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

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

**DISCUSIÓN DEL INFORME DEL PRESIDENTE DEL CONSEJO DE ADMINISTRACIÓN Y
DE LA MEMORIA Y LOS INFORMES DEL DIRECTOR GENERAL**

Original Arabic: Mr. ALSALIM (Minister of Labour, Jordan)

The Director-General, in his Report for this year entitled Changing patterns in the world of work dealt with one of the most important and pressing issues of our times. We agree with the Director-General that, given the changes in the working world, progressing towards the goal of decent work requires change in the status quo and the current approach at the economic, social and political levels, and the acceptance of such changes by all social partners.

The important developments in the areas of transport and telecommunications, as well as the economic openness dictated by the rules of globalization and free trade require, more than at any other time, the establishment of rules to safeguard decent work as an important element of national, regional and international strategies.

At this stage of economic and social change, the importance attributed to human rights at work in the framework of international standards is a key factor in ensuring stability and security in the labour market. On the other hand, for many countries, creating employment opportunities in itself is often the greatest challenge, especially in developing countries. Therefore, more attention must be placed on training and employment programmes with a view to providing the necessary jobs.

In this context, Jordan has embarked on the implementation and financing of programmes, in cooperation with private sector institutions, aimed at

supporting and training unemployed persons and enabling them to fill vacancies. In addition, public employment services were established in cooperation with the private sector.

In order to promote the participation of women in the national economy and their entry into the working world, in particular the non-traditional fields, the Ministry of Labour recently established a division for women workers.

In cooperation with the social partners, efforts are also being made to modernise legislation governing labour relations and the rights and duties of both parties at work, in accordance with international standards, in order to establish an equitable relationship between the two parties.

A programme aimed to build the capacity of the social partners and promote social dialogue in currently being carried out in cooperation with the International Labour Organization; the project should facilitate the creation of the Jordanian economic and social council, which would provide a forum for the social partners to express their views in respect of different issues freely and in a democratic setting.

With regard to social protection, we currently work on expanding social security coverage to the informal sector and domestic workers; with regard to maternity protection, we explore the possibility of creating a maternity fund to finance, together with employers, the costs incurred by the rights of women workers.

We face many other challenges, which require considerable efforts. These include, in particular,

the issue of labour migration; the restructuring of vocational training to meet the needs of a globalized world and changed labour market situation; and capacity-building within the Ministry in different areas to ensure that it can respond effectively to labour market requirements, especially with regard to labour inspection and employment.

In the area of child labour, Jordan has long been working on identifying the true reasons for children's presence in the labour market, with ILO support, with a view to finding workable solutions to this problem. Programmes to curb child labour and the relevant international standards articulated in the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No.138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182), which Jordan has ratified, provide a framework for such efforts.

Jordan, like many other countries, is concerned about the situation in the occupied Arab territories and the high levels of unemployment and poverty, considering the problems that impede finding solutions. We are aware that the situation in the labour market is linked with the political situation, but we consider that the responsibility of the international community in the regard should not be limited to such considerations. In order to ensure social security in these territories and improve the standard of living, urgent measures must be taken to create decent employment opportunities.

Original Turkish: Mr. BASESGIOGLU (Minister for Labour and Social Security, Turkey)

I would like to commend the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, for his excellent Reports submitted to the Conference. The Director-General's Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, encompasses a range of significant issues which we, as constituents committed to transforming the ideal of decent work into reality on both national and global levels, cannot afford to overlook, but will continue to reflect upon and discuss over the coming years.

Intensification of global competition following trade and financial liberalization stimulated by information technologies; the open market economy; production and distribution processes internationally, as a multinational enterprise is spread over several communities; and labour markets shaped by foreign direct investments is causing a debate over the role of the State. However, the creation of positive implications of these changes, a reduction in poverty and inequalities in the distribution of income and improvement of living and working conditions can only be possible through the regulatory role of the State.

Combating poverty and achieving the MDGs are also the priority goals of my country, as is the case for other countries.

Drivers of change, as mentioned in the Director-General's Report, have also affected my country deeply, and, as a consequence, a radical reform of labour law was made in 2003 by changing the Labour Act completely through social dialogue. A legal framework required by the world of work in Turkey has been established by introducing new provisions regarding flexible working modalities, as well as provisions ensuring job security.

Radical reforms have also been made very recently in the field of social security in Turkey. The social security system has been reassessed and restructured with a holistic approach. Hence, existing segmentation in the institutional structure of social

security has been replaced by a single institution, and the right to social protection with equal conditions and coverage and quality has been granted to all workers without discrimination. With this reform, a general health insurance system will also be initiated covering all residents in Turkey. These aspects of the reform indicate that the aim of the radical changes made in the social security system is not only to ensure financial sustainability, but also to make it more effective, equal and comprehensive.

Turkey joined the Youth Employment Network in January 2006. Thus, national policies and strategies to create employment opportunities for youth are hoped to be implemented in the near future with the collaboration of the ILO and the World Bank.

Turkey has taken a rightful place among the countries showing progress in the implementation of international labour standards in the fields of child labour and equal treatment. I am pleased to note that Turkey is also among the countries which have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; enhanced social dialogue opportunities; tackled the informal economy through social dialogue; and improved working conditions in certain economic sectors by ratifying new international conventions.

The EU-funded project Technical Assistance for Strengthening Social Dialogue for Innovation and Change in Turkey has been initiated this year with the cooperation of the ILO International Training Centre in order to strengthen social dialogue institutional capacities.

As regards legislation regulating freedom of association and industrial relations, consultations with the social partners are continuing in order to finalize work for bringing it up to date.

In the face of globalization, as we are aware of the necessity to first create more and better jobs in order to achieve the decent work goal within the context of the ILO social dimension of globalization, this autumn we will host an ILO subregional conference for south-eastern European countries, inviting the relevant ministers of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia, to exchange views and share experiences on designing and implementing policies in the field of emerging new patterns of work and employment strategies.

We consider worth noting the proposals and findings in the conclusions of the meticulously prepared Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*. We hope that the conditions in the region will improve in the direction of ensuring a lasting peace and in the observance of the ILO principles that are valuable to all of us.

In my concluding remarks, I would once again emphasize the importance that my country attaches to the work of the International Labour Conference and extend my highest regards to all of you.

Sr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*empleador, Argentina*)

Es un honor para mí, en nombre de la Organización Internacional de Empleadores y como Presidente del Grupo de los Empleadores de la Conferencia, saludarlo a usted por su designación y comentar la Memoria del Director General titulada *Cambios en el mundo del trabajo*.

Para nosotros es satisfactorio constatar que la Oficina reconoce en este documento que el mundo del trabajo está cambiando, y que continuará haciéndolo. Las empresas y nuestras organizaciones vivimos día a día ese cambio y debemos ser capaces de traducirlo en oportunidades, oportunidades no sólo para nuestras empresas sino también para nuestros trabajadores.

Muy frecuentemente, el cambio se percibe como algo negativo. Como algo que debe ser temido. Como algo que debe ser frenado. Pero ésta no es la visión que necesitamos para hacer frente a los retos de hoy y a las transformaciones a las que aspiramos para el bien común. El cambio es hoy constante y rápido: para lograr ser partícipes activos del mismo, nosotros los miembros de esta Organización necesitamos buscar nuevas respuestas y nuevas ideas. El mundo de hoy ya no se entiende con las respuestas de ayer.

El Presidente de la Conferencia nos ha hecho referencias particulares a ello en el día de hoy. El Director General también ha marcado parte de sus desafíos.

La globalización ha dado y está ofreciendo a la OIT una oportunidad de reafirmar su relevancia, sobresaliendo en el propio ámbito de su mandato y destacándose por ello del resto de las agencias de desarrollo de las Naciones Unidas, ya que el empleo productivo está en el centro de toda estrategia de crecimiento económico.

Al mismo tiempo que el mundo empresarial constata el gran potencial que la OIT tiene en el mundo globalizado, observamos con preocupación tantos intentos por sacar lo social de nuestros espacios tripartitos para llevarlo a otros foros, como también algún intento para llevar a la Oficina más allá del ámbito de su mandato. Sin embargo, insistimos en que la fuerza de la OIT reside en dar respuesta a las necesidades e intereses de todos sus mandatos y en el marco de nuestro mandato específico en lo social, y por ello los empleadores tenemos la legítima expectativa de que estas prioridades sean plenamente incorporadas en las actividades de la Casa.

Sr. Presidente, quiero señalar que valoramos profundamente los programas nacionales de trabajo decente, los cuales habrán de ser indudablemente el vehículo a través del cual la OIT dará respuestas concretas y adecuadas a las necesidades y realidades específicas de cada país. Por ello, debe garantizarse la participación y el compromiso de los actores sociales en la definición de dichos programas.

La discusión general sobre la cooperación técnica que está teniendo lugar durante esta Conferencia resulta altamente oportuna. La cooperación técnica es el medio de acción más importante de la Organización. En este sentido, lamentamos constatar que, con excepción del programa IPEC, existe una disminución en los recursos disponibles para su implementación. Debemos revertir esta tendencia. Como empleadores esperamos que nuestras prioridades sean prioridades también para la totalidad de la Oficina. Por tanto, las organizaciones empresariales deberían recibir el beneficio de la cooperación técnica no sólo a través de ACT/EMP, cuyos recursos son limitados, sino también del resto de los departamentos técnicos y basados en necesidades concretas y prioritarias para nuestra Organización y los mandantes tripartitos.

En particular, necesitamos desarrollar programas en temas clave, tales como la promoción del espíritu empresarial, la creación de nuevos negocios, el fo-

mento de un ambiente propicio para la creación de empresas, las microfinanzas, la economía informal, la inspección y administración del trabajo, la productividad y la competitividad. Esos temas alentarán la inversión, la inversión con empleo que anhelamos.

También debe quedar claro que el trabajo decente y los derechos laborales sólo pueden existir en la medida en que exista el empleo productivo, y ello requiere la implementación de enfoques y políticas que alienen la generación de empresas y su sustentabilidad, así como el claro respeto del derecho a la propiedad y la libre iniciativa. Atendiendo a los temas que afectan al mundo real del trabajo la OIT aportará, seguirá aportando, un mayor valor agregado para el mundo que viene.

Las relaciones entre la Organización y otras organizaciones internacionales serán más claras en la medida en que precisemos y nos limitemos a nuestro mandato. Debemos participar, eso sí, en el amplio debate del desarrollo, ofreciendo respuestas efectivas fundadas en nuestras realidades, en las realidades nacionales, y contribuyendo así al logro de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio relativos a la reducción de la pobreza, sin olvidar el importante papel que desempeñan las empresas en la sociedad.

Los resultados de la reforma de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo examinada por el Consejo de Administración son cruciales para reafirmar la relevancia de la Organización. Debemos dejar de lado las confrontaciones ideológicas y preguntarnos con toda sinceridad si nuestras actuales estructuras de gobernanza contribuyen o no a encauzar a la OIT por el camino deseado. Para ello hemos iniciado a nivel tripartito un diálogo sobre estos temas, pero es necesario no dejar pasar esta oportunidad para que de forma creativa exploremos nuevas maneras de fortalecer el gobierno de la OIT y, por tanto, hacer a la misma más eficiente y más responsable en sus acciones.

Antes de terminar quisiéramos realizar un breve comentario sobre el Informe del Director General relativo a la situación de los trabajadores en los territorios árabes ocupados. Compartimos la preocupación del Director General y, tal como lo hemos hecho en el Consejo de Administración, exhortamos una vez más a los donantes a que apoyen las actividades de cooperación técnica y muy especialmente hacemos un llamamiento a los nuevos gobiernos de Israel y de la Autoridad Palestina para que avancen en beneficio de todos los pueblos hacia la resolución del conflicto. Por nuestra parte, los interlocutores sociales estamos preparados para apoyar toda iniciativa a este respecto.

Finalmente, seguimos convencidos de que el principal objetivo es fortalecer a la OIT en los años venideros, y dicho objetivo sólo será logrado en la medida en que trabajemos conjuntamente trabajadores, empleadores y gobiernos, hacia las metas comunes que nos fijemos y, para ello, no dudamos de que hemos de contar con el decidido apoyo de la Oficina, reforzando, como el Director General ha expresado hoy, el papel de los actores sociales. Ese es nuestro desafío, ese es nuestro compromiso.

Muchas gracias.

Mr. TROTMAN (*Worker, Barbados*)

The word is out, but the news is not good. If we did not know before we now have the finding that: "Current patterns of growth are not generating

enough decent jobs to meet the growth in the global labour force and the need to reduce current levels of unemployment and working poverty.” This is the summary of our Director-General in his analysis of the changing patterns in the world of work, which the Workers’ group commends as an excellent probe into these issues related to the world of work, which may easily spell the difference between national and international growth, development and stability on the one hand, and decline, division and deprivation on the other.

The Report could easily be read and put aside as being merely a document to start this year’s debate. In our view, that would be a major mistake. We believe that it has value well beyond the here and now. Our Workers’ colleagues do not see it as a discussion item for this Conference alone, we see it as a reference text for workers’ organizations all over the world in their strategizing about their future. And we make bold to say, equally candidly, that employers’ organizations and national governments will find it equally useful.

We do not wish to convey the impression that we are in agreement with everything in the Director-General’s Report, quite the contrary. But it is a sober and a sobering analysis, which should permit each of us to locate our country or our enterprise or industry and to reflect on how we may start a useful strategy to renew, refocus or simply to reinforce. The world could do with other reports like this one.

Regrettably, we are limited in the scope of our response and will be able to touch only a limited number of issues, not the least of which is the acceptance that a driver of change in the world of work should be greater reliance on markets and a correspondingly reduced role for the State. Some may believe this, but for us this remains a fallacy, a myth perpetuated by those who would relieve us not only of our proverbial cloak, but of our coat also. It is the basis for the crisis the world finds itself in regarding growth without development and employment. The State must reassert itself if we will avert this crisis.

On the positive side we should note that the Report draws our attention to the extent of poverty among rural workers, the continuing large shift out of agriculture, the low productivity levels that are becoming graver every year, the low earnings in jobs in the informal sector, the deprivations associated with those earnings and the resulting crisis in international labour migration. These are all labour problems which go to the heart of our global strategy for poverty eradication and of the ILO’s decent work country programmes.

It is, however, evident that we do not fully understand the true extent of the problems which cause women and men to uproot themselves from the villages of their ancestral homelands and to brave the unknown in search of “decent work.” What we do know is that it is not for the purpose of viewing the historic or cultural sites of their destination countries. The Report is right to bring this matter so vividly before us and to challenge us, all of us, to recognize that it is a global problem that will only be solved globally.

Another very interesting issue raised by the Director-General is the matter of global production systems and the culture they are bringing to the world of work. Among the many things which one may address here, we must treat the matter of corporate social responsibility. The Director-General’s Report

properly points out that these CSRs, as we call them, embrace a wide variety of initiatives, including companies’ codes of conduct intended to guide managers’ behaviour on employment issues.

These initiatives are generally well intentioned and, where they are well intentioned, are to be commended. The Report, however, stops short of the required full treatment. It fails to say that these CSRs are frequently unilaterally determined for the express purpose of avoiding the collective bargaining exercise and full recognition of the fundamental principles and rights at work, as detailed by the ILO. Where we can have CSRs pursued and arrived at by consultations with workers’ representatives, and faithfully adhering to the principles covered by our ILO Conventions as their minimal point of departure, then our group may continue to support them.

The ILO’s task ought to be to examine these CSRs and to provide information to the Governing Body of their text and their import, as well as to guide where necessary regarding how they could be made compatible with our global standards.

We are pleased to see that the Report has dealt with one of the most critical matters facing the world of work, that is the informal sector. Quite clearly, more work has got to be done, but the Report recognizes that organization has to be brought to the sector. Our group knows that workers’ organizations have to enfold these workers within our ranks and governments have to supply the necessary infrastructure, including storehouses for products, roads for transport, equipment and machinery, preferably on a cooperative basis, basic education, vocational training and professional advice. The Director-General is absolutely correct where he asserts, and I quote: “breaking out of informality onto a developmental trajectory in which increased private and public sector investment feeds into the creation of decent work opportunities is the single biggest challenge for labour market governance worldwide”.

I have not finished but I have to close. And I have to close by taking note of the advice given by the Report to accept, nurture and utilize the institution of social dialogue as a more healthy, productive and a sustainable form of labour market interaction. My group believes that this Report should be carried forward for further study and the distillation of action programmes by the Governing Body.

Sr. ANDRADE LARA (*Ministro del Trabajo y Previsión Social, Chile*)

El Gobierno de la Presidente Michelle Bachelet se ha propuesto una agenda social ambiciosa que pone al centro dos objetivos muy consistentes con las metas impulsadas por la Organización Internacional del Trabajo. Por un lado el fortalecimiento de un gran sistema de protección social que acompaña a chilenos y chilenas desde sus inicios hasta su término, y por otro lado, la decidida promoción del trabajo decente.

Uno de nuestros logros más recientes es la aprobación en el Congreso Nacional de la ley que regula la subcontratación y el suministro de trabajadores, de modo de asegurar la protección de los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo de más de un millón y medio de personas que se desenvuelven bajo esas modalidades y, además, eliminar las odiosas discriminaciones entre trabajadores de primera, segunda y tercera categoría. Se trata sin duda de un

avance en nuestro proceso de consolidación democrática expresado en el plano laboral.

Con ello honramos los compromisos contraídos en el seno de esta organización y también el compromiso de noviembre de 2005 en la Cumbre de las Américas, que reafirmó el trabajo decente como principal estrategia en materia de desarrollo para nuestros países, lo que hace posible conciliar dinamismo económico con protección social, aumentos de productividad y gobernabilidad social y política.

Ahora bien, no pretendo entregar en esta intervención una imagen autocomplaciente de nuestro país, pues tenemos conciencia de que en algunos planos tenemos logros importantes pero también rezagos que nos preocupan. Así por ejemplo, la propia Memoria del Director General da cuenta de los significativos avances logrados por Chile en lo que respecta a la erradicación del trabajo infantil, lo cual ha implicado un trabajo multisectorial que incluyó la suscripción de convenios internacionales sobre la materia, un esfuerzo complementario vía la promulgación de varias leyes de protección de niños, niñas y adolescentes, y la elaboración y aplicación de políticas públicas focalizadas. Sin embargo, la práctica del trabajo infantil aún existe en nuestro país debido en parte, como en muchos otros, a la persistencia de una pobreza que hemos ido reduciendo fuertemente durante los gobiernos democráticos pero que no ha desaparecido del todo.

Por otro lado, tenemos desafíos pendientes en el plano de la ratificación de los convenios más importantes en materia de seguridad y salud en el trabajo, aunque dimos un paso significativo con la nueva ley de subcontratación, al establecer la faena como eje central de la responsabilidad en esta área y establecer que la empresa principal es la que debe diseñar y aplicar una política de gestión de seguridad en faenas que establezca condiciones seguras para todas y todos los trabajadores que en ella laboran, sean propios o externos, dado que los riesgos no diferencian entre unos y otros.

Con puntos altos y puntos bajos, entonces, pienso que podemos afirmar honestamente que, en lo sustantivo, nuestro país avanza en los objetivos comunes que compartimos con esta honorable asamblea. Para ello tenemos como referencias vivas y plenas de sentido los propios acuerdos de las instancias tripartitas de la OIT y nuestro programa de gobierno.

Tal como les explicara hace un momento, la creación de un gran Sistema de Protección Social es uno de los objetivos estratégicos de nuestro Gobierno, porque entendemos que la inclusión social y la protección social son elementos consustanciales a la democracia. Sólo si somos capaces de ofrecer un conjunto de garantías de mínimos sociales en salud, educación, previsión social y en la esfera laboral que les permitan acceder a una calidad de vida digna, tendremos ciudadanos identificados con la democracia y dispuestos a defenderla.

En definitiva, para que el ciudadano reconozca como propio el sistema social que lo cobija, éste deber ser capaz, a su vez, de reconocerlo en su dignidad y en un mínimo de derechos más allá de los clásicos derechos civiles y políticos.

Por este camino estamos avanzando, sabiendo que no hay atajos en la ruta hacia el desarrollo, pero sí los frutos que entrega —recordando a nuestro poeta Pablo Neruda— una *ardiente paciencia*, lo que implica legitimidad y seriedad en las políticas públicas, sustentabilidad financiera de los esfuerzos de la

política y un efectivo diálogo social para hacer viables las reformas.

Finalmente, no puedo dejar de mencionar los grandes esfuerzos que estamos haciendo en pro de la equidad de género en nuestro país en todos los ámbitos y con un énfasis especial en materia laboral. Desde ya, el signo más fuerte que estamos dando al respecto es contar con la primera mujer Presidenta de la República en nuestro país y con el primer gabinete paritario de América Latina. A ello se agrega una política de empleo con un fuerte acento pro mujer y pro jóvenes. Y una serie de medidas tendientes a facilitar la incorporación de la mujer al mercado de trabajo y a evitar todo tipo de discriminación, ya sea en materia salarial u otras. Todo ello tiene un fuerte significado cultural en un continente como el nuestro, tan proclive al machismo. Constituye, sin duda, un signo de esperanza.

