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**Eleventh sitting**

Thursday, 8 June 2006 – 11.10 a.m.

*Presidents: Mr. Sajda and Ms. Abdel Hady*

**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.)**

The PRESIDENT

It is now my pleasure to open the 11th sitting of this session of the International Labour Conference.

Now we shall proceed with the general discussion. I would like to remind speakers that the agreed time limit for speeches is five minutes.

*Ms. CHAO (Secretary of Labor, United States)*

I would like to commend the Director-General for the comprehensive nature of the Report that frames our discussion today, *Changing patterns in the world of work*.

The Report notes that despite the different challenges facing many nations today, there is one basic challenge that all nations face, and that is the importance of creating new jobs. It is the experience of the United States that job creation cannot occur without and cannot be separated from economic growth. The United States believes that the role of government is to create the conditions for economic growth so that the private sector can create new jobs. That means reducing the excess of taxation, over-regulation, and abusive litigation that hamper growth. Other conditions that help and create and sustain the climate for job growth include: transparency, accountability and the rule of law. By following these strategies, the United States economy has

experienced strong and steady job growth despite unprecedented challenges during the last five years. America has seen 33 months of uninterrupted growth, creating more than 5.3 million net new jobs since August 2003. The national unemployment rate remains low at 4.6 per cent and you can contrast this with the 5.7 per cent average unemployment rate in the decade of the 1990s.

The majority of new jobs being created in the United States are high value, requiring higher skills, more education. So, by definition they pay above average wages. This trend is creating a skills gap in our country. This is the mismatch between the skills of our workforce and the skills required for the new jobs being created. Our challenge in America is to help workers continually update their skills and ensure that they have access to job training and education. The Government provides many opportunities to help workers access training and education. The President recently announced the American competitiveness initiative, and part of his proposal is to give eligible workers up to US\$3,000 annually in career advancement or self-managed accounts to purchase, to decide a job training that suits them best. Other programmes help workers get the training needed to access growing opportunities in their specific communities. Two of these are the Presi-

dent's high-growth job training initiative, and the community-based job training programme. And yet there is also realization in our country that the Government cannot do it all. The private sector spends an enormous amounts of resources on job training and they far outweigh that of the Government.

Our goal is to link employers, education providers and government programmes together to train workers for jobs that are in demand. And you might be interested to know that in the United States the workforce is very dynamic and very flexible. Approximately one-third of our nation's workforce have approximately 150 million people leave their jobs every year and find new ones because of better economic opportunities. The average American worker will have had ten jobs by the time he or she is 38 years old. So change is the norm in our society, and without job creation there can be no future for dislocated workers or for young people. Job creation is also very important to solving the demographic challenges faced by societies with ageing populations. The creation of many different kinds of opportunities, including part-time work, is essential to ensuring that older workers have the opportunity to continue to contribute.

So let me conclude by noting that migration alone can never solve the challenge of creating employment for the millions of new workers emerging in the world. Each country is responsible for fostering the conditions that favour growth within its borders, and my Government believes that policies that encourage job creation, transparency, accountability and rural law are the best ways to ensure that the gains of the overall worldwide economy will be shared by all.

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Ms. STO. TOMAS (*Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines*)

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When I attended my first International Labour Conference as a junior officer of the Philippine Department of Labor, I heard somebody say, in this very hall, that unemployment was the greatest exploiter of labour.

More than five years into my term as Secretary of Labor, that statement continues to ring in my head. It is true that the patterns in the world of work continue to change, but unemployment remains our biggest scourge. Even as we speak, hundreds of millions the world over are without voice, purpose or identity because they are without work.

We usually define work as activity for which one is paid. This effectively eliminates mothers and sisters and grandmothers – many women, in fact, and perhaps a few courageous and hard working men, who cook, clean house, wash and do the other mundane things that allow the rest of us to run factories, offices and businesses. It is ironic that the people who make this possible for us often labour in anonymity. Even worse, they grow old, get sick and die without the formal safety nets that we prescribe for ourselves. The Director-General is correct in saying that we need to value this kind of work in a much better way than we are doing right now. There is more to unpaid family work than the absence of wages. Society owes its continued existence to this natural support mechanism. It is payback time and we must find the will and creativity to take care of those who take care of us.

We also define work as something done inside our national borders. I am acutely aware of this because our overseas Filipino workers are, in a very real

sense, in this statistical limbo. We subscribe to the ILO definition of who constitutes our labour force and, consequently, of who is employed and who is unemployed. When this definition was done, however, we did not envision this phenomenon of temporary migratory flows. Almost 8 million of my countrymen are in this state and, while their presence is felt nationally, the fact that they are not counted renders them virtually invisible. This is not just a conceptual aberration. As we confront globalization, even in the labour markets, we must begin by recognizing that definitions are changing because conditions are changing. We cannot provide for something unless we first acknowledge that it exists.

Society also defines work as either desirable or not desirable. While the rhetoric of social debate acknowledges the debt we owe to those who till the soil and farm the waters or those who fulfil the technical or vocational requirements of our daily existence, there is an unwritten or unsaid bias against certain occupations. We must acknowledge those biases before we can transform those obviously necessary jobs into decent work. Work that is not illegal, immoral or obviously harmful may constitute decent work if we value it adequately and if we educate society properly as to what could happen if these jobs suddenly disappeared.

Our definition of work is also threatened not just by its changing patterns but also by its increasingly transitory character. In the committee on new employment relationships, we now recognize, where there was only one clear employer-employee relationship before, the presence of even trilateral relationships. We now have outsourced services, locally and internationally, where the immediate employer is not really the ultimate beneficiary of the services being rendered by the worker. In the Philippines we have more than 100,000 call centre agents, medical transcriptionists and animators, among others, who are subcontracted by companies who are not the principals for the services being rendered. Similarly, we have subcontractors who perform time-bound or project-specific undertakings, which render security of tenure less permanent and more threatening. The increasingly temporary nature of employment creates the kind of tension that fuels class-war rhetoric all over again and heightens social conflict.

There is no question, however, that whatever the season, some things must remain the same. Among other aspects, children must not be made to work – they must go to school; people should not be forced to work and definitely not under terms and conditions that are hazardous or morally or legally unacceptable: bondage or slavery cannot be countenanced because work presumes just and regular compensation.

From our homes to the bigger global community, the changing patterns of the world of work are evident. On the one hand, there is unpaid family work, a tradition that builds on affection and the social mechanisms of support and assistance. On the other hand, there is the movement of labour beyond national borders in search of decent work and better opportunities. That the International Labour Organization continues to be at the vanguard of these developments, documenting them and providing a forum for debating the interventions necessary to redress global and national imbalances should give us a certain level of comfort.

We are grateful for the Director-General's lucid and comprehensive Report on the challenges that we face. We are equally grateful for your leadership, Mr. President, and commitment to giving these issues the widest hearing possible. We congratulate you, sir, on your well-deserved election.

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Mr. FONG (*Minister of Human Resources, Malaysia*)

First and foremost, the Malaysian delegation extends to the President our congratulations on his election to preside over the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. We are confident that with his experience and skills, and under his wise and able leadership, this Conference will attain all its desired objectives. We also wish to congratulate the Vice-Presidents on their elections.

We gather at a difficult time for the world, a time of anxiety, some might even say of crisis in many fields. The world is facing a global employment crisis, both in quantity and quality. We have to face up to it. We have been told that globalization could offer new hope and opportunities for more productive work and better incomes. However, what is the value of global markets to the women and men from all over the world if they cannot compete because of lack of skills and technology?

The Director-General of the ILO in his Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, asks: "Can we create an institutional framework for labour markets that enables working women and men to see change more as an opportunity and less as a risk?"

Malaysia's response to the issue is that we should undertake a serious evaluation and then take the necessary corrective action to address such constraints. We must ensure our workers upgrade their skills through training and lifelong learning in order to help them meet the changing needs of our industries to remain employable. This will also help our workers earn more through increased productivity. This is especially relevant for low-wage workers who are more at risk because of structural unemployment.

We acknowledge the sincere and courageous efforts of the Director-General when he referred to the Decent Work Agenda. We believe that employment creation is the first step towards achieving the Decent Work Agenda and the best way in alleviating poverty in a globalized economy. In order to achieve this goal, putting decent work into practice at the national level must be enhanced.

Employment strategies for decent work country programmes are the best concept and approach. They must be undertaken by more countries in order to overcome challenges facing them and the global economy. Therefore, Malaysia gives its individual support to the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework on the Decent Work Agenda based on the integration of four strategic objectives in promoting sustainable forms of work for all.

Malaysia notes that, in recent years, occupational safety and health (OSH) has become a priority for the ILO. Recognizing OSH as a core element of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda is most appropriate. It is timely to have a new instrument establishing a promotional framework in the area of occupational safety and health. Malaysia welcomes and supports this decision as our workers and their families deserve a safe working environment

Malaysia is one of the countries that has embarked on a fundamental review on our regulatory

framework based on ILO guidelines on occupational safety and health. We have set ourselves a target of halving occupational fatalities, currently standing at 69 fatalities per million workers. Within ten years we seek to become one of the safest working places in the world in which to work.

Speaking as Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Malaysia wishes to reiterate the importance of ongoing efforts by the ILO to improve the working methods and procedures of the Committee on the Application of Standards. NAM therefore call for more changes to the functioning methods of the Committee on the Application of Standards. This request, in NAM's view, is in conformity with the overall efforts to reform the United Nations' system and in line with adhering to the principles of transparency and tripartism within the ILO. It is the belief of NAM that the process for the selection of countries to be examined by the Committee is not as transparent and equitable as it should be. NAM feels that the procedure as it stands now may be at a disadvantage to some groups of countries compared with other groups.

The 108 member States of NAM, which are also ILO member States, have called on the Director-General and the workers' groups of the ILO on a few occasions to address such concerns. Amongst others, NAM's proposals are as follows. First, there should be a better balance in the selection of experts in the Committee on the Application of Standards to reflect all regional and legal settings. Second, there should be a more defined and comprehensive set of criteria for the selection process and enough means to make sure that such criteria are properly applied, such as the re-release of the list of countries to be examined must be secure. Third, Governments should have observers when the selection of cases takes place. Fourth, the actual elements expressed by the Governments in their defence during the debates should be reflected in the Committee's conclusions. The pre-drafting of conclusions must be avoided.

NAM appreciates the positive attitude shown by the Director-General and the Workers' and Employers' groups towards this request. We hope that all members of the Committee and others directly involved in its work will address this important question in a constructive and productive manner for the benefit of all.

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M. FONSECA VIEIRA DA SILVA (*ministre du Travail et de la Solidarité sociale, Portugal*)

«Attendu qu'une paix universelle et durable ne peut être fondée que sur la base de la justice sociale...»; c'est ainsi que commence le préambule de la Constitution de l'OIT qui vient de nous être rappelé par le Directeur général et qu'il vaut la peine de rappeler aujourd'hui plus que jamais.

L'interdépendance des économies et des sociétés et l'intensification de la concurrence internationale qui en découle sont incontestables. Sont aussi incontestables les chances, mais aussi les défis que présente cette mondialisation, les chances et les défis qui découlent de la libéralisation des marchés de biens et de services, les chances et les défis qui découlent de la réduction des coûts de transport et des communications, les chances et les défis qui découlent de la libéralisation de la circulation des facteurs de production, notamment le travail, des chances qui doivent être exploitées, des défis qu'il importe de relever.

Les protagonistes politiques et sociaux sont conscients de leurs responsabilités. L'engagement pris au Sommet de 2005 en faveur d'une mondialisation équitable, créant des emplois dignes et productifs, l'atteste, le rapport présenté ici est une étape importante pour la concrétisation de ces responsabilités.

Les tendances et les problèmes que traversent les marchés du travail et les systèmes de protection sociale placent toutes les économies face à un impératif de développement qui doit répondre à la nécessité de réduire la pauvreté et les disparités de revenus.

Des disparités qui reflètent des inégalités extrêmes de niveaux de développement entre différentes régions et qui aboutissent à des flux migratoires internationaux de personnes en quête de meilleures conditions de vie. Les migrations internationales exigent un effort généralisé d'intégration des travailleurs et de leurs familles dans les pays d'accueil, un effort généralisé qui ne réduit en rien la nécessité d'un engagement lui aussi général pour un développement équilibré des régions les plus défavorisées.

Des disparités qui reflètent le poids écrasant de l'économie informelle et qui traduisent des situations d'emploi sans droits et à des pressions accrues sur les systèmes de protection sociale. Ce caractère informel aboutit très souvent à une concurrence déloyale qui nuit aux entreprises et au travail décent.

Dans une économie mondialisée, la compétitivité internationale exige l'égalité des chances, ce qui signifie essentiellement le développement des qualifications de la main-d'œuvre.

Le développement des compétences se fonde sur un investissement dans les systèmes d'éducation formels et sur un bon système de formation professionnelle, une formation professionnelle tout au long de la vie active, une formation professionnelle diversifiée et flexible qui donne une grande capacité d'adaptation aux besoins du marché du travail, qui découle des transformations des processus productifs et de l'organisation de travail.

Ces besoins s'imposent aussi au droit du travail et à sa vocation historique de protection des travailleurs. La création d'emplois, la stabilité des emplois et la garantie de rémunérations justes ne sont pas séparées de la réalité économique. Dans ce contexte mondial, la sécurité est de plus en plus associée à la flexibilité, mais cette flexibilité dépend des niveaux d'éducation et de formation des travailleurs et du niveau de développement des mécanismes de protection sociale, de la législation et des conventions collectives dans la mesure où ces dernières permettent l'inclusion d'éléments de souplesse et d'adaptabilité dans la réalisation et l'organisation du travail.

Quelle que soit la réponse que l'on donne au défi de la concurrence et de la compétitivité internationales, il faut trouver des réponses au défi de la flexibilité, des réponses qui exigent un effort de tous les agents économiques, sociaux et politiques pour la promotion du dialogue tripartite et la définition et la réalisation des politiques, des politiques qui conduisent à l'objectif stratégique et fondamental du travail décent, du renforcement de la cohésion sociale et de l'élimination de la pauvreté.

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M. TSITOURIDIS (*ministre de l'Emploi et de la Protection sociale, Grèce*)

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La structure de l'emploi, les conditions de travail et le fonctionnement des systèmes de protection sociale font partie des paramètres constitutifs de l'économie mondiale actuelle. Les politiques suivies

dans ces domaines influencent de manière positive ou négative tant la compétitivité internationale d'un pays que le niveau de vie des travailleurs.

Selon la thèse soutenue par la grande majorité des forces politiques et sociales de mon pays, pays membre de l'Union européenne, la protection et la cohésion sociales doivent continuer à faire partie intégrante de la nouvelle stratégie de Lisbonne. La planification appropriée des systèmes de protection sociale contribue au développement et à la croissance économique. La croissance économique, à son tour, offre les moyens nécessaires au soutien de la cohésion sociale. D'ailleurs, la protection et la cohésion sociales forment autant les conditions que les conséquences de la réussite des objectifs de la croissance économique, de l'emploi et de la justice sociale.

La réalisation de ces objectifs exige des réformes sur le plan national ainsi que sur le plan européen et international. Il est évident que le rôle des partenaires sociaux dans la réussite des réformes est déterminant. Le succès de ces réformes présuppose la création de rapports dynamiques entre partenaires sociaux et la participation active de ces partenaires tant aux niveaux international et national qu'au niveau sectoriel.

Le rôle actif des partenaires sociaux nous permettra d'«accélérer la vitesse», tout en obtenant l'intensification de la compétitivité avec une sécurité accrue pour les travailleurs.

En ce qui concerne plus particulièrement la nécessité de la flexibilité du marché du travail, je souligne que ce sujet doit être abordé avec grande attention et sagesse, vu que notre position est que chaque action, dans la direction du renforcement de la flexibilité, doit aller de pair avec le renforcement de la sécurité des employés et des travailleurs.

Mon pays, la Grèce, dans le but d'obtenir un équilibre entre un niveau suffisant de protection des employés et des travailleurs et la flexibilité du marché du travail, a élaboré et mis en œuvre un nouveau cadre réglementaire en s'inspirant en grande partie de la réglementation de l'Union européenne.

Mesdames et Messieurs, dans mon pays, nous croyons que, pour tous ces sujets, la collaboration sincère entre partenaires sociaux permettra à nos peuples et à nos économies de réussir un double défi, celui de devenir, chacun de nous, protagoniste d'un monde ouvert, régi par la concurrence intensive, ainsi que de préserver, dans nos pays, le plus haut niveau de notre modèle social et des valeurs humaines, qui sont communes en Europe et, j'en suis certain, partout dans le monde.

En ce qui concerne le modèle social européen, je considère que, par sa promotion dans le monde entier, nous pouvons contribuer au renforcement de la stabilité mondiale. L'Union européenne ne doit et ne peut contribuer activement à faire face aux effets de la globalisation qu'en incluant les valeurs de ce modèle social dans ses relations extérieures.

Tout de même, pour que la promotion du modèle social européen puisse devenir effective, elle doit tenir compte des particularités culturelles, économiques, sociales, éthiques et religieuses de chaque pays et de chaque peuple.

Nous estimons aussi que, dans le nouvel environnement international, le rôle de l'Organisation internationale du Travail peut et doit être renforcé, puisque nous estimons que notre vision européenne du développement, de l'emploi et de la cohésion

sociale coïncide avec les objectifs et les activités de l'OIT.

Je suis certain que nous tous croyons qu'un avenir viable et décent doit être basé sur un ensemble de valeurs telles que l'humanisme, la solidarité, la cohésion sociale, l'égalité des chances, la lutte contre les discriminations, le haut niveau de sécurité et de santé au travail, le développement durable, ainsi que la participation active de la société civile à la formation de ces politiques.

Nous sommes décidés à travailler de toutes nos forces dans cette direction.

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Mr. KILLEEN (*Minister for Labour Affairs, Ireland*)

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I very much welcome the Director-General's Report, which shows that over the period the ILO has, against the background of the strategic direction and targets set by the Governing Body, undertaken a number of major developments aimed at improving its operations from both an internal and external perspective.

Looking at the Organization's internal operations, the "bedding-in" of strategic and results-based management structures has led to a stronger focus in the ILO's work, with the various proposed outcomes being accompanied by specific indicators and targets. I welcome the progress made on ongoing internal management reforms. I note from the Report that all administrative and support services have been overhauled.

As always, such important change management efforts require review and refinement on an ongoing basis for the benefit of the Organization and its constituents.

From an external perspective, I am pleased to note the ILO has consolidated its work around the four strategic dimensions of the Decent Work Agenda and has positioned decent work as a widely shared policy objective across the globe. This is, as it should be, focused policy intervention supported by our tripartite constituencies.

I particularly welcome the progress made on the decent work country programmes across member countries in collaboration with governments and representatives of employers and workers. These country programmes have contributed to a more focused and integrated cooperation between the ILO's external offices and the headquarters here in Geneva, enabling an integrated approach to technical cooperation programmes.

The Millennium Development Goals direct the development strategies of the international community. Decent work increasingly underpins these strategies and this is how it should be.

The United Nations World Summit agreed in September 2005 to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of national and international policies and strategies.

I am pleased to note, and indeed I congratulate all member States, the steady increase in the rate of ratifications of the eight core ILO Conventions; 116 member States have now ratified all eight of these core Conventions, while 147 member States have ratified at least one. This is solid progress which must be welcomed – the ILO is, after all, a standard-setting body.

The growing number of ratifications has an impact on the workload of the Standards Department. The effectiveness of the supervisory system has a direct bearing on the credibility of the ILO as a

whole. Ireland supports the statement made by IMEC colleagues from the International Maritime Employers' Committee at the March 2006 Governing Body meeting, which called upon the Director-General to ensure that the essential work of the Standards Department remains among his highest priorities.

We should remind ourselves that the simple reality in all our lives is that we all work for a living and that there are related individual, family and community significances attaching to this reality. Director-General Somavia has correctly raised a series of questions affecting working patterns across the globe to which we must react and respond, albeit in differing ways, when tackling issues such as identifying the drivers of change, meeting the challenges for social security systems and adapting governance to the changing labour market.

I agree that we must all make a major effort to improve productivity, earnings and working conditions in order to reduce working poverty. We must also place youth employment at the top of the global jobs agenda. We must integrate policies and programmes for decent and productive work into development strategies. We must invest in education and skills development to overcome digital divides within and among countries. We must continuously upgrade worker and management skills to ensure technological development and competitiveness.

It is rightly stressed in the report that the ILO is not, and should not in my view, be a neutral observer of this process.

The ILO has a mandate to support governments, employers' and workers' organizations in their efforts to achieve the goal of decent work for all. In a world where the international influences on work and labour markets are becoming ever stronger, the ILO, through the engagement and commitment of its constituents, could make an important difference to the way the world of work changes in the future.

I believe that it is for employers and workers, together with their representative organizations, to agree what best suits their respective individual requirements in relation to acceptable work-life balance arrangements.

In Ireland, we have found that through our social partnership process, decentralized rule-making through social dialogue and collective bargaining allows for innovation in new forms of cooperation and in the resolution of conflicts.

The social partnership process has, in no small way, helped to build a consensual approach to economic and social development in Ireland over the past two decades. We are currently negotiating our latest partnership agreement and many of the issues referred to in the Director-General's Report feature in the current negotiations in Ireland.

To meet the expectations of constituents and partners in the international system, a number of actions have been identified in the Strategic Policy Framework 2006-09 and in the Programme and Budget for 2006-07. Ireland supports these proposed actions and calls on the Conference to endorse the Director-General's Report so that these actions can be progressed as part of the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework 2006-09.

(*Ms. Abdel Hady takes the Chair.*)

(*M<sup>me</sup> Abdel Hady prend place au fauteuil présidentiel.*)

(*Asume la presidencia la Sra. Abdel Hady.*)

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Mr. ANNAKIN (*Government, New Zealand*)

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I congratulate the Director-General on his third biennial Report to the Conference on progress towards implementing the Decent Work Agenda. The Report gives us a clear and timely summary of the performance of the ILO in achieving its outcomes against the indicators and targets we have set for it.

As the Director-General notes, the Report also shows us, in concrete and measurable terms, how the values and principles of the ILO, reflected in the Decent Work Agenda, can make a practical response to the realities of workers, businesses and governments, nationally, regionally and globally.

New Zealand endorses the integrated approach taken by the ILO to implement the agenda through: embedding the concept of decent work in the international policy debate; improving the capacity and cohesiveness of ILO delivery mechanisms; and, most importantly, putting decent work into practice at the country level.

The New Zealand Government has used the concept of decent work as a key principle in advancing my country's social and economic development. Our Government's strategic priorities place great emphasis on progressing an economic transformation to a high-income, knowledge-based market economy. To succeed, this requires: globally competitive firms, a world-class infrastructure, and innovative and productive workplaces, underpinned by high standards in education, skills and research. New Zealand has seen strong economic and employment growth over recent years, but we realize that only sustainable productivity through participation in high quality work can ensure ongoing social and economic benefits. As the Report quotes the United Nations Secretary-General – "The best anti-poverty programme is employment and the best road to economic empowerment and social wellbeing lies in decent work."

We therefore strongly support the connection drawn by the Report between employment and poverty reduction and the benefits of programmes that encourage the upskilling of employees and good business practices amongst entrepreneurs. We also support the important role tripartism plays in this process. This occurs both through workers' and employers' organizations providing services to their members and in the voice they give them in dialogue about national policies and programmes.

We are committed to further progress in these areas and strongly support the use of decent work country programmes by the ILO as a framework for effective assistance at national and regional levels. We look forward to further discussion on these themes at this year's Asian Regional Meeting in Busan, Republic of Korea.

The concept of decent work can be seen to be as much a journey as a destination. In that context, it is important that we can accurately chart our progress towards making the ideal a reality.

In addition, the economies required in ILO operations in recent years have given us additional challenges. The Director-General has acknowledged that competing resources require prioritization with a greater focus on delivery "in the field". We sup-

port this approach wherever possible, whilst noting the need to maintain a robust central infrastructure.

We also commend the Director-General's efforts to fully implement a culture of results-based management practices throughout the Organization, so that its accountability and effectiveness can be clearly monitored and assessed.

The Director-General's Report notes satisfactory progress in meeting ILO performance targets, but acknowledges that these measures need further refinement to ensure they are robust measures of outcome rather than simply descriptions of activity.

We encourage the further development of performance indicators, better management information systems and increased use of independent programme evaluation. We welcome the implementation of the long-awaited IRIS information system and, in particular, of the ILO's human resources strategy. All are essential to ensuring that the ILO remains a relevant, vibrant and cost-effective organization.

The ILO is mandated to promote the Decent Work Agenda. In New Zealand's view, the best way of doing so is to ensure that the Organization maintains a clear view of its mission and objectives and that the contribution of its activities can be transparently assessed.

