

**Seventh sitting**

Monday, 11 June 2006, 10.20 a.m.

Presidents: Mr. Sulka and Mr. Barde

The PRESIDENT

It is my great pleasure to declare open the seventh sitting of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference.

This morning we are opening the general discussion on the important reports that you will address here in the plenary of the Conference. One of these is the report of the Chairperson of the Governing Body, which Mr. Mdladlana has submitted in writing, and which was published as *Provisional Record* No. 1. The others are the Reports of the Director-General, who will shortly introduce them. They are *Decent work for sustainable development* (Report I(A)) and *The situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories*, which is published as an appendix to Report I(A).

I should now like to give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference for an announcement.

**RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR
CONVENTIONS BY MADAGASCAR**

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

I am pleased to inform you that the ratifications of the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105), and of the Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention (Revised), 2003 (No. 185), by Madagascar were registered by the Director-General on 6 June 2007. With its ratification of Convention No. 105, Madagascar has now ratified all eight fundamental Conventions of the ILO.

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

The PRESIDENT

It is my honour to open the general discussion on the reports presented by the Director-General to the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. With your permission, I should like to take this opportunity to make a few personal comments.

First of all, I wish to express my satisfaction at the focus that has been given to this session, which deals with the ILO's capacity to assist its member States in promoting decent work as one of the pre-conditions of sustainable development. This is quite simply the *raison d'être* of our Organization. In this globalized world, member States have a greater need than ever for a universal Organization, based on tripartite principles and on universal labour standards. This is proved by the experience of my own country, Albania, which was among the very first Members of the ILO, having joined in 1920. But in

1967 it left the Organization for 24 long years. Today, we know how unfortunate that decision was.

Since our return in 1991, we have not only benefited hugely from our membership, but have also actively supported this Organization and adhered to its values, by ratifying all of the fundamental Conventions. As you may know, Albania is one of the eight "One UN" pilot countries. I am sure that in this context the ILO's assistance in such areas as enforcement of labour legislation, promotion of effective tripartite dialogue or reduction of informal work will give great impetus to the achievement of the country's economic and social objectives.

Secondly, it is my firm conviction that, despite the additional complexity caused by the globalization process, the peoples of the world hold their fate in their hands. I am convinced that efficient governance makes the difference, and that the International Labour Conference constitutes a unique opportunity to share opinions and experience in the area of labour and social affairs. I have no doubt that we will hear many success stories, but also some failures. Because no other area of governance touches peoples' lives and everyday worries so closely, these are very painful, in both human and political terms. In spite of globalization, the responsibility of national and local authorities remains enormous. For this reason, I fully agree with the Director-General in his Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, when he says that "well-functioning markets require effective States if they are to operate without distortion and balance out uneven social outcomes".

Thirdly, and with all the respect due to the ILO's long history and well-established traditions, may I say how deeply I appreciate the huge efforts the Organization is making to adapt its thinking and functioning to the requirements of the modern world? The trial format of the International Labour Conference, applied for the first time this year, is part of this effort to modernize. It is the result of action undertaken by the ILO and the response to a wish expressed by the tripartite constituents for a new revitalized Conference. "First times" are often difficult, and I therefore call on all of you to respect time schedules and observe strict discipline. With your tripartite assistance I have no doubt that, however heavy our workload, our labour will be crowned with success.

Finally, in the modern world, which, as His Excellency President John Kufuor of Ghana so appropriately highlighted, more and more closely resembles a global village, the values of tolerance, mutual

respect and equal treatment between nations, between religions, and between men and women are of paramount importance. I believe that all delegates taking part in the general debate will stick to these values, so characteristic of our Organization. Last week we had a very enriching debate on the Global Report, on the challenges facing us before we can achieve equality at work. The discussion provided a very open exchange of opinions and experiences. In my opinion, the excellent Report prepared for that event should be taken as one of the building blocks of this year's Conference.

It only remains for me to thank you sincerely for your attention and to wish you a fruitful general discussion.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

The PRESIDENT

It is now my honour to give the floor to Mr. Juan Somavia, Secretary-General of the Conference and Director-General of the International Labour Office, to present the Report he is submitting to the Conference this year.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL

It is a great moment for a Director-General of the ILO to see this incredibly large assembly, this parliament of workers, employers and governments. It is very impressive to stand before you to see this rich group of women and men from all over the world who know so much about the world of work. We have already had nearly two weeks of intense and detailed discussions and important agreements on a range of really important issues. Congratulations! It is a new format and it seems to be working. Let me highlight, for example, the conclusions of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises – the critical issue at the centre of markets and society which, I think, will have a strong influence beyond the ILO.

As we look forward we can take great strength in the success of the ideas we have developed together in recent years, which were so heavily informed and shaped by your own discussions: the Decent Work Agenda now accepted as a global goal and a global agenda, the objective of working out of poverty to put the Millennium Development Goals on the right track, and the need for a fair globalization that considers fully its social dimension, which is today accepted as a common-sense approach to globalization.

ILO tripartism was in the lead in lifting these concepts onto the world stage as international priorities. But we cannot be complacent about this multilateral success. There are still too many decent work deficits in the world, too many children working, too many workers facing anti-union policies, too many small enterprises unable to share the benefits of growth, too many labour and social ministries under-staffed and underfunded, too many places where social dialogue is stifled and certainly a long way from achieving fair globalization.

And yet we all know that we are moving forward. We can point to important advances in our cooperation around decent work objectives on each of these issues in so many of your countries. But we know that we cannot go it alone. Delivering on the Decent work Agenda means ensuring that other organizations and other policies are also working with us.

This goal is no longer only ours. It is no longer the ILO Decent Work Agenda. It is the global decent work agenda endorsed by the United Nations and numerous other international and regional bodies, and most recently by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and, only last week, by the G8 Summit in Germany.

We are here still where we have been since 1919, because we have always endeavoured to look ahead and come to grips with reality. and that is why in my Report this year I want to provoke your further reflection on a number of serious issues that have an impact on our core mandate. I think tripartism cannot afford to ignore them. They represent opportunities to project once again our shared interests.

Today, I would like to address six interrelated challenges on the road ahead – the need for sustainable development and a green jobs initiative, the need to assume the ILO's central role on trade and employment issues, the need to address the inequalities emerging from the growing imbalance between the capital and labour share of national income, the need to improve labour statistics so that they can fully reflect the real extent of labour underutilization, the need for cooperation with other multilateral organizations to advance together the Decent Work Agenda, and the need to continue strengthening and modernizing our standard-setting and supervisory machinery. Let me deal with each of these challenges separately.

1. Sustainable development and green jobs

Decent work is part of the wider balance of economic, social and environmental policies. It is part of a sustainable development vision. Social and economic sustainability are challenges which are familiar to the ILO but I believe that now we must also address the environmental dimension on which, to be frank, we have ground to make up. As the reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change tell us the inconvenient truth is that production and work consumes energy and other resources and leaves behind waste and greenhouse gases at rates which have become dangerous for our planet and for our health. Addressing it will entail a transition to new patterns of production, consumption and employment, a key message of the summit in Rio 1992, Johannesburg 2002 and the Kyoto Agreement among others.

As our conclusions on sustainable development enterprises clearly show, decent work does not have to be traded off against environmental sustainability. There is a tremendous opportunity before us. The United Nations Environment Programme estimates that the market for clean energy technology could be worth 1.9 trillion dollars by the year 2020. That is a lot of investment and a lot of jobs. So adjusting to new patterns of natural resource use and conservation is a challenge, I believe, to our capacity to anticipate change, and to prepare and then implement an efficient and just process of adaptation. We need to assess the potential scale of the technological production and employment shifts involved. The particular needs and interests of developing countries will have to be specially considered. Development cooperation will need to be oriented towards these issues. We need to find low-emission strategies for development that do not slow progress in poverty reduction. Brazil and other countries are already working in this direction. I think that tripartism should, through social dialogue, begin develo-

ping the policy tools for an ILO green jobs initiative, so as to support workers and enterprises through the transition to much more environmentally sustainable production processes. We can begin the discussions of the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization this November and follow up with the required technical work and report back to you next year.

2. Trade and employment

I believe that the Decent Work Agenda has given us an opportunity to look at the positive interaction between trade and social policies, and to do so by moving away from the certainty of some that trade is always good and the certainty of others that, that if trade is stopped, overall social conditions will improve. Neither is true. This year, the ILO and WTO secretariats decided to tackle this issue and publish a sober report on trade and employment. It concluded, as was logical, that trade liberalization produces both job destruction and job creation. In the short run the effects of liberalization may be positive or negative, depending on factors like the functioning of a labour and product market as well as the pace, depth and sequencing of market openings, the fairness of international rules and the existence or not of social protection measures to weather the adjustment needs.

In the long run, if the necessary policy balances are there, like the ones I have just mentioned, more open markets are likely to generate more jobs, better wages or a combination of both. But such averages will, we know, hide impacts that affect some working women and men negatively and sometimes very negatively. I believe that the tripartite ILO is today well-placed to develop a balanced approach to trade and employment issues that respects the interests of developed and developing countries and those of workers and employers in all regions – and to do so away from imposed conditional ties but with a clear commitment to the values of all strategic objectives in the Decent Work Agenda, we can do this in cooperation with the WTO and other interested international organizations, but from our point of view I think that the basis is an integrated approach that recognizes the need for fair trade rules, sustainable enterprises and appropriate employment and social policies to deal with the downsize. This will give greater security to workers, families and communities and greater opportunities for all countries to share in the benefits of trade.

3. Labour share and inequality

In my Report, I cite work by the International Monetary Fund on the declining labour share in the national income of 16 developed countries. It shows that labour income as a share of national income fell, on average, from around 68 per cent to around 62 per cent; 6 per cent of the GDP is more than double the defence expenditures of most of these countries. We are talking about trillions of dollars changing hands. In the developing countries there are fewer statistics, but a similar phenomenon exists. This reduction in the wage share is reflected in the widening gaps in the distribution of income and wealth in many countries. Furthermore, income gaps between the richest and poorest countries are growing. The average income per person in the 20 most prosperous countries is 112 times that in the

poorest 20, compared to 49 times some 50 years ago – which was already rather scandalous.

Here at the ILO, I think that we all have to be concerned by this development. It is especially important for us because it is increasingly looking like the interests of capital are better protected than those of labour, and this is not sustainable in the long run. These issues are at the heart of our Constitution and at the core of our mandate. The Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work calls on us to support policies to enable workers “to claim freely and on the basis of equality of opportunity their fair share of the wealth which they have helped to generate”. We are researching this ourselves with other agencies and academics active in this field. We are trying to establish an understanding of how to measure these trends, their underlying causes and possible policy responses within our own mandate.

4. Labour statistics

As you know our statistics are based on methodologies defined by the International Conference of Labour Statisticians which will be meeting next year. This is timely because I believe we must work together with them to develop better methodologies to capture the reality of unemployment in countries where the absence of social protection means you have to work in the informal economy.

This is also an issue in developed countries. In my Report, I illustrate the possible scale of labour underutilization. I make a rather conservative assumption that many informal economy workers classified in official labour force surveys as self-employed or casual workers, and thus considered statistically employed, can only find work three-quarters of the time they are available for. In many countries it would indicate a labour underutilization rate of 15 per cent. If you add that to a conventionally recorded unemployment rate of say 5 per cent, you get a figure of around 20 per cent. This sounds to me a lot more like real life and the evidence we see with our own eyes.

I think we must move forward on this and investigate new ways of capturing statistically the reality of labour underutilization. And this has implications for our future reports. With present statistical methodologies we may be underrepresenting the extent of real unemployment in the world. It is vital that we have better data to draw on for policy-making and measuring progress towards the Millennium Development Goal of cutting extreme poverty in half by 2015.

We will prepare a major technical cooperation programme to support further work on the definition of concepts to measure the labour market realities of developing countries, and to support the strengthening of statistical services in the collection and analysis of information.

5. Cooperation with the United Nations

As you know, we are in the first stages of an effort at the UN to better integrate the joint delivery capacity of technical cooperation at the country level. Our Governing Body had a full discussion of UN reforms and the role of the ILO in that process. I think that, together with other specialized agencies, we can help lead the discussions towards practical reforms that promote better policy coherence,

together with the necessary improvements in joint operational delivery.

Let me give you a practical example. Over the last year we at the ILO have been engaged in an intensive effort with other agencies to develop together a toolkit for mainstreaming employment and decent work in their own activities, as called for by ECOSOC. I am proud to say that it has been adopted by the Chief Executives Board (CEB), headed by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon at the last meeting held at the ILO here in April. As the debate on UN reform has unfolded over the past months, I have been called upon as your Director-General to explain on many occasions how the ILO's unique tripartite governance structure and mandate adds value to the international system's effort to deliver as one.

My response has been clear. To begin with, we add value with our constitutional conviction that labour is not a commodity. We stand up for the dignity of work and dignity at work. I also highlight our identity: tripartism, our standard-setting mandate and its supervisory system, our respect for national ownership and for the priorities set by you, the constituents, our focus on a Decent Work Agenda with global backing, and on the Decent Work Country Programmes, which can be incorporated into delivering One-UN programmes, and a method of social dialogue which, as we know, is the best way to build stable and balanced solutions and decision-making capacity, as has been demonstrated again this year at the Conference. I would say that all of these taken together makes a pretty strong contribution to a better multilateral system.

Yes, there are dangers, problems and uncertainties ahead. Certain donors condition their support on compliance with their version of what UN reform should be – a real backsliding in transparency and accountability. There is also the risk of exclusion of non-resident agencies if everything is going to be decided nationally. Only the UNDP and the World Bank have offices almost everywhere. There are too, the high transaction costs that we are already observing, and the difficulty of some UNDP Resident Coordinators with understanding the ILO's tripartite identity. But, in highlighting the problems, let me tell you that I believe that all of them can be dealt with positively.

6. International labour standards on tripartism

We are taking up the Global Report, *Equality at Work: Tackling the challenges* because work is central to our lives. Eliminating discrimination at the workplace will go a long way to rooting it out in society at large. This is a key to empowering individuals, fuelling economic growth and enriching societies.

As we advance in the promotion of fundamental rights, we must strengthen and modernize our standard-setting system, because it is at the heart of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda that is attracting so much support. With over 7,500 ratifications of different Conventions, our system is the largest rules-based international legal framework in operation today. Each of those 7,500 ratifications of our Conventions reflects a decision by a national legislator to opt for an international system of accountability and to allow the country's laws and practice to be scrutinized by the competent bodies of the

ILO's supervisory machinery. International labour standards are thus a shared commitment.

In the emerging global market economy, they provide a common reference point for the labour rules vital to building the cooperation at workplaces that is the foundation of successful enterprises. Without the ILO's standard-setting system, or if it were weakened, the efforts that all the ILO constituents are making to have globalization be a race to the top could be undone.

At this session, your agreement in the fishing sector proves once again that consensus on contemporary and workable Conventions is perfectly possible. From the time of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), to the Maritime Labour Convention approved last year, we have been moving forward whenever necessary, when agreements are possible.

Let me mention one of the new threats to social dialogue and tripartism that I see – and indeed to the values of our standards system. It is the emergence of forms of finance known as hedge funds, or private equity funds. These funds sometimes view enterprises as simply an asset that can be broken up in the short term and sold at a profit, and lay-offs inevitably follow. What has that to do with the ILO you may ask. The fact is that the impact of tripartism on the culture and traditional social dialogue and conflict resolution mechanisms that an enterprise may have developed over time then becomes extremely compromised.

The concept of social dialogue, of establishing good labour relations is a totally different concept from that of breaking an enterprise up and selling it up for a profit.

The strong and effective implementation of the ILO's mandate is a vital counterbalance to such trends. Market economies need social and economic behavioural growth disciplines that reflect the shared interest of governments, business and labour.

All this leads me to express my satisfaction with the progress made this year in the Committee on Strengthening the ILO's Capacity. There is still work to be done for next year, certainly, but I believe we are well on the way to crafting a package of intelligent reforms that will reinforce tripartism in the Organization and in member States – and we know what a difference this can make on the ground.