Original Russian: Ms. MASLAROVA (Minister of Labour and Social Policy, Bulgaria)

On the item concerning the Director-General's Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, I would like briefly to describe our position.

The Report quite correctly underscores the need to change established working patterns and also makes us think about how best to reconcile the process of work with the rapidly changing environment in which work is done. The various trends and phenomena that can be observed in different parts of the world today are described in detail in the Report.

From the viewpoint of my country, problems relating to changing established patterns of work have been aggravated by problems encountered as part of the difficult and rather lengthy transition period that we have been going through as we move to a system of democracy and market economy. During that period, to a significant extent we had to make changes, in some cases radical changes, to our national labour legislation, to our social security system, and to the way in which we conduct social dialogue in the country. We have had to make all of these changes as part of an overall reform of our economy and, as we all know, the social sphere depends directly on the state of the economy.

In such circumstances, then, one always runs up against the same kind of question: what should the main objective of policy be in areas such as employment, social security and labour market regulation? Should it be to enhance economic competitiveness, or to uphold the principles that will make it possible to create a cohesive society? This is a question that we all have to answer.

There is a lot of evidence today supporting the conclusion reached in the Report that the latest technological developments in the world require new and ever-expanding knowledge bases. The very process of economic and technological change means that we constantly have to be expanding our knowledge and skills, and that is true for both workers and employers.

As an example of some positive practice in this area, I would like to refer to the fact that we in Bulgaria have adopted a national strategy on ongoing vocational training for the period 2005-15. The purpose of this strategy is to ensure that we can undertake further far-reaching reform in the area of vocational training and education by creating the conceptual and methodological framework required if such training is to be successful.

I would also like to note the need to change the way in which we organize employment in a way that does not have an adverse effect on stable labour relations. Greater use of part-time work and flexible working time arrangements creates fresh opportunities for employers, who can make more rational use of labour, and, for workers, who will be able to reconcile their personal and professional lives more successfully.

We must pay particular attention in all of this to the important role of the ILO's international standards system. We continue actively to pursue an active policy of ratifying ILO standards, and we seek to ensure that international standards that have already been ratified are actually implemented in Bulgaria. In doing this, we cooperate actively with the ILO, which is helping us to improve our labour and social legislation. This is particularly important to us on the eve of Bulgaria's accession to the European Union.

Reform in our education and vocational training systems is particularly important as, indeed, is reform of our social security system and social support in general. We are also trying to develop a clearer definition of the poorest groups in our society, and endeavouring to help them out of the situation of marginalization.

All this is just part of the very difficult and far-reaching changes we have lived through in Bulgaria. In undertaking these reforms we have had to use a lot of our national resources, but now I am happy to say, and indeed I can say with absolute certainty, that all of these reforms are now beginning to bring their welcome results to people living in Bulgaria.

Mr. ALKA'ABI (*Minister of Labour, United Arab Emirates, speaking on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs of the Gulf Cooperation Council States*)

The agenda of the Conference contains a large number of items of vital importance, such as the employment relationship, the promotional framework for occupational safety and health, the role of the ILO in technical cooperation, as well as other issues linked to the activities and programmes of the ILO. We are sure that the Conference will have a positive outcome which will strengthen the efforts made to promote the Organization's laudable objectives in the fields of development, progress and decent work.

The policies of the members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf are based on an approach consisting of constant openness toward the international community and cooperation with friendly countries and international specialized organizations and agencies. Thus, I am happy to announce that the Ministers of Labour of the Gulf Cooperation Council States participated in the Third Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia, held in Bali, Indonesia, in September 2005 and organized in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The participation of the Council States in this conference in their role as countries of destination was particularly useful and positive, our point of view being well-received by the Asian countries of origin and leading to specific results, the most important of which being the replacement of the term "migrant workers" with that of "temporary migrant

workers". We hope that this term will be employed in ILO documents.

It is important for us to state in this international forum that the workers welcomed by the Council States are received on a temporary basis and not as migrant workers. The workers do not leave their countries with the aim of emigrating and settling in these States. They come, rather, with temporary work contracts for specific tasks, upon completion of which they return to their countries of origin, complying with the mechanisms and procedures established in line with the rules in force in the countries of origin and in the countries of destination. Such a process can only be beneficial for the economies of the two parties.

In light of this, we wish to stress the following points.

- (1) The important role played by the workers entering the Council States in economic development and infrastructure construction projects; a role for which we hold these workers in the utmost esteem. Our States are also proud to contribute to the economic development of the friendly countries from which such workers originate, as well as in the development of their human resources through the provision of employment and training in the Council States, without forgetting the considerable constraint-free transfers of savings which may be carried out by these workers.
- (2) The concern of the Council States to guarantee that workers' rights are respected and that they are recruited without discrimination and without distinction with respect to race, nationality, religious beliefs and cultural traditions, since the laws applied in our countries are in line with international labour standards.
- (3) The need for countries of origin to understand the national objectives that Council States adopt to ensure that their citizens have work opportunities, to operate settling-in programmes, to find solutions for unemployment and to encourage the citizens to fit into the job market.
- (4) The right of Council States to apply their national legislation, to protect their national and cultural identity, to establish the structures required to prevent illegal work, illegal entry and workers vanishing from the workplace and other illegal practices, which are against the current regulations.
- (5) Finally, we would like to stress the importance of proceeding in a completely transparent manner, with dialogue and consultations between the countries of origin and the countries of destination regarding any problem that arises. This would strengthen common interests and make these countries more able to handle and to find a solution to all common interests.

We have been notified of the efforts made by the Organization within the framework of technical cooperation to benefit Palestinian workers and those in the occupied Arab territories. We would like to thank the Organization for its efforts and we call for extra steps to be taken to support the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection and to promote the development of capacities and social dialogue to rebuild these territories.

We have learnt that Dr Taleb Rifai, director of the ILO Regional Office for the Arab States, has resigned. We would like to thank him for his work while in office for the member States and the social partners. We wish him every success in his future undertakings. Finally, we ask the Director General to appoint a new director as soon as possible.

We would also like to take this opportunity to ask that the regional offices connected with the activities of Arab countries have more support and that Arabic is used more extensively in all the Organization's activities.

Original Russian: Mr. ODONCHIMED (Minister for Social Welfare and Labour, Mongolia)

The Government of Mongolia fully supports the agenda of this 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. The Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, submitted by the Director-General, provides a clear picture of the effective abolition of child labour.

Our Government is now really looking forward to supporting all delegations at the Conference in unanimously adopting the proposed Convention on the promotional framework for occupational safety and health. The Government of Mongolia has adopted, and is implementing, a national programme on occupational safety and health (OSH) with some success, but there is a need to strengthen the national inspection system and to foster a preventative occupational safety and health culture. An instrument such as the proposed Convention will greatly help in this, and we support the initiative.

The Government of Mongolia has also adopted a national programme on improving OSH and the working environment, based on demands to increase public awareness of occupational safety and health issues. This is very important, as we seek also to intensify our Government's efforts and find new ways of implementing an OSH strategy and ILO instruments. The programme in question aims to establish a prevention culture for OSH, to reduce the incidence of industrial accidents and occupational diseases, provide a suitable workplace environment for all, improve the enforcement of OSH legislation, enhance social dialogue, and develop and promote an integrated occupational safety and health information network.

As a result of all of these activities, the OSH management system proposed by the ILO in 2001 should now be implemented by Mongolian and other organizations. Our Government focuses particular attention on OSH, undertaking a comprehensive policy and activities intended to guarantee work free from injury or accident and to provide a safe working environment. The Government of Mongolia has implemented a national programme on OSH and on improving working conditions in two phases. The main outcomes of this programme are: the development of legislation in this area; the establishment of a management and monitoring system; and the improvement of attention to OSH issues by entities and organizations. We fully intend to bring our law and regulations into line with ILO standards in this regard. These activities will be implemented thanks to the active participation of our Government, as well as its agencies and workers' and employers' organizations. Other NGOs will also be involved in the process.

In February 2005, the Parliament of Mongolia ratified the ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). We have started to revise national laws and regulations to comply with those Conventions. I am proud to say that Mongolia has now ratified all the core Conventions of the ILO.

Within the framework of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up, and in order to ensure proper application of all of the Conventions, the ILO recently organized a seminar in Mongolia. This provided a greater opportunity for us to gain a better understanding of forced labour, and indeed this also applied to other countries of the subregion. It also encouraged national initiatives as well as the exchange of experiences and information.

We believe that ILO technical assistance will play a vital role in ensuring implementation of policies in this area. The Government of Mongolia therefore supports the idea of this Conference holding a general discussion on the role of the ILO in technical cooperation. Mongolia has been working very actively with the ILO in conducting needs-based research by providing policy advice and making recommendations to the Government and social partners.

We have also been conducting training activities aimed at capacity building as well as holding workshops and seminars. I would like to express my particular thanks to the ILO Beijing and Bangkok offices.

Original Russian: Mr. ALAKBAROV (Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Azerbaijan)

Allow me to begin by expressing my thanks to Mr. Juan Somavia for the Report that he has submitted to us. Today's assembly once again underscores the link between fundamental ILO declarations and the basic principles of social development that are adhered to by the member states of this authoritative international organization. The Republic of Azerbaijan, which is endeavouring to modernize its social policy, gives effect to ILO initiatives in this area directly through its concrete achievements in the social sphere. The main objective of the reforms undertaken in the Republic of Azerbaijan is to raise the standard of living. Employment growth and social policy in general are key to achieving these objectives, not only in the context of social protection, but also as the basis for achieving effective economic growth.

Providing decent work, raising the standard of living and achieving social development have become key policy objectives. This is reflected in a number of Presidential Decrees and in state programmes aimed at poverty reduction and promoting regional social and economic development, as well as putting in place a mechanism to provide targeted social assistance population growth and the implementation of an employment strategy. The priority given to youth employment in the Republic of Azerbaijan has meant that the ILO has included it in the top ten countries in regard to tackling youth unemployment.

The fact that Azerbaijan has ratified 55 ILO Conventions, including all eight core Conventions, as well as the European Social Charter, is conducive to further promoting social development in our country.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to the ILO for its assessment of the social change we have achieved and for its support to Azerbaijan in implementing our employment strategy and in developing an occupational safety and health system, and its advice in eliminating the worst forms of child labour and developing the role of the social partners in resolving social problems.

With the aim of providing decent work, our country is in the process of building market economy institutions as a necessary prerequisite for liberalization in regard to employment and remuneration. Steady macroeconomic growth is vital to this process.

According to the International Monetary Fund, in 2005 Azerbaijan achieved the highest rate of economic growth in the world. According to an assessment by foreign experts, we can expect similar trends in our GDP in the near future. In the year 2005 alone, monetary incomes increased by 27 per cent, wages went up by 22 per cent and real incomes by 17 per cent. In the past two years more than 350,000 jobs were created in the country.

Social development will be further boosted by the implementation of our oil strategy, the opening of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, the construction of the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars transport link, the effective use of non-oil resources and further economic integration.

The Director-General's Report, *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, as well as the strategic objectives of this Organization, once again lay emphasis on the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all solution for social problems in the world today that would suit every country. Today we can say with increasing certainty that success in social reform is determined by the choice of national priorities.

At the national level, we see decent work and addressing employment issues as part of the general context of development issues, based on the interrelationship between macroeconomic policy and labour market policy. Employment needs to be seen from the perspective of providing decent work in the context of achieving productive employment, growth in stable and good-quality jobs, reform of the system of remuneration and education, and the provision of effective means of training the unemployed and ensuring occupational safety and health. These principles also shaped our youth employment objectives. Particular importance is attached to informal employment issues, entrepreneurship development and addressing child labour. I must point out that increasing attention is given to the gender dimensions of development and social dialogue when addressing social problems in our country.

I hope these orientations will also be reflected in programmes for further cooperation between Azerbaijan and the ILO, as well as other international structures and donors interested in achieving the abovementioned objectives at the country level.

At the same time I would like to draw your attention to the fact that security of societies plays an increasingly determinant role in the further development of social rights. I would draw your attention to the fact that unauthorized armed conflicts and the threat of terrorism hinder the social progress, not only of individual countries, but also of the international community as a whole. Thus, the problems faced by Azerbaijan in its social development during economic transition have been compounded by the Armenian occupation of 20 per cent of Azerbai-

jani territory and the presence of over a million refugees and displaced persons.

All of the above, in my view, calls for greater efforts on the part of the international community to solve the problems that make it difficult to achieve many of the ILO's strategic objectives. I would also like to express our empathy with the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories as described in the Report of the Director-General.

Once again I would like to extend my thanks for organizing this Conference and emphasize that the achievement of decent and productive employment calls for long-term changes and commitment. This meeting provides new opportunities to implement these strategies and resolve social problems.

I wish all the participants confidence in meeting the above objectives in the name of social progress.

M. NKILI (*Ministre du Travail et de la Sécurité sociale, Cameroun*)

Des trois rapports présentés par le Directeur général à la Conférence internationale du Travail, celui relatif à *La fin du travail des enfants: un objectif à notre portée* a particulièrement retenu notre attention.

Comme plan d'action, vous proposez trois actions majeures: le renforcement de l'action de l'IPEC, l'abolition du travail des enfants, la mobilisation partenariale contre le travail des enfants.

S'agissant du renforcement de l'action de l'IPEC, il importe de vous dire que le Cameroun est en phase avec vous. Nous avons accueilli le projet LUTRENA en 2002 et le projet WACAP en 2004. Dans ce cadre et dès le 22 octobre 2004, nous avons signé un protocole d'accord avec le bureau sous-régional de l'OIT à Yaoundé portant sur la participation de mon pays au programme IPEC. Le bilan est plutôt flatteur: 5 000 enfants identifiés dans des exploitations agricoles, dont près de 1 100 réinsérés dans des écoles de formation, soit 20 pour cent seulement. Plus de 70 pour cent restent encore abandonnés.

Plus grave, le financement du programme ne semble plus assuré, au point que l'avenir de ces enfants est donc incertain. C'est le lieu pour moi de lancer un appel pressant aux donateurs de l'OIT pour aider le Cameroun à donner espoir à cette frange fragile de notre population.

Relativement au renforcement des mesures destinées à l'abolition du travail des enfants, l'engagement du Cameroun est total. Aux dispositions réglementaires prises dès 1969 se sont ajoutées des actions fortes: la loi de 1992 portant Code du travail, la ratification des conventions n^{os} 138 et 182 de l'OIT, la toute récente loi de décembre 2005 contre le trafic et le travail des enfants. La lutte sur le terrain juridique est donc inébranlable.

S'agissant enfin du renforcement des partenariats, nous affirmons ici que la communauté nationale est engagée dans la lutte contre le travail des enfants: parlementaires, élus locaux, société civile, toutes les couches actives sont en mouvement.

Le Chef de l'Etat, son Excellence Paul Biya, a fait de son septennat actuel un moment fort de la lutte contre la précarité et la pauvreté. L'avenir de la jeunesse le préoccupe au plus haut point. La lutte contre le chômage est totale. Après la consultation nationale de novembre 2005, un vaste programme pour l'emploi des jeunes est en cours de finalisation.

Au total, je réaffirme du haut de cette tribune que le Cameroun est avec le Directeur général et que nous le soutenons.

Sr. MARTÍNEZ MOLINA (*trabajador, Chile*)

Señor Presidente de la 95.^a Conferencia de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo.

Señor Director General don Juan Somavia.

Distinguidas delegaciones de los países hermanos, reciban ustedes un saludo cordial de los trabajadores de Chile.

La época está marcada por rápidas transformaciones que afectan al mundo del trabajo, lo que ha significado abandono en el plano social, generando exclusión y alarmantes niveles de pobreza en el mundo y en particular en América Latina.

Millones de hombres y mujeres luchan por sobrevivir en un mundo profundamente desigual, donde está en juego la dignidad del trabajo y el ejercicio de los derechos más elementales, tanto en el plano individual como colectivo.

Hasta hoy los cambios en la organización del trabajo han tenido como objetivo primordial el bajar costos de mano de obra para alcanzar mayores niveles de competitividad, aunque ello signifique un atropello de los principios y derechos fundamentales del trabajo.

Desde la formulación del trabajo decente como un objetivo estratégico, se aprecia un consenso y un respaldo a tal iniciativa de muchos gobiernos y algunos empleadores, aunque a veces es más en el discurso que en la práctica.

A muchos aún les cuesta entender que avanzar en el objetivo del trabajo decente significa una apuesta a largo plazo, una mayor oportunidad para producir más y mejor y una profunda legitimidad democrática.

Las relaciones de trabajo son un aspecto fundamental para el objetivo del trabajo decente y la aplicación de las normas internacionales, pero la forma que ha tomado esta relación laboral se contrapone con tal objetivo.

La instalación de un sinnúmero de intermediarios entre el capital y el trabajo hace difícil saber quién es el verdadero empleador y responsable de los derechos laborales, previsionales y sindicales; generando precariedad en el empleo y ausencia de protección social.

Cuando el verdadero empleador se oculta en una diversidad de razones sociales o múltiples subterfugios, resulta imposible el ejercicio de los derechos fundamentales del trabajo.

La fragmentación de la empresa, fragmenta el empleo y también fragmenta la organización sindical, en un claro afán de debilitamiento de la contraparte.

La instalación de lo que se ha llamado la “externalización” ha traído más y nuevas dificultades, causando efectos negativos para los trabajadores y sus familias.

Por más de tres décadas, se fue instalando en mi país, por la vía de los hechos, una forma de subcontratación sin regulación, hasta convertirse en un fenómeno de desprotección y pérdida de derechos laborales y sindicales.

En Chile, tanto en el sector privado como público y en particular en el sector municipal se ha pretendido aprobar una ley, que niega a los funcionarios municipales el derecho a la negociación colectiva y entrega a los alcaldes, sus empleadores, excesivas atribuciones para el manejo de las relaciones labora-

les. A nuestro juicio esto vulnera los Convenios internacionales de la OIT núms. 87, 98 y 151 y los fallos emitidos por la Comisión de Expertos en Aplicación de Convenios y Recomendaciones de la OIT.

Recientemente el Gobierno de Chile tomó la iniciativa de legislar, aprobando una ley de subcontratación que es un paso fundamental en la consecución del objetivo del trabajo decente. Esperamos seguir por este camino para eliminar las prácticas autoritarias y la falta de derechos en las relaciones laborales.

En nuestro país, el 62 por ciento de los accidentes del trabajo con consecuencias graves ocurren en el llamado sector terciario, lo mismo sucede con las enfermedades profesionales.

Esto no podía ser de otra forma, por cuanto las empresas que se desempeñan en el área del subcontrato no tienen presencia, ni injerencia en los lugares de trabajo.

Debemos desde la OIT ser más activos en promover la prevención y protección, incorporando al listado las nuevas enfermedades profesionales y acordar, al menos, un convenio sobre la seguridad y salud en el trabajo.

En la consecución de estos objetivos es que destacamos la importancia de fortalecer las inspecciones del trabajo como un instrumento que garantice el cumplimiento de las normativas legales de cada país; inspecciones del trabajo que actúen con políticas claras que fiscalicen y con atribuciones, con funcionarios capacitados y eficientes que cuenten con el respaldo de los gobiernos a sus acciones y a sus decisiones.

Original Arabic: Mr. GUIDER (*representative, Arab Labour Organization*)

First of all, please allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, as well as the Vice-Presidents, for being elected to conduct the work of this Conference at its 95th Session. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Juan Somavia, the Secretary-General, for the Report he submitted to the Conference and for the developments and achievements that have been witnessed by the International Labour Organization during his administration, which have impacted on the technical cooperation between the Arab Labour Organization and the International Labour Organization.

My intervention in this sitting will be very brief. It will be limited to one issue. We see in the Arab world that this issue has direct repercussions on the standards and principles of the International Labour Organization, in particular including freedom of association, labour standards, decent work, child labour, social protection, the right to decent work and the Declaration on Fundamental Rights and Principles, as well as all the Conventions relating to the activities of this Organization, and which deal with human rights.

I would like to begin first of all by saying that we live in a world that is characterized by being a civilized one in which human rights are applied in all fields – at least, are supposed to be applied in all fields. However, facts reflect a completely different picture. We in the Arab world feel bitterness, sadness and discontent because of the slogans we repeatedly hear in international circles at the United Nations and in all its specialized agencies.

Wherever we look we find economic and social exclusion, arbitrariness and unfairness of treatment,

killing and displacement, the suppression of any chance of enabling Arab workers in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Shabaa Farms to obtain stability, social peace and decent and dignified work.

Double standards in international establishments are a very dangerous phenomenon that require a serious stand by all honest and sincere people in the world. The fact of defending the land, the family, the community, honour and decent life – is that prohibited for Arabs and permitted for others?