The implementation Report shows that a unified approach yields results and promises much for the future if the present course can be maintained. New Zealand is committed to ensuring that it is.

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*Original Russian: Mr. YURKIN (Worker, Ukraine)*

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Mr. President, first of all allow me to echo the many congratulations addressed to you on your election to this important post and to wish you every success in guiding the work of the Conference.

The Director-General's Report, *Programme Implementation 2004-05* is sufficiently comprehensive and objective. Importantly, the Report talks not only about what has been done but also indicates how the ILO intends to face up to the new challenges of globalization.

For a new structure of the global redistribution of labour is taking shape. Former hopes that the twenty-first century would see the fading of labour conflicts and a peaceful globalization have not stood the test of experience. The world has entered a new stage of competitive struggle. As a consequence, the abandonment of social guarantees and subordination to the dictates of the market are becoming more and more common.

The geo-economic challenges of today require the trade unions to find conclusive answers in practically all areas of life.

For Ukraine, in the view of its trade unions, such a response must be a strategy agreed by corporate, political and civil society. The adoption of such a strategy is possible only if there is well established social dialogue between government, employers and trade unions. However, there has been practically no social dialogue at national level in Ukraine in recent years, to state an unpleasant truth. Nevertheless, last year did see the adoption of a Presidential Decree on the creation of a tripartite National Socio-Economic Council, and there is no question that this was a positive step.

Very recently, the Government of Ukraine unilaterally, and in breach of the General Agreement concluded between the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine,

the trade unions and the employers, made a number of decisions to raise the prices for natural gas and electricity for the whole country.

It is true that, in the past year, minimum and average wages have risen. However, we have to bear in mind that prices have gone up too and today the incomes of 58 per cent of the Ukrainian population and the wages of 26 per cent of workers are below the minimum living standard. The sharp increase in the prices of gas and electricity, therefore, we can only regard as a gross violation of the constitutional right of citizens to an adequate living standard, particularly bearing in mind that the minimum living standard – this again in breach of current legislation – has not been reviewed for over six years.

The situation is exacerbated by the fact that 365,000 workers still have not been paid their wage arrears, and, what is more, one-third of them are owed for over six months.

Given the absence of a consensus, the state strategy for economic development is regarded by the trade unions not as a balanced system for geo-economic guidance, but rather as an attempt by the authorities to defend the interests of those in power.

All of this forces the trade unions to bring people out onto the street and to enter into labour disputes with the authorities.

The trade unions have welcomed the President's programme for creating one million new jobs each year, because this would do something to reduce the level of unemployment. However, we cannot go along with the wholesale approach taken by the State and business to ensuring employment. We insist in the first instance on the creation of technology-intensive jobs, because this is the only way of ensuring decent work for all workers. We therefore categorically reject the accusation that Ukrainian workers have low productivity because, in fact, for every \$1 of wages paid to Ukrainian workers, their productivity is two or three times that of their European colleagues.

We would like here to express our gratitude to the International Labour Organization for its consistent implementation of the cooperation programme between Ukraine and the ILO on ensuring decent work.

The trade unions, which represent the rights and interests of workers, are more interested than anyone in securing the best possible combination of the interests of labour and business. On this basis, the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine supported the international initiative known as the United Nations Global Compact, and was one of the first bodies in Ukraine to sign it.

At the same time, our Federation has proposed that, in 2006-07, all employers' bodies should also sign up to the United Nations Global Compact. I am convinced that the unfortunate facts which I have given in my statement are a temporary phenomenon and that in the near future common sense will prevail and that we shall have a real social dialogue once again.

The prerequisites for this are already in place. We, the trade unions, will strive on our part for constructive work in putting forward legislative proposals concerning the social and economic rights and interests of workers. The highest priority here is the adoption of a new Labour Code.

We are actively preparing to work with the new Ukrainian Parliament. As soon as its committees are set up, the Federation will put forward a package of

bills aimed at stimulating wages and improving labour relations.

We believe that the discussion on the Report of the Director-General at this session will not only help to focus attention on workers' needs worldwide but will also lead to real steps on the part of the member States of the ILO to strengthen the social protection of workers.

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Mr. O'REILLY (*Employer, New Zealand*)

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The Director-General's Report this year details ILO activities during a period when the Organization has consolidated its efforts around the four strategic dimensions of decent work, namely standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, greater opportunities for decent employment and income, social protection for all and the strengthening of tripartism and social dialogue.

The Report explains that the United Nations World Summit in September 2005 resolved to make the goal of decent work central to relevant national and international policy and strategy development, including development strategies directed to poverty reduction. In the Director-General's view, broad international support is paving the way for decent work to become central to global and national policies.

Regarding decent work promotion, Business New Zealand notes with approval reported endeavours to strengthen institutional capacity and the ILO's increasing involvement in country assistance programmes. That is something our organization has long recommended.

However, we continue to be concerned that some ILO activity takes too little account of the specific and differing needs of each country. On occasion, the ILO will promote solutions that place the Organization's own institutional gloss on the interpretation of labour standards. It is important to promote principle, rather than prescription and not always to require unrealistic "letter of the law" compliance. There are many pathways to success.

The need for change was recently underlined by the United Nations' Secretary-General in his 7 March speech to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. There, Mr. Kofi Annan clearly stated his view that an organization in place for some 60 years is likely to require a radical overhaul. The ILO, of course, is older than that. Like the United Nations, it is now wholly diversified and truly worldwide, a far cry from its origins.

The Secretary-General saw the need for change in six areas: people, leadership, information and communications technology, service delivery, strategic budgeting and governance.

The Secretary-General's proposals have much relevance for the ILO. In a rapidly changing world, international organizations must be in a position to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. The ILO has already had some significant success in recent years, greater involvement in field work is a good example. But the game moves on and change is still essential if the Organization is to retain worldwide member support.

The breadth of the ILO's work and the worldwide spread of its activities are remarkable, but the challenge remains to ensure that the knowledge gained by field workers passes into policy development, rather than simply staying with the individuals concerned. It would be a great outcome if the ILO was truly able to understand and take account of the

many and varied situations in which individual countries find themselves.

Business New Zealand has had a long partnership with the ILO in capacity building. In cooperation with the Organization, we recently held a workshop for representatives of Pacific employers' organizations in Auckland. Eight countries were represented and a wide range of issues were discussed. Both of our social partners in New Zealand contributed actively during the meeting, demonstrating – if it ever needed to be – that tripartism is alive and well in our country.

Delegates shared skills in governance, advocacy, industrial negotiation, member management and policy work. Plans were made for future tripartite initiatives aimed at issues such as youth employment and the promotion of decent work.

As the most isolated of the developed nations, we are only too aware of the problems of distance. But I would like to use this platform to call on the ILO to consider further capacity building in the Pacific Islands. The social partners in those small, often very isolated, countries will doubtlessly benefit greatly from ILO involvement that recognizes and takes into account their unique challenges and opportunities.

Capacity building is some of the most valuable work of the ILO and businesses in New Zealand recognize and support that by being actively involved.

The need for the ILO to constantly meet new challenges of the sort I have just spoken about in capacity building and otherwise suggests that the Organization must constantly be open to change. This change may not be easy, but it is the only way to ensure that the Organization, however long-standing and respected, stays relevant and useful. The winds of change are blowing through the United Nations. That can only be healthy. As a sister Organization, the ILO must think about how it will change too.

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Mr. SUKHBAATAR (*Worker, Mongolia*)

The Global Report submitted by the Director-General provides a global picture relating to the effective abolition of child labour, as one of four categories of fundamental principles and rights.

In Mongolia 68,580 children are economically active. This constitutes 10.1 per cent of total children between the ages of five and 17 years. Children predominantly work in the agricultural and informal sectors, including hazardous work, mainly gold and coal mines. The tripartite constituents signed an agreement in June 2005 to join in the efforts for the elimination of child labour in the mining industry in Mongolia by 2015 in cooperation with the ILO/IPEC country programme.

The Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions has developed a strategy and action plan on strengthening roles of capacity of the trade unions in combating the worst forms of child labour, which aims to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

Mongolia ratified the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), in 2000 and the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) in 2002. Through the effective implementation of those instruments, with the support of ILO technical cooperation, we believe that the social partners will eliminate child labour in Mongolia. The recent ratification of the forced labour Convention by our

country has increased the number of countries which have ratified all core international labour standards.

The Workers' delegation of Mongolia fully supports the item on a new instrument establishing a promotional framework for occupational safety and health for a second discussion with a view to adopting a Convention and Recommendation. As we all know, according to the ILO estimation, the worldwide fatality level for work-related accidents and injuries is about 2 million annually. Occupational accidents and diseases are not decreasing in Mongolia. For the last 19 years, or from 1986 to 2005, a total of 20,359 accidents were registered in our country; 22,798 people suffered, 1,318 people were disabled and 1,103 people lost their lives. This proves that the health and lives of workers, as well as the economy of the country, incur significant losses.

It clearly tells us that the world is facing challenges to fight this phenomenon. The proposed instrument of a Convention will greatly help with this and is supported. The Confederation of Mongolian Trade Unions is making every effort to implement the ILO Decent Work Agenda through the principle of "decent work must be safe work" in the context of globalization. In this regard we need efficient, effective ILO technical cooperation. The employment relationship is a subject which is closely connected to the dramatic changes in the world of work described in the Director-General's Report. Our delegation fully supports the proposed international labour standards as a Recommendation on the employment relationship giving both challenges and achievement.

The Workers' delegation of Mongolia highly appreciates the ILO's review of the technical cooperation programme in promoting the ILO decent work programme. The ILO technical cooperation programme has proven to be invaluable in assisting countries to achieve decent work for all.

The Director-General in his opening address to this session said: "Our decent work country programmes will progressively become the main instrument for cooperation with member States and the expression of tripartite priority setting engagement and ownership." I think the Director-General has expressed the ILO position clearly and there is a need to work more efficiently for periodic review of the decent work country programme and their effective implementation. Therefore, we consider all ILO decent work activities, particularly the decisions of Regional Meetings, to be very important in order to closely look at and assess ongoing activities at country level and for future challenges to be more realistic in practice.

In this regard, we are expecting a clear policy in the action programme that will produce a forthcoming Asian Regional Meeting in August to be held in the Republic of Korea. The Workers' delegation of Mongolia make every effort to review and implement the national policy programme for the promotion of decent work in cooperation with other social partners.

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Mr. ANDREWS (*Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Australia*)

I welcome this opportunity to address this plenary session of the 2006 International Labour Conference and congratulate you Mr. President on your new role.



The Director-General's Report on ILO programme implementation points to a world characterized by rapid change to which all nations must respond or fall behind. From a labour market perspective, the Report states that there are no rights at work if there is no work. The Australian Government strongly endorses this view. Paid work is the key to economic well-being for individuals and for communities and the most effective way of alleviating poverty. Labour laws do not in themselves equip a nation to respond to this challenge, but are one measure amongst others which a country can use to achieve economic and social goals for individuals, for families and for nations. We experienced this truism in Australia in the early 1990s, when prescriptive workplace regulations failed to prevent a million of our fellow men and women from becoming unemployed and many more from suffering a decline in their real wages as a result of poor economic management.

Belatedly, Australian governments recognized that the regulatory framework first established a century before could no longer sustain a modern economy. We also reassessed the fundamental principle that fairness involves the opportunity for work, for individuals and for their families. An industrial relations system that impedes or prevents our fellow men and women from having a chance of a job is a system that destroys the basic aspirations of its people and fails the precepts of social justice. Indeed our primary task, and that of the International Labour Organization, is to seek to eliminate social disadvantage through productive employment. It is outcomes, not rhetoric, that are the ultimate criteria of our success.

In this context, good economic management, including the preparedness to engage in ongoing workplace reform, has delivered significant results in Australia since 1996: almost 2 million new jobs, a 16.8 per cent increase in real wages, historically low levels of industrial disputation, and rising living standards. Despite these outcomes, those who criticized our reforms in 1996 can now be heard again, following the Government's recent workplace relations reforms, as if the very opposite of success had occurred. Even though the national unemployment rate in Australia has fallen to below 5 per cent, we should remind ourselves that hundreds of thousands of our fellow Australians are still without a job and that 600,000 children are growing up in families where no one has work. Not only do these people not have the dignity of a job, they are at an increased risk of social adversity.

Significantly, we also face new challenges, including the ageing of our population. Countries with ageing populations tend to have low-growth economies unless other measures are taken to ensure economic development. We in Australia must look to increased productivity and increased workplace participation if we are to sustain our economic growth.

Our experience of the past decade reveals that workplace flexibility is clearly linked to productivity growth and economic prosperity. To fail to embark on further economic reform, including increased labour market flexibility, would be to fail in our responsibility to deliver better economic and social outcomes for the people of Australia.

Australia's continued prosperity in the twenty-first century requires systems of regulation that encourage, rather than restrict, creativity, that reward,

rather than confine, initiative. We must also continue to respond to the desire of workers for flexibility that enables individuals to meet their many aspirations, including a balance between work and family life.

The rigid industry- and economy-wide approaches of the past are being increasingly rejected by workers and businesses alike. This has led to the use of both collective and individual workplace arrangements in the modern economy.

At its core, a successful labour market must strive to create work for its citizens, increase individual prosperity and increase the prosperity of the nation. Anything short of these goals is nothing less than a failure of a nation to provide opportunities for its people.

Our initiatives also involve significant programmes to assist the unemployed and others traditionally excluded from work, including the disabled and older workers. Recent "welfare-to-work" reforms in Australia build on the successful Job Network in assisting more people into work.

The ILO has an important role to play in harnessing the gains from globalization, primarily through technical assistance, information sharing and the promotion of best practice examples. The Australian Government is committed to working with the ILO to advance its international agenda. To this end I am assigning a senior government official from my Department to Australia's Mission here in Geneva. That official's primary role will be to pursue closer links and greater cooperation with the ILO.

Finally, on behalf of the Australian Government, I would like to thank those governments that last year supported Australia's membership of the Governing Body for the period to 2008. Australia looks forward to greater engagement in the ILO, both as a Member and as a representative of its close neighbours. Thank you.

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Sr. ESPINAL ESCOBAR (*Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social, El Salvador*)

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Es para mí un honor y un privilegio, como Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social de la República de El Salvador y miembro titular del Consejo de Administración de la OIT, expresarles en nombre de mi Gobierno un caluroso saludo a todos los miembros de las delegaciones que participan en esta 95.<sup>a</sup> reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo.

Los grandes objetivos comunes que discutiremos como puntos del orden del día de esta Conferencia, sin duda alguna, tendrán como eje transversal la búsqueda del desarrollo económico y social de nuestros pueblos, a través del mejoramiento sustancial de las condiciones laborales de los trabajadores y la competitividad de los centros productivos.

Los resultados obtenidos por los países Miembros, que están reflejados en el Informe sobre la aplicación del programa de la OIT en 2004-2005, a través de la aplicación del programa sobre trabajo decente, muestran la forma en que los valores y principios de la OIT han permitido configurar respuestas y estrategias prácticas a las realidades de los trabajadores y empresarios a nivel nacional y global.

El concepto de trabajo decente se ha consolidado como una aspiración universal de las personas de todas las sociedades, independientemente de su grado de desarrollo, para hacerle frente a los desafíos y oportunidades del proceso de globalización, integración y apertura comercial en marcha.

Como resultado de estos esfuerzos, la promoción del trabajo decente se ha posicionado como una de las prioridades más importantes de las políticas y programas nacionales de desarrollo de América Latina en general y de mi país en particular.

Como ejemplo de esto, en el segundo trimestre de 2005 se desarrolló en la Ciudad de Tegucigalpa (Honduras) el primer Foro Subregional Tripartito sobre Empleo, denominado «Desafíos y políticas para el fomento del empleo y el trabajo decente en Centroamérica y la República Dominicana», con el propósito principal de situar el objetivo de la creación de empleos de calidad en el centro de las políticas económicas de los países.

Estas políticas se plantearon como un objetivo de largo alcance, para avanzar hacia una nueva situación de progreso socioeconómico y laboral donde los trabajadores tengan posibilidades de acceder a un trabajo productivo libremente elegido y en condiciones apropiadas de seguridad y dignidad.

A la fecha, en El Salvador se ha iniciado, en el seno del Consejo Superior del Trabajo, el proceso de elaboración y desarrollo de la Política Nacional de Empleo, con la participación activa de trabajadores y empresarios en un claro esfuerzo y ejercicio de tripartismo y diálogo social.

En el ámbito del cumplimiento de las normas y los principios fundamentales en el trabajo es importante destacar la voluntad decidida de mi Presidente, Don Elías Antonio Saca, de fortalecer la capacidad presupuestaria del Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social que dirijo, aprobando un importante incremento en nuestro presupuesto ordinario, por una cuantía de 2,5 millones de dólares. Este refuerzo presupuestario nos está permitiendo contratar a casi 300 nuevos funcionarios, principalmente personal encargado de vigilar y hacer cumplir la legislación laboral.

Por iniciativa del señor Presidente de la República, Don Elías Antonio Saca, se creó la Comisión Nacional para la Modernización del Sector Laboral (CONAMOL). Esta instancia multidisciplinaria recomendó por unanimidad la necesidad de ratificar los Convenios núms. 87 y 98 de la OIT, habiéndose determinado en base a estudios técnicos y a jurisprudencia de la Sala de lo Constitucional de la Honorable Corte Suprema de Justicia que, previo a la ratificación de los citados convenios, será necesario reformar la Constitución de la República en las disposiciones que desarrollan la libertad sindical y la prohibición de la huelga en general.

El Salvador, por medio de este servidor, preside el Grupo de Trabajo núm. 2 de la Conferencia Interamericana de Ministros de Trabajo, lo cual nos ha permitido colocar en un lugar estratégico de la agenda el tema de la seguridad y salud ocupacional.

En el mes de mayo del corriente año, desarrollamos en la ciudad de San Salvador el foro hemisférico denominado «Los desafíos de la salud y seguridad ocupacional frente a los mandatos de la IV Cumbre de las Américas», en el que participaron más de 20 países del hemisferio y organismos internacionales vinculados con el ámbito de la seguridad industrial.

Este evento se convirtió en un espacio propicio de diálogo y consenso para avanzar en el abordaje de la protección de la salud de los trabajadores entre las distintas subregiones de nuestro continente americano.

En esta línea temática, felicitamos a la OIT por la elaboración de un nuevo instrumento que establece

un marco promocional para la seguridad y salud en el trabajo, en el que se presenta un proyecto de convenio y de recomendación que recoge las diferentes posiciones de los gobiernos en esta materia.

En el tema del combate contra las peores formas de trabajo infantil, en El Salvador se ha beneficiado a más de 35.000 niños, niñas y adolescentes por medio de actividades concretas de intermediación laboral, formación profesional, movilización social, educación y salud, entre otras.

A este esfuerzo se suma el Programa Red Solidaria y Oportunidades impulsado por el Presidente Don Elías Antonio Saca, el cual comprende una serie de acciones sociales orientadas a reducir significativamente la pobreza extrema y beneficiar a 100.000 familias de los 100 municipios más pobres del país.

Con este programa se busca retirar a los niños, niñas y adolescentes que trabajan en las peores formas de trabajo infantil, dado que el componente de transferencias financieras directas a las familias exige que los niños del hogar beneficiado estén inscritos y permanezcan en la escuela.

Finalmente, considero firmemente que el logro de los objetivos trazados en el Programa y Presupuesto para 2005-2006 nos permitirá garantizar a nuestros trabajadores un empleo libre, con equidad, justicia y dignidad humana, y a las empresas mejorar el entorno productivo y hacerle frente a los retos y oportunidades del proceso de globalización en marcha.

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M. AKOUETE (*représentant, Organisation démocratique syndicale des travailleurs africains*)

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L'Organisation démocratique syndicale des travailleurs africains (ODSTA) se joint par ma voix aux autres orateurs pour féliciter le Président et le bureau tout entier pour son élection à la direction de la 95<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence internationale du Travail.

C'est avec beaucoup de plaisir et d'intérêt que nous avons accueilli le rapport du Directeur général, et nous tenons à l'en féliciter.

L'intérêt de notre organisation pour ce rapport réside dans le fait qu'il aborde une question qui nous est chère en tant qu'organisation des travailleurs: les changements dans le monde du travail.

La mondialisation, il est vrai, est une opportunité, mais nous ne saurions cacher les difficultés rencontrées par les travailleurs, tant au niveau de la recherche de l'emploi que de sa stabilité et de la protection sociale.

La Commission mondiale sur la dimension sociale de la mondialisation a rendu des conclusions utiles qui pourraient être exploitées pour améliorer la vie des travailleurs dans le monde.

L'Afrique, bien évidemment, a plus que besoin de la mise en œuvre de ses conclusions pour lutter contre la pauvreté, le chômage et les guerres civiles et tribales qui détruisent les forces actives de notre continent, un continent qui a besoin de stabilité pour amorcer son vrai développement.

Il est aujourd'hui de plus en plus question de la réforme de l'ONU, et nous tenons à affirmer ici notre soutien solennel aux travaux entrepris pour cette réforme.

Néanmoins, cette tribune est l'occasion pour nous d'affirmer la nécessité pour notre Organisation à tous, l'OIT, de préserver son indépendance et son avantage comparatif que constitue le tripartisme.

D'ailleurs, l'unification des deux grandes centrales internationales mondiales avec d'autres organi-

sations indépendantes pour constituer une autre force sociale est d'une importance capitale, et nous devons en sortir renforcés et non affaiblis, encore moins en faisant perdre à notre organisation son identité et sa valeur ajoutée.

L'Afrique, mon continent, ne pourra que bénéficier de cette force pour qu'enfin elle se mette dans les rangs d'un continent développé.

Nous saluons la fin de la guerre au Libéria et en Sierra Leone et nous souhaitons qu'elle finisse également en République démocratique du Congo et en Somalie.

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*Original arabe: M. DJILANI (employeur, Tunisie)*

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Je voudrais exprimer mes remerciements à M. Juan Somavia, Directeur général du BIT, pour les propositions et idées exposées dans son rapport de cette année, et plus particulièrement celles qui concernent l'exécution du programme de l'Organisation pour les années 2004-05 et surtout la lutte contre le travail des enfants, car ce dernier constitue une violation des droits de l'enfance et une spoliation des capacités des pays en développement. En effet, ces enfants qui travaillent ne peuvent pas aller à l'école et ne peuvent pas bénéficier de l'éducation et de la formation nécessaires, ce qui diminue leurs chances de trouver un travail décent à l'avenir.

La Tunisie a fait de nombreux progrès dans le domaine de la protection des droits des enfants, aussi bien dans sa législation que dans la pratique. Elle a non seulement signé et ratifié toutes les conventions internationales fondamentales les intégrant ensuite dans sa législation nationale, mais elle a aussi donné à l'enfant le statut qu'il mérite dans la société. Ainsi, l'éducation est obligatoire pour tous les enfants jusqu'à l'âge de 16 ans, ce qui a élevé le taux de scolarisation à 89 pour cent, aussi bien pour les garçons que pour les filles, de même qu'ont été éliminées toutes les formes d'exploitation et de travail des enfants.

L'ordre du jour de cette Conférence contient de nombreux autres sujets importants car ils ont pour objectif de promouvoir les efforts visant à améliorer les conditions de vie et de travail dans la société. Dans ce contexte, nous allons participer avec beaucoup d'intérêt à la Commission de la relation de travail car nous accordons une importance particulière à ce problème qui peut avoir une influence directe sur la productivité des entreprises. Assurer les meilleures conditions pour la protection de la santé et de la sécurité au travail, ainsi qu'une couverture sociale et médicale adéquate, et garantir l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes doivent être les bases de toute législation sociale qui permettrait aux travailleurs de s'acquitter au mieux de leurs devoirs et à l'entreprise de prospérer. Pour les employeurs comme pour les travailleurs, ces conditions sont très importantes car elles permettent d'organiser les bases qui régissent les relations de travail de manière claire et transparente.

La mondialisation a ouvert une nouvelle ère dans les relations mondiales et de nouvelles formes apparaissent dans les relations entre les pays et dans les moyens de production et d'échange. L'entreprise est ainsi forcée de s'adapter à tous ces changements et de contrôler au mieux ces capacités afin d'améliorer la valeur ajoutée de ses produits et de renforcer sa compétitivité.

Depuis de nombreuses années, la Tunisie a adopté une politique de dialogue et de consensus établie

par le nouveau régime et encouragée par le Président Ben Ali. Nous avons ainsi pu obtenir des succès certains avec des répercussions positives sur la situation sociale et les efforts de développement du pays en général. L'un des sujets les plus importants est celui des négociations collectives qui ont lieu tous les trois ans et un sixième round de ces négociations a été organisé l'année dernière.