In Guinea, we recently saw the enormous power and potential of the social partners as they came together peacefully with society at large to make a difference for the people of Guinea. The ILO was proud to be there, insisting on the importance of workers' rights and dialogue and ensuring the security of the union leaders. Last week, I received a letter from the new Prime Minister thanking the ILO for its active presence during the crisis. Remember that last year I had a similar letter from the Prime Minister of Nepal, thanking us for the way we had participated in that situation. Today, before you, I want to salute the courageous leadership of the workers of Guinea, in the person of Ms Rabiatoo Diallo? who is a member of our Governing Body. There were some very courageous people and some very difficult moments – we know that because we were following the situation every moment.

We still face many challenges. The annual report on Arab workers in the occupied territories again depicts a very disquieting and worsening situation. Average income has plummeted, investments and

enterprises are stifled, employment of some sort is available to only one in every three persons of working age. The conflicts among Palestinians do not help. But, above all, the stifling feeling of collective punishment that permeates the report comes out strongly, but so too does the dignity, the inner strength, the conviction that the Palestinian quest for freedom and peace will ultimately prevail. I want to honour that conviction.

The support we have received for the Decent Work Agenda beyond this hall, and from the people you represent, shows that we have focused our efforts on an issue of global significance on which we can make a difference.

With the Decent Work Agenda we have raised hopes and expectations. We have created opportunities for our Organization, but also for tripartism nationally, to play a much stronger role in shaping a fair globalization and a sustainable development path.

I believe we have done much to equip the Organization for these challenges and we must continue, as is clear from the programme and budget approved by your Finance Committee. The ILO, in the end, is only as strong as its constituents, who, in turn, are only as strong as the mechanisms of dialogue that bring them together for action and shared goals and priorities.

We are living in a phase in which very powerful new forces of competition have been released by the opening up of markets and by rapid and far-reaching technological change.

The logic of cooperation is perhaps slower moving, than the force of competition. But let me tell you, social dialogue consistently applied is equally powerful, and it is in your hands.

Dialogue is needed within and between countries to stabilize this new global market system. This is what the ILO was built to do.

So let me end by saying that it is your responsibility back home, – I would say your opportunity, to make tripartism work. We know the difficulties, the complications, but it is there in your hands.

You do not develop trust from one day to the other but if you once sign an agreement that sticks, and you sign it twice and it sticks and you sign it three times and it sticks the next time you are probably just going to shake hands. It is going to be very different. The process is totally dissimilar because it is nationally rooted. It has to do with your own traditions, your own cultures and your own way of doing things.

I want to finish by saying that the great challenge we all have, and that you have, is to make social dialogue work, to listen to each other and work together for your larger common interests; With all the support we have received internationally, I think that it is very much in your hands to make that happen nationally. Of course, the Office will be with you every step of the way, accompanying you every time you may need our advice or our support.

The PRESIDENT

Thank you, Mr. Somavia, for that introduction. I have no doubt that your words will provide a fertile ground for the discussion of the tripartite constituents and will enable them to give you clear indications as to the areas in which we wish to see the action of our Organization directed.

Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employer, Argentina, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group*)

The Director-General's Report to this Conference, while short in length, is full of issues for our consideration. As I only have a few minutes, I am unlikely to be able to respond to all the issues he raises, so I reserve our views for more substantive discussions in the Governing Body. However, there are a few things that the Employers' group would like to raise now.

There is no doubt that the world is changing and that the ILO must change with it. United Nations reform, in whatever form that finally takes, requires a well-focused organization. We need to differentiate ourselves from other agencies and we have the issues to do that if we are prepared to focus our efforts.

We have a key tool, namely social dialogue and tripartism, and a major objective, which is to contribute to improving the world of work in the context of the globalization process.

As the Director-General notes, the increasingly important and positive role of enterprise in contributing to social and economic development and poverty reduction is now well understood and accepted. That is where we need to make our contribution, through the development of policy and tools that help countries maximize investment through the right regulatory mix, that support the creation and development of enterprise, that support small and medium enterprises as a vehicle for employment creation, that understand the needs of entrepreneurs, that look to enhance skill development and that address new forms of work, not as a threat but as opportunities.

This is not about undermining anyone's interest, but rather it is to strengthen the role of constituents where they are most present, and that is in the world of work.

We need to use our models of dialogue to encourage engagement with other actors. Rather than tell them what to do, we need to encourage them to understand that the realization of our objectives can actually help them achieve their own. That is what social dialogue can do and how it, and we as constituents, can help place the ILO successfully in the future.

We need to engage in reform and see it as an opportunity for us to inject the labour and social aspects of the world of work into the mix in national development.

We need to be more positive in how we look at the world. This does not mean that we blind ourselves to reality, but rather we need to address the world with ideas and proposals.

The open economy and free initiative may have their problems, but the alternatives would be catastrophic to the aims and aspirations of this Organization and, rather than criticize others, we need to find ways to understand what has happened, what is happening and how we, as an organization, can contribute to a more positive future both within our own mandate and, as I said earlier, in how our responses may also help others.

This underpins the two very important discussions during this session of the Conference. Both hold keys to a successful future for the ILO, combining sustainable enterprise and decent work and promoting an updated strategy for the ILO in order to respond to our real needs.

Within the Governing Body, a number of efforts are being made to improve the functioning of this Conference and the Governing Body. We must continue and strengthen this work, building an understanding and consensus among us on what we need to do. But time is running against us. The ILO needs to be of value to all its constituents. This means we need to be open to each other's needs but we must move forward with ideas.

For our group, the key for the ILO, despite desires to address other pressing issues, is, and must remain, its focus on the world of work. The Office needs to build a competency and knowledge base that supports that focus and does not dissipate scarce resources elsewhere. It needs to build an evidence-based research capacity to support our work and it needs to connect directly with the decisions of the Governing Body in determining its priorities. The Office and the Organization need to follow the same agenda. We support efforts to achieve that, but we cannot do it, that is the job for the Director-General and his senior management team, and we say to you, "Go forward Director-General".

I want to express our solidarity with the employers in the occupied Arab territories and the region. We support all efforts by the ILO alone, or in collaboration with others, that can help enterprises through this difficult time and add our call to others that it is time to resume real efforts to effect a lasting peace, not simply for the benefit of those now living under such difficult circumstances in the region but for all of us everywhere.

Finally, I want to stress our concerns related to the permanent harassment that our member federation, the Employer Organization of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is receiving from the Government. I firmly ask the Office and the Government to do all that may be necessary to ensure respect for freedom of association and to restore social dialogue, that nowadays do not exist at all, and to consider sending a high-level type of commission with a view to establishing consensus and social dialogue in the country.

Mr. TROTMAN (*Worker, Barbados, speaking on behalf of the Workers' group*)

Mr. Chairman, the Workers' group wishes on this occasion to recommit itself to the ILO, to its mandate, its principles, its programme and indeed its efforts. The theme before the Conference is pertinent and timely and, for me, suggests a sense of urgency which we are likely to ignore at our own peril. The two significant reference elements within the title are in themselves very appealing. One, sustainable development, the other decent work. Together they should make for a very rich debate. This debate should link the two elements already referred to with the equally critical one of strengthening the ILO.

I trust that we all welcome the opportunity to respond to the call for help made at page 2 of the introduction. I challenge my colleague Workers' delegates to respond, whether from a national, regional or global standpoint, respond and reinforce our calls stated elsewhere in the Conference for social justice, for protection from murder of our trade union leaders, for democracy, democracy for all and for good governance.

Among the questions which we should seek to answer I would wish the Conference to consider the following: What is it that we need to strengthen?

How can that help us to effect sustainable development? Will decent work be more than a catchphrase at cocktail parties after this Conference? How can we work meaningfully to bring about this decent work? What are the costs of inaction and what are the costs of our failure?

The experiences of delegates should be most helpful in this regard. We should therefore endeavour in each case to include in our presentations some ideas which we believe will provide for a better future for our children. We should also be willing from our perspectives to advise regarding what threats we see on the horizon for our groups, for our countries or even for the ILO as we now know it.

To look here at my own list of questions, our group considers that the strengthening needs spring from the experiences of ineffectiveness we have encountered. And the real or perceived attacks against our unions at national, regional or global level, or attacks even at our international defence system. I refer to attacks against the ILO itself.

At the workplace and at the national level we are encountering increasing instances of hostility towards trade unions which dare to stand on the principle of our own ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), and we dare to insist that they will not be an extension of the ruling party. The ILO, meaning the Office, has to be more visible and more vocal at the country and regional levels in ensuring that the deaf, the old, the maimed and the blind, physically or intellectually, are all aware that interference in workers' freedom of association constitutes a violation of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). In many countries it is a constitutional infringement.

We have here far too many reports of employers at the enterprise level with government approval or of governments' direct action of removing trade union leaders frequently on frivolous charges and seeking thereafter to impose their own friendly leader.

We have had too many reports of the killing of trade union activists and the subsequent attempt by government and sometimes by employers to deny the ILO supervisory agencies the opportunity to reflect on those reports, as this year in the reports on Colombia. We have seen attempts made to compromise those set supervisory mechanisms and to devalue their relevance, and in some incidences for governments completely to insult or disregard the institution while at the same time seeking to hold positions in its highest offices.

Surely these are signs of weakness which, left unattended, could lead to a depreciation in the respect given worldwide for the ILO, for its structures and for its values.

Unfortunate situations like those I have just described make this further threat loom larger than it might otherwise have done. I refer to the nature of the ILO in structure, in role and in relevance in any reformed United Nations. If we are not willing or not able to influence our own members or their practices, how will we be able to exercise meaningful influence in the larger United Nations family.

Based on the work done by the administration, the Governing Body has been able to share with constituents the work of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization and to make each one aware of the varying levels of support for

the Commission's recommendations. We have even had the pleasure of seeing the international financial institutions embrace the demands of the international trade union movement for respect for the core labour Conventions and their use of them as part of their treatment conditions with clients. And yet here labour is worried. Labour is worried by the apparent contradiction in having labour's role respected and welcomed in Geneva, where the benefits of social dialogue are so clearly seen, but resisted, vilified and even crushed at home. We strongly support the Director-General's assertion that it is in the workplace that the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development come together. We accept as well that sustainable development requires a strong and generally agreed public framework of rules and regulations.

We on the Worker benches are worried, however, that these very sound views are squandered by many at home, as many governments, in their blind trust in the markets, feel they have to silence labour's insistence that economic development and social development must be inseparable.

Our brief report on the Global Report, entitled *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, and its relevance to the cross-cutting item also should be taken note of, and we support the views taken by our colleagues during that exercise. And I could not continue unless I made reference to the fact that this year represents the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade by Great Britain, followed subsequently by others.

But, forced labour still continues in the world and the effort of those of us who believe in social justice must be reinforced in order to remove all vestiges of forced labour, and the ILO's mission in that regard should be supported.

I turn now to another of my list of questions, the one addressing the response to decent work, and I refer at this time to our treatment of the Report of the Director-General on the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. I am fully aware of how sensitive a question related to this area may be. I am, however, very strongly persuaded that our mandate requires us to speak when everyone else may choose to be silent. In any event, paragraph 3 of the introduction underlines carefully our need to reflect on equality of opportunity and treatment, trade union freedom and rights and damage caused psychologically and spiritually, as well as materially, by the settlement policy of Israel.

Within the limits of the time given to me, I can hardly deal with much in this area. I remind my colleagues, however, that the General Secretary of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU) has made references to some of the needs when he addressed the workers last week. We, ourselves, must see what we, with the rest of the global community, may do to bring relief to these persons. Some years ago, Chair, an appeal went out in this very institution for monetary assistance. I think I am right in saying that the response fell way below expectations. Another effort should be made, springing from this Conference in 2007. Our group, while not dismissing the complexity of the problem, is alarmed at the threat to these persons' right to food, and thus to their right to exist. We are equally saddened by the access to water which is described by the Report as discriminatory, both in quantity allowed and the cost incurred. Such a situation is surely untenable and should be corrected.

Our group continues to insist that all the relevant actors should renew their efforts to settle their differences so as to bring decent work and a sustainable development to the Middle East.

I must leave it to my colleagues to speak more fully to how labour's agenda may be met. In our own work on strengthening the ILO, we have insisted that the Office has to develop itself into a centre of excellence, especially in its research and analytical work. It must better service ministries of labour, so that they may have large enough numbers of competent functionaries to bring similar empowerment and excellence to national labour administrations. It must hire and train suitable officials to work in the real field of industrial relations, collective bargaining and dispute resolution. A more efficient staff will strengthen the membership. An effective membership can better assist in directing and guiding the Organization and giving it a place of prominence at the UN family table.

Finally, our group wishes to express appreciation to the governments for adopting our budget for 2008–09. This is never easy, but our group believes that the many tasks we set require even a larger purse than what was voted. It is our hope that the work of this 2007 Conference and its follow-up will so impact on the work we do and how we do it, that governments will have no difficulty with our follow-up of budgets when the time comes.

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

The PRESIDENT

Many thanks for those clear indications. I am sure we have all taken good note of the lines along which the groups see our debates going.

Before starting the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General, I should like to make the following statement on behalf of all Officers of the Conference, to remind you of the principles by which we shall be guided in our debates. These principles were established by the Working Party on the Programme and Structure of the ILO, approved by the Governing Body and communicated to the Conference in 1967. They are set out in paragraphs 54 to 58 of the Working Party's report, which are recalled in the *Conference Guide* to the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, a copy of which you should all have.

The Officers of the Conference wish to draw the close attention of all delegates to the contents of paragraph 58, which reads as follows: "In periods of acute political tension, the ILO has a twofold responsibility: to uphold the values of human freedom and dignity enshrined in its Constitution, and to circumscribe, rather than extend the area of international tension by ensuring the fullest possible degree of continued cooperation in pursuit of the objectives of the ILO. Every delegate to the International Labour Conference therefore has an obligation to the Conference to keep these considerations constantly in mind, and the President has an obligation to ensure that the Conference does not lose sight of them."

It should be remembered that the debates of the International Labour Conference must not encroach on what is being discussed by the Security Council and the General Assembly of the United Nations in

New York, which have responsibility for political decisions, and of the United Nations Charter.

Thus, I should like to ask all delegates to comply with these principles; we, the Officers of the Conference, are committed to ensuring that these principles are upheld.

I should also like to say that I rely on you all to conduct our discussions with both the openness and the dignity that are appropriate to the highest international body in the realm of social and labour-related matters.

Freedom of expression is a vital feature of the ILO. However, in order to exercise this right in a spirit of mutual respect, it is of paramount importance that all delegates use parliamentary language, respect the accepted procedure, refer only to the items under discussion and avoid raising any question alien to these matters. We have to accept a certain amount of discipline if we want our work to be effective and successful.

Each and every delegate will have the right of reply if he or she feels that there is a need to respond in the event that his or her Government has been challenged. In such cases, delegates must inform the President of the sitting, before that sitting finishes, that they wish to exercise their right to reply. Please make such requests by coming up to the podium and informing the Clerk of your wish. The Clerk will transmit the request to the President, who will agree with the delegation concerned on a time at which the reply may be made.

The reply should refer only to the point under debate. It should not exceed two minutes, and it should be delivered in correct parliamentary language. Lastly, it is not practice in our Organization to allow replies to a reply.

Please also note that the duration of the speeches is limited by the Standing Orders of the Conference to five minutes only. All delegates and ministers attending the Conference will no doubt wish to take this limit of five minutes into account in preparing their speeches, so that the President will not be obliged to stop speakers before they have finished their speeches.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these arrangements are agreeable to the Conference?

(It is so decided.)

We shall now open the discussion on the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

The sitting continues with delegates' statements.

The transcript of speeches 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.

Mr. PLASKITT (*Parliamentary Undersecretary, Department for Work and Pensions, United Kingdom*)

Mr. President and colleagues, in the brief time available to me I want to underline why we need the ILO and what the ILO still needs to do to maintain the support necessary to develop its important role.

Later this morning I will meet with the Youth Employment Network. I announced that the United Kingdom would join the Network as a lead country at the 2005 Conference. Since then, amongst other things, with United Kingdom support, a Youth Em-

ployment Unit for West Africa has been set up in Senegal.

We support this because until young people have the opportunity to find decent work, the chance of having genuine peace, security and development in West Africa will remain remote. And it provides firm evidence of what the ILO can achieve when it puts emphasis on work as the best route out of poverty.

Our support for the Decent Work Agenda is inextricably linked to the aim of making this Organization more effective, and that is why the United Kingdom delegation scrutinizes the programme and budget so carefully, and I make no apologies for the United Kingdom's strong focus on budgetary management.

