulfilment and personal development. Unfortunately, this does not hold true for the growing number of people working in the informal economy, who already represent more than half of the global labour force. The dignity of their work is seriously devalued.

It is true that the phenomenon of the informal economy is quite complex. It encompasses a diverse group of workers and enterprises, and covers many different sectors and occupations. There is also a wide range of reasons to explain why people end up in the informal economy.

However, informal economy workers share one common characteristic and that is that they are not recognized or protected, under the legal and regulatory framework. That lack of recognition has several consequences. The most serious one being that these workers are vulnerable, as they enjoy no legal or social protection and they are unable to assert their rights.

But there is more, businesses will also suffer because the use of informal work distorts competition on the market. Finally, governments are affected as non-compliance with laws leads to a drop in tax revenues and the erosion of social security schemes.

Therefore, the Report, I think, rightly indicates that breaking out of informality is the single biggest challenge for labour market governments. This challenge is not just a challenge for the workers in the informal economy, it is a challenge for all of us, governments, employers and workers.

We could add that it is also one of the most urgent challenges for labour market governance. Just by having a look at the Conference agenda, it becomes clear how urgently an integrated approach must be developed and implemented. For example, the discussion on the employment relationship, which I followed, clearly shows that inadequate criteria to establish the existence of an employment relationship have led to the informalization of work.

Apart from that, the discussion concerning the general survey on labour inspection revealed that labour inspectorates could stop the growth of the informal economy by preventing and redressing non-compliance with relevant laws and regulations. These few examples show how issues in the world of work have a significant impact on the informal economy and its workers as well.

I therefore call upon all the constituents of the ILO to tackle the decent work deficit of the informal economy. If our work, if your work, at the ILO is to be representative, we must not forget about the needs and interests of this very large segment of the global labour force. I sincerely hope that the constituents will consider this point.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.15 p.m.)

(La séance est levée à 13 h 15.)

(Se levanta la sesión a las 13 h.15.)

Ninth sitting

Wednesday, 7 June 2006, 3.20 p.m.

President: Mr. de Regil

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

RAPPORTS DU PRÉSIDENT DU CONSEIL D'ADMINISTRATION ET DU DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL: DISCUSSION (*SUITE*)

DISCUSIÓN DEL INFORME DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN Y DE LA MEMORIA Y LOS INFORMES DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL (*CONT.*)

Mr. SORIANO (*Employer, Philippines*)

On behalf of Philippine employers, we commend the Director-General for his comprehensive Report on the ILO programme implementation 2004-05 in the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda against the indicators, targets and budget approved by the Governing Body. In effect, this Report concludes the period of consolidation of the Strategic Policy Framework for 2002-05 of the Decent Work Agenda.

Decent work has increasingly underpinned the Millennium Development Goals of the international community. Thus, the World Summit of the United Nations resolved in September 2005 to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of national and international policies.

Even more important, the greater part of the ILO programme, as indicated in the Report, is carried out in countries, in close collaboration with governments and representative organizations of employers and workers.

One of the important performance indicators measured by the ILO was the rate of ratification of the eight fundamental Conventions. According to the Report, the 2004-05 biennium continued with a strong rate of ratification. Two-thirds of member States (166 out of 178 member States) have now ratified all eight fundamental Conventions, and I am proud to say the Philippines is one of these countries. All of these Conventions ratified by my country are not only fully embedded in laws and regulations but are also being actively translated into the social development programme of the country to the extent that resources would allow.

I am also pleased to report that in the Philippines we have been undertaking the same process of consolidation of our first National Action Plan for Decent Work, which was launched with ILO assistance in May 2002 by the tripartite partners. There is consensus among the tripartite partners that, as a result of their individual and collective effort, deficits in the areas of labour standards, employment, social protection and social dialogue within the context and realities of the labour market are progressively being addressed.

The respective contributions of government, the employers and the workers in reducing the decent work deficits are too many to enumerate here, but what we can say is that the individual and collective

actions of the tripartite partners are transforming the strategies of the National Action Plan for Decent Work into a growing reality that will benefit the entire nation. In fact, it bears stress that decent work has now become a guiding principle in the formulation of the country's development agenda.

Nevertheless, these deficits continue to challenge government, employers and workers, particularly in the area of employment generation and immediate reform of an over-regulated labour market. One of the most important components of the Second Philippine National Action Plan for Decent Work for the period 2005-07 is a common and integrated agenda to address the most serious deficit of decent work; chronic unemployment and the inability of the economy to create enough jobs for our burgeoning labour force. The unemployment problem is particularly critical among the youth aged 15 to 24 years where unemployment for the past seven years after the Asian financial crisis in 1997 and 1998 has remained at a high of more than 22 per cent. Thus, the tripartite partners, with ILO assistance, have placed youth unemployment at the top of their agenda for 2005 to 2007.

The ILO will conduct this year an independent evaluation of its programme on decent work in the Philippines covering the period from 2000 through 2005. Over the past six years, the ILO has forked out over \$10 million in extra-budgetary resources for the Philippines to support interventions to: protect domestic workers; eliminate child labour within targeted sectors and a comprehensive time-bound programme to address its worst forms; initiatives to enhance infrastructure linked to rural productivity; actions to promote gender equality; and support for mainstreaming decent work at local level and indigenous people's rights. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of progress made and lessons learned to inform further strategy development in the Philippines beginning in 2006. The evaluation will consider areas in which the ILO's collaboration has been more or less effective in the context of the national decent work effort, to inform on what should be pursued in the future and where improvements can be made.

But what should not go unnoticed, and that which deserves due recognition is that the social partners, particularly workers and employers, heretofore traditional adversaries, have found common cause in promoting and implementing the decent work action plan and this has moved them towards such close

cooperation and collective action as never experienced in the dynamics of tripartism.

Directly involved in overseeing programme design and implementation is a high-level tripartite technical working group on decent work where no less than Director Linda Wirth of the ILO Subregional Office in Manila is a member along with key ILO officers involved in the Decent Work Agenda.

Finally, I am pleased to say that, as an active partner in the implementation of the National Action Plan for Decent Work, the Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), on behalf of Philippine employers, continues to prioritize its efforts towards the reduction of the country's major decent work deficit, that is unemployment, which is the basic cause of poverty in the Philippines. Through continuous advocacy and appropriate projects and programmes, we have been mobilizing employers and the business community in establishing stronger linkages with micro and small and medium-sized enterprises, which constitute the bulk of our economic units, not only in the formal sector, but also in the informal sector. Hand-in-hand with these activities, we are at the forefront of the advocacy for the protection of workers' rights through corporate social responsibility.

We hope that the success of ECOP in these endeavours, however modest can serve as further attestation of the intrinsic validity of the strategic objectives of decent work.

Original Russian: Mr. GRYSCHENKO (Employer, Ukraine)

It is a great honour for the Ukrainian employers to take part in the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference, to welcome its participants and organizers and to note that the annual Conference is an event of signal importance for the whole international community.

I would like to express particular personal appreciation to Mr. Somavia and the International Labour Office for their active cooperation with and support to Ukraine, as well as the responsibility they have taken on in the process of integrating the transition countries into the world economic system.

The Director-General's Report fully reflects the fundamental processes taking place in the world of work and enables us to track the trends in the work of the ILO as it pursues its programme objectives.

One of the most important factors affecting the socio-economic policies of the member countries of the ILO is globalization. Today, we in Ukraine are concerned that the process of globalization may have negative implications for the country. Studies show that in the process of globalization, it is the interests of the developed countries that are mainly taken into account, and they are given priority in the development of the world economy. Yet, building open and free markets requires creating the conditions and opportunities for national economies to reap the benefits of these global processes.

Transition economies see the advantages of globalization in its potential for creating decent working conditions and increasing employment by stepping up the transfer of investment, technology and know-how in all spheres of economic activity.

In the process of Ukraine's integration into the global economy, the national priorities are as follows: energizing economic processes in the country; creating decent conditions of work; and establishing flexible guarantees in regard to employment

through the development and institutionalization of social dialogue.

Ukrainian employers share the view expressed by Mr. Juan Somavia at the World Economic Forum in Davos about the existence of an unprecedented global jobs crisis. This crisis is causing growing alarm, not only because of its impact on economic development, but also because of the threat it poses to democracy. The "opportunity gap" has a very negative impact on people's lives, depriving them of decent earnings, a sense of self-worth and family stability, all of which ultimately destabilizes the real economy.

We fully support the ILO's proposals aimed at overcoming this crisis.

The time has come today to return to the commitments made by the international community in regard to promoting social integration. This is the only way of overcoming the global employment crisis.

To do so, it is critical for governments and workers' and employers' organizations to understand their role. The social partners must realize that the problem of unemployment can only be overcome in conditions of economic growth, which, in turn, is only possible if there is active cooperation between governments and the social partners.

We propose that global international organizations should recognize the exclusive and consolidating role played by the ILO in global economic, social and labour processes and should confer on the ILO the right to manage globalization processes. We invite the distinguished delegates to this Conference to support this proposal.

As concerns child labour, as described in the Director-General's Global Report, we have the following comments.

The Ukrainian employers' organizations have supported the national programme for the prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, but, in our view, there is a need for the social partners and governments to increase their efforts to establish an effective system of state monitoring of the informal sector, which is where the worst forms of child labour are usually to be found.

We should also note the positive aspect of ILO technical cooperation, consisting in the effective utilization of donor contributions. We consider it necessary to continue such cooperation, in the first instance, with developing economies. What is certain, taking Ukraine as an example, is that the outcome of ILO projects, such as the technical cooperation programme on decent work in Ukraine, enables us rapidly to adapt world best practice.

In conclusion, I would draw your attention to the fact that, from the standpoint of the Ukrainian employers' organizations, ILO technical cooperation aimed at the development of social dialogue needs to be strengthened because, in countries which until recently were still living under a totalitarian communist regime, governments all too frequently still fail to understand the role of social dialogue in development.

Original Hungarian: Mr. WITTICH (Worker, Hungary)

The Report of the Director-General on the period 2004-05 gives an account of steps taken in order to make the activities of the Organization more effective. The efforts to spread the concept of decent work and have it applied in as many countries as possible are praiseworthy. The UN Millennium De-

velopment Goals, the four strategic objectives of the Decent Work Agenda and the tasks relating to the social dimension of globalization provide an adequate framework for creating a fairer and more humane world. In this there is need for to better improve the coordination of the activities of international organizations and to strengthen the ILO's position.

It is important that steps are being taken towards the effective exploitation of available resources; however, they should not endanger the promotion of meaningful social partnership. It is only with cooperation based on partnership that the challenges before us can be faced, which further enhances the ILO's role.

We think it is important that the ILO's standard-setting activity should be given appropriate emphasis in the future as well. The Organization must continue to act as a global advocate for enforcing fundamental labour standards according to the original working principle of the Committee on Freedom of Association, avoiding the risk of becoming a victim of political considerations.

The Strategic Policy Framework discussed in the Report, the priorities set out by the European Regional Conference, have lost none of their validity. In Hungary, we have much reason to stand up for workers' rights to decent employment and income, to decent working and living conditions as well. We live in a country where ratification of fundamental international labour standards and their transposition into Hungarian legislation has long been completed. It is not the written law, but the everyday practice that gives rise to problems. The number of violations of the rights of association and collective bargaining has not decreased. Quite a few employers take advantage of workers' defencelessness. We believe that this is unacceptable, even detrimental to the development of a competitive economy and a society based on cooperation. If the economy and society are to be based on solidarity, no infringement of lawful rights or selfish utilitarianism can be tolerated.

To take steps against unlawful behaviour of employers is not only the task of trade unions. In addition to legislating in a spirit of tripartite cooperation, if compliance is not voluntary, enforcement of the law is government responsibility.

It is important in that context for the ILO to devote special attention, in its technical cooperation programmes, to resolving problems and eliminating anomalies related to employment relationships.

We support the adoption by the Conference of the draft Convention and Recommendation entitled "Promotional framework for occupational safety and health". The Hungarian trade unions urge that the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health at Work Convention adopted by the 2002 International Labour Conference should be ratified by Hungary, which would contribute to reducing health impairments at work and the related "social costs", thus released could serve progress.

Finally, let me express our thanks for the support the Budapest Regional Office provides for the Hungarian social partners. This is something we hope to receive in the future as well.

Original Russian: Mr. VAZIROV (Government, Tajikistan)

Allow me to express sincere gratitude to the organizers of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference for giving us all, and my dele-

gation in particular, the opportunity to take part in it and to create favourable conditions for its success.

The agenda of this Conference contains some very topical items. The tripartite delegation of my country shares the views and supports the strategy outlined by the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia. We continue to be committed to the standards and principles of the ILO and in our state policy we give all due attention to them.

Tajikistan is successfully implementing policies in all areas of labour policy, striving to secure decent work for all, and has a number of practical programmes to raise living standards in the country. Thanks to these programmes, we have managed to reduce poverty by 22 per cent in recent years, and concrete measures have been taken to formulate a national development strategy in the country. We are successfully pursuing reforms in the areas of legislation and administration. Priority is being given to securing the right to social protection, employment and freedom of association, to the development of social partnership and to occupational safety and health, as well as to securing pensions for our workers and providing social assistance.

It should be noted that, in these achievements, a considerable role has been played by the ILO, and it is with the assistance of the ILO that we have created an effective mechanism for social partnership. We have also been helped by the ILO in tackling all forms of discrimination, as well as in creating the potential for effectively preventing child labour in the country. We also have national and regional programmes to that end.

Let me note that, in honour of the current focus on the elimination of child labour, special media events have been organized seeking to make more widely known the various forms of child labour and the efforts of the ILO to eradicate it.

We reaffirm our adherence to the standards and principles of the Organization and our determination to carry out our obligations. To that end, we have already ratified 44 ILO Conventions and Recommendations.

In pursuit of our obligations, we intend to continue taking an active part in social partnership, in bringing our legislative basis up to date and in improving the social protection of the population. This policy has led to the adoption of new legislation on social partnerships and collective agreements.

All sections of the economy are represented in the workers' and employers' organizations. The social partners are all engaged in the effort to secure social agreements in pursuit of all the noble aims of raising the living standards of the population and ensuring social peace, long-term programmes to this effect are in place.

An important part of the Government's work is devoted to the objectives to ensuring employment, social protection and the exercise of human rights and the right to work. Annual reports on progress made in these various areas are submitted to the Government.

I would like once again to express our appreciation to the ILO for the technical and other assistance afforded to our country.

In close connection and cooperation with the ILO Regional Office of the ILO for Europe and Central Asia, in recent years there has been successful development in such cooperation.

Seven regional projects are under way in our country involving the ILO. These programmes are

designed to bolster the Republic's potential and to raise the levels of decent work in accordance with our national development strategy.

In conclusion, I hope that the ILO will continue to foster the process of development because this will enable us to more successfully make our contribution to national development and to carrying out our poverty reduction strategy.

Mr. SAKTOR (*Worker, Slovakia*)

It is an honour for me to address this distinguished assembly and to share the experiences of the Slovak trade unions in solving present day issues in the world of work and thus respond to challenges described by the ILO Director-General.

Slovakia is among those developed countries of the world that have a rich tradition in the field of creating and protecting workers' rights, and actively participates in the work of international organizations such as the ILO.

The Slovak Republic has ratified eight ILO Conventions relating to respective fundamental principles and rights at work.

On the other hand, Slovak trade unionists are aware that the ratification of a Convention in itself is not the objective, but a means to ensure decent life and work.

Decent work and the implementation of ILO Conventions are directly linked to existing and future labour legislation, both national and international. The situation and development of the labour market is also crucial.

Currently, the situation in the labour market in Slovakia is quite complicated. Almost every fifth citizen is unemployed or forced to take any form of work offered. On behalf of Slovak trade unions, I want to emphasize that trade unions are in favour of structural reforms to ensure Slovakia's competitiveness.

We are fully aware that, in the light of globalization, labour market reforms are necessary. We support that reforms that combine flexibility with safety and thus benefit workers who make a significant contribution to the creation of values.

We feel the need to prepare the worker adequately and provide him with the necessary knowledge and skills to enable him to change work more easily, but have adequate social protection.

Slovak trade unions understand flexibility of the work environment contrary to many of those who only understand the ensuing easy transition from one job to another.

Therefore, we consider investment in the lifelong learning of workers as the most important investment in the future. At present, trade unions consider measures which will lead to the decrease of youth unemployment as the key objective of employment policy. This is the task of today. We know that it requires a comprehensive approach, including more public investment in education, research and development, technology and vocational training.

It may be necessary to formulate labour legislation that provides for corporate social responsibility, training for young people and the creation of more decent jobs. Only by doing this we will prevent the exodus of young people abroad and face the challenges of an ageing population.

The basis for this effort must be a real, functioning tripartite dialogue between the representative social partners, and here Slovakia has to do more.

The anniversary of the ILO is approaching and, concurrent with this important event, the assessment of the Decent Work Agenda. The social partners play an important role in this.

Over the past ten years, I have been participating almost every year in these top-level tripartite Conferences where we work together towards the common goal of decent work and life.

Our trade unions, and I am not speaking only on behalf of the trade unions of Slovakia, consider a socialist Europe, part of the European social model. Our trade unions do not consider this an obstacle to competitiveness, on the contrary.

Mr. TAKAGI (*Worker, Japan*)

On behalf of the Japanese workers, I would like to begin my remarks by expressing our support for the ILO's Decent Work Agenda mentioned in the Director-General's Report, which calls for fair globalization, full and productive employment and decent work for all.

In advance of this Conference, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, held in January this year, the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, released a statement warning that "the world is sliding into an unprecedented global jobs crisis". Within the statement, he said that there were 192 million unemployed people around the world, and that roughly half of them were young people.

As shown so clearly in his statement, we are steeped very much in the midst of a global job crisis. Though the world economy continues to achieve solid growth in general, we have not succeeded in generating more and better jobs. The burden of this has fallen on the most vulnerable workers, leading to a growing gap between rich and poor and to increasing social instability.