Issues must be revealed as they are, clearly. How can we dream that we have got rid of the child labour phenomenon, that occupational safety and health will be achieved and that basic human rights will be preserved, while seeing in reality that such ambitions, derived from the principles drawn up by international labour standards, have become mere ink on paper, without any affect?

Economic blockades, military occupations, civil wars, division plans and conspiracies and the creation and implanting of all forms of disruption between Muslims and Christian Arabs are imposed on many of our Arab communities.

“Faith is for Allah and land is for everyone.” This is what we say, without any exploitation of one human being by another because of faith or race. Are we treated well by those who protect our rights, including the International Labour Organization or even this Organization of ours, or are they prejudiced in favour of the strong?

The Appendix to the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories put forward in this session is just an event that confirms partiality, whether in description, wording or transfer of facts. Perhaps what is more bitter and disturbing is the refusal of the ILO mission to the occupied territories to meet the Palestinian officials, including the Palestinian Minister of Labour.

Was this a mission of the International Labour Organization or a mission of the occupation, which refused to sit with the Palestinian Government, which is democratically elected?

Does democracy depend on moods? Is democracy genuine when its activities conform to the will of the sole occupying force? Is it not just the opposite if it contradicts public opinion and trends?

What is happening cannot be accepted by honest people in this world. The movement of history has always thought us that change comes regardless. We Arabs always say “no matter how high a bird flies and ascends, it always falls to earth.”

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Minister of Labour, South Africa*)

We have long observed that employment plays a critical role in the full realization of individuals and societies. Whilst employment can further social integration and social cohesion, it can also lead to exclusion by limiting access to jobs, by the provision of income too low to satisfy basic human and social needs, thus fermenting submission and marginalization. These are individuals who become rich in poverty — poverty dramatically illuminated by the scenes in which human dignity is crushed by the need simply to survive, as catalysed in the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta, the European Union’s only land border with Africa.

Statistics can be very cold and inhuman, but the stark horror of what they mean cannot be ignored. In sub-Saharan Africa about 47 to 52 per cent of the

population is estimated to be living beneath the poverty threshold. This indicates that Africa entered the 21st century as the world’s poorest, most indebted and most marginalized region, lagging behind in new technologies. In short, decent work deficits abound.

The Director-General’s Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, reflects that progress is painfully slow in creating decent work opportunities for all. And yet there is hope: despite the daunting statistics, we believe that the poverty challenge is not insurmountable. The ILO cannot afford to remain an uncommitted and disinterested spectator in a world in which, for many workers, life at work still presents serious deficit. It is with this acknowledgement that I welcome the Director-General’s Report on the changing patterns of work and the need for us to enlarge and deepen our knowledge. It is indeed true that we need to have a good understanding of how the world of work is changing and could be shaped to answer the worldwide popular demand for decent work.

One can go as far as arguing that this Report is mirrored within the South African labour market. The workplace in South Africa is being restructured under the impact of globalization and its own transition from authoritarianism to democracy. In fact, the most significant challenge facing the workplace has been the transition from a domestically oriented economy to a globally integrated one.

Work restructuring resulted in a labour market that is fragmented and a work order that is increasingly differentiated into different zones, which consist of core formal sector workers enjoying full time work and benefits, non-core formal sector workers who are employed in atypical forms of work, and those workers at the periphery who make a living through informal sector activities.

We remain heartened that employment and social protection have remained the backbone of ILO activity for Africa, and we appreciate the continuing support by the Office in advising constituencies in member States, along with the ambitious plans being implemented in Iraq. It is our belief that where there is hope, there is a way. The death of hope will be the demise of humankind. I believe the Decent Work Country Programmes, our main operational means of achieving the global Decent Work Agenda, usher in a new age of hope.

In concluding, let me take this opportunity to thank the Director-General for his Report, *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, which clearly describes the situation of those workers. We should remain critical of those deliberately blind to the facts staring them in the eye, that the rights of Palestinian workers and their families constitute one of the essential steps on the path towards socio-economic development, security, peace and enhanced freedom in the occupied Arab territories. We should emphasize that people can no longer intellectually shrug off the oppression, the cruelty, the injustice of the occupation as though it were a careless trifle. The truth is that the total unemployment rate amounts to an estimated 40 per cent of the labour force, and this should be a major concern to all of us. We nonetheless welcome the withdrawal of the Israeli presence in the Gaza Strip and the Agreement on Movement and Access of 15 November 2005, which has the potential to ease the situation of workers. One can also not overempha-

size the role played by social dialogue in ensuring that lasting peace and social dialogue are achieved.

It is very important for the capacities of social partners to be strengthened for them to be able to engage in dialogue and negotiate to achieve social dialogue and a lasting peace.

M. LARCHER (*ministre délégué à l'Emploi, au Travail et à l'Insertion professionnelle des jeunes, France*)

Depuis des années, l'Organisation internationale du Travail s'est pleinement mobilisée sous l'impulsion de son Directeur général, M. Somavia, autour de l'objectif commun de promotion du travail décent dans le monde.

L'an dernier, à cette même tribune, j'ai eu l'occasion de souligner, au nom de la France, l'acuité particulière que cet objectif revêtait dans la perspective du Sommet de suivi de la Déclaration du Millénaire des Nations Unies. Le document final du Sommet a témoigné de l'engagement des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement en faveur d'une mondialisation équitable et de l'emploi décent.

Cet engagement a constitué une étape déterminante. La très récente communication de la Commission européenne consacrée à la promotion du travail décent pour tous et le choix de ce thème pour la prochaine réunion de haut niveau de l'ECOSOC témoignent de la prise de conscience de son caractère central pour atteindre un développement réellement durable.

Comme le Directeur général le rappelle dans son rapport consacré aux changements dans le monde du travail, le cadre stratégique 2006-2009 engage notre Organisation à faire du travail décent un objectif fédérateur autour duquel s'articuleront ses futures activités. Cette démarche mérite notre entier soutien.

Dans ce cadre, le Bureau international du Travail devrait également contribuer à alimenter les réflexions développées par le Groupe de personnalités sur la cohérence des Nations Unies mis en place par Kofi Annan. Le BIT peut apporter sur ce sujet, par sa constitution tripartite et sa qualité opérationnelle, une véritable valeur ajoutée.

La nécessité, et je cite le rapport du Directeur général, «d'intégrer l'Agenda du travail décent dans les stratégies de réduction de la pauvreté et d'instaurer une mondialisation sans exclus» est au cœur de la mission de l'Organisation internationale du Travail. Pour atteindre cet objectif, la mise au point de méthodes d'évaluation doit être une priorité.

La coopération envisagée par la Commission européenne peut y contribuer et les actions envisagées doivent pouvoir être rapidement mises en œuvre. Jeudi dernier, au Conseil des ministres de l'Emploi de l'Union européenne, la France, par ma bouche, a fortement appuyé cet objectif de coopération de l'Europe avec le Bureau international du Travail. Par ailleurs, je partage également avec notre Directeur général, dans un contexte d'intensification de la concurrence internationale, l'intérêt, et je cite, «d'envisager un seuil minimum pour les normes d'emploi dans les systèmes de production mondiaux».

Cette année, la Conférence examine également d'autres questions cruciales. Le rapport global, consacré à la fin du travail des enfants, donne l'occasion de noter la baisse de ce fléau, mais les défis à relever sont encore nombreux et il est essen-

tiel que l'ensemble des agences concernées des Nations Unies y travaillent de manière convergente.

La France soutient depuis de nombreuses années le programme IPEC consacré à cet objectif; nous maintiendrons notre appui. Ce sera notamment un des axes de coopération retenu dans le cadre du nouveau partenariat pluriannuel conclu entre la France et le Bureau international du Travail que je vais signer cet après-midi même avec notre Directeur général, et répondre ainsi aux préoccupations exprimées il y a quelques minutes par notre collègue du Cameroun.

Dans ce sens, je me félicite que la discussion générale soit, cette année, axée sur le rôle du BIT en matière de coopération technique. Nous devons également approfondir notre réflexion sur la recherche des moyens permettant de garantir le fonctionnement régulier du Bureau international du Travail pour des actions financées par les contributions extrabudgétaires.

Je voudrais enfin souligner l'enjeu du cadre promotionnel pour la sécurité et la santé au travail, à double titre: avant tout, parce que la protection contre les risques professionnels est un droit humain vital, ensuite, parce qu'il s'agit de la première concrétisation de l'approche intégrée qui combine les normes et d'autres formes d'action dans une vision stratégique. En France, depuis 2005, nous mettons concrètement en œuvre cette approche globale avec le plan Santé au travail qui se poursuivra pendant cinq années autour, notamment, du développement des connaissances scientifiques, du renforcement des contrôles de l'inspection du travail, de l'amélioration de la gouvernance et, en même temps, en assurant la promotion d'une culture de prévention dans les entreprises.

La France a toujours soutenu et soutient l'objectif d'un cadre promotionnel international pour la sécurité et la santé au travail; elle souhaite que se bâtisse un socle conventionnel autour de la convention (n° 155) sur la sécurité et la santé des travailleurs, 1981, et de la recommandation (n° 164) sur la sécurité et la santé des travailleurs, 1981, pour servir de point d'appui de politiques nationales. Cette avancée est nécessaire.

Je souhaite aussi que ce futur cadre promotionnel soit la source d'une nouvelle dynamique. Que l'Organisation s'inspire de l'exemple de la Conférence internationale maritime, dont la conclusion en février nous a montré qu'il était possible de revisiter un grand nombre de normes, dans une logique de progrès social, pour les rendre plus effectives et impliquer directement les partenaires du tripartisme dans leur application.

Enfin, au-delà de ces débats sur la nature des instruments, des questions se posent à tous les pays, y compris les plus développés. C'est en particulier le cas de l'amiante. La France plaide fortement pour que s'engage, au sein même de l'OIT, un débat approfondi en vue de l'élimination rapide, à l'échelle mondiale, de l'usage de ce matériau, responsable d'une catastrophe sanitaire majeure. En suivant la décision unanime de l'Union européenne, il nous faut bannir, je dis bien bannir au plan mondial, l'amiante.

La France plaide également pour que l'Organisation contribue à renforcer la protection des travailleurs qui, pendant des décennies encore, resteront confrontés à l'amianté demeuré en place dans les équipements les plus divers.

Dans le monde ouvert qui est le nôtre, le travail doit être source de sécurité et d'épanouissement pour les travailleurs comme pour les familles, mais cet objectif suppose d'intégrer une dimension sociale forte à l'économie. L'OIT a été créée pour la promouvoir. Jamais sa mission n'a été aussi nécessaire.

Sr. BETANCOURT (*empleador, Rep. Bolivariana de Venezuela*)

Señor Presidente, ante todo un saludo al Director General por los documentos que nos ha presentado. Aprovecho la oportunidad para extender un muy especial reconocimiento a la Organización Internacional de Empleadores.

Colegas y amigos del mundo, quienes hacemos vida empresarial privada en Venezuela estamos sujetos a mecanismos intervencionistas y adversos al libre mercado como la fijación unilateral de precios, la inamovilidad laboral y el Decreto de creación unilateral «solvencia laboral», el control cambiario, invasión de tierras, el exceso de discrecionalidad de importaciones por parte del sector público y el acoso a nuestros dirigentes gremiales, entre muchos otros. Todo esto presumimos, tiene su origen en la actitud y aptitud prejuiciada que algunos empleados públicos y dirigentes políticos del oficialismo han demostrado hacia la empresa privada.

En este contexto en el que están vulneradas las libertades económicas, la propiedad privada, la libre asociación, el estado de derecho, es realmente difícil para el empresario responder a las necesidades de la población. Sin embargo, seguimos confiando en nuestro país y superando obstáculos, pues nuestro compromiso es con Venezuela, con nuestra gente, con nuestro país.

Estamos convencidos de que la empresa privada en el mundo es la principal fuente generadora de empleo formal decente, socialmente influyente, moderno y productivo. Los empresarios somos importantísimos actores sociales en cualquier país y por ende somos protagonistas del desarrollo. De allí la relevancia de los entes gremiales que nos agrupan y la responsabilidad de asumir un gran compromiso social. Tenemos en nuestras manos la actividad productiva y de intercambio comercial independientemente de la corriente política que esté de turno, pues el compromiso nuestro no es propugnar el poder, es coparticipar en la toma de decisiones para atender lo que sabemos hacer: generar empleo productivo.

Es entonces fundamental que las agrupaciones sindicales y empresariales defendamos los valores que nos identifican: las libertades económicas, la libre competencia, es decir, empleo productivo decente y de libre elección en el marco de un ambiente democrático. Defendiendo estos principios, obtendremos además del trabajo sustentable y productivo generación de verdadera riqueza y valor agregado a nuestros recursos no renovables.

Los gobiernos definen y deciden las políticas a seguir, pero estas políticas oficiales deben ser el fiel de la balanza entre el rol que debe asumir el sector público y el sector privado, ya que es determinante para el progreso que cada uno sea más sólido, sin detrimento del otro.

Las fórmulas gubernamentales estatistas, centralistas, excluyentes y llenas de contenido ideológico dogmático ya se han ensayado y han fracasado en otros tiempos y en otras latitudes, pues toda empresa debe generar beneficios para sus propietarios y

empleados, para la comunidad y para sus consumidores, de lo contrario siempre exhibirá un balance negativo y dependerá de la fuerza del Estado o del gobierno para reponer su capital y mantenerla operativa.

Hemos expresado nuestra preocupación y además nuestra voluntad de establecer acuerdos de integración con políticas incluyentes del sector privado, pero desafortunadamente las decisiones de gobierno se toman generalmente sin tomar en consideración las opiniones, ideas y experiencias que pueden aportar los otros sectores.

Incluso hemos visto cómo Venezuela asume compromisos internacionales sin que tales iniciativas sean consecuencia de decisiones consensuadas entre y con los actores sociales.

Queremos dejar sentado que los empleadores o la empresa privada no somos los enemigos, pues generamos 8 de cada 10 empleos en Venezuela. Está claro que el enemigo a vencer es el desempleo que se traduce en empleo informal, en inseguridad y pobreza, flagelos que día a día crecen en nuestro país y otras latitudes del mundo.

Amigos del mundo, estamos justo a seis meses de las elecciones presidenciales en Venezuela. Ahora, todos los venezolanos tenemos en mi país la responsabilidad de velar por el edificio de la democracia para que se construya bien.

No hemos dejado ni dejaremos de luchar en defensa de nuestros principios esenciales.

Entonces, ¿qué hacer frente a este difícil contexto? Desde FEDECAMARAS hemos buscado el encuentro, el diálogo, el entendimiento. Hemos solicitado que se valore el diálogo social tripartito.

Amigos del mundo, en Venezuela vivimos tiempos difíciles, obstáculos que esperamos saber superar con creatividad dentro del marco legal que nos ofrecen la Constitución y las leyes de la República.

La injusticia social, la pobreza, reflejadas en el empleo infantil y la informalidad del empleo en general, tal como lo reflejó la Memoria del Director General, son caldo de cultivo para ensayos de movimientos políticos que no necesariamente obedecen a lo que aquí en la OIT profesamos. Y la política también se puede globalizar o regionalizar. Nosotros los actores sociales, empleadores y trabajadores libres no debemos dejar espacios para que nos manipulen. No nos dejemos desviar de nuestro rol principal como lo es combatir la pobreza con empleo productivo decente, socialmente incluyente y de libre elección.

Empleadores y trabajadores, es preciso que nos revisemos crítica y constructivamente, pues al fin y al cabo somos nosotros los verdaderos actores de la actividad económica productiva y nos corresponde fortalecer nuestros entes gremiales en pro de defender nuestros derechos y principios y hacer de nuestras empresas el verdadero sustento de la economía mundial generadora de riqueza y bienestar social.

Reciban el saludo de este representante de la tierra de gracia, donde esperamos poder atenderles cuando quieran visitarnos. Estoy seguro de que con el fortalecimiento de la solidaridad internacional de la OIT y del respeto al Convenio núm. 87 en nuestros países podemos legarle un mejor porvenir a nuestros ya golpeados pueblos latinoamericanos.

Original arabe: M. MANSOURI (Ministre de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle, Maroc)

Dans son rapport, le Directeur général a exposé les principales activités de l'OIT pendant le bien-

nium 2004-05, notamment en ce qui concerne l'activité normative, le renforcement des droits fondamentaux des travailleurs, l'éradication du travail des enfants, le travail décent pour les hommes et les femmes, la protection sociale et le renforcement du tripartisme et du dialogue social.

Le rapport global en vertu du suivi de la Déclaration de l'OIT relative aux principes et droits fondamentaux au travail a évoqué un sujet des plus importants, à savoir le travail des enfants. En effet, la proportion d'enfants qui travaillent dans le monde a enregistré une baisse, et notamment parmi ceux qui connaissent les pires formes de travail des enfants.

A cette occasion, j'aimerais souligner les efforts déployés par le gouvernement du Maroc dans le domaine du travail des enfants. En effet, nous avons pris de nombreuses mesures visant à protéger les enfants, en général, et les enfants au travail, plus particulièrement. Nos efforts ont été couronnés par la mise en place d'un plan national de protection de l'enfance qui s'inscrit dans l'Initiative nationale de développement humain lancée par sa Majesté le Roi Mohammed VI afin de trouver des solutions aux problèmes sociaux.

Si l'Organisation internationale du Travail accorde une attention particulière au principe du travail décent et à la réduction de la pauvreté dans le monde, cela ne pourra se réaliser qu'à travers l'affrontement des défis qui nous sont imposés par la globalisation.

En ce qui concerne le problème du travail non décent, il convient de rappeler que ce problème a des origines et des dimensions multiples, et plus particulièrement son rapport à la pauvreté et au travail forcé. Il est en outre très répandu dans de nombreux pays, et notamment dans les pays en développement. Lutter contre le travail non décent nécessite une réponse collective de la part de tous les partenaires sociaux, gouvernements, employeurs, organisations régionales et Organisation internationale du Travail, car la pauvreté et l'insuffisance des moyens matériels et des ressources humaines poussent parfois les pays à fermer l'œil sur l'expansion de ce travail non décent.

Partant de cela, le Royaume du Maroc s'emploie à promouvoir le travail décent, et ce notamment dans le secteur du textile et du prêt-à-porter qui est une des principales composantes du tissu socio-économique, et nous avons pour objectif d'assurer les conditions du travail décent dans tous les secteurs de la production ainsi que dans les politiques nationales de développement.

Le Royaume du Maroc, depuis la fin des années quatre-vingt-dix, s'emploie activement à l'édification d'une société moderne et démocratique, fondée sur le renforcement de la démocratie et le respect des droits de l'homme, des libertés individuelles et collectives, et des principes du dialogue social entre tous les partenaires sociaux. Ainsi, le Maroc a œuvré à la diffusion de la culture du dialogue qui est le cadre le plus propice à l'établissement d'un contrat social et de bases solides pour développer la productivité et permettre aux entreprises de relever les défis économiques imposés par les contraintes de la mondialisation et de la compétitivité. C'est également cette culture du dialogue qui permettra d'améliorer les conditions de travail et de faire régner la paix sociale dans les unités de la production.

Dans cette optique, le législateur marocain a procédé à l'institutionnalisation des mécanismes de

consultation et de négociation collective. Le dialogue ainsi établi a permis de discuter des divers dossiers économiques et sociaux, de l'emploi, des relations de travail et de la santé et la sécurité au travail.

Outre cette culture du dialogue, le Maroc a inscrit le problème des droits de l'homme dans les priorités du gouvernement. Depuis 1990, nous avons œuvré dans ce sens et beaucoup de résultats ont été enregistrés. De même, nous avons créé la Commission indépendante d'arbitrage visant à indemniser les victimes des violations commises dans le passé.

Afin d'élargir la protection sociale, à tous les citoyens, le gouvernement a créé un système d'assurance maladie obligatoire, et ce afin de promouvoir l'un des droits de l'homme les plus élémentaires, à savoir le droit à la santé.

Dans le domaine de l'emploi, il est important de signaler que ce sujet est l'une des préoccupations principales du gouvernement marocain. A cet égard, le Maroc a organisé cette année un Séminaire national pour l'emploi auquel ont participé tous les partenaires sociaux et qui a débouché sur plusieurs mesures pratiques visant à éliminer progressivement le chômage; les recommandations se sont centrées sur l'élaboration de plans de l'emploi pour les jeunes diplômés et pour le développement de l'esprit d'entreprise.

La coopération entre le Royaume du Maroc et le BIT a connu, avec l'aide de certains pays amis, un développement important et a débouché sur de nombreux projets dans différents domaines. Permettez-moi de citer à titre d'exemple la lutte contre le travail des enfants, l'amélioration des relations professionnelles et la promotion de la santé et la sécurité au travail. Le Maroc souhaite approfondir davantage cette coopération dans d'autres domaines et préparer des projets encore plus ambitieux relatifs au travail des femmes, à la relance de l'emploi et à l'amélioration de la protection sociale.