Last year I drew attention to the needs identified by both the Joint Inspection Unit and the External Auditor for improvements in various areas of management. Since then we have seen welcome moves to establish an independent audit committee and a comprehensive view of the ILO field structure.

Nevertheless, we still have concerns. Staff grading structure, which was identified as a priority in 2003, is still an issue. Questions about the transparency and clarity of many of the programme objectives, indicators and targets remain, particularly in regard to baselines.

We are now looking at a request for a 6.9 per cent rise in the budget. Are there special UN features which justify that? Other UN agencies have settled for far less; even some for zero nominal growth. Are there special ILO features, such as the location here in Geneva? Not obviously. I don't see that the organization is particularly exposed to currency risks, for instance.

Are there particular staffing cost pressures? Possibly. 70 per cent of the budget goes on staffing. And there is a UN agreed pay rise this year of 4.6 per cent. But as I indicated, other parts of the UN have been able to absorb that.

Are there other cost pressures? Well, clearly, yes. There is a proposed allocation for management services of 55 million dollars. That represents an increase of 62 per cent over 2002-03 levels. The bid for policy-making organs is now 71 million dollars, that is an increase over 2002-03 of 33 per cent. These are large increases, and on these my point is this: greater transparency, please, especially given the ILO's declared commitment to deliver substantial efficiency savings, its acknowledgement of the budgetary constraints on member States and its wish for a consensus budget.

Let me be clear about my message. The ILO, with its unique tripartite structure is as needed now as it was in 1919. But the labour issues are not the same as a 100 years ago, and just as the labour issues have changed, and in some ways become even more challenging, as you outlined yourself, Mr. President, so have the expectations of financial accountability.

So my appeal is for faster, deeper budgetary reform. Not because we have any problems with what the ILO does, quite the opposite. But because that essential work is clouded or even placed at risk by too many questions about the Organization's finances. Before I can, with confidence, ask my hard-working taxpayers, to contribute to help create work for those who do not have it, I need to demonstrate with equal confidence the soundness and the rigour of this Organization's financial management.

So the greater your progress on budgetary reform, the more scope you will create for what we need to do: deepening the impact of the ILO and honouring its principles. Thank you.

(Mr. Barde takes the Chair.)

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-DOSARI (Minister of Civil Service Affairs and Housing, Qatar)

I am pleased to greet this august assembly, and to speak to you on behalf of the Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, which include the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the State of Kuwait and the Republic of Yemen.

I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office, and to the Governing Body for the efforts undertaken in preparing the Report presented this year to the Conference, *Decent work for sustainable development*. It deals objectively with the challenges that the world of work is facing in the context of globalization, in achieving our common objectives in a balanced world of global partnership and in creating decent work for all, without distinction or discrimination. We also express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Governing Body and by the Director-General in managing the programmes and guiding the activities undertaken by this pioneering Organization, which has an influential role in setting down fundamental principles and rights at work and strengthening the values of justice and combating discrimination, and achieving higher levels of dedicated work in meeting its noble objectives and promoting dialogue between the social partners, developing experience and taking advantage of opportunities for the benefit of the Organization, and also in strengthening the role of the competent bodies in following up the implementation of those programmes.

Our countries are committed to the Constitution of this Organization and to the Declaration of Philadelphia, and join the other countries of the world in pursuit of our objectives, in promoting the principles and rights which guarantee human dignity and decent and productive work, and strive in their policies and programmes, as a matter of priority, to ensure a decent life, social and health protection, and the promotion of decent jobs. We appreciate the fact that the Organization has chosen the Kingdom of Bahrain among eight other countries as an example of a model of decent work. The Gulf States have expanded opportunities and choices for women, promoting equality in employment and recruitment. An effort is being made to increase growth rates through ambitious humanitarian and development plans, as well as providing education and training with a view to building capacities to enable citizens to obtain jobs in production, and to deal with the challenges facing them. Our countries are developing their institutional capacities through a comprehensive vision of labour market reform in a rapidly changing world, and by supporting personal initiatives to promote small enterprises, enabling them to be competitive, and strengthening modern information systems so as to enhance partnership between the social partners.

We emphasize the importance of increasing opportunities for the GCC countries to benefit from

the technical assistance programmes provided by this Organization to develop the role of the competent bodies in ensuring the implementation of its programmes. This prompts us to continue to develop technical cooperation and joint activities that respond to the needs of the GCC countries and enable us to meet international standards. We appreciate the support provided by the Organization to our countries during the past years within the framework of bilateral cooperation, as well as under the joint programme of activities between the Organization, the GCC countries and the executive office. I would like to refer specifically to the distinguished technical assistance provided by the Regional Office in Beirut, which enables us to achieve our common goals and objectives.

On this occasion I would like to mention the role played by the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia, in preparing a special Report on the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories and to emphasize the necessity of providing rapid assistance to meet the urgent needs of Palestine and of implementing the necessary programmes to improve the situation of workers and employers, given the deterioration of the economic situation as a result of the occupation and the attendant arbitrary and destructive measures, as well as the unfair embargo that has been imposed on the Palestinian people by the occupying authorities. We also affirm the need to continue supporting and financing the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, to enable it to take on its role in support of the Palestinian workforce. We affirm the need for a joint effort by the international community to put an end to the occupation of the occupied Palestinian territories and the Arab territories occupied in 1967, and enable the Palestinian people to establish an independent State with Al-Quds as its capital.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm that our countries within the GCC Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs strive to support and implement the future programmes and plans of the Organization that come within the framework of the strategic objectives that we all aspire to fulfil, towards justice, equality, progress and the promotion of fundamental freedoms and rights at work and in life.

Mr. NECAS (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic)

It is a great honour for me to be here and to address this distinguished audience.

Allow me to begin my intervention by praising the Director-General for his Report on *Decent work for sustainable development*. I am pleased to see that it reflects the economic realities of the current global environment.

The International Labour Organization is bound to cope with the challenges of the 21st century if it is its wish to further strengthen its highest relevance to the world of work. Some of the regulatory frameworks that were established many decades ago can no longer fully satisfy the needs of modern economy. The same can be said about policy assumption and positions, which may sometimes be based on obsolete concepts.

Recognition of trade as one of the driving forces of change and especially of trade liberalization among important factors for positive development in the area of job creation and wages, is an indispensable prerequisite for sound regulation of the

conditions of employment, as well as of industrial relations, and I would like to thank the Director-General for including these principles in his high quality Report that we have before us. It is the reason why we also welcome cooperation with the World Trade Organization (WTO).

I believe that everyone in this august body agrees that freely chosen and productive employment is the key to the economic well-being of individuals and of communities. I therefore welcome this year's discussions on sustainable entrepreneurship, because of the crucial role enterprises play in economic growth and development, and most importantly in job creation.

The Director-General reminds us that well-functioning markets require effective states and I cannot but agree with this idea. It is important to keep in mind that it is the responsibility of governments to continuously evaluate not only their social and employment policies, but economic, in particular fiscal and tax policies as well, including the relevant legislative framework, and their contribution towards enterprise development, economic growth, and through these also the promotion of productive and freely chosen employment.

The Czech Republic is currently at the beginning of the process that should lead to a better budgetary situation and more employment-friendly environment. Improvement of the conditions of entrepreneurship through lower taxation, the removal of the administrative burden and the stimulation of the economy, backed by innovation, shall, together with healthy public finance and pro-employment revision of social benefits, contribute to robust economic and employment growth.

Simply, a solid state of the economy is an imperative for tackling unemployment. Modern labour legislation that is flexible and that is not over regulatory is naturally among the cornerstone of current Czech reform plans. I am pleased to inform you that despite major differences in the views of social partners, negotiations at the highest level held during the last few weeks led to the partial agreement on the most necessary and most pressing changes to the Czech Labour Code.

Original Turkish: Mr. KILIC (Worker, Turkey)

I would like to congratulate the President on his election to preside at this very important Conference and I wish him all success.

I would also like to congratulate and thank the Director-General for the successful work that he has been performing.

Thanks to the cooperation and the programmes jointly implemented with the ILO, important improvements have been achieved in my country in the combating of child labour. During the 95th Session of the ILC, our activities in this field of combating child labour were introduced to the other nations as good examples. In this regard, I would like to express our appreciation. However, we must continue a much more effective struggle to prevent child labour in accordance with our national legislation and with the ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

The Turkish workers believe that war and terror are the worst enemies of human rights, democracy and trade union rights and freedoms. In this respect, the developments in Iraq, Palestine and many other parts of the world are observed with great concern. I

would like to express our wish for the establishment of peace and sustainability in the Middle East. We also believe that the occupation of Iraq must immediately come to an end while the unity of the Iraqi nation must be preserved.

Externally supported, divisive terror, which has been continuing for many years, has interrupted peace while increasing tension in my country. I would like to condemn all the politicians and the countries supporting terror and favouring war. We wish peace to prevail around the entire world.

While addressing this Conference we all focus on the fact that the process of globalization means the termination of trade union rights and freedoms, threatening the concept of the nation State and destroying the social state both in our country and in the world. Unfortunately, the negative effects of globalization continue intensively and have done for many years.

Our Government maintains its reservations on articles 4, 5 and 6 of the European Social Charter regulating the decent wage, the right to organize and the right to strike and bargain, as well as collective bargaining.

No concrete steps towards the compliance of the national legislation with the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) and the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151) are envisaged.

The burden of the policies driven by the IMF and the World Bank, which are demolishing the social state, is laid on the shoulders of the low- and medium-wage workers. Due to the same policies, poverty, unfair distribution of wealth, deunionization and unemployment are on the increase.

A new strategy must be developed with a universal approach to establish fair globalization. Globalization must focus on the humanitarian and social aspects, while it should also be curbed in the framework of regulations.

New mechanisms and new strategies must be developed so as to enable the ILO to increase its effectiveness and its capacity in its struggle in the pursuit of fair globalization.

Organized society and the "rule of law" are the very fundamentals of democracy. The trade union movement in Turkey is faced with serious difficulties and oppression regarding the right to organize. Freedom of expression and religious beliefs, the right to organize, the right of entrepreneurship and decent work are the most fundamental pillars of democracy and human dignity. These fundamental pillars must be consistent with working life.

Labour Act No. 4857 should be revised. The framework and the effect of job security provisions should be increased. The Trade Union Act No. 2821 and the Strike and Lock-out Act No. 2822 should immediately be enacted with due regard to the demands of the social partners in such a way as to preserve labour peace and avoid the drawbacks in this field.

In my country, trade unions organized in the public sector still face difficulties regarding the right to bargain collectively. The decisions of the arbitration board are not respected. The trade union members and executives do not benefit from the right to practice union activities freely.

We all observe the recent climate changes and I would like to finish my words by urging us all to

take action regarding global warming. This is a common problem of humanity. It is not global warming, but a “global warning”.

Original Korean: Mr. LEE (Minister of Labour, Republic of Korea)

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, and his staff for the work they have put into preparing this Conference.

In its report released in 2004, the ILO's World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization stated that “now is the time for leadership to move from sterile debate to positive action”. Since then, the ILO has made a lot of effort in close cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized agencies, as well as with the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund, to ensure that globalization creates equal opportunities for all. However, for all its efforts, many socio-economic problems, which may undermine sustainable development, still persist in today's world.

The Director-General's Report this time adequately pointed out the problems caused by globalization and properly illustrated the tasks that we have to undertake to tackle those problems.

I found his Report very similar to the broad-based growth strategy the Korean Government is currently pursuing. The strategy is to expand growth potential and strengthen social integration so as to be able to promote employment and growth simultaneously and to strike a balance between growth and distribution.

The Korean Government has pursued “flexicurity” in order to resolve labour market polarization, with a special focus on improving employment security for vulnerable groups of workers. A bill on non-regular workers was passed by the National Assembly last November, with the aim of eliminating abuse and discrimination against non-regular workers. The Korean Government is also striving to expand social service jobs in areas such as health care, welfare and education, which are directly related to people's daily lives.

Since last year, the Government has made it a national strategic task to build an advanced employment security network, and has intensively invested in it. The Government is also pushing ahead with policies aimed at promoting the welfare of the aged and low-income earners and expanding the coverage of social insurance to non-regular workers and self-employed people.

As the Director-General pointed out, close consultation between tripartite parties is very important in realizing decent work for sustainable development. In this respect, it seems appropriate to discuss this matter at the ILO.

Personally, I am of the belief that open-minded dialogue is the most powerful tool for solving difficult problems. When I took office as Minister of Labour in February 2006, the legislative process concerning the roadmap for industrial relations reform was bogged down in a stalemate in Korea, but we were able to get out of it through tripartite dialogue.

The legislative bills on the roadmap were prepared on the basis of tripartite agreement and passed through the National Assembly at the end of last year. Although there is still room for improvement, the passage of the bills served as an important op-

portunity for Korea to bring its labour laws into line with international standards.

Never complacent about what it has achieved so far, the Korean Government will continue to try to improve industrial relations systems and change thoughts and practices to establish cooperative industrial relations.

The Director-General's Report properly pointed out major issues of concern, but the ideas proposed in the Report have yet to be developed into concrete action plans. More effort should be made to develop policies and conduct theoretical studies on these issues.

As I mentioned earlier, the ILO has the great advantage of operating on the basis of tripartism. The ILO should find specific measures to solve various current issues by making maximum use of that advantage. By doing so, it could ensure that the benefits of globalization can be evenly distributed within, as well as between, advanced and developing countries.

Keeping in mind the criticism that tripartism could not respond rapidly enough to keep up with the fast pace of change, I would like to propose that innovation should be brought to the way the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body are operating.

I hope that this session of the Conference will become meaningful by enabling us to seek and find concrete solutions to important issues proposed by the Director-General.

The Korean Government would like to reiterate its commitment to support and cooperate as much as possible in achieving the ILO's goal of decent work.

Original portugais: M. da COSTA PITRA NETO (gouvernement, Angola)

Le choix de l'Angola comme membre du Conseil des droits de l'homme lors de la dernière session de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies accroît ses responsabilités aux niveaux national et international, et c'est pourquoi nous sommes heureux d'intervenir dans le cadre de cet important événement pour continuer à apporter une contribution positive à la recherche de solutions durables aux problèmes de l'humanité.

Depuis l'adoption de la Déclaration du Millénaire, nous avons constaté que la situation socio-économique reste caractérisée par une extrême pauvreté dans plusieurs régions du monde, en particulier sur le continent africain où des endémies comme le VIH/SIDA, le paludisme, la tuberculose et d'autres maladies constituent un obstacle au développement.

La paix a été signée en Angola le 4 avril 2002 et, depuis, des défis innombrables se présentent au gouvernement. Il s'agit surtout de consolider le processus de paix et d'assurer le redressement économique et social de l'Angola, car ce sont des facteurs déterminants pour créer les conditions qui mènent à un travail décent, c'est-à-dire à un travail productif, bien rémunéré, exercé dans des conditions de liberté, d'équité et de sécurité, sans aucune forme de discrimination, et permettant à tous ceux qui vivent de leur travail de mener une vie digne.

L'Angola traverse une phase de transition, où il est urgent de reconstruire et, dans tout ce processus, une série d'actions sont engagées. Il s'agit surtout des opérations de déminage qui vont déterminer le succès des programmes de réinstallation des popula-

tions déplacées, ce qui permettrait au gouvernement de mieux garantir leurs droits fondamentaux.

Les résultats économiques enregistrés depuis que la paix a été instaurée sont un encouragement réel pour la croissance et le développement.

En termes de taux d'emploi – c'est une variable économique cruciale par rapport à l'intégration économique interne, la justice et la cohésion sociale –, nous avons enregistré une baisse de l'ordre de 4 pour cent du taux de chômage en 2006 par rapport à 2005. Ce taux de chômage s'établissait à 25,2 pour cent en 2006, un chiffre qui reste à nos yeux très élevé.

Les mesures tant juridiques qu'institutionnelles, qui ont été prises à ce jour depuis l'indépendance, il y a près de trente-deux ans, du pays, reflètent tout ce qui a été fait en Angola dans le domaine législatif, en particulier pour éliminer la discrimination en matière d'emploi et de profession. En Angola, les lois n'établissent aucune discrimination basée sur l'emploi et l'activité professionnelle, mais il y a cependant des défis importants à relever car nous devons surmonter des difficultés et des limitations pour créer de meilleurs emplois en plus grand nombre et augmenter les revenus dans les zones du pays les plus touchées par la guerre.