Malgré les difficultés que rencontre parfois la Tunisie en raison de la situation économique mondiale, nous avons pu y faire face en faisant toujours le choix de l'intérêt général et en mettant en avant le principe de la sauvegarde des institutions et des emplois.

L'un des enjeux importants qui nous préoccupe en Tunisie est celui d'accroître la création d'entreprises et d'encourager les jeunes diplômés de l'université à créer leur propre entreprise. Ainsi, nous pourrions encourager les jeunes à rester dans leur pays et bénéficier ainsi de leur expérience et de leurs compétences.

Nous notons avec satisfaction les efforts déployés par le BIT pour aider les pays en développement, notamment les pays africains, grâce à ses programmes et à son assistance technique dont bénéficient surtout les employeurs afin de les aider à créer plus d'emplois et retenir ainsi la main-d'œuvre dans son pays d'origine. Nous appelons cependant à renforcer ces efforts et à les rendre plus efficaces.

Je voudrais enfin rappeler notre soutien à la cause palestinienne et au droit du peuple palestinien à instaurer son Etat indépendant et à vivre en paix comme tous les autres peuples de la région; nous appelons ainsi au retour à la négociation et au respect des résolutions internationales.

Permettez-moi, pour conclure, de renouveler mon estime et mes remerciements pour les efforts déployés par notre Organisation afin de nous offrir l'opportunité d'exprimer nos préoccupations et de dialoguer avec les autres partenaires sociaux pour trouver dans la consultation des solutions aux principaux problèmes économiques et sociaux dans le monde.

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*Mr. DIMITROV (Worker, Bulgaria)*

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Allow me first of all to congratulate you on behalf of the Bulgarian workers and to express my confidence that the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference will adopt decisions which will increase the possibility of decent work for the working people in the context of our globalizing world.

I should like to express my appreciation for the realization of the ILO programme for 2004-05 with regard to the four strategic objectives related to the promotion of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; the promotion of decent employment for women and men, the enhancement of social protection for all and the strengthening of tripartism and social dialogue. I should also like to support the considerable work carried out by the ILO in that direction, as well as the conclusions contained in the Director-General's Report.

Unfortunately, we cannot report on much achievement with regard to the decent work of the Bulgarian workers. Low and often unpaid wages, insecure employment, a large shadow economy, the continuous increase of flexibility at the expense of security, an expanding army of working poor, every violation of labour and trade union rights and discrimination in a number of enterprises – such are the employment relations in our country.

Both the Government and business are not investing enough in the development of human capital and are not securing the employability and adaptability of the workers, which could ensure the competitiveness of the economy and a high quality of life and work.

We are concerned about the continued use of child labour and the increasing number of children dropping out of school, mainly because of economic reasons. The mere ratification of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 Convention (No. 182), by Bulgaria is not enough. We need the efforts of all stakeholders, of the Government and the social partners in order to develop a comprehensive national strategy, taking account of the ILO's efforts for a future without child labour. That is why we support this second Global Report on child labour and the action plan it contains.

During recent years, with the active participation of the unions, certain steps were made towards the harmonization of our legislation with the ILO's Conventions and Recommendations and with the practice of the European Union in a number of fields, such as gender equality, especially with regard to employment and remuneration, enforcement of labour legislation and health and safety at work.

The Labour Code was amended to secure a transposition of Directive 2002/14/EC establishing a general framework for informing and consulting employees in the European Community. We are disturbed, however, by the tendency to minimize labour, social and trade union standards and rights, provoked by the international financial institutions. The IMF-imposed restrictive monetary policy continues to deepen social polarization and employment insecurity and makes it difficult to formulate coherent social policy and to follow the European Social Model.

We do not think that the World Bank and the IMF should be advising the Government and the social partners in the field of labour relations. We believe that the ILO is the right institution to do that.

Progress was achieved on the further institutionalization of industrial relations and social dialogue. The Economic and Social Council and the National Institute for Reconciliation and Arbitration are already operating. But social dialogue, on a national as well as branch level, is still not efficient enough and has not reached its full potential.

In spite of statements attesting to the willingness of the new Government to sign a Pact of Economic and Social Development of Bulgaria lasting until 2009, today, nine months after it came into power, there still is no consensus between the Government and the social partners on the Pact's content. The employers are continuing their attempts further to liberalize the Labour Code and to remove the additional payment for working conditions and the seniority bonuses, as well as more flexible working time and work arrangements, to the detriment of the workers.

The current failure to negotiate consensus solutions on incomes, labour, tax and insurance policies was the reason for the national protest demonstration organized by the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions in Bulgaria (CITUB) on 30 May 2006.

We also insist on the removal of the ban to strike in the healthcare, communications, energy public administration and railway transport sectors. We

have filed a complaint on this issue with the Council of Europe.

We support the proposed *Promotional framework for occupational safety and health* and the texts of the proposed Convention and Recommendation. In my country, mandatory insurance for workers in case of accidents at work has been introduced.

The significant changes to the labour market in our country bring with them serious challenges for the employment relationship, social protection and the rights of the self-employed, unpaid home workers and others whose employment status is not altogether clear and falls under the category of triangular employment relationships. We support the conclusions made in the report on the employment relationship and the suggestions for adoption of a suitable ILO standards-setting instrument. We, the Bulgarian trade unions, are convinced that this is the way to strengthen the social and labour protection of those working under non-standard forms of employment.

In conclusion, I would like to express our gratitude to the International Labour Office and the Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest for the assistance rendered regarding a number of issues such as violence and stress at work, social finance for support to self-employment, remuneration systems and wages, etc. and to express our hope that our successful cooperation will continue in the future as well.

I wish the Conference every success in its work and thank you for your attention.

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Mr. VAN LEEUWEN (*representative, Education International*)

The teachers of the world welcome the ILO's message of hope this year in the Report *The end of child labour: Within reach*. We too want to reach the critical threshold quickly, to put an end to child labour, once and for all. Education International, representing the world's teachers and education employees, works with our sister global unions to achieve it. No longer can we accept that the coffee we drink, or the shoes we wear, be produced at some point in the supply chain by child labour and, like the ILO, we want to move children from workplaces to classrooms.

But the task is immense. All countries have committed to education for all, yet already many are falling behind the Millennium Development Goal benchmarks. The very first benchmark – gender equity in primary education by 2005 – has been missed in most of Africa and in much of Asia, and one of the major obstacles is the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS.

Another huge challenge is to train enough qualified teachers. UNESCO's latest report shows that we need more than 18 million newly trained teachers by the year 2015. The ILO Sectoral Action Programme aims to meet teacher shortages to achieve education for all by bringing together governments, employers and teachers' unions, nationally and regionally. Yet so far that Action Programme, which is, I believe, a good programme, has functioned in only 12 countries and the ILO must continue the work and put in the human and financial resources required, otherwise this programme will turn out to be just another drop in the bucket of good intentions.

In this respect, I must refer to the new Commonwealth Teacher Recruitment Protocol agreed by Education International Commonwealth member

unions and their governments. This protocol, facilitated by the Commonwealth Secretariat, is a very good model, and we propose that the ILO take this model and work with us to establish its standards worldwide, because it is of crucial importance that industrial countries stop poaching qualified teachers from the south.

On World Teachers' Day this year, 5 October, we will have the 40th anniversary of the ILO/UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers. The joint ILO/UNESCO Committee of Experts on the Application of the Recommendations concerning Teaching Personnel (CEART) will meet here at the ILO to report on progress. The picture is not a good one. In many developing countries, the wages – when they are paid – are so low that teachers are driving taxis, working in hotels or even in the informal economy just to survive. Yet quality education for all is one of the keys to the prospect of future decent work for today's young people and they deserve, they need, qualified teachers able and available to give them full attention. The mass protest of schoolchildren in Chile today is a sign of the times. In many countries, students and parents are supporting teachers more and more in their efforts to prevent declining quality and promote accessibility of public education systems.

ILO standards help set the conditions required for communities to build better futures – standards like the Conventions to end child labour and to provide proper maternity leave – and just as important are the standards to protect trade union rights.

ILO's freedom of association work has won great respect. We find unacceptable any attempts to either politicize the freedom of association committees through the election process or to weaken their jurisprudence. This latest challenge is, I am afraid, part of a pattern. Nationally and internationally, there is an unrelenting assault on the very concept of norms and principles of behaviour in workplace relations. Protection of workers' collective rights is denied and we see it in Australia and in other countries, and we see it in the attack on freedom of association jurisprudence.

All this in the context of globalization. Do we have to accept the race to the bottom? If the world's most populous country grows at 8 per cent per annum, and does it by denying basic rights, including independent trade unions, does that mean the rest of the world has to do the same in the name of competition? I put it to you that globalization should not be used to justify weakening of standards. Rather, globalization is the very reason why we need to strengthen and apply standards.

The global trade union movement is modernizing to meet that challenge. Education International strongly supports that, and is glad to play a part in it. We see a decent future for all, not just the fortunate few, built upon universal standards and genuine constructive social dialogue between governments, employers and representative organizations of workers – in a word, the tripartism which is at the heart of the ILO.

We continue counting on this Organization's help in creating such a future.

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M. ONDONGO (*ministre du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Sécurité sociale, Congo*)

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Je ne puis m'empêcher de commencer mon propos par l'expression d'une grande satisfaction au regard de l'excellente organisation de nos travaux,

découlant elle-même, j'en suis convaincu, de la très bonne préparation de ceux-ci. Nous y sommes tellement habitués que nous ne mesurons peut-être plus à leur juste valeur les efforts, ô combien louables, qui sous-tendent cette préparation et cette organisation, irréprochable sur tous les plans.

La République du Congo, par ma voix, félicite et remercie le Président du Conseil d'administration, le Directeur général du BIT et tous ses collaborateurs pour leur savoir-faire éprouvé.

Je m'associe avec honneur et bonheur aux éminentes personnalités qui, de cette tribune, et avant moi, ont très chaleureusement félicité le Président, ainsi que ceux qui l'assistent, pour leur élection à la présidence de la 95<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence internationale du Travail.

Il n'y a pas de développement sans travail, et il n'y a pas de travail qui vaille dans la société des hommes sans entraîner le développement. Le Directeur général du BIT a eu beaucoup de mérite de mettre en évidence la problématique très actuelle de la relation entre le travail et le développement. Le gouvernement de la République du Congo accueille donc avec grand intérêt l'approche du Directeur général du BIT, qui ouvre dans son rapport à la présente session les débats sur les principaux thèmes d'actualité, comme la mondialisation et le travail, l'avenir de la sécurité sociale, le travail décent et la réduction de la pauvreté, etc. C'est pourquoi mon pays appuie sans réserve l'ordre du jour qui nous a été proposé. Les points qui y sont inscrits appellent de notre part quelques commentaires.

Concernant l'application des normes internationales du travail, le deuxième rapport de notre Organisation sur le travail des enfants en a dressé un bilan négatif, particulièrement en Afrique subsaharienne.

La République du Congo, qui a ratifié la convention n° 182, l'un des instruments de lutte contre les pires formes de travail des enfants, demeure radicalement opposée au travail des enfants. Elle en appelle solennellement à tous pour que nous donnions réellement les moyens de combattre et d'éradiquer à jamais de notre planète l'ignominie que constitue le travail des enfants. Dans mon pays, le gouvernement ne fait l'économie d'aucun effort dans la traque de toutes les formes condamnables du travail des enfants.

Au sujet de la convention n° 81 sur l'inspection du travail, notre Organisation doit rester attentive aux mutations technologiques et économiques qui s'opèrent sous nos yeux, jour après jour, pour pouvoir adapter l'inspection du travail aux réalités des temps présents. Le travail évolue sans cesse, et ses règles évoluent en même temps. Le système d'inspection doit lui aussi évoluer pour épouser parfaitement les contours de ces diverses transformations. Pour notre part, nous avons engagé depuis un peu plus d'un an des réformes hardies qui sont assurément de nature à redonner ses lettres de noblesse à l'exaltante et indispensable mission d'inspection du travail au Congo.

S'agissant du cadre promotionnel sur la sécurité et la santé au travail, les textes proposés à la faveur de la 93<sup>e</sup> session, notamment les projets de convention et de recommandation sur la sécurité et la santé au travail, constituent pour le gouvernement du Congo une bonne base de discussion. Ces textes mériteraient donc d'être adoptés à la présente session.

Pour ce qui concerne le projet de recommandation sur la relation de travail, il ne présente aucune entorse aux lois et règlements en vigueur dans mon

pays. Au contraire, il répond aux multiples attentes qui s'y manifestent. Bien plus, il traite des aspects importants pouvant aider à compléter et à renforcer notre législation. En conséquence, le gouvernement de la République du Congo se prononce pour l'adoption dudit projet.

Quant à la coopération technique, si des résultats appréciables ont été atteints dans ce domaine, il reste que la mobilisation des ressources financières pour l'exécution certaine et satisfaisante des projets retenus demeure le maillon faible du système de coopération de l'Organisation.

Aussi le Congo soutient-il avec force l'adoption de nouvelles stratégies de mobilisation des ressources financières et la mise en place de nouvelles formes de partenariat.

Au-delà de l'ordre du jour, j'aimerais indiquer que mon pays n'appellera jamais assez à une réforme de l'Organisation internationale du Travail propice à lui permettre d'être encore plus utile aux peuples du monde, en général, et au monde du travail, en particulier, l'Organisation internationale du Travail se doit de se réformer.

Pour terminer, je souhaite plein succès aux travaux de notre Conférence, et je forme le vœu de voir les délibérations des présentes assises contribuer efficacement à la réalisation des objectifs de notre Organisation.

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*Original portugais: M. DOMINGOS PITRA NETO (ministre de l'Administration publique, de l'Emploi et de la Sécurité sociale, Angola)*

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Au nom du gouvernement angolais, je me félicite que l'Organisation internationale du Travail ait constaté que des progrès significatifs sont faits dans la lutte mondiale contre le travail des enfants, comme on peut le lire dans le résumé du rapport global préparé pour cette Conférence.

Je saisis l'occasion pour, dans cette enceinte, réaffirmer l'engagement du gouvernement angolais à mettre en œuvre des mesures sociales et économiques pour appliquer la convention n° 182 sur les pires formes de travail des enfants et l'action immédiate en vue de leur élimination, adoptée à la 87<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence internationale du Travail en juin 1999.

Le gouvernement angolais a déjà ratifié la convention n° 182 et est en train d'élaborer son Plan national de lutte contre l'exploitation du travail des enfants en Angola. A cet effet, une commission ministérielle multisectorielle a été créée. Elle devra coordonner toutes les actions jusqu'à la mise en œuvre efficace des mesures qui seront définies, sans préjudice des responsabilités de notre Institut national de l'enfance et des actions qu'il entreprendra.

Le plan national envisagera des programmes spécifiques pour éviter que ne surgissent les maux qui vont généralement de pair avec la croissance économique et le développement des pays, à savoir l'exploitation des mineurs, la prostitution des enfants et la traite de mineurs.

Cependant, le gouvernement angolais est bien conscient que lutter contre la pauvreté est la meilleure façon de combattre des maux comme le travail

des enfants et toutes les formes d'exploitation du travail des enfants. A cet effet, nos politiques sont conçues et réalisées en vue de l'augmentation du nombre de salles de classe et par conséquent du nombre d'enfants dans le système d'enseignement. Nous envisageons également la construction d'un plus grand nombre d'hôpitaux afin de réduire le taux de mortalité infantile, nous envisageons de réparer les routes et les ponts pour permettre la circulation des biens et des personnes, et enfin nous envisageons d'adopter des mesures pour créer de nouveaux postes de travail.

En ce qui concerne le thème du rapport mondial de cette année, à savoir l'abolition effective du travail des enfants, j'aimerais souligner que les institutions angolaises ont toujours adopté une position de protection de l'enfance. A cet effet, un institut public a été créé précisément pour protéger les enfants.

Nous pouvons avec assurance affirmer que l'Angola fait partie du groupe de pays où, même si l'on n'a aucune preuve de l'existence du travail des enfants ou de la traite et de l'exploitation sexuelle de mineurs, la prévention et la sensibilisation dans ce domaine sont une préoccupation constante du gouvernement.

La grande préoccupation du gouvernement angolais concerne le travail de mineurs dans les petites entreprises familiales, surtout en milieu rural et au moment des récoltes, parce que cela éloigne les enfants du système d'enseignement. J'aimerais proposer à cette auguste assemblée que soient créées des commissions régionales de travail pour réaliser une étude de ces cas par région et présenter des solutions.

Le rapport global fait également mention de systèmes de surveillance des indicateurs concernant le travail des enfants comme étant l'une des mesures de l'OIT. Je souhaiterais proposer à cette 95<sup>e</sup> session la création de mécanismes permettant aux gouvernements de jauger le travail des enfants, surtout ceux des pays qui ont déjà ratifié la convention n° 182. Dans les cas les plus flagrants de gouvernements permissifs à l'égard du travail des enfants, il conviendrait que l'OIT conçoive et exécute des programmes spécifiques de sensibilisation.

Je tiens, ici et maintenant, à exprimer notre plus vive solidarité et notre appréciation des efforts déployés par l'OIT pour, d'une part, encourager les pays à créer un cadre juridique adapté et un travail sûr et salubre et, d'autre part, stimuler les initiatives visant à éliminer le travail des enfants, comme le Programme international pour l'abolition du travail des enfants. L'objectif de ce programme est effectivement d'éliminer toutes les formes de travail des enfants d'ici 2016. La République de l'Angola s'est engagée dans cette voie en élaborant son Plan national de lutte contre l'exploitation du travail des enfants en Angola.

*(The Conference adjourned at 1 p.m.)*

*(La séance est levée à 13 heures.)*

*(Se levanta la sesión a las 13 horas.)*

## Twelfth sitting

Thursday, 8 June 2006, 3.05 p.m.

Presidents: Ms. Abdel Hady and 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.)

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*Original Arabic:* The PRESIDENT

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I declare the twelfth sitting of this session of the Conference open, and give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference to make an announcement.

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The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

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You will be aware that yesterday afternoon an unfortunate accident occurred involving one of the Conference minibuses. We are pleased to advise that the delegates who were injured have received treatment and have been discharged from hospital. The necessary follow-up, both administrative and humanitarian, is in hand. In this respect it would be very much appreciated if any person who was directly involved in the incident, that is was a passenger, who has not already identified him or herself to the Conference services secretariat office, should do so as soon as possible. It is also important that any witnesses to the incident similarly identify themselves to the secretariat, that is to the Conference services secretariat office, one level down on the second floor on this side of this building. Thank you for your attention.

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*Original Arabic:* The PRESIDENT

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

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Mr. KEARNEY (*representative, International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation*)

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At the heart of the ILO's mandate is the promotion of freedom of association. Unfortunately, too many member States pay no more than lip service to this core standard and thus, increasingly, threaten the credibility of the whole Organization.

Freedom of association is an essential foundation for decent work and the bedrock of mature industrial relations.

The right of workers to form trade unions of their choice to bargain collectively with their employers is key in tackling and eliminating all major workers' rights abuses, including forced and child labour, discrimination, poverty-level wages, excessive working time, unhealthy and unsafe workplaces and job insecurity.

Freedom of association is of such fundamental importance and so potent in exposing workplace injustice through the transparency of collective action that it provokes outrage from wayward employers and corrupt politicians and officials. Free-

dom of association is rightly the core Convention of the ILO, but increasingly it is becoming one of the most ignored by member States who often appear to connive with employers to preserve a union-free workplace environment.

Nowhere is that connivance more obvious and its impact more evident than in labour-intensive industries like textiles, clothing and footwear. Take Turkey, last Friday 110 of the 174 workers at NUMAS, a yarn company, joined the textile union TEKSTIL. The very same day all 110 were fired! Where was the Government? Where was it when INTEK, another Turkish company, closed down its stitching section some weeks ago because workers there joined a union? What is the same Government doing to protect workers at Metraco, a company currently embarked on a campaign to destroy the trade union recently established there? Union members have been harassed and intimidated and even threatened in their own homes by company goons. Local police have presided over its efforts to get trade union members to renounce their membership.

What is the Government of Morocco doing to force textile company Somitex to reinstate the 14 union leaders who were illegally fired in March 2004? Why did the same Government repeatedly harass the three women Moroccan Labour Union (UMT) leaders at Dovetex for resisting the firing of 34 of their colleagues?

Cambodia is another Government failing to fulfil its ILO obligations relating to freedom of association. At Yung Hwa the registration of the trade union is being blocked at a high level and the union president and other members have been suspended. At Gold Flame, the same, criminal charges on incitement have been filed against 11 union leaders. Eighteen candidates for election as union officers were bribed into resigning from the company.

The Government of Sri Lanka continues to drag its feet in defending freedom of association. Five hundred and eighteen workers at GP Garments and 100 at Workwear Lanka were fired for trade union membership and activity and are still awaiting reinstatement.

Over these past few weeks, the garment industry in Bangladesh has been in turmoil as protests mount against exploitative labour practices. No wonder trade unions are banned in export processing zones and are crushed almost as soon as they appear in wider industry. Year after year, the Government of

Bangladesh dutifully comes to the ILO and promises reform but nothing changes for workers on the ground.

Finally, not a single one of China's hundreds of millions of workers can form or join a free and democratic trade union, yet China sits at the heart of the ILO. Not an encouraging picture and one that increasingly prompts workers to question the credibility of the ILO when they see governments ignoring or suppressing workers' rights with impunity.

Thus, the ILO urgently needs publicly to renew its commitment to freedom of association, to collective bargaining and to social dialogue and in doing so, develop up-to-date mechanisms to enforce their observance, as well as calling on member States to account for their failures and demanding that they provide time-bound programmes for compliance.

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Mr. NGUYEN (*Standing Vice Minister for Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, Viet Nam*)

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I have the honour to speak on behalf of the delegation of the Government of Viet Nam at this important forum. I would like to extend my warm greetings to the President and all participants of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference.

May I begin by commending the Director-General and the Office on the Global Report, *The end of child labour: Within reach*. Compared to four years ago when the first report on child labour was released, this Report lists more names of countries which have ratified Convention No. 138 and Convention No. 182 and have developed more plans of action for their enforcement. We are convinced that concerted efforts by governments working closely with the social partners, and supported by the ILO, will ensure that Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 will continue to be promoted and enforced on a global scale through concrete actions. For its part, the Government of Viet Nam commits to furthering its cooperation with the social partners, mass organizations and local communities in proceeding with the National Programme for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour.

The Government of Viet Nam is supportive of the fact that the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference will adopt a new instrument on occupational safety and health with a view to further promoting this important work on a global scale. The issuance of a new instrument on occupational safety and health has once again reaffirmed the ILO's mandate of protecting the right of workers to a secure and safe working environment. In Viet Nam, in 2005, a National Council on Occupational Safety and Health, which comprises relevant ministries and agencies of the Government and employers' and workers' organizations, was established to orchestrate joint actions. A National Programme on Occupational Safety and Health, which embodies the ILO's notion of a preventative safety culture at work, has been developed and submitted to the Government.

Concerning activities to promote the Decent Work Agenda, I am happy to inform you that after in-depth consultation, the Government and social partners in Viet Nam and the ILO office in Hanoi have finalized the Draft Country Framework on Promoting Decent Work in Viet Nam for the five years to come which focuses on the labour market, labour institutions, social security and protection for the vulnerable. As the name of the document indicates,

this will be a framework to guide and facilitate cooperation between the ILO and its tripartite constituency in promoting decent work in Viet Nam. This document will be signed officially in the near future between the ILO, the Government and the social partners in Viet Nam.

At present, Viet Nam stands on the threshold of entering the World Trade Organization. The Government and social partners have been making tremendous efforts in confronting the opportunities and challenges posed by WTO accession, particularly with regard to its social implications, with a focus on three main areas: social security, labour markets and labour relations.

In view of the importance and urgency of this effort, Viet Nam hopes to cooperate further with the ILO, as well as other partners, in these three areas.

With regard to international labour standards I am happy to inform this body that an inter-ministerial task force, with the support of ILO specialists, has finalized a report on a comparative analysis of the compatibility of Vietnamese legislation with the provisions of Conventions Nos. 29 and 105, with a view to recommending to the competent authorities the ratification of these Conventions. In addition, Viet Nam has worked to improve its administrative procedures to reinforce the study, application and reporting of the implementation of ILO Conventions which the country has ratified. We are also considering the review of a number of other Conventions in time to come.

Viet Nam continues its policy of human - centred development that fosters a close link between economic development and poverty reduction, with a view to ensuring that the poor are also able to participate in the economic integration of the country and to benefit from economic growth through concrete programmes that target the workforce as a whole. Viet Nam has recorded remarkable achievements with regard to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; reduced the poverty rate by half over the past ten years; and will continue its efforts with the international community to advance towards our common goals.