Tout en appréciant fortement les efforts de l'OIT visant à rapprocher le BIT des Etats Membres par le biais des équipes multidisciplinaires, nous souhaitons que ces équipes soient renforcées et dotées des moyens nécessaires afin qu'elles répondent au mieux au besoin des Etats Membres.

L'identité de l'OIT, ses principes, son expérience et sa nature tripartite, sont autant d'éléments qui la prédisposent à jouer un rôle central et pionnier dans un monde régi par l'hégémonie économique globalisée. Et c'est pourquoi notre Organisation doit poursuivre ses efforts afin de repérer les effets de ce phénomène et d'y remédier.

Ainsi, à partir des principes qui constituent la base de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, nous l'appelons à intervenir dans le cadre de ses compétences, afin d'atténuer les souffrances que connaît la région du Moyen-Orient. Nous lui demandons de fournir tout le soutien nécessaire à nos frères palestiniens et de déployer tous les efforts possibles afin d'arrêter les pratiques inhumaines dont sont victimes les travailleurs palestiniens et de mettre fin à la situation tragique qu'ils vivent.

Sr. HUAMÁN RIVERA (*trabajador, Perú*)

Quiero empezar destacando la importancia de las conclusiones adoptadas en la Decimosexta Reunión Regional Americana, llevada a cabo recientemente en la ciudad de Brasilia y, en especial, el deseo unánime manifestado por todos los asistentes de adoptar medidas efectivas para generar trabajo decente y superar la pobreza. Deseo ahora enfatizar que en

dicha reunión también concluimos que, si bien son indispensables los esfuerzos que cada país lleve a cabo a nivel interno para lograr estos objetivos, también se requiere de un contexto internacional favorable.

Ciertamente, andamos en la ruta de articular mecanismos efectivos para una gobernanza de la globalización que brinde condiciones ambientales adecuadas para el trabajo decente, pero el camino puede hacerse extremadamente largo si los grandes intereses comerciales, en consonancia con las políticas de algunos gobiernos, insisten en promover intercambios comerciales sin equidad y crecimiento económico sin derechos. Justamente, los tratados de libre comercio a puertas de celebrarse en el área andina, constituyen un claro ejemplo de cómo la promoción ciega del intercambio comercial puede mermar el objetivo de generar trabajo decente para todos.

Puedo contarles, por ejemplo, que el Gobierno y los empresarios peruanos, estimulados por las oportunidades que les abre la globalización, promueven y respaldan la suscripción de tratados de libre comercio quizás sin evaluar los efectos sociales que acarrearán y las responsabilidades que generan. Ni siquiera el compromiso y la responsabilidad básica que deben incorporar estos tratados, de dar cumplimiento efectivo de las normas laborales nacionales e internacionales, es materia de medidas efectivas que garanticen su aplicación y respeto irrestricto.

En efecto, los convenios de la OIT firmados por el Perú han sido y siguen siendo materia de observación por los órganos de control. Sólo en este año, la Comisión de Expertos en Aplicación de Convenios y Recomendaciones ha formulado múltiples observaciones al cumplimiento de los convenios internacionales, entre ellos, algunos fundamentales como los relativos al trabajo forzoso, a la libertad sindical y la protección del derecho de sindicación, y a la igualdad de remuneración. Como también sucede en el resto del mundo, en el Perú aún existe trabajo forzoso en la extracción de la madera, minas y otras actividades. Para el año 2005 se estimaba que uno de cada tres niños trabajaba, y la mayor parte en actividades calificadas como peores formas del trabajo infantil. Los despidos antisindicales se producen con frecuencia y el sindicalismo, por efecto de leyes y prácticas restrictivas, es reducido a la empresa y a la discusión del salario. Las reformas y políticas sociolaborales se definen sin participación sindical. ¿Son éstas acaso condiciones aceptables para ingresar en mercados internacionales? ¿Sólo es importante el precio del producto sin importar el tipo de empleo y los derechos de quienes los elaboran?

Con esto no queremos decir que existe una incompatibilidad natural entre la promoción del comercio internacional y el trabajo decente. Sólo queremos afirmar que resulta irresponsable la promoción de comercio internacional en países en los que no existe una voluntad decidida de los actores sociales por generar trabajo decente. Por ello, un pacto por el trabajo decente que comprometa en forma inmediata y con acciones concretas a empresarios, trabajadores y, sobre todo, a los gobiernos en la ejecución de los planes nacionales de trabajo decente debe ser una condición indispensable para la apertura comercial.

El apoyo técnico de la OIT en este itinerario es trascendental, pero también es indispensable reforzar el marco normativo internacional. Observamos

con suma preocupación que los esfuerzos desplegados por lograr un instrumento normativo que establezca criterios mínimos de protección para los trabajadores en régimen de subcontratación, y en especial para aquellos insertos en relaciones triangulares de trabajo, no vienen dando los resultados esperados. Con ello, los problemas de incertidumbre sobre la figura del empleador, la desprotección de los créditos laborales y otros seguirán afectando a los trabajadores en el mundo. Manifestamos nuestro deseo de que este tema siga siendo abordado en futuras reuniones.

Para nosotros, los trabajadores, en tanto se relegue a las grandes mayorías a aspirar únicamente a un futuro mejor sin enfrentar el enorme reto de transformar un presente de exclusión y desigualdad, el trabajo decente no pasará de ser otro componente más del acaso irrealizable sueño de la justicia social.

M. JURCA (*travailleur, Roumanie*)

C'est déjà une coutume bien établie d'examiner chaque année, aux réunions de notre Conférence, le rapport présenté par le Directeur général du Bureau international du Travail, et de constater encore une fois la valeur, la pertinence et l'humanisme des idées présentées.

Au nom des travailleurs roumains, je félicite le Directeur général et son équipe pour les documents présentés. Soyez rassurés que ces idées et principes continueront d'être pour nous un guide pour notre activité.

En même temps, je tiens à remercier le Bureau international du Travail, les bureaux de Budapest et de Bucarest pour le soutien et le guidage tout au long de la période écoulée depuis la Conférence précédente accordés à notre lutte pour promouvoir et soutenir dans la législation et la pratique roumaine les valeurs fondamentales de l'Organisation internationale du Travail contenues dans les conventions et recommandations. Nous sommes convaincus du fait que cette coopération continuera après l'admission de notre pays dans les structures européennes, où, ensemble, avec plus de 100 millions de travailleurs, nous allons consolider l'édifice de l'esprit du BIT en Europe.

Puisque j'ai évoqué l'intégration européenne de notre pays, que l'on désire le plus tôt possible, permettez-moi de présenter brièvement quelques-uns des défis auxquels nous sommes confrontés.

Même si l'on a réussi par le dialogue et par des luttes acharnées à obtenir une législation concernant les relations industrielles compatible, en principe, avec les exigences de l'OIT et de l'Union européenne, il y a encore des obstacles.

Le niveau du salaire minimum en Roumanie, qui devrait assurer aux travailleurs un niveau de vie décent, est presque deux fois plus bas que celui prévu dans la Charte sociale européenne. Il faut noter également que, pendant les cinq dernières années, il n'a augmenté que de 30 euros, c'est-à-dire qu'il est passé de 75 à 105 euros.

Malgré le fait que la Constitution roumaine, les conventions de l'OIT ratifiées et la législation pertinente confirment le droit de libre association pour former des syndicats, dans de nombreux cas, constituer un syndicat dans une compagnie privée, surtout s'il s'agit d'une compagnie avec un capital étranger, représente une vraie aventure. Il y a encore des magistrats qui ne considèrent pas que l'obstruction du droit de libre association et des actions syndicales

est un crime; il y a encore des inspecteurs du travail insensibles aux violations des droits syndicaux garantis par la loi.

Et, puisque j'ai parlé des inspecteurs du travail, il faut admettre que, malheureusement, leur activité est inefficace puisque le travail au noir existe encore et il est même prédominant dans plusieurs secteurs. Même s'il y a eu un certain progrès dans le développement et une amélioration de l'activité de l'inspection du travail, les résultats requis et attendus sont longs à venir. Nous avons eu des camarades qui ont été obligés de se substituer aux inspecteurs du travail pour prouver l'évidence, ce qui n'est pas du tout naturel quand on a des institutions habilitées pour cela.

En ce qui concerne le droit aux actions collectives, surtout à la grève, on se trouve dans une situation paradoxale. Même si ce droit est garanti par la Constitution roumaine, et malgré le fait que la Roumanie a ratifié les conventions fondamentales de l'OIT, l'interprétation courante de la loi sur les conflits du travail, en raison de certains excès administratifs, nie pratiquement aux travailleurs roumains la possibilité de déclencher une grève de manière légale même si les négociations salariales annuelles échouent. Seule l'absence d'accord collectif de travail ou un accord périmé permettrait cela. Le fait que, depuis quelques jours, il y a un espoir de pouvoir résoudre ces problèmes du fait que la Chambre des députés a accepté une proposition d'amendement de la loi représente un timide espoir et non pas une solution de fond. Nous nous tiendrons au courant de l'évolution de ce processus et, s'il y a un échec, nous demanderons l'intervention du Comité de la liberté syndicale et de la Commission pour l'application des normes.

Je vais utiliser cette occasion pour affirmer encore une fois notre détermination de voir chez nous, établis et opérationnels, les tribunaux du travail. Nous les désirons en tant qu'institutions distinctes, spécialisées, professionnalisées, capables de donner aux travailleurs confiance dans l'indépendance de la justice, dans l'accès sans obstacles à un jugement équitable, par des procédures simples et caractérisées par la célérité. Nous en sommes encore au début, à un stade certes prometteur, mais ce n'est qu'un début.

Tout Etat démocratique qui respecte ses citoyens devrait fonder ses politiques sur un niveau de vie décent et digne, la garantie des droits et libertés fondamentales, des chances égales de progrès et de développement individuel et communautaire. La Roumanie est un Etat qui a opté définitivement pour la démocratie et qui sera bientôt dans la grande famille des Etats européens, mais, selon nous, il faut encore faire quelques pas, et très vite. La paupérisation de larges couches de la population, la persistance de la polarisation sociale, l'absence de politique cohérente pour l'accès à des services publics de qualité

– suite au caractère excessivement mercantile des solutions adoptées – sont toute une série de problèmes dont les solutions appartiennent au parlement et au gouvernement roumain.

Nous, les travailleurs roumains, sommes profondément engagés pour atteindre ces buts. Nous voulons être des partenaires responsables, respectant nos partenaires et, en même temps, demandant du respect. Nous voulons entrer dans la famille européenne avec dignité en tant que partenaires et non pas comme une nation d'assistés.

Pour toutes ces raisons, pour que la réponse à ces défis soit une réponse européenne, basée sur les valeurs fondamentales de la justice sociale et du travail décent, c'est-à-dire basée sur les valeurs de l'OIT, en Roumanie la lutte continuera.

Mr. KULUNDU (*Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development, Kenya*)

The Kenyan delegation welcomes the Reports of the Director-General and the Chairperson of the Governing Body, which include the *Changing patterns in the world of work*, *ILO Programme implementation 2004-05*, and *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*.

Turning to the *Changing patterns in the world of work*, the Report is very educative and it sheds light on the concept of work and, lastly, it provides informed insights into developments in this domain.

Work has meant different things to different people in different parts of the world, and even at different times. One universal undeniable reality, however, is the value of work as a source of dignity. In every society or community we derive our relative economic and social worth from the type of work, craft or profession we engage in. Kenya, therefore, subscribes to the message in the Report that work is for a living.

This Report makes a significant contribution by broadening the understanding of the term "work". Of particular importance is the unpaid work in the family, in the community and work done by women. Though not paid for financially, this social productivity contributes a great deal to the development and the well-being of society. The inclusion of this segment of work in the definition proves that, given its privilege of regular exchange with governments, workers, employers and other social actors, the ILO remains the major repository of knowledge on labour issues.

It is against the foregoing that we once again endorse the Decent Work Agenda which addresses the challenges of the globalization process while guaranteeing fairness. Decent work in the words of Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General, is, and I quote: "Work on which I can raise my family and send my children to school. Work in which I am respected, can organize and have a voice. Work, which will provide a reasonable pension at the end of a working life."

It will be recalled that the summit of world leaders at the United Nations in September 2005 endorsed the ILO's vision of decent work as a global goal. The United Nations, in addition, resolved to ensure full respect for fundamental principles and rights at work.

The Extraordinary Summit of Heads of State and Government of the African Union on Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa, sitting in Ouagadougou in September 2004 and the African Union April meeting in Cairo have all declared employment creation as the number one goal for Africa.

We are aware that the high-level segment United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meeting in July this year has again put decent work on the international political agenda of the United Nations. There is also evidence everywhere which suggests that employment creation is at the heart of the ILO's work and government policies. The ECOSOC meeting should provide us with an opportunity to call on international financial and other institutions to support the ILO's decent work coun-

try programmes. I hope that this will be the standpoint of social partners who bring real voices to the discussions on employment and decent work.

Given the changes that are being witnessed in the labour markets, we feel that the ILO can and should develop appropriate norms for a global market, norms that would balance the need for flexibility and guarantee security of work. Kenya, therefore, supports initiatives towards a strong rights-based approach to the governance of labour markets that foster social dialogue.

The February 2006 Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 is a perfect example of what the ILO can do in creativity and consensus-building in modern standard setting. We need to develop institutional frameworks that facilitate management of change so as to be seen as a source of opportunities and less as a risk. This calls for all-inclusive action in planning, adapting and shaping the process of decent work, as well as technical cooperation.

My delegation welcomes the proposal for a new tool – an integrated policy framework for implementation of decent work programmes suitable to each country. Such policy options would enable member states to make choices that suit their unique situations.

In order to be successful, Kenya calls for stronger links between national economic policies and prescribed Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs), as well as genuine partnerships with multilateral and financial institutions.

Governments, on our part, should play the role of providing a conducive investment climate by putting in place infrastructure in the energy and communication sectors, especially in the rural areas, as well as ensuring maintenance of law and order for business, growth and development.

Kenya has established the Constituency Development Fund which currently receives 2.5 per cent of the budget with the objective of raising it to 7 per cent in this year's budget. It is a model that provides for a practical approach to the implementation of the decent work agenda.

The Constituency Development Fund is a model of participatory democracy which encourages a cul-

ture of accountability in the utilization of resources. It is expected to have a positive impact on the lives of Kenyans by providing employment opportunities and decent work across the country

The PRESIDENT

Ladies and gentlemen, we have completed our list of speakers for this morning but I have to inform that the right of reply has been requested so I would like to ask Mr. Apitonian, Government representative of Armenia, who wishes to make use of the right of reply to the statement of Minister Alakbarov, to take the floor. In accordance with the decision of the Officers of the Conference, the reply must not exceed two minutes; it must refer only to the point under debate; and it must be delivered in correct parliamentary language. It must on no account give rise to a new speech. As agreed by the Conference, there will be no right of reply to a reply.

Mr. APITONIAN (*Government, Armenia*)

My delegation would like to make the following statement in response to the accusations made against my country in the statement of the distinguished Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Azerbaijan concerning alleged occupation of another country's territory. We would like to emphasize that this has nothing to do with the reality on the ground, and the current status quo is the result of the self-defence of the people of Nagorno-Karabach against the aggression launched against the population of that small enclave.

We also fail to understand the link between this conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict raised in the statement of the distinguished Minister. It is most ironic that the distinguished Minister mentioned the Arab-Israeli conflict, which has at its core a people's right of self-determination, whilst denying that same right to the people of Nagorno-Karabach.

We would encourage the Azerbaijani side to refrain from misleading statements at different forums which have nothing to do with this particular conflict, and instead to concentrate on peaceful negotiations under the aegis of the existing formula.

The transcript of statements made in a language other than English, French or Spanish is produced in the language chosen by the country concerned for the purpose of official correspondence with the ILO.

Les interventions prononcées dans une autre langue que l'anglais, l'espagnol ou le français sont transcrites dans la langue choisie par le pays concerné aux fins de la correspondance officielle avec le BIT.

Las intervenciones pronunciadas en un idioma distinto del español, el francés o el inglés se transcribirán en el idioma que el país interesado haya escogido a efectos de su correspondencia oficial con la OIT.

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

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

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

Mr. SUPARNO (*Minister of Manpower and Transmigration, Indonesia*)

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Indonesia, let me echo previous speakers in congratulating Mr Sajda of the Czech Republic on his election as the President of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. I am sure, under his able chairmanship, this session will result in excellent achievements for the betterment of employment around the world. I am also pleased to convey the best wishes of President Yudhoyono of the Republic of Indonesia for the success of this session of the International Labour Conference.

Indonesia, as a country which has undergone a meaningful transformation in becoming a fully democratic society, will always commit to international endeavours that encourage a strong and dynamic social partnership. For this reason, President Yudhoyono encourages frequent social dialogue in resolving employment issues, as well as labour and industrial relations.

I would like also to take this opportunity on behalf of the Government of Indonesia to bestow our most sincere gratitude and appreciation to the international community for the many expressions of sympathy and condolence and emergency assistance and efforts we have received following the terrible earthquake which rocked the provinces of Yogyakarta and Central Java, Indonesia, on 27 May 2006.

For the last decade, Indonesia has been making considerable progress regarding the ILO's 1998

Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up.

The development of human rights at work in Indonesia is emerging in line with our economic growth and decentralization of authority.

This principle has been accorded higher tripartite priority, as reflected in our legislation.

The impact of economic globalization is a never-ending concern, especially in relation to income generation and people's welfare. However, unemployment is still a major concern. For this reason, Indonesia encourages strong dynamic relations with international communities to tackle this issue through a better investment climate.

As reported by the Director-General of the ILO, Indonesia is pleased to be involved in eliminating the worst forms of child labour of about 111 million children around the world. I am of the opinion that the world of work should be freed from the exploitation of children and that the International Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour's project in Indonesia is a good example.

In order to promote occupational safety and health, since 1996 Indonesia has adopted an occupational safety and health management system and, by the adoption of Manpower Act No. 13, in 2003, it has become compulsory for every enterprise. Indonesia welcomes the ILO initiative to discuss the proposed Convention on the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health. However, we should discuss this initiative firmly. To develop

sound employment relations at the company level, we need a strong commitment among the social actors, and Indonesia is keen to strengthen social dialogue and empowerment of workers on these issues as well.

On the other hand, training programmes, certification and placement of human resources should be integrated to improve the capacity of human resources and to obtain proper jobs. Therefore, an integrated three-in-one concept of training, certification and placement will, I believe, be able to create job opportunities to eradicate poverty.

I think that, to enhance our mutual recognition, the ILO should work closely in its technical cooperation with other international agencies, such as the International Organization for Migration and the World Trade Organization.

In conclusion, although we support the role played by the ILO in improving the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories, we are still deeply concerned by the situation in those territories. Therefore I strongly encourage the ILO to continue assisting the Palestinian Authority to develop a Decent Work Agenda.

Mr. DROBNIC (*Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia*)

It is a great honour for me to address this session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I would like to congratulate the President on his election. I also want to congratulate the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, on the extremely comprehensive Report addressing the emerging opportunities and uncertainties in the changing world of work. It is again confirming the adequacy of the ILO's strategic objectives and calls for the improved ability of the Organization to adapt constantly to new trends and to make "decent work for all" a reality.

In line with this, allow me first to point out the aim of the ILO to achieve the universal ratification of the eight fundamental Conventions. Due to the globalization process, the subject has gained additional value in recent years. In this context, the implementation of the core ILO Conventions represents the minimum that needs to be ensured and it is not only the responsibility of the governments, but also of the private sector that can contribute importantly with its socially responsible behaviour in the global markets.

Slovenia has already ratified all of the core ILO Conventions, nevertheless we consider the recent ratification of the Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 and the adoption of the Collective Agreements Act as an important step forward. Together with other implemented changes in recent years, we have gained important experiences which we would gladly share with countries with similar social and political backgrounds undergoing the transition process or acceding to the European Union.

Minimum standards at the workplace can only be respected when enough jobs are being created so everyone can have access to decent work. How can we create new productive jobs?

I am well aware that it is mainly the responsibility of governments to create an environment that will stimulate investments, and consequently also create new jobs and speed up economic development. Having this in mind, the Slovenian Government has recently adopted a framework of economic and so-

cial reforms. Since their realization requires coherent action of various ministers, a coordinating body, the Government Office for Development, was established.

This year we have also started negotiations with social partners for concluding a social agreement that will represent the commitment of social partners for the key projects that are to be implemented by 2009. Among them the realization of management reforms represents its core which, as we believe, will secure the basic values and solidarity.