L'égalité des chances est consacrée par plusieurs textes de loi. Dans le domaine de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle, la loi fondamentale du premier emploi a été adoptée et, pour en assurer l'application, plusieurs projets très importants sont mis en œuvre. Il s'agit notamment du programme pour l'intégration des jeunes dans la vie active, du programme de formation des jeunes dans le cadre d'un apprentissage, du programme d'insertion des jeunes dans la vie active, du programme d'appui technique et financier à la formation professionnelle, du programme pour la formation de cadres et leur intégration dans l'entreprise, du programme d'encouragement à la main-d'œuvre qualifiée, du programme de travail temporaire pour les jeunes dans des activités d'intérêt collectif, du programme d'appui et de formation pour les femmes, du programme d'appui à l'intégration socioprofessionnelle des jeunes handicapés.

Nous avons également élaboré un plan général d'emploi et de formation professionnelle, un instrument de base et d'orientation pour la politique de l'emploi en Angola, qui vise à assurer le développement d'une stratégie cohérente, intégrée et viable pour l'emploi, et auquel ont contribué les partenaires sociaux et la société civile en général. Ce plan comprend cinq piliers qui sont le garant de sa durabilité.

Je suis convaincu que les décisions auxquelles nous aboutirons au cours de cette session donneront une nouvelle impulsion au débat sur le processus de développement économique mondial, surtout en ce qui concerne la mise en place des conditions propices à la création de nouveaux emplois, et qu'elles seront les catalyseurs de la vision et des objectifs communs des États.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-SALEM (Minister of Labour, Jordan)

The Director-General, in the two reports submitted to this Conference, entitled *Decent work for sustainable development* and *Equality and work: Tackling the challenges*, has clearly addressed two issues of major importance. We agree with the Director-General that we need to implement social justice and decent work as the goals of sustainable deve-

lopment, and we know what is involved in achieving this: sustainability of employment, sustainability of enterprises, and social dialogue. We know the high hopes that people in all countries of the world have of changing their lives, so that we can all live together in this rich and diverse world.

In Jordan, we are working towards economic growth, improving productivity and creating job opportunities to get people out of poverty, and we have already succeeded in increasing growth rates, thanks to signing agreements with the WTO that have allowed us to establish free trade zones, thereby increasing our exports. We have recently seen investment in Jordan has doubled, and this is, to a large extent, thanks to the efforts made by His Majesty King Abdullah II, who has in fact succeeded in creating greater confidence and trust in our country.

Inspired by His Majesty, we have established economic development zones in Jordan to attract greater investment, particularly in information technologies, communication technologies and medical services. We work very closely with research institutes and universities in Jordan to mobilize the human resources they have to offer.

We are committed to achieving the objectives of the decent work agenda and the Millennium Development Goals. Our Prime Minister, Dr. Marouf Bakhit, and the Director-General signed an agreement in the Republic of Korea in 2006 on Jordan's Decent Work Country Programme, to which we are fully committed.

It really puts us at the forefront of development in our region and I would like to thank the Director-General and the ILO for the technical and financial support provided.

Cooperation between Jordan and the ILO goes right back to the year when Jordan became a Member. In recent years our cooperation has intensified considerably and rapidly, with the launch of a number of projects, such as a social dialogue project, a capacity-building project for social partners, including staff of the Ministry of Labour, and a project intended to reduce the worst forms of child labour.

All of the technical cooperation programmes that we undertake in cooperation with the ILO are producing very positive results. For instance, within the framework of the social dialogue project, the Government has agreed to set up an economic social advisory council in Jordan. This will be launched very shortly, once the appropriate legal steps have been taken. We have also established a tripartite advisory committee within our Ministry for Labour, the first of its kind in our region.

We are convinced of the need to guarantee fundamental rights for migrant workers. In March 2007, a regional conference was held in Jordan which focused on the situation of migrant workers and coordinated our efforts with other countries to protect the rights of migrant workers and reduce human trafficking and illegal migration. Our Ministry of Labour, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, is setting up a project that would establish a unit devoted to focusing on the problems of migrant workers.

We are working to extend social protection, and in particular are examining the possibility of setting up a special fund that would allow us to ensure maternity benefit for all working mothers.

Like everyone else, we are extremely concerned about the situation pertaining in our region and we are particularly worried by the political and humani-

tarian problems in the Palestinian territories and in Iraq, where unemployment is very high. We believe that there is a very important international responsibility in that regard. It is not enough to say that problems in the labour market are linked to the political situation and that a few projects will be undertaken. We need to do more. We need to ensure genuine social welfare in those parts of the world. We need to raise standards of living there and improve employment opportunities. Everyone must contribute to finding solutions to these problems as rapidly as possible and, in particular, we must lift the blockade that is being imposed on the Palestinian people. We must all work together to that end.

In conclusion, I would like to wish this session of the International Labour Conference every success and we do hope that, by our work here, we will be able to further intensify cooperation between the ILO and Jordan.

Mr. BAALAKRISHNAN (*Employer, India*)

This session of the Conference is taking place at a time when the global economy is looking up and likely to register growth of 4.9 per cent, which by all means is a fair growth. Yet global unemployment, which currently stands at around 195 million, is also growing at a rate of 6.3 per cent. If we add the number of people surviving on less than US\$2 dollars a day, which is approximately one-sixth of the population of the globe, the situation is very gloomy. Even in India, the magnificent growth of 9 per cent has failed to make a sizeable dent on unemployment. This disconnect between “growth” and “employment generation” is an issue of overriding concern. This session of the Conference should therefore engage in addressing this issue, which is foundational to the existence of this multilateral institution.

The Director-General’s Report this year highlights a dominant concern for achieving sustainable development and examines the relevance of the ILO’s conventional tools – decent work, tripartism and social dialogue – in this context. The Decent Work Agenda, which is serving as a framework for ILO activities over the years, is not without operational problems. The question is how to ensure it is put into practice across diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The segmented nature of the economy (formal and informal) makes the task all the more difficult.

In India, 92 per cent of the workforce is in the informal sector, where workers are not organized, the employer–employee relationship is blurred, and more than 55 per cent of the workforce is self-employed, although earning a pittance. I am sure this profile of the workforce is common among the countries of the Asia-Pacific and sub-Sahara regions. Participation of this category of worker in the dialogue process is difficult. “Employment generation” and “social protection”, identified as strategic objectives by the ILO, are important tools for sustainable development, hence the need for focused attention.

As already stated, global unemployment stands at 195 million and is growing at the rate of 6.3 per cent. Asia alone has 74 million unemployed people. With the shrinking of the manufacturing sector, the service and knowledge sectors have to share this responsibility. Yet these sectors require high skill levels. The ILO should play a pivotal role in strengthening skills and vocational training programmes

across its member countries as part of its initiative to promote employment generation.

Only 20 per cent of the global population enjoys full social protection. Globalization and restructuring of industries have exposed a sizeable workforce to the vagaries of unemployment and social insecurity, which may cause social tension and make economic transition socially expensive. The ILO’s technical support in designing and running social security programmes should help developing economies to maintain socio-economic tranquillity, thereby contributing to sustainable development. The two important agenda items of the Conference, *Strengthening the ILO’s capacity to assist its Members’ efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization*, and *The promotion of sustainable enterprises*, should generate a rich debate and useful conclusions.

We strongly believe that the strengthening of the ILO’s capacity is necessary to improve its effectiveness, delivery mechanisms and service to its Members. Better integration with the other United Nations organizations is definitely a useful step in this context. Of late, the ILO’s increased interface with the IMF, WTO and other United Nations bodies is worth appreciating.

Promoting “sustainable enterprises” is dependent on national policies, entrepreneurial culture and enterprise autonomy. A sustainable enterprise is the key to generating jobs and contributing to the national economy. In order to develop sustainable enterprises, a flexible institutional environment is needed to respond to changing needs. Globalization has increased competitive pressure on enterprises, requiring “industrial restructuring”, skills enhancement, human resource development, and so on. Environmental issues are a critical aspect of sustainable development. Global warming threatens to expose us to unhealthy environmental developments. Skilled migration is an important issue. The ILO should engage itself in this area, where developing countries are facing population growth, and countries such as India have demographic dividends, with 54 per cent of the population below the age of 23 years. Migration policies should therefore be more flexible.

Sr. LUKSIC SANDOVAL (*Gobierno, Chile*)

Sr. Presidente, tal como lo señalara el Director General de la OIT, Don Juan Somavia, en su introducción a la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, la decisión de este organismo de convertir el trabajo decente en un objetivo mundial, ha sido adoptada rápidamente por el sistema multilateral y ha llenado de esperanzas a millones de seres humanos a lo largo y ancho del planeta.

Desde Chile, un país pequeño situado en los confines del mundo, nos hemos hecho parte entusiasta de este proceso y nos atreveríamos a decir que el concepto de trabajo decente ha sido una pieza fundamental para avanzar hacia un nuevo pacto civilizatorio como sociedad. Es decir, ha sido un modo de pensar y construir nosotros, marcado por la inclusión social y no por la indiferencia hacia los más débiles o hacia los afectados por las severas contingencias que ofrece.

La experiencia chilena reciente muestra que es posible avanzar simultáneamente en calidad y cantidad de empleo. Y como se señalara en el reciente estudio conjunto de la OIT y la Secretaría de la OMC, a través de políticas pertinentes y adecuadas

a la realidad específica de cada país es posible conciliar los desafíos que emanan de la eficiencia con aquellos que derivan de la equidad y la inclusión social.

Dentro de los temas sustantivos que serán objeto del debate en esta Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo surge como especialmente relevante para nosotros, la articulación del Programa de Trabajo Decente con el paradigma del desarrollo sostenible.

Este acoplamiento conceptual y de enfoque de política hace pleno sentido en la medida que, como ha señalado el Director General, la sostenibilidad de la vida de la gente, la sostenibilidad de las empresas y la sostenibilidad del medio ambiente, del planeta, están estrechamente relacionados.

Las consecuencias de esta articulación conceptual, están llamadas a ser profundamente revolucionarias, pues están allí en juego, asunto de vital importancia para las actuales y futuras generaciones.

Para algunos, la única política posible es el pragmatismo de corto plazo que obliga a desechar cualquier consideración de equidad o de sostenibilidad debido a la radicalización de la competencia en el mercado global. A ellos, que ven en la agenda del trabajo decente o en el objetivo del desarrollo sostenible una manifestación de voluntarismo utópico, les decimos que están profundamente equivocados. Que junto con las fuentes éticas de las cuales se alimentan ambos conceptos, existen también consideraciones pragmáticas de largo plazo que les dan pleno sentido. En breve, tenemos conciencia que si no rectificamos camino alguno en dimensiones fundamentales del quehacer humano, en la relación con nuestros propios semejantes y con la naturaleza, estamos condenados a la catástrofe. De allí surge entonces el desafío de pensar de manera más compleja el proceso de desarrollo y las políticas conducentes a él, lo que implica considerar simultáneamente y de manera integrada sus pilares social, económico y medioambiental.

Por cierto, compartimos el punto de vista que, en materia institucional, el tripartismo es una herramienta privilegiada para procesar las tensiones que emanan de objetivos, en ocasiones no convergentes, y que es preciso arbitrar.

Además, nos parece evidente que si esta herramienta debe ser perfeccionada, adaptada a nuevas circunstancias, ello deba hacerse con presteza, con rapidez, para que siga aportando sus mejores frutos al devenir de nuestras sociedades.

Del mismo modo, creemos que la institucionalidad de la OIT y de todo el sistema multilateral, debe ser fortalecida para que siga jugando un rol relevante y capaz de afrontar desafíos de mayor complejidad, como algunos que ya despuntan en el horizonte. De hecho, no es casual, que del actual Informe al Director General emerja con fuerza el llamado a reflexionar sobre la relación que existe entre las políticas para mitigar el cambio climático y para promover el empleo y en particular en lo que atañe al impacto sobre la naturaleza del empleo en las economías menos dependientes del carbono.

Quisiera terminar con un aspecto que estará muy presente en los debates. ¿Cuál es la necesidad que enfrenta a nuestras sociedades de concebir regímenes de seguridad social adaptados a sus necesidades y atendiendo a sus posibilidades económicas existentes? El Gobierno de la Presidenta Bachelet en Chile se ha planteado como uno de los mayores desafíos de su gestión, crear un sistema de protección social que acompañe a las personas desde la cuna

hasta la vejez. El enfoque que está detrás de este gran objetivo de política es el que ha sido puesto de relieve en esta Conferencia, de que la protección social no debe ser pensada como un problema de costo sino ante todo como una inversión social y económica que puede ser muy rentable para los países.

(The sitting adjourned at 12.30 p.m. and resumed at 1 p.m.)

Sr. ECHAVARRÍA SALDARRIAGA (*Empleador, Colombia*)

En la Memoria del Director General, se abordan varios temas, pero sólo quiero referirme a las empresas sostenibles y a la reforma de las Naciones Unidas. Es importante resaltar que en la OIT se abre un espacio para reconocer a las empresas como base para la creación de riqueza, como actores que contribuyen al funcionamiento del Estado y como fuentes de empleo y trabajo, es decir, que las empresas son pilares fundamentales para el desarrollo productivo porque no hay trabajo sin empresa. Las empresas privadas deben ser promovidas y alentadas por los gobiernos sobre la base del reconocimiento de la propiedad privada y la libre iniciativa de los agentes económicos en el mercado, de manera que éstos, se sientan alentados a efectuar inversiones con la certeza de la seguridad jurídica y de la simplicidad en los trámites operativos y más reglas laborales favorables al incremento de la producción de bienes y servicios. Por lo que respecta a la OIT, es importante que promueva acciones para el fomento de las pequeñas y medianas empresas, en las que se origina más del 80 por ciento del trabajo en el mundo. En cuanto a la reforma del sistema de las Naciones Unidas y el papel que debe desempeñar en el futuro la OIT, estimamos que este organismo podría efectuar una aportación significativa al fomento de las inversiones mediante la promoción general de un entorno reglamentario propicio para el éxito empresarial. La creación de empresas privadas y la capacitación de emprendedores, son la respuesta más eficaz en la lucha contra la pobreza.

Por otra parte, quiero referirme al acuerdo tripartito celebrado por el Gobierno, los empleadores y los trabajadores colombianos en la Conferencia celebrada el año pasado, que, pese a su corto tiempo de implementación, ha venido arrojando resultados positivos. Se han registrado progresos evidentes en la renovada presencia de la representación permanente de la OIT. Su instalación a partir de mediados de enero de 2007, ha permitido a los interlocutores sociales tener una comunicación constante con el funcionario local de la OIT, y también ha servido para que la propia OIT conozca la realidad nacional de primera mano.

Asimismo, la continuación del Programa de Cooperación Técnica en torno a temas tan importantes como el diálogo social, la adaptación laboral de las personas reinsertadas y los desplazados a consecuencia del conflicto armado, el fortalecimiento del desarrollo local y el fomento de los programas de género, actividades que cuentan con partidas económicas aseguradas por el presupuesto nacional de la nación colombiana, son garantía de que habrá resultados aún mejores en los próximos meses.

Creemos que será necesario sellar acuerdos complementarios para incorporar un programa de mejoramiento de las capacidades en materia de la inspección del trabajo en el Ministerio de la Protección Social. Existen otros importantes logros recientes en

Colombia, en relación con los cuales hemos dejado un documento más extenso al Director General.

Vemos progresos en torno a temas como la protección y garantía de los derechos de los miembros de las organizaciones de los trabajadores; la reducción de la violencia, la lucha contra la impunidad; la asignación de recursos materiales y humanos para agilizar los procesos judiciales y las quejas ordinarias; la reactivación de las discusiones de temas de la Comisión de Concertación Nacional; la creación de una comisión de análisis de casos que puedan ponerse en conocimiento del Comité de Libertad Sindical; la formulación de disposiciones jurídicas en temas tales como las limitaciones a las agencias privadas de empleo y las cooperativas que prestan servicios de trabajo en empresas públicas o privadas, la reducción de trámites en los procesos judiciales, laborales y la simplificación del registro de sindicatos.