In the face of this job crisis, how can we achieve decent work and overcome the negative aspects of globalization? In relation to this question, I would like to emphasize the following two points.

The first is that the ILO should continue and improve one of its most fundamental roles, that is the establishment and promotion of implementation of international labour standards that are suited to the times. As the Director-General stated in his Report, two-thirds of member States have ratified all eight core Conventions. However, it is also true that there are a large number of problems concerning their implementation. I would like to point out that while globalization is rapidly expanding, the importance of the supervisory and monitoring mechanism should be highlighted more.

The second is that there is a need for economic growth which generates decent work. In Japan, the economy is in a process of recovery, but, as a result of deregulation of the labour market, there has been continuous growth in the number of people working as atypical workers who are suffering from low wages and unstable employment status. Gaps are widening at rapid speed and are becoming entrenched. Such a society is not sustainable. I would like to point out here that creating and maintaining decent work is an absolute prerequisite for a sustainable society.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon the situation of Japan in terms of the implementation of standards, the promotion of which is one of the most fundamental roles of the ILO, as I just stated earlier.

Japan is the second largest contributor to the ILO, funding one-fifth of its budget. It is a regular mem-

ber of the Governing Body, and I believe its position is such that it should play an exemplary role in the activities of the ILO. However, Japan has failed to ratify two of the eight core Conventions, namely Conventions Nos. 105 and 111.

In addition, I must note with regret that, in the area of the application of ratified Conventions as well, Japan has failed to play an exemplary role in the most basic area of freedom of association. Japan has placed strict restrictions on the fundamental labour rights of public service employees, against which recommendations have been issued by the Committee on Freedom of Association three times, calling for fundamental improvements, including legal amendments.

On this issue, a top-level government-labour meeting was held on 29 May in advance of the Conference. The meeting agreed that a forum or “*kentono ba*” for discussing the scope of public service employees to be granted fundamental labour rights was to be established with a legal basis, which means that the issue has now been put on the political agenda. During the discussion, the Minister of State for Administrative Reform expressed his views that the Government would take public opinion and the ILO recommendations into consideration, and that the Government hoped to adopt reforms worthy of international praise. We give a positive evaluation of the stance of the Japanese Government expressed at this meeting, as they could lead to a fundamental reform to bring industrial relations in the public sector into conformity with international labour standards.

We will continue to make efforts, through dialogue with the Government, to resolve this issue, in line with the recommendations of the Committee on Freedom of Association.

I would like to conclude my speech by asking the ILO to keep monitoring the progress of this issue.

Mr. TATEISI (*Employer, Japan*)

This year’s Director-General’s Report is an impressive one that takes a multifaceted look at questions such as how work, certainly one of the major life activities, is changing and what government, labour and employers ought to do to assure decent work in light of these changes.

The Report states: “there are no rights at work if there is no work”. As this suggests, one of the most fundamental tasks is to create jobs and this crucial role must be played mainly by enterprises. Partly for this reason, I would like to give my views on corporate social responsibility (CSR).

To begin with, besides being economic entities, companies are also social entities, in that they are part of the surrounding society. Human, material, financial and other business resources are social assets. Societies entrust them to companies, which have the mission of enriching society as a whole by making efficient use of them to produce goods and services. Companies cannot exist apart from the society and are obliged to make positive contributions to it. This is why we say that they must be constructive members of society. It is only when they serve society that companies can reap a profit as compensation commensurates with their contribution.

In this interpretation of the essence of corporate activities, CSR proceeds from the very entrepreneurial aspirations to find a way to meet the expectations of society. With the progress of globalization,

corporate activities are crossing national borders and people are beginning to talk about CSR as a tool of corporate governance in terms that go beyond domestic law.

It is my conviction, however, that CSR was a universal value even before globalization and that, instead of being a mere means of governance, it is at the heart of management philosophy.

The way in which corporate managers try to meet social expectations varies from company to company. This variation per se is bound up with the very reason for the company’s existence as a unique entity. As such, any attempt to constrain the CSR approaches with uniform rules or uniform standards would surely do more harm than good and is not the right direction.

I might also observe that CSR’s expectations vary depending on the country or region, reflecting differences in the history, society and culture. They also vary depending on the type of industries and size of the company. Promotion of CSR may be understood as a global trend, but their diversity and variety ought to be accepted.

In sum, measures for CSR should take full account of corporate initiative and diversity. At the same time, there are common core elements of CSR and that must be appreciated by all companies active in this century. In this sense, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in 1998 must be termed of critical importance as a CSR-related standard to be universally applied.

Companies are the principals of CSR, but it is also true that CSR begins with compliance with laws and regulations. The basic task of conditioning this legislation must be performed by governments. The ILO must support this kind of groundwork for CSR. This session of the Conference is to deliberate on the direction of ILO technical cooperation. I propose that ILO must assist governments in the task of building the CSR infrastructure.

I said a little earlier that CSR may be equated with the entrepreneurial aspirations to find a way to meet the expectations of society. To do so companies must heed the views of society. This, in turn, demands closely knit communications with various stakeholders. Dialogue with employees who are key stakeholders is a part of these communications. As such, the ILO also has a major role to play on the front of encouraging communications between labour and management.

Mrs. ROMCHATTHONG (*Employer, Thailand*)

Let me first convey to the President, the Director-General and all of you the good wishes of the employers of Thailand. It is once again a privilege to be addressing you on this occasion, at a time when globalization is well understood and seems to be reaching its high dynamism. It is timely for the ILC to discuss the importance of the employment relationship with the application of national and international standards. I shall bring to your attention two levels of concern – globalization and localization – as I sincerely agree with the Director-General that “there cannot be a successful globalization without a successful ‘localization’”.

At the global level, the ILO was first created to combat poverty. We need to bear in mind that we need to have an in-depth understanding of what the issues are in relation to the formal and informal sectors, and this could vary from country to country.

Inability to notice local differences may be too generalized. To remain competitive, what should be the new roles and responsibility of tripartism? Could both employers and workers decide on their employment relationship? Should the government have to take on the task of preparing and ensuring a strong social safety net and social protection for all?

At the local level, Thailand, along with many other nations, has been an active partner with the ILO in ratifying a good number of labour standards. But, to what extent does globalization mean to the employment scenario, as many are ready to accept, the broader term of job mobility and employment boundaries. Employment concerns thus arise and encompass diverse aspects, including legal, humanitarian and moral standards. Labour demands and sourcing may not be sufficient to describe the new era trade scene. Collaborative and consensual independent work based on commercial and civil contractual arrangements seems to be on the rise and therefore needs to be explored more carefully.

I want to bring to your attention what I consider an “employers’ creative mix and fix”. For example, in the eyes and hearts of employers, we are looking forward to having a labour force quality pool to bring about quality products and therefore help maintain the competitive advantage. Cheap labour costs no longer appear as the most critical incentive. Customer expectations have gone far beyond buying cheaper priced, better quality and quicker delivery products. They have been awakening to the fact that they will not support and be part of the “sweat and toil” products from the hands of exploited workers of all kinds.

Lastly, the Employers’ Confederation of Thailand is in full support of ILO initiatives on labour standards development. We are fully aware of the necessity of having well-designed methods and mechanisms to meet the challenges of the new facets of employment.

We sincerely hope that much of the discussion and outcomes of the Conference will further lead to the accomplishment of decent work for all. I thank the President for the opportunity to speak and I wish the meeting every success.

Mr. DE PAYVA (*Worker, Singapore*)

We welcome the timely discussion at this ILC to address the challenge posed by the changing employment relationship. All over the world union membership is on the decline. One of the reasons for this decline is the increase in atypical workers who could not be represented in the traditional framework.

In Singapore, atypical workers, such as contract and part-time workers are increasing as companies try to be more competitive and make more efficient use of manpower.

In 1997, 5 per cent of the employed persons were atypical workers. This is in Singapore. By 2004 the figure had shot up to 8.5 per cent. We expect part-time and contract work to become a regular feature here.

The Singapore labour movement has bucked the worldwide trend of declining membership, with union membership doubling in the last ten years to 460,000 today. This year, we have set a target of achieving 1 million members by the year 2015. We hope to achieve this by targeting atypical workers, new growth sectors of the economy, such as communications and biosciences and younger workers.

Similarly, unions worldwide will have to look at more creative ways of organizing and representing this group of workers.

We believe strongly that one way to help atypical workers is to provide for skills training, as employers, especially temporary work agencies, are not likely to do so. We initiated the Skills Redevelopment Programme (SRP) in 1996, an employer-based training programme to help lower-skilled workers to upgrade or expand their skills to meet the changing demands of the job market. The Government took it over as a national programme two years later. Under the surrogate employer programme, the Singapore National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) acts as surrogate employer for non-Singaporeans or workers wishing to embark on self-sponsored training that is not supported by their employers. Over the last six years, the NTUC has supported over 200,000 training places for our workers under the SRP.

The labour movement in Singapore welcomes the ILO’s emphasis and efforts on standard setting on occupational safety and health (OSH) over the last few years. It is of paramount importance that our workers’ right to safe and healthy workplaces is upheld.

In Singapore, efforts to achieve the target of halving Singapore’s present occupational fatality rate by the year 2015 are under way. We are particularly pleased that our advocacy for changes to the legislative framework to better enhance the safety and health protection of our workers resulted in the enactment of the Workplace Safety and Health Act (WSHA) on 1 March 2006. This Act, which replaces the Factories Act, has an extended scope to cover all workplaces, ensuring that all stakeholders play an active role in creating a safer and healthier work environment for our workers. We have also called for the Government to set up a safety hotline for workers to call should they come across, or be subjected to, unsafe work conditions, and we are pleased that our suggestion was taken up last year.

The collaboration of the tripartite partners – the Government, the union and the employers has been effective in bringing down workplace fatalities over the years. We will continue to actively contribute to raising OSH standards in Singapore.

The ILO remains the only international organization that brings together the tripartite social partners to engage in meaningful dialogue and cooperation. Let us continue to mobilize global tripartism to work towards an effective approach to the social dimension of globalization and realize our goal of decent work.

Sr. GALLARDO FLORES (Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social, Guatemala)

Me siento orgulloso de ser parte de la movilización política regional que lucha por erradicar los trabajos peligrosos donde los niños y niñas se involucran, constituyéndose una perpetuación de la pobreza de nuestros países.

Guatemala se suma al desafío de enfrentar mediante alianzas estratégicas y con mayores alcances la lucha para que en nuestros países el trabajo infantil deje de existir.

El Informe Global nos ha permitido ampliar nuestra comprensión sobre el impacto que tiene el trabajo infantil, comprometiéndonos políticamente a considerarlo una meta alcanzable si incrementamos

el presupuesto en educación y facilitamos la formación técnica laboral.

Guatemala ha construido una plataforma de protección social que está permitiendo la restitución de los derechos de la niñez mediante la ejecución de la política pública y el Plan de Acción Nacional a favor de la Niñez y Adolescencia, en donde uno de sus principales objetivos es proteger a la niñez de la explotación económica y de los trabajos peligrosos. Muestra de ello es la efectiva coordinación que se ha hecho con varias instituciones gubernamentales y no gubernamentales, la sociedad civil y los sindicatos, al trabajar conjuntamente en varios esfuerzos encaminados a la efectiva eliminación del trabajo infantil, tales como la promulgación de la Ley de Protección Integral de la Niñez y Adolescencia, la elaboración y posterior emisión del Reglamento de la Actividad Pirotécnica, la elaboración del Reglamento de Protección Laboral de la Niñez y Adolescencia Trabajadora, el cual ya fue emitido, y la creación del Comité Técnico de Seguimiento para la Prevención y Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil Doméstico que realizan los niños, las niñas y los adolescentes en casas particulares.

Además, es importante destacar la existencia de una política pública y el Plan de Acción Nacional a favor de la Niñez y Adolescencia 2004-2015, uno de cuyos objetivos específicos es proteger a la niñez de la explotación económica y a la adolescencia de los trabajos peligrosos para su salud y su desarrollo físico, espiritual y social, lo que obstaculiza su educación.

El Gobierno de Guatemala está comprometido a redoblar los esfuerzos para la promoción de la educación, por lo que se debe mencionar el rotundo éxito logrado por el Ministerio de Educación al completar el programa de 10.000 becas dirigidas específicamente a la erradicación del trabajo por parte de niños y niñas para asegurar su proceso educativo, y que ya está en proceso la evaluación del impacto de las Becas para la Paz.

El programa «Mi Primer Empleo», que está a cargo del Consejo Nacional de la Juventud, en coordinación con los Ministerios de Trabajo y Previsión Social, de Economía y de Cultura y Deportes y la Comisión Presidencial de Derechos Humanos, fue creado para fomentar la ocupación laboral entre los jóvenes en riesgo de ser presa de las pandillas. Se ha iniciado con una primera etapa de 1000 adolescentes y se pretende llegar a 15.000 próximamente a nivel nacional. Se les otorgará becas incentivo a cambio de que continúen sus estudios y de que reciban capacitación, e incluso podrán acceder a un microcrédito para iniciar sus propias empresas.

Quiero reconocer que el apoyo técnico y del personal especializado de IPEC/OIT ha sido fundamental para la consecución de los compromisos asumidos por el Estado de Guatemala en materia de trabajo infantil, por lo que esperamos seguir contando con la presencia y la participación de dicho programa.

Mr. DE GEUS (*Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Netherlands*)

Conventions are instruments – instruments with which we can work towards a world without forced labour, without child labour, a world that offers freedom of association for trade unions and free collective bargaining, an environment in which men and women are treated on an equal basis. There must be no tampering with the core Conventions of

the ILO that deal with these issues. That is simply unacceptable. Conventions are made to be observed worldwide. The role of the ILO through technical cooperation should be focused on the ratification and effective implementation of Conventions. Technical Conventions need to be kept sharp in order for them to function optimally. From time to time they need to be reviewed in the light of new developments and the number of ratifications.

The Netherlands has a preference for Conventions that describe minimum standards and basic rights in general terms. Overly detailed Conventions soon form bottlenecks. Overly detailed Conventions are less likely to be ratified. They will not contribute to worldwide protection of workers nor to a level playing field for employers. It is therefore more effective to limit Conventions to the essence – minimum standards and rights which should apply worldwide. We must leave the details to the member States themselves. That is the responsibility of governments, employers and workers in the individual countries.

Particularly when it comes to Conventions in the field of social security and occupational safety and health, the Netherlands chooses in favour of consolidation and modernization of existing Conventions in these fields. For example, modernization of social security Conventions is needed so that they not only provide income security but also facilitate the return to the labour market.

The Netherlands says “no” to outdated Conventions. The Netherlands says “no” to overly detailed Conventions, but it still says “yes” – wholeheartedly, “yes” – to the ILO strategic objectives and to Conventions as an instrument to meet these objectives. So that, too, is a “yes” to placing the violation of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) by the authorities in Myanmar high on our agenda. I would like to appeal to other countries to follow the Netherlands example in discouraging trade relations with Burma.

It is also a “yes” to the recently published Report entitled *The end of child labour: Within reach*. It is encouraging to read how much progress has been made. We should continue our efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. However, we should not forget to fight all forms of child labour.

Our “yes” to the ILO strategic objectives means “yes” to promotion of full and productive employment, to compliance with fundamental labour standards, to improvement of social protection and to the reinforcement of social dialogue. These four spearheads of the Decent Work Agenda must always remain our targets worldwide. To reach these targets it is necessary that the ILO cooperates with all actors involved – not only with tripartite constituents of the ILO, but also with other international organizations.

In our cooperation programme with the ILO, the Netherlands wishes to make a concrete contribution to the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda. On behalf of my colleague for development cooperation, I am pleased to inform you that the programme is to be continued for a further four years until 2010. The sum of €32 million has been reserved for that purpose. That money can be put to good use in enabling countries to implement ILO Conventions for a better world of work.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Mr. Sarda on his election as President of the Conference. I am convinced that, under his guidance, this session of the Conference will be a success.

The Director-General's Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, is extremely interesting and very inspiring. It constitutes an excellent starting point for discussion on the Polish labour market. Many of the problems and challenges described in the Report relate directly to Poland. Let me mention, for instance, young people's difficult situation in the labour market, labour migration, inequalities of income, the ageing society, and lastly, efforts aimed at greater balance in labour market flexibility and employee security. These are the issues I deal with on a daily basis as Minister for Labour and Social Policy.

Like other developed countries, Poland has a low birth rate. Unemployment, relatively high among young people, especially women, does not create a friendly climate for starting a family. The decision to have children becomes particularly difficult, which is why the Polish Government is considering many initiatives aimed at boosting the birth rate. One of the solutions already being implemented is providing financial aid on the birth of a child. Other solutions are also being considered. In the context of the pace at which Polish society is ageing, increasing the birth rate is becoming a subject of national priority.

As the baby boom generation enters the labour market, young Poles are seeking employment opportunities abroad. For them, working abroad is a great chance for both professional and personal development. Many countries of the European Union, including recently Finland, Greece, Spain, Portugal and Iceland, have opened their labour markets to Polish workers. We are grateful for this provision of job opportunities to our citizens; however, we hope that young people will see this as an interesting professional experience and, after returning to Poland, will enrich their country's labour market and become the driving force of the Polish economy.

Unfortunately, migration involves numerous hazards, among them trafficking in human beings for forced labour. That is why Poland has joined the European Commission's AGIS Programme, implemented in conjunction with the United Kingdom, Germany, Portugal, Ukraine, Romania and the Republic of Moldova, which is aimed at preventing trafficking in human beings for forced labour. We believe that the programme will sensitize representatives of the legal and judicial systems, border guards, and bodies monitoring private employment agencies to the problem of trafficking in human beings for forced labour, and will make it possible to combat the problem.

The International Labour Organization and the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization have jointly called for the creation of a fair globalization and making decent work a global goal. This call, supported by the participants of the 2005 World Summit, has also been heard in Poland. Trade unions and employers' organizations, members of the Tripartite Commission for Social and Economic Affairs, have declared that they will start working, nationwide, on a social agreement entitled "Economy – Labour – Family Dialogue".