Best wishes to you all, and I wish our Conference every success.

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*Original Arabic:* Mr. DAHLAN (*Employer, Saudi Arabia*)

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I take the opportunity of this Conference to extend my gratitude to the Secretary-General and his colleagues of the International Labour Office and to express my appreciation for their efforts to promote the attainment of the fundamental objectives and principles of the ILO, in particular in the area of technical cooperation; the establishment of labour standards; the application of the principles of social dialogue; the implementation of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182); the monitoring and follow-up of respect for human rights at work; and the safeguarding of the rights of workers and employers.

Despite these efforts, unemployment rates and poverty unfortunately continue to increase. There is a need to examine this phenomenon. In fact, when numerous countries became members of WTO, we expected that the accession of poor and developing countries to this organization would contribute to the reduction of unemployment rates and poverty. However, unfortunately the contrary occurs in these countries. The causes for this situation must be analysed. The problem might not be the WTO system



itself, but its implementation. While poor and developing country markets opened to export goods from the major industrialized nations, the markets of the latter closed themselves off absurdly to exports from poor countries and barriers were put in place to keep developing country exports out. We expected multinational companies to increase their activities and investment in poor and developing countries to create employment but, unfortunately, we saw setbacks rather than notable progress in this area.

In recognition of the commitment of the members of this Conference, the international community, other international organizations and the United Nations to implement the fundamental principles of the ILO, especially those safeguarding workers' and employers' rights and human rights at work, we call for the implementation of these principles with respect to workers and employers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, who suffer flagrant violations of those principles by the occupying force.

People in the Islamic and Arab world are peace-loving and respect the rights of all nations. We call on the State of Israel to comply with the principles of the ILO. It is our wish to ensure the rights of all workers and employers in Israel, Palestine and the occupied Arab territories and I believe that repression of workers will backfire inevitable.

Iraq is a member of all international organizations. What happens there today is a catastrophe for workers and employers. Any efforts made towards a return to security and any technical assistance will help increase production levels. All international companies should include Iraq in their future investment plans.

I ask all those present and all decision-makers in the world to join us in praying that God may protect the world from war and catastrophes, which have caused a rise in unemployment rates and poverty worldwide. May the language of dialogue and diplomacy take precedence over the language of war and economic blockades.

To conclude, I should like to draw your attention to the efforts of the Saudi Arabian Government in the area of economic and political reform, especially the establishment of workers' committees as legitimate representatives of Saudi workers. It should also be noted that Saudi workers decided to include women in the Saudi Workers' delegation to this Conference for the first time in the history of workers' representation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

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*Original portugais: M. GOMES PROENÇA (travailleur, Portugal)*

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Encore une fois, le Directeur général nous a présenté un excellent rapport sur un thème qui est fondamental pour tous: la réflexion sur les changements qui se produisent dans le monde du travail et la manière dont nous pourrions lutter activement pour assurer le progrès et promouvoir le travail décent en combattant la pauvreté et l'exclusion.

L'OIT est parvenue à mettre le travail décent à l'ordre du jour au plan mondial en soulignant ses facettes multiples et l'importance du travail organisé, comme l'importance du travail informel.

L'action persistante et fondamentale de l'OIT démontre que le développement économique et social doit se fonder sur le droit au travail et sur l'amélioration de la qualité du travail, sur le renfor-

cement du dialogue social bipartite et tripartite et sur la lutte contre la déréglementation sociale.

Dans le cadre de la mondialisation, il importe que tous les pays ratifient les huit conventions fondamentales de l'OIT et que les principes et les droits qui y sont consacrés soient réellement respectés.

C'est une obligation pour tous les participants à la Conférence que de promouvoir la ratification des huit conventions, sauf dans le cas de difficultés transitoires reconnues au niveau tripartite, et si cela ne remet pas en cause l'application effective des principes et des droits qui sont consacrés par ces conventions.

De même, le droit au travail oblige les gouvernements et les partenaires sociaux à accorder la priorité effective à la croissance et à l'emploi dans le cadre des politiques publiques et privées, tout en refusant la persistance de niveaux de chômage très élevés qui touchent particulièrement les jeunes et les femmes.

Il nous faut des politiques qui favorisent l'amélioration de la qualité de l'emploi en luttant efficacement contre les discriminations, particulièrement les discriminations entre hommes et femmes, et en assurant la promotion d'un travail toujours plus qualifié et mieux rémunéré.

Il nous faut donc investir dans l'éducation et dans la formation initiale et continue.

Nous aimerions également saluer la présentation à cette Conférence du rapport sur la lutte contre le travail des enfants. Cette lutte doit être une lutte résolue contre les différentes formes d'exploitation des enfants. Les enfants doivent avoir le droit à l'éducation et à un avenir qui offre des perspectives professionnelles réelles.

Le combat contre la pauvreté et l'exclusion questionne aussi nos sociétés sur la libre circulation des travailleurs dans les espaces d'intégration régionale et également sur le rôle que jouent les immigrants dans le progrès économique et social de nos pays. Il est donc important de promouvoir une politique d'immigration juste qui encourage l'intégration et qui constitue un outil de coopération permettant un développement plus équilibré au plan mondial.

Il nous faut plus de sécurité dans l'emploi, ce qui n'est pas incompatible – bien au contraire – avec la flexibilité qui est nécessaire aux économies dans le cadre de la mondialisation, et ceci par le biais de formes d'adaptation négociées entre les travailleurs et les employeurs.

Un travail décent et de qualité exige également un niveau plus élevé de protection sociale par le biais d'un dialogue sur la durabilité financière des systèmes de protection sociale et en portant une attention spéciale aux travailleurs qui travaillent sur la base de contrats atypiques ou qui travaillent dans l'économie informelle.

Les changements en cours dans nos économies et nos sociétés, qui ont des impacts significatifs sur le monde du travail, doivent renforcer le rôle du dialogue social aux plans national et régional, ainsi que l'importance de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, qui est le siège par excellence du dialogue social tripartite au plan mondial.

J'aimerais conclure en saluant les efforts du Directeur général, Juan Somavia, en ce qui concerne le renforcement du rôle des partenaires sociaux, et nous espérons que le Forum sur la mondialisation qui est en cours d'organisation aura lieu en 2007, sous les auspices de l'OIT, une Organisation qui est

un acteur de plus en plus incontournable dans les décisions concernant la mondialisation.

*Original portugués: Sr. HUGUENEY FILHO (Gobierno, Brasil)*

Permítame presentar en esta sesión plenaria las directrices del Gobierno brasileño para la aplicación del concepto de trabajo decente de mi país, en nombre del señor Ministro del Trabajo y Empleo, Luiz Marinho que, a última hora, por razones de fuerza mayor, no pudo venir, como hubiera querido, a Ginebra para participar en esta Conferencia.

La Memoria del Director General resalta este año el papel de los valores y principios de esta Organización reflejados en las normas internacionales del trabajo y el diálogo social, y en la formulación de respuestas prácticas a los problemas presentes en las realidades de las personas, de los trabajadores, de los empleadores y de sus familias.

El concepto del trabajo decente es una aspiración universal de nuestra sociedad frente a las oportunidades y retos de la mundialización. Este concepto también fue retomado en la Decimosexta Reunión Regional Americana de la OIT, celebrada en el Brasil en mayo pasado, que contó con la participación del Sr. Somavia y de los representantes de los empleadores y los trabajadores de las Américas. En esa ocasión, tuvimos la oportunidad de debatir una Agenda Hemisférica de trabajo decente para el período 2006-2015.

En el Brasil estamos trabajando para poner en práctica esta agenda. Los resultados de nuestro esfuerzo han sido reconocidos por la OIT, como lo atestigua el Informe global con arreglo al seguimiento de la Declaración de la OIT relativa a los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo: *La eliminación del trabajo infantil: un objetivo a nuestro alcance*, que también se inició en Brasilia durante la Decimosexta Reunión Regional Americana.

Esos resultados, con la plena participación de la sociedad civil, alentaron al Gobierno brasileño a patrocinar el proyecto del Programa Internacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil (IPEC) en los países de habla portuguesa de África, donde esperamos poder repetir, siempre con la estrecha cooperación de los gobiernos locales, las buenas prácticas existentes en el Brasil en esa esfera. Esta es una iniciativa inédita de cooperación sur-sur en el contexto de la OIT que esperamos que sea el primero de otros proyectos que se adopten en el futuro.

Además de esto, y paralelamente al inicio de la Agenda Hemisférica de trabajo decente, hemos elaborado, en consulta con los interlocutores sociales brasileños, un programa nacional de trabajo decente. La definición de las prioridades de nuestro programa nacional ha tomado en consideración los ejes programáticos previstos en el plan plurianual del Gobierno para 2004-2007.

El Gobierno del Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ha procurado asegurar el cumplimiento y la aplicación eficaces de la legislación laboral por medio del fortalecimiento de acciones de inspección del trabajo con miras a combatir el llamado trabajo precario causado, entre otros factores, por razones laborales encubiertas.

Combatimos implacablemente el trabajo forzoso en el territorio nacional y hemos retirado del trabajo en régimen de esclavitud a más de 13.000 trabajadores gracias a las acciones del Grupo Móvil de Fiscalización, y realizado pagos por más de 10 mi-

llones de dólares de los Estados Unidos en indemnizaciones.

Al mismo tiempo, hemos vivido un panorama favorable al crecimiento de los niveles de empleo en el último año, durante el cual se crearon más de 1.300.000 puestos de trabajo formal. De enero de 2003 a marzo de 2006, el número de nuevos empleos formales alcanzó la cifra de 3.700.000.

Como consecuencia de una negociación histórica, tanto para el Gobierno como para las entidades sindicales, el nuevo salario mínimo, vigente desde el 1º de abril de 2006, que se acordó en consulta con la sociedad, representó un crecimiento real del orden del 13 por ciento en relación con el año pasado. Es la subida más grande desde 1996.

Nuestro Gobierno se ha comprometido a construir una política estatal a largo plazo que permita elevar de manera continua y coherente el valor real del salario mínimo. En agosto de 2005, iniciamos un importante proceso de debates, consultas y negociaciones con representantes de la sociedad civil organizada, por medio de la Comisión cuatripartita para la valorización del salario mínimo, que coordina el Ministerio del Trabajo y Empleo. Junto con la creación de empleos y el aumento del valor del salario mínimo, el sector de la economía solidaria y el microcrédito también están creciendo en Brasil.

Un amplio contingente de trabajadores está buscando alternativas reales en forma de iniciativas innovadoras en materia de relaciones laborales. Tales alternativas propuestas por los propios trabajadores se componen de un amplio conjunto de actividades para participar en la gestión de los parques industriales metalúrgicos y las empresas del sector de los servicios.

El Gobierno federal reconoció la importancia de esta relación de trabajo en el contexto del debate de políticas públicas cuando creó en 2003 la Secretaría nacional de economía solidaria del Ministerio del Trabajo y Empleo.

Nuestro programa de microcrédito productivo que acaba de cumplir un año ha facilitado, desde su creación, 25 millones de dólares de los Estados Unidos para operaciones de microcrédito, beneficiando a 360.000 pequeños empresarios.

El diálogo social cuenta en el Brasil con espacios privilegiados para su ejercicio pleno. Con la reciente creación del Consejo nacional de relaciones de trabajo esperamos proseguir la necesaria reforma de la legislación sindical y laboral iniciada con los debates que tuvieron lugar en el Foro nacional del trabajo.

Cumpliendo con los principios inscritos en el Convenio núm. 144 de la OIT, hemos instituido una comisión tripartita de relaciones internacionales que tiene como objetivo tornar permanente el proceso de consulta para ayudar al Gobierno a tomar decisiones en materia laboral internacional.

El Brasil sigue firmemente comprometido con la OIT. Como afirmara el Ministro de Estado para las relaciones exteriores, Embajador Celso Amorim, con motivo de la clausura de la Decimosexta Reunión Regional Americana, las agendas del Brasil y la OIT coinciden. Las metas promulgadas por la OIT han dejado de ser exclusividad de esta Organización para pasar a ser objetivos mundiales. A nosotros nos incumbe, con el apoyo de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, la tarea de ponerlas en práctica a nivel nacional, regional e internacional.

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*Original lao: M. KAKANHYA (vice-ministre du Travail et des Affaires sociales, République démocratique populaire lao).*

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A l'issue de la 93<sup>e</sup> session de la Conférence internationale du Travail, la République démocratique populaire lao a considéré la question de la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes comme étant l'une de ses principales priorités. A cet égard, nous avons élaboré une politique de développement des qualifications, renforcé les normes sur les qualifications professionnelles, mis en place des centres de formation professionnelle aux niveaux local et central pour adapter les compétences professionnelles des jeunes aux besoins des différents secteurs du marché du travail.

En ce qui concerne le Plan d'action en vue de l'élimination de toutes les formes du travail forcé et obligatoire, la République démocratique populaire lao a entrepris une rigoureuse inspection des entreprises, tant au niveau central que local, pour empêcher le recours au travail forcé. En outre, nous avons incorporé le plan annuel de l'OIT de 2006 pour l'élimination du travail forcé et l'objectif d'une élimination du travail forcé d'ici à 2015, respectivement dans le plan d'action en matière de travail de notre ministère et de son programme stratégique relatif au travail courant jusqu'à 2010.

En ce qui concerne la question de la sécurité et de la santé au travail, nous avons considéré qu'il s'agissait là de l'une de nos priorités en matière de protection des travailleurs. Nous avons par conséquent fait de notre mieux en vue d'établir un plan d'action pour 2005-2010 en faveur de la santé et la sécurité au travail par le moyen de consultations tripartites. Ce plan est actuellement en cours de mise en œuvre. Au cours des dernières années, le ministère du Travail et des Affaires sociales ainsi que les autres mandants tripartites ont mis l'accent sur les activités de sensibilisation par des mesures de formation, des publications et d'autres moyens de communication, de façon à garantir un environnement de travail sûr et limiter les accidents du travail et les maladies professionnelles. Nous avons par ailleurs lancé la semaine de la santé et de la sécurité au travail qui a lieu la dernière semaine du mois d'avril.

Nous avons également un autre projet qui vise à créer un comité de la santé et de la sécurité au travail aussi bien au niveau central que local. Ce comité regroupera les représentants des ministères et des instances concernés, en particulier les responsables de l'inspection et la gestion de la santé et de la sécurité au travail.

Au delà des problèmes liés à la santé et la sécurité, nous nous sommes largement intéressés à d'autres questions relatives à l'emploi dans le cadre des activités pour la protection des travailleurs. Afin d'assurer une mise en œuvre uniforme de ces normes dans l'ensemble du pays, nous nous appuyons sur la loi du travail n° 0002/N.A comme norme de mise en œuvre. Cette loi recouvre un ensemble de thèmes comme le salaire minimum, la réglementation du travail, les relations sociales, les contrats de travail, la médiation en cas de conflit au travail, l'emploi et la sécurité sociale des travailleurs.

La bonne coopération entre le gouvernement de la République démocratique populaire du lao et l'Organisation internationale du Travail nous a permis de mettre en œuvre un certain nombre de projets qui ont permis des progrès comme le projet

sur la sécurité sociale et celui pour le développement des qualifications professionnelles.

Sur les huit conventions fondamentales de l'OIT, certaines n'ont pas encore été ratifiées par mon pays. Cependant, nous attachons une grande importance à ces conventions et nous les examinons de façon à pouvoir les ratifier le plus rapidement possible.

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Mr. TALIADOROS (*Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, Cyprus*)

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It is an honour for me to address the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The theme of the Report is very topical. Globalization and developments in technology and demographics have led to considerable changes in the way production is organized and services are provided at a global level and in the structure and distribution of jobs.

Change in workplaces and labour markets is occurring everywhere. I would like to congratulate the Director-General of the ILO, Mr. Somavia, on the quality of his Report. As he rightly points out, if we want to achieve the goal of decent work for all, it is vital to understand what is driving the process of change so that it can be shaped to yield more and better jobs for working women and men everywhere. We therefore fully subscribe to the call in his Report to deepen our knowledge and enrich the statistics and the data on decent work throughout the world.

The impact and the forces of globalization present us with huge challenges but also with great opportunities. Our policies and actions should be guided by a fundamental principle, i.e. to ensure an equitable distribution of the benefits of world economic growth. Each and every country should make its own contribution in order to prevent a segmented labour market, with some parts of it condemned to marginalization.

In this connection, it is important that every effort be made to protect the rights of all involved, especially those who are most affected by the ongoing structural reforms and transition. These rights should not be seen as an obstacle to growth but, rather, as a prerequisite, facilitating structural change.

Multilateral governance is needed to reign in any potentially negative effects of globalization and to ensure that its benefits are distributed fairly, within and between countries and regions. Moreover, proper governance and institutional management of change will enhance the chances for a successful adaptation of the international economy and the labour market.

It is important, therefore, to promote a model that balances market forces with policies determined at multilateral level – and to advance a strategy for sustainable development, aimed at reconciling economic growth, equity and social cohesion, as well as environmental protection.

We would like to share the optimism expressed in the Director-General's Report that technological progress, if applied in ways that promote inclusion rather than exclusion, could increase productivity and make material poverty history within a generation.

Sustainable progress and development require a social floor for the governance of the world of work, including minimum labour standards, which brings us to the necessity for international action

and to the key role of the ILO in economic development, progress and ultimately, world peace.

It is very important in this connection to boost the capacity of the ILO for the provision of technical advice and information and to encourage and support it to continue its analysis work and to strengthen its research and knowledge base.

The Government of Cyprus is fully committed to promoting decent work, which has been at the heart of the ILO's policy agenda since the year 2000. I am very pleased to note the convergence between the European Social Agenda and the Lisbon Strategy on the one hand, and the ILO Decent Work Agenda on the other hand.

Decent work is an essential part of my country's objectives and policies and is contained in the National Reform Programme, which Cyprus has submitted to the European Union within the framework of the re-launched Lisbon Strategy.

This programme adopts an integrated approach with a commitment to finding the right mix of policies to promote growth and competitiveness, while ensuring that conditions for social cohesion prevail.

In line with the EU Lisbon Strategy, the employment challenges set out in the National Reform Programme are to maintain high rates of increase of labour supply, particularly by raising the old-aged and female participation rates, taking into account the gradual ageing of the population and the shortages observed in the labour market and reducing gender inequality to increase the flexibility of the labour market; to proceed with the orderly management of economic migration issues and to further develop human capital, as well as to enhance the conditions for social cohesion.

The priorities that stem from these challenges are actively being tackled via a series of measures and policies, which are currently being promoted. We are fully committed to the effective implementation of our National Reform Programme. We aim for Cyprus to be at the forefront, leading the reform agenda and making its own important, albeit small, contribution to the labour market and economy.

In conclusion, I would like to express my country's willingness to contribute to the national and international effort to promote decent work in the world and the social dimension of globalization. I would also like to express our full support for the efforts of the ILO to improve health and safety in the workplace.

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Ms. THEODORSEN (*Worker, Norway*)

As a representative of the workers of Norway, I congratulate the President on the reports presented showing all the good work done by the ILO this last year.

Today, I will mainly focus on three topics: the Decent Work Agenda; the lack of fair gender representation in the ILO; and the situation for Palestinian workers.

During his recent visit to Norway, Mr. Somavia gave a valuable presentation of both the content of the Decent Work Agenda and the follow-up plans. His message was very well received by both the trade union movement and our newly elected worker-friendly Government which really has focused on employment questions since it came into office.

The challenge is especially to secure safe working conditions and decent wages for workers coming to Norway from the new European Union countries,

thereby avoiding a race to the bottom, and, at the same time, keeping up continued decent wages and job security for Norwegian workers as well.

Fortunately, our trade union movement and the Government are completely in line on these essential questions. In addition, Norway is the only Scandinavian country so far that has ratified the Labour Clauses (Public Contracts) Convention, 1949 (No. 94), thereby having an effective instrument to avoid social dumping and secure workers' rights.

In addition, the Government has just recently decided on the comprehensive plan of action against social dumping and has listened very intently to the advice from the trade unions on which measures to pursue.

The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions is very satisfied that decent work, including respect for and inclusion of social standards, and focus on tripartism and social dialogue, is now finally dominating the global political agenda.

The right to work is a basic human right. Of course, employment for everyone should have been included in the Millennium Development Goals. This not being so, the outcome document of the United Nations World Summit from last September provides a very good platform for the work onward.

My second topic, the question of fair gender representation in the ILO, is, however, not a success story. The Director-General has our full support in his efforts to achieve a more democratic representation in the ILO. But, so far, there have been few tangible results. This is a serious situation for the ILO. Women delegates this year represent only 15.4 per cent of the total delegates. This is even a slight decrease compared to last year.

We even see a direct result of this representation in this room today, where there are 49 men and 5 women on the list of speakers for today's meeting.

So, I am sure you all share my view that the Director-General and the Governing Body must give priority to this work and present concrete measures to increase the overall representation of women, at the yearly conferences, and in the ILO, as such.

In Norway, gender representation is an integrated part in all of our political work, both within the trade union movement and in society as such. Discussions on quotation and gender representation on company boards have, for instance, resulted in a substantial increase in women's representation.

Concerning the third topic, we thank the Director-General for his objective and interesting Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. Our Confederation is following with deep concern the daily life of the Palestinian workers and their families under the Israeli occupation.

We are now planning a large solidarity campaign for Palestine.

The ILO Report will be of great help, shedding light and giving objective information on the grave situation. Calling upon the international community to practise serious pressure on the Israeli Government to put an end to all measures against the Palestinian people and to respect the international law and the human rights of the Palestinians is of utmost importance. It should be clear that there will be no peace as long as the building of settlements, the work on the apartheid wall and the occupation is continuing. The international community should also respect the democratic will and choice of the Palestinians by dealing with their legal authorities,

instead of punishing them, and thereby increasing their suffering and tragedies.

In conclusion, I want to focus on a specific case. The Director-General specifically pointed to the recent situation in Nepal and the threats to freedom of association in his presentation. I would like to point to the situation in Zimbabwe, as a recent example of flagrant violations of trade union rights. I am sure the Director-General shares my view about the urgent need for action to make sure trade unionists in that country as well are protected and not deprived of their basic human and trade union rights by a worker-hostile government.

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Ms. MAHASE-MOILOA (*Minister of Employment and Labour, Lesotho*)

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It is my distinct honour and a special privilege to address this august gathering at this 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. Allow me to congratulate the President and the Vice-Presidents on their election to preside over this Conference. It is through their inspiring and indeed able leadership that we will be able to achieve the objectives of the Conference. My delegation and I bring with us warm greetings from the Mountain Kingdom.

The Lesotho delegation welcomes and endorses the Reports. The Decent Work Agenda, as the foundation of the ILO, cannot be realized unless other issues that affect the workplace are addressed. Hence, the need to look at the issues of occupational health and safety at work, the employment relationship and technical cooperation, as discussed in various committees of this Conference.

You will agree with me that decent work brings with it positive results such as economic growth, job creation and productivity, thereby contributing toward poverty alleviation. It is on this premise that, to support the Decent Work Agenda, we have embarked on the integrated inspection system to ensure that the workplace complies with the relevant labour laws as well as international standards. We believe that inspections form the pillar upon which the achievement of decent work can be based. The positive results of this effort are already being realized. We would like to thank the ILO for the technical support given to us to realize this dream.

We are facing a high unemployment rate in Lesotho. This is largely a result of a slow-growing economy relative to the high numbers entering the labour market, accompanied by the appreciated currency in the common monetary area. This has been further exacerbated by the closure of some apparel and textile factories, where about 20 per cent of factory jobs were lost. One lost job for us is one too many, because of the negative multiplier effects of such a loss.

In the meantime, we are glad to inform you that we have allies, in the form of the ILO and the Multifibre Arrangement Forum, who have come to our support at this time of dire need. May I take this opportunity to extend our deep gratitude to them as they have demonstrated that truly a friend in need is a friend indeed.

The Government of Lesotho and the Multifibre Arrangement Forum have hand-in-hand been working tirelessly trying to halt, reverse and restore the situation. We had a very fruitful meeting last month where the national tripartite body, the ILO and the Forum were discussing ways and means of retaining the existing factories and attracting new ones into Lesotho's economy. We are hopeful that these ef-

forts will bring the desired results of creating more decent and sustainable employment for our workers.

We are fully cognizant of the changing patterns in the world of work. It is a reality that cannot be ignored. It is for this reason that among the other steps that we have taken so far is the review and adaptation of our existing labour legislation. This exercise has been undertaken together with our social partners. The objective is to enable our fledgling industry to become more competitive in the global economy. Enhancement of our competitiveness shall not be at the expense of our workers as at all times we strive to ensure that human dignity and principles of decent work continue to prevail at the workplace.