Se requiere un esfuerzo mayor en la construcción de una visión nacional que permita ir más allá de las naturales diferencias en la observación de los temas por parte de los sectores sociales, y que apunte a un propósito colectivo que oriente al país hacia la construcción de una Colombia con mayor tolerancia política, mayor inclusión social, una mayor armonía con la naturaleza y un mayor proceso de paz con todos los sectores armados.

En conclusión, Colombia se encuentra en la dirección correcta y el apoyo de la OIT y la comunidad internacional es fundamental en ese proceso. Los empresarios estamos decididos a impulsar todas las acciones que se orienten en dicha dirección.

Sr. GAGLIARDO VALAREZO (*Gobierno, Ecuador*)

En nombre del Gobierno del Ecuador, que preside el ciudadano Rafael Correa, saludo con el mayor respeto a usted y a todas las delegaciones que asisten a esta 96.ª reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo.

En Ecuador, bajo la presidencia del ciudadano Rafael Correa, el 15 de enero del 2007, se inició un cambio de época. Un cambio democrático y humanista con el que nos proponemos hacer realidad el principio que proclama al trabajo como un derecho y un deber social que debe gozar de la protección del Estado.

En efecto, nosotros consideramos que el Estado, la economía y la sociedad en su conjunto deben asegurarle al trabajador el respeto a su dignidad, una existencia decorosa y un ingreso justo que cubra sus necesidades y las de su familia, como así lo dispone la norma constitucional que rige en el Ecuador.

En mi país, las políticas y prácticas implantadas por el neoliberalismo, entre otras: la extrema liberalización económica, la flexibilización del ámbito normativo laboral, el imperio total de las fuerzas del mercado y el desmantelamiento del Estado para quitarle por completo su rol regulador, distorsionaron la naturaleza de las relaciones laborales, ocasionaron mayores tasas de desempleo y subempleo y desataron olas de migraciones masivas.

En la última década casi 2 millones de ecuatorianos emigraron hacia Europa, Estados Unidos de América, Canadá y otros países. Ellos son los que sustentan en buena parte la dolarización vigente en el Ecuador, a través de las remesas que envían a sus familiares. Para ellos demandamos como Gobierno no solamente su regularización sino también el reconocimiento pleno de los derechos laborales que

les corresponde según las normas internacionales y el ordenamiento legal de cada país receptor.

Frente a semejante escenario de crisis integral que encontramos al asumir nuestro Gobierno, hemos formulado una nueva estrategia de desarrollo que se fundamenta en la necesidad de profundos cambios económicos, sociales y políticos que serán adoptados en el marco de la constitucionalidad y de la democracia.

En nuestro Gobierno estamos recuperando el rol regulador y redistribuidor del Estado en la economía.

El plan económico del Presidente Rafael Correa tiene como eje central la creación y generación de fuentes de empleo y la aplicación progresiva de los principios del trabajo decente que hoy son la guía para las acciones de la OIT. Damos continuidad y damos mucha importancia a la línea de acción del diálogo social-laboral tripartito, pero con un nuevo enfoque que permita acuerdos de cohesión, integración social, equidad y seguridad jurídica para todos los interlocutores sociales.

Estamos comprometidos firmemente con la aplicación de los convenios vigentes con la OIT, en especial los relativos a la libertad de asociación y la libertad sindical y el reconocimiento efectivo del derecho a la contratación colectiva; de igual forma en lo tocante a la abolición del trabajo infantil, la eliminación de toda forma de trabajo forzoso, la eliminación de cualquier discriminación en el campo del empleo y de la ocupación.

Al respecto, en la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente de plenos poderes que se instalará en el Ecuador a fines del presente año, como Gobierno plantearé, en esa suprema instancia de la democracia, la derogación de toda forma de trabajo precario, especialmente de la tercerización e intermediación laboral que fueron generalizadas hasta los máximos extremos en desmedro de la estabilidad y de los derechos de los trabajadores ecuatorianos.

Consecuentemente, postulamos la restauración de la relación de trabajo bilateral y directa, como es la sentida aspiración de los trabajadores ecuatorianos.

Señor Presidente: deseamos proclamar, en esta gran tribuna de la OIT, nuestra identificación con el pensamiento del Libertador Simón Bolívar, quien en su célebre discurso pronunciado ante el Congreso de Angostura en pleno siglo XIX, manifestó: «El mejor sistema de Gobierno es el que asegura la mayor suma de estabilidad política, la mayor suma de seguridad social y la mayor suma de felicidad posible». En esta época, al pensamiento del Libertador de cinco naciones sólo habría que agregarle: la mayor suma de trabajo decente y de justicia social. Gracias por su atención.

Ms. MUGANZA (*Secretary of State responsible for Labour, Rwanda*)

In relation to the Global Report and emanating from the ILO Decent Work Agenda concept, I am glad to inform you that the Government of Rwanda has prepared a national employment policy with support from the ILO, which was endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 13 September 2006.

This policy is based on the recommendation of the Ouagadougou Summit of the Heads of State and Government, the National Investment Strategy and the National Gender Policy. It has guided the drafting of the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy that runs from 2007 to 2011, in

which employment is considered as one of the main pillars of poverty reduction.

Rwanda is a member of the Youth Employment Network, a commitment made by our President, His Excellency Paul Kagame, in 2004. The Ministry in charge of labour, in partnership with other stakeholders and direct support from the Youth Employment Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, developed a five-year plan of action that runs from 2007 to 2011.

Other five-year plans of action developed based on the policy include the Five-Year Action Plan for the Promotion of Women's Employment, funded by the ILO. This has attracted the interest of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNDP and national and international NGOs based in Kigali.

With support from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Government of Rwanda has also developed a five-year plan of action for the elimination of child labour. With the support of UNICEF and the United States Department of Labor through the Combating Child Labor Project (KURET), the Government has withdrawn over 6,000 children from the worst forms of child labour and they have been integrated into primary schools.

The five-year plan of action for employment of people with disabilities is being drafted. With the recent public administration reform, the retrenched public servants benefited from a reconversion programme, which includes a credit and guarantee fund to allow them either to continue their studies or to start their own business.

No nation can develop sustainable employment without dealing with HIV/AIDS and its effects. In this regard, the Government of Rwanda, with the ILO and joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) support, has developed a strategic plan for fighting HIV/AIDS in the workplace. Working with the National Commission for Fighting HIV/AIDS and the Treatment and Research AIDS Centre (TRAC) from November to December 2006, voluntary HIV counseling and testing (VCT) for all public servants was conducted. This is a continuous programme.

Promoting vocational training is a major input for employment promotion. A national workforce development authority was created to strengthen vocational training policy and programmes in the country.

For better management of the labour market, and to compliment the ongoing skills audit in the country, a labour force survey will be conducted before the end of 2007.

As a country recovering from the diverse effects of the 1994 genocide and with the very limited resources, we humbly recognize the positive strides we have made towards national reconstruction, reconciliation, justice and peace. Employment promotion programmes are major components to sustain the gains made in the last 13 years in our country.

Our Government is committed to the reinforcement and the creation of adequate labour administration structures and a reliable legal framework. It is in this perspective that in the 2005-06 public administration reform, each district was given a labour inspector, bringing the number from 14 to 31 countrywide. Most of them now need more training and we have benefited from training conducted by the African Regional Centre for Labour Administration

(CRADAT) and the International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin. The National Labour Council was legally set up by an Order of the Prime Minister, and its implementation is ongoing.

Through these programmes, we will continue to deal with the present challenges, namely high unemployment and underemployment, the higher number of unskilled workforce, the inadequate budget for the implementation of the employment policy and its programmes, improving the relationship between the social partners, and the absence of labour market data.

The Government of Rwanda is committed to poverty eradication and to attaining social justice as indicated by the different policies and programmes. With the continuing partnership based on global commitments made in different international forums, we shall achieve the goals envisioned in our Vision 2020.

I would like to thank the ILO for its support in the mentioned achievements and the ILO officer who has been recruited for the Kigali United Nations Office in regard to the "One UN", of which Rwanda is one of the pilot countries. I am confident that this will strengthen our communication with the ILO at all levels.

Sr. PINZÓN (*trabajador, Guatemala*)

El tema del presente cónclave «Trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible», constituye en sí mismo un desafío de dimensiones imprevisibles para los gobiernos, para el movimiento sindical, para la diversidad de organizaciones existentes, para la ciudadanía en general y, fundamentalmente, para los beneficiarios, quienes deben elevar su autoestima y participar sin complejo alguno, tomando plena conciencia que el trabajo es un valor y un derecho humano a través de los cuales el ser humano se dignifica y puede lograr su pleno desarrollo y el de su familia como núcleo central de la sociedad donde se desenvuelve.

El tema que ocupa la Conferencia ha sido objeto de miles y miles de declaraciones, discursos y promesas de parte de gobernantes y personalidades del mundo, incluso de nosotros los trabajadores organizados, pero las cosas siguen casi iguales, por no decir peores: más pobreza, más miseria, más exclusión, más incremento del trabajo autónomo, más migraciones a pesar de las restricciones y las «mullas de la vergüenza».

La Memoria y el Informe del Director es contundente y leo un párrafo: «Si bien el crecimiento ha sido un factor importante en la reducción de la pobreza, las pruebas de que ha aumentado la desigualdad dentro de los países indican, sin embargo, que los modelos actuales de crecimiento favorecen a las personas acomodadas». Como si fuera poco, además del Informe Memoria del Director se han suscritos en esta materia instrumentos internacionales que comprometen a los Estados. Por ejemplo: el Pacto Internacional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales, la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos, la Declaración de Nuevo León (México), la Declaración Tripartita de Tegucigalpa, etc. Sin embargo, al hojear las constituciones de todos los países comprobamos que contemplan todo lo referido al trabajo y al empleo.

A manera de reflexión, conviene también preguntarse de qué sirve la democracia formal y representativa si los temas de «deuda social, empleo, salud,

educación, vivienda, recreación, etc.», constituyen el menú de las diversas campañas proselitistas, pero cuando los partidos políticos llevan a sus candidatos al poder, las promesas de la «deuda social» se convierten en «bagazo y basura» para las mayorías y en el «pago de facturas» para las minorías que han financiado las campañas políticas.

Cuando los dirigentes sindicales reclaman a los gobiernos de turno que respeten el diálogo, la libertad sindical y la negociación colectiva, que respeten a los más desposeídos y cumplan sus promesas y sus programas, éstos responden con políticas de destrucción de los sindicatos, los califican de terroristas y delincuentes, afirman que los sindicatos no deben existir en un Estado socialista y, lo peor, utilizan sicarios para asesinar a sus dirigentes. Puedo mencionar como ejemplo el caso de mi país, Guatemala, donde en los dos primeros meses del año asesinaron a tres dirigentes sindicales, o el caso de Colombia, donde han destruido más de mil sindicatos y asesinado a más de 2.500 dirigentes sindicales en los últimos 20 años.

En estas condiciones, ¿hay necesidad de más declaraciones? Por supuesto que sí, pero no podemos limitarnos a las declaraciones. Respetuosamente solicitamos crear las condiciones para que la OIT sugiera acciones al sistema tripartito, para que oriente políticas y estrategias de información, sensibilización, compromiso e incorporación de acciones en el sistema de los partidos políticos, para abordar y asumir con ellos el tema de «El trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible». También debe acompañar y sugerir procedimientos para que cada país elabore y desarrolle políticas de Estado sobre la materia. Sin decisión política gubernamental, el tema seguirá siendo teórico, de promesas con poca realidad y efecto.

Señor Presidente, seguimos apostando por la OIT y su normativa, esencialmente los convenios fundamentales, el diálogo y el tripartismo.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-GHANEM (Employer, Kuwait)

Allow me, at the outset, to convey to you the greetings and appreciation of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the representative organization of employers in my country; I have the honour of being chairperson of its executive committee.

I have the pleasure to address you today at this important annual assembly, which renews itself continually through dialogue with a view to achieving its lofty objectives, namely establishing peace and social security, as well as constructive cooperation among the social partners. For, during this Conference and within its tripartite structure of representation embodying an approach and philosophy of dialogue, the social partners meet to express their views and discuss their differences with a view to reaching solutions that are satisfactory to all parties. It is thus natural that we have high hopes of this Conference and that the competent persons concerned look forward to it year after year.

The Director-General has not presented a technical report at this session for discussion. Hence I will speak about the International Labour Organization, which will soon complete its ninth decade, having been founded in 1919. This is a decisive historic milestone, marking the culmination of social and civilizational progress and protecting humankind from imminent dangers. The industrial revolution has entailed exorbitant social costs, which have af-

fecting working conditions and labour relations. Many philosophers and theorists have forecast a conflict between the social partners, and I can affirm that the establishment of the ILO as part of the League of Nations at the time represents a balanced social philosophy which has overturned many slogans and ideas on the inevitability of the class conflict.

Thus, the International Labour Conference and the regional meetings, as well as the different meetings of the ILO, have become forums for dispute settlement, for resolving contradictions and reaching agreement on shared concepts, which take workers' rights into account without disregarding employers' interests, achieving a balance between both sides. I am not exaggerating when I say that the ILO's constant action in support of the social dimension of the process of economic and social development in member States has played an incontestable role in underpinning the market economy so that it represents a model for development worldwide.

The Director-General's periodic Reports give a global picture of the efforts being made to eliminate the different forms of discrimination in employment and occupation, in accordance with the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. The Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the Declaration as a whole on its adoption in 1998, particularly in view of its well-balanced and objective approach. Their position has remained unchanged, in their unconditional support for the elimination of the different forms of discrimination in employment and occupation; they consider that there cannot be any grounds for discrimination, for it undermines human dignity and rights.

Upon reading the report of the mission on the situation of workers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories, we can only call on the International Labour Conference to align itself to a greater extent with human rights and to take a more rigorous position against the inhuman practices perpetrated by the Israeli authorities in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories, which not only affect workers, but also hit employers through exorbitant taxes, compulsory closures, looting, robbery and destruction of their commercial and industrial establishments.

Item V refers to strengthening the ILO's capacity to carry out its core tasks, to secure decent work for all as a key objective of the relevant national and international policies. For our part, we support the concept of decent work and the implementation of fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as the promotion of efforts aimed at creating non-traditional employment opportunities, providing social protection for all and promoting constructive social dialogue.

To conclude, I would like to convey the appreciation of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the efforts made by the Director-General, the Governing Body and its committees in preparing the reports presented, emphasizing the need to review obsolete working methods which are inadequate in the face of new realities and rapid changes in today's world.

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

Mr. President and distinguished delegates to this Conference. In his introductory comments the Di-

rector-General of the ILO raised a major global contemporary problem, that is to say, the link between decent work, sustainable development and eradication of poverty.

The Director-General is absolutely correct in stating that it is not possible to eradicate poverty by some kind of decree or piece of legislation. If we are really to promote the welfare of people, we need sustained efforts to be undertaken by society as a whole. He is also quite right in saying that the international system as a whole, including the ILO, has not yet managed to create the kind of powerful synergy required between sustainable economic, social and ecological development on one hand, and the eradication of poverty, on the other, and as a result of that we have not succeeded in attaining significant progress in respect of a convergence of policy positions nor in achieving practical results. And you have to ask why. We believe the reason is that efforts to fight poverty including efforts to extend sustainable development and decent work can only succeed if all three social partners, in particular governments and employers, since they take decisions on economic and social issues, fully shoulder their responsibility in respect of this global challenge. Unfortunately, political will is often lacking on the part of governments, and even more frequently employers consider social responsibility to be purely voluntary, rather like charity. The ILO provides us with a unique opportunity to achieve consensus on interests and on long-term initiatives and in looking towards the long-term prospects for sustainable development for the world as a whole. If we are to make this a reality, then we need to develop sustained and responsible social dialogue at all levels. We need to ensure that collective agreements once concluded are respected, and that proper rules for industrial relations are accepted and put into practice. The report shows that the reality is far removed from this ideal. In particular, the trades unions consider that the situation in the Russian Federation with regard to decent work and sustainable development is far from ideal.

The trade unions are trying to achieve that goal. But after all, five days before the opening of this particular session of the Conference, Russian trade

unions called for certain measures to be taken by the Russian authorities to ensure sustainable growth in the level of wages paid in Russia, which would allow people to have a decent standard of living, that is to say, a kind of subsistence level that would be applied to all, and to increase pensions to at least the pensioners' subsistence level. They also called for the ratification and application of the Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention, 1967 (No. 128), and the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), and for the Government to recognize the need to develop a strategic plan, particularly for wages and pensions in Russia.