This tripartite agreement will provide for a comprehensive programme, including the following areas: creation of new jobs; policies on employment and labour market institutions; conditions for social, economic and business development; social security; family policy; health protection; and social dialogue, social partnership and civil society.

I believe that, thanks to the objectives identified in the framework of the social tripartite agreement, a balance between social and economic development in Poland will be achieved and Polish society will become less vulnerable to the negative results of the process of globalization.

The first signs of improvement in the Polish labour market can already be seen. In April 2006, the very high rate of unemployment fell to 17.2 per cent, a level that was previously observed in 2001. Experts claim that the fall is not seasonal in nature. I, as Minister for Labour and Social Policy, will ensure that this trend continues since, like the Director-General, I believe that, for families and communities, the availability of decent work is the foundation for stability and social advancement.

Original français: M. NORDMANN (secrétaire d'Etat, Département fédéral de l'Economie, Suisse)

La mondialisation est un phénomène en évolution rapide qui provoque des défis importants pour les économies, pour les Etats, pour les travailleurs et travailleuses du monde entier. Dans ce contexte, le rapport du Directeur général soulève de nombreuses interrogations sur le rôle et la signification du travail.

A la lumière du rapport du Directeur général, je vois les défis suivants à relever:

Le premier défi est de réaliser l'engagement pris à New York en 2005: faire du travail décent un objectif global, en le plaçant au cœur des politiques économiques et sociales, pour lutter contre la pauvreté et assurer la dignité de l'homme. Cela ne signifie toutefois pas une uniformisation de l'emploi et du travail au plan mondial.

Le second défi est de réussir la négociation sur le suivi de Doha: nous voulons mettre en place le régime applicable à la libéralisation globale des échanges et donner un appui aux pays en développement et en transition pour assurer leur intégration dans le système commercial mondial. Ainsi, nous contribuerons à la création d'emplois décents et à la lutte contre les migrations du travail.

Notre principal défi est de mettre en place des conditions-cadres qui assurent un équilibre optimal entre conditions de travail et flexibilité du marché du travail. Le dialogue social permet de trouver des solutions souples, négociées avec des partenaires sociaux responsables, et adaptées aux conditions nationales.

Les Etats doivent mettre en œuvre l'Agenda global pour l'emploi et l'Agenda du travail décent avec l'aide de l'OIT. Nous devons donc poursuivre nos efforts de coopération technique avec l'OIT sur le terrain, pour renforcer l'impact des normes fondamentales du travail, comme le fait la Suisse en Afrique du Sud, au Viet Nam, en Inde et au Pakistan. Nous favorisons ainsi la création d'emplois respectueux des droits sociaux fondamentaux et nous attaquons à la racine le mal de la pauvreté, du sous-emploi et du chômage et, partant, des migrations du travail.

Les engagements fondamentaux de l'OIT restent d'actualité, même s'ils s'inscrivent dans un monde en perpétuelle évolution.

L'OIT doit continuer d'agir dans le cadre de son mandat constitutionnel. Notre Conférence de l'année prochaine se penchera sur le renforcement de la capacité de l'OIT à appuyer les efforts déployés par ses Membres pour atteindre ses objectifs dans le contexte de la mondialisation. Nous disposerons d'une chance unique pour confirmer le mandat de l'OIT et pour renforcer sa capacité de répondre aux besoins de ses Membres par des services plus ciblés et efficaces.

Les normes de l'OIT fixent les conditions-cadres relatives au fonctionnement des marchés du travail, tout en laissant une grande liberté d'action aux Etats. Ces normes ne sont pas destinées à uniformiser le fonctionnement d'un marché du travail mondialisé. Elles sont mises en œuvre par les Etats, avec le concours des partenaires sociaux.

La légitimité des normes ne doit pas être externalisée, faute de quoi la tentation du protectionnisme nous guette. L'OIT doit donc renforcer son action pour que ses normes servent l'objectif d'équité dans le monde du travail, en tenant compte des avantages comparatifs des économies nationales.

Nous avons besoin d'une OIT et d'une Conférence fortes et efficaces pour réaliser le travail décent: la Suisse regrette que les idées de réformes lancées l'année dernière n'aient pas porté leurs fruits. La reconnaissance au plus haut niveau politique du rôle crucial que jouent le plein emploi productif et le travail décent ne suffit pas si l'OIT veut accompagner la mondialisation de manière cohérente au plan social.

La Suisse soutient l'OIT avec détermination, car l'OIT est la seule garante tripartite d'une évolution d'un monde au sein duquel les bénéfices de la mondialisation seront redistribués de manière plus juste.

Mr. KATEMA (*Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Security, Zambia*)

I would like to commend the Director-General for his illuminating Report on the work of the ILO in member States and the enormous support that Zambia has received. This has been demonstrated through various joint programmes.

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate what other colleagues have said regarding the good work that the Director-General and his team are doing, especially in developing countries. Zambia has benefited a great deal from these programmes, and it is my strong conviction that the ILO will not relent in its noble duties under the committed leadership of the Director-General.

On behalf of my Government and the people of Zambia, let me put on record our profound appreciation for the continued close and warm cooperation that we enjoy with the ILO. It is this cooperation that has made it possible for the child labour programme and the ILO project "Improving labour systems in southern Africa" (ILSSA) in my country to succeed.

Zambia has observed with gratitude that the Director-General's Report of 2004-05 coincides with the time when the United Nations General Assembly called for a fair globalization that creates decent work opportunities for all. It is delightful to note that there is now wide recognition of the need to promote the Decent Work Agenda, especially in this era of globalization when trends have been such that

equal opportunities have not benefited poor countries.

My Government takes a keen interest in this development, because the challenges for a developing country like Zambia are immense and would require concerted national and international efforts to achieve development objectives. It is necessary that appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the drive towards maximization of profits by multilateral companies is not at the expense of the quality of jobs or of workers' fundamental rights and freedoms.

The approach by the ILO and the UN is therefore most welcome and, as observed by the United Nations Secretary-General, and I quote: "the best anti-poverty programme is employment and the best road to economic empowerment and social well-being lies in decent work". Zambia is ready to implement strategies which are envisaged to be developed and applied in promoting the Decent Work Agenda.

My delegation is inspired by the items placed on the agenda of this Conference. The agenda addresses itself to core issues of employment relationship and occupational safety and health, among many others. Zambia eagerly awaits the adoption of a new Recommendation that proposes to member States the formulation and adoption of national policies aimed at guaranteeing effective protection for workers. This Recommendation, once finalized and adopted, will go a long way in guiding the implementation of Zambia's national development and labour market policy.

In addition to that, we are interested as a nation in seeing a new instrument establishing a promotional framework in the area of occupational safety and health, which is coming up for a second discussion, to be finalized. Our resolve in the area of occupational safety and health is that workers should work in an environment that enables them to utilize their potential fully in the production process and contribute effectively to economic growth.

Promoting greater labour market participation of disadvantaged groups is a key issue of great concern to the Zambian Government. A comprehensive national development plan is being drawn up, with employment creation being one of the major cross-cutting issues, along with mainstreaming gender and persons with disabilities in all economic programmes.

Original Hungarian: Mr. KORDÁS (Political State Secretary, Ministry of Employment and Labour, Hungary)

Ladies and gentlemen, the drama of the First World War made the international community recognize the need for closer cooperation in order to harmonize the objectives of economic and social development. This recognition led to the establishment of the ILO and the creation of the system of international labour standards. I do not think we should draw a parallel between the past and the present, but we must reconsider the parameters of international cooperation, which may even result in a change of paradigm. The problems are so serious that – based on the best-seller of Thomas Freidman – we may even ask if the world is flat or round.

I have no intention of deciding on this issue and I do not even agree with the one-sided statements on globalization. I support the view of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization that the cause of the problems is not globaliza-

tion but the lack of appropriate institutions and the lack of harmonized international policies. This is the starting point for the Report entitled *Changing patterns in the world of work*. I fully agree with its diagnosis and its Recommendations regarding the future activities of the ILO.

Global changes – like the employment consequences of the geographic shift of economic sectors, the problems of the sustainability of social systems, the spread of new forms of employment, or deepening social differences – have a direct impact on Hungary as well. Coordinated action on the part of the international community is therefore of the utmost importance. The Decent Work Agenda is a useful guide, especially on the basis of its core principle: “...work is a defining feature of human existence ... it is crucial ... to the welfare of families and to the stability of societies.”

The society which Hungary is building is based on work and the security of families. We envisage a country in which people can work and also find such work worthwhile; where everyone who can and wants to work will find a job and where work is respected because it provides a decent living and security for the families, for the workers.

To achieve these objectives, last year we implemented a programme of 22 measures. These measures replace passive aid and instead support the active search for jobs and the employment of young people they help job creation in SMEs by decreased contributions, protect the rights of temporary workers and enforce labour regulations. Companies complying with all labour regulations are given priority with regard to public-tender procedures and unregistered employment is sanctioned heavily. These measures have improved the labour market situation in Hungary, which is positive even by international standards; they decrease the dependence of workers and improve the efficiency of the labour market institutions.

Efficient social dialogue is a precondition of successful employment policies; therefore we modernized the system by which it is instituted. Next to the traditionally strong national level, we strengthened interest conciliation at the mezzo level by creating sectoral dialogue institutions. Now there are 36 sectoral social dialogue committees operating. We also established the Economic and Social Council and it would now be impossible for the Government in Hungary not to negotiate with the social partners on questions concerning the world of labour.

A good example of this is when, for the first time, a medium-term agreement was concluded on the national minimum wage in 2005. This tripartite agreement for 2006-08 set the mandatory level of the minimum wage and the guaranteed wage-minimum for different qualifications. The agreement harmonized the real-wage increase, employment boost and productivity and makes wage policy predictable.

In April 2006, for the first time since the democratic transition of 1990, the Government won consecutive terms in office. The new Government will be formed in the near future. Its main task is to strengthen the country's economic competitiveness, improve the balance of the budget and – through the reform of the system of social transfers – to promote social justice. The experience of the international community, participation in international decision-making and strong international cooperation

are of special importance for all of us in this process.

I would like to underline at this point that the ILO Subregional Office in Budapest has traditionally been a good partner of the Hungarian Government. The Office provides technical assistance for 17 countries in the region and I can assure you that our Government will support the Office in its work in the future as well.

M. BOISSON (*employeur, France*)

Nous vivons une période de changements accélérés – certains sont prévisibles, d'autres non –, mais tous créent des incertitudes, des inquiétudes et des tensions souvent graves dans le monde du travail.

Dans ce contexte, l'OIT – dont le champ d'action est précisément le monde du travail – doit jouer un rôle déterminant.

Je crois que trois points positifs méritent d'être soulignés.

En premier lieu, la convention maritime. Après cinq ans d'un travail intense de consultations bilatérales, tripartites, formelles et informelles, je crois que cette convention constitue un exemple de ce que le tripartisme peut produire de mieux dès lors qu'il s'appuie, et cela a été le cas, sur une grande compétence et sur un engagement résolu du Bureau.

Cette convention maritime revêt une grande importance sur trois plans. D'abord au plan juridique, la mise à jour et la consolidation de plus de 60 instruments en un seul texte, qui constitue maintenant le pilier de la réglementation maritime internationale, sont l'exemple abouti de l'approche intégrée. Ensuite, sur le plan pratique il faut souligner l'intérêt du pouvoir d'inspection des navires, quel que soit leur pavillon, lorsqu'ils sont dans un port d'un pays ayant ratifié la convention. Enfin, au plan politique, c'est la démonstration que l'OIT est capable d'apporter des réponses constructives aux défis de la mondialisation.

Certes, cette convention ne concerne que 1 200 000 travailleurs dans un domaine extrêmement spécifique, mais les enseignements à en tirer en matière de stratégie normative sont précieux.

Deuxième point positif, le constat que le travail des enfants recule dans nombre de pays. Certes, c'est un résultat très modeste et insuffisant qu'il faut améliorer, mais là encore cela montre qu'une action déterminée, menée dans la durée, peut porter ses fruits.

Surtout lorsque cette action s'inscrit dans la ligne d'un texte fondateur de notre institution, je veux bien entendu parler de la Déclaration relative aux principes et droits fondamentaux du travail de 1998, qui a introduit l'éradication du travail des enfants dans les principes fondamentaux.

Troisième point positif, le Sommet mondial des Nations Unies de septembre 2005, où l'OIT a pleinement joué son rôle dans le système multilatéral en promouvant la notion de travail décent. Il faut souligner que ce fameux paragraphe 47, en consacrant ce concept à l'échelle mondiale, lui a apporté une valeur ajoutée que nous considérons essentielle.

Les Nations Unies précisent, en effet, qu'il s'agit du travail décent et productif. A nos yeux les deux termes sont indissociables, surtout lorsque l'objectif est de faire reculer la pauvreté, ce qui ne peut se faire qu'en développant l'emploi productif, générateur de richesses, dans un monde où les besoins sont immenses.

Comme le souligne le rapport du Président du Conseil d'administration, «l'emploi est au cœur de la réduction de la pauvreté», et M. Tateisi a justement relevé ce point tout à l'heure.

Par ailleurs, le Directeur général a rappelé lui-même, lundi, que notre objectif doit être l'emploi productif et le travail décent. Or l'emploi productif c'est avant tout l'entreprise, c'est la création d'entreprises, le développement d'entreprises, la culture d'entreprise, en un mot, un environnement favorisant l'esprit d'initiative et garantissant la sécurité des affaires. Pour notre groupe, de grands progrès restent à accomplir en ce domaine dans de nombreux pays.

Lorsque l'on regarde l'évolution de notre institution depuis quelques années, on constate que celle-ci a réussi à développer de façon remarquable sa capacité de réflexion. Elle a amélioré sa visibilité et sa présence dans le débat. Mais son point faible réside dans le passage à l'acte, dans la mobilisation de nos moyens, en faveur de l'action sur le terrain.

Renforcer notre capacité à agir, nous souscrivons pleinement à cette formule qui fut prononcée par le Directeur général lundi. Guy Ryder notait ce matin les coûts immenses de la non-action ou de l'inaction; la Commission mondiale ayant clairement montré que les réponses aux défis de la mondialisation se jouent tant au niveau local, national, que mondial. Il est clair qu'il faut insister sur le niveau local et on ne peut que féliciter le Bureau d'avoir emprunté la voie de l'adoption de programmes par pays. C'est une voie incontournable.

En partenariat avec les autres institutions multilatérales, l'OIT doit aider les pays à définir leurs besoins prioritaires de façon à se forger des outils dans la libéralisation des échanges. Pour ce faire, il nous appartient d'améliorer notre base de connaissances sur nos quatre objectifs stratégiques et la manière dont ils interagissent.

Dans ces conditions, il m'apparaît que la démarche engagée par le Conseil d'administration, visant à mettre en synergie et en cohérence nos quatre objectifs stratégiques – qui, je le rappelle, sont les droits fondamentaux, l'emploi, la protection sociale et le dialogue social – est essentielle. Je crois que, comme vient de le faire M. Nordmann, il faut se féliciter de la décision qui a été prise d'ouvrir un débat général à la Conférence de 2007 sur le renforcement de la capacité de l'OIT à répondre aux besoins exprimés par ses Membres dans le contexte de la mondialisation. Je pense que ce débat sera d'une importance capitale pour l'avenir de notre institution et pour l'accomplissement de sa mission.

Sr. ALMERÍ VERAMENDI (*Ministro de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo, Perú*)

Para los países en desarrollo, como es el caso del Perú, el crecimiento económico que genere empleos de calidad es un punto crítico de la agenda política actual. Luego de casi cinco años de tener un producto bruto interno en crecimiento sostenido por encima del promedio de Latinoamérica, la informalidad laboral, el subempleo, la poca cobertura de la seguridad social y la pobreza han disminuido magramente. Nuestro déficit de trabajo decente, en medio de una economía en proceso de globalización, que afecta la posibilidad de que la política nacional pueda influir sustantivamente en mejorar estas variables, origina problemas de estabilidad y de gobernabilidad en los países en desarrollo. Somos países que hemos estado luchando fallidamente por centu-

rias o décadas para construir Estados que puedan brindar bienestar a sus ciudadanos, y en algún momento, sin alcanzar este objetivo de viabilidad institucional, apreciamos que no es posible, únicamente a través de la política y el derecho nacional, influir en la solución de cuestiones económicas y sociales que se transfieren por el «efecto centrífugo» de la globalización a los ámbitos locales y supraestatales.

En el Perú persisten aún aquellas fórmulas que proponen organizar la sociedad en torno a una economía liberal radical; dentro de esta perspectiva, el derecho y las instituciones sociales deben encuadrarse dentro de las reglas «invisibles» de un mercado que depende cada vez más de la inversión extranjera y de la demanda externa de nuestros bienes y servicios. Pero también, del otro lado, existen propuestas de planificación estatal de lo económico y social que prescinden de valorar la cuestión global.

En efecto, durante la década de los noventa, el Perú apostó por liberalizar la economía brindando seguridades jurídicas a la inversión a través de la protección absoluta de la libertad de contratar y del derecho de la propiedad y, de otro lado, se efectuó una reforma del Estado orientada al repliegue de la prestación de servicios públicos, privatizando empresas públicas; como igualmente se produjo una privatización relativa en la seguridad social, en salud y en pensiones. El objetivo fundamental fue ser un país atractivo para la inversión extranjera. Los derechos fundamentales fueron relegados a un segundo nivel, cuando no vulnerados directamente. La exclusión de derechos cedió paso a un agudo conflicto social que buscaba expresarse políticamente. Estos cambios, realizados para permitir la «adaptación eficiente», prescindieron del diálogo social y privilegiaron la imposición. El Perú ingresó en una fase de represión de libertades políticas y derechos civiles a fin de mantener este Estado autoritario, cuyo fin era mantener la corrupción y una economía «eficiente», esta última entendida como el único elemento de legitimación del gobierno.