All these measures are aimed: firstly, at responding successfully to the emerging challenges of globalization and increased competitiveness on the labour market; secondly, at reducing the disparities among regions in terms of the level of development and the labour market performance; and, thirdly, to assure more jobs and, therefore, better social inclusion and higher labour standards. Namely, labour markets in Slovenia are facing a lack of flexibility and low-level of adaptability and mobility of workers. Our priority, therefore, is to develop a framework where people would be able to find work quickly and easily, where employers would be encouraged to employ more workers, especially young and elderly people, people with disabilities and those with family responsibilities, where employed and recipients of social transfers would be properly motivated to seek work more actively and where factory employment and incentives for investment in knowledge and skills will be introduced.

At the same time, special attention should continue to be paid to the improvement of the existing social security system in terms of greater efficiency and transparency.

I believe that the optimal policy response to the changing patterns in the global markets can be best defined through the dialogue with social partners. Also, at the international level, the tripartite structure of the ILO represents the main competitive advantage that the ILO should take advantage of when facing the mentioned challenges.

In conclusion, I would like to say that many of the necessary measures are not easy to carry out since the results are only visible after a certain time; yet, we have to bear in mind that the situation today is the outcome of the measures implemented in the past and that only strong will for the introduction of required measures today can guarantee a better tomorrow.

Sr. MORALES CARTAYA (*Ministro de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Cuba*)

Reducir la pobreza mediante el trabajo en el contexto de la globalización neoliberal es una quimera.

La escalofriante tragedia del desempleo y la desprotección social descrita en la Memoria del Director General, que afecta fundamentalmente a millones de seres humanos del llamado tercer mundo y a los migrantes y minorías en los bolsones de pobreza del mundo rico y desarrollado, constituye un nuevo testimonio para ganar más conciencia sobre las causas que generan esta pobreza y quiénes son sus responsables. El reconocimiento de tal situación, lejos de promover la frustración, es un acicate para redoblar las acciones a emprender hasta acabar con tales males.

En el actual escenario internacional es más necesario que nunca fortalecer el multilateralismo y, dentro de ello, es clave el papel que le corresponde asumir a la OIT para que se cumplan por todos los

Estados las normas internacionales del trabajo, se erradiquen las peores formas del trabajo infantil, el trabajo forzoso y las desigualdades, y se fortalezca el diálogo social y la plena participación de los trabajadores.

La OIT requiere también reformar y democratizar sus estructuras y métodos de trabajo para estar a la altura de los nuevos tiempos. Debería también focalizar su atención, desde su estructura tripartita, en la promoción y apoyo al cumplimiento de los Objetivos de Desarrollo del Milenio.

Vivimos también un momento de cambios signados por la lucha de los eternos oprimidos y marginados frente a la opulencia del capital, como ocurre en América Latina, donde el fracasado modelo neoliberal está siendo barrido por los pueblos para, desde el gobierno, enfrentar la pobreza en que fueron sumidos durante siglos.

En todas las latitudes del planeta crece la esperanza de un mundo mejor. La Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas, encabezada por Venezuela, Bolivia y Cuba, demuestra lo que se puede alcanzar con voluntad política y solidaridad. A través de lo que se conoce como Operación Milagro, más de 220.000 personas con escasos recursos de diferentes países de América Latina y el Caribe ya han recuperado la visión gratuitamente. La alfabetización de otros miles con el método cubano, la creación de Petrocaribe y los acuerdos firmados para la industrialización de los hidrocarburos y el desarrollo de la agricultura en Bolivia redundan en la creación de nuevos empleos.

La resistencia del pueblo cubano durante más de cuatro décadas a la política hostil dirigida a rendirlo por hambre y enfermedades prueba que vale la pena el sacrificio de defender el camino escogido. Ello permite afirmar aquí que Cuba mantiene el pleno empleo, garantiza la seguridad social para todos los ciudadanos y desarrolla programas que la consolidan como potencia mundial en salud, educación, deporte, cultura e investigación científica. La economía de Cuba creció en un 11,8 por ciento en 2005 y su ritmo actual avanza a más de 12,5 por ciento, sin renunciar a su obligación de prestar ayuda solidaria a los hermanos pueblos de Asia, Africa, América Latina y el Caribe, siendo un símbolo la cifra de 1.743.244 personas atendidas en consultas médicas en Pakistán, víctimas del catastrófico terremoto ocurrido el pasado año. Todo ello como demostración de que un mundo mejor es posible y que la lucha nos dará la victoria.

Original German: Mrs. STAKE (Minister of Welfare, Latvia)

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr President, on your appointment and wish you every success in your efforts. I would also like to welcome all other delegates to this distinguished Conference.

The subjects of the Conference this year are particularly important, since the world, and Europe in particular, faces major political and macroeconomic challenges.

A major test for modern social and economic policies is their ability to be flexible to change. At the same time, however, these policies must provide a selection of combinations of opportunities (flexibility) and protection (security) in order to enable individuals and the general public to opt for the most suitable solutions for their particular circumstances. As a rule, special consideration must be given to the standards set by the International La-

bour Organization and the European Union in order to ensure an adequate level of protection (security).

Latvia this year has made a great step forward as an ILO Member by ratifying three major Conventions. These are the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and also the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

Considering the new strategic challenges of today, such as globalization and competitive pressures, the transition to knowledge-based economy, the ageing population, new family models and European integration, flexible security – “flexicurity”, as it is called – plays a crucial role.

Flexicurity is now becoming a main feature of a society that is prepared and able to take account of globalization and benefit from it without losing its internal cohesion, integrity and quality of life.

Flexicurity is not only a two-dimensional issue – flexibility and security – it must be closely intertwined with an active labour market policy, especially with regard to issues of access to employment, jobseeking and vocational training. Here, I would like to place particular emphasis on flexitime and flexible work arrangements, since, when employers pay due respect to the individual needs of employees, employees are better motivated and more willing to remain loyal to their employers in the long term.

All parties must contribute to optimizing the improvement of methods applied in managing individuals’ working lives, from the moment a person leaves school, and whenever she/he changes job or occupation, moves from one country to another or retires. It is important to develop a model that is flexible enough to increase productivity at work and at the same time maintain the balance necessary to ensure social security and welfare for families and society as a whole.

In a period of rapid social change, both social partners and regional representatives should take active part in various activities as good results can only be achieved through synergy and cooperation. Social dialogue is the cornerstone of economic growth, as employers, employees and the government all share interest in the stable growth of enterprises and in improving the overall social climate. In addition to tripartite social dialogue, it is crucial to facilitate dialogue between employees and employers in order to ensure smoothly functioning employment relations, balancing social security and flexibility on this basis of mutual compromise and thus providing the necessary incentives in entrepreneurship. Well-developed social dialogue ensures stability and promotes social peace.

In conclusion, I would like to wish all of us sufficient energy, endurance, determination and focus to achieve the objectives in a speedy and efficient way.

Mr. SULKA (Government, Albania)

It is my pleasure to participate in the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference and, on behalf of the Albanian Government, to warmly congratulate Mr. Sajda for presiding over this working session.

Making use of this session, I would like to acknowledge Mr. Somavia’s performance and achievements as the Director-General of the International Labour Office and, at the same time, to

convey my faith that such accomplishments will grow in the future.

The importance that this session is giving to the eradication of child labour, as an issue with a universal dimension, whose management deals with ensuring basic human rights, remains also one of the main things encouraging the Albanian Government to intensify its struggles to ensure that children's rights are respected, and especially that fundamental human rights are respected in the work environment.

I would like to express my gratitude for giving me the chance to provide the Conference with a concise account of the Albanian Government's efforts.

Child labour is a sensitive and complex issue, relatively new as a phenomenon within the Albanian reality. Many economic and social factors, such as poverty, unrestrained demographic movement of the population within the territory of the country, insignificant prospects for unemployment and the low level of education of most families, are the basis of this phenomenon. The family economic sector, marketing, services, transportation, road construction and the agricultural sector are the main sectors where child labour is likely to be used. Most of the children work within the informal labour sector, where a considerable number of those children are involved in activities and illegal actions such as trafficking.

The diminution of this phenomenon, as well as the abolition of the worst unsafe forms of child labour, will require multisectoral cooperation between all the social actors involved in resolving this issue. The awareness of the Albanian Government towards the abolition of the worst unsafe forms of child labour has been focused on the process of implementing tangible programmes regarding this matter. Albania has adopted legislation that protects children and prohibits, as well as defines restrictions about, children's employment according to ILO standards. Albania has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as ILO Conventions such as the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). Important steps have been made in terms of adopting national legislation in line with the international standards defined in the Conventions. The Labour Code of Albania is the main resource where such efforts are seen.

Under the framework of the project of the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) to eradicate child labour, which has been implemented by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, work is focused on: establishing and strengthening the institutional framework necessary for bodies such as the National Steering Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour and the Unit of Child Labour within the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, which deal with child labour; strengthening the necessary capacities with a multidisciplinary perspective in order to better address child labour problems at all levels; increasing the capacities of labour inspectors and other social actors involved in the process of monitoring child labour at national and regional levels in order to combat the worst forms of child labour throughout their training; reviewing national legislation concerning child labour issues to promote the improvements necessary for its conformity with international stan-

dards; and drafting and implementing national policies against child labour and in favour of eradicating the worst forms of child labour.

This programme's strategy consists of identifying and addressing straight away the problem at three levels, through strengthening local- and national-level capacities, through piloting within three regions of the community, and through gathering and analysing information in this field at national and local levels that will help in improving practices and policies.

Expressing the gratitude of the Albanian Government, especially the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, in this address to the International Labour Conference for its support during the implementation of the project to eradicate child labour in Albania through the IPEC programme, I would like to express once again the will, and assure you of the commitment, of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities to continue to support this cooperation. Keeping always in mind the Albanian Government's priorities, we will very much appreciate the presence, as well as further assistance, of IPEC in Albania, through a larger time-bound programme.

On behalf of the Albanian Government, allow me to express one more time my best compliments and wishes for success to the working sessions of this Conference.

Mr. FARRUGIA (*Employer, Malta*)

The Report of the Director-General is tangible proof of the increasing relevance and dynamism of the ILO in its efforts to spread the principle of decent work throughout the world, in spite of the many global and national forces that may impede the Organization from reaching its goals. It is on this note that, on behalf of the Maltese employers, the Director-General is to be congratulated for the results that have been achieved in each of the major strategic objectives that form part of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. It is indeed a positive development to witness the implementation of decent work country programmes that are focused to tackle labour-related issues at national and regional levels through the practice of tripartite social dialogue that enables strategies to be translated into concrete action.

The Report also lists as one of its objectives the provision of a context for debate about the institutions and policies required to create decent work for all and to diminish the uncertainty that rapid change provokes. This aspect of the Report is certainly of great relevance to Malta, as our country also is passing through a phase of rapid economic restructuring. The pace of economic transformation has been the result of accession to the European Union, the need to meet fiscal criteria to introduce the euro as our currency in the beginning of 2008, and is also due to a pressing need to build a competitive economy that can survive and grow in an aggressive global competitive environment.

Indeed, Malta has been experiencing a significant reduction in jobs in areas of low value added manufacturing, which has been balanced with a healthy inflow of foreign investment during the last couple of years in sectors which demand a higher skill content. The success, or otherwise, of the strategy of transition will depend on the input of all the social partners, and it is clear that social dialogue is the

mechanism that reduces the friction that can be part and parcel of social and economic change.

We fully support, and actively participate in, tripartite dialogue on key policy issues and believe that the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development, which is the Maltese institution where tripartite dialogue can be practised, can be more influential in promoting the principles of decent work in Malta.

The essential precondition for decent work is job creation. Therefore, establishing an infrastructure that supports and encourages entrepreneurship is crucial to achieve the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals through fair globalization, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In a world where national barriers are being eroded, investment invariably flows to countries and regions that offer the necessary flexibility and competitive conditions. Global competition in the market for goods and services is also being reflected in competition in the factor markets, including labour. Job creation is thus becoming increasingly dependent on the price of labour and, more importantly, on the quality of labour, which is influenced by the degree of flexibility and trainability of the labour force. This implies obligations not just on the part of employers, but also on employees. Perhaps the emphasis on employees' rights in the Report needs to be supplemented by an emphasis on the importance of fostering a flexible work environment and culture that is more adaptable to changing situations. There is also the need for national policies aimed at encouraging a higher participation in the labour force, developing skills and retraining employees to fit into new jobs. Education is a key element to ensure that the labour force is able to avail itself of decent work opportunities, and more resources need to be channelled by the ILO into skills development programmes, as these are essential tools in the fight against poverty. Educational programmes should also focus on developing entrepreneurship skills as a means to generate productive employment.

Maltese employers have been advocating a higher resource allocation to education, as well as to channel structural funds from the European Union into upgrading the human resource as a means of avoiding structural unemployment, which can result in having a segment of the labour force facing worsening working conditions. Labour market policies are also needed to address the possibility of a brain drain in sensitive areas like health, and to curb wage inflation caused by labour shortages and expanding sectors of the economy.

The global economic environment is also affecting the mobility of workers. Malta is witnessing an increasing flow of immigrants who risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean from African shores in the hope of living in a place where their fundamental rights are respected, where they may have job opportunities and access to social protection. This phenomenon is proof that there is still a long way to go in many countries, and that a core aspect of the solution to such migrations is the design and implementation of the decent work country programmes. These are the means available to bring the global debate down to country-specific frameworks and policies and should be the main focus of the ILO.

Discussing issues like decent work, productivity and skills development from a global perspective is relevant only in so far that such discourse is given

form into significant plans at national and regional levels.

In conclusion, it is the belief of Maltese employers that the ILO has a specialized function, and it must not detract from its primary role of encouraging enterprise and developing the infrastructure to generate productive and decent employment opportunities for all. The ILO mandate of dealing with the world of work and with the interaction of employers and employees is in itself ambitious. Rather than widening its sphere of influence in a manner that might overlap with other institutions, the ILO can be more effective if it opts for depth in its core activities in order to retain its distinguished identity and increase its effectiveness.

Mr. SENEVIRATHNE (*Minister of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment, Sri Lanka*)

We want to thank the Director General, Juan Somavia for the comprehensive presentation of the three reports and support the recommendation for action.

We should be proud of the achievement of the ILO for innovating the vision of "decent work" and taking it beyond the ILO into the United Nations system, making it a global goal recognized by our leaders at the World Summit in September 2005.

The ILO programme implementation report for the last biennium presented positive performance-based results on the four strategic objectives even at a time of zero-growth budget. We also note with satisfaction the rising rate of ratification of the fundamental Conventions, and urge the ILO to continue its advocacy in this regard.

Sri Lanka has formulated both its national policy and the National Plan of Action on Decent Work. The national policy identifies the weaknesses in the focus areas of decent work and sets out policies designed to overcome them. The National Action Plan has been developed with tripartite and regional consultation to transform policy into action. His Excellency President Mahinda Rajapakse, who takes a personal interest in labour matters, having held the labour portfolio for several years, will himself present the policy to the Cabinet of Ministers shortly for approval.

The Director-General's Report, *Changing patterns in the world of work*, takes up the challenge of achieving decent work as a global, regional and national reality based on the experience gained by the ILO of working with its constituents. Globalization is driving rapid change affecting all sectors of economic activity, including labour markets and workplaces.

In this context, narrowing down income inequalities has become the major development imperative for developing countries. In Sri Lanka, income inequality has remained virtually unchanged during the last half a century. The lowest 40 per cent of income households received 15 per cent, and the highest 20 per cent of households around 50 per cent, of national income. Poverty afflicts nearly one-quarter of the population, but varies considerably across the country.

While we consider job creation is central to poverty reduction, it is important to ensure that new jobs yield incomes above the poverty line and guarantee to workers certain minimum standards that enable them to obtain a better quality of life.

Sri Lanka has experienced mixed results following economic liberalization. On the one hand, the

country has recorded strong average annual growth of over 6 per cent. On the other hand, intensification of global competition has affected some workplaces either through lay-offs, closures of businesses or deterioration of working conditions.

I believe that we need not be disheartened, as there are ways and means of addressing these problems. At the level of trade policy, Sri Lanka was also able to gain from preferences granted on good governance and protection of labour rights. The drive for greater efficiency and higher productivity must be balanced with respect for the basic rights of workers. For example, the ILO's Factory Improvement Programme has achieved credibility with both the employers and the trade unions and should be extended.

The Director-General's Report also discusses the important issues of informal economy and migrant workers which continue to pose major challenges for Sri Lanka. Around 70 per cent of the workforce in the country is engaged in the informal economy, and around 1.5 million Sri Lankans, equivalent to around one-seventh of the labour force, are working overseas. Migrant workers provide the most important source of foreign exchange for the country, and we are continuously upgrading promotional and welfare programmes for decent employment in this sector. As Labour Minister, one of my main priorities is to meet with my counterparts in labour-receiving countries and concerned multilateral agencies for broad consultations, in order to find solutions for the many problems facing migrant workers. We have also initiated new programmes to address the socio-economic and psychological problems of migrant workers' families.

I will be presenting to the committees Sri Lanka's special experience and the lessons learned on reconstruction after the devastating Tsunami.

We take this opportunity once again to convey our deep appreciation to the international community for the continued generous support and assistance to Sri Lanka in our time of need.

Mr. DANEV (*Employer, Bulgaria*)

Mr. President, I would like to extend my congratulations on your appointment to this distinguished position and my wishes for successful and fruitful work.

In the year since the 93rd Session of the International Labour Conference, collaboration between the organizations of Bulgarian employers has strengthened and joint positions have been taken up while participating in bi- and tripartite social dialogue. The social partners and the Government have united in preparing the drafts for changes in Bulgarian labour and social legislation which fully reflect the requirements of European Union law. We consider that, among the conditions for improving bipartite dialogue, Bulgaria has to adjust its practice of dialogue to conform the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). Bulgaria continues to violate the requirements of the Convention regarding voluntary bargaining for signing collective labour agreements.

The Employers think that the balance between flexibility and security of the labour market is upset, with too much emphasis on security. It is necessary to undertake measures to promote flexibility and raise employment without affecting security. An example in relation to this is that Bulgaria is the only country worldwide where overtime labour is

generally forbidden and admitted as an exception solely in case of seasonal work, disasters and accidents. The State still interferes when determining the specifics of labour remuneration.

The Bulgarian employers realize the necessity of the new approach to human resources development under the conditions of the globalization of the world economy. Qualification of staff has already become a principal factor for competitiveness. We support the efforts of the Bulgarian Government to enlarge the scope of employment relationships and the range of non-regulated employment. A considerable reduction in unemployment has been recorded thanks to the measures taken in employment promotion, which the social partners have fully supported. One of the principal challenges to the employers in Bulgaria comprises the betterment of occupational safety and health. We think that the policy of the Government in this area should also be directed to encouraging the employers to invest in the improvement of labour conditions. In cooperation with the ILO, the Bulgarian Industrial Association has been implementing two projects targeting employers' organizations in order to assist their members to ensure occupational safety and health while meeting their social insurance obligations. The South East European Employers' Forum takes great interest in these projects and we are ready to share our experience with them in the future joint activities with the ILO.

In conclusion, we declare our firm belief that the resolution of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference will be the new important step for adherence to fundamental principles and rights at work.

Mr. BUNWAREE (*Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, Mauritius*)

The year 2005 has been an eventful year for Mauritius. General elections were held last July in conformity with deeply entrenched democratic principles and tradition and a new government came into power with a clear mandate for change.

Since independence, Mauritius has been relying heavily on its preferential trade agreements in sugar and, later, textile, two main pillars of its economy, to create growth and sustain economic and social progress.

The loss of these trade preferences with the dismantling of the Multifibre Agreement, which has exposed the country to the full blast of competition, and the drastic review of the EU sugar regime, which translates into a significant shortfall in revenue, have compelled the Government of Mauritius to review the way things have been done so far on the economic front, all the more so in the present context of the spiralling rise in the price of petrol.

We have to think and act differently in the interest of the country and the nation as a whole. We are therefore putting in place a new economic model to cope with this unprecedented difficult situation.

This new model calls for major reforms, if we are to achieve once again the 5 to 6 per cent growth rate we have known in the past and be in a position to sustain and consolidate our social policies and strategies and check the steady rise in unemployment.

For the reforms to be successful, it is imperative that there be a common sense of purpose, discipline and solidarity on the part of all stakeholders, be it the government or the employers, workers and civil

society. The Government has sent a clear message to all, and we will ensure that the burden of the reforms are equitably shared. Setting the example, the Government has imposed severe restrictions on public expenditure. This year it has also approved a rate of compensation to workers for the rising cost of living, in line with what the economy in general can afford, ensuring, however, that those at the lowest rung of the ladder obtain compensation commensurate to the rate of inflation. The Government has exhorted those employers who can afford to pay more to do so, and a few enterprises have already responded positively to this call.

We are fully conscious of the significance of work for all peoples of the world. There is no doubt that work is more than subsistence. It is a source of dignity, self worth, family stability and social peace. I am pleased to inform this Conference that, in the context of the reforms being undertaken, the Government of Mauritius is implementing a number of measures to promote investment in all sectors and to facilitate the development of new sectors, such as seafood and information communication technology, to support the economy. We are also promoting self employment and the development of SMEs and, through extensive training and multiskilling, greater employability of workers. We aim thus to protect workers, given the changing nature of jobs in the present context.