All of these demands that were put forward by Russian trade unions in their campaign are fully in line with the relevant ILO instruments. We therefore recognize that member States, on acceding to the Organization, take on the responsibility to put into practice all the provisions of ILO instruments.

If we look at the report of the Committee on the Application of Standards, it is clear that the Government of the Russian Federation has not submitted any of the reports required of it and, therefore, has ignored its responsibilities called into question the system of submitting reports to a monitoring mechanism. That is cause for considerable concern. During this session we have seen the way in which actions have been taken without any kind of principle whatsoever in order to remove from the list violations of ILO Convention No. 87 in Colombia, where every year over 100 trade union members and activists are killed, and where for many years trade union rights have been trampled on and there is really no genuine social dialogue whatsoever. That is a very bad precedent and a bad example for the future. Russian trade unions fully support the idea of the ILO supervisory mechanisms because they are the only possible way to ensure that we all move towards attaining the goals of this Organization, and strengthening its strategic capacities to increase decent work, achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty.

It is our joint responsibility to ensure that these goals are achieved. Thank you.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.40 p.m.)

Ninth sitting

Monday, 11 June 2006, 2.35 p.m

Presidents: Mr. Sulka, Mr. da Rocha Paranhos and Mr. Blondel

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

The PRESIDENT

I declare open the ninth sitting of this session of the Conference. We shall now proceed with the general discussion of the reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General.

The sitting continues with delegates' statements.

The transcript of speeches 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.

Mr. ALAKBAROV (*Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population, Azerbaijan*)

Hopes built on the realization of the "Decent work for all" concept can be conducive to solutions to increasingly important problems. This path may seem long but it is the only right path which we should walk together. I believe this is the principal conclusion one can draw from the Report of the Director-General. Discussions at the national level have focused on issues related to the implementation of the decent work concept and ensuring more equitable and sustainable human development. As noted in the Director-General's Report, we have a moral responsibility to deliver on our promises, and the changes around us require new solutions to guarantee fundamental principles and rights at work and decent work for all.

All of us understand that the reforms would not take place without sufficient societal support of the reform concept as well as most of the specific measures required to execute it.

Balanced economic policy aimed at promoting employment and implementing the decent work programme is a national priority that has already yielded certain results. Macroeconomic stability and one of the internationally highest economic growth rates in the last three years have allowed the Government of Azerbaijan to put into practice political declarations about improving social welfare and the life standard of the people.

Effective employment and education reform, improving wage policy and helping vulnerable groups adjust to the market economy are all components of national policy aimed at achieving decent work. The Government pays major attention to job generation, especially in the non-oil sector. Sustainable economic and employment growth has impacted the re-

duction of poverty from 46 per cent in 2002 down to 20 per cent in 2006. I should note here that, by implementing target social assistance, we not only provide social transfers to the poor but also conduct social rehabilitation programmes for disadvantaged groups.

To identify effective employment policies, Azerbaijan is developing a national labour database to encompass major features of the labour market.

The progress achieved in Azerbaijan and our choice of priorities lead us to the conclusion that Azerbaijan is already implementing a comprehensive strategy, outlined in the Report by Mr. Juan Somavia. At the same time, I should stress here that continued aggression and military occupation by Armenia in spite of a resolution passed by the United Nations Security Council and the Council of Europe on the integrity of Azerbaijan, as well as the existence of more than 1 million refugees and internally displaced persons, with a high share of women and youth among them, are limiting possibilities for social development in my country.

The next issue I would like to touch upon is the liberalization of international trade and the distribution of labour. Economic globalization makes transition economies vulnerable to shifts in global, financial and commercial markets. The issue for discussion presented in the Global Report emphasized once more the need to consider the decent work challenge in the light of this process.

The Global Report stressed again the importance of social dialogue. All parties to the social partnership in our country understand that achieving decent work for all is a long-term goal that nevertheless serves as a useful benchmark for developing social dialogue in this policy area.

The importance of participation of social partners in this process is conditioned by the fact that social and employment policy directly empowers them, and they can better than anyone else appraise its visibility, efficiency and sustainability. This position has been reinforced during the development and implementation of the employment strategies in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Decent Work Country Programme agreed between the ILO and our country.

From year to year, we witness an increasing role of the ILO in ensuring social security and social progress all over the world. The current session of the Conference will define the new initiative intended for promoting social progress and implementing the decent work concept.

In closing, I express my confidence that the ILO standards may and should guide us in finding ans-

wers to key questions posed in the Report by the Director-General.

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

I would like to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election to the Presidency of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. I am confident that this Conference will bear productive work under their able leadership.

At the outset of my statement, I would like to extend my thanks to the Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO for the Reports they have submitted to the Conference. The Report of the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, entitled *Decent work for sustainable development*, while reflecting eloquently in its title the main objective on which we, the policy-makers duly agree with the social partners, also shows clearly the main challenges on the way to reaching this objective. The issues elaborated in the Report, such as a balanced approach that integrates economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, and coherent functioning of trade, finance, investment and employment policies, as well as the establishment of a similar political harmony among the international organizations, also demonstrate the appropriate solutions for achieving our goal of making development sustainable.

In order to benefit from the opportunities created by and to overcome the problems stemming from globalization, no one-dimensional approach based on either economic, social or environmental aspects excluding the other components will serve us. Nor will it be possible to find solutions to the problems debated within the framework of the ILO alone. Besides the other organizations of the UN system, I believe that policies should be developed in close cooperation with the international financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF, and I consider the diligent efforts of the Director-General in this direction to be very positive. Continuation of the increased efforts to enhance coordination between international organizations will be useful.

The individual efforts of the countries to promote decent work will surely not be sufficient in the globalization process, where the national economies have a tendency to integrate. In this regard, we had the honour of holding the Subregional Conference of South-East European Countries on "Employment and Development in South-East Europe in the Context of Economic Globalization", which was hosted by our Government and the ILO in September 2006 in Istanbul. At the Conference we had the opportunity to discuss how to implement the policies aimed at achieving full employment in the context of globalization, how to address jobless growth in a globalized world, how to adjust the labour market imperatives of fair globalization through flexibility, security and policy coherence, and the role of public policies, social partners and social dialogue in attaining the goals of decent work for all and fair globalization. The distinguished participants of the Istanbul Conference have declared to the public their considerations related to the future employment strategies and globalization which they have agreed upon in the *Istanbul Declaration on Integrated and Coherent Employment Strategies in the Face of Globalization*.

I am pleased to state that the cooperation activities between Turkey and the ILO are continuing intense-

ly within the framework of various projects. Besides, I would like to extend my thanks to the employees', employers' and public servants' unions for their contributions to the development of social dialogue in our country. We wish for the existing cooperation to be strengthened within the framework of Decent Work Country Programmes and would like to cooperate in order to give priority to strengthening social dialogue, eradicating child labour, preparing an action plan for youth employment and increasing employment for women based on gender equality.

The agenda of this year's Conference, which focuses both on the creation of standards as well as on the implementation problems within the framework of providing support to the efforts of the member States, underlines two dimensions of the ILO's strategy which we consider to be appropriate for the ILO to follow. The promotion of sustainable enterprises, which was the theme of a general discussion, gave us the opportunity to consider socioeconomic aspects in detail by drawing our attention particularly to creating employment in the struggle to establish and maintain decent work. The items on the agenda of the Conference, in line with the Decent Work Agenda of the ILO, will also contribute to the organizational reform process foreseen by the ILO.

In order to improve working conditions and occupational safety and health in the fishing sector, which is one of the most dangerous sectors in the world, the ILO's work to set international standards in this field started in 2004 but did not come to a successful conclusion. I believe that they will be successful this time around. I appreciate the commitment of the ILO towards this issue.

I hope that this International Labour Conference, to which my country always attaches great importance, will be fruitful and useful for both the ILO and member countries.

Original portugués: Sr. SOUZA (trabajador, Brasil)

Sólo podremos superar la pobreza cuando la mayoría de las personas tengan acceso a un trabajo decente, ya que dos mil millones de personas en el mundo siguen viviendo con menos de dos dólares por día, en condiciones indignas de trabajo y de vida. El papel de la OIT es fundamental para luchar contra la pobreza y la miseria, al promover la justicia social y favorecer la creación de trabajo decente.

Con el advenimiento de una nueva realidad en la economía, la política y el trabajo en el mundo entero, surgió una voz más fuerte y más unida a nivel mundial, destinada a abordar el desafío de la globalización con energía y esperanzas renovadas, que dio lugar a la Confederación Sindical Mundial.

En el Brasil, la Social Democracia Sindical, la Confederación General de los Trabajadores y la Central Autónoma de los Trabajadores se unieron con el fin de seguir este paso dado a nivel internacional.

En este contexto nace la Unión General de los Trabajadores, que tiene como meta trazar una nueva trayectoria del movimiento sindical para el siglo XXI que vaya más allá del corporativismo e incorpore las ideas de un sindicalismo ciudadano, ético e innovador, de manera que el proceso de globalización asuma una dimensión social y quiebre los paradigmas tradicionales.

Brasil ha sido un modelo a escala mundial en los ámbitos tecnológico, energético y sociolaboral, y recientemente ha marcado el camino para des-

contaminar la atmósfera gracias al biocombustible. Además, el Informe global con arreglo al seguimiento de la Declaración de la OIT relativa a los principios y derechos fundamentales en el trabajo destaca al citar a Brasil la reducción de las desigualdades raciales y de género como parte de la inclusión social y la repartición de los ingresos gracias al crecimiento del producto y del empleo, así como los planes nacionales de política para mujeres, promoción de la igualdad racial y el plan Brasil sin homofobia.

El sector pesquero brasileño ha progresado mucho. En un país con 8.000 kilómetros de costas, es importante instaurar una vigilancia eficaz. Actualmente, damos importancia a las condiciones de trabajo y de vida a bordo de las embarcaciones y contamos con equipos especializados de inspección de trabajo que también verifican los barcos extranjeros.

Es importante observar que existen 11 normas elaboradas de forma tripartita, y que los representantes de los trabajadores participan colaborando en la planificación de esas supervisiones. Apelamos a que se asuman nuestras preocupaciones con miras a que, mediante un intenso trabajo tripartito, podamos lograr el consenso en torno a un convenio.

Brasil, está empezando a abandonar un modelo de empresa ya obsoleto para adoptar un modelo de empresa moderna y globalizada, ya que esa es la principal fuente de crecimiento y empleo en el marco de la promoción de empresas sostenibles.

Recordamos a los países miembros de la OIT que lo que impulsa el crecimiento económico es, sobre todo, la reducción de los impuestos, la creatividad y la ardua labor de los trabajadores y empresarios, alentada por la creación de empleo y el aumento de los ingresos y del bienestar derivado del trabajo.

Solamente se practica civismo empresarial con un comportamiento ético, pagando los impuestos, cuidando del medioambiente, mejorando las condiciones reinantes en la comunidad, dando un trabajo digno a todos los seres humanos y respetando todos los derechos de los trabajadores.

Como principio único de la promoción de empresas sostenibles, tenemos que calificar a nuestros trabajadores de acuerdo con el contenido de la Recomendación sobre el desarrollo de los recursos humanos, 2004 (núm. 195).

Por último, el Brasil es uno de los 10 países miembros de la OIT con un escaño permanente en el Consejo de Administración. El Gobierno tiene que corresponder y asumir esta responsabilidad, ya que aún no ratificó el Convenio (núm. 151) sobre las relaciones de trabajo en la administración pública, 1978 y la Recomendación sobre las relaciones de trabajo en la administración pública, 1978 (núm.159) que contemplan un conjunto de procedimientos para el reconocimiento de las organizaciones de funcionarios públicos, la negociación de condiciones de trabajo y la reglamentación de la huelga en el servicio público.

No podemos dejar de citar la ausencia del tripartismo, sobre todo del Grupo de los trabajadores, en el Programa de Trabajo decente que está elaborando el Gobierno brasileño, olvidando que los trabajadores ejercen una gran influencia en la inclusión social, las oportunidades y las políticas públicas.

Quisiéramos concluir indicando que no hay gobierno ni empresa sin trabajo, ni tampoco éstos pueden existir sin el trabajador.

(Mr. da Rocha Paranhos takes the chair.)

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

Two thousand and six marked an important economic milestone for the world's workers. It was the fourth consecutive year in which growth in developing countries exceeded 5 per cent, a record never previously achieved.

The International Monetary Fund noted the impressive growth performance of developing countries. The World Bank reported that growth rate in developing countries in 2006 was 7.3 per cent, well above the 2006 estimated average rate of 4 per cent. The OECD expects growth in the developing nations to be between 6 and 7 per cent in 2007 and 2008.

These achievements seem to contradict a central message of the Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, which is that workers in developing countries have not benefited from the growth of the worldwide economy.

Without growth there can be no job creation, without job creation there can be no decent work. It is hoped that future ILO reports will place greater emphasis on the responsibility of national governments to create the climate for growth and job creation within their own countries.

Factors that support sustainable growth and job creation include free markets, openness to trade, transparent and accountable institutions and the rule of law.

The recent achievements by developing countries make it clear that market forces and trade liberalization have not been discredited. In fact, countries that embrace market reforms and trade liberalization are showing the strongest growth, creating the largest number of jobs and lifting the largest number of people out of poverty.

A recent World Bank study divided groups of developing countries into two categories: globalizers and non-globalizers. Countries that have opened up their domestic markets and embraced trade liberalization have experienced growth rates in excess of 5 per cent over the decade of the 1990s. Non-globalizers, by contrast, had a cumulative growth rate over the 1990s of only 1.4 per cent.

Where there is progress there will always be inequities that must be addressed. Focusing on static snapshots of inequity never gives a complete or accurate picture of progress or development.

Successful economic strategies provide a ladder of opportunity through which the poorest members of our societies can progress and better themselves. We would like to see more research devoted to upward mobility and identifying strategies that foster upward mobility.

We support the crucial importance of addressing the key issues mentioned in the Director-General's Report on poverty, unemployment, the spread of HIV/AIDS and the lack of access to social protection.

The question is not if, but how to achieve these goals. Again, we believe that those countries with strong sustainable growing economies will be better equipped to address these concerns. Indeed, OECD experts have noted that most of the evidence confirms that poverty reduction depends on the pace and pattern of economic growth.

The ILO can help support growth that unlocks the countless opportunities created by trade liberaliza-

tion and energizes the private sector, or it can advocate policies that lead to higher taxes on capital and labour, massive new borrowings and the certainty of severe cuts in services when growth fails to materialize.

Let me close by encouraging the ILO to continue to focus on the important areas in which it has a comparative advantage. These include promoting democracy and workers' rights, developing coherent approaches to employment and helping countries develop the capacity to manage a flexible, effective and productive labour system centred in the private sector. We commend the Director-General's emphasis on strengthening statistical measurements of employment. The ILO has a clear mandate and should focus on that before it expands its portfolio. We hope the ILO would devolve more attention and resources to strengthening the transparency and accountability of its current programmes. As the oldest United Nations technical and specialized agency, the ILO's leadership on transparency and accountability can serve as a model for others in the United Nations system.

Original portugais: M. FONSECA VIEIRA da SILVA (ministre du Travail et de la Solidarité sociale, Portugal)

Je voudrais tout d'abord saluer tous ceux qui participent à cette 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail, un forum mondial de la plus grande importance économique, politique et sociale. Je voudrais en particulier féliciter le Directeur général pour son excellent rapport global.

Mesdames et Messieurs, chers délégués, la mondialisation est venue modifier complètement le regard que nous portons sur de multiples questions économiques, commerciales, humaines et sociales. Parmi elles, il en est une qui regroupe ces différentes dimensions, c'est la réalité du travail. Ceci ne veut pas dire qu'il n'y a pas de défis fondamentaux à relever concernant l'emploi et ses conditions. Cela veut dire tout simplement que la façon dont ils sont liés et notre capacité à les aborder de façon intégrée ont changé de manière radicale. La mondialisation, si elle a apporté son lot de défis, offre aussi de nouvelles possibilités et de nouveaux instruments.

En tant que protagonistes et acteurs de ce monde nouveau et complexe, nous avons une importante responsabilité qui consiste à trouver des réponses mondiales à ces défis aux aspects et dimensions si variés.