El regreso a la democracia en nuestro país, hace cinco años, marca el inicio del fin de una etapa traumática y supuso una inmediata apertura política, la restitución plena de libertades políticas y civiles y de determinados derechos fundamentales del trabajo relacionados con la libertad sindical. En efecto, entre otras medidas, destacan la modificación de la legislación sindical teniendo en cuenta las observaciones de los órganos de control de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, el respeto a la jornada de trabajo, la limitación a la intermediación laboral, la aprobación de los Convenios fundamentales núms. 138 y 182, con lo cual hemos ratificado ya todos los convenios fundamentales, la implementación de medidas contra el trabajo infantil y el inicio de un plan de erradicación del trabajo forzoso.

Sin embargo, somos conscientes de que apenas hemos iniciado un largo trecho para hacer de los derechos fundamentales y el trabajo decente el principio básico sobre el cual se organicen las instituciones económicas y sociales. Creo que en torno a este núcleo mínimo, que irradian todos los espacios de la vida y de la administración pública, es posible respetar los elementos de las instituciones económicas que las hacen eficientes. La liberalización del comercio, de las inversiones y la seguridad jurídica, en armonía con el respeto de los derechos fundamentales, debiera producir una igualdad sustantiva, que es para nosotros la justicia política, económica

y social. Estas reflexiones para el Perú, creo que de alguna manera son aplicables al ordenamiento mundial.

Pero nuestro país enfrenta hoy un reto mayor cuando la globalización pone en el ámbito mundial aspectos económicos y sociales que no pueden ser gobernados desde los Estados mismos, sobre todo cuando esta escala global contiene un ordenamiento que requiere mejoras sustantivas, mejoras en cuanto al respeto de los principios democráticos, el desarrollo de un constitucionalismo mundial, la promoción y protección de los derechos humanos, la liberalización de un mercado global para los bienes y servicios, la reducción de la deuda externa, la eliminación de la pobreza y de la desigualdad entre los países, que se traduce en el día a día en la desigualdad real entre los ciudadanos de los países desarrollados y los de los países en desarrollo. En otras palabras, la eliminación de la dramática desigualdad entre las personas que son libres, que son los menos, y aquellos que carecen de libertad real, todos los pobres del mundo.

Nos parece que no ha sido suficiente resaltado el informe de la OIT *Por una globalización justa*, elaborado por la Comisión Mundial sobre la Dimensión Social de la Globalización, en cuanto a la necesidad de construir una gobernanza en tres niveles: global, nacional y local. En ello nuestro compromiso por crear más empleos decentes, mantener una conducta internacional consecuente con los derechos humanos y promotora de un ordenamiento global justo y democrático.

Finalmente, quiero agradecer y felicitar a nombre del Estado peruano al Director General de la OIT, Don Juan Somavia, porque está imprimiendo en esta Organización un rumbo consecuente y previsor de las exigencias globales actuales y futuras. Creo también que la concertación y la conciliación de intereses entre el capital y el trabajo es una tarea pendiente que está en la agenda nacional, pero también en la internacional.

Debemos gobernar la globalización. Es la única manera de dar sostenibilidad a la creación del trabajo decente y es también la mejor vía para reconciliar la democracia con la economía.

M. BARBU (*ministre du Travail, de la Solidarité sociale et de la Famille, Roumanie*)

Premièrement, je tiens à féliciter le Directeur général du BIT pour les rapports présentés à la Conférence: le rapport *Changements dans le monde du travail*, le rapport sur le travail des enfants et le rapport sur la promotion du travail décent par les programmes de l'Organisation internationale du Travail.

Je veux profiter de cette occasion pour faire référence aussi au rapport sur le monde du travail, quoiqu'il soit mis en discussion plus tard. Le rapport donne une perspective globale sur les aspects principaux du monde du travail en indiquant les principales forces qui affectent le monde du travail, la manière dont les modèles de travail se sont adaptés et les défis qu'elles représentent pour l'objectif du travail décent pour tous. Il propose des objectifs et des mesures concrètes qui vont permettre à l'Organisation internationale du Travail de devenir une organisation plus forte.

La libéralisation économique et l'interdépendance ouvrent beaucoup de nouvelles opportunités pour les investissements et pour le développement, mais elles supposent aussi de nouveaux risques et des

incertitudes. Beaucoup de ces risques ont des implications économiques et sociales en termes de viabilité des entreprises, de sécurité de l'emploi et du revenu, de conditions de travail, de migration et de protection sociale.

Il est important de combiner la stabilité, la flexibilité et la sécurité pour créer un grand nombre d'emplois sans diminuer leur qualité.

La réalisation de l'emploi total dans les conditions de travail décent, sans que ne périclitent la stabilité des prix ou l'équité sociale, représente de vrais défis pour le gouvernement.

La Roumanie, comme tous les pays de l'Europe de l'Est qui sont ou qui vont devenir membres de l'Union européenne, a été et continue d'être confrontée à de nombreux changements sur le marché de travail depuis dix-sept années et cherche des solutions pour combiner la compétition économique avec la justice sociale et la réglementation de relations de travail équitables. L'Organisation internationale du Travail a offert son appui à tous ces efforts par des conseils et des expertises, en agissant souvent comme médiateur. En même temps, les conventions et les recommandations de l'Organisation internationale du Travail et la jurisprudence ont représenté des modèles d'inspiration pour l'élaboration des politiques en matière de travail.

Le rapport sur la promotion du travail décent par les programmes de l'Organisation internationale du Travail offre une image des progrès réalisés dans l'application des programmes de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, dans le contexte de l'évolution, de la modernisation et de la réaffirmation des idéaux de l'Organisation, mais identifie en même temps les domaines qui nécessitent des améliorations. La Roumanie soutient entièrement l'Agenda du travail décent de l'Organisation. En mettant l'accent sur l'emploi, la qualité de l'emploi et les politiques sociales correspondantes, la promotion du travail décent constitue non seulement un facteur de justice et de cohésion sociale, mais aussi un facteur de performance économique.

Le programme de coopération pour 2006-07 entre la Roumanie et le Bureau international du Travail, qui a pour but de promouvoir le travail décent, programme signé aujourd'hui, met en valeur le fait que le travail décent est un élément clé des politiques pour le développement social de la Roumanie.

Les priorités du programme de coopération sur le travail décent en Roumanie sont la croissance du pourcentage de l'emploi, l'amélioration de la protection sociale et le renforcement des relations dans l'industrie, en s'appuyant sur une approche complémentaire qui combine les différentes dimensions du travail décent.

Les priorités du programme de coopération avec l'Organisation internationale du Travail respectent celles du Plan national de développement, une des six priorités du plan étant le développement des ressources humaines, la croissance du pourcentage de l'emploi et la lutte contre l'exclusion sociale.

La mise en œuvre du Programme international pour l'abolition du travail des enfants fait aussi partie de ce programme. Comme il est mentionné dans le rapport sur la mise en œuvre du Programme international de lutte contre le travail des enfants, à la suite de l'application du programme ces quatre dernières années, le nombre des enfants qui travaillent a diminué.

Ont aussi été mis en évidence les avantages économiques de l'élimination du travail des enfants et le remplacement du travail des enfants par l'éducation universelle.

La Roumanie appuie l'intégration de ce programme dans les politiques et les plans nationaux de développement, ainsi que l'objectif de l'Organisation internationale du Travail qui vise à abolir le travail des enfants et à éliminer les pires formes de travail des enfants d'ici à 2016.

Le gouvernement de la Roumanie encourage une politique d'appui de la jeunesse par des efforts soutenus pour joindre et harmoniser les programmes, par l'application des politiques publiques qui ont un impact social et éducatif pour les jeunes, afin de faciliter leur transition dans une société en changement permanent et afin de réaliser un équilibre entre les générations.

Pour conclure, en qualité de représentant du gouvernement de la Roumanie et de ses politiques, je veux mettre en évidence l'importance donnée au dialogue social en vue d'atteindre les objectifs fixés aux niveaux national et international.

M. BILTGEN (*ministre du Travail et de l'Emploi, Luxembourg*)

Je voudrais d'abord présenter mes félicitations et meilleurs vœux de succès au Président de notre Conférence.

Le gouvernement luxembourgeois et moi-même suivons avec une attention particulière, à laquelle s'ajoute désormais un degré certain d'optimisme et d'espoir, les efforts déployés par des acteurs de plus en plus nombreux de la communauté internationale pour asseoir définitivement le travail décent pour tous comme objectif politique prioritaire. Mes remerciements particuliers vont à notre Directeur général, M. Juan Somavia, pour la ténacité persuasive avec laquelle il ne cesse de poursuivre cet objectif.

Pour que cette prise de conscience soit suivie d'effets, je plaiderai pour une politique de la communauté internationale basée sur la conviction de valeurs communes, une cohérence interne et externe de l'action des gouvernements et des organisations internationales, une complémentarité dans la répartition du travail entre tous les acteurs ainsi que sur des plans de travail concrets et ayant des finalités claires, à court, moyen et long terme. Finalement, pour que cette action soit efficace, une institutionnalisation forte est nécessaire, sous une forme à définir, englobant sous un chapeau commun notamment les organisations du système de l'ONU, mais aussi d'autres organisations internationales.

En ce sens, je salue fortement l'Union européenne qui a montré le chemin, d'abord, en 2005, par des conclusions prises en 2005 par le Conseil des ministres des Affaires sociales, que j'ai eu l'honneur de présider à l'occasion de la présidence luxembourgeoise du Conseil des ministres de l'Union européenne, conclusions qui montrent des voies vers une dimension sociale concrète de la mondialisation, puis, tout récemment par la communication de la Commission «Promouvoir un travail décent pour tous». Je tiens d'ailleurs à remercier le commissaire Spidla pour cette initiative extrêmement importante, et ce de plusieurs points de vue.

Quant au fond, à l'instar des rapports du Directeur général, ces documents montrent clairement la nécessité, tant économique que sociale, de tout faire pour assurer un travail décent pour tous.

Je voudrais souligner deux éléments.

D'abord, le travail décent pour tous n'est pas une contrainte mais, sans même parler de l'équité et de la justice sociale, une nécessité économique, même dans les pays en voie de développement. Et il y a lieu d'y insister: la qualité de l'emploi est, à la fin, une garantie indispensable de productivité du travailleur, donc de compétitivité de l'entreprise, voire de l'économie d'un pays ou d'une région. Je citerai deux exemples: la santé et la sécurité au travail, qui ne sont pas un luxe, mais évitent des accidents et des maladies, assurent la disponibilité et l'efficacité du travailleur, donc sa productivité. Il en est de même des horaires de travail ou des rémunérations appropriés. Ce qui peut paraître comme contrainte au départ sera à la fin une source d'amélioration de la performance économique, et ce dans tous les pays, indépendamment de leur état de développement.

Par ailleurs, le travail décent, par le biais d'emplois plus nombreux, de meilleure qualité, socialement protégés, basés sur l'égalité des chances et le dialogue social, aidera les pays en voie de développement à lutter contre la pauvreté et les pays développés à améliorer les conditions de travail et à les adapter aux changements; résultat final: une augmentation de la productivité.

Cette démarche suppose évidemment la croissance engendrant la création d'emplois. Je ne suis pas dupe; il faut évidemment des marchés qui fonctionnent, des entreprises productives et compétitives, une saine concurrence, pour développer toutes les économies. C'est la prémisse à la création d'emplois et de richesses qui permettra seulement une politique du travail décent pour tous. Il faut même, le cas échéant, des politiques volontaristes à cette fin.

D'un autre côté cependant, l'augmentation de la croissance n'est pas automatiquement garante d'amélioration de l'emploi, voire de lutte contre l'exclusion sociale. Il faut une politique déterminée et volontariste dans ce domaine. Le marché à lui seul ne réglera rien du tout, tout comme il n'est pas une fin en soi. Politiques commerciales, économiques et sociales doivent aller en parallèle et se renforcer mutuellement.

Ce qui m'amène à l'efficacité de notre action, donc aux aspects d'ordre plus formel.

Il faut d'abord une meilleure cohérence des politiques aux niveaux national et international. Le travail décent pour tous doit figurer à l'agenda pour tous les acteurs, de même que le souci de la croissance doit se trouver dans toutes nos préoccupations. Les deux ne doivent pas être considérés comme antinomiques, mais comme les deux faces de la même action.

La coopération cohérente des acteurs est à son tour une clé du succès. Je ne cesse de croire qu'une certaine institutionnalisation, au niveau global, de la politique pour un travail décent pour tous, ne soit une nécessité, du moins au départ, pour assurer du succès à cette politique. Je regrette donc que cet aspect ait un peu disparu cette année. L'amélioration de la gouvernance à tous les niveaux reste essentielle.

Il faudra devenir de plus en plus concret. Cela passe, comme le souligne M. Somavia, par des plans d'action concrets et mesurables, et la fixation d'objectifs chiffrés ou chiffrables à réaliser dans certaines échéances, et ce sous le contrôle de la communauté internationale. En Europe nous le faisons en matière de politiques financière, économi-

que, sociale et de l'emploi. C'est un modèle, certes pas transposable tel quel, mais pouvant servir de source d'inspiration. L'approche du plan d'action de lutte contre le travail des enfants, de même que celle des programmes de travail décent par pays, me semble la bonne voie. Après avoir identifié les pistes d'action prioritaires, il faut, de manière consensuelle, établir des plans d'action et en évaluer les résultats. L'éradication des pires formes de travail des enfants endéans une période déterminée, à mon sens d'ailleurs encore beaucoup trop longue, est désormais dans les politiques quotidiennes. Ne faudrait-il pas définir un deuxième objectif à poursuivre selon le même schéma?

Finalement, l'intégration du travail décent dans les politiques de coopération bi et multilatérales est une nécessité, de même d'ailleurs que la poursuite de ces politiques de coopération au développement qui ne doivent pas pâtir des problèmes budgétaires qu'ont certains de nos pays dits développés. Mon gouvernement aura une large discussion sur la question à la rentrée politique de septembre.

La tâche est énorme. Continuons à aller de l'avant.

M. DAMIANO (*ministre du Travail, Italie*)

Je suis très honoré d'intervenir aujourd'hui en qualité de ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité sociale du nouveau gouvernement italien.

J'aimerais tout d'abord adresser mes salutations chaleureuses au Président de cette session, M. Česmir Sajda, et au Directeur général Juan Somavia, auquel j'aimerais exprimer ma plus vive satisfaction concernant l'engagement et l'effort qu'il poursuit depuis longtemps pour permettre à tous de travailler dans la dignité. Cet objectif demande de gros efforts. Cent soixante-dix-huit pays avec une multiplicité de situations sociales et économiques et avec une histoire et une culture différentes attendent que se concrétisent ici les espérances concernant le monde du travail des familles, des femmes et des jeunes.

L'ordre du jour: «Travailler dans la dignité» doit être consolidé et les résultats obtenus dans ce sens dans le cadre des politiques stratégiques sont encourageants, comme le souligne le rapport du Directeur général sur l'exécution du programme biennal. En ce sens, l'effort que l'Organisation a accompli est fondamental.

Il faut développer à travers des programmes et des projets stratégiques et aux niveaux global et régional les droits fondamentaux des travailleurs et les projets de création d'emplois à l'intérieur d'un cadre général et promouvoir le dialogue tripartite et les rôles essentiels des partenaires sociaux.

Ce n'est pas travailler dans la dignité que de faire travailler un enfant mineur ou de forcer quelqu'un à travailler sous la contrainte et en le privant de ses libertés.

Le travail est un élément central de notre identité et détermine chacun de nous avec tellement de force qu'il constitue une clé de lecture de notre façon d'être et de notre façon de vivre.

C'est justement cet effort pour définir les limites et les normes qui permettra à tous les travailleurs de travailler dans la dignité qui caractérise l'Organisation internationale du Travail.

L'Italie la soutient avec une conviction renouvelée et aussi par le biais du Centre international de formation de Turin. L'œuvre du centre, dans l'accompagnement des actions de sensibilisation et

des activités d'implantation des programmes de l'Organisation, est perçue comme cruciale.

Certes, la scène internationale impose de nouveaux défis: l'ouverture des marchés et la concurrence internationale poussent souvent à une compétition au rabais où l'addition, trop souvent, est payée par les travailleurs. Même dans les pays les plus développés où le droit du travail a construit un système de protection avancé en faveur des travailleurs, le problème est au cœur de la réflexion. Le fait qu'il n'existe plus aujourd'hui un travail sûr, qu'aucun travail ne soit plus pour la vie, ne doit pourtant pas nous pousser à cesser la lutte pour la sécurité de l'emploi.

En Italie, comme en Europe, nous nous sommes engagés à promouvoir la qualité et la productivité du travail de façon à assurer ou à maintenir la compétitivité des systèmes nationaux à l'échelle mondiale.

L'importance de la flexibilité du travail devient ainsi cruciale dans ce panorama. Par exemple, le gouvernement italien se propose à brève échéance de trouver des solutions pour réduire le coût du travail et pour encourager les entreprises à embaucher des travailleurs avec un contrat à durée indéterminée.

Mon pays a donné son soutien total à la déclaration adoptée en septembre 2005 par le Sommet mondial des Nations Unies qui situe les objectifs du plein emploi, de la productivité, du travail décent et de la réduction de la pauvreté au cœur des préoccupations des politiques nationales et internationales comme étape fondamentale pour atteindre les objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement.

En accord avec ces choix, alors que nous tentons de parcourir le chemin de la qualité du travail, nous devons de garantir en même temps un travail de qualité pour tous.

Si d'un côté la flexibilité devient une nécessité pour la survie du système économique, d'un autre côté, la flexibilité non encadrée par une garantie met en péril le développement démographique des systèmes sociaux. Elle a surtout un impact négatif sur les catégories les plus faibles. Ainsi, les jeunes ne sont plus en mesure de se projeter dans l'avenir, de devenir autonomes et de donner vie à de nouvelles familles.

Les femmes, confrontées à une organisation flexible du travail, à leurs obligations familiales et aux soins portés aux enfants ou aux plus âgés, décident souvent, pour ne pas s'engager sur plusieurs fronts, de renoncer tout simplement.