It is a fact that workers' rights without work cannot exist. It is therefore essential that we undertake comprehensive and far-reaching reforms built around the people and designed to reposition ourselves for sustainable growth, stability and development. It is a fact that collaboration between the public and the private sector is a sine qua non requirement for economic growth and sustainable livelihoods protection and development. I am happy to report that Mauritius has a long tradition of such collaboration and well defined structures are in place for that purpose.

I am also pleased to inform this august assembly that we have made great strides in the reform of our industrial relations framework and our labour legislation generally. The legislative reform is being undertaken with an involvement of all stakeholders in the true spirit of social dialogue and tripartism. We shall be guided in this exercise by the distilled wisdom of the ILO standards, taking into account equity and human dignity.

With a view to promote and advance the right of workers to a safe and healthy environment, the Government of Mauritius enacted last year a new Occupational Safety and Health Act. This new Act is intended to consolidate the legal framework for the provision of a safe and healthy workplace for one and all, and it addresses the changes occurring as a result of the introduction of new technologies, new equipment, new production methods and new work patterns. The initiative of the ILO to adopt standards on the "Promotional framework for occupational safety and health" comes at an opportune moment for us. I would like to highlight here the fact that we are also, in this context, giving due importance and consideration to the issue of HIV/AIDS at the workplace.

The principles of decent work are at the heart of our strategies for economic and social progress and for creating a more inclusive society.

I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the ILO for what it has achieved in its fight against

child labour. The Report of the Director-General entitled *The end of child labour: Within reach* gives encouraging evidence that the situation, which was disquieting some years back, has improved impressively. I concur fully with the UN Director-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, when he said that child labour "has serious consequences that stay with the individual and with society for far longer than the years of childhood". More often than not, victims of child labour face an adulthood of illiteracy and unemployment.

Compulsory education being historically one of the most effective measures for eliminating child labour, the Government of Mauritius has amended the Education Act to make schooling compulsory up to the age of 16. An important provision of the law is the obligation placed on parents to send their children to school.

The Government of Mauritius has also enacted legislation to establish the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children. The Ombudsperson has the duty to promote the rights and interests of children and is also empowered to investigate any suspected or reported case of child labour.

Ms. MENKERIOS (*Minister of Labour and Human Welfare, Eritrea*)

I would first of all like to congratulate the Director-General Mr. Juan Somavia for the quality of his Report, which brings a message of hope to the world of work in its decent form. Without going into details of the Report, I would like to refer to some of the messages that I believe are essential.

The 2004-05 Programme implementation report indicated that most of the ILO programmes were reported to be implemented within the stated strategies and are yielding the expected results. I believe that this can open the way to achieve the strategic dimensions of decent work. To make this hope sustainable, more decent work country programmes need to be initiated and supported by dialogue as a new dimension of the programme process.

The Report declared a performance of encouraging reduction in child labour, especially its worst forms in many areas of the world, and is supported by the empirical results of the studies made in the different areas. However, in some regions of the world, especially sub-Saharan Africa, child labour is reported to remain alarmingly high which calls for a continuous advocacy and technical assistance in this region to achieve the reported hope and contribute to its sustainability.

On the "changing patterns in the world of work", interesting messages for discussion are highlighted. To yield a great deal of varied insight on the questions and messages raised, there is a need to conduct more studies and research, which will help us understand the status of the world of work.

We do indeed share the conviction expressed in the Report of the Director-General that the strategy of decent work is central to efforts to overcome poverty.

My country Eritrea, as a new nation in its own initiative and capacity, is taking steps to enhance the quality level of workers that ensure social justice in the workplace. Its people are striving for collective and individual well-being through work.

To break through the food aid-dependent chain and establish secure life by overcoming poverty, a food security programme is the number one priority of the Government of Eritrea. That includes con-

struction of roads, building of dams, diversion of river courses, afforestation, and distribution of seeds and agricultural equipment. This programme has opened a wider opportunity of employment to all people, and for young people in particular to participate to its full implementation.

As part of social security activities, adequate support is given to orphans, vulnerable households and disabled persons, in order to provide employment opportunities through community-built development programmes.

Furthermore, special support, care and treatment, including distribution of retroviral drugs are given to people living with HIV/AIDS, including at the workplace. We started a pension scheme in 2004 as part of a social security initiative which we believe can furnish adequate old-age security.

With regard to human resource development, progressive measures are being adopted: by opening schools in many parts of the country, with priority given to rural areas, and making primary education free of charge and compulsory for all, as a measure to discourage child labour. Several new colleges have been opened. To enhance female education, girls' boarding schools have been opened, and are all functioning. This fits well with the new pattern of work opportunity for girls. As regards health services, health facilities at different levels are being built, including referral hospitals, and are giving their services to ensure safe work. More reinforcement activities are under way on occupational safety and health.

In our case tripartism has become a way of life. I can proudly report that we have strengthened the tripartite voice by establishing a Labour Relations Board and in the process of establishing labour advisory boards, to facilitate tripartite guidance. We are spearheading efforts to gather basic level market information, including the labour force survey, child labour survey and the employment survey, so as to objectively measure our labour situation, and develop or revise our national policies if this is deemed necessary.

We are putting a great effort into the well-being of workers and provide them with a social safety net as we intended. With proper implementation of our economic and social development strategies, we the Government of Eritrea is committed to offering decent work and a decent life to all Eritreans.

Original arabe: M. OULD AHMED OULD DJEGUE (ministre de la Fonction publique et de l'Emploi, Mauritanie)

Le gouvernement provisoire de Mauritanie travaille fermement et sans relâche, sous la direction du président du Comité militaire pour la démocratie et la justice, le Chef de l'Etat, le colonel Ali Ould mohamed Fal, pour améliorer les conditions de vie des citoyens mauritaniens.

Au cours des dix derniers mois, le gouvernement mauritanien a eu des résultats importants dans les secteurs vitaux de l'économie grâce à la volonté politique et à un environnement propice apporté par les changements du 3 août 2005.

Le gouvernement a mis en place trois comités ministériels chargés d'examiner les principales priorités telles que la transition vers la démocratie, la justice et la bonne gouvernance.

Les rapports rédigés par ces comités ont débouché sur des consultations qui ont eu lieu avec la participation de tous les partis politiques ainsi que de la société civile.

L'un des résultats de ce consensus national sur le plan politique a été la création d'un Comité national indépendant pour les élections, chargé de superviser le processus de transition démocratique au cours des prochaines échéances, à partir du référendum sur la Constitution jusqu'aux élections présidentielles.

Sur le plan social, les salaires des travailleurs ont augmenté de manière significative, de même que les allocations familiales et les pensions des civils et des militaires. Nous avons procédé aussi à une réduction des impôts sur les salaires. Des négociations se poursuivent avec les partenaires sociaux afin d'améliorer davantage les conditions des travailleurs et d'augmenter leur pouvoir d'achat.

Le gouvernement provisoire de Mauritanie est déterminé à poursuivre ses efforts en vue d'améliorer les conditions économiques et sociales du peuple mauritanien et de garantir la justice sociale. A cet égard, nous souhaitons féliciter l'OIT pour l'appui qu'elle nous apporte et nous sommes convaincus que ce soutien va encore s'intensifier et se poursuivre, en particulier dans cette phase de transition que traverse mon pays.

Le rapport du Directeur général concernant la situation des travailleurs des territoires arabes occupés montre que les conditions de travail de ces travailleurs se sont détériorées de manière significative.

Mon pays appuie les recommandations qui figurent dans ce rapport et demande au Bureau d'intensifier et de promouvoir ses programmes visant à améliorer les conditions de vie de cette catégorie importante de la société palestinienne.

Sr. RIVERA ESCUDERO (Ministro de Trabajo y Desarrollo Laboral, Panamá)

Panamá ha aprobado los convenios fundamentales de la OIT y el Gobierno aprobará en los próximos días el Decreto Ejecutivo que reglamenta los trabajos peligrosos para la salud, la seguridad, la moralidad y el desarrollo integral de las personas menores de edad, en conmemoración del 12 de junio, Día mundial contra el trabajo infantil. En la reunión celebrada en Panamá en marzo pasado, el Consejo de Ministros de Trabajo de Centroamérica y República Dominicana declaró convertir esta región en una «zona libre de trabajo infantil», con el apoyo de la OIT.

En esta fecha el año pasado, el Gobierno que represento tenía sólo nueve meses dirigiendo el país. Encontramos grandes retos, en especial, generar la confianza del ciudadano en sus gobernantes, lograr la participación de los sectores laborales y empresariales en las áreas prioritarias del desarrollo económico y social, y rescatar la credibilidad y apoyo de la comunidad de naciones y los organismos internacionales.

No ha sido fácil el camino recorrido, pero avanzamos. Estamos fortaleciendo la inversión social para el desarrollo y promoviendo la equidad y justicia social en las relaciones laborales.

Para nosotros, es necesario crear las bases para una nueva cultura laboral que tenga al diálogo y al tripartismo como su principal base de apoyo, al igual que el respeto por el derecho de los trabajadores y empleadores, el equilibrio en la administración laboral y el compromiso de responsabilidad social que el capital debe jugar en la desaparición de la pobreza y las desigualdades.

Algunas estrategias ejecutadas por mi Gobierno en esa dirección son: una reforma tributaria que

permite mayores recursos para invertir en los programas sociales; fortalecimiento de la transparencia en la administración del Estado y sus recursos, combatiendo la corrupción y la burocracia improductiva; se impulsó de una reforma a la seguridad social, con la participación de todos los sectores involucrados, que evitará el colapso financiero de la institución que la administra; y fortalecimiento de los programas de intermediación laboral y de inspección para el cumplimiento de la ley, la seguridad y salud en el trabajo y la inserción laboral de las personas con discapacidad, entre otros.

Avanzamos en el desarrollo de políticas económicas y sociales, en especial de empleo, bajo un enfoque de integralidad y trabajo decente, cumpliendo con los principios de las normas internacionales de trabajo y los convenios fundamentales de la OIT.

Prueba de ello son: el crecimiento de la economía al 6,5 por ciento anual; la disminución de la pobreza estructural, del desempleo y la informalidad; la disminución de los índices de trabajo infantil y los avances hacia el logro de una equidad laboral en relación al género y la participación de la mujer en el mercado de trabajo; y el fortalecimiento de los mecanismos de participación ciudadana a través del diálogo y la concertación.

En febrero pasado, por segunda vez en 50 años y con el apoyo de trabajadores y empresarios, se aprobó por consenso el salario mínimo.

Durante 92 años, el Canal de Panamá ha servido al comercio marítimo mundial y es una de las principales actividades económicas del país, junto al turismo.

El pueblo panameño emprenderá, previa aprobación en un referéndum, el más grande proyecto económico de los últimos 100 años, la construcción de un tercer juego de esclusas y la ampliación del Canal Interoceánico, a un costo de 5.200 millones de dólares de los Estados Unidos.

Esta obra generará millares de trabajos decentes, directa e indirectamente, y permitirá mejorar nuestra competitividad en las rutas marítimas internacionales y ofrecer un mayor servicio en el desarrollo mundial del comercio.

Reconocemos el valioso trabajo que la OIT ha realizado para consolidar el Convenio refundido sobre el trabajo marítimo. Nuestro Gobierno está anuente a ratificar el Convenio sobre el trabajo marítimo y se está preparando para ese objetivo.

Como señaló hace unos años el General Omar Torrijo, líder tercermundista que hizo posible el fin del colonialismo en nuestro país, «cada pueblo tiene su propia aspirina para su problema». Por ello, su hijo, el actual Presidente de la República, ha dicho: «la globalización no es una opción, sino una realidad, y estamos nosotros, los panameños, escogiendo nuestra ruta para enfrentar los retos y desafíos que ella nos impone».

Original Serbian: Mr. STIJEPOVIC (Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Republic of Montenegro, Serbia and Montenegro)

Please allow me first to address this Conference by greeting you all on behalf of the Republic of Montenegro, which officially proclaimed its independence only two days ago on Saturday 3 June. Montenegro is committed to continue to build itself as a modern, open and civil society, respecting human rights and freedoms, the principles of democracy, the rule of law, as well as the market economy. As an independent State, Montenegro will

further develop cooperation with European and international institutions and continue its active policy of good neighbour relations and regional cooperation in all areas. The Republic of Montenegro has expressed a special interest in and commitment to enhancing good and friendly relations with the Republic of Serbia.

In the context of this Conference, Montenegro will, in particular, continue to respect and further improve standards and good practices in the field of employment and labour, through international, regional and bilateral cooperation and, of course, by respecting the principles of tripartism.

Montenegro has achieved macroeconomic stability and established a stable environment for business, new investments and new job creation. This is confirmed by a recent report of Standard and Poor's showing improvement in the credit rating from BB to BB+ in only a year, with the assessment of further positive trends. I would like to confirm that, following the definition of the State status, the Government of Montenegro will continue to carry out policy measures with regard to overall legislation reform, which will further improve the economic environment in order to achieve three main objectives: growth of the standard of living and quality of life of all citizens, along with appropriate social, healthcare and education systems; fast, sustainable economic development through the increase of economic freedoms, strengthening the impact of the private sector, achieving a higher degree of macroeconomic stability; and building an institutional and legal framework in compliance with international standards and norms based on the rule of law.

Through the application of government policy and measures, unemployment in Montenegro was reduced from 76,000 in early 2003 to 45,000 in May 2006, which is a decrease of about 31,000, that is of 40.79 per cent.

Reform in the field of labour and employment is part of overall economic reform which contributed to macroeconomic stability. In 2006, we have all parameters planned for overall stabilization, which includes an increase in GDP by the rate of 4.5 per cent and inflation not exceeding 3 per cent, together with the growth of industrial production and a budget deficit decrease of 1.7 per cent.

I would like to reiterate that the unemployment rate was reduced from 29.1 per cent in 2003 to the current rate of 17 per cent. In the same period, the share of unemployed young people has decreased to 21 per cent, and the share of unemployed women fell from 59 per cent in 2003 to 49.3 per cent.

Over the last few years, the employment of people with disabilities, the Roma population and other vulnerable groups has been achieved.

The World Travel and Tourism Council has proclaimed Montenegro, for the second year in a row, the most rapid tourist economy in the world, with an annual growth rate of above 10 per cent. This is of utmost importance for employment, not only in Montenegro, but also in the region, bearing in mind that last year the number of non-residents employed in Montenegro was around 30,000.

Montenegro is willing to solve the problem of unemployment as a global and, in our case, as an important regional problem, in partnership with relevant national and international institutions. We will continue to be devoted to the process of regional cooperation within employment, the labour market and training for our future integration into the Euro-

pean Union, the implementation of standards in the field of employment and so that the Global Employment Agenda of the International Labour Organization becomes operational in our country.

Please allow me to reaffirm that Montenegro, which is now an independent State, with its national, political and institutional stability, will guarantee the follow-up to the cooperation within the region and a stronger impact on the democratization process of the region.

We hope that Montenegro will soon become a member of all relevant European and international organizations, including the United Nations. This will also be a formal commitment for Montenegro that will guarantee all the rights and standards also promoted by the ILO.

The democratically organized referendum, as it was assessed by the European Union, is the confirmation that Montenegro has the capacity to develop a democratic and prosperous society. I do believe that member States of this Organization, as well as European international institutions, will support us in further reforms.

Mr. MAGAYA (*Minister of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development, Sudan*)

It is my pleasure to express to the President, on behalf of the delegation of Sudan, our sincere congratulations on his election to the presidency of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. We are confident that he will lead the deliberations of this session to a successful conclusion.

The Report of the Director-General on ILO programme implementation 2004-05 is highly appreciated. It reflects the achievement and dialogue of the previous biennium and ILO efforts to assist member countries in need to create employment, alleviate poverty and ensure social protection. Therefore, the ILO is encouraged to develop policies and programmes with international financial institutions to respond to the needs of its constituents, especially in the areas of employment creation, poverty alleviation and occupational safety and health. It is also encouraged to look for extra-budgetary resources to support technical cooperation programmes.

Sudan is now enjoying very cordial relations with the ILO, reflected in the different areas of assistance to the Government and the social partners. The assistance covers such different areas as: firstly, the formulation of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (IPRSP) of northern Sudan, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and other stakeholders.

We are quite confident that the ILO will also help the Government of southern Sudan in formulating its Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP); secondly, in capacity building, the Government of Sudan benefited in areas of child labour and international labour standards; and thirdly, formulating programme proposals covering the areas of employment recovery for poverty reduction and reconstruction in Sudan. The programme will provide direct training and employment opportunities for vulnerable populations through the provision of vocational training, training for self-employment and the rehabilitation of infrastructure through labour-intensive schemes as part of the ILO's local economic development approach. The ILO will also provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour, Public Service and Human Resources Development

in labour administration and labour statistics.

The people of Sudan are happy to have peace and enjoy stability. The historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed by the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) on 9 January 2005 in Nairobi has halted the war completely in southern Sudan, Blue Nile and the Numa Mountains. The Government of Sudan and the SPLM have become partners in implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

A Government of National Unity was set up, a new National Assembly was composed and a new Interim National Constitution was adopted which will cater for freedoms and human rights. The Constitution of southern Sudan was approved and the Government of southern Sudan was formed. The Minister of Labour of the Government of southern Sudan is a member of the delegation attending this session and he will address the Conference at a later date.

Sudan now calls on the donor countries to honour the commitments which they made at the Oslo Donors' Conference on Sudan, hosted by the Government of Norway in April 2005, for recovery and development in all war-affected areas.

It gives me great pleasure to bring to the attention of this august gathering that the Government of Sudan concluded a peace agreement on 5 May this year to put an end to the war in Darfur. The peace agreement covers security arrangements, power sharing, wealth sharing and the future administration of Darfur. It also stresses the importance of respecting basic human freedoms, including freedom of worship, and the fair representation of Darfur's people in all institutions. The Government of Sudan will allocate funds for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the war-affected areas in Darfur. We call on the international community to commit financial resources to help the people of Darfur, especially in the humanitarian field, repatriation of refugees and displaced people, and development. We appreciate the decision of the Netherlands to organize a donor's conference on this issue.

Here, I take the opportunity to extend thanks and gratitude, on behalf of the people and Government of Sudan, to His Excellency the President of Nigeria, the African Union, the mediators and facilitators and friendly countries who spared no effort to help the parties to reach a peace agreement in Darfur.

To conclude, the Government of Sudan draws attention to the sufferings of the people of the occupied Arab territories and atrocities committed by the occupation authorities. We call on the ILO to increase assistance to the social partners in the occupied Arab territories so as to achieve decent work. On the other hand, the international community is asked to respect the democratic right of the Palestinian people to choose their own government.

(Mr. de Regil takes the Chair.)

Mr. ALLAM (*Employer, Egypt*)

On behalf of the employers and the Republic of Egypt, it is my pleasure to congratulate the President on his election to the presidency of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. I hope, and am sure, that the work of this Conference will be crowned with success.

Decent work is a term which is recognized internationally and which allows people to deal with

different situations. The programme to combat poverty certainly involves the promotion of decent work. Everyone deserves decent work. The Director-General of the International Labour Organization, in his Report *ILO programme implementation 2004-05*, comments on the efforts made by the ILO to promote the four strategic objectives of decent work. The Report refers to fundamental principles and rights at work, which means creating possibilities for employment, ensuring revenue, decent work and social protection for our workers, and recognizing the importance of social dialogue. The result of these strategies is made clear by the Report for a number of countries which have made changes to their labour policies in order to incorporate these fundamental principles and rights at work, and where very serious policies have been implemented in order to fight poverty. During the 2005 World Summit, we saw that decent work and productive work were made goals for all policies at international level.

The ILO is now implementing practical solutions for decent work, solutions which are based on dealing with challenges, such as child labour and discrimination between men and women, as well as on the need for local development. International preparation is vital, and technical cooperation is the key, along with national programmes, especially those national technical cooperation programmes in Arab countries where there are training programmes set up for small and medium-sized enterprises. Providing labour to qualified young people is also important. The 65th Congress of the Arab Labour Organization noted that investments in technical cooperation are increasing, in keeping with the needs of the social partners.

As regards social protection and social security, a number of systems of social security have been promoted, thanks again to the efforts of the ILO. We should like to pay tribute to programmes dealing with small enterprises, especially local development programmes, and those to improve labour conditions in small enterprises.

Generally speaking, as regards the activities and performance of the ILO in the period covered by the Director-General's Report, we note that the ILO has in large part met its targets in implementing the principles of decent work. Certainly, eliminating child labour is a tremendous challenge, since this practice exists in many countries. Since the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour began, we have seen progress, thanks to constant efforts made to put an end to the use of child labour by the year 2016.