It is no secret that Lesotho is amongst the countries with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS. The Government of Lesotho has declared war against this scourge and launched a fierce battle, fighting it from all fronts. Given the measures taken, I am highly confident that we will eventually win the war. As a contribution of my Ministry towards the elimination of this scourge, Parliament passed legislation last week on HIV/AIDS at the workplace. This has been formulated based on the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Code on HIV and AIDS. We are sure that this will go a long way in fighting HIV/AIDS at the workplace.

Let me point out that we have enjoyed a long history of technical cooperation with the ILO. The positive results are there for everyone to see. To point out but a few examples, we have established a dispute prevention and resolution body which has been performing very well. We have improved the inspectorate that I mentioned earlier. There are many more examples, but time and place do not permit detailed enumeration and elaboration.

The Lesotho Government is immensely gratified that the ILO has also considered the country for the decent work country programme. To ensure national ownership, a tripartite plus meeting was held.

The following were identified as areas of possible cooperation with the ILO: the introduction of a social security system; monitoring of labour standards in the textile and apparel sector; employment creation, especially for young people; and the fight against HIV/AIDS at the workplace. Lesotho is eagerly awaiting the commencement of the programme.

We fully endorse the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Lesotho is passionately committed to its meticulous implementation. To this end, we are the recipients of technical support from the ILO. We are working with other stakeholders, including United Nations agencies responsible for the rights of children to eliminate any forms of child labour. At this point, it is worth noting that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho has introduced free primary education, which will soon be compulsory. This is a bold move which will ensure that every child gets basic education as a right, instead of being subjected to work. It is therefore my belief that this will assist us in the effort to uproot any lingering remnants of child labour, should there be any.

To conclude, I wish to point out that the efforts which are being made by the ILO within the context of its mandate will pave the way for achieving the objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, reach-

ing the Millennium Development Goals and realizing our own Lesotho Vision 2020.

Let me reiterate the commitment of the Kingdom of Lesotho to the founding principles and ideals of the ILO.

At this point, allow me to congratulate the Director-General for his exceptional and visionary skills displayed in his leadership of the ILO and for steering the Organization skilfully through the turbulence of the times, and may I wish him and his staff every success in their future noble endeavours.

May I thank you for the opportunity to address you and thank you for your kind attention. *Khotso, pula nala* (peace, rain, prosperity).

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Mr. GIBSON (*Minister of Immigration, Labour and Training, Bahamas*)

First, I wish to pledge my country's support to the President and respective Vice-Presidents as we work together to successfully complete the Conference agenda.

I should like to take this opportunity also to congratulate Dr. Ana Teresa Romero on her appointment to office as Director of the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean and to commend the ILO for once again choosing one of our brightest and eminently qualified daughters to work with us as we seek to improve conditions for all our people.

I am indeed honoured for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, and I wish to begin by saying that my country appreciates the assistance rendered to us over the years by the International Labour Organization, and we look forward to your continued assistance as we work to establish the highest standards and best practices for all in our region.

In the Report submitted to this session of the Conference by the Director-General, it was patently clear that he understood the important challenges faced by small middle-income countries, such as those that make up the Caribbean as a whole and the Bahamas in particular. He is to be commended for his keen sense of fairness and his compassion for the smaller nations of this world.

I am pleased to note that the role of decent work as a global goal achieved high-level support at the 2005 World Summit of the United Nations General Assembly. In particular, it is most encouraging to learn that the Summit adopted an extensive outcome document which outlined a large number of commitments on key issues that include ILO employment goals, expressing strong support for fair globalization, full and productive employment and decent work for all. We are advised that these were identified as central objectives of national and international development strategies and as a part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

And now, permit me to comment on national issues within the Bahamas.

As we reported to you last year, the Bahamas, like our global economy, is still undergoing a metamorphosis that is being fuelled by the flexibility and competitiveness of integrating labour markets, increased competition, global, political and social changes and advances in information technology.

The Government of the Bahamas remains committed to providing employment opportunities, not only for Bahamians, but for those who reside within our borders legally. In our efforts to do so, we have

secured additional direct foreign investment initiatives that are churning out jobs faster than we can fill them. Additionally, we shall continue to work with all our social partners to ensure that workers' fundamental rights and privileges are protected by laws and best practices.

The Bahamas is committed to doing its part to ensure that the Millennium Development Goals are achieved. While we may be a small country on the world scene, I assure you that we are keenly aware that, as a government, we are responsible to those who elected us to provide the kind of opportunities that will reduce and eliminate poverty and help our people to accomplish their dreams for a better way of life.

My Government realizes the vital role that employers, workers and trade unionists play in sustaining a safe and secure work environment, as well as a safe, secure and democratic society. We also recognize that education and training play a significant role, and, as a consequence, we have stepped up our efforts to educate, train, retrain and retool our people. We have allocated funds to achieve these goals and we shall continue to persuade all foreign investors to include in their heads of agreement provisions for the training of workers.

I am pleased to inform you that we have continued to realize significant progress in the area of labour relations overall, and this is due in no small measure to the level of maturity with which the social partners approach the collective bargaining process.

We pledge to continue to provide the enabling legislation and social environment for the further development of the tripartite approach to this process.

Finally, let me reaffirm my Government's commitment to and support for the goals and objectives of the ILO, for it is only when we reach out and touch others at their point of need that we are truly able to see that the dignity of every man, woman and child is one of the most important elements of human existence.

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*Original Russian: Mr. SHMAKOV (Worker, Russian Federation)*

First of all, I would like to say that the Director-General of the ILO has surprised us in a very pleasant way once again, by submitting to this 95th Session of the International Labour Conference the very innovative Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, which not only provides a welcome change to the reports traditionally discussed at such meetings, such as Reports on activities and finances of organizations, but it also forces us to think seriously about what the world of work expects in circumstances of such rapidly evolving globalization.

In this connection, I would like to touch, in my presentation, upon the issues contained in the three Reports of the Director-General, namely, *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, the *Financial Report and Audited Financial Statements 2004-05* and the Report I mentioned, *Changing patterns in the world of work*.

First of all, the financial Report. While this Report is of a high quality, professional calibre and while we agree with many of its conclusions and proposals, we would like to call for a more careful attitude to some of the proposals derived from the administrative reforms of the United Nations system, which gave rise to some heated debates at the recent sitting

of the Programme, Financial and Administrative Committee.

With respect to the Report *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, we think that it gives a very full and detailed picture of what the Organization and its members have done in the past two years. These two years were years of very fruitful cooperation between the ILO and the Russian Federation in the framework of our cooperation programme, which we think has been implemented very successfully – albeit incompletely – especially on issues such as labour migration and monitoring of the observance of trade union rights and freedoms in our country.

Just two days ago here in Geneva, the fourth cooperation programme between the ILO and the Russian Federation was concluded. This will cover the next four years. As a delegate of the Russian workers and a coordinator of workers' representation at the Russian Tripartite Commission on Regulating Social and Labour Relations, I would like to express the hope that the implementation of this programme will help progress in our country in relation to such global goals as decent work, the eradication of poverty, the achievement of gender equality in labour relations, unconditional observance of trade union rights and freedoms and the development of a system of collective bargaining and consultation.

Finally, the Report *Changing patterns in the world of work*. We think that this Report is a logical continuation of the efforts of the ILO in spreading the concept of decent work around the world. Without a doubt, unless this challenge is met, it will be impossible to take labour relations to a new, higher level and to achieve equitable and sustainable development.

At the same time, this Report does point to many challenges that are a consequence of unfettered development of markets, including the labour market. This certainly applies to Russia, where we see such phenomena as unemployment, poverty among those in work, widespread informal labour relationships, a decrease in social protection and other problems. One way of overcoming these problems is to enhance the role of the State in developing and possibly regulating labour markets. Unfortunately, in our country, these kinds of conclusions are not often seriously considered. This is leading to a long-term situation in which, in a country that is one of the wealthiest in terms of natural resources, some 10 per cent of the population live below the survival threshold and where the guaranteed minimum wage is only US\$2 a day.

The Russian trade unions are not in favour of a rigid state regulation of the market. However, we think that, left to itself, the market cannot fully ensure balanced economic and social development in the interests of all. This is also mentioned in the Report, which, once again, only proves to us that our analysis is the right one.

While the Report may not provide recipes for every situation that we encounter, it does, as I said, give pause for thought about choosing paths for development. The very existence of this Report confirms the key role of the ILO as a tripartite institution in finding ways to resolve bottlenecks in the area of labour market development while taking into account the interests of all participants in economic and social processes. At the same time, it confirms the potential of the Organization and makes us optimistic for its ability to continue to

serve the interests of harmonious and sustainable development.

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M. BRIESCH (*représentant, Comité économique et social européen*)

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Je m'adresse à vous en ma qualité de vice-président du Comité économique et social européen, et c'est un réel plaisir de retrouver au sein de votre assemblée plusieurs membres de ce comité mais également de nombreux délégués qui participent de façon régulière à nos rencontres internationales.

Permettez-moi en quelques mots de vous présenter le Comité économique et social européen. Le comité est une assemblée consultative créée par le Traité de Rome en 1957. Constitué de représentants des différentes composantes à caractère économique et social de la société civile organisée, le comité a pour mission fondamentale d'assurer une fonction de conseil auprès des trois grandes institutions de l'Union européenne: le Parlement, le conseil et la commission.

Outre sa participation active au processus de formation des politiques et de préparation des décisions communautaires, le comité exerce deux missions complémentaires: permettre une meilleure adhésion et une plus grande participation de la société civile organisée au projet européen, tant au niveau national qu'au niveau européen, et renforcer le rôle de la société civile organisée dans les pays ou ensembles géographiques extracommunautaires où il développe un dialogue structuré avec les organisations de la société civile.

Nous avons engagé une étroite collaboration avec l'Organisation internationale du Travail et souhaitons approfondir davantage ce travail en commun. A la fin de l'année dernière, nous avons signé une déclaration conjointe relative au renforcement des relations entre nos deux institutions. Cette déclaration n'est pas une proposition figée, mais bien évidemment un engagement commun à promouvoir et à développer notre relation.

En effet, les valeurs qui figurent en préambule du texte sont de mieux prendre en compte la dimension sociale de la mondialisation, d'assurer le respect des droits fondamentaux et de promouvoir le dialogue social et, plus généralement, la démocratie participative.

Dans ce contexte, nous avons pris ensemble l'initiative de tenir, sur le thème du modèle social européen, une première conférence conjointe du comité et de l'OIT qui se déroulera à Bruxelles à la fin de ce mois.

En amont de cette conférence, le Comité économique et social européen émet un avis d'initiative sur le modèle social européen. Nous pensons et sommes convaincus qu'une meilleure compréhension et appréciation du modèle social européen, comme partie intégrante de la société européenne, sont aussi importantes pour l'Union européenne que pour le reste du monde.

Des principes bien ancrés dans ce modèle européen tels que la justice sociale, la protection sociale, l'égalité des chances ou les standards minimums sociaux et du travail sont cruciaux pour le bien-être des personnes, tout comme le progrès économique durable.

Plusieurs de ces valeurs se reflètent dans les standards internationaux et plus spécifiquement dans le concept de travail décent de l'OIT. L'Europe, avec d'autres, a certainement un rôle majeur à jouer dans l'instauration d'une mondialisation sans exclus en



coopération avec d'autres organisations. Avec l'OIT, le Comité économique et social peut renforcer sa propre contribution à l'instauration d'une mondialisation sans exclus en encourageant le développement et l'intervention et en précisant le rôle de la société civile organisée dans les pays extracommunautaires.

Le Comité économique et social et l'OIT peuvent, dans leurs travaux respectifs, profiter d'un potentiel important de synergie sur de nombreux sujets sur lesquels nous avons des intérêts communs.

A titre d'exemple, nous avons adopté l'année dernière un avis sur la dimension sociale de la mondialisation, thème auquel l'OIT a prêté une attention toute particulière.

En conclusion, je formule le vœu que la coopération établie entre l'Organisation internationale du Travail et le Comité économique et social européen connaisse un nouvel essor, aussi bien par la conduite de réflexions communes sur les thèmes majeurs pour nos deux institutions que par la poursuite de la collaboration établie sur la promotion du dialogue social et du dialogue civil dans les pays extérieurs à l'Union européenne.

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Mgr. TOMASI (*Government, The Holy See*)

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The international community has committed itself in a solemn way to promote "full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people". The strategic role of work, in combating poverty and the quality of work, within its social context, bear directly on the dignity of the human person even before they serve as indispensable tools of development.

The delegation of the Holy See notices with satisfaction that decent work, not only as a notion, but as a strategic agenda, is now at the forefront of any discussion on the eradication of poverty, and that a convergence of efforts is under way for its implementation. The task, however, is far off from reaching its target.

The liberalization of finance and trade and the ongoing process of globalization have produced much wealth, but plenty of evidence shows growing disparities among and within countries in reaping the benefits of this increased wealth.

If the measure of decent work is adopted, it becomes clear that too many people remain excluded from enjoying it because they are indecently exploited or are altogether out of work. People not sufficiently qualified to board the globalization train, or whose capacity and talents are utilized to propel forward the global economy without their sharing in the accruing benefits, are in the tens of millions: undocumented migrants working in agriculture, in manufacturing, in domestic service; women in textile industry working in unhealthy conditions and with miserable salaries; workers labelled by their race, case or religion that are relegated to the marginal jobs of society without a chance for upward mobility; exploited workers in export processing zones and all over the world, workers being paid less and less who must work more and more to earn a decent salary.

A case can be made, it has been observed, that inequality and poverty are the overriding moral issues of the twenty-first century. Thus, a globalization that fosters economic growth without equity blocks access to decent work and calls into question the current functioning of the international structures created to facilitate the flow of ideas, capital,

technology, goods and people for the common good.

The importance of work is evident above all in the formation of a person's humanity. Not consumption, but the capacity to create new things, situations, expressions, marks the vitality of a person, her/his self-expression. The personal imprint given through work brings about satisfaction and the will to grow, to give and contribute in a positive way to social coexistence. If work is lacking or is indecent, it is the person that is stifled and pushed into a crisis and a person in crisis is easily tempted by anti-social and destructive behaviour. From the primacy of the ethical value of human labour follows "a logical sequence of priorities: of the person over work, of work over capital, of the universal destination of goods over the exclusive right to private ownership of the means of production", in a word of the human being over enterprises, increased stock market value, material possessions. The changed perspective that decent work for all entails calls for a renewed emphasis on the dignity of every person and on common good by placing them at the centre of all labour activities and policies.

The initiatives of solidarity undertaken to promote the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda at the local level are effective forms of cooperation that give credibility to this Agenda. In past decades, the ILO has developed a rich body of labour standards; they remain the main road through which the international community can achieve a progressive improvement of the quality of work and of the rights of workers. At the same time, this unique dimension of the ILO requires today convergence of efforts with other international agencies and a coherence of plans and actions so that the complexity of the economy and social relations may not frustrate or delay the global goal of decent work.

Two steps taken in this context add an encouraging dimension to the concrete implementation of decent work objectives. The first concerns the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and the recent good news that, for the first time, the number of children bound to work in the world has been reduced by 11 per cent between 2000 and 2004 passing from 248 to 218 million. The prospect that children may be taken out of agricultural work or quarrying, that they may not be trafficked for forced prostitution, that they may be able to go to school and grow up with hope, should redouble the determination of governments, employers, unions and civil society to aim at the total elimination of child labour. The second step regards the hopefully soon to be adopted Convention and Recommendation on a framework for occupational safety and health. A safe and healthy working environment is an integral component of decent work, especially if we keep in mind that 270 million work accidents are registered every year and 160 million people suffer from illnesses related to work and accidents and illnesses causing the death of about 5,000 workers daily. The patient development of labour standards, when the political will and the collaboration of all segments of society are present, becomes an effective tool that gives results and changes the world of work for the better.

The fast-evolving process of globalization impacts directly on the organization of production and of work and continues to demand adaptation and imagination to sustain decent work. But work will be really decent if, as Pope Benedict XVI has re-



minded workers on the occasion of last May 1st, the human person “is subject and protagonist of work”. In fact, work is of primary importance for any woman and man’s “fulfilment and the development of society, and this is why it is necessary that it always be organized and developed in full respect of human dignity and at the service of the common good”.

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Mr. MAVRIKOS (*representative, World Federation of Trade Unions*)

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We live in an era of growing poverty and unemployment. Exploitation of children, women, and economic migrants is becoming worse and more widespread. The erosion of rights, social security and labour relations, and the absence of trade union rights impact on the workers and bring large profits to monopolies and transnational corporations.

Nowadays, the aggressiveness of the United States Government is unleashed under the pretext of the defence of democracy. The interest of the United States in democracy, I believe, is not genuine. They use it as an excuse, in order to threaten Syria, Sudan, Venezuela, Belarus, Bolivia. The embargo against Cuba and its people was continued for about 40 years. Are those practices interpreted as democracy? Today they use the need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons as a pretext to invade Iran, tomorrow to invade another country.

The real causes are deeper. The reasons are: the distribution of influence spheres and the control over energy sources; and aiming for economic, political and military hegemony of the world. Today, the role of the world trade union movement against all these developments is to consolidate all workers, irrespective of their gender, colour or religion; to consolidate and organize the struggle of workers; to resist the whims of capital; to build trade unions independent from monopolies and transnational corporations, independent trade unions with a militant perspective.

We pursue a world without exploitation of one person by another, a world without wars, without unemployment, without poverty, for all levels of society.

In order to succeed in those aims, we need unity and action. The World Federation of Trade Unions is open to common action with all workers’ trade unions, at national and regional levels, willing to fight for the rights and modern needs of workers.

Poverty, unemployment, exploitation, environment, nuclear issues and imperialist wars in general, as well as at regional level, can form the basis for our initiatives. An additional basis will be the need for trade union rights, democratic freedoms, and the right of all people to self-determination.

The WFTU is also on the side of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian problem can be approached only through the unconditional strengthening of decisions of the United Nations, the foundation of an independent Palestinian State with Eastern Jerusalem as the capital and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the occupied Arab territories.

The WFTU remains constantly on the side of the Arab people and will continue struggling for peace and progress in the Middle East.

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Sr. FADUL (*Secretario de Estado de Trabajo, República Dominicana*)

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Permítanme felicitar al señor Presidente con motivo de su elección al frente de la 95.ª reunión de la

Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, así como al Director General por el Informe que nos presenta sobre la aplicación del programa de la OIT en 2004-2005.

En este Informe se muestran los valores y los métodos de la OIT aplicados en el Programa de Trabajo Decente, un marco de referencia en el ámbito de las estrategias globales y nacionales para lograr el progreso económico y social al que aspira la OIT para todos los trabajadores.

El camino del trabajo decente es esencial para la vida de los ciudadanos. Es por eso que se está convirtiendo en un objetivo asimilado por todas las poblaciones del mundo civilizado, y que se exigen políticas orientadas a estimular y promover el diálogo social, el cual requiere la implicación de los interlocutores sociales del mundo del trabajo.

Quisiera agradecer a la OIT el haber tomado la iniciativa de crear la Comisión Mundial sobre la Dimensión Social de la Globalización, pues sólo la composición de la misma contribuye al peso político de su Informe sobre una globalización justa que ofrezca oportunidades para todos y que convierta al trabajo decente en un objetivo global de acuerdo con los principios de la Organización, tales como promover y cumplir las normas y los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo; disponer de mayores ingresos; incentivar la protección social, y fortalecer el tripartismo y el diálogo social.

El Gobierno de la República Dominicana está promoviendo los valores fundamentales para incentivar el trabajo decente, trabaja a favor del crecimiento económico y trata de atraer e incentivar las inversiones, tanto nacionales como extranjeras, que involucren a todos los sectores gubernamentales, los trabajadores y los empleadores en la creación del empleo mediante una iniciativa de coherencia política.

Hemos encendido el motor para impulsar la creación de empleos de calidad. A estos fines, el Gobierno dispuso crear más de 600.000 puestos de trabajo en los próximos tres años.

En la República Dominicana creemos firmemente en el desarrollo de los valores humanos, razón por la cual nos esforzamos por implementar estrategias nacionales de desarrollo a favor de las mujeres y la juventud, a través de la suscripción de convenios de colaboración y cooperación, ya que el mejor programa de lucha contra la pobreza es el empleo.

A este respecto, el Gobierno ha logrado, a través del programa «Juventud y Empleo», insertar en el mercado laboral a más de 20.000 jóvenes en el marco de dicho programa de capacitación laboral, que desempeñará un papel fundamental en la integración de la población en el desarrollo del país.

Desde la promulgación del Código de Trabajo en el año 1992, existe en el país una verdadera cultura de diálogo y tripartismo, la cual impide que se produzcan conflictos laborales. Ello se debe a la participación activa de la Secretaría de Estado de Trabajo y de las instituciones representadas por los obreros y los empleadores.

Por otro lado, en materia de lucha contra el trabajo infantil y sus peores formas, la República Dominicana, a través de la Secretaría de Estado de Trabajo, ha creado los Comités Locales Provinciales y Municipales de Prevención y Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil, que operan en cada provincia y municipio donde existe un Representante Local de Trabajo. Estos comités realizan un seguimiento de esta problemática, con el compromiso de denunciar e

impedir cualquier manifestación de este flagelo. La inspección permanente en los lugares de trabajo también desempeña un papel primordial en la lucha contra este mal.

Por otra parte, debo comunicar que estamos trabajando para poner en vigor un plan estratégico nacional de diez años para la erradicación de las peores formas de trabajo infantil, en consonancia con el Convenio sobre las peores formas de trabajo infantil, 1999 (núm. 182)

En relación con los salarios, el Gobierno ha revisado y ha aumentado las tarifas de los salarios mínimos nacionales, y ha emitido unas 17 nuevas resoluciones, logrando con las mismas un incremento significativo de los salarios de los trabajadores.

Los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio requieren la adopción de una estrategia de desarrollo por parte de la comunidad internacional para luchar contra la pobreza y crear las bases del trabajo decente. El trabajo decente se crea con la participación de todos, y la República Dominicana es en estos momentos el mejor ejemplo de que «cuando se quiere, se puede». En el primer trimestre del año nuestra economía creció en un 12,6 por ciento, y la inflación fue apenas del 1,52 por ciento, reduciendo la tasa de desempleo, que actualmente es de un 17,1 por ciento.

El Gobierno dominicano se ha comprometido a elevar la calidad del trabajo. Para ello, nosotros comenzamos a visualizar el anhelo de la masa trabajadora de hacer del trabajo un ejercicio digno y respetable, donde los trabajadores consigan la realización social y puedan lograr asimismo la estabilidad jurídica que les permita gozar de la seguridad social que redundará en beneficio del pueblo dominicano.

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*Original portugués: Sr. MOTTA (trabajador, Brasil)*

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Como Secretario de Relaciones Internacionales de Fuerza Sindical, agradezco la oportunidad que me concedieron las demás centrales sindicales para presentar y representar a los trabajadores de mi país, el Brasil, en esta importantísima reunión de la Conferencia.

La creación de trabajo decente para todos en un mundo sostenible constituye la base de la dignidad humana.

El acceso al trabajo, acompañado de asistencia sanitaria, seguridad en el lugar de trabajo y en materia de jubilación y una remuneración justa es un derecho que corresponde a hombres y mujeres por igual.

Tenemos que anunciar la feliz noticia de que el trabajo infantil está disminuyendo en nuestro continente donde, en el Brasil, se han realizado importantes progresos, todo ello gracias a la ratificación del Convenio sobre la edad mínima, 1973 (núm. 138) y del Convenio sobre las peores formas de trabajo infantil, 1999 (núm. 182), ratificados en muchos países del mundo.

Sin embargo, para seguir avanzando en la lucha contra el trabajo infantil en el Brasil, pretendemos reducir la pobreza, mejorar la educación básica y afianzar el respeto por los derechos humanos.

El crecimiento económico es un hecho importante, así como el fortalecimiento de nuestras instituciones democráticas. No obstante, para superar la pobreza es necesario, además, realizar un esfuerzo político tripartito.

Ese esfuerzo debe tender a la aplicación efectiva de los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo, la ampliación y el fortalecimiento de los regímenes de prevención y protección social de los

trabajadores y a una mayor inclusión social de los trabajadores destinados a reducir las desigualdades.

Al ser la pobreza el principal factor de nuestras dificultades, todos los esfuerzos tripartitos realizados a través del diálogo social deben dirigirse a superar ese problema. No basta con tener buenos propósitos, hay que concretarlos.

Necesitamos fórmulas políticas éticas a fin de que la dimensión social sea una condición necesaria en un nuevo modelo de crecimiento.

Se trata de que, como gobiernos, empleadores y representantes de los trabajadores, asumamos la responsabilidad de crecer con empleo.