Le principal de ces défis est de savoir comment faire progresser sur les agendas politiques les instruments qui valorisent le travail en tant que valeur essentielle et universelle afin de garantir qu'il y ait de la dignité dans le travail et que nous intégrions les millions d'êtres humains qui travaillent dans le monde. Nous avons donc l'obligation morale de le mettre en valeur, pour nous permettre ainsi de répondre aux aspirations de notre citoyenneté.

Pour exercer cette citoyenneté par le biais du travail, il faut dépasser, tout en les réglant, les problèmes liés aux attaques discriminatoires injustes fondées sur le sexe, l'appartenance ethnique, la nationalité ou tout autre critère, ou venir à bout de ces problèmes partout où perdure le travail des enfants, qui les empêche de développer leur potentiel et anéantit leurs espoirs pour l'avenir.

A cet égard, l'Agenda du travail décent, promu par l'OIT, est un élément d'intégration très puissant, un agenda qui touche les questions essentielles et établit avec clarté les conditions fondamentales

qu'il convient de garantir à tous, sur tous les marchés et en toutes circonstances.

Cet agenda esquisse les réponses aux divers problèmes qui se posent dans un monde globalisé et dans les diverses configurations du monde. Si la formulation de ces réponses peut varier, l'exigence de dignité humaine est, elle, inaliénable.

La croissance économique exige des marchés ouverts et des systèmes flexibles, mais on ne saurait confondre cette exigence avec l'absence de réglementation ou de politiques sociales.

Dans les pays en développement, la quête de croissance est essentielle au développement durable et pour déterminer les conditions d'emploi.

Dans les pays où le développement repose sur des bases plus solides, les problèmes croissants de la segmentation et de la précarisation de l'emploi induisent une tendance que l'on a appelée la surenchère des minimas, qui remet en cause la dignité du travail.

C'est aussi pour cela, Mesdames et Messieurs, que nous voulons consacrer le concept du travail digne et faire en sorte que l'Agenda pour le travail décent devienne un principe fondamental de la coopération internationale.

Mon pays, le Portugal, en tant que membre de l'Union européenne, dont il assumera la présidence au cours du prochain semestre, se battra sans relâche pour placer ces questions au centre de l'agenda international.

C'est pourquoi nous sommes très honorés d'accueillir à Lisbonne, en novembre prochain, à l'initiative de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, le premier forum mondial sur le travail décent pour une mondialisation juste.

Nous sommes convaincus que ce forum sera une étape importante pour faire avancer l'Agenda du travail décent et permettre l'avènement d'un monde de progrès où nous fassions preuve de solidarité.

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

At the outset I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of this session. I wish you every success in your endeavours. We have examined the Reports of the Director-General and of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organization describing the various activities of the Organization, in addition to the concept of decent labour and its implementation. The fast pace of development in the world today has had a negative impact in several aspects of life. Some of these negative repercussions can be identified in the field of immigration, of workers with special needs and disabled workers and of child labour.

These negative developments call for more social protection when it comes to dealing also with other phenomena such as unemployment. In addition to dealing with the informal sector of the economy and trying to integrate this sector within the formal economy, the implementation of decent work at the national level will only be effective if we combine all international efforts in order to build an appropriate environment. We cannot eradicate poverty and decrease the levels of unemployment unless we are able to provide an environment that is conducive to development, to sustainable development, and to more job opportunities and productive labour in which a respect for basic and fundamental principles and rights at work is part and parcel of our ef-

forts to reduce unemployment and improve working conditions for workers.

Therefore, the ILO should fulfil the needs of its member States, especially the developing member States, when it comes to vocational training because this is one means of achieving social development and addressing the gap between developing and developed countries in the fields of education, communication and technology.

Therefore, we should provide more training sessions for these developing countries, and also address the gap between offer and demand in labour markets in order to be able to face the challenges in the field of information technology.

Egypt realizes the importance of human resources and of decent work as a principle that should be upheld. Therefore, we have preserved the interests of all forces of production at the initiative of His Excellency President Hosni Mubarak, by promoting dialogue between all the social partners. The Ministry of Manpower and Migration has a leading role to play in this field, and we agree with the conclusions of the Director-General's Report regarding the importance of cooperation between the government and the social partners in order to make equality at work a reality, and in order to implement Decent Work Country Programmes and work to fight and eliminate discrimination at the workplace in an effective manner, based on our belief in the importance of equality of opportunity and equal treatment of all citizens and individuals.

We have examined the Director-General's Report related to the Programme and Budget for 2008-09. We must give higher priority to implementing the Decent Work Agenda for the African region. This deserves our attention. However, more extra-budgetary resources should be channelled towards implementing this programme. However, this should not entail imposing conditions on the countries of this region, when providing resources for this programme from extra-budgetary resources can sometimes be questionable.

The annex to the Director-General's Report describes the degrading situation in Palestine and the occupied territories, that is to say the increase of unemployment and the continuation of violence due to the Israeli occupation, in addition to the building of the separation wall. That in itself is a violation of international resolutions. Israeli occupation should be stopped, and this is a pressing need. Therefore, we call on the ILO to continue its efforts to improve living conditions for workers in the occupied territories by increasing its support for technical cooperation programme from its regular and extra-budgetary resources.

Also, we should increase our support to the Palestinian Workers' Fund and improve our cooperation with the social partners and other marginalized categories in Palestine, in order to achieve equality and add more momentum to the effort of establishing peace in this region.

I would like to thank all those who helped prepare this Report and who are protecting Arab workers in the occupied territories by implementing international resolutions in order to achieve peace and stability in this region.

Original, arabe: M. AL-SABEH (*ministre de l'Intérieur, ministre du Travail par intérim, Liban*)

Les sujets abordés par la Conférence cette année se rapportent à la modernisation des tâches de l'OIT

et la création de nouvelles approches de travail susceptibles de répondre aux aspirations des hommes à une vie décente où règnent la justice, l'égalité, la liberté, et le bien-être économique et social, ces éléments qui ont constitué le moteur même de la création de l'Organisation internationale du Travail.

Le rapport du Directeur général de cette année intitulé *Le travail décent au service du développement durable* s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une série de défis que l'Organisation internationale du Travail et ses mandants se doivent de relever à l'ère de la mondialisation et de la concurrence féroce.

Le Directeur général a présenté un certain nombre de ces questions sous des rubriques pour lesquelles nous voudrions formuler quelques propositions visant à promouvoir le travail décent au service du développement durable, tout en renforçant les capacités et en établissant les partenariats adéquats et les politiques pertinentes.

Nous proposons donc, premièrement, d'établir les lois et les mécanismes qui permettent de réaliser le développement durable sans que cela ait des répercussions sur le droit au travail décent durable dans les limites du possible, ou sur le droit à un salaire juste et motivant.

Deuxièmement, de créer des centres de contrôle nationaux ou au niveau de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, afin d'identifier les effets et les conséquences de la mondialisation, des transformations industrielles et des révolutions technologiques sur le marché du travail et de préparer des programmes pionniers pour une formation adéquate, et développée, qui permettront de répondre aux besoins nouveaux et faciliteront le déplacement de la main-d'œuvre d'un lieu de travail à un autre, à l'intérieur ou à l'extérieur du pays selon la demande.

Troisièmement, que le BIT établisse les éléments directeurs pour des plans d'action visant à réaliser un développement socio-économique et à assurer une protection globale de l'environnement, et qu'il fixe une période d'essai pour appliquer ces plans dans un secteur économique donné, et bâtir ensuite sur cette base d'autres initiatives.

Quatrièmement, réaliser les conditions du travail décent dans le cadre de l'encouragement à l'investissement et les opérations des multinationales, etc., et trouver les incitations nécessaires afin de réaliser cela à travers des aides octroyées par les institutions internationales.

Cinquièmement, dans le cadre de l'approche pour les Nations Unies du «principe de l'unité d'action», que le BIT soit informé des programmes, des institutions financières internationales des Nations Unies, ainsi que des éléments des programmes des autres organisations internationales afin de garantir leur respect. Les règles du travail décent adoptées par les différents sommets et conférences internationaux qui se sont tenus au fil des années.

Notre cher pays, le Liban, connaît un grand nombre de problèmes sociaux et économiques créés par la guerre destructrice lancée par l'Etat d'Israël en août 2006. En effet, l'agression a ciblé l'infrastructure, les entreprises de production, les ponts et toutes les composantes de la vie économique. Israël n'a pas non plus épargné la faune, la flore, la richesse agricole. En même temps, de gros dommages ont été occasionnés par les incendies résultant du bombardement des réservoirs de carburant. Ajoutons à cela les milliers de morts et de blessés, les handicapés et les bombes à sous-

munitions qui continuent à tuer tous les jours les innocents et ceux qui voudraient vivre en paix dans leurs villages, leurs maisons et leurs champs.

Pour ce qui est des travailleurs, 4 000 d'entre eux ont vu leur lieu de travail rasé, 7 000 ont été renvoyés en raison de la stagnation économique et du manque de ressources financières, sans oublier les déplacements internes, l'émigration et notamment celle des jeunes, ainsi que les effets secondaires de la guerre telles que les maladies physiques ou psychologiques dont souffrent les citoyens libanais.

En dépit de tout cela, le gouvernement libanais a poursuivi son activité et a continué à traiter tous les problèmes de négligence au travail. A cet égard, nous voudrions signaler la décision de la création, en 2007, d'un comité d'action national chargé d'examiner la situation des femmes domestiques émigrées au Liban. Son rôle est de sensibiliser la population à la situation des femmes et de préparer et mettre en œuvre les projets qui visent à promouvoir la situation de ces femmes, et à les protéger, en coopération avec les administrations compétentes, l'Organisation internationale du Travail, et les autres organisations internationales et arabes concernées, avec les agences nationales et les comités locaux, et enfin, avec les ambassades concernées afin de lutter contre tout aspect de travail forcé. Nous avons également appliqué la loi promulguée en 2005 concernant l'adhésion du Liban au protocole contre le trafic illicite de migrants par terre, air et mer, ainsi que l'adhésion au protocole visant à prévenir, réprimer et punir la traite des personnes, en particulier des femmes et des enfants, protocole additionnel à la Convention des Nations Unies contre la criminalité transnationale organisée.

Au nom du gouvernement et en mon propre nom, permettez-moi de rendre hommage à l'OIT d'avoir répondu aux besoins ayant découlé de la guerre de 2006, lancée par Israël contre le Liban. Ainsi, le BIT a envoyé une mission au Liban afin d'évaluer les besoins après l'arrêt des opérations militaires, et d'examiner l'impact de la guerre sur les différents secteurs de l'emploi. Il a commencé l'application d'un programme mené en coopération avec l'ESCWA sur la création d'emplois et la génération de revenus à travers le développement de petites exploitations et de micro-exploitations agricoles au Sud-Liban. De même qu'un programme concernant l'interdiction des pires formes de travail des enfants au Sud-Liban à travers le programme de travail OIT/USDOL (ministère du Travail US), concernant l'élimination des pires formes de travail. Il a enfin mené des études concernant les effets de l'agression israélienne de l'été 2006, sur les petites et moyennes entreprises, dans le cadre d'un sondage d'évaluation rapide mis au point par l'OIT et par le PNUD.

Nous souhaitons que le BIT accélère ses efforts en vue d'assurer les fonds aux projets suivants: le projet d'assistance économique et social, accordé aux régions qui ont été affectées par l'agression israélienne au Liban, en particulier au Sud-Liban, renforcer la capacité de l'agence nationale de l'emploi, protéger les droits des femmes émigrées qui assurent le travail domestique au Liban, à travers une action commune avec la Commission européenne et poursuivre le projet OIT/PNUD/FNUAP sur l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, qui doit être soumis au PNUD Espagne – Mécanismes de financement pour les objectifs du Millénaire.

Sr. ALVIZ FERNANDEZ (*trabajador, Colombia*)

Informe global del Director General, *La igualdad en el trabajo: afrontar los retos que se plantean*, articulado con la Declaración relativa a los principios y derechos fundamentales, constituye el eje de la lucha contra la discriminación y la iniquidad.

Las condiciones laborales en Colombia se caracterizan por las modalidades de contratos basura a que están sujetos los trabajadores: prestación de servicios, cooperativas de trabajo asociado (que desfiguran el sistema cooperativo) y, en general, la tercerización que libera de toda responsabilidad prestacional a los empleadores, incluso de las obligaciones para con la Seguridad Social, debiendo pagarlas los trabajadores con sus bajos salarios, modalidad de contratación que es un fraude al Derecho del Trabajo.

Esta forma de explotación de la mano de obra agudiza los índices de pobreza y violenta el derecho de sindicalización, conllevando la eliminación de los sindicatos, y, consecuentemente, la negociación colectiva.

Observamos que en el año 2006 sólo 47.280 trabajadores fueron sujeto de negociación colectiva en una población económicamente activa de más de 17 millones de personas, lo que se agrava con la negación del Gobierno a cumplir el Convenio sobre las relaciones de trabajo en la administración pública, 1978 (núm. 151).

Por tales circunstancias, que aún continúan, el sindicalismo colombiano, representado por las centrales nacionales CTC, CUT y CGT, procura generar condiciones que corrijan las violaciones a los convenios fundamentales (en especial los Convenios núms. 87 y 98) denunciadas por más de 20 años en esta casa.

Suscribimos el acuerdo por el derecho de asociación y la democracia.

En el marco de la 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, y con su aval, declaramos hoy en este escenario, en donde se aplaudió ese compromiso tripartito, que no ha sido cumplido por empleadores ni Gobierno nacional.

Colombia pasa por una profunda crisis política que involucra a 14 congresistas de la coalición de gobierno y también a altos funcionarios y que compromete incluso al Vicepresidente de la República, al Ministro de Defensa y al ex Director del Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad (DAS), lo que pone en peligro la legitimidad institucional del Estado.

Las confesiones hechas por los jefes paramilitares en el proceso de justicia y paz requieren de la justicia una investigación exhaustiva que conduzca a la verdad para garantizar el derecho a la vida a sindicalistas y para que no se repitan 72 asesinatos como en el año 2006, en el que se masacró a campesinos y defensores de derechos humanos.

Los trabajadores colombianos denunciamos a empleadores y Gobierno por negarse a examinar en la Comisión de Aplicación de Normas las violaciones permanentes a la libertad sindical, los asesinatos y la impunidad. Ese hecho atenta contra los principios y derechos fundamentales de la OIT.

Original portugués: Sr. LUPI (Ministro de Trabajo y Empleo, Brasil)

La Memoria del Director General retoma las conclusiones de la Cumbre de Johannesburgo y pone de relieve la necesidad de que las políticas nacionales y

los organismos internacionales multilaterales sean más coherentes. Fortalece el concepto de trabajo decente para todos y lo asocia con la sostenibilidad de los modelos de desarrollo de nuestros países.

Los cambios sociales y económicos que han tenido lugar en el mundo globalizado, han menoscabado en los últimos decenios la relación del empleador con el trabajador. Muchos trabajadores se ven obligados a renunciar a sus derechos fundamentales para garantizar su supervivencia. Debido a estos cambios, en el Brasil hay todo un proceso de calificación de los trabajadores, en el que participan las universidades, los estados federales, etc., la capacitación de nuestros jóvenes, para esta nueva realidad del mundo contemporáneo, es una prioridad.

Estamos convenidos de que la generación de trabajo decente es un medio para lograr la superación de la pobreza, la reducción de las desigualdades sociales y la gobernanza democrática. Es inaceptable que la eliminación de los derechos y las garantías del trabajo sea una condición previa para el crecimiento económico.

El Gobierno brasileño se ha dedicado a la aplicación de políticas públicas destinadas a superar la pobreza y asegurar la inclusión social, a promover los derechos fundamentales en el trabajo y a luchar contra el sector informal. No creemos que haya una supuesta contradicción entre el progreso social y unos buenos resultados económicos. Por el contrario, la experiencia brasileña reciente ha demostrado que el aumento de los progresos sociales es una condición previa para el fortalecimiento de la democracia y para el crecimiento económico.

Sabemos, sin embargo, que el crecimiento económico por sí solo no basta para generar trabajo decente para toda nuestra población. Por ello, el Ministerio de Trabajo y Empleo coordina en la actualidad varios programas orientados a la creación de empleo, trabajo e ingresos, tales como el Programa de generación de empleo e ingresos, el Programa nacional para estimular el primer empleo, el Programa nacional microcrédito productivo y orientado y el Programa nacional de calificación profesional.