Il va donc de soi que la flexibilité doit être encadrée et déclinée sous une forme de flexisécurité. Cela nous ramène à une flexibilité qui est en mesure, par exemple, de s'adapter aux exigences de l'équilibre entre un travail et une famille. La famille représente une grosse partie du travail non rémunéré et son existence a une immense productivité sociale qui soutient toutes les activités productives rémunérées.

L'idée de la flexisécurité évoque en plus la création d'un système capable de protéger les droits fondamentaux des travailleurs en garantissant un cadre général de référence pour la santé et la sécurité sur le lieu de travail, en évitant les formes de discrimination en direct à travers l'utilisation déviée de divers types de contrat de travail qui répondent aux exigences de flexibilité de l'entreprise, mais qui sont trop souvent utilisés pour priver les travailleurs

de leurs droits fondamentaux, comme les vacances ou le congé de maternité.

Je pense aux émigrés qui laissent derrière eux leur pays et souvent leur famille pour trouver un monde meilleur qui leur permette de vivre et pas seulement de survivre. Je pense aussi aux enfants. A ce propos, je voudrais remercier le Directeur général pour le message du rapport global qui relève que les efforts internationaux liés à des politiques nationales qui visent à préserver les jeunes générations en tant que bien le plus précieux d'une société peuvent donner des résultats concrets.

La diminution de 10 pour cent du nombre d'enfants astreints à un travail et de 33 pour cent du nombre d'enfants de 5 à 14 ans exécutant des tâches dangereuses est une donnée encourageante qui montre que la route que nous parcourons est la bonne et que l'IPEC est un programme bien construit et bien implanté, qui mérite tout le soutien qu'il a toujours reçu de l'Italie, aussi bien au niveau financier qu'au niveau culturel.

L'objectif de l'élimination des pires formes de travail des enfants d'ici 2016 nous semble, pour la première fois, à portée de main. Il ouvre de nouveaux horizons pour l'avenir; un avenir dans lequel les enfants ne devront fournir qu'un effort scolaire pour devenir demain des adultes travailleurs dans un monde qui ne connaîtra plus le travail des enfants d'aucune façon.

Sr. GOMEZ (*representante, Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores*)

Huelga decir que esta Memoria tiene una importancia fundamental para las organizaciones de trabajadores, por cuanto que refleja una de las principales preocupaciones de la clase trabajadora en torno a las normas, los principios y los derechos fundamentales en el trabajo, en una sociedad en la cual los neoliberales han dejado en segundo plano todo lo relativo a los derechos de los trabajadores, desconociendo los elementos centrales del trabajo decente y la normatividad internacional.

Compartimos con el señor Director General varias de las preocupaciones que refleja en su documento a propósito de la visión de la OIT sobre las regiones. Sin embargo, es necesario aclarar que los Tratados de Libre Comercio no suponen un paso adelante para nuestros países en Latinoamérica – Caribe, sino todo lo contrario.

La Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores expresa sus profundas preocupaciones ante la caótica situación que hoy en día estamos viviendo en nuestra región fruto de la aplicación del modelo neoliberal. Como siempre, la clase trabajadora y la población más vulnerable son quienes pagan el precio más alto de dichas políticas, cuyas consecuencias son el desempleo, la exclusión social, los altos índices de analfabetismo, la insalubridad, la morbilidad infantil, la informalización, la ausencia de oportunidades para la juventud y las demás secuelas que deja a su paso la globalización capitalista.

En medio de esta situación, el movimiento sindical hace lo que está a su alcance para asumir la representación no sólo de los trabajadores organizados sindicalmente, sino además del conjunto de la población, casi siempre en medio de la precariedad e incompreensión de gobierno y empresarios, tal como lo vivimos en países como Colombia, Costa Rica, Perú, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Paraguay, u otros lugares donde la libertad sindical, el derecho de ne-

gociación y los derechos humanos están seriamente amenazados.

Precisamente en medio de esta situación, la Central Latinoamericana de Trabajadores desea expresar toda su solidaridad para con los trabajadores de la República de Colombia, quienes en días pasados propiciaron la firma de un acuerdo con el Gobierno y los empresarios colombianos en la perspectiva de procurar las debidas garantías para el ejercicio de la libertad sindical en este país, así como la defensa de los derechos humanos, siendo el más sagrado de ellos el derecho a la vida.

Expresamos adicionalmente nuestras preocupaciones ante el incremento de los accidentes de trabajo en la minería, en hechos lamentables que han cobrado vidas de decenas de trabajadores por la falta de previsión de las empresas y por la ausencia de labores de inspección por parte de los ministerios de trabajo.

Un párrafo pequeño pero muy sentido para expresar toda nuestra solidaridad para con los trabajadores y pueblo de Palestina, quienes en forma heroica continúan luchando por que se les respete su derecho a la soberanía, a su territorio, a su cultura y que nadie pretenda desconocerlos, porque los ojos del mundo están puestos en la sufrida situación de los niños, las niñas, la juventud, las mujeres y los hombres de Palestina. La humanidad no puede ni debe permitir que se continúe construyendo un nuevo muro de la infamia.

América Latina, una región con más de 20 millones y medio de kilómetros cuadrados, con aproximadamente 550 millones de habitantes, con más de la mitad de la población por debajo de la línea de pobreza, es la región más injusta del planeta en medio de una inmensa riqueza. Por ello, las mujeres, los niños y las niñas, los desempleados, el campesinado, los desplazados por la violencia y, en general, quienes sufren las consecuencias de la globalización capitalista esperan mucho de esta casa común.

Para finalizar, en el marco de esta Conferencia y en esta solemne sala, queremos decir dos cosas: primero, que cualquier institución, país o persona que pretenda violentar la normatividad internacional atenta contra la paz mundial; y segundo, solicitar muy comedidamente al Gobierno de Cuba la libertad para el compañero Pedro Pablo Álvarez y para un grupo de compañeros sindicalistas que se encuentran en prisión por haber fundado un sindicato independiente.

Ms. JALALI (*Worker, Islamic Republic of Iran*)

I have the privilege of standing before this body on behalf of the Workers' delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I would like to pay tribute to the ILO for the commendable efforts it makes in promoting humanitarian ideals. We share the ILO's ideals and are grateful to all its staff. I will briefly touch on a few issues of vital importance.

According to statistics, approximately one and a half million people in the world live in extreme poverty with little or no social security coverage. The income of the majority of workers barely meets their sustenance needs, and the share of GDP allocated for poverty reduction is shrinking.

Globalization is a controversial issue. It proceeds on a biased and uneven basis. It is not a give-and-take process. On the one hand, in an increasingly globalizing world, the outstanding feature of capital is its volatility; it travels easily across national boundaries; it knows no barrier and no borders. Un-

der such circumstances, access to sources of information forms a main part of the wealth of nations. In reality, there is unequal access to information, inducing unfair competition among nations. As a result, gradually more countries are being excluded from the market. On the other hand, there is an increasing dismissal of regular workers as a result of privatization and more reliance on contract and casual labour.

We must ensure that the lengthy and meticulous deliberations and debates, of which the Conventions and Recommendations of ILO are the product, reflect the composite views of all the people who have contributed to their formulation. There are of course particular policies with which not everyone is fully satisfied. There must be commitment to justice, and justice is an all-inclusive term defying any form of exclusion. Too much scrutiny into and emphasis on the rights of minorities is a little bit strange when there are majorities whose rights are violated every day throughout the world. Complacency in this regard adversely impacts justice, which has been a cause respected by the ILO ever since it came into existence.

In the world of work, we think that there is no integrated strategy. We think there is a need for a mandate to draw up a plan for organizing the workforce at a global level. What we suggest is a global labour monitoring system based on tripartism and relying on a real-time database.

On the demand side, employers and contractors may at any moment make their requests for the numbers and types of high-skilled or low-skilled labour. On the supply side, national or regional centres may provide the same kind of data for the unemployed workforce, providing a conducive environment for modernizing labour market management, and the dispatch of workers from any point on the globe to another, thereby giving them a fair chance at having real opportunities at a global level. As a result, the movement of the labour force will be traced and monitored, and the ease of labour movement brought about through this initiative will, to a large extent, decrease human trafficking.

As to the issue of Palestine, the ILO is not, and must not, be indifferent to the sufferings of the people who endure pain, anxiety, fear and death. The perils of indifference are great, and we must be sensitive to the irreversible harm it may cause. We must lift the shroud of silence which has been draped over the fact that the Zionist regime in no way falls into any category of nation states that came into being by the collapse of the old imperial powers by the end of the First World War. People of the same creed, but of different nationalities, brought together in an occupied land do not, and will never, form a nation. We cannot love justice and ignore prejudice. We must be consistent if we are to be believed. Sheer terror is what children feel in this sacred land. Every day houses are demolished, with death taking heavy tolls, turning children into orphans, and bringing parents the eternal grief of having lost their children. Who can sleep at night after having seen the futile struggle of a father in the street trying to protect with his body that of his child against the brutal and barbaric soldiers shooting at them in broad daylight. In our view, the issue at stake in Palestine is a matter of the life and death of children, not child labour. So bring that silence to an end, no matter what the cost.

Ms. AMARELLO-WILLIAMS (*Minister of Labour, Technological Development and Environment, Suriname*)

It is a great honour and privilege for me as the newly installed Labour Minister to address the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference.

We have examined with great interest the comprehensive Report of the Director-General presenting a global perspective of the main features of the transformation of work. We strongly support the approach of the ILO to further the commitment of the social partners to contribute more effectively to national development efforts.

In order to strengthen rights-based governance, Suriname will enhance the quality of its existing labour legislation by complete revision with the Decent Work Agenda, ILO standards and Caribbean Community model laws as points of reference.

Within the context of the Decent Work Agenda, the Government fully understands the importance of a safe working environment for all. The Government therefore welcomes the second discussion on occupational safety and health with the prospects of adopting a Convention and a Recommendation. This instrument will be an excellent guideline for new legislative and administrative measures with regard to the complete revision of our labour legislation.

In the fight against HIV/AIDS it is worthwhile mentioning the launching of the business coalition against HIV/AIDS as a synergistic approach for all the big companies in our country. With the financial aid of the Global Fund, attention is now being paid to the small and medium-sized enterprises, a programme that runs in cooperation with the labour inspectorate.

With regard to the Millennium Development Goal on poverty, a minimum wage system is considered to be an effective means to reduce inequality and to combat gender discrimination. In April, the tripartite preparatory commission for a national minimum wage system was established and will report to my department within six months.

We recognize the motion on active labour market policies as a means to encourage change. At the national level the approach to employment policy is revived by the newly established tripartite national commission for employment policy. After completing its tasks towards the Caribbean Employment Forum, it will be transformed into the permanent tripartite national board for employment. The Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No.181) which was ratified in April 2006, will guide new policy measures in this regard.

As changes occur in the patterns of the more developed world of work, the Surinamese Government notices the uncertainties, lack of clarity and legal complexities due to the increasing dominance of contract labour on labour markets. We appreciate the efforts being undertaken by the Conference to guide member States by adopting an instrument.

The formal ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), by Suriname was registered on 12 April 2006. The Surinamese Government had already started the implementation process by preparing the establishment of a monitoring mechanism, the multipartite national commission against child labour. The *Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work* clearly shows the rapid decline of the number of economi-

cally active children and the activity rate for Latin America and the Caribbean and bears witness to successful regional and ILO efforts. In order to prevent the trafficking of children and avoid labour exploitation, my department actively participates in the Government's Anti-trafficking Commission.

The Government of Suriname acknowledges the creation of productive employment as the most important means to generate prosperity. In order to improve national productivity and enable the development of a comprehensive national productivity enhancement programme, the Labour Ministry established the tripartite preparatory committee for the establishment of a multipartite national productivity centre which will report to my department within six months.

As part of small vulnerable economies, globalization compels our governments to continuously reform the State. Social justice will become a goal harder to achieve without the assistance of the ILO and the developed world.

In conclusion, I would like to convey my appreciation for guidance and assistance provided by the ILO and its programmes and services. The Report of the Director-General and the Global Report clearly state the substantial role of the ILO and influence on the world of work.

M^{me} FATIME (*ministre de la Fonction publique, du Travail et de l'Emploi, Tchad*)

Nous voudrions exprimer très spécialement à M. Juan Somavia, Directeur général du BIT, la gratitude de Son Excellence Idriss Deby Itno, Président de la République du Tchad, et celle de son gouvernement pour les actions entreprises dans notre pays, d'une part, et pour les efforts que l'OIT déploie pour faire du travail décent un paradigme de politiques économiques et sociales axées sur l'homme, d'autre part.

Au Tchad, le gouvernement considère que le meilleur moyen de favoriser le travail décent est le dialogue social, auquel il s'est toujours attelé avec les partenaires sociaux pour améliorer les conditions de vie des travailleurs.

Cependant, malgré les efforts consentis pour atteindre cet objectif, le bout du tunnel reste encore invisible du fait de la pauvreté, la migration, le VIH/SIDA, les conflits armés et le chômage des jeunes, qui sont des défis à relever, sans quoi il serait impossible de parler de droits fondamentaux au travail et de travail décent.

Aujourd'hui, du fait de conditions socio-économiques difficiles, l'homme est exposé à tous les abus et sa dignité est bafouée.

En réponse à ces problèmes, au chômage des jeunes notamment, le gouvernement du Tchad a fait de l'emploi l'une de ses priorités.

Les orientations dans ce domaine sont contenues dans le programme politique du Président de la République, dans la stratégie nationale de réduction de la pauvreté et dans la politique nationale de l'emploi.

Pour ce faire, le gouvernement a accordé toute l'attention nécessaire au développement des activités pour la formation, le renforcement des capacités, la culture, le sport au profit des jeunes mais également la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes.

Et cela d'autant plus que l'emploi participe à la réduction de la pauvreté et à la lutte contre l'insécurité et la délinquance juvénile.

Toutes ces considérations ont conduit le gouvernement à poursuivre la mise en œuvre du Programme national de promotion du secteur privé et à promouvoir la microfinance et la création des conditions propices au développement de l'auto-emploi et de l'artisanat.

C'est aussi fort que cela, et, tenant compte des divers engagements dont il est partie prenante, le gouvernement s'est attelé dès la fin du Sommet de Ouagadougou à élaborer son Plan national d'action pour l'emploi et la lutte contre la pauvreté pour les dix années à venir.

La mise en œuvre de ce plan nécessite l'appui technique de l'OIT, notamment dans le cadre de la recherche de financement.

Cependant, nous voudrions déjà remercier l'OIT pour le soutien qu'elle nous a accordé avant, pendant et après ce sommet. Nous voudrions également saluer, au nom de notre gouvernement, le lancement prochain au Tchad du programme par pays de l'OIT de promotion du travail décent.

Dans le cadre des relations de travail, le Tchad, dont le marché du travail a connu de grands changements consécutifs à l'exploitation pétrolière, est en train de réfléchir avec les partenaires sociaux aux dispositions à prendre en vue de la protection des droits au travail et des droits des travailleurs nationaux.

A ce sujet, nous savons pouvoir compter, comme par le passé, sur l'appui du Bureau international du Travail pour mener à bien ce processus.

S'agissant du travail des enfants, le Tchad a ratifié les conventions fondamentales relatives au travail des enfants et, dans le cadre du processus de mise en œuvre de ces conventions, beaucoup d'efforts sont accomplis.

Cependant, pour résoudre véritablement le problème du travail des enfants, il faut, croyons-nous, que les facteurs socioculturels soient mis à profit de manière efficace pour entretenir la survivance de la cohésion sociale et des principes de solidarité, aussi bien économique que sociale, renforçant ainsi la prise en charge des enfants et des familles en difficulté.

Tout ceci nécessite la stabilité politique, alors que mon pays connaît en permanence des agressions extérieures motivées par des intérêts géostratégiques déstabilisants. En définitive, tous les problèmes que nous venons de soulever ainsi que le phénomène de la migration ont un lien étroit avec la pauvreté. C'est en agissant sur elle de manière efficace que nous pourrions changer les choses et créer les conditions pour une lutte contre la pauvreté par le travail décent.

Pour finir, nous réitérons nos remerciements et nos encouragements au Directeur général du BIT et toute son équipe pour les efforts qu'ils ne cessent de déployer pour la réalisation des objectifs de notre Organisation commune. Nous le félicitons pour son rapport excellent et explicite qui nous a éclairés sur les voies à suivre dans le cadre du travail décent. Et, enfin, nous félicitons le Président Sajda pour la bonne gestion des travaux de cette 95^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail.

Original German: Mrs. ENGELEN-KEFER (Worker, Germany)

Madam President, I am particularly happy to see your appointment as President, as I look back on our work together with such pleasure.

Globalization has brought about change that affects us all but the opportunities of globalization are

unequally distributed, as shown in the Director-General's Report. Though enormous wealth is being created, basic problems of poverty and exclusion remain. Corruption is rampant and workers' fundamental rights are being trampled in many places. According to the Report of the Director-General, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, nearly half of the workers in the world live in poverty and are socially and economically excluded from the benefits of globalization. In industrialized countries, too, the protection and safety of workers becomes very fragile when they suffer an accident or lose their job. It is not hard for us, sitting in this comfortable conference hall, to feel our obligation to fulfil the universal goal of decent work. However, what is more important is that we act in practice to promote and find support for promoting decent work. For many people, this is a matter of survival and of escape from extreme poverty and health- and life-threatening working conditions; for all of us, it affects the future and the protection of human dignity.

For two years, my own organization, the German Confederation of Trade Unions, has made human dignity its central priority and put it at the very centre of all its work. The Basic Law of Germany provides that "human dignity shall be inviolable." It is worrying, then, that 57 years after the introduction of the Basic Law, and after the terrible experience of National Socialism, the Holocaust and the Second World War, yet again that article has to be invoked because economic and social trends tend more and more to support so-called shareholder value at the expense of human rights.

High unemployment, long-term unemployment, increased poverty despite work, precarious employment with little or no social protection, difficulties for young people entering the labour market and exclusion of senior workers, women and people with health problems are all part and parcel of the effect of such neo-liberal trends.