We are concerned by the situation in the occupied Arab territories and we believe that greater efforts should be made in order to ensure security, stability and peace, as provided for in the ILO Constitution. Sustainable international peace will not be possible until social justice is provided, and employers' organizations and workers' organizations in the occupied territories deserve greater support. We also deplore the problems of access experienced by Palestinian workers and we call on the ILO to increase its technical training programmes in the occupied Arab territories, given the increase of unemployment and the deterioration of living conditions there. Irrespective of one's religion, or one's gender, everyone has a right to work and denying such a right denies the equality of opportunities for all.

Sr. ARTHUR ERRÁZURIZ (*empleador, Chile*)

Para nosotros, la participación en la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo reviste una especial significación, ya que representa la mejor instancia internacional para intercambiar ideas respecto a los temas laborales de actualidad, así como para trabajar de manera conjunta en la construcción de marcos normativos tendientes a garantizar las más sanas, humanas y modernas relaciones del trabajo posibles.

Nuestra participación viene a reafirmar a nivel internacional lo que en el plano nacional hemos estimado fundamental: el diálogo social.

Hoy, vivimos en un mundo en el que se hace indispensable ampliar los espacios de acción y colaboración para incrementar el crecimiento de las empresas y el bienestar de los trabajadores. Nuestro aparato productivo se desenvuelve en el marco de una economía abierta, donde se compite en base al conocimiento, las competencias técnicas, la organización y la productividad.

Las relaciones laborales que en el pasado han estado marcadas por la desconfianza y el conflicto entre trabajadores y empresarios han ido dando paso a unas que se fundan en el entendimiento y la colaboración. Para avanzar en este aspecto debemos vencer algunas resistencias.

En definitiva, debemos ser capaces de alcanzar un nuevo trato en la empresa con la participación de actores sociales fuertes, renovados y representativos de los distintos sectores. La alta y sostenida tasa de desempleo hace que fomentar la cultura del diálogo social sea una tarea prioritaria y urgente.

Y entendemos por diálogo social las relaciones que se producen entre actores sociales productivos (empresarios, trabajadores y sus respectivas organizaciones representativas) con la finalidad y voluntad efectiva de abordar en conjunto la búsqueda de soluciones a problemas de interés mutuo.

En nuestro país hemos hecho permanentes esfuerzos en esta materia poniendo un especial énfasis durante el último tiempo. Desde hace poco más de un año, empresarios y trabajadores chilenos hemos participado en instancias de acercamiento que nos han permitido llevar adelante un diálogo técnico sobre diversos temas, tales como educación, capacitación, seguridad social, acción gremial y sindical. A pesar de las naturales y conocidas diferencias, ambas partes hemos procurado privilegiar una visión de país con miras al bien común, por sobre los intereses particulares de cada sector.

Coincidimos hoy en que en un mundo en el que la economía social de mercado se ha consolidado como la forma más eficiente de organizar las actividades productivas, la empresa privada constituye el motor de la economía. Esta debe ser entendida como un espacio de cooperación y armonía entre trabajadores y empresarios, donde ambos deben trabajar juntos en el logro del bienestar mutuo y de la sociedad.

Estamos inmersos en un proceso de globalización donde todo cambia rápido y existen cada vez menos barreras de todo tipo. Esto se aplica también al mundo de la empresa, donde ya no es común trabajar durante toda la vida en un mismo lugar. Nuevos sectores se han incorporado al mundo del trabajo, se incrementan las relaciones por cuenta propia y cada vez más procesos productivos requieren de jornadas de trabajo especiales.

Ante estos vertiginosos cambios, nuestro sistema de relaciones laborales y, por consiguiente, la legislación del trabajo deben adecuarse también rápidamente; ello significa que instituciones y normas más modernas y funcionales deban aplicarse a nuestro mercado del trabajo.

Estimamos que se requiere de un marco jurídico moderno que combine la necesaria flexibilización de las relaciones laborales que demanda el mercado, con los adecuados resguardos que eviten su precarización.

En este sentido, los múltiples y fundamentales cambios ocurridos en la economía y la sociedad durante los últimos años han hecho cada vez más necesario disponer de sistemas de relaciones laborales alternativos, distintos del contrato de trabajo tradicional. Dentro de esta dinámica, el trabajo en régimen de contratación y las empresas de servicios transitorios resultan claves.

Restringir estas formas de contratación puede ser perjudicial para la generación de empleo, así como para la subsistencia de miles de empresas pequeñas y medianas. La Confederación que represento siempre ha condenado y seguirá haciéndolo cualquier violación de los derechos de los trabajadores, pero siempre seguirá abogando por la primacía de la racionalidad, el derecho al trabajo y el derecho al libre emprendimiento privado.

En este sentido, valoramos el protocolo de acuerdo suscrito en el Congreso Nacional de Chile, mediante el cual se precisan seis aspectos del proyecto de ley sobre subcontratación y empresas de servicios transitorios.

Esperamos que estas aclaraciones superen algunas ambigüedades y restricciones excesivas que se podrían haber producido en esta materia. Se debe estar especialmente atento a las formas en que se limite el concepto de subcontratación en la redacción del texto final.

Otro tema que está discutiéndose en el mundo es la reforma de los sistemas de previsión social. Los cambios demográficos (el aumento en las expectativas de vida y la disminución de la tasa de natalidad) han hecho inviables los mecanismos de reparto (*pay as you go*) que, paulatinamente, han ido dando paso a sistemas de capitalización en los que el trabajador es dueño de sus aportes, que son administrados por empresas privadas en un ambiente de competencia que fomenta la rentabilidad de los recursos.

En Chile, la reforma del Sistema de Pensiones cumplió 25 años de existencia, período durante el cual ha demostrado enorme fortaleza, tanto desde la perspectiva de su contribución al mejoramiento de las pensiones de los trabajadores como desde su contribución al desarrollo económico del país. Al efecto, la administración eficiente de estos recursos ha permitido que en estos 25 años los trabajadores hayan obtenido rentabilidades superiores al 10 por ciento como promedio real anual.

El Sistema ha implicado también un importante aporte a nuestro desarrollo económico en lo que se refiere a la profundización del mercado de capitales, el impulso a la industria aseguradora, la contribución a los proyectos de infraestructura y de vivienda, y el aporte, en general, al crecimiento económico de Chile.

Conscientes de estos beneficios, sabemos que el Sistema de Pensiones debe enfrentar nuevos desafíos que lo perfeccionen. Para ello, se ha constituido en Chile una comisión de expertos para estudiar los

perfeccionamientos que éste requiere a fin de asegurar las mejores pensiones a los trabajadores.

Erróneamente, algunos sectores culpan a las administradoras de fondos de pensiones de problemas que, en realidad, no derivan del Sistema en sí sino del mercado del trabajo. El desempleo, la discriminación por género y por edad, y la informalidad, entre otros factores, atentan contra la cotización regular de los trabajadores afiliados a las administradoras.

Todo ello hace necesario, otra vez, que la reforma previsional vaya acompañada de cambios sustanciales en las normas que regulan las relaciones de trabajo para hacerlas más flexibles y eficientes, a fin de que promuevan el empleo y la formalidad.

Mr. RACHMAN (*Employer, Indonesia*)

First of all, allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Employers' Association of Indonesia (APINDO) to express our warmest congratulations to the President on his election at this 95th Session of the International Labour Conference 2006.

Secondly, I should also like to take this opportunity to convey our sincere gratitude and appreciation to you all, especially to the Director-General of the ILO, for your expressions of sympathy and condolences to the sad and unexpected earthquake disaster that happened in Yogyakarta and some parts of Central Java Provinces in Indonesia on 27 May 2006. To date, we have received confirmation of the death toll rising to more than 6,000, over 46,000 injuries and around 200,000 persons are now displaced.

Unemployment and poverty in Indonesia are creating great burdens to the development of our society. At the same time, there is lack of implementation with respect to the national security system and law enforcement. All these factors have in fact caused extra cost to the operation of enterprises.

Therefore, it is our view that investment can be a fundamental solution to these problems. With the flourishing investment, improving prosperity, quality of education, and preventing as well as eliminating the worst forms of child labour can be effectively pursued. In addition, efforts to push and sustain the growth and development of investment can be made through the following ways: good performance of production capacity to meet the growing public demand; sustainable improvement of production appliances, management and manpower employability; and/or new investment in formal and informal sectors, particularly domestic and foreign investors.

The market itself depends on supply and demand. Proper services and better competitive advantages will be the basic platforms of sustainable investment. In these days, our business competitiveness is relatively low to meet international as well as domestic markets.

In Indonesia, there has recently been a labour issue as the Government has a plan to revise certain provisions in the Labor Act No. 13 of 2003. In this regard, allow me to share with you regarding the development of this issue, as follows.

As a follow-up of the national tripartite summit agreement in the beginning of 2005 and understanding agreed at the national tripartite body, the Minister of Manpower and Transmigration of the Republic of Indonesia launched a proposal of changes on certain articles of the Labor Act No. 13 of 2003 in February 2006. Unfortunately, the representatives

of trade unions refused the draft proposal, arguing that this had never been discussed before.

After a month of postponement, consultation among the tripartite was restarted in March 2006. Again, it ended up in deadlock and disappointment to all parties. Trade unions refused the proposed draft definitely. Despite efforts by APINDO to bring this matter into the priority agenda of the national tripartite body, this, in the end, found no success.

After this deadlock, mass demonstrations and strikes in several cities were held by trade unions at both national and local levels. These badly created serious business interruptions.

In April 2006, the President of the Republic of Indonesia initiated a meeting to facilitate a constructive dialogue between representatives of trade unions and APINDO. The President asked all parties to remain restrained and propose academic interventions in making an analysis for a solution. Five universities were asked to do this task and planned to submit their conclusions in two months.

Despite this consultation, trade unions announced the Jakarta Declaration emphasizing their refusal to the draft proposal. This was followed by mass demonstrations in various cities. In Jakarta, riots occurred in the area surrounding the National Parliament on 4 May 2006. Against this background, some business associations in certain sectors have planned to sue trade unions due to the serious losses incurred during the mass demonstrations.

Let me reaffirm to you, APINDO has a good faith to maintain the importance of social dialogue with social partners in solving all industrial relations problems. However, at this juncture, I would like to take this good opportunity to bring to the attention of the leaders of trade unions, particularly in Indonesia, that they show more consistency, in the spirit of social dialogue within the bipartite procedure, in dealing with the said industrial relations problems.

For our part, APINDO has in fact taken initiative in establishing a bipartite dialogue forum to discuss all aspects that may affect the positive investment climate in Indonesia. This bipartite forum was agreed by all parties concerned and served many dialogues, and did not merely focus on the issue of the revision of the Labor Act.

In conclusion, I do hope that in this good opportunity of attending this 95th Session of the International Labour Conference, the delegations of APINDO and the trade unions can continuously take positive action in the framework of bipartite dialogue forum, to concentrate on synergizing the spirit of dialogue in favour of attaining a climate conducive to the world of work and business.

On this basis I am convinced that by overcoming problems of unemployment, poverty, as well as creating a conducive climate on investment and prosperity for our nation can be better served.

Original Arabic: Mr. ALZAROO (Government, Palestine)

I would like to take this opportunity to convey the greetings of the Palestinian people – the President, the Government and the people – and of the Palestinian Minister of Labour, who is unable to attend this Conference, because the Israeli authorities prevented him from leaving the Palestinian territories.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of the Director-General's Report, which places emphasis on a set of principles and strategic goals that are an integral part of the International Labour Organization's no-

ble mission. We are grateful for the ILO's past and current efforts with regard to Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, especially in the light of the extremely difficult and unusual situation of workers and peoples in Palestine. However, over the last years, we have noted a considerable decrease in assistance despite the fact that the recent developments in our country make assistance even more necessary. Given the current major challenges faced by the social partners in Palestine, and given the noble principles on which this Organization was founded, we are convinced that the ILO is in a position to step up its efforts considerably.

Just like any people in the world, Palestinians seek social peace. The struggle for social peace and better working conditions is inseparable from the fight against war and racist occupation. It is therefore imperative that taking a stand on the Palestinian cause is a key criterion for the peoples of the world, who are represented by their States, governments and organizations, when it comes to achieving social peace.

In this context, I would like to underline that the deadlock in the peace process in our region, contrary to what Israel and its allies allege, is not caused by the current action of the Palestine Government. Rather, it is a result of the policies and positions adopted by successive Israeli Governments that are based on a lack of respect for the Palestinian peoples' fundamental rights, especially the right to self-determination; the right to create an independent Palestinian State with Al-Qods as its capital; and the right of refugees who were driven from their homeland over 58 years ago to return home. The current Palestinian Government, which was elected in transparent and democratic elections, was preceded by nine governments, all of which recognized Israel and its right to existence, in order to find a comprehensive, peaceful settlement that would put an end to the bloody struggle, in the hope to end Israeli occupation. However, these objectives were not attained, because Israel's concessions were purely cosmetic and without effect, and at the beginning of the Oslo process 12 years later, the situation of the Palestinian people was even more catastrophic.

Israeli mentality is the main obstacle to peace in our region; Israelis lay claims over Palestinian lands, under the pretext of baseless religious, historical, political and security issues that are based on rationale of force and occupation. The true problem is the policy of confiscating Palestinian land, either for the purpose of colonization – which was recognized worldwide as being illegal – or to build a racist separation wall that has divided Palestinian lands into isolated regions and cantons and that the International Court of Justice in the Hague has found to be illegal and racist.

In addition, the separation of the Gaza Strip from the West Bank; the separation of Al-Qods from the West Bank; the hundreds of military checkpoints and roadblocks; the daily humiliation of Palestinians passing those road blocks in the morning and at night; Israel's continuing of attacks and assassinations; the presence of over 9,000 political prisoners in Israeli detention centres; Israel's withholding of revenue owed to the Palestinian Authority; the blockade by Israel and other international parties after the new Government assumed power and the resulting starvation of the population. All these policies and practices have increased the suffering

of our people in various areas; hampered the overall and sustainable development in the Palestinian territories; and impeded efforts to rebuild the economy, which was destroyed by the occupation and the attendant arbitrary measures. All these policies have led to a rise in unemployment and poverty in Palestine. The unemployment rate reached 33 per cent during the first quarter of 2006, and over 65 per cent of Palestinians are living below the poverty line. Not to mention the more than 165,000 civil servants, representing some 23.7 per cent of all workers and supporting over 1 million Palestinians, who are without any income because they have not been paid for over three months. This situation portends a true humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

The lack of political perspective in the region and the policy of blockade and political blackmail imposed by Israel against the Palestinian people for having exercised its democratic right to choose its own government will no doubt further exacerbate the feeling of despair among the population. If the world remains silent in respect of those practices, it will bestow legitimacy on the Israeli occupation; undermine international legitimacy and the credibility of relevant decisions; and weaken the basis for equitable peace. It will also make the Palestinian Authority's structures and institutions crumble, which were built over the past 12 years with donor support. All this will only serve the enemies of peace. It will doubtlessly fuel extremism, violence and disorder and destroy the basis for fair and comprehensive peace in the region. It will also have disastrous consequences on the entire region that can spiral out of control.

We invite all peoples and governments to take the side of the Palestinian people and support their fair and legitimate struggle to end Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and Arab territories, so they can establish a sovereign State with Al-Qods as its capital. Palestinians are determined to continue their struggle and efforts to create fair and comprehensive peace, which can only be achieved if Israel recognizes international legitimacy and the legitimate rights of Palestinians, which are reaffirmed in dozens of United Nations resolutions.

Hope gives momentum to peace; justice engenders moderation; honesty calls for justice. Our mission is to give our people hope; your mission is to help us by taking a sincere and courageous, balanced and honest stance, thus preventing that our people and workers are abandoned to hunger, oppression, deprivation and blockade.

Ms. CLAIR (*Worker, New Zealand*)

I join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your appointment, Mr President. I seek the indulgence of the plenary to begin with a greeting in my language, the indigenous language of New Zealand, Maori, and then I will continue in English for the rest of my address:

Greeting follows in Maori language.

Greetings to you all from the workers, Government and employers of the New Zealand delegation and also from the indigenous people of New Zealand, the Maori.

It is truly an honour and privilege for me to stand here as an indigenous woman of New Zealand and as the first Maori Vice-President of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions, to share beliefs, concerns and of course our connections to the environment. I pay homage to all those who throughout

history have done so much to promote and defend the rights of working women and men, create social justice and fight for equality, human rights and democracy. They have taught us that trade unions play a vital role in ensuring that we must continue to create a tomorrow that our grandchildren will value. This involves keeping this planet alive, looking after each other and our natural resources. It means workers must mobilize by applying a rights-based approach that integrates the environmental and social dimensions of sustainable development.

Trade unions understand the desire to create a sustainable world and we understand that sustainability is not just about how we use natural resources; it is also about our societal structures and relationships with each other. Maori people understand our duty to live in balance and harmony with each other and all living things. To do this we must have keen and unhurried thinking which resides in good heart. The sacredness of this is respect. The choices we make affect our evolutionary process. If we live unconsciously we evolve unconsciously. If we live consciously we evolve consciously.

The ILO's evolving consciousness demonstrates global leadership in good heart. Commitment to the Decent Work Agenda is paramount to good heart evolution.

Work is one of the most important avenues by which we come to know ourselves as people. Work is the place and the activity in which we spend most of our waking lives and must align with our sense of ourselves as individuals and as members of our communities and environments to achieve our aspirations.

It is important to work together to achieve unity and purpose, to cooperate, to relate to one another in meaningful ways. The ILO leads the way in the world through tripartism. I am proud to be able to say that in New Zealand, whilst we still have much work to do, we promote an active approach to social and economic development, committing ourselves to partnerships and promoting change that leads to greater prosperity for all in Aotearoa – New Zealand – and the Pacific.

A major priority for workers in New Zealand is supporting joint union campaigns to increase wages, end low pay and improve training and skills and investment in people because workers want a fair go to decent work to achieve an end to poverty.

The war against children must end. Our young need to be able to have freedom from poverty so that they can be the leaders we will need tomorrow. Poverty and impoverishment must end so that a strong, healthy, dynamic workforce can blossom.

In conclusion, I would like to share a message from a very wise Maori priest the Rev. Maori Marsden who said: "Man is the conscious mind of Mother Earth and plays a vital part in the regulation of her life support system and man's duty is to enhance and sustain those systems."

Therefore, all workers, all employers and all Government members of the ILO let us reaffirm our commitment to a living planet where decent work is enjoyed by everyone.

Original Vietnamese: Ms. CU (Worker, Viet Nam)

We highly appreciate the reports presented by the Chairperson of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO. We are proud of the efforts made and accomplishments achieved by the ILO over the past year, especially on important issues

such as the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the elimination of child labour, and occupational health and safety.

After 20 years of renovation since 1986, Viet Nam has recorded encouraging achievements in socio-economic development. The average annual GDP growth reached 7.5 per cent in the last five years. People's lives have been improving day by day. The development strategy of Viet Nam in the coming period is to bring the country out of a less-developed status, creating momentum for a modern-oriented industrial country in the year 2020 and driving up the cause of national industrialization and modernization for the goal of creating rich people, a wealthy country, and a just, democratic and civilized society.

The Viet Nam General Confederation of Labour, with a total membership of over 5 million in 19 industrial unions and 64 provincial unions, is striving to better represent and protect the lawful and legitimate rights and interests of Vietnamese workers. The trade unions of Viet Nam over the past year have actively brought into full play the role of the representation and protection of workers' rights and interests. They have made every effort in membership development and unionization in all economic sectors, especially in foreign direct investment enterprises and the private sector. They have also improved the capacity of enterprise union activists in negotiations and collective bargaining agreements, labour dispute settlements and the promotion of sound industrial relations in the workplace. Much attention has been paid to awareness raising for workers and enterprise unions on issues such as occupational health and safety, HIV/AIDS prevention and child labour in the workplace. The trade unions of Viet Nam have actively participated in the formulation and completion of legislative systems, especially labour-related legislation and policies, with a view to better safeguarding workers' rights and interests. Vietnamese trade unions have also striven for international solidarity and unity of action with trade unions all over the world in their common struggle for a better life for workers.

Over the past few years, the ILO and friendly trade union organizations the world over have provided workers and Vietnamese trade unions with efficient support and assistance. Thanks to the ILO technical cooperation, thousands of Vietnamese trade unionists have been trained intensively to improve their skills in negotiation and collective bargaining, labour dispute settlements, occupational health and safety, child labour and gender equality. We always highly value and sincerely thank the ILO for its productive support and technical cooperation and wish to receive further support and assistance from the ILO and friendly international trade union organizations in order to overcome challenges arising from Viet Nam's integration into the world economy and in the context of globalization.

Mr. SEN (*representative, Trade Unions International of Public and Allied Employees*)

At the outset I express my gratitude to you and the ILO Governing Body for providing me with this opportunity to address the Plenary of the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference.

The 95th Session of the International Labour Conference is taking place in an unprecedentedly diffi-

cult phase of the world situation. Never before have the jobs of the workers and employees been so jeopardized and the workers been rendered so completely insecure in respect of their jobs, economic benefits, social security and trade union rights.