Se trata de crecer con trabajo decente, cada uno desempeñando el papel que le corresponde dentro de sus campos de actuación, pero al unísono, y de luchar para erradicar el trabajo en régimen de servidumbre, infantil, desigual y discriminatorio, y en favor de salarios más justos.

Asimismo, debemos combatir la lacra de las instituciones brasileñas que son la corrupción y la impunidad. De lo contrario, la confianza democrática se debilitaría, lo que pondría en peligro los objetivos de la nación.

El Brasil debe asumir su responsabilidad internacional de dar prioridad al logro de las reformas políticas, macroeconómicas y judiciales, con una férrea decisión en favor del progreso y del desarrollo duradero, continuo, sostenible e ininterrumpido.

La Agenda Hemisférica para el trabajo decente que propone la OIT a través de su Director General el Sr. Juan Somavia, constituye una directriz segura para que los gobiernos, empleadores y trabajadores alcancen las metas propuestas de crecimiento y generación de empleos.

Gracias a estas convergencias de fuerzas, se logra una visión de conjunto según la cual el trabajo constituye el motor para el desarrollo y para la eliminación de la pobreza a fin de lograr la realización personal y profesional de las personas y sus familias y, por consiguiente, lograr la participación social en el bienestar de la sociedad en general.

Debemos pensar en forma global, pero actuar en el plano local, colocando siempre a las personas en primer lugar.

Hacemos hincapié en la necesidad imperiosa de abordar con más decisión las categorías de trabajadores más vulnerables.

Una acción firme contra el trabajo en régimen de servidumbre y forzoso a nivel nacional y en colaboración con la comunidad internacional puede llegar a erradicar esa forma de trabajo, que es totalmente indecente y que no debería haber existido nunca, mucho menos en la era moderna.

Para terminar, hay otro tema de importancia capital que va a debatir esta Conferencia, cuya insistencia llevó a que el Consejo de Administración de la OIT aprobara la discusión al respecto. Se trata de la relación de trabajo.

Ante los cambios que se producen en el mundo del trabajo y, particularmente, el mercado de trabajo, hay nuevas relaciones que no siempre se ajustan a los parámetros de una relación de trabajo.

Esas nuevas formas aumentan la flexibilidad en el mercado de trabajo, por lo que se multiplica el número de trabajadores excluidos de la protección, generalmente asociada con una relación de trabajo justa.

Estamos aquí para examinar una recomendación centrada en las relaciones de trabajo ocultas y en la necesidad de contar con mecanismos que garanticen

que cada persona que interviene en una relación de trabajo tenga acceso a la protección que le corresponde a nivel nacional.

Esta recomendación es importante, pero no por eso va a influir en los verdaderos contratos comerciales y las reglas contractuales de los trabajadores autónomos. En nuestra tarea debemos hacer lo contrario: proteger a esas personas que viven una relación de trabajo sin amparo ni protección legal.

De todos los excelentes ejemplos que figuran en la Memoria del Director General, para finalizar nuestra presentación debemos citar el siguiente:

«El Estado tiene que desempeñar un papel fundamental, creando un marco constitucional propicio para que, al responder a la evolución de las exigencias de la economía global, se concilie la necesidad de flexibilidad que tienen las empresas con la necesidad de seguridad que tienen los trabajadores. [...] Una estrategia dinámica para gestionar el cambio del mercado de trabajo resulta fundamental para las políticas nacionales destinadas a dar respuesta a los desafíos sociales de la globalización.»

(*Mr. de Regil takes the Chair.*)

(*M. de Regil prend place au fauteuil présidentiel.*)

(*Asume la presidencia el Sr. de Regil.*)

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M. MONTEIRO (*ministre du Travail, de la Famille et de la Solidarité, Cap-Vert*)

Tout d'abord, je tiens à remercier le Directeur général pour la clarté et la concision de son rapport. Fidèle aux principes de l'OIT, le gouvernement du Cap-Vert s'efforce de renforcer le dialogue permanent qui existe au Conseil de concertation sociale afin de créer un bon climat de négociation entre les représentants du gouvernement, des travailleurs et du patronat.

Le gouvernement du Cap-Vert, conscient que le travail est essentiel pour une cohésion sociale durable, a accordé la priorité dans son programme à l'amélioration du système de l'administration du travail et à la législation dans le domaine de la sécurité et de la santé au travail. Nous avons porté une attention toute particulière à la formation spécifique dont doivent bénéficier les agents des services d'inspection pour pouvoir superviser l'application des mesures et des politiques dans ce domaine, afin de réduire le nombre des accidents du travail et des maladies professionnelles et de créer des conditions favorables aux processus de production sur le lieu de travail.

A ce sujet, avec l'approbation et la publication prochaine du nouveau Code du travail, qui comprend un avant-projet de diplôme du travail portuaire, un avant-projet de diplôme du travail maritime, le statut du travailleur étudiant et un avant-projet du travail aéronautique, notre pays sera doté d'un instrument qui améliorera les relations professionnelles et, par conséquent, favorisera la création d'emplois plus dignes et plus justes pour les Cap-Verdiens.

Au Cap-Vert, la protection de l'enfance et l'éducation sont au centre de nos préoccupations. Notre nouvel ordre juridique se caractérise par une conception novatrice de l'enfant puisqu'il lui attribue la condition de citoyen et lui donne des droits et des devoirs dont l'exercice doit être garanti, non seulement par la famille mais aussi par la société et par les pouvoirs publics en priorité.

Le travail des enfants, bien qu'il n'ait pas l'ampleur et la gravité qui existent dans d'autres pays, surtout ceux qui sont touchés par la guerre, commence à être préoccupant et découle des transformations socio-économiques que notre pays connaît. Aussi, notre gouvernement a-t-il adopté plusieurs mesures pour mettre un terme à l'accroissement de ce phénomène.

C'est avec une grande satisfaction que j'annonce à cette auguste assemblée que, le 6 décembre 2005, l'Assemblée nationale du Cap-Vert a ratifié la convention (n° 138) de l'OIT sur l'âge minimum, 1973. Je rappelle que mon pays a ratifié, en octobre 2001, la convention (n° 182) sur les pires formes de travail des enfants, 1999.

Ainsi, mon pays a ratifié toutes les conventions internationales dans ce domaine.

Je souhaiterais aussi vous assurer de l'engagement total de mon gouvernement pour activer les mécanismes juridiques qui permettront l'adoption à brève échéance de l'amendement à la Constitution de l'OIT adopté en 1997, afin de contribuer ainsi à son entrée en vigueur.

En conclusion, je renouvelle tous mes vœux de succès pour cette session de la Conférence et espère que les liens qui unissent l'OIT se resserreront, dans le but d'une plus grande cohésion sociale.

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Mr. MCKENNIREY (*Government, Canada*)

Let me begin by congratulating the President and Vice-Presidents on their election to preside over this session of the Conference.

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to address today some of the important issues that the Director-General has raised in his Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*.

This Report of the ILO examines the impact of major forces today – globalization, trade liberalization, labour migration unemployment and labour market deregulation, the impact of these forces on the world of work – and asks us to consider what role the ILO should play within this new reality.

Canada welcomes this Report and we are, in fact, impressed by its depth and its quality. It is an example, we believe, of the kind of contribution from the ILO that needs to be developed further. The constituents here, of the ILO, have a great need for this kind of solid analysis, of how the principles set out in the ILO's Constitution and core Conventions can complement economic growth in the modern world economy.

Without such an analysis, we are afraid that governments may feel they are faced with a choice, a false but tempting choice, between economic growth, on the one hand, and the value and the principles of the ILO, on the other hand.

Only high quality empirical analysis can overcome this tendency by demonstrating the evidence for the complementarity of economic growth and the principles of the ILO. Hence, we are extremely pleased with the Report that we have received this year.

Clearly, the ILO itself must be prepared to change and adapt if it is to play a leadership role in a rapidly evolving world. This requires a reinvigorated and credible modern Organization that can bring forward the priorities of its constituents and include the broader international agendas. It requires an Organization that offers evidence-based analysis, such as we have seen this year, along with practical assis-

tance to its members in meeting the challenges they face in a very difficult global economy.

I would like to add, personally, that the remarks of President Oscar Arias Sánchez this morning are an example of combining the necessary strategies for economic growth with the full respect for the principles of the ILO.

It is important that the ILO fully engage in the reform of the United Nations system as well, focusing on areas within its mandate where its expertise and tripartite structure bring added value to the entire United Nations system. Canada welcomes the Director-General's commitment to ensuring that the ILO, and I quote, "be an active partner in seeking the best solutions to make multilateralism more effective and efficient", and his further commitment to ensure the full integration of results-based management throughout the Organization.

Modernization and organizational efficiencies, together with improved delivery of technical cooperation, should facilitate the strategic targeting of the valuable resources of the ILO to better assist constituents to realize the goal of decent work. This includes support for programmes on child labour and HIV/AIDS, where the ILO has demonstrated important success, even outstanding success, as well as other programmes and activities directly related to the ILO's core mandate.

We believe it is also time to move forward with modernization of international labour standards if we are to ensure the continued credibility of the ILO's normative role. A streamlined and up-to-date set of international labour standards that can be widely ratified and implemented is essential.

We need to build on the recent success of the Maritime Session of the Conference that resulted in the consolidation of 68 instruments into a single, comprehensive Convention and includes new mechanisms for flexibility. Supervision can be enhanced through greater focus on outcomes, sharing of best practices and the identification of opportunities for technical assistance.

In addition, our interpretation of Conventions must also evolve and take into account the evolution in the world of work.

Finally and lastly, an important area for reform is the International Labour Conference itself. The effectiveness of the Organization is closely linked to having an effective annual Conference. This Organization can no longer afford lengthy Conferences and costly plenary sessions where many speak but few listen. The Conference should be organized in a manner that attracts participation at the highest levels and facilitates frank dialogue on emerging issues. It should focus on generating outcomes that directly impact the lives of workers.

We are impressed with this Conference agenda, notwithstanding those comments. For example, the adoption by this Conference of a promotional framework Convention for occupational safety and health can make a genuine contribution provided it can be widely ratified. We also think it is important that the ILO find a way to offer useable guidance to governments on measures to ensure that workers with employment relationships can access the protection to which they are entitled.

Canada is committed to working with the Office and the ILO constituents towards implementation of reforms in these key areas and we look forward very much to next year's session of the Confer-

ence's discussion on the evolving role of the ILO in the context of globalization.

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Sr. ECHAVARRÍA SALDARRIAGA (*empleador, Colombia*)

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Los cambios en el mundo del trabajo a los que alude en su Memoria el Director General son una realidad que implica el replanteamiento de la acción de la OIT en su propósito de ser el organismo del sistema de las Naciones Unidas que lidera el mundo del trabajo y de las empresas. Para ello, hay que pensar en la empresa como motor de desarrollo y fuente indispensable de generación de empleo.

Por lo tanto, la OIT debe establecer que, para la reducción de la pobreza, es básico que las empresas, que son creación de personas emprendedoras en el mundo de los negocios, requieren condiciones de estabilidad en el orden jurídico y económico que se plasmen en el reconocimiento de la libre iniciativa privada y en el respeto de la propiedad privada.

Estos pilares son principios con los cuales la inversión productiva deviene en creación de riqueza y fuente de bienestar general a través de la distribución de beneficios de la empresa para todos al Estado por la vía de los impuestos, a los inversionistas a través de los dividendos, a los trabajadores por conducto de los salarios, a los consumidores por la vía de productos y servicios de calidad y precios competitivos y a la comunidad en general a través de la redistribución con transparencia de los recursos provenientes de las cargas impositivas y las actividades complementarias de responsabilidad social.

El campo de desarrollo de las empresas está enmarcado en una economía de mercado abierta, donde los diferentes Estados se relacionan a través de acuerdos de integración comercial respetando el medio ambiente y las normas laborales.

La OIT puede desempeñar un papel propiciador de tales acuerdos, aportando a los países miembros de esta casa, su experiencia en este último tema, es decir, el tema laboral. He aquí el nuevo papel que debe orientar a la Oficina con la cooperación técnica como herramienta básica.

El mundo del trabajo es cambiante y las nuevas relaciones de trabajo que hoy se discuten son la muestra evidente de que es necesario transformar el funcionamiento tradicional de la OIT. No es la creación de nuevas normas internacionales, sino la adaptación de las existentes, la política que debe instrumentarse en el Consejo de Administración. Igualmente, es necesario transformar el papel de los órganos de control y los mecanismos para seleccionar los casos individuales en la Comisión de Aplicación de Normas.

Un ejemplo específico de adaptación a las exigencias de la globalización, acaba de ser dado por el Presidente Oscar Arias, al plasmar como indispensable para crear más y mejores empleos, la profundización de la educación y la incorporación comercial con tratados de libre comercio. Dada la autoridad de quien anuncia tales cambios desde el mundo en vías de desarrollo, la OIT debe apoyar decididamente esta iniciativa.

En síntesis, la OIT debe establecer como fundamental el principio de la libertad de empresa, al igual que la libertad de asociación sindical y de negociación colectiva. Al desarrollar este principio, la OIT debe erigir a las empresas como un centro motor de desarrollo que requiere garantías para operar en los Estados sin restricciones que vulneren la libertad de sus propietarios. En otras palabras, la OIT debe considerarse como la agencia mundial especia-

lizada en el desarrollo de la empresa y del empleo. Complementariamente, la OIT debe desplegar acciones directas de apoyo en cada país mediante programas de trabajo decente, que siempre contengan el concepto de productividad y el reconocimiento de las particularidades de los países miembros.

No puedo, terminar sin referirme al Acuerdo Tripartito por el Derecho de Asociación y la Democracia que los empleadores hemos suscrito con el Gobierno de Colombia y los amigos de las centrales sindicales al inicio de esta Conferencia. El empresariado colombiano recibe con enorme entusiasmo el acuerdo y está siempre dispuesto a implementar todas las acciones conducentes al éxito de los propósitos y fines que éste tiene plasmados. En todo este proceso, el papel de la OIT, es fundamental.

La vía del diálogo tripartito y la búsqueda de soluciones conjuntas a las dificultades sociales y laborales, son un paso que debemos considerar como irrenunciable. Además, debe servir como llamado a los actores incurso en el conflicto armado para que avancen en la búsqueda de medios para lograr la reconciliación nacional y la obtención de la paz.

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Ms. BYERS (*Worker, Canada*)

Greetings delegates and friends. We welcome the new approach provided in the Report *Changing patterns in the world of work*. Most, if not all, of the issues addressed in the Report are highly relevant and important to the experiences of the Canadian working class. To name just a few, training, migrant worker rights, recognition of international credentials, rural-urban dynamics and the issues of discrimination, exclusion and social justice: all are the daily challenges faced by working people and their organizations.

Of course, it is impossible to address all of the issues at this time. So let me begin by briefly addressing fundamental rights in Canada. As we know from successive reports by the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, Canada's record in both ratifications and implementation is, to put it simply, unacceptable!

The latest annual survey of trade union violations by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions reveals deeply disturbing trends, especially for women, migrant workers and those who work in the public sector. Canada once again is singled out as one of the industrialized countries with a very poor record.

The explanation to justify inaction with regard to international commitments is based on the decades-old ruling on federal-provincial jurisdictional matters and it is no longer acceptable. Other federated states have managed to resolve this issue and we need to deal with this as a matter of urgency.

While the federal labour code broadly encourages collective bargaining rights as a policy, workers continue to face barriers to the free exercise of the right to strike. We are campaigning, once again, to amend the Canadian Federal Labour Code to include a ban on "scabs" (sometimes known as replacement workers) during strikes and lockouts.

Next, let us consider the issue of creating decent employment and income opportunities for women and men. The last 25 years have provided very little progress for most Canadian workers. Our hourly wages have been remarkably stagnant while the real (inflation-adjusted) GDP per person has risen by about 50 per cent since the early 1980s, driven mainly by increased productivity. It is therefore not

surprising that income inequalities have continued to grow.

To give one example, over the past decade, the share of corporate profits taken as personal compensation by the top five executives in the 1500 largest US public companies has doubled from 5 per cent to more than 10 per cent of total corporate profits to a total of more than \$40 billion per year.

That certainly leaves a lot less for reinvestment, for wage increases for ordinary workers, for pay equity for women, for training, or to fund pension plan liabilities. Today, the obstacle to long-term stable growth and shared prosperity is not the lack of corporate profits. Corporations are not investing in any significant way in what it takes to boost productivity and growth. Levels of real investment lag far behind the increase in profitability, driven in large part by financial pressures.

It is difficult to see how we will create decent employment and income opportunities for women and men until we can create a regulatory framework and establish tax policies to encourage corporate reinvestment of profits and until we can establish closer regulation of mergers and acquisitions, while paying attention to the impact on workers and to public interest issues not covered by competition law.

On issues surrounding social protection and social security, Canadian working families have many concerns. The situation is so serious that the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted the persistently high rates of poverty among women, aboriginal peoples, African Canadians, people with disabilities, youth and single mothers. The Committee recommended that Canada establish social assistance and minimum wage rates at levels that provide a decent standard of living, support adequate childcare services, implement pay equity and improve low wage workers' access to employment insurance benefits.

For working women, access to quality, affordable childcare means equality in the job market. It opens doors to greater job security, to skills training and the ability to compete for jobs.

It means their children have access to the same head-start in life through child care that includes early learning and development. Working families will not settle for less just because of where they live, or how much they earn.

Healthcare is part of our social protections. Canadian workers need to know that they have access to a quality public health care system that works for all citizens. Privatization of healthcare services has meant less access and more financial pressures on families and less accountability for corporate health care providers.

Research has shown that a large percentage of adult Canadians are worried about their retirement income, yet Canadian politicians continue to ignore this issue.

Finally, on the issue of social dialogue and tripartism, while there have been noticeable and welcome efforts by individuals from the Department of Labour, social dialogue and tripartism are not institutionalized in Canada. We question why Canada has not ratified the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144). We challenge Canadian employers to join us in moving our Government toward ratification.

In closing, while we continue to promote workers' rights at home, we are also actively involved and committed to our international obligations on tech-

nical cooperation and building solidarity to advance the rights of workers around the world.

Thank you for this opportunity to address you today.

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*Original Arabic:* Mr. KHAMASS (*Employer, United Arab Emirates*)

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We, the employers of the United Arab Emirates, appreciate the unstinting efforts made by the ILO to strengthen the rights and fundamental principles at work; provide optimal conditions for access to decent work; expand social security coverage; and establish an adequate framework to create a favourable environment for both employers and workers.

We are pleased to report that the public and private sectors of the United Arab Emirates strive to create an atmosphere of transparency and fairness when it comes to applying fundamental rights and principles at work; promote and respect internationally recognized human rights; and take a clear stand against all forms of child labour. They share the ILO's commitment to eradicating child labour worldwide as an integral part of the Organization's Decent Work Agenda, which aims at promoting and ensuring employment for all persons at working age, providing them with access to decent and remunerating employment in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity.

With regard to the promotion and protection of women, all girls, boys, men and women have access to education. At the same time, women are guaranteed equal access to employment, equal remuneration and have the right to the same benefits as men. As a result, women are found in the upper echelons of the administration and the Government. In this connection, I would like to stress that the employers' organization promotes and encourages the use of environmentally friendly techniques and encourages producers to switch clean production methods.

With your permission, I will say a few words about the dramatic situation of the Palestinian people in general, and employers and workers in particular, which has come as a result of the policies of occupation and repression imposed in response to the outcome of the most recent elections. In this regard, let me remind you of the words of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, who said that "if we want to establish democracy, we have to respect election results".

The blocking of financial aid, the economic blockade imposed on the Palestinian people, and the deprivation of millions of workers of their monthly wages has caused a dramatic situation and constitutes a violation of human rights, the fundamental principles and rights at work and basic workers' rights. It causes the destruction of infrastructures, undermines the material and human foundation and thus hampers the pursuit of any form of economic activity aimed at providing and creating employment.

For all these reasons, we use this forum of free speech to call on the international community to assume its responsibilities and compel the Israeli occupation Government to respect the United Nations Charter and the ILO Constitution and to put an end to policies aimed at starving the population and destroying the factories, houses and infrastructures of the Palestinian people.

I would also like to mention the dramatic situation of the Iraqi people after the foundation and structure of their economy was destroyed. This has had seri-

ous consequences in social and human terms and has caused the deterioration of the situation of employers, workers and craftsmen. Expressing our solidarity with the efforts of our brothers in Iraq to build a new, prosperous Iraq, we hope that the ILO, which is one of the pillars of the international economic culture and has far-reaching competences and considerable moral clout, will provide its utmost to help Iraqi employers and workers to build their institutions and encourage their leaders to step up efforts to fight against corruption, ensure total transparency and guarantee an environment conducive to a decent life.

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Mr. RIMAL (*Worker, Nepal*)

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The month of April is always the best in Nepal, for the finest sky, smiley Himalayas, welcoming a caravan of summiters, climbers and trekkers and reddened mountains and hills by the blooming of the rhododendron.

However, April of this year did not stop here, it went further. The scenic city of Pokhara saw a panic moment. A worker operating a cyber café known as Bhimsen Dahal was gunned down due to his credence in democracy. A street vendor, Hiralal Gautam, was shot dead when bullets showered on demonstrators for similar reasons. Chandra Bayalkoti, a father of three innocent children, who earned his livelihood as a cobbler in the streets of Kathmandu, was severely injured in a shooting in Tripureshwar and died. Nepalese soil was further bathed in the blood of thousands of workers, including the transport workers Pradumna Khadka and Suraj Biswas and a young mother of three children. A daily wage worker in the informal economy, Setu B.K., whose heroic sacrifice was for nothing other than *loktantra* (fully-fledged democracy), freedom and an equitable society.

Their sacrifice was not in vain. It led to colourful achievements. As the popular movement for *loktantra*, led by the seven-party alliance, could involve every segment of Nepalese society and millions of people poured into the street, the Nepalese successfully turned the most cunning and autocratic king into a figurehead and succeeded in a unique revolution, the first ever in the world at the beginning of the twenty-first century!

We achieved the historic proclamation of the reinstated parliament, which opened the doors for trade union rights for the entire workforce, right up to senior officers in the government service. And a landmark declaration on 30 May has annulled all discriminatory laws and practices against women. Furthermore, the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) are expected to be ratified.

I am proud to take a little time to share our joy about the victory at this moment. And please allow me to pay tribute, on behalf of the entire Nepalese working masses, to the Director-General, Juan Somavia, and to the entire ILO family, the ICFTU, WCL and the international trade union movement as a whole, including the global union federation, various national trade union centres and the entire international community, for the enormous support and solidarity in our fight against autocracy and for fully-fledged democracy.

I represent workers from a country where almost 2.6 million children begin their life with work, at

least shouldering responsibilities as baby-sitters or cattle-herders. All of their childhood, including learning and understanding in a pampered atmosphere, is denied. Those whose parents have not even thatched-huts are either forced to work as domestic servants or end up in the street. Worst is that Nepal fails to produce the results from the ILO-IPEC's time-bound programme, which targets the intolerable worst forms of child labour, despite the social partners' courage, enthusiasm and commitment. We sadly joined the ranks of countries whose tender children are forced to fight in the battlefield as child soldiers. The only excuse we have is the deadly violent insurgency and the defamed royal coup of 1 February 2005, which disrupted every aspect of our society.

At a time when workers worldwide cooperate to attain more and more decent jobs, upgraded social protection, reduced working hours and more leisure time, living wage and equity based on social justice, we Nepalese are struggling for a mere minimum wage for all. We are still fighting for rational social dialogue and asking our respective partner: Who is our actual employer – you or someone else? The question arises in a context where the workers are denied even a letter of appointment. Nepalese are surviving on such low wages that they are pushed into poverty. I represent a country half of whose population is still below the poverty line and where trafficking of women and children, forced labour, under- and unemployment are the bitter reality.

In such circumstances, may I ask you how global players can reconcile my situation with the recommendations prescribed in these excellent reports, such as the Global Report on the effective abolition of child labour, on changing patterns in the world of work, the employment relationship and occupational safety and health presented here?

I hereby call on the ILO and member States, please, please, please lend a hand of solidarity to Nepal. Yesterday your solidarity inspired us in the fight for *loktantra*, now we need your support for peace and stability. We have courage and beautiful dreams; one day certainly we will be part of this world and offer help to others in need.

I extend heartfelt thanks to the entire world for cooperation, solidarity and support during our decisive struggle of April 2006.

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Sr. CASTILLO CAMINERO (*empleador, República Dominicana*)

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Señor Presidente, le felicitamos por su acertada elección.

La delegación de los empleadores de la República Dominicana saluda solidariamente a todas las delegaciones que participan en esta 95.<sup>a</sup> reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, recibe las consideraciones estimulantes del Director General de la OIT, el Dr. Juan Somavia, expresadas en su Memoria e Informes, y concuerda con él en que, en la actualidad, resulta imprescindible crear políticas e instituciones adecuadas que permitan aprovechar las oportunidades de trabajo para todos y una reducción de las incertidumbres que genera el ágil proceso de cambio.