It is right that the Director-General's Report should state the universal truth that decent work for all can only be achieved if economic, social and labour market policies work together. It is time to prioritize this truth in conjunction with the other international institutions, be they responsible for business, finance, trade, the environment, migration or children's rights to name only the most important. The Director-General, with the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, has taken important steps in this direction.

What we need to do now is to help to ensure that practical measures are taken around the world.

The Director-General's Report makes many important practical points. In particular, I would like to refer to the vital role of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Without the rights enshrined therein, there cannot be any lasting progress anywhere in the world in entitling and enabling as many people as possible to find decent work.

We must, however, remember that the rights of workers and trade unions are being violated throughout the world, including even mass murders of trade unionists, such as are taking place in Colombia. I am most relieved that the ILO has now managed to reach a tripartite agreement which provides hope for an effective fight against such inhumane reprisals against trade unions and workers. I

sincerely hope that this will also apply to another very grave case – that of the labour and human rights violations in Myanmar.

I could go on with this list, but let me make it quite clear that ILO international labour standards must be implemented in such a way as to strengthen further, not to weaken freedom of association and the right to organize. In this connection, the Committee on Freedom of Association is among the most important tools that the ILO has to monitor the implementation of Conventions Nos. 87 and 98, and must remain so.

This is an essential condition for decent work to become a reality for as many people as possible around the world. It would help if, at long last, as in the core Conventions, we could agree on the priority Conventions that are essential in ensuring that decent work is truly achieved.

The German Confederation of Trade Unions will give every support to the Director-General and the ILO in this respect.

M. SALL (*ministre de la Fonction publique, du Travail, de l'Emploi et des Organisations professionnelles, Sénégal*)

C'est assurément avec plaisir que la délégation du Sénégal, que j'ai l'honneur de conduire pour la première fois à cette Conférence internationale du Travail, s'associe par ma voix aux délégations qui l'ont précédée à cette tribune pour exprimer leurs félicitations aux membres du Bureau et leur apporter notre soutien.

Nous félicitons également Monsieur le Directeur général du BIT pour l'exhaustivité et la qualité de son rapport en relevant les points forts qui coïncident avec les défis à relever. Pour l'un des défis, à savoir la promotion du travail décent, j'ai eu l'honneur de représenter l'Afrique hier au Panel de haut niveau sur le plein emploi productif et le travail décent dans la coopération internationale pour le développement. A l'occasion de ce Panel, j'ai souligné les défis auxquels l'Afrique est confrontée et j'ai également mentionné le rôle important que doit jouer et que joue l'OIT en demandant donc le renforcement de ses capacités pour mieux venir en appui aux programmes nationaux initiés dans les pays africains en particulier.

Aujourd'hui, le rapport du Directeur général m'offre l'opportunité d'apporter le point de vue de ma délégation sur les conséquences néfastes du travail des enfants. En effet, dans le rapport du Directeur général, il est apparu qu'il existe un lien entre le travail des enfants, notamment à ses pires formes, et la pauvreté. Prenant conscience de la réalité de ce lien, il convient alors d'intégrer la lutte contre le travail des enfants dans nos programmes de développement, essentiellement tournés aujourd'hui vers l'élimination de la pauvreté.

La ratification par le Sénégal des huit conventions fondamentales dont celle portant sur l'abolition des pires formes de travail des enfants traduit, s'il en était encore besoin, sa réelle volonté politique d'atteindre l'objectif principal de travail décent pour tous dans le respect des droits humains en général, et la préservation de l'intégrité et de la dignité des enfants en particulier.

Dans le rapport global sur le suivi de la Déclaration de l'OIT, l'éducation et la lutte contre la pauvreté constituent les deux leviers sur lesquels il faut s'appuyer pour atteindre cet objectif. Je me réjouis de la parfaite convergence entre ces paramètres axés sur l'éducation et la lutte contre la pauvreté, précé-

nisées par l'OIT, et les objectifs que le Sénégal s'est assignés. En effet, en dépit de l'urgence des priorités, de l'ampleur des tâches et de l'insuffisance des moyens, des efforts considérables sans commune mesure avec les actions antérieures ont été consentis par mon pays en affectant plus de 40 pour cent de son budget à l'éducation et à la formation professionnelle.

Ainsi, le taux de scolarisation au Sénégal est passé de 54,4 pour cent en 1994 à plus de 80,5 pour cent en 2005, soit une progression de 21,6 pour cent. Il importe de souligner que le taux de scolarisation des filles s'est accru de 29,8 pour cent, contre 13,1 pour cent seulement pour les garçons. C'est dire l'effort que le gouvernement du Sénégal consent pour la promotion des femmes.

Au plan de la promotion de l'égalité des chances, une modification de la loi d'orientation sur l'éducation est intervenue en 2004 pour rendre obligatoire la fréquentation de l'école jusqu'à l'âge de seize ans et lutter ainsi contre les mariages précoces.

Tout récemment, le projet d'appui à la mise en œuvre du Programme assorti de délais pour l'élimination du travail des enfants, initié par le BIT avec l'appui du ministère du Travail des États-Unis et de la France, a permis au Sénégal d'élaborer un plan-cadre national de prévention et de lutte contre le travail des enfants. Ce plan-cadre inscrit l'éducation dans les domaines d'intervention permettant l'éradication des pires formes de travail des enfants.

Dans le cadre de l'élaboration de la stratégie nationale de protection sociale, qui constitue désormais l'un des piliers du deuxième document de la stratégie de réduction de la pauvreté, des mesures nouvelles, telles que les programmes de logements sociaux et les allocations familiales de rentrée scolaire permettront, sans aucun doute, de lutter efficacement contre le travail des enfants et la pauvreté infantile. A ces initiatives, s'ajoute un toilettage des textes pour assurer la protection pénale des enfants travailleurs avec de nouvelles incriminations.

Ces résultats, nous les devons en partie à l'appui de l'IPEC au ministère de l'Éducation, à travers un programme de sensibilisation et d'inscription scolaire massive des filles dans les zones pourvoyeuses de jeunes domestiques, mais surtout de leur maintien en scolarité par une stratégie discriminatoire positive.

Ces performances, faut-il le rappeler, confortent le Sénégal dans son ambition de faire en sorte qu'en 2015 les enfants, où qu'ils se trouvent, soient en mesure d'achever un cycle complet de scolarisation dans le primaire, conformément aux objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement.

Tout ce cheminement s'est fait en parfaite adéquation avec les partenaires sociaux que sont les employeurs et les travailleurs dans le cadre d'une alliance nationale.

Après ce tour d'horizon, je voudrais mentionner que les actions entreprises par le Sénégal sont réelles et effectives, et je ne saurais terminer sans lancer un appel à l'endroit des partenaires au développement en faveur d'un appui accru au programme de l'IPEC, plus particulièrement au Programme assorti de délais auquel mon pays a adhéré pour garantir un avenir radieux à nos chers enfants.

Quisiera, en primer lugar, felicitar al señor Presidente por su designación para llevar adelante los trabajos de esta 95.^a reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, y expresarle nuestros mejores deseos de éxito en la conducción de los trabajos.

Asimismo, deseo congratular al señor Director General de la OIT, Don Juan Somavia, por el Informe global realizado este año, el cual se refiere a *La eliminación del trabajo infantil: un objetivo a nuestro alcance*.

Según el Informe, el número de niños trabajadores disminuyó globalmente en 11 por ciento durante los últimos cuatro años, mientras que el número de niños que realizan trabajos peligrosos disminuyó en un 26 por ciento.

Con relación al tema, en nuestro país, la República del Paraguay, se ha dado prioridad en la agenda pública a la atención del trabajo infantil, para lo cual se vienen desarrollando políticas para hacer frente a esta realidad que aqueja a todos los países del orbe.

Es así que actualmente, con la cooperación del Programa Internacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil (IPEC) de la OIT, nos encontramos elaborando el proyecto de Registro de Adolescentes Trabajadores, de manera que este año podamos concretar un modelo de Registro para su posterior formalización por parte de las Consejerías Municipales por los Derechos del Niño, la Niña y los Adolescentes (CODENI) que se encuentran en las diversas municipalidades de la República.

Asimismo, a través de la Secretaría Nacional de la Niñez y la Adolescencia, se han emprendido acciones concretas para evitar el maltrato infantil a través de una campaña denominada «Tarjeta Roja al Maltrato», mediante la cual se difunden mecanismos a seguir en caso de que alguna persona tenga conocimiento de casos concretos de abuso, maltrato o explotación de niños, niñas o adolescentes.

El Gobierno, en forma conjunta con organismos internacionales (OIT, UNICEF) y ONG, está implementando proyectos específicos como el *Programa Abrazos*, con un gasto de más de 1.000 millones de guaraníes en inversión social para atender a los niños, niñas y adolescentes que viven en la calle.

Se ha elaborado y aprobado oficialmente un plan nacional para erradicar el trabajo infantil, con énfasis y prioridad en sus peores formas. Este plan está en marcha desde el año 2005 e incluye contenidos que van desde la concienciación, los ajustes legales, la creación de un sistema de información estadística permanente sobre el trabajo infantil y la implementación de programas y acciones hasta la adopción de políticas públicas a nivel nacional, departamental y municipal.

Por decreto del Poder Ejecutivo se están implementando en el plan de actividades de todas las instituciones públicas, acciones que contemplen los temas de la infancia en nuestro país, a través del Ministerio de Educación, la Secretaría de la Niñez y la Adolescencia, la Secretaría de Acción Social, la Secretaría de la Mujer, el Ministerio del Interior y el Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo, entre otros.

Agradecemos a la OIT la cooperación que nos brinda a través del IPEC, al cual alentamos para que continúe desarrollando iniciativas tripartitas a nivel local.

Quisiera referirme asimismo a la Memoria del Director General, titulada *Cambios en el mundo del trabajo*, la cual aborda la enorme diversidad de temas que conforman la realidad laboral mundial.

En este documento se menciona que, en todos los cambios que se producen en el mundo del trabajo, la relación laboral básica sigue siendo un intercambio de trabajo por una remuneración, sustentado por una comprensión común de las obligaciones mutuas y los intereses comunes. Entonces, las relaciones laborales dependen básicamente del diálogo.

En nuestro país, atender las cuestiones laborales se enmarca dentro de uno de los ejes estratégicos del Gobierno nacional, que es el desarrollo y fortalecimiento de las instituciones públicas para que los servicios a la ciudadanía puedan llegar a todos los habitantes de la República.

En ese sentido, conviene aclarar que el Paraguay tiene dos regiones geográficas bien delimitadas que son la Región Oriental y la Región Occidental o Chaco, y que existe una división política de 17 departamentos.

Sobre la base de esta realidad quisiera mencionar que, en el mes de marzo de este año, hemos inaugurado la primera Dirección Regional del Trabajo en la ciudad de Mariscal José Félix Estigarribia, centro de la Región Occidental, la cual realizamos en cooperación con la municipalidad de esa localidad y teniendo en cuenta que el 49,3 por ciento de la población indígena se encuentra en dicha región del país.

La misión de esta nueva Dirección es la de promover y supervisar la aplicación de las normas laborales, atendiendo a que las condiciones de empleo y las relaciones entre el trabajador y el empleador se desarrollen conforme a los principios y leyes vigentes. Su capacidad efectiva y su eficiencia dependen en gran medida del trabajo conjunto que ésta pueda realizar con los actores sociales y las autoridades de la zona.

Es nuestra intención, poder instalar una oficina regional en cada departamento de la República, entre los años 2006 y 2007, con el objetivo de que los trabajadores y empleadores tengan una proximidad a las oficinas de la Autoridad Administrativa del Trabajo.

Desde el Gobierno y principalmente desde el Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo estamos convencidos de que la descentralización y el diálogo social con los actores directamente involucrados son las mejores herramientas para una buena gestión administrativa del trabajo, ya que sólo de esta forma es posible programar objetivos y ejecutar acciones concretas enfocadas en la realidad local.

El Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo, a través de sus direcciones regionales del trabajo, son los encargados de implementar la política laboral que descansa básicamente en el respeto de los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo.

Estamos seguros de que en cada localidad existen las condiciones adecuadas para avanzar hacia esta meta pues el país necesita trabajadores fortalecidos y empresarios comprometidos con los principios y valores que dignifican a la persona a través del trabajo que realizan.

Estamos convencidos de que la atención de temas en el ámbito administrativo debe ir de la mano con la cultura de la paz, facilitando la mediación de conflictos tanto individuales como colectivos para la solución de problemas, y ese trabajo debe a la vez ir acompañado de un diálogo con el poder judicial, de

manera que la magistratura se encuentre permanentemente actualizada sobre estas cuestiones.

En ese sentido, tenemos previsto realizar con la cooperación de la OIT un seminario para jueces y magistrados del fuero laboral, sobre normas internacionales del trabajo y su aplicación, de tal forma que los mismos puedan adoptar en sus sentencias las disposiciones de los convenios internacionales que han sido ratificados por nuestro país.

También aprovecharemos esa oportunidad para dar a conocer los resultados de nuestra gestión en la oficina recientemente creada en la Región Occidental, pues ya tenemos información de las principales cuestiones que atañen a los habitantes de esa zona, y en ese sentido creemos necesaria la instalación de un juzgado en lo laboral en esa región, de manera a completar el acceso a la justicia a los usuarios.

Creemos en la importancia de interrelacionar los programas y políticas económicas con las sociales, tanto a nivel nacional como internacional, con el fin de promover simultáneamente los objetivos económicos y sociales. Consideramos que siempre es importante para el ámbito laboral, tener visiones regionales para resolver problemas similares como pueden ser los trabajadores migrantes y las negociaciones comerciales.

Nos encontramos abocados como país a dar impulso a convenios sobre seguridad social. En ese sentido, ya hemos negociado un convenio con el Reino de los Países Bajos y actualmente nos encontramos realizando la negociación de los términos de dos acuerdos bilaterales sobre seguridad social con la hermana República de Chile y con el Reino de Bélgica, lo cual redundará en beneficio de los trabajadores aportantes en uno y otro país respectivamente.

Actualmente el Gobierno nacional se halla abocado a la formulación de un programa de inversiones públicas productivas de empleo, para lo cual se ha contado con el apoyo de la Oficina Subregional de la OIT en Santiago de Chile, y se ha conformado una mesa de trabajo interinstitucional liderada por el Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo y con la participación de los Ministerios de Obras Públicas y Comunicaciones, de Industria y Comercio, de la Secretaría Técnica de Planificación, de la Secretaría de Acción Social, entre otros.

Por otro lado, hemos solicitado la cooperación del Programa de la OIT sobre el VIH/SIDA y el mundo del trabajo, con el objetivo de desarrollar un proyecto que pueda llevarse adelante a nuestro país.

Por último, quisiera referirme al Estudio general presentado a esta Conferencia que se refiere a la inspección del trabajo, ponderando la utilidad del mismo para tenerlo presente en acciones futuras y referir que en nuestro país contaremos con el apoyo del Proyecto BID/OIT, el cual contiene como uno de sus temas el fortalecimiento de la inspección en el Ministerio de Justicia y Trabajo.

Cabe recalcar la importancia que mi país concede a la función de la OIT, la cual a través de una estructura tripartita permite oír la voz de los actores sociales y los gobiernos, para la cual solicitamos su apoyo permanente, lo cual también merecerá respuestas creativas para desarrollar acciones con mayor eficiencia y oportunidad para todos.

Mr. BEHURIA (*Employer, India*)

The global economy has been looking up since the year 2001. The growth projections of 4.9 per cent this year are indeed fair. Yet, employment

deficit remains a daunting challenge in the new millennium. Unemployment stands today at 192 million and is growing at an alarming rate of 6.3 per cent per annum. The population of people surviving on under US\$2 per day, pegged at 1.4 billion globally, is a cause of immense concern. The situation will be further impacted with spiralling global oil prices and their rippling effect on essentials.

Dictated by these realistic pointers, I share my humble concerns with this learned audience. What policies do we put in place to promote good quality living conditions, growth that has strong roots and is harmonious with the environment, raising the living standards of present and future generations. This forum can provide a reference to key issues to think about, prioritize and adapt to the specificities of each particular situation based on social dialogue. The main issue is not only about macro policy, but also about reaching people at the grass-roots level. It is now imperative to initiate a dynamic process of implementation.

I perused with great interest through this year's Report of the Director-General of the ILO, which has made a marked departure from those of earlier years. It reflects the results-based management framework and strategic budgeting that the ILO is highlighting. Spelling out impact assessment-relevant indicators makes this document very significant, opening a constructive opportunity for mid-course correction, if needed.

Globalization has brought both gains and costs. It has created both unprecedented economic opportunities, as well as deepened social inequalities and personal insecurities. In this context, your ceaseless efforts, which have turned the Decent Work Agenda into a global goal, is highly relevant and noteworthy. We look forward to the ILO emerging as a driving force to shield against the unintended consequences of globalization. Decent work in the information society has a common threat and is an important topic for all countries. I am sure we can dwell on how to better translate the decent work vision into reality, particularly with regard to national employment strategies. Some issues require to be addressed by national policies, while some need a global policy response. Social dimensions of globalization need to be understood and contained.

India strongly supports fair globalization, and is reaping the material, technical and intellectual fruits of globalization. We see a collective energy of enormous magnitude across all sectors in our country, which are indices of excellent economic performance. India continues to gallop at a fast rate compared to the rest of the world, with an estimated compounded economic growth of over 8 per cent. The enormous consumer population here, combined with the intellectual capital, is bound to impact markets all over the globe in years to come.

Your strategic objectives 2 and 3 of the Decent Work Agenda of employment generation and social protection need special thought.

I am reminded at this juncture of the apt words of Mr. Kofi Annan, I quote "employment is the best anti-poverty measure". Employment generation strategies are a mammoth mission, which will require the collective wisdom of this forum. The key question, I believe, would be how we can chart an innovative model to develop effectively on available national resources to seek convergence to achieve this end on a global level.