Social securities, pension benefits and other financial gains are now being reversed, putting the working class in grave insecurity. Hundreds of thousands of workers are losing their jobs, unemployment has assumed formidable dimensions and poverty has increased. Statutory pension systems, which were in vogue for several decades for public service employees in different countries, are threatened with privatization to boost the stock market and private companies in tune with the profit-only policy of globalization. All these are taking place under the policy direction of the IMF and the World Bank.

In 2004, the Director-General's Report confirmed our contention that for many people the benefits of globalization are today a mirage. The World Commission on Globalization also vindicates our contention against globalization when it says that "worldwide, many are convinced that the rights of capital are better protected than the rights of workers!"

ILO Director-General Juan Somavia warned of an "unprecedented job crisis" while addressing the last World Economic Forum held in Davos.

"Decent work is at the heart of the economic and social concerns of all people", Mr. Somavia said.

The Director-General said the global jobs crisis was illustrated by a number of factors. Firstly, half of all the workers of the world – some 1.4 billion working people – currently live in families that survive on less than US\$2 a day per person. They work in the vast informal sector – from farms to fishing, from agriculture to urban alleyways – without benefits, social security or health care. Unemployment in terms of actual people out of work is at its biggest point and the trend continues to rise. In the last ten years, official unemployment has grown by more than 25 per cent and now stands at nearly 192 million worldwide, or about 6 per cent of the global workforce. Of these unemployed, the ILO estimates that 86 million, or about half the global total, are young people aged 15 to 24. When people cannot find work at home in their communities and societies, they look elsewhere. In the present environment, labour migration easily becomes a source of tension, not to speak of trafficking and other similar activities.

"One might ask whether the recent global economic growth is sufficient to offset the job crisis", asked Mr. Somavia. His own answer is no. In the words of Mr. Somavia, "the global job crisis is one of the biggest security risks we face today".

While portraying this extremely grim picture of unemployment condition, the ILO Director-General said that decent work was at the heart of the economic and social concern of all people, and rightly so: In the Director-General's Report to the 95th Session of the International Labour Conference it is also stated that ILO has positioned decent work, with its relative and absolute components, as a widely shared policy objective.

But what is the reality? All over the capitalist world, workers are witnessing longer working hours, withdrawal of job protection, hire and fire and drastic cuts in social security benefits, privatization of pensions, etc.

The examples of one small country, Puerto Rico, are sufficient to reveal the stark reality. It is reported that 90,000 public employees filed unemployed benefit requests, which means a huge number of public employees have been fired. More than 95,000 teachers, maintenance workers and other public sector employees were laid off as a part of partial government shutdown in that country.

In France, in April 2006, about 3 million workers and students paralysed the country protesting against a notorious labour law allowing employers to dismiss new recruits within the first two years of service. In Great Britain, 1.4 million government employees went on a complete strike protesting against a pension scheme. In India also, against pension privatization scheme and labour law violations, public employees and other workers organized the biggest of strike struggles in 2004 and 2005. This has become a global struggle against the anti-worker neo-liberal policies being pursued by the governments concerned.

It is necessary that the ILO take these serious developments into account and direct its activities to protect the workers from this ferocious onslaught. The TUI recognizes the important role played by the ILO at the present time and desires further strengthening of its role in the formulation and implementation of international labour standards despite financial, political and other forms of pressure by the dominant economic powers and neo-liberal forces who seek to impose their economic and military hegemony.

On behalf of the Trade Unions International of Public and Allied Employees, which represents 20 million public employees in different countries, we strongly feel that there should be more consensus-based and non-discriminatory functioning and decision-making of the ILO with the involvement of all segments of the trade union movement so that the ILO, with its Governing Body and ACTRAV, are able to properly deal with the fast-developing situation that the world is witnessing today.

Original Arabic: Mr. DJEMAM (representative, International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions)

First, allow me to congratulate the President on his election. This sitting is taking place during times of difficulty where we are not able to have a decent life, poverty has increased, and children are being deprived of education, despite all the efforts being made to eradicate or at least limit the problem.

I should also like to refer to the Report of the Director-General this year where he deals with questions of major importance concerning work and the idea of decent work, given the very important role played by the ILO and the work done in conjunction with the office in Beirut. We wish to ensure that this cooperation can overcome the difficulties that these Arab countries are experiencing and that we can apply the ILO standards and ensure dialogue among the partners. With this in mind we are determined to continue strengthening this dialogue and that is why we have had this Arab dialogue since it is special and of great importance for the trade unions and employees. We wish to improve this dialogue and improve the fundamental freedoms and trade union rights.

Here I would like to refer to the positive steps taken by Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Oman and Qatar in creating trade union institutions, and contributing to

the development of social peace, in harmony with international labour standards.

The Director-General's Report for this year refers to the conditions of the workers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, the Golan Heights and Lebanon under Israeli occupation. Despite the improvement in the results indicated in this Report, the situation is still less favourable than we would expect and does not meet international labour standards. It is also not in conformity with the ILO resolution.

It is of surprise to learn about the conditions of life and work for Arab workers living in occupied territories where Palestinian workers are being humiliated and oppressed and incarcerated as a punishment for the democratic choice of their representatives carried out in democratic elections recognized by the international community.

The same thing applies for Lebanese labour and the Syrian Golan where the workers are subjected to all kinds of atrocities under the Israeli authorities.

In Iraq, we see complete disaster. Children in Iraq are dying in their dozens, in their hundreds, under the military coalition under the aegis of the United States and the United Kingdom, and from this podium I should like to urge the occupying forces to leave and to give the Palestinian people their self-determination. We would express our support for the workers in Syria and their efforts to liberate the territory. We also express our support with regard to Sudan in protecting its sovereignty. We would urge non-interference and an end to this terrorism imposed by the United States and Israel, which just increased the rate of human disasters suffered by workers in the Arab region, which are deprived of decent life and decent work.

This region will only see peace once the occupying forces are removed and the territory is returned to its owners.

Mr. ADILL (*Worker, Afghanistan*)

I am very happy to be speaking to you at this session of the International Labour Conference. Coming from Afghanistan, I faced financial difficulties to make it to this meeting.

The All Afghanistan Federation of Trade Unions (AAFTU) is a strong and representative organization uniting 24 different unions for Afghan workers, men, women and children. The AAFTU has been working continuously to assist Afghan workers in line with ILO policy since it was established on 23 May 1997 when Mr. Rueben Dudley was Director of the ILO Office in Pakistan. The AAFTU celebrates United Nations days such as Labour Day, International Women's Day, World Day Against Child Labour and so on without any assistance from any sources. Several letters, documents and proposals have been sent to the ILO Office in Pakistan, the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, the ICFTU Asia and Pacific Regional Organization and the ILO Office in Kabul asking for assistance. We have also sent some photo albums and cassette tapes of our activities to the ILO. We are working to improve workers' rights for men and women, the rights of child workers, education for very poor children, and so on.

As is well known, Afghanistan is a country which has suffered two-and-a-half decades of war, and during the war everything, the formal and informal economy, was destroyed. Even though we have been waiting for a long time, unfortunately no aid

has been given to us. When Mr. Johannes Lokollo was Director of the ILO Office in Pakistan, he was invited to our office and shown our programme at that time. After the defeat of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the AAFTU's main office moved to Kabul and continues to fulfil its role there. When Mr. David Salter became the ILO Senior Coordinator in Afghanistan (ILO-Kabul) he met our office staff and was shown our programmes.

As yet, the Government of Afghanistan has no Ministry of Labour. There is a Ministry of Martyrs and Disabled and a Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and these Ministries have the joint responsibility of solving the social and economic issues of society. Until now the Ministries have not played a positive role in all these issues which concern the welfare of labourers and workers.

The workers and labourers of Afghanistan lost everything. There are no jobs, there are no good incomes, there is poverty among the people, particularly labourers and workers. Now they need to enhance their lives, which will be possible if the international community and the ILO's offices working all over the world can come together to establish welfare and insurance projects in Afghanistan.

As we know, trade unions are playing a very positive and important role in the development and improvement of our country, so we are kindly requesting that the international community and the ILO should assist Afghanistan and to enhance its informal economy by sending funds and implementing projects all over Afghanistan. The AAFTU's administration costs are increasing and the AAFTU cannot meet those costs without the help of the ILO, so we are in this case once again requesting the Director-General of the ILO and other welfare institutions to help and assist us economically and technically.

The text of 15 Conventions to which Afghanistan is party and those Conventions to which it is in the process of acceding have been studied by the AAFTU. The president and members of the AAFTU welcome all the Conventions and agree with them and their practical implementation in society is the dream and aim of the AAFTU. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has sent copies of 138 Conventions to the AAFTU head office to obtain the views of the AAFTU, who have then returned them to the Ministry. It is my contention to the Ministry and ILO-Kabul that this will ensure the social rights of citizens and, in some cases, will change the addressing of all related affairs.

Thus, since the Government is sending the Conventions to obtain the views of trade unions, we have noted that page 3 includes a requirement that a social organization be registered with the framework of the Ministry of Justice. We have no objection on this issue, but we have to say that, in this case, organizations may or may not be physically able to register or even inquire about registering, or may register under some other category of organization. The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and ILO-Kabul should first solve these problems.

Regarding the five articles that are mentioned on page 5, the AAFTU can play a very important role in implementation and management. The Government must focus on it.

A message from Mr. Mohammad Zafar Quraishi, President of the All Afghanistan Federation of Trade Union.

To all participants, the distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased and grateful that today Dr. Muhammad Liaquat Adill, Senior Vice-President and active member of the AAFTU, is presenting my message to the honourable participants, experts and Members of the ILO at this 95th Session of the International Labour Conference. First of all, I want to submit my best wishes to all participants and particularly to the staff of the ILO and the Director-General for a healthy and comfortable life ...

[The President interrupts the speaker to say he is out of time.]

It is a great pleasure for me that today, a representative of the AAFTU can participate alongside representatives of other countries of the world in the work of this important body, discussing the rights of labourers and workers and making decisions to improve their welfare and conditions of work.

Original Arabic: Mr. HIJJAWI (Employer, Palestine)

It is an honour to address you all on behalf of the Palestinian private sector at the 95th Session of this important annual Conference. It is my hope that the Conference will adopt resolutions and recommendations which reflect the importance given to employers in the Palestinian private sector and employment in Palestine.

I should like to take this opportunity to express my respect for the Organization, which is represented by the Director-General.

Reference should be made to the mission of the International Labour Organization which visited Palestine, in accordance with the resolution adopted by the International Labour Conference in 1980, in order to assess the difficult economic and social situation of Palestinian employers and workers who are subjected to the severe measures imposed by the occupation. The mission received our full cooperation and we provided it with genuine information and facts.

We should like to thank the Director-General for the recommendations contained in his Report concerning the deterioration of the economic conditions and situation of Palestinian workers. These recommendations emphasize the need to ensure that these workers have decent places of work, as well as the freedom of movement and transportation. They also refer to the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories; a situation which requires urgent and immediate intervention to prevent it from collapsing.

On behalf of employers, before the Conference, I would like to express our regret that the mission did not hold meetings with the Palestinian Minister for Labour. We consider this to be a political position adopted by the International Labour Organization which is not in keeping with its regulations or labour standards.

The Reports of the Director-General have played a fundamental role in raising public awareness of the suffering of the Palestinian people; this role stems from the responsibility which rests upon this Organization, namely that of protecting human rights relating to work and workers which are set out in international instruments and Arab labour standards. We thank the Director-General for his Report and hope that he will take into account the observations of the Arab group in that respect, particularly the observation emphasizing that we are citizens in our own territory, and not a population.

The Palestinian economy has been one of the sectors most affected by the Israeli occupation during the last 40 years. The Israeli occupation authorities have a great many measures and policies targeting the land and water resources of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. They are also aimed at making the Palestinian economy entirely dependent on the Israeli economy by creating a relationship of interdependence (which still persists), in areas such as the labour market, domestic and foreign trade, tax revenue, international communications, the currency, energy sources, water and internal and external crossing points.

Before concluding, I should like to make the following recommendations, in the hope that they will be taken into account in the resolutions and recommendations of this Conference:

- (1) Intervene to remove the major obstacles facing the private sector and the Palestinian workforce, in order to bring peace and stability to the region.
- (2) Request the donor countries and friends of Palestine to provide aid for us, the Palestinian people, aid that was interrupted when the Palestinians exercised their democratic right. A third of the population is living in a state of extreme anxiety and difficult conditions, owing to the non-payment of wages. This has had a negative impact on the general Palestinian economic situation.
- (3) The International Labour Organization must call on the Government of Israel to transfer tax and customs revenues and other revenues owed to the Palestinian Authority, because our people urgently require these funds which have become a means of political pressure.
I should also like to point out that the non-payment by the Palestinian Authority of the sums owed to the Palestinian private sector, as a result of the non-receipt of foreign aid and the retention by Israel of the revenues due, will lead to the collapse of the economy and a potentially catastrophic situation.
- (4) Increase action regarding the support and development of Palestinian private sector firms, thus contributing directly to the development of this sector so that it may serve the Palestinian people and build their economy.
- (5) Put pressure on Israel to open the Gaza Strip crossing points, remove the road blocks and obstacles between the towns of the West Bank and facilitate travel between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, in order to ensure freedom of movement and transport and to stimulate production which is approaching breakdown. The current state of affairs makes it extremely difficult to maintain industrial and commercial capacity, which in turn has a negative effect on employment in Palestine.
- (6) Finally, your Organization played a fundamental role in the creation of the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, in aid of the Palestinian workers and we hope that you will continue to support this Fund and to call on friendly countries and donors to provide the necessary assistance.

Mrs. DEL RIO (*Worker, Italy*)

The Italian trade union confederations, CGIL, CISL and UIL, welcome the ILO Global Report *The end of child labour: Within reach*, issued this year

under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

The Report gives us useful information regarding the nature and the extent of the problem in the different countries and regions, although concerns have been raised by trade unions regarding the reliability of the figures. We continue to stress the importance of tackling together fundamental Conventions Nos. 138 and 182.

It should be pointed out that significant progress has only been made in Latin America, while in Asia and Africa the problem remains very serious. In particular in Asia, where in some countries economic growth is very high, we would have expected more visible results. Furthermore, we have to consider that unemployment among adults is increasing across the globe, which means that we need different strategies to encourage the creation of regular and contract labour worldwide, assuring compliance with labour standards.

The elimination of child labour is one of the challenges facing us, but we need coherent national policies and a system at the international level working and striving for common priorities and objectives. Convergence between national and international policies is a key element for the achievement of positive results.

We have pointed out on several occasions that it is crucial for the ILO to build a constructive relationship and a common workplan with the international financial institutions and the WTO, in order to set up coherent national programmes based on the ILO Decent Work Agenda, linking development policies and governance.

The first important occasion to discuss these issues is the ECOSOC High-level Segment on employment to be held in July.

We also need to have an open discussion on the reform of the UN and the particular role of the ILO.

We welcome the proposal to organize a forum on decent work next year. We are convinced that we should go beyond the promotion of core labour standards. We must enlarge our working agenda. The forum should represent an occasion to set up a new partnership with governments, progressive employers and the international organizations and financial institutions, to promote the adoption of action programmes on a country-by-country basis. The available resources at international level have to be strategically allocated and not dispersed.

ILO technical cooperation has a key role in accompanying and supporting in a more consistent way the implementation of these national programmes, provided that the social partners are fully involved and strengthened by the technical cooperation projects.

The Italian trade union confederations cannot but underline once again the key role of the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin in carrying out targeted and better focused training programmes, in line with the Decent Work Agenda. But the Centre needs and deserves more concrete and convinced support from the ILO, with a policy based on the integration of the Centre with Geneva and with the extensive use of the Centre for the implementation of technical cooperation projects.

One final remark. We are deeply concerned by the continued violation of fundamental Conventions by a group of countries and we urge intervention by the ILO and Governments on the issue, in particular regarding Belarus, Myanmar and Zimbabwe, while

we welcome the recent tripartite agreement signed here during the Conference by the Colombian constituents.

Original arabe: M. BENJELLOUN ANDALOUSSI (travailleur, Maroc)

Plusieurs questions peuvent être posées qui appellent une réponse responsable dont la question sur le rôle des syndicats, à l'ère de la mondialisation. En ce qui nous concerne, notre syndicat a choisi la voie du partenariat fondé sur une relation contractuelle avec nos interlocuteurs, dans le gouvernement et les autres secteurs de l'économie, afin de développer l'entreprise citoyenne avec les syndicats citoyens. Ce choix nous est imposé par le désir d'associer la protection des emplois avec la compétitivité, la qualité et la formation et d'encourager la participation de tous les partenaires au développement futur de l'entreprise.

Cette démarche pragmatique nous a amené à reconsidérer la façon dont nous formons les cadres syndicaux à de nouvelles formes de relations au travail et de les former également aux questions de la gestion et de l'esprit d'entreprise. Voilà l'option adoptée dans le dialogue avec les partenaires sociaux dans la préparation des lois du travail et de la famille et dans les débats sur la législation concernant la protection sociale et les grèves, l'organisation des syndicats et les questions de retraite. Nous considérons que cet ensemble législatif peut être une base pour le dialogue social, et nous désirons institutionnaliser le dialogue social par l'application d'un article portant sur le commencement des travaux du Conseil économique et social.

Néanmoins, les syndicats se heurtent encore à de nombreux obstacles. Des violations quotidiennes sont commises par des gens qui ne reconnaissent pas l'importance et la valeur des relations de partenariat et la responsabilité de protéger le travail et d'assurer une protection sociale. Nous insistons sur la nécessité pour notre gouvernement de ratifier la convention n° 87, même si cela se faisait avec les réserves nécessaires sur certains points.

En même temps, nous remarquons que les pressions que nous imposent les institutions internationales et les mesures d'ouverture non justifiées des marchés nous empêchent de protéger nos industries, et nous amènent à nous poser la question: à quoi sert le dialogue social local lorsqu'il y a un tel déséquilibre dans les relations entre le Nord et le Sud et qu'il n'existe aucun dialogue positif entre les institutions financières créditrices et les pays débiteurs? Comment peut-il y avoir un dialogue avec des puissances dominatrices?

L'OIT est notre refuge, l'endroit où nous pouvons venir réclamer justice pour les problèmes des travailleurs face aux gouvernements et aux employeurs et nous n'accepterons jamais que sa responsabilité ou sa mission soient réduites, car elle est la seule tribune chargée de défendre les valeurs humaines et

les droits fondamentaux en matière de travail et de nous protéger contre toutes les formes de domination et d'injustice.

Ces pratiques se répercutent sur la situation des travailleurs migrants négligés et exploités et dont les conditions n'ont fait qu'empirer au cours des dernières années. Pour les deuxième et troisième générations de migrants, la vie est devenue encore plus difficile bien qu'ils soient des citoyens à part entière. La lutte contre l'immigration illégale ne doit pas se limiter à une approche sécuritaire. Il s'agit d'un problème plus profond qui touche au rapport entre le Nord et le Sud, se traduit par l'exode de cerveaux, l'exploitation effrénée des ressources naturelles et devient un obstacle au développement et au progrès.

Des mesures doivent être prises pour corriger le déséquilibre entre le Nord qui avance très rapidement et le Sud qui ne fait que reculer. C'est une véritable guerre, même si elle n'est pas déclarée.

Il est vrai que certains pays pauvres ont des problèmes très graves qui sont l'image du sous-développement, des problèmes qui trouvent leur origine dans l'inégalité des chances, l'analphabétisme, les drogues, les maladies graves, notamment le VIH. Sans oublier la situation de la femme qui est le véritable moteur de tout changement positif. C'est ainsi qu'il ne faut pas considérer la femme comme une simple machine démographique, mais lui accorder son véritable rôle dans la société. Des mesures doivent être prises pour assurer sa formation sur les plans économique, social et politique.

Il faut également lutter contre le travail des enfants sous toutes ses formes car il renforce l'analphabétisme et porte atteinte aux droits fondamentaux du travail.

A l'intérieur de notre Organisation, nous devons lutter contre toutes les formes de discrimination entre les langues vivantes; nous réclamons ainsi une plus grande utilisation de la langue arabe car c'est une langue de civilisation qui a eu un rôle très important dans le développement de la pensée humaine.

Je voudrais également parler de la délégation palestinienne et des difficultés qu'elle a eues à se rendre à cette Conférence, et protester contre cette situation qui se répète chaque année. Je voudrais également parler de la situation du peuple et des travailleurs de Palestine qui subissent le blocus, le mur de séparation et les humiliations quotidiennes de l'occupation.

Il faut aussi signaler la situation terrible de la population iraquienne qui vit des massacres chaque jour. Toutes les excuses auront été utilisées pour l'opprimer, comme celle des armes de destruction massive dont l'existence n'a pas été prouvée, et cela aurait dû être une raison suffisante pour que les forces d'occupation se retirent de ce pays.

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