En nuestra condición de empleadores, consideramos necesario que las políticas de trabajo que son requeridas se orienten en función de la inversión, ya que sólo así promoveremos dicha inversión, la creación de empleo y la formalización de las actividades no tradicionales o informales. Estas acciones permi-

tirían de forma concreta disminuir la pobreza, distribuir de forma más equitativa el ingreso y contribuir al cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio.

En este contexto, la arquitectura multilateral desempeña un rol de primer orden, y la OIT debería ser considerada como la agencia de las Naciones Unidas especializada en el desarrollo de las empresas y del empleo, ya que sólo lograremos alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio si los medios que se ponen a disposición de nuestros países están en correlación positiva con el desafío de dotar a nuestros ciudadanos de trabajo decente de calidad.

Para alcanzar esos loables objetivos, se requiere de mayor equidad y justicia mundial, se precisa de un abordaje realista del problema de la deuda externa de los países del Sur, se demanda una mayor coordinación a nivel mundial de las instituciones de Bretton Woods y se exige una mayor responsabilidad de las agencias de financiamiento, tanto a nivel internacional como en lo regional, nacional y local.

Crear trabajo decente productivo y de calidad implica, a nivel nacional, que los presupuestos asignen mayores recursos a la educación, a la salud, y a la transformación productiva con equidad; que se consoliden el clima de inversiones y la seguridad jurídica necesarios para que la corriente de ahorro e inversión se torne en un círculo virtuoso que dinamice los mercados laborales; y que la democracia y el desarrollo alcancen la «expansión de las libertades reales que disfrutaban los individuos».

En la República Dominicana, estamos en pleno proceso de crecimiento, enmarcado en un acuerdo con el Fondo Monetario Internacional, proceso que, aun estando en plena ejecución, nos ha permitido experimentar un crecimiento económico alentador y mantener un clima de negocios favorable a la inversión. No obstante, los cambios a que nos conduce la firma del Tratado de Libre Comercio de los Estados Unidos, Centroamérica y la República Dominicana requerirán e implicarán consenso, diálogo y concertación política.

Desde la perspectiva oficial, la estabilidad macroeconómica se ha mantenido, las reformas fiscal y social están en plena vigencia y, mediante diversos programas, se procura apoyar el sustento de los estratos vulnerables del país.

Respecto a los empleadores, los programas de responsabilidad social empresarial se multiplican de forma acelerada, en aras de procurar un apoyo a las necesidades de los trabajadores y las comunidades. Estos programas han sido promovidos conjuntamente con organizaciones sociales, que buscan, entre otros objetivos, reducir los efectos de las coyunturas desestabilizadoras.

Al finalizar el primer trimestre del año 2006, la economía dominicana presentó un crecimiento del 12,6 por ciento, de acuerdo a cifras preliminares. Las actividades económicas que presentaron mayores crecimientos fueron la actividad agropecuaria, las telecomunicaciones, la minería, la manufactura local, la construcción, el comercio y los hoteles, bares y restaurantes, entre otros.

Ese crecimiento ha implicado una incorporación de la economía informal a los esfuerzos del desarrollo nacional, donde las micro, pequeñas y medianas empresas han desempeñado un rol protagónico en materia de creación de empleo e innovación tecnológica, al tiempo que la empresa formal de talla hace su transformación productiva para lo que son los nuevos nichos y parámetros del mercado.



En estos momentos, aportamos nuestro esfuerzo para implementar en el país, el Sistema de Seguridad Social que habrá de garantizar salud y previsión social a la totalidad de la población. Al respecto, hemos planteado nuestro compromiso como empleadores para implementar el sistema en condiciones equitativas, institucionales y sostenibles.

Actuando en consonancia al Convenio sobre las peores formas de trabajo infantil, 1999 (núm. 182), relativo a la erradicación del trabajo infantil y ratificado por nuestro Estado, en el que se encuentra en vigor, hemos servido de promotores y reproductores de múltiples programas de erradicación de las peores formas del trabajo infantil establecidos y coordinados por diferentes organismos.

Es importante que, como Organización Internacional del Trabajo, demos seguimiento a nuestras propias acciones, que nuestros medios de acción sean cada vez más eficaces y que se destinen mayores recursos al desarrollo de las calificaciones y al fortalecimiento de las capacidades de las organizaciones de empleadores y de trabajadores.

Finalmente, si la búsqueda de la paz y la convivencia humana es nuestro norte, y si hemos de afrontar con éxito los desafíos que hoy tenemos en un mundo más convulso en que predominan la incertidumbre y la inseguridad y asoman conflictos bélicos que en nada habrán de contribuir al desarrollo humano, creemos que ha llegado el momento de repensar los medios de actuación de la OIT y de toda arquitectura del sistema de las Naciones Unidas, si es que queremos paz duradera y el bienestar de la humanidad. Sólo mediante la puesta en vigencia de una nueva cultura de la cooperación internacional será posible el logro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio y el alcance del desarrollo humano.

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M. RANJIVASON (*ministre de la Fonction publique, du Travail et des Lois sociales, Madagascar*)

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Le rapport présenté par le Directeur général va dans le sens des réalités vécues par l'ensemble des pays Membres. Il permet aux mandants de l'Organisation, ici présents, de mesurer les efforts accomplis par la communauté internationale en vue de promouvoir l'intégration de l'Agenda du travail décent dans les politiques économiques et sociales aux niveaux local, national et international.

A ce propos, nous avons rapporté l'année dernière que Madagascar a inclus parmi les trois axes stratégiques de son DSRP la recherche du plein emploi pour réaliser la croissance et le développement. La mise en œuvre de ce DSRP nous a valu l'allègement de la dette dans le cadre de l'Initiative pour les pays pauvres très endettés (IPPTE) en 2005, puis l'effacement total dans le cadre des Initiatives d'allègement de la dette multilatérale en 2006.

Aujourd'hui, nous continuons sur notre lancée et renforçons nos acquis: sous l'impulsion de Son Excellence, Monsieur Marc Ravalomanana, Président de la République, un nouvel instrument fait l'objet d'une large consultation nationale. C'est le MAP (*Madagascar Action Plan*), qui porte sur cinq ans. Il contient des objectifs spécifiques et chiffrés qui sont basés sur les objectifs de la vision nationale intitulée *Madagascar naturellement* et sur les objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement. Cette vision cadre parfaitement avec l'Agenda du travail décent de notre Organisation puisque la promotion de l'emploi pour les jeunes et les femmes, l'intégration du secteur informel et l'augmentation de la produc-

tivité en vue d'un saut qualitatif de la croissance y tiennent une place prépondérante.

En ce qui concerne l'emploi, nous avons mis en place le Comité national tripartite élargi de suivi de la promotion de l'emploi et de la réduction de la pauvreté. Nous mettons ainsi en œuvre les recommandations du Sommet de Ouagadougou, concomitamment avec la Politique nationale de l'emploi, érigée en loi.

Dans le cadre du partenariat mondial, nous travaillons de concert avec le PNUD, le BIT, la FAO et la coopération suédoise pour la réalisation du programme emploi-revenu et du programme HIMO, en renforçant les capacités des structures locales de promotion de l'emploi en milieu rural, et notamment au niveau des groupes vulnérables, jeunes et femmes. Cela requiert une formation professionnelle de proximité dans les centres d'apprentissage et d'application pour la production, en liaison avec l'expertise internationale et nationale pour l'intégration du secteur informel et la création de micros, petites et moyennes entreprises.

De même, la mise en place d'un Fonds d'insertion et de réinsertion à l'emploi formel est imminente dans le cadre d'un partenariat public/privé, national et international. Il soutiendra les actions initiées.

Parallèlement au modèle de développement de l'emploi présenté ci-dessus, plusieurs actions ont été entreprises en ce qui concerne la promotion de l'emploi décent. L'étude pour l'amélioration de la productivité dans les entreprises franches par le travail décent (APRODEF) a été finalisée; le programme attend seulement sa mise en œuvre. Le nouveau Code du travail a fait l'année dernière l'objet d'une large campagne de vulgarisation nationale et ses textes d'application sont élaborés progressivement dans une approche tripartite. L'un des principes de base sur lequel reposent les actions définies pour cette année est la promotion du dialogue social. Le ministère s'attelle actuellement à mettre en place ou à renforcer les différentes structures de dialogue à tous les niveaux: Conseil national du travail au niveau national, Conseil régional tripartite du travail, comité d'entreprise et délégué du personnel au sein des entreprises. Le document renfermant les actions de renforcement du dialogue social au niveau national, dans la logique de la continuation du PRODIAF (Programme régional de promotion du dialogue social en Afrique francophone), sera finalisé incessamment. Sa mise en œuvre permettra de fixer les modalités pratiques des critères de représentativité, le renforcement des capacités d'intervention de l'inspection du travail ainsi que le renforcement des compétences et aptitudes à la négociation des partenaires sociaux. Concernant les normes internationales et les droits fondamentaux au travail et leur suivi, Madagascar reste attentif aux actions préconisées par l'OIT. Les phénomènes liés à l'application de la convention n° 29 sur le travail forcé sont presque résolus. Le gouvernement de Madagascar entame actuellement la procédure de ratification de la convention n° 105 sur l'abolition du travail forcé pour compléter la ratification des huit conventions fondamentales consacrées par la Déclaration.

A propos de la lutte contre le travail des enfants, notamment sous ses pires formes, et s'agissant du programme financé par l'USDOL et appuyé par le BIT/IPEC, des étapes importantes ont été franchies au niveau régional et au niveau du Comité national de lutte contre le travail des enfants. Je saisis



l'occasion pour annoncer que, le 12 juin, la Journée mondiale contre le travail des enfants sera célébrée au niveau de 11 localités et avec une touche particulière visant l'appropriation de la lutte par chaque région de l'île.

En dernier lieu, concernant la sécurité sociale des travailleurs, les membres du Conseil national du travail et des cellules de coordination ont reçu une formation en matière de lutte contre le VIH/SIDA. Actuellement, une campagne de lancement national est en cours de préparation.

En matière d'extension du système national de sécurité sociale, la loi portant création, réglementation et fonctionnement des fonds de pension de retraite complémentaire ou de base a été adoptée et publiée. Une campagne d'information des populations-cibles annonce la mise en place de mutuelles de fonds de pension.

En outre, une étude de faisabilité sur la création d'un régime de pension de base universelle sera effectuée avec l'appui du BIT.

Pour terminer, le gouvernement malgache se réjouit déjà de la qualité de la coopération avec le BIT et espère que les actions de soutien seront renforcées en vue de mener à terme les différents programmes de coopération convenus. Le soutien de notre Organisation en faveur de Madagascar sera plus cohérent et éminemment utile pour mon pays s'il contribue à la mise en œuvre des actions relatives à l'emploi prévues dans le MAP, nouveau document de référence nationale, qui est actuellement en phase de consultation.

Mais d'ores et déjà, Madagascar tient à exprimer sa reconnaissance à la future assistance technique, au Directeur général ainsi qu'à toute son équipe centrale et régionale pour cette coopération fructueuse.

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Sr. DORADO CANO (*Gobierno, República Bolivariana de Venezuela*)

El Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela considera valiosa la Memoria del Director General, a quien le correspondió situar la experiencia y los conocimientos de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo en la actual perspectiva global de cara a la meta del trabajo digno y decente.

Para el Gobierno de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela resulta necesario destacar que, para alcanzar trabajos y empleos decentes, es fundamental primero lograr empresas decentes, lo que implica un cambio en el actual modelo de cosas, en el actual esquema de producción y de intercambio que impone el modelo capitalista. Se trata pues de superar la lógica de la acumulación del capital, de la renta sobre el trabajo, a la que oponemos los valores de la justicia y la solidaridad, tanto respecto del trabajo que se produce y se presta, como respecto de la distribución justa y equitativa de los ingresos que corresponden a los trabajadores y trabajadoras que lo producen.

En otras palabras, para que exista trabajo decente debe existir un mundo decente, fundado en otros valores y principios donde los derechos humanos sean la premisa sobre la cual se hacen vigentes los modelos económicos y sociales, particularmente la defensa y la protección de los derechos laborales y sindicales. Hablamos de colocar a los pueblos y su agenda de necesidades en un lugar privilegiado frente a la lógica de la ganancia a cualquier costa y a cualquier costo.

Así pues, en relación con el Informe del Director General, respecto de la superación y la erradicación de las políticas de flexibilización, regulación y precarización del empleo, presentado en el marco de la reciente Reunión Regional Americana, indicamos que lo expuesto por el Director General representa una muestra evidente de la contradicción neoliberal entre el crecimiento económico y el derecho al desarrollo que tienen los pueblos.

Tales políticas fueron justificadas en el pasado con el argumento, entre otros, de que constituía la garantía de crecimiento para economías de exportación destinadas al intercambio global, pero al mismo tiempo fueron implantadas de manera inconsulta, sin tomar en consideración sus consecuencias en el plano laboral y social, con prescindencia de la satisfacción de las necesidades básicas de los pueblos que las producían, bajo criterios de competitividad y rentabilidad absoluta del capital.

En este contexto se dio prioridad a lo privado en desmedro de lo público, llegando a la privatización y la desnacionalización de las materias primas y de los servicios públicos esenciales.

Los elementos incorporados en la presente Memoria sobre la creación de un marco institucional para los mercados laborales que permita a la gente que trabaja considerar el cambio más como una oportunidad que como una amenaza o un riesgo nos debe llevar a la convicción de que esto será posible si el Estado asume la regulación y la administración de los recursos fundamentales, cumpliendo su rol de dar bienestar a las mayorías, con buenos servicios públicos, con políticas de incremento de salario, con ampliación de la cobertura de la seguridad social.

Es decir, asegurando que los excedentes financieros sean destinados al menos a cumplir con los objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio. Citando al Informe del Director General, titulado trabajo decente en las Américas: una agenda hemisférica 2006-2015 «El dilema no es cómo el Estado interviene en el mercado, sino cómo opera en la relación con la sociedad de la que es su expresión directa», se trata pues, de superar modelos de desarrollo exógenos impuestos por la globalización y divorciados de las mayorías, los cuales se colocaron en contradicción con los modelos de desarrollo endógenos, que priorizan la satisfacción de las necesidades de quienes habitan en los pueblos, en las localidades, y quienes producen la riqueza. Hablamos de un modelo de desarrollo democrático que garantice la igualdad de condiciones como requisito previo a la igualdad de oportunidades como forma de superación de la pobreza, de la injusticia y la desigualdad.

Para superar la crisis del empleo entonces, resulta también fundamental que los gobiernos impulsen políticas activas que incluyan a los desempleados estructurales, tanto los formales como los informales, facilitando su formación para el trabajo, permitiendo incrementar sus competencias y capacidades, así como su organización productiva. Hacia allá se dirige el Gobierno del Presidente Hugo Chávez en el marco de una revolución democrática bolivariana, dirigiendo con urgencia los excedentes financieros obtenidos tras la recuperación por la administración de los recursos naturales y las materias primas fundamentales. Se trata de recuperar el tiempo perdido de los años ochenta y noventa, adelantando hoy políticas que tengan como sujetos activos y protagonistas a los trabajadores y a las trabajadoras, tanto formales como informales, y no solamente estableciendo incentivos para los sectores productivos.

vos tradicionales como desgravámenes, subsidios a la seguridad social, planes e incentivos de empleo al viejo estilo.

En este esfuerzo se toma en cuenta a los sectores de las micro y pequeñas empresas, así como a las cooperativas, siempre que estas últimas sean el reflejo de un esfuerzo autogestionario y de emancipación de los trabajadores y las trabajadoras incluidas en las experiencias importantes de recuperación de empresas por éstos y éstas.

Al mismo tiempo, el Gobierno del Presidente Chávez está consciente de que debemos profundizar los procesos de integración e intercambio, pero que éstos deben progresar basados en los principios de la complementariedad, la solidaridad, la cooperación y el respeto de la soberanía, que tenga como objeto la satisfacción de las necesidades inmediatas de la población sobre la base de nuevos mecanismos de intercambio que reconozcan las asimetrías entre nuestros países y las particularidades de cada uno de ellos. Un proceso de intercambio comercial divorciado de tales principios nos conduciría a las consecuencias nefastas del pasado y profundizaría las asimetrías entre nuestros pueblos y los indicadores de pobreza y de exclusión. Se trata por tanto de que las políticas comerciales y de intercambio tengan coherencia con las metas que nos hemos propuesto como comunidad internacional para alcanzar los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio.

Ha llegado un tiempo en el que los pueblos claman por las peticiones de justicia y dignidad respecto del trabajo para que éstas sean satisfechas. En la República Bolivariana de Venezuela, el Gobierno y el pueblo unidos avanzan democráticamente sobre la base de que es posible que exista otro mundo, superando las limitaciones del viejo modelo capitalista y abriendo cauce hacia el socialismo que hemos llamado del siglo XXI.

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*Original Arabic: Mr. MAATOUG (Secretary, General People's Committee for Workforce, Training & Employment, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)*

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The Director-General's Report perfectly reflects the concern felt by our organization and its constitutional bodies regarding the follow-up to the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and demonstrates the importance that our organization attributes to fundamental rights at work, the consolidation of social dialogue, the respect of trade union freedoms, social protection and freedom of association and the prohibition of forced and child labour.

In accordance with the legal instruments adopted by the Organization and ratified by my country, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya pays particular attention to the respect and strengthening of the fundamental rights at work, based on the principles of the philosophy of the People's Jamahiriya and the Green Book, as well as on the Promotion of Freedom Act No. 20 and Act No. 23 of 1998 on Trade Unions and completely in accordance with the fundamental legal instruments referred to in the 1998 declaration of the Conference. The approach taken by my country also promotes employment relations which prohibit trafficking for the purpose of labour, consider the right of the individual to work and to an emolument as a sacred right, while wages are considered to be a form of slavery, respect the right of association and social dialogue and prohibit forced and child labour.

Women are considered to make up the other half of society and are guaranteed the right to participation in the decision-making process through their participation in the People's Congress, in trade unions and professional unions and associations, while Libyan society affords social protection to all its members.

We appreciate the concern shown by the Committee of Experts with regard to ensuring that workers enjoy the best possible working conditions and we have complete confidence in the competence of each of its members. However, at the same time, we would like to point out that, in cases when the Committee persists in presenting unsatisfactory observations because it has not found the information provided in the reports of the member States to be convincing or owing to a divergence in opinions or in the explanation of the legal texts governing the Conventions and Recommendations, it does not encourage the member States to ratify these Conventions, we feel that it would be better if your organization were to employ methods to encourage the States to fulfil their legal obligations with a view to transposing the articles stipulated by these legal instruments.

Our Conference meets at a time when the world is undergoing political and economic transformations, which have a significant effect on labour conditions and labour policy. This necessitates a review of the legal instruments dealing with working time to provide more flexible restrictions on weekly working and rest times to be based on productivity, the workers' competence, their level of training and their capacity to keep up with technological progress. No time period has been fixed for the completion of this work, which must take account of the close links between the various international economic areas, as well as the diversity of cultures and religious beliefs among different populations. This will contribute to enhancing dialogue between religious groups and benefiting from the particular observances of each of them with regard to certain days of the week.

We consider that study into harmonizing working hours and weekly rest times, bringing them into line with the globalized economic system, could mean that working time is used to its maximum potential and the costs of production and services are reduced, leading also, indirectly, to growth in production at lower costs and with longer rest times being afforded to more consumers.

My country's tripartite delegation calls on the Conference to re-examine previous legal instruments, starting from the Hours Work (Industry) Convention, 1919 (No. 1), through Hours of Work (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1930 (No. 30) and the Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957 (No. 106) as far as the recommendations of the Committee on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations during its examination of working hours at its meetings during the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference, in order to harmonize the three weekly rest days throughout the world, and requests the Governing Body to include an agenda item on this subject for discussion at the next session of the Conference, in accordance with the Constitution of the Organization.

The congresses of the people of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, aware of the importance of updating the constitution of the African Union and developing of

the machinery of common African work, and concerned to conform with the content of the Ouagadougou declaration relating to employment creation and poverty alleviation adopted by the extraordinary summit of the African Heads of State and presidents on 9 September 2004, although your Organization and the partners of the African continent for development played an important role in drawing up and implementing follow-up mechanisms for this declaration, and convinced that using the human and natural resources of the African continent and the possibility to find decent work are more certain ways of eliminating poverty, limiting illegal migration and guaranteeing the rights of the most vulnerable categories and migrant workers, they decided during their annual meeting in 2005 to adopt the initiative of Colonel al-Qadhafi – the Qadhafi project for African young people, women and children – and allocated a part of the sum required to the investment in the field of job creation and poverty elimination in the African continent through the Libyan African funds for investment.

They call on all the multilateral and bilateral regional and international organizations to support the initiative and to help developing the machinery to implement it.

We are using this opportunity to ask your Organization in its tripartite component to cooperate with us to offer the necessary technical assistance to the African Union Commissariat and to the African Union Labour and Social Affairs Commission to use this initiative to bring about the Organization's objectives to create decent work, generate employment, alleviate poverty and create a favourable environment for sustainable development and for the respect of human rights in Africa and globally.

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, maintaining the importance of increasing efforts to strengthen cooperation for Palestinian workers, expresses its regrets and its disapproval for the content of the report of the high-level mission for the occupied Arab territories and emphasizes once again the need to examine closely the observations of the Arab group concerning this report. It calls on the Conference and the Governing Body to take the necessary steps rapidly to support the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, condemns the practice of the Zionist entity in the occupied Arab territories and calls for the application of that which was set out in the revolution leader's White Book as a realistic and indispensable means to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Although the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya expresses its concern for the events that its brother Iraq is experiencing, it condemns the foreign presence on Iraqi soil and strongly supports the Arab and Iraqi people and its unity. It welcomes the peace agreement concluded with Sudan and calls on the international community to focus its efforts to create a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

To conclude, I hope that the Conference achieves results that can lead to our common objectives to guarantee global political, economic and social human rights.

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Mr. MAMMADOV (Employer, Azerbaijan)

I greet you on behalf of the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs' (Employers') Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan and express my gratitude to the organizers of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference, who have made it

possible for us to participate in this event, and wish the Conference's work every success.

We have read with keen interest the Director-General's Report and are acquainted with the *ILO decent work country programmes: A Guidebook*. The Report provides wide opportunities for exchanging, discussing and learning about decent work country programmes. The success of today's discussions on the issue will depend on our ability to understand and acknowledge the crucial role of decent work country programmes, and also to communicate and share experience.

Employment and social protection issues are highlighted in the Director-General's Report, and, increasingly, the role of decent work in reducing poverty has been recognized. As for this, I have to note that some efforts have been made in this sphere by the Government of Azerbaijan in recent years. In order to ensure stable employment, the National Employment Strategy for 2006-15 was adopted last year. It is necessary to note that the strategy has been developed and approved thanks to ILO technical cooperation, and I hope that the ILO will support the implementation of this national programme.

Within the context of employment issues, I would like to touch on the situation of youth employment in our country. The Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation, with the support of the International Labour Organization, carried out a survey within the "From school to work transition" project to study relations between employers and employees. Thanks to ILO technical cooperation, we could learn about relations between employers and young employees/jobseekers and share information on youth in employment, and youth employment problems were studied. As it became obvious from the survey, today there is a great necessity for more global studies on youth employment and the realization of concrete measures in this direction.

I have to note that, due to the technical assistance of the ILO, the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation has made some efforts to promote women's employment issues through the implementation of a women's entrepreneurship project. It is a good practice that the involvement of women in entrepreneurial activity can help to provide women who work with a gross income. With ILO support, we intend to go on with the project on increasing and improving the business skills of women.

Action for the elimination of child labour is always one of the priorities of ILO activity. It is important to say that, since 2004, the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation has been involved in the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) project on the role of employers in the elimination of child labour in the agricultural sector. The project revealed that the problem of child labour should be considered to be most serious; as it should be.

With ILO technical assistance, since 2005, the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation has been implementing the ACT/EMP project on capacity building for employers' organizations on productivity and competitiveness in Azerbaijan. Within the survey, we have learned of the needs and problems faced by enterprises. Providing safe and healthy working conditions for employees is very important – that is a key factor for increasing labour productivity and production quality which has a positive effect on the competitiveness of enterprises. It should be noted that on the eve of the country's

membership to the World Trade Organization, this is considered to be a very important factor for us.

The Director-General also was concerned about HIV/AIDS in the workplace in his Report. It is a social and economic problem, rather than a purely medical one. It affects productivity and workforce supply, and increases production costs for the employer. For this reason, employers should be concerned with the issue of protecting the workforce from HIV infection and can take comprehensive multi-sectoral action against HIV/AIDS.

The Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation intends to join the efforts directed at raising the awareness of employers on HIV/AIDS issues in order to be actively involved in removing discrimination against people living with HIV, as well as in taking specific steps for the prevention and spread of the epidemic and providing social security for at-risk groups in this sphere. We would like to receive ILO technical support on enlightening employers on HIV/AIDS issues.

Before concluding my remarks, with the purpose of enhancing the role of employers in the processes of economic growth and industrial relations, I would like to submit to the ILO the suggestions of the Azerbaijan Employers' Confederation, which I represent.

First, the ILO should strengthen its efforts to coordinate the activities of employers' organizations in the decent work country programme and also provide recognition of employers' organizations by social partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States countries.

Second, technical assistance through ILO projects for strengthening the capacity of employers with regard to productivity and competitiveness.

Third, ILO projects to provide youth employment through educating young people on the basis of entrepreneurship to be actively involved in this activity and provided with decent work.

Fourth, ILO projects to promote women's entrepreneurship through increasing and improving their education on the basis of entrepreneurship in order to promote gender issues in this sphere.

Fifth, ILO projects to strengthen the capacity building of employers to follow standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, including occupational safety and health, the elimination of child labour and forced labour and enlightening employers on HIV/AIDS issues.

Sixth, to include HIV/AIDS issues in the decent work country programme.

Seventh, ILO projects to improve and increase business studies in the country.

Eighth, efforts to strengthen cooperation between multinational companies and national employers' organizations.

To conclude, I wish to stress again the importance of the subject of decent work policy, and that the role of employers should be enhanced in this regard.

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Mr. BIYAMA (*Minister for Labour and Industrial Relations, Papua New Guinea*)

We pledge our total support and commitment on the Report *Changing patterns in the world of work*. We also agree with the presentation on the role of the ILO which has had, and will continue to have, an impact on shaping the global ways and approaches to addressing issues of developing social justice and world peace.

I praise the presentation of the Director-General and the Chairman of the Governing Body, which have given prominence to what the ILO has been and what it endeavours to do in the years to come.

The continuing support of the ILO in addressing issues, its tripartite strategies and the united values we share have placed my Government and my country in good stead to address matters which truly touch our hearts and impact our national progress to achieve decent work.

My Government also conveys its support to rise to the challenges outlined in the Global Report, with specific focus on the effective abolition of child labour. This is evident in the ratification of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

To give further effect to the fight against child labour, my Government is coming up with legislative reforms throughout the internal mechanism to address various issues, and child labour is no exception. We are giving it due consideration.

I thank you for including the item on occupational safety and health, which is going for adoption to a Convention; the employment relations, which is also going for adoption to a Recommendation; and the general discussion on the role of the ILO in technical cooperation.

For as long as those issues lead to achieving decent work, my Government will put all its support behind them. This commitment is in line with our own programmes and national development in Papua New Guinea which are slowly, but surely, going into the direction of decent work.

A policy on decent work has been prepared for submission to the National Executive Council for endorsement. This decent work policy will be used as a national development policy, concurrently with the Government's medium-term development strategy for 2005-10.

The important role of the ILO Office in the Pacific, as well as the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, play through technical assistance to give effect to the decent work country programme is welcomed and acknowledged. We are hoping that the role of the ILO in technical cooperation will further boost and enhance our activities at the national level.

I must state that Papua New Guinea strongly supports the work of the ILO, because we believe in its values and shared common objectives. This commitment is now bearing fruit, as the ILO's Decent Work Agenda has become the global agenda. We share this success with other ILO member States and, as long as we remain partners with the ILO, we will translate these goals, shared values and objectives with pride in our country.

My Government has identified employment creation and poverty alleviation in its medium term development strategy 2005-2010, which for us depicts the realization that the global agenda of decent work is slowly making its way into the Government's national development policies.

The Government's sponsorship of the development and formulation of the national policy on decent work and the national action plan on decent work, which have been slowly pushed by the ILO, is a stepping stone for its general realization and implementation in Papua New Guinea.

The challenge posed by the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body is wel-

comed with open arms by my Government and we will do what we can to progress towards decent work, bearing in mind that the stage is set with our partnership with the ILO, which has influenced the global agenda.

Our commitment in legislative reform to comply with standards is progressing. Our commitment to practical solutions in promoting fundamental principles and rights, creating employment, promoting social security, and promoting social dialogue has remained as strong as ever and our commitment to achieve decent work for all is alive.

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Mr. GOCHE (*Minister of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, Zimbabwe*)

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Mr. President and fellow delegates, I wish first to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your Vice-Presidents on your election to preside over the business of the 95th Session of this Conference. I have no doubt that we will have a successful Conference through your diligent execution of the responsibilities thrust upon you.

Mr. President, I also take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Director-General for the effort and time spent in preparing such a thought-provoking Report. The Director-General's Report, apart from enlightening us on the realities of the world of work, places us on a better platform to understand the changes in the labour market, with a view to properly aligning our systems, policies and efforts to mitigate the challenges which militate against the attainment of the Decent Work Agenda.

As individual countries, we also stand to benefit from the experiences of other countries outlined in the Report. For indeed, best practices are worthy of our collective emulation.

Mr. President, it is sad to note that, despite encouraging global economic growth, our labour markets still do not reflect a rise in employment levels. This is a clear manifestation that the globalization process has not yielded the many social benefits expected by many citizens of the world.

The negative trends in employment reflected in the Report should definitely compel us to redouble our efforts in developing policy initiatives to enable us to deliver enough new jobs, particularly for the youth, as it is sorely evident from the Report that lack of work still plagues the lives of many people, especially the young ones.

We in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region had the opportunity to discuss the issue of youth unemployment at a regional conference financed by the ILO in Harare as a follow-up to last year's discussions at the 93rd Session of the Conference. While the key impediments to youth employment in the region and individual countries were identified, there was a consensus on the need to develop country-specific plans of action with wide stakeholder participation. It is against this background that, through the collaborative efforts of stakeholders in Zimbabwe, we have identified the issue of youth employment as a national priority to the extent that we have developed a national plan of action which was incorporated into our decent work country programme.

It is, however, encouraging that the Report of the Director-General notes an increase in the participation of women in the labour market, though a lot needs to be done regarding the provision of equal opportunities for women in sectors of the economy other than the informal sector. I am happy to inform

the Conference that the Government of Zimbabwe has made great strides in this respect. The Government of Zimbabwe, apart from mainstreaming gender perspectives in all aspects of national policy, has also developed a gender affirmative action policy in the public sector which ensures that women occupy a third of all managerial posts. Though a modest figure, it is indeed a significant leap towards the provision of equal opportunities for women. As part of the initiatives of equipping women with the necessary skills for their advancement into professional and managerial jobs, a women's university has been set up to cater for the academic advancement of women. The leadership role in this was played by the women themselves.

It is equally encouraging to note that child labour is also noted in the Report to be on the decline, particularly its worst forms. While this is an encouraging trend, it should however compel us to redouble our efforts to eliminate this cancerous practice completely from our labour markets. I am also glad to inform you that, following the 1999 Child Labour Survey, the Government of Zimbabwe has embarked on a number of initiatives aimed in particular at ensuring that children are withdrawn from situations that perpetuate child labour by breaking the vicious cycle of poverty through the provision of free education to vulnerable children. It is in this context that the Government of Zimbabwe, through the Basic Education Assistance Module, seeks to reduce the number of children dropping out of school and also to reach out to those who have never been to school. In this way, we aim to diminish their vulnerability to child labour. Accordingly, the Government has allocated substantial financial resources to this programme this year, with an expected coverage of about 905,752 children across the nation.

I am also glad to inform the Conference that the Government of Zimbabwe and the social partners intend to conduct a survey to identify the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labour, since this was not covered in the 1999 Child Labour Survey. The desire of the Government of Zimbabwe and the social partners to eliminate child labour is also clearly articulated in the decent work country programme for Zimbabwe, in which we have resolved to develop a time-bound programme for the elimination of child labour. We call upon the ILO to provide all the necessary support for the successful implementation of this programme.

The impact of AIDS on the world of work noted in the Director-General's Report cannot be overemphasized, particularly the projected loss of the workforce to HIV/AIDS.

Finally, the Worker delegate from Norway has characterized my Government as being "worker-hostile". I can only say that that is false and I shall deal with that issue in the appropriate forum and I do hope that the Worker delegate from Norway will be at the Committee of Standards when my country appears to respond to certain allegations that have been made.

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Mr. DAVE (*Worker, India*)

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Warm greetings to all of you from India.

The emergence of new geopolitical equations, global imbalances in growth and income, unfair globalization, anxiety of the future due to terrorism and unemployment are some of our common concerns.

Unemployment in terms of people with no work at all is at its highest point ever and continues to rise. Half of all the workers in the world, some 1.4 billion people, are the working poor, currently surviving on less than US\$2 a day per person. They work in the vast informal sector, without benefits, social security or health care.

This situation is mainly due to global transfers, not just of capital and technology, but also of new work practices, through production chains that have a major impact on employment, skills creation and gender roles. These transformations in production systems create increased competitive pressures, foster informalization and exclude significant numbers of workers from the process of change.

A decent job respects and confers the dignity of work, promotes a sense of self-worth and is the key to family stability. When people cannot find work at home in their communities and societies they look elsewhere. Decent jobs will be created when firms and workers are able to adapt and acquire new capabilities so as to take advantage of new opportunities. Employment policies must anticipate technological and institutional change, so that workers are equipped to move into new jobs using the skills and incentives provided by enterprises.

People aspire to a future that delivers opportunities for decent work in a sustainable environment. We need to assess our common endeavours to translate decent work into realizable programmes and activities. Because it is an integrated agenda, we cannot selectively pursue decent work objectives.

An integrated approach is essential because each of the elements of decent work – employment, rights, protection and dialogue – reinforces the others. And together they play a part in achieving broad goals such as poverty eradication. Economic and social goals and policies must be considered together. For instance, macroeconomic policy must take into account its social impact.

The World Economic Forum has a new agenda of creating jobs. The world is sliding into an unprecedented global jobs crisis. So, as things stand now, even the most robust growth is not creating enough jobs. And this growth is insufficient in itself to reverse the decent work deficit and reduce poverty. The global jobs crisis, which is also creating a decent work deficit, is one of the biggest security risks of our time. Addressing this crisis is therefore essential.

First, we need a paradigm shift in economic and social policies.

Second, economic growth continues to be a necessary objective as a means for achieving economic development and job creation. We must focus not just on global, but also on local, economic development. This requires the right mix of macro, micro and sectoral policies.

Third, competitiveness and enterprise development should become a major national objective in every country.

Fourth, in a global and increasingly integrated economy, people's skills determine not only individual employability, but also how a country does business with the rest of the world. We need a big push in training, lifelong learning and upgrading human capacities.

Fifth, to meet the challenges of the global jobs crisis, governments, business and trade union leadership and relevant international organizations must

help in close technical cooperation with other stakeholders of the global society.

It is clear that none of the global actors can solve this problem alone. And so, we have the employment relationship on the agenda this year.

Before I conclude, let me very briefly touch upon the other agenda items of this session of the Conference.

Let us all join in the symphony for social justice and resolve to keep investing in the struggle for the right of every child to their childhood. We all have a responsibility to build that future. Together, we can generate the global consensus to eliminate child labour.

Occupational safety and health is also an integral component of successful and productive enterprises and of strategies for sustainable development. But today, let us remember the majority of workers globally who are in the informal economy outside the scope of formal occupational safety and health mechanisms and health-care systems. This also remains a formidable challenge. We must overcome these obstacles with persistence and conviction.

A world with decent work for adults, quality education for children and real opportunity for young people. My friends, it is possible. And we are moving in the right direction. Let us maintain the momentum and move forward. Bharatiya Mazdoor Sang looks forward to addressing these challenges forthcoming, confronting labour globally and working with all of you in a spirit of partnership and mutual trust.

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Mr. ATHORBI (*Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development, Government of Southern Sudan*)

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My name is David Deng, I come from Southern Sudan. I am the Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resource Development.

As most of you are aware, Southern Sudan has just emerged from a damaging civil war.

I am told I have only a few minutes, but before I proceed to the substance of my talk, I must say that it is a great honour for me and the people of Southern Sudan and the Sudan as a whole, to stand before you to say these few words.

I have just mentioned that we came out of a civil war and we are now in a time of peace. The comprehensive peace agreement which was signed between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, of which I am a member, and the National Congress Party, is based on two main foundations. These are: making unity of Sudan attractive; the right of self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan to choose in an internationally-supervised referendum between unity of the country or secession.

Our short time of peace has demonstrated that peace has its own challenges. In our context of Southern Sudan, our people have high expectations. Most of our people expected great things to come with the peace and over a short period.

Secondly, we are faced with how to make our people be realistic in their expectations.

Thirdly, now the third challenge is setting up a Government of Southern Sudan that works and delivers services efficiently. We need support from the international and external agencies to enable us to set our system of government in place, and the first challenge is the training of human resources to run the Government of Southern Sudan. This may involve institutional support like construction of vocational training centres to train our labour force.

When we took over as the Government in Southern Sudan, we started the processes of addressing the challenges of peace which I mentioned earlier. We prepared extensive short and medium-term strategies, plans and actions for addressing them. Some of these are:

- Formulation of a legal framework to govern and regulate our labour. We need labour laws and regulations. We plan to do this through reviewing existing laws in Sudan and, in accordance with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), making laws that are relevant to Southern Sudan.
- In Southern Sudan we are also embarking on the demobilization of soldiers. We need to set up vocational training institutions that can impart skills to enable those former soldiers to access jobs and earn their living accordingly.

Finally, let me once again state that, though we in Sudan fought a long and vicious civil war, I am glad to say that we have taken bold steps to stop it. We assure you we shall try our best to keep the peace. However, like in all other countries which underwent our experience, war has consumed our human and material sources. And therefore we are looking for ways to strengthen our cooperation, and relationship with the international community to support us in many fields, especially in the following areas.

Building of our human resources to enable our public sector and private sector to play a vital role in the delivery of services to the people of Southern Sudan.

International support to ensure speedy payment of Oslo pledges for recovery and development in the war-affected areas of Southern Sudan.

We also need international support to ensure smooth implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

With these few remarks, I would like to conclude by saying once again that Sudan is now at peace, it is a land of peace. We look forward to your support to sustain and make peace a reality in Southern Sudan and in the whole of Sudan. I thank you all.

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*Original Arabic: Mr. ALGHATAMI (Employer, Oman)*

It is my honour to speak before this honourable gathering on behalf of the employers of Oman. It is also my pleasure to congratulate the President of this session of the Conference and his Vice-Presidents on their election. I wish you every success in managing the work of this session of the Conference and in achieving the desired aims and goals, that is to say, to promote social and economic justice for all social partners.

The Director-General, in his Report, *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, mentioned a number of achievements made by the International Labour Office in implementing its programmes and activities to promote social justice and in ensuring fundamental principles and rights at work.

We are proud of these achievements and we call on the Organization to strengthen its technical cooperation programme in order to support and promote these principles, particularly in countries where the social partners are facing a number of challenges in ensuring labour rights and decent work for all. The Director-General's Report, *The end of child labour: Within reach*, is worthy of attention by all social partners because it will help us

find ways to prevent child labour and create more job opportunities to end this phenomenon.

The Sultanate of Oman is witnessing economic growth in all sectors. As such, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman is working hard, by means of programmes and projects, to encourage investors to establish companies, in order to benefit from this economic growth and create more job opportunities in the private sector for those seeking employment, in addition to raising awareness and supporting the activities of employers in order to place decent work high on our agenda and programmes. In the light of that, and in cooperation with the Government and the main workers' committee in the Sultanate, we have established tripartite sectoral committees, in order to train, retrain and employ workers in various sectors. This experience is bearing fruit.

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Oman, as the main representative of the private sector, places the utmost importance on reviewing labour legislation in the Sultanate of Oman through constant cooperation with the Government and with the participation of members of the workers' representative committees in order to make sure that labour legislation is in line with international labour standards and to preserve for all the rights contained in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The Director-General, in his Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories* highlighted the tragic situation of employers and workers in the occupied Arab territories; the economic situation is deteriorating and workers and employers are being deprived of their basic rights as a result of unjust economic blockade and other arbitrary measures. As such, we call on the international community, through the International Labour Organization, to fulfil its duty in ending the injustice and the blockade imposed on economic, social and service sectors in the occupied Arab territories, in addition to supporting workers and employers in these sectors.

The ILO Regional Office for Arab States needs new staff to fill vacancies in order to help implement its technical programmes for countries in the region. As such, we request the Director-General to enhance the role of this Office so it can effectively discharge its mandate by filling the vacancies with highly qualified personnel who can speak Arabic and have the necessary technical experience to assist countries to fulfil the requirements of international labour standards, promote social dialogue, create more job opportunities in small and medium-sized enterprises and develop its human resources, devoting special care to the translation of documents adopted by the Organization into Arabic, given their importance.

Finally, I wish this Conference every success and peace and may God's blessing be upon you all.

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*Sr. RICCI MUADI (empleador, Guatemala)*

Felicito al Director General por haber seleccionado como tema central para su Memoria *Los cambios en el mundo del trabajo*. Hoy más que nunca es necesario abrir un debate sobre este tema a nivel internacional, pero también localmente, sobre todo en países como el mío en donde no se ha tomado conciencia de la magnitud de los cambios y la necesidad de adaptación a los mismos, tanto a nivel legislativo como de actitud de dirigentes nacionales que



pretenden aferrarse a los privilegios que una época de economías cerradas les garantizaba y que ahora, en la apertura de mercados, constituyen un pesado lastre para la sociedad que intenta crear riqueza para todos a través de la única forma sostenible, es decir la empresa competitiva en un mundo cambiante.

Nuestra Organización debe ser la que muestre el camino a aquellos países que comprendan esa necesidad de cambio y alertar a aquellos que todavía no lo hayan hecho, con el objeto de acompañarlos en el proceso de modernización de sus mercados laborales. Es un elemento indispensable para la creación del empleo productivo, único capaz de generar bienestar en la sociedad.

A esos efectos, la OIT debe hacer una reflexión profunda sobre sus objetivos y la forma en que se propone alcanzarlos. Es necesario que concentre sus esfuerzos en todo programa encaminado a la creación de empleo productivo, lo cual pasa por temas tan importantes como el desarrollo de calificaciones, la gestión de recursos humanos, la productividad, la redistribución salarial en función de esta última.

Además de evitar la dispersión de esfuerzos y recursos, a través de ese enfoque prioritario, debe revisar también su función normativa, tanto en lo relativo a la creación de tales normas como a sus mecanismos de verificación. Lo primero con el objeto de modernizar el cuerpo normativo de esta casa dejando de lado todos aquellos convenios que ya resultan inoperantes, así como aquellos que reportan muy bajas tasas de ratificación, pero sobre todo con miras al futuro, a fin de que las normas que se adopten vengan a satisfacer esas nuevas realidades.

En cuanto a lo segundo, es decir los mecanismos de verificación, debe volverse a la naturaleza de los mismos, evitando así su utilización abusiva por muchos, que intentan aprovecharlos para intereses particulares; cobra especial relevancia este tema, hoy en día, pues no en pocos acuerdos comerciales internacionales se menciona a esta casa como el referente en temas sociolaborales. Pues bien, debe ser nuestra Organización a través de sus propios métodos la que revise la aplicación de las normas que haya emitido y no los mecanismos de tales acuerdos comerciales.

En suma evitar la dispersión de esfuerzos y recursos enfocándose en lo que todos consideramos prioritario: la eliminación de la pobreza a través del trabajo productivo, esa debe ser la respuesta de la OIT ante los cambios del mundo del trabajo; ello a través de programas concretos en el terreno.

Termino felicitando la intervención del Presidente Oscar Arias, esta mañana. Hago votos porque su visión de progreso y paz, basada fundamentalmente en la educación e impulsada por el libre comercio sirva de ejemplo a otros líderes en el mundo, pero muy especialmente en América Latina, donde la paz, la democracia y el progreso se ven amenazados por quienes quieren imponer ideologías fracasadas que en nuestro Continente han dejado una huella de miseria cuyas consecuencias están todavía a la vista.

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*Original Arabic: Mr. ABU RAGHEB (Employer, Jordan)*

In his Report the Director-General raised a number of important issues which require us to join forces and which will have a positive impact on working conditions, and result in decent work, and make it possible to improve the lives of both workers and employers.

The Government of Jordan, under the direction of His Majesty King Abdullah II bin al Hussein, is working on coordination and cooperation with the private sector to draw up regulations and laws which relate to the economic and labour sector. This has had a positive impact on the application of these laws and regulations.

We are also currently updating other labour legislation in Jordan through joint tripartite committees. We are also trying to promote mechanisms which ensure the creation of a trained workforce with the necessary experience and training provided by professional training institutions and other types of institutions and which help to reduce unemployment, to meet the needs of the labour market and to find jobs for university graduates and this, in coordination with all parties involved.

We are also anxious to improve the working conditions and the standard of living of workers and to ensure they have adequate social protection. Consequently, we have already raised the minimum wage twice in the same year to ensure that they have a decent standard of living.

In Jordan we are very proud to see women working, and they actually hold a large number of important positions in the private and public sectors. Women are also self-employed and have free right to association.

We hope to finish soon the final stages of the creation of the social and economic council, and the rules and regulations related to that council have already been finalized, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization through the project for social dialogue set up in Jordan.

We would like to recall that international standards are constantly violated in the occupied Arab territories, and that the Palestinian people are under unjust occupation, which destroys any basis for a dignified and independent life, especially since this people, who chose democracy in its last elections, is subject to sanctions. All assistance has been denied, officials' wages have not been paid and a blockade has been imposed on them. In another neighbouring region, the Iraqi people no longer have any safety and employers and workers are unable to reach their workplaces where they face death and destruction.

We call upon the International Labour Organization to inform all international forums about this so that they can work on ending the suffering of these people and not on using two sets of rules to apply international standards. We call upon the Organization to provide them with all possible assistance so that workers and employers can have a dignified life and a beneficial working environment.

We also call for you to work to end the suffering of our brothers in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, and in the Lebanese Shebaa farms and to grant them the freedom guaranteed by the international community.

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*Original German: Mr. RAMME (representative, International Confederation of Executive Staff)*

I shall be speaking German, the language of a country where the FIFA World Cup kicks off tomorrow, and, well, when I look at this room it looks rather as though everybody has already left to get to Munich for the opening match tomorrow.

Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on behalf of the International Confederation of Executive Staff (CIC), on your election to preside over this 95th Session of the International Labour



Conference and to wish you every success in handling this important and demanding task. My congratulations also go to the Officers of the Conference and the staff of the Organization for the excellent work they have done as set out in the Director-General's Report.

This Report provides excellent information on the state of the fundamental rights of workers around the world and details the many efforts being made to improve the lot of workers. On behalf of my organization, I would like to focus on the following few points.

Allow me to assure you that the CIC supports you in every way in your efforts to enhance the importance of occupational safety and health around the world.

Within the European Union, where the majority of our members work as executive staff, there is already a high level of protection thanks to relevant legal provisions. It is regrettable, however, that these provisions are not always properly observed. We see it as the role of executive staff to respect current requirements and to ensure that they are properly implemented. In some other parts of the world, the issue of safety and health in the workplace receives far less attention and greater effort needs to be made to improve the level of protection there. The ILO's programme to promote occupational safety and health is therefore a very welcome tool in raising awareness and stressing the importance of this issue. We support an internationally recognized programme of minimum standards and hope that these will be extended further. Of course, this can only happen if member States are behind it.

We note with satisfaction that the process of developing these minimum standards has involved the social partners, employers' and workers' representatives alike, through information and consultation. These bodies, too, can help in the implementation of standards in individual countries.

Executive staff represented by the CIC are, by virtue of their particular roles, less affected by occupational accidents and diseases than many others. However, they do suffer more from stress and spinal and muscular disorders because of their sedentary jobs. However executives play a key role in this area and are our main partners in implementing appropriate preventive measures and training.

In conclusion, I would like to mention the still unsatisfactory situation regarding the rights of executive staff in certain countries in respect of organizing and engaging in collective bargaining.

Workers have the basic right to organize and that right is still denied to executive staff in some parts of the world, such as Quebec in Canada. We are deeply convinced that the ILO should exercise its influence in these places to ensure that executives, like all other workers, can form their own organizations and enjoy recognition.

I am delighted to assure you that our Confederation is committed to extending workers' fundamental rights and making the world of work a fair and decent place.

*(The Conference adjourned at 7 p.m.)*

*(La séance est levée à 19 heures.)*

*(Se levanta la sesión a las 19 horas.)*

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