Without doubt, the market economy does not automatically guarantee growth, social justice or even economic efficiency. The government, political systems and social dialogue play an important role in balancing these interdependencies, where the ILO has a big role to play.

An important component of the employment generation programme is employability skills. We are faced today with what I would call a "skill divide". Facts say that against vocationally trained manpower of 80 per cent in Japan, 68 per cent in the United Kingdom, 75 per cent in Germany, 78 per cent in Canada, India has only 5 per cent. I am sure other developing countries are battling with a similar fate.

Employability skills cannot be job specific, but are skills that cut horizontally across all industries and vertically across all jobs, from entry level to chief executive officer. The increasingly multicultural nature of the workforce has seriously prompted changes in employability skill needs of today's workplace.

A final reason for the increased interest in equipping young people with basic, higher order and effective skills is the growing awareness of what happens when great numbers of people lack these qualifications. We must think about employability skill development as a universal rights issue. There is a strong ethical and practical imperative facing all of us who help prepare people for the labour market: to ensure that people are well prepared to enter working situations.

Another important fact is that working women form 54 per cent of the labour force, compared to over 80 per cent male participation. Poverty is increasingly feminized. Women constitute 70 per cent of the world's 1.3 billion absolute poor.

Half of the world's labour is in sex-stereotyped occupations, with women dominating those occupations that are lowest paying and least protected. In a world increasingly dominated by information and communication technology, gender inequalities lead to new forms of social exclusion.

We need to address these multifaceted gender issues. For the ILO and its partners, the future challenge consists in effectively incorporating gender equality concerns throughout the process of putting decent work into practice at the national and international levels.

In this context, I would like to share the development of India in restructuring 500 industrial training institutions, with support from the World Bank and involving public-private participation. I request the ILO to initiate similar mega projects to aid the development and restructuring of vocational training institutions.

The Global Compact is a very good instrument for using the dynamic skills of business for social needs. After all, long-term business success depends on constructive partnership with communities. A boardroom agenda infused with social responsibility will surely be meaningful.

In India too, this vision is taking strong roots, with over 100 countries enrolled in Global Compact programmes. After the National Convention in 2004, the Regional Conclave of March 2005 was very fruitful. Informal networks have come up in New Delhi and Mumbai; chapters are being planned in major cities.

I am sure the present agenda will aid in providing an integrated, workable and user-friendly opera-

tional framework for identifying the ILO's basic principles and helping countries identify and act upon their own priorities. Your agenda is rooted in each country and will significantly impact its people. Your forum is the leading global agency in core competencies related to the world of work and labour markets. We look forward to your guidance.

Sr. CARDONA VALLE (*Viceministro del Trabajo, Honduras*)

En la parte introductoria del informe VI titulado *La función de la OIT en la cooperación técnica*, se hace una afirmación seguida de una pregunta: «El mundo cambia: ¿seguir el ritmo o marcarlo?» A continuación se formulan unas interrogantes que su seriedad y agudo contenido retomamos: ¿cuál es la mejor manera de ayudar a los países a lograr el trabajo decente para todos en un mundo con problemas cada más complejos y numerosos? ¿Cómo se pueden promover el empleo, los derechos, la protección y el diálogo de tal manera que sea posible impulsar el crecimiento, reducir la pobreza y permitir una distribución más amplia de los frutos del crecimiento económico, mejorando y complementando a la vez las políticas de desarrollo en otros campos? ¿Cómo deberían tomarse las decisiones relativas a la cooperación técnica y a su estructura y cuál es la mejor manera de llevarla a cabo?

Todas estas inquietudes suenan como un eco de nuestras aspiraciones y anhelos, y aquí está la cuestión: cómo traducir a la práctica las correctas y hermosas elaboraciones teóricas que, no obstante encontrarse fundamentadas en hechos y realidades, cuando queremos llevarlas a la práctica nos encontramos con una cantidad de imponderables que a menudo frustran los más sanos y humanos intentos para concretarlos en un beneficio hacia los sectores menos favorecidos. Para el caso, el aumento incontenible del precio del petróleo constituye una importante variable de riesgo, al igual que los efectos de los cambios climáticos y los desequilibrios de las economías mundiales más fuertes.

El agravamiento de las dificultades para atemperar los problemas que obstaculizan el avance de la promoción de empleos dignos, el fomento de la productividad mediante el fortalecimiento del tripartismo y el diálogo social, al parecer se vuelven cada vez más difíciles de lograr. A este respecto, la experiencia nos enseña que tendremos que redoblar esfuerzos y fortalecer nuestro espíritu.

En la publicación de esta Organización llamada *Tendencias mundiales del empleo*, de enero de 2004, en su Perspectiva general decía: «En 2003 no mejoró el empleo en el mundo, a pesar de que volvió el crecimiento económico después de dos años de declive», y continuaba diciendo: «Paralelamente al empeoramiento de la situación del empleo en el mundo, creció de tamaño la economía informal en las regiones en desarrollo de poco aumento del PNB».

A menudo los análisis macroeconómicos proyectan perspectivas de recuperación económica en América Latina, más o menos positivas. Pero cuando hacemos el análisis de la distribución de este crecimiento económico, en general observamos un desbalance entre el concepto crecimiento económico y desarrollo social.

Por otra parte, y especialmente en los países que han abierto la puerta al «gran mercado global» por medio de los tratados comerciales, se prevé que las llamadas «economías en transición» mejorarán en cierta medida la situación del mercado laboral en

virtud de las inversiones extranjeras y de la posibilidad de la exportación de productos libres de impuestos. Pero esto estará por verse. En todo caso, los retos son grandes.

En junio de 2005, con el patrocinio de la OIT, se llevó a cabo en mi país, Honduras, el Foro Subregional Tripartito sobre Empleo, en el que se expuso y analizó el tema del empleo con objetivos claros, adoptando un procedimiento de seguimiento para el cual fue constituida una comisión que ha venido cumpliendo su cometido.

Por su parte, el Gobierno de la República, con el apoyo técnico de la Oficina Subregional de la OIT para América Central, con sede en San José de Costa Rica, ha confiado a la Secretaría de Trabajo y Seguridad Social de Honduras la elaboración de un Plan Nacional para el Empleo Digno.

Vale destacar que el Gobierno de Honduras ha venido impulsando acciones concretas para erradicar las peores formas de trabajo infantil y promover el respeto de los derechos sindicales y la legislación laboral, acciones que han sido apoyadas por la OIT y que esperamos seguir fortaleciendo con la finalidad de favorecer el desarrollo sostenible en nuestro país.

Original Farsi: Mr. OTAREDIAN (Employer, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The coming years will be challenging ones for the ILO as it looks to strengthen further its support for, and involvement of, its Members in responding to the changing needs of the world of work.

Globalization has resulted in enormous opportunities throughout the world, but has also brought with it many challenges. In this context, the credibility of globalization vis-à-vis its ability to deliver on promises made regarding opportunities for employment and growth in the developing world is declining rapidly, with the global economy failing to deliver enough new jobs for those entering the labour market. If this process continues, its result will be unacceptable and unjust to emerging labour markets.

Progress towards the goal of fair globalization requires change. All actors in the growing emerging job crisis must aim to turn around the process to increase opportunities for all, regardless of frontiers.

In today's world, States have interlocking interests. However, as the world grows more prosperous, the widening gap between the rich and poor becomes less tolerable to all of us. This widening gap can be seen in terms of the increasingly unequal distribution of employment opportunities around the world and is resulting in a number of dangerous trends in international migration and even social stability. Hence, when countries are plagued with high unemployment – and in particular with high youth unemployment – the top priority should remain employment creation. It is a prerequisite for the alleviation of poverty and the attainment of the other strategic objectives of the ILO. Consequently, we firmly believe that employment creation should be at the heart of the ILO's work.

The ILO's technical cooperation programme is contributing to the creation of enterprises and employment, acceleration of economic growth, upgrading of skills and competencies, and productivity and competitiveness. It is also a vehicle for the transfer of knowledge, skills and best practices. Its ultimate objective is to improve the standard of living of millions of people in the world through the creation of employment. Hence, the effectiveness of

the ILO's technical cooperation programme is of prime importance to all of us.

Looking at those challenges as a whole, we all should recognize the importance of increasing the ILO's role and influence in international debates on global commerce, investment, employment and migration. The ILO's mandate connects with that reality.

In this context, we do believe that the ILO needs to work closely with the United Nations system, the World Trade Organization and the global financial and monetary institutions in policy formulation to respond to current trends in trade, investment and migration and how they affect the quality and quantity of employment, which is the number one priority for social and economic policies. But we believe that a clear process should be established where the ILO can further its core mandate and contribute its competencies without losing its identity. This is also where the ILO can make a real and substantive contribution within the overall United Nations system. The adoption of decent work country programmes as the framework for delivering technical cooperation programmes to countries provides the ILO with an excellent opportunity to engage with and influence the United Nations at the country level.

In conclusion, reflecting on the future role of the ILO in the face of changes in the world of work is timely. However, it is important to realize that change cannot be stopped. We need to look to the future with new eyes, rather than trying merely to apply old thinking and approaches to what are in fact new issues.

Original Arabic: Mr. JERAD (representative, Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb)

I would like at the outset to express, on behalf of the member organizations of the Union of Workers of the Arab Maghreb, my congratulations to the Officers of the Conference on their election. I wish them every success in their work. I have also the pleasure to address my thanks to Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General, for his efforts in upholding the principles of decent work and the framework on which the Global Report, *The end of child labour: Within reach*, is based.

We all know that the elimination of child labour is closely linked to the problems of development and problems of peace. The Palestinian child, like the Iraqi child, suffers from the calamities of occupation. In Africa millions of children are enduring depravation and hunger, and millions of children in the world are subject to exploitation and abuse. If we want to bring some hope into the minds of those children, we have here to apply effectively the principle of worldwide solidarity, through debt relief, through the establishment of a more equitable world trade system, through the allocation of additional resources to development in Africa, and through efforts to limit the effects of armed conflicts, which will pave the way to building a more just and more stable world.

The objective of development worldwide cannot be achieved, in our view, without encouraging developing countries to establish regional organizations. Here, the ILO can act as a catalyst, by stepping up technical cooperation with the social partners, particularly in the Maghreb region and the Arab world as a whole, and by enhancing their capacity to participate effectively in regional integration. In that regard, there is a need to reinforce the

status of the Arabic language in the ILO in order to promote cooperation between the two parties.

Peace and stability worldwide remain one of the essential prerequisites to reaching our objectives. Areas of tension and regional conflicts waste a large amount of our resources, and it really is our duty to hurry up and settle these conflicts as soon as possible and to ensure stability and progress for all people of the world.

I would like to mention here the efforts made by the Organization towards establishing peace in the Middle East. It is vital to pursue these efforts in order to support the Palestinian people in their struggle to recover their legitimate rights foremost of which is their right to establish an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

Development in the occupied Arab territories suffers the consequences of Israeli occupation, the establishment of the separation wall, and violent and racist practices. This crisis has been exacerbated by the collective punishment imposed on the Palestinian people since the last legislative elections, by international aid being withheld and by the increased pressure on the Palestinian authorities.

As a way out of the current deadlock, the ILO should provide immediate support to the social partners in Palestine to help them face the destructive impact of the occupation and the blockade.

Efforts must also be continued towards putting an end to the occupation of Iraq and stopping the spiral of violence, to enable the Iraqi people to build their democratic institutions in an atmosphere of freedom and unity. Similarly, efforts must be made to put an end to the occupation of the Syrian Golan and the Shebaa Farms, to protect the unity and stability of Sudan, to put an end to policies of domination and threats of force, and to free the Middle East from all weapons of mass destruction. This will ensure a propitious ground for eradicating the reasons behind fundamentalism and extremism and allow the peoples of the region to build their own future in an atmosphere favourable to development, democracy and respect for human rights.

We have a deep conviction that this Organization can play a leading role in consolidating the values of cooperation and mutual aid among nations. This will contribute to spreading peace and prosperity all around the world and strengthening security and dignity for all.

Mr. SELMANAJ (representative, United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo)

On behalf of the UNMIK delegation I am pleased to have the opportunity to explain the important work being undertaken in Kosovo in pursuit of the ideas of the International Labour Organization. Furthermore, I express the commitment of the UNMIK delegation to transfer the results of the Conference into concrete action for our people.

As a Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, I bear a heavy responsibility in responding to the employment and welfare needs of a diverse ethnic population. Our needs are many. The registered unemployment rate in Kosovo is 43 per cent, one of the highest in Europe. About 53 per cent of our population is under the age of 25 years. Many of our young people are facing a future with very limited opportunities. Those lucky enough to find work need protection from exploitation and dangers in the workplace.

Desperate times can lead families to take desperate measures. We see children and young children gamble away their futures by leaving school to become street vendors to help support their families. We are troubled to see the connection between poverty and the low retention rates for girls and children from the Roma community in school.

So what should be done to improve work opportunities for the people of Kosovo? The answers are many: economic development, stable investment, a climate of certainty about a future within Europe. What is certain, however, is that the challenges of expanding employment opportunities for all ethnic communities, for women and people with disabilities will not be solved by defining the status of Kosovo, which is now being discussed in Vienna.

The current employment challenges are difficult. However, we refuse to allow the economic, social and political structure of the past to dictate our future. Instead, we want to build on the advancement that has been made with the support of numerous organizations and donors in the last few years. All thanks go to the International Labour Organization, European Agency for Reconstruction, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Council of Europe and the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and to all who have made substantial contributions.

Many donor countries, too numerous to list here can be assured they are well remembered by Kosovo for their immense contributions in the areas of employment and social security.

Advances in the reform of the education and vocational training sector have led to improvements in the skills level of our labour force. The European Agency has invested 10 million euros and a donation from the Government of Luxembourg over the next four years will help with the reform of the framework, including the involvement of private business partners. As a result, people of all ages have the opportunity to attend vocational training and acquire the modern skills sets they need in a progressive labour market.

Kosovo is moving forward in a manner which reflects our commitment to a full European future. We are also grateful to the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe. Working Table II on Economy for including Kosovo at the original meeting of the Initiative for Social Cohesion. The meetings and activities provide useful forums to meet with the neighbours and develop projects of mutual interest. With a view to preparing for participation in regional labour markets, we have turned our attention to the sector of social security and pension forums. The Council of Europe's Social Institutions Support Programme has been instrumental in assisting the development of our social security and pensions system toward concurrence with European neighbours.

By participating enthusiastically, we hope our neighbours will recognize our commitment to improving cooperation and attaining European standards for our systems. We hope that this will benefit the transfer of social security and pension information of those who once worked in Kosovo and for those from Kosovo who have returned from working abroad.

I hope today I have been able to highlight the commitment of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to updating the skills and training of the Kosovo workforce and modernizing our social secu-

rity and pension system. I hope this will help other countries to see Kosovo as a mature place with a reliable source of labour which could implement their own seasonal market needs. Regular or seasonal employment would generate income that would contribute to reducing poverty in Kosovo, as well as changing the skill sets of our youth. Increasing the employment opportunities and reducing poverty would increase the uptake of education and make a major contribution to the goals of the Kosovo Steering Committee on the Prevention of Child Labour.

Mr. BROSH (*Employer, Israel*)

In the next few minutes I would like to talk about cooperation. As a business person that stands today at the head of the Israeli business community, it is clear to me that the road to growth and development runs through different forms of cooperation. I was glad to find out that the recently elected head of the Israeli trade union, the Histadrut, has a similar philosophy.

We both believe in solving conflicts by negotiation. We prefer to find agreement instead of legislation. In legislation you know where you start, but you can never know where it will end, as you are in the hands of the politicians and here their agenda is different and not always in favour of the workers or the employers.

We, employers and employees, have one common interest, the success of the business. We know that the success achieved by cooperation benefits all sides as it also means high wages and better job security.

This understanding brought about dynamic and dramatic changes in the relations between employers' organizations and the trade unions in Israel. For many years we had good labour relations at the factory level—talks and negotiation instead of strikes and conflict. Now we have this achievement also at the national level.

Just for example, in the year 2004 1.2 million working days were lost because of strikes, in 2005 only 250,000. This is not because of a lack of labour disputes, this is because of cooperation.

Cooperation is also the way to avoid conflicts on regional and international arena. For that, I am pressing for creating more programmes for cooperation between Israeli industry and the industry of our neighbouring countries. We must adapt a goal of growth in trade relations between Israel and other countries in the region in cooperation with countries in Europe and North America. For instance, the Qualified Industrial Zones agreement (QIZ) between the United States, Jordan, Egypt and Israel has contributed greatly to trade and employment in both Jordan and Egypt.

All together, it increased Arab exports to the United States. It has also benefited Israeli industry by demanding a certain Israeli content.

I am convinced that similar plans must be developed with the Palestinians. The private sector in Israel will push for it. I am proud to be a partner in several initiatives of the private sector in Sweden, Turkey and England; some were started two years ago. Unfortunately, they were stopped in the last month because of the election result at the Palestinian Authority. I hope that they will resume shortly and that we will be able once again to cooperate in projects for economic and social growth that will also serve the road to peace.

I would like to thank the Director-General for the kind and helpful words that he expressed on the restoration of democracy in Nepal and for the leadership of Nepal. I also wish to express our sincere and profound appreciation for the role the ILO plays in raising the voice for the protection of fundamental rights of trade union leaders and workers during the movement.

Let me inform this august body that, recently, Nepal has gone through a momentous change. The success of the historic peaceful movement has ushered in a new era of fully-fledged democracy, supremacy of people over all institutions, peace and stability in Nepal.

The process of transformation is resolutely and steadily unfolding and will continue to consolidate our achievements. This has been possible only with the unparalleled courage and determination of people from all strata of the Nepalese society. As the nation is looking for the new dawn of peace and stability, continued support and sympathy of the international community will be crucial for our success.

We have taken due note of the Report of the Director-General on *Changing patterns in the world of work*. We must have a holistic view of all these issues to better understand and manage the forces of change in a world in which fairness and social justice would be the drivers of change. Liberalization, globalization and all progressive revolutions and science and technology have completely changed the production pattern and the nature of the global economy. They have created unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities for all the countries around the world.

But some are facing the downside of globalization more than others. It is a palpable reality that the weakest and those on the lower rungs of the economic ladder, trapped in a vicious circle of poverty at a low level of equilibrium, have to face low productivity, low growth and high unemployment. They have been systematically marginalized from this globalized stream of prosperity. Therefore, our collective efforts should be directed towards promoting an inclusive and fair globalized region that encompasses all.

We should also aim at enhancing a high rate of growth that simultaneously creates gainful employment opportunities for all by ensuring growth while promoting decent work. Finding a balance between efficiency and security of labour and internalizing the organic relations between effective demand and supply are indeed our constant endeavours.

Because of its unique tripartite character, the role of the ILO in all its mandatory areas will be crucial, especially as we find ourselves in an ever-changing and highly competitive global economic landscape.

The latest ILO report on child labour explains that their number has globally fallen by 11 per cent; though it is a modest fall it has nonetheless reinforced our common aspirations that a world without child labour is indeed within our grasp.

My country has also seen the average level of child labour decrease, despite a ferocious insurgency at home. This was possible because of the concerted efforts of all, the Government, ILO-IPEC programme, social partners and the civil society. The IPEC time-bound programme also assisted us

in implementing the programme for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. We feel that a coherent policy formulation, legal instruments and their enforcement, social partnership, basic education and growth at home, supported by strong international partnership, can greatly contribute to the rapid reduction of child labour.

Extension of the second phase of the programme would help strengthen our capacity to deal with the problem further. This should continue to be at the forefront of the global agenda.

I would like to reiterate our deep and abiding commitment to the Decent Work Agenda. We intend to attain decent working conditions in Nepal progressively through a tripartite and participatory process. Nepal has adopted a new labour and employment policy, which is based on the four pillars of the Decent Work Agenda. A national plan of action and decent work and a new labour migration policy are being finalized. Provisions have been made for the promotion of productive employment, fundamental rights at work, social security, occupational safety and health, as well as social dialogue. Based on social partnership, we are in the process of developing legal instruments for their enforcement and devising focus programmes for their implementation.

Finally, let me also take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to the ILO for the technical cooperation that is being provided to Nepal. We believe that the ILO should give priority to providing robust and comprehensive technical cooperation programmes to countries with a low capacity and countries in transition to post-conflict situations. Youth employment and skill development in this regard are crucial for our stability and progress.

I would like to conclude by expressing the commitment of the Government of Nepal to pursue the goal of socially responsible growth that promotes the objective of high economic growth, decent work and reduction of poverty in an integrated manner. I would therefore like to call for a vigorous and supportive role of the ILO in helping us achieve those worthy goals.

Ms. TAYLOR (*Worker, United Kingdom*)

I bring greetings from the 6.5 million members of the Trades Union Congress (TUC), our General Council and our first black woman president, Gloria Mills.

The Reports before us demonstrate the ILO's crucial relevance to the changing world of work. We share the determination to place it in the vanguard of the search for global policy coherence and share the Director-General's views on the reform of the United Nations. Coherence and greater effectiveness will not be aided by undermining the ILO's unique tripartite structure.

Tripartism enables the ILO to fulfil its mandate by keeping it rooted in the world of work. We welcome the development of decent work country programmes as a national expression of that coherence. They must be rooted in tripartism and supported by the other United Nations agencies and the international financial institutions.

We welcome the progress towards the elimination of the worst forms of child labour but are concerned at the apparent increase in the number of children in its non-worst forms. This raises questions about the commitment of governments to the holistic ap-

proach pursued by IPEC to the elimination of child labour and education for all. This lack of coherence was unfortunately reflected in the Declaration of the September United Nations Summit, which overlooked the ILO member States' obligations to eliminate all forms of child labour and the need for compulsory schooling to continue at least until children reach the minimum age for employment.

We too applaud the adoption of the multilateral framework for a rights-based approach to migration, to which the TUC contributed significantly. We are committed to inclusive trade unionism, where all workers have a home, regardless of their status or place of work and we are dismayed at the distortion and conflation of the migration, trafficking and asylum debate by parties and governments seeking electoral advantage. We want a social Europe not a fortress Europe.

We share the pleasure at the adoption by the Maritime Session of the consolidated Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, and are proud of the role played by my General Council colleague, Brian Orell, as Seafarers' spokesperson. It has become a cliché that shipping is the first global sector.

The Convention represents a further contribution by the ILO and its tripartite constituents to the construction of a social dimension to globalization. We hope it will contribute to real improvements for the seafarers of all nations who make global trade possible.

However, the crushing weight on the poor of jobless growth continues to call into question the current mode of globalization. While injustice in global agricultural trade blocks, poverty reduction in developing producer countries, profits – not least, of multinational food retailers – continue to soar. Women, migrant workers and children continue to bear the brunt of global inequality.

The TUC is strongly wedded to the European social model and to a fair globalization. So we are following with interest developments in Latin America, as government after government throws off the shackles of neo-liberalism and they begin to explore together a new mixed economy model, committed to equity and social justice; truly an opportunity to change patterns in the world of work for the good of the many rather than the few. We have expressed our concern at threats to the sovereignty of these member States and to the life of at least one democratically elected president.

We maintain a close relationship with the Colombian trade union movement and our concern at their plight. So we welcome the agreement to establish an ILO presence in the country and, as we stated at the Governing Body in March, the TUC intends to contribute to the special technical cooperation programme for that purpose.

Zimbabwe and Myanmar remain preoccupations for us. Ensuring respect for their workers' fundamental rights also requires international coherence and, in the Asia Pacific region, we are profoundly concerned at the threat to free trade unionism and collective bargaining in Australia.

In the Arab region we continue cooperation with Global Unions' efforts to aid in the reconstruction of free trade unionism in Iraq. We are building links with the trade unions of the Saharawi people, who suffer gross violations of fundamental rights in the occupied zone of their country.

The TUC has repeatedly called for contributions to the ILO's Palestinian Fund for Employment and

Social Protection. Ensuring the proper functioning of the Palestinian Authority and supporting the social partners is more urgent than ever. The Director-General's Report highlights the downward spiral in the decent work deficit for Palestinian workers and the barriers placed literally on the development of the Palestinian economy and social infrastructure by the occupation restrictions on the movement of people and goods, the wall and the continued growth of illegal colonies in the West Bank. Both Palestinian and Israeli workers need decent work and re-invigorating the peace process, in line with United Nations Resolutions, demands immediate action.

I will conclude by saying that the world needs the ILO and the world's workers need decent work for adults and schools for all their children. As the global economy grows richer and disparities in wealth and poverty between the nations increase, we must, for the sake of peace and social justice, work together for a globalization based on equity, fairness, social dialogue and the rule of international law. The current path is unsustainable.

Ms. BURROW (*Worker, Australia*)

The ILO is an anchor in a world being pulled in many directions by the gale forces of globalization. Work, decent work, will go a long way to calming the waters and protecting the lives and aspirations of working people. But there can be no work more important than that directed towards realizing the objectives of the decision by 150 Heads of State and Government to support the objective of achieving fair globalization, full employment and decent work for all.

The Decent Work Agenda promotes access for all to freely chosen employment, the recognition of fundamental rights at work, an income to enable people to meet their basic economic, social and family needs and responsibilities, and an adequate level of social protection for workers and family members.

In 1998, all governments that are Members of the ILO committed themselves to implement fundamental rights at work. Yet, progress on implementation remains problematic at best. Unfortunately, we have witnessed regression on freedom of association and collective bargaining around the world. Governments like my own have passed legislation that dramatically curtails these rights. They are not alone, but they are morally wrong and economically misguided.

The Director-General rightly points out that the world is facing an unprecedented global jobs crisis, with the need to create some 40 million jobs in the next decade.

What is particularly distressing is that governments which are struggling with the challenges of globalization, development and job creation have often been encouraged and praised by certain international organizations when they curtail the rights of workers. In particular, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has been fulsome in its praise of labour legislation reforms, including those in my own country, Australia. Human rights and workers' rights for the IMF are labour market rigidities in their view. Morally bankrupt, yes, but also economically shortsighted.

To have millions of producers in our global workforce who have little or no hope of being consumers, or, to put it another way, who do not have the

choice of even small amounts of discretionary income, is counterproductive in a global economy based on capitalism.

The core labour standards, in particular collective bargaining, have a central role to play. To this end, the World Bank's International Finance Corporation has demonstrated real social and economic leadership in its decision to include core labour standards as part of the conditionality for loans.

There is increasing research that demonstrates that where union bargaining is active, not only is discretionary income higher, but productivity growth is positive. Where there is a fair wage, it in turn spawns associated jobs in the community to meet retail, construction and service demand.

As controversial as it may be, so does the minimum wage – a living wage based on the level of economic development within countries and perhaps related to the GNP or average wage levels of individual economies will have the effect of supporting the poorest and greatest numbers of workers worldwide so that they can be active in their domestic economies.

This is an impossibility if the greed of our western multinationals, the corporate giants who use their power to refuse price rises and entrench the “China price” which denies workers increased wages and decent conditions, remains the standard. Rather, as buyers in both wholesale and retail markets, they insist on further reductions. Mr. Huang, a factory engineer, talking about stereos produced for the United States market, says “the profit is really small; we have to constantly cut costs to satisfy Wal-Mart”.

Governments and international institutions must also recognize the twin growth engines of public services and small and medium-sized enterprises. In developing countries, rural non-farm activity investment in both physical and social infrastructure is critical if decent work is not to remain elusive. The role of the State with its institutions, transparent regulations and enabling facilities is a crucial partner required for both business and communities to grow.

Where companies and unions work in partnership with governments, we can realize decent work. This was the story of Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where the social partners, with the Government, facilitated corporate restructure, upskilling, low inflation and productivity growth and set up our economy, in large part, for the long period of growth it has experienced.

Sadly, you cannot look to Australia today. Decent work, rights at work, have been torn up by the Government in the grip of the greediest of business leaders. Yesterday, we were pleased to see the Committee on the Application of Standards call for the Australian Government to provide material to be examined by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, with particular concern for the obligation of the Government to ensure respect for freedom of association and its obligation to promote collective bargaining.

Let me conclude by saying that the ILO is unique in the global family, with its twin strengths of a tripartite structure and a mandate covering the world of work; decent work.

I hope to be very much part of this global work in support of the leadership of the Director-General. The very real opportunity afforded to us to achieve

the ambition of the world's leaders to achieve a fair globalization can occur with the strengthening of the ECOSOC-ILO partnership.

Equally, I long for the day when we have a government in my own country that again recognizes the strength and opportunity of tripartite relations that allow us to grow as a nation, able to meet our own challenges for a sustainable future, based on respect for the rights of working people, ILO standards and that very Australian, but sadly tarnished, notion of a “fair go”.

Ms. PONCINI (*representative, International Federation of University Women*)

Vulnerability is not a characteristic of the female gender, but of the sectors in which society and private entities have rendered them vulnerable. Segmentation and welfare categorization of women have exacerbated their disadvantaged position in the employability and development process. We are therefore very pleased that the Director-General's outstanding Report on *Changing patterns in the world of work* has underscored that work includes unpaid work in the family and in the community that is ignored in current thinking about the economy and society, done mostly by women and carried alongside with paid work. We congratulate and thank the staff who worked on the Report for mainstreaming the gender dimension throughout and highlighting where and how women-specific patterns of work continue being disadvantaged by their very low level of employment and inequality at work.

We are gratified to see in Mr. Somavia's vision of decent work, which has become a global agenda, including in human rights' circles, that women's rights to equality towards decent work is a core concept. His leadership in promoting gender equality as a fundamental framework of the ILO's programme on decent work and poverty reduction are indeed a welcome impetus for change.

The many paragraphs in this Report concerning women's paid and unpaid work trace a red line, clearly proving that women are significant contributors to the money economy by their entrepreneurial capability and capacity to generate income through self-employment and through other forms of services in the informal sector. On the other hand, we see a continuity in women being utilized for “race to the bottom” measures, due to global competition, that are below the decent work definition of the ILO. A gender perspective clearly shows that, while women more than men are increasingly participating in the labour market, they continue to bear the brunt of poverty, arising from the triple task of the reproductive role, giving care to the family and earning an income. On the latter, women are found at the lowest scale of decent employment and decision-making positions. There is gender inequality in social protection throughout their life cycle from childhood to retirement age because women, from their girlhood, are often deprived of formal education and non-formal training, which would open doors to quality employment. Thus, on reaching working age, a substantial number of women are found in the informal sector, part-time, home and domestic work and increasingly in human trafficking and sex trade, where there is little or no social security coverage and safety nets, leading to sexual exploitation and physical violence against women, arising from women's disempowerment.

The Director-General addressed the need to envision demographic changes, particularly the ageing population. I would like to stress that it is women who are living longer, continuing to overload older women as substitute caregivers to orphaned children of HIV/AIDS victims or to children of mothers who are single heads of households. Therefore, proactive policies have to be adopted with a gender lens to reduce caregiving and increase social protection for older women.

Women's greatest obstacle to productive work, quality in employment and career development is lack of an enabling environment to help her in her productive role, such as providing free or affordable childcare facilities, and boys and men, sharing in work and family responsibilities.

For years, we have asked that the gender asymmetry in article 3, paragraph 2, of the ILO Constitution adopted in 1919, which stipulates "when questions specially affecting women are to be considered by the Conference, one at least of the advisers should be a woman" be revised. This article limits women's equal rights to accede to the decision-making level of the ILC. As the Director-General urged in his closing speech last year, it is time to take more vigorous action to increase women's participation, notably as delegates.

Finally, I respectfully remind honourable delegates that a phrase, or even a word, weighs heavily on principles, policies and standards such as those contained in the ILO's Constitution. They serve to give a legal and an institutional base to protect rights, promote better working conditions and prevent gender inequalities, among others. This is why it is necessary to amend the article, removing conditionality and qualification. We propose the following wording: "women and men should be invited equally to participate in the Conference as delegates and advisers and observers".

And in article 9 on staff recruitment, where it stipulates that a "certain" number should be women", the word "certain" be replaced by "an equal" number. Both amendments will then reflect gender equality, as called for in the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Lastly, I am pleased to inform this Conference that the Working Group is organizing, at the parallel NGO Forum in June, a round table on decent work and women's perspectives.

Original Russian: Mr. SHCHERBAKOV (representative, General Confederation of Trade Unions)

First, we have read very carefully the Report of the Director-General concerning the ILO's activities over the last two years and we note with satisfaction that the ILO has carried out its activities with determination and according to plan, in order to implement the Decent Work Agenda. The principle of decent work articulated five years ago by the ILO has received worldwide acclaim.

This is shown by the fact that the United Nations has acknowledged that these principles have made the greatest contribution to economic development to be seen in the next ten years.

We also clearly realize that the matter of putting the Decent Work Agenda into effect is going to be a long and difficult task. As the Report states, the lack of decent jobs is a chronic problem throughout the world and has been declared by the international community as a serious challenge for combating poverty.

We feel that in developing and implementing country programmes, the ILO has given a new impetus to resolving the whole problem of decent work. The Report notes quite rightly – and we see this in practice – that this approach has very much helped to bring the ILO closer to the needs and ambitions of its member countries and their social partners, in particular the trade unions. This has enabled the social partners, and the trade unions in particular, to participate actively in implementing ILO programmes to bring their labour and social policies into line with international labour standards.

The indicators shown in the Report demonstrate that the countries of our region, too, are beginning to make more active use of the database of the ILO, its consultative assistance and its research activities.

We would like to inform the participants at the Conference that our organization, the General Confederation of Trade Unions (GCTU), has made its contribution towards rising to the Director-General's call to ratify and apply the core Conventions of the ILO. At the present time, on the initiative of the GCTU and with the involvement of the Interparliamentary Assembly of the Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (IPA CIS), all the CIS member nations who were there are member organizations of the GCTU and have ratified all eight of these Conventions. We fully realize that constant monitoring of their implementation is essential and we intend to work on this. Thus, at the meeting of the GCTU executive committee in April of this year, a mechanism for regular monitoring by trade unions of compliance with ratified Conventions in the countries of the CIS was drawn up and approved.

We recently approached the IPA CIS with a new proposal for the CIS countries to ratify a further 11 ILO Conventions which would be of great significance in defending the socio-economic rights and interests of workers.

In the context of the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda and trade union efforts towards ensuring full employment and the well-being of workers, the GCTU held a large international specialist conference on "The situation and problems of the trade union movement in CIS countries", in which more than 250 people participated representing nine national trade union centres and 31 international sectoral trade union associations from our region.

The conference noted that in spite of several positive steps in socio-economic development, the CIS countries are still facing mass unemployment and crisis in their education, health, social security, occupational safety and health and environmental systems. There are significant difficulties in the area of migration processes, particularly as regards illegal labour migration. Our countries rank very low, according to United Nations statistics, in terms of many social indicators. The fall in strike activity in recent years does not mean that there has been a decrease in social pressure in many CIS countries. There are frequent instances in the countries of our region of national labour legislation failing to comply with international labour standards. In several States, there have been cases of flagrant interference on the part of the authorities in the internal affairs of trade unions, and of violations by employers and the authorities of the rights of workers and trade unions.

All these problems will continue to be addressed by our organization, the General Confederation of

Trade Unions, and we hope to receive assistance in this from the ILO as well.

In conclusion, just a few words on the Appendix to the Report of the Director-General on the problems faced by workers in the occupied Arab territories. As you can see from the Report, the situation of the last few years has not only not improved, it has in fact greatly worsened, which gives great cause for concern for the international community and, of course, for the trade unions. A very difficult and volatile situation has emerged in that region, which demands immediate action by the United Na-

tions and the diplomatic Quartet. We support all the ILO programmes and initiatives aimed at helping to protect the interests of Palestinian workers.

(The Conference adjourned at 7.45 p.m.)

(La séance est levée à 19 h 45.)

(Se levanta la sesión a las 19 h.45.)

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