A estos programas se suman además proyectos productivos colectivos, como cooperativas populares; redes de producción, consumo y comercialización; instituciones financieras de apoyo a iniciativas populares y solidarias; empresas recuperadas por trabajadores organizados en autogestión; cooperativas de agricultura familiar, y cooperativas de prestación de servicios.

Los Consorcios de la Juventud, formados por entidades y movimientos de la sociedad civil organizada proporcionan calificaciones profesionales a los jóvenes que se hallan en una situación de vulnerabilidad personal y de riesgo social, con miras a facilitar su ingreso en el mercado de trabajo. El Gobierno concede, además, los recursos financieros necesarios para costear esta calificación, así como subsidios a las empresas que contratan a dichos jóvenes.

Para apoyar estos programas, el Presidente Lula da Silva está desplegando esfuerzos con miras a reforzar el diálogo del Gobierno con la sociedad brasileña, a fin de formular conjuntamente una política nacional de trabajo decente para la juventud. Esta movilización nacional ha contribuido de manera decisiva a la creación de más de seis millones de puestos de trabajo en el sector formal en el Brasil en los últimos cuatro años sin que por ello se haya per-

dido ninguno de los derechos logrados por nuestros trabajadores.

Estamos registrando índices sin precedentes de crecimiento del empleo en el sector formal: 701.000 nuevas empresas en cuatro meses, un récord en toda la historia de Brasil. Esto refleja los esfuerzos realizados por el Gobierno para que Brasil siga el camino del crecimiento económico y la distribución de los ingresos.

Brasil acoge con satisfacción el Informe global sobre la discriminación en el trabajo. Queremos destacar a este respecto el Decreto ministerial núm. 41, que prohíbe cualquier tipo de referencia negativa en contra del trabajador en su Carta del Trabajo. Prohíbe asimismo que el empleador exija al trabajador que renuncie a sus derechos o que le proporcione una prueba de esterilización o embarazo.

El Gobierno brasileño querría reiterar su firme compromiso con la eliminación del trabajo forzoso en su territorio nacional. Teniendo en cuenta los resultados positivos obtenidos en este ámbito, querríamos expresar nuestro interés en que se siga cooperando con la OIT en el proyecto *Lucha contra el trabajo forzoso en Brasil*, cuyo término se prevé para este año.

Este año también se desplegarán grandes esfuerzos en los Estados de Pará, Maranhão y Piauí, recordando a los trabajadores sus derechos, y se luchará por medio de nuestros equipos de fiscalización, contra cualquier tipo de trabajo forzoso.

La lucha contra el trabajo infantil también es objeto de creciente atención en los planos nacional y mundial. En Brasil, el programa «Bolsa Familia», uno de los programas más importantes de transferencia directa de ingresos en el mundo, contribuye de manera decisiva a romper el ciclo de vulnerabilidad y pobreza entre las generaciones. Además de las medidas encaminadas a reducir la pobreza, somos conscientes de que conceder prioridad a la educación es un requisito previo para lograr una política eficaz que permita hacer frente a este azote que aqueja a tantos niños y jóvenes en el mundo. Los programas brasileños en este ámbito, a saber, el Programa para la erradicación del trabajo infantil y el programa «Todo niño en la escuela», reflejan esta preocupación y han sido reconocidos por la Organización como ejemplos de buenas prácticas.

En este sentido, quisiéramos agradecer a la OIT los grandes progresos realizados por el Programa Internacional para la Erradicación del Trabajo Infantil en nuestro país. Estos resultados han alentado al Gobierno brasileño a patrocinar proyectos del IPEC en Haití y en países de lengua portuguesa en Africa, donde esperamos poder reproducir, siempre en estrecha coordinación con los gobiernos locales, las buenas prácticas existentes en el Brasil en este ámbito. En este sentido, Brasil seguirá apoyando los esfuerzos desplegados por la Organización para fortalecer nuestra cooperación.

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

El Gobierno de la República de Panamá, presidido por el Excelentísimo Señor Presidente Martín Torrijos Espino, saluda fraternalmente a los delegados y delegadas participantes en esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo.

Expresamos a nombre del Gobierno de mi país nuestro acuerdo y reconocimiento por el Informe presentado por el Sr. Presidente del Consejo de Administración a la Conferencia al darnos cuenta

del trabajo realizado por las autoridades y entes especializados de la OIT y de los Estados Miembros en el último año. También se han definido diáfana y correctamente los objetivos, metas y estrategias pendientes para lograr una sociedad humana, con mayor justicia, equidad social y económica, en especial en todo aquello vinculado al entorno laboral.

Las tareas que tenemos los Estados Miembros, sobre todo los que nos debatimos en los persistentes flagelos de un subdesarrollo estructural, son además de complejas y difíciles, impostergables. Las asimetrías entre nosotros y las naciones industriales y desarrolladas, hacen imperiosa no sólo la comprensión de estas últimas, sino también el fortalecimiento de los programas de apoyo técnico y de recursos económicos no reembolsables que nos permitan cumplir más adecuada y rápidamente los objetivos planteados. Si esto no ocurre o no se produce suficientemente, todos los años se incrementarán las asimetrías sociales, económicas y laborales que nos diferencian y nos separan.

El año pasado expresábamos que estábamos cerca de realizar una consulta democrática en Panamá para lograr la aprobación de la ampliación y construcción de un tercer juego de esclusas del canal interoceánico que con nuestra posición geográfica representa nuestro principal recurso económico. Esto fue logrado exitosamente y con las obras, cuyas construcciones se inician el próximo año, el Gobierno asume el compromiso de promulgar y cumplir un programa de trabajo decente en todo el país y en especial en el desarrollo de este macroproyecto.

Con satisfacción también expresamos que hemos continuado fortaleciendo el diálogo social con empresarios y trabajadores e incrementado los esfuerzos por erradicar definitivamente el trabajo infantil.

También me permito señalar a esta asamblea la disposición del Gobierno nacional de ratificar el Convenio sobre el trabajo marítimo. Esto será una realidad tan pronto demos cumplimiento a un programa que permita a los actores involucrados su conocimiento y la debida preparación para su cumplimiento. Para esto hemos pedido el apoyo técnico y financiero de la OIT.

Cónsone con los principios del pluralismo político e ideológico, así como el de libertad sindical que distingue al Gobierno panameño, y en el marco de la tradicional vocación de nuestro pueblo por contribuir al entendimiento y la concertación latinoamericana, como lo planteó visionariamente el libertador Simón Bolívar cuando afirmó que si el mundo tuviera que elegir su capital el istmo de Panamá estaría señalado para tan augusto destino, a solicitud de las organizaciones de trabajadores que integran la ORIT y la CLAT, en el próximo mes de marzo se celebrará en nuestro país, con el apoyo del Gobierno nacional, el encuentro que debe sellar la unidad de estas importantes entidades laborales.

Paralela a esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia de la OIT se han reunido en Alemania los representantes de los ocho países más industrializados del mundo. Entre los temas tratados el recalentamiento global ha sido uno de los más importantes. No hubo acuerdo claro. Sin embargo, el Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas sostiene, con razón, que éste es el más grave peligro de la humanidad y, en consecuencia, de nuestro pueblo, seamos trabajadores, empresarios o gobernantes.

¿Qué debe hacer la OIT para evitar la catástrofe que se avecina? ¿Habrà trabajo decente en un plane-

ta sin recursos naturales, con gente hambrienta y sin trabajo? Si las naciones más poderosas de la Tierra no pueden dar los pasos en la dirección correcta ¿cómo exigirnoslo a los pequeños, pobres y subdesarrollados?

Finalmente, deseo reiterar a esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia de la OIT nuestro deseo de que culmine exitosamente, a la vez que aprovecho la oportunidad para agradecer a su Director General, Sr. Juan Somavia y sus colaboradores por su permanente actitud de respeto, comprensión y solidaridad con todos los integrantes de este trascendental organismo internacional.

Mr. BAEK (*Worker, Republic of Korea*)

It is a great privilege to deliver my speech in this important Conference on behalf of 15 million workers in the Republic of Korea.

I am deeply impressed with the Report of the Director-General, *Decent work for sustainable development*, amid the ever-increasing challenges of neo-liberal globalization that have been facing us.

In particular, I extend my full support to the conclusion that there is an urgent need to strengthen social dialogue based on tripartism in order to guarantee decent work for all, given the consistent deterioration in the employment conditions of working people.

At the same time, my special thanks go to those in the ILO who have worked so hard on this year's Global Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*.

The Report coherently provides us with future action priorities by emphasizing that further efforts should be made to eliminate discrimination based on gender, race, religion, age, HIV/AIDS status and disability, despite the considerable progress that has been made so far in achieving equality at work.

In this regard, I would like to stress the issue of discrimination against non-regular workers. Non-regular workers, whose numbers have been rapidly increasing owing to the growing flexibility of the labour market, are suffering from extreme job insecurity and poor working conditions. Therefore, concerted efforts to resolve the non-regular worker issue should be made by governments, management and labour, in order to achieve decent work for all.

The Federation of Korean Trade Unions (FKTU) is keenly aware of the importance of social dialogue, which is the core principle of the ILO. It was in this belief that we succeeded finally, on 11 September last year, in reaching a social agreement on labour laws and systems, which has been a thorny issue for a long time, within the tripartite high-level panel. This tripartite agreement brought about some significant achievements, such as the abolition of compulsory arbitration and the third-party notification requirement, as well as the introduction of written labour contracts and dismissal notices.

Of course, there still remains a lot to be done to further improve Korean industrial relations. Nonetheless, we strongly believe that meaningful progress has been made by the agreement, to the effect that extreme confrontation and conflicts between labour and management could be avoided and that reasonable settlement of industrial disputes should be sought through social dialogue.

I would like to take the opportunity to introduce the FKTU's new strategy for the trade union movement.

We recently committed ourselves to a social reformist trade union movement under the banner of "Trade union movement in alliance with grass-roots workers and the general public" in order to tackle the challenges posed by neo-liberal globalization.

It is our firm belief that the trade union movement should serve not only a few organized workers, but all vulnerable members of society. All the parties concerned, including trade unions, businesses and governments, should play responsible roles. It was in this context that the FKTU joined the UN Global Compact in March this year with the aim of promoting corporate social responsibility.

We also took a leading role in setting up the Korea Labour Foundation in April this year, in the belief that a new paradigm of industrial relations could be created by direct dialogue between labour and management.

Last but not least, I have to express my deepest regret over the fact that the Japanese case of "comfort women" (concerning Japan) and a case on the right to freedom of association (concerning Colombia) were excluded from the list of individual cases to be examined by the Committee on the Application of Standards. In particular, it is intolerable that these cases were vetoed by the Employers' group even before the Committee started consultations on the selection of cases.

We are convinced that such a veto against the "comfort women" case by the Employers' group is closely related to the unjustifiable attitudes of the Japanese Government, which has kept denying that it coerced women into prostitution during the Second World War. This issue is no longer only a matter of the victims or countries concerned, as we recently saw strong movements to adopt resolutions on the issue in the national legislatures of the United States, Canada and Australia. Accordingly, a worldwide consensus has been built that this is a universal issue to be urgently resolved.

We strongly urge the Government of Japan to provide the victims with official apologies and due compensation, as recommended on several occasions by the Committee on the Application of Standards and to do so as soon as possible. I would like to point out that the supervisory mechanism of the ILO could be seriously jeopardized if this case were again excluded from consideration by the Committee.

Mr. HJORT FREDERIKSEN (*Minister for Employment, Denmark*)

Last year, I ended my speech here at the ILO saying that I looked forward to this year's discussion on the ILO's role in globalization. I understand it has been a fruitful yet difficult exercise, focusing on ways to strengthen the capacity of the ILO in assisting its member States. The ILO's efforts in promoting decent work around the world takes us forward. However, even the ILO cannot manage this task alone. International cooperation is vital if we are to ensure decent living and working conditions in a world characterized by fast changes, restructuring of businesses and increasing demands for lower production costs. Therefore, the challenge is to disseminate the Decent Work Agenda to all relevant forums, as well as to inspire the ILO member States themselves to take on the challenge.

In this regard, let me refer to the European Union's most recent commitment to the Decent Work Agenda. The European Commission's communica-

tion of May 2006, as well as the Council's conclusions of December 2006, all underline the importance that the European Union attaches to decent work. Denmark fully supports the European Union's endeavour to promote decent work and it is my hope that the actions of the European Union can inspire other regional forums in their support for decent work. Further, it is important that every country engages in and makes a commitment to the Decent Work Agenda in order for real changes to happen at home. Here, the capacity of the ILO is in demand to assist countries preparing for the challenge of globalization.

In my country, we have had a fruitful debate on the impact of globalization on Danish society. The debate was brought and involved many actors, including social partners. One of the results of the debate was a comprehensive welfare reform to prepare Denmark for future challenges. In Denmark, we realize that welfare necessitates sustainable economic growth. Therefore, I personally find this year's discussion on the promotion of sustainable enterprises very interesting and I am sure that everyone will take something home that can inspire and maybe improve what we are already doing today.

And what are we doing in Denmark? The Danish Government is working on a national action plan on corporate social responsibility. Corporate social responsibility is first and foremost the responsibility of individual companies and enterprises. It is the task of governments and society, however, to ensure a business environment that is conducive to sustainable enterprises. This also includes the facilitation of corporate social responsibility. The Danish action plan brings together a broad range of initiatives, from promotion of an inclusive labour market to the development of tools to assist Danish companies in monitoring labour rights in their supply chains. Now corporate social responsibility initiatives only work if companies and businesses actually make use of them. Thus, it is crucial to include social partners in the process of developing the different tools for action.

At the Governing Body in March this year, a very interesting debate on the connection between trade and employment took place. In his reaction to the debate, Mr. Somavia urged the ILO member States to take up the discussion on a national tripartite basis. I think that this is a very good idea and it is one that we are going to take up in Denmark. In my ministry, we are currently examining the different ways to approach such a debate and are outlining the various topics. Our plan is to have a substantial and full discussion with the social partners in the permanent ILO committee on trade and employment on how best to influence the already existing national initiatives in this field. The discussion should focus on the social dimensions of globalization and the role of the social partners in this. Next year, I hope to be able to relay to you some of the outcomes of this national discussion.

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

I would like to thank the Director-General for the very interesting Report entitled *Decent work for sustainable development* to which few can remain indifferent. We do not concur with all the arguments in the Report but on the whole we appreciate the Office's intellectual contribution to the analysis of problems which are confronting workers, em-

ployers and governments on the road to economic progress, social stability and economic security. In theory, this document could be a means for building a world of peace and harmony. All of us, of course, would like to live in such a world. Unfortunately, the realities of life, including in Russia, are harsher and more varied than the recipes for development found in the Report. For lack of time I will dwell on just a few of them.

First of all, I will mention the concept of sustainable development, which the Report's authors think is to be attained by stepping up the role of the State in the economy. This is precisely the process that has been observed in Russia in recent years. Giving the serious imbalances persisting in the Russian economy at sectoral and regional level, including income distribution, the structure of foreign trade and the state of the pension and health systems, many link the prospects for sustainable development of the country's economy with precisely that kind of comprehensive intensification of state intervention. However, at the same time as the State's regulatory role increases we are seeing a clearer attempt to solve a number of economic problems without using market methods. This approach has already been included in many national and international rankings to assess the sustainability and competitiveness of the Russian economy. Suffice it to say to say that in the World Bank's *Doing business* ratings which give a comprehensive assessment of the business environment, Russia ranks 96th out of 175 countries. Only 20 per cent of all jobs in our country are in small and medium-sized business.

Without in any way rejecting state regulation as such, Russian employers are convinced that neither the State nor business should assume responsibilities and functions which are not their own. Only comprehensive strengthening and improvement of market institutions can ensure truly sustainable and diversified economic development avoiding the traps of state capitalism. We have doubts about the negative assessment of market relations given in the Report.

We are also somewhat alarmed by the Report's call for a global approach to questions of social protection. Of course, we realize the extreme importance of a balanced labour market policy. However, the system of social protection is a matter of national jurisdiction and the economic capacity of each country. It is not clear how the Office intends to respond to the call for global solidarity in practice. For us it is obvious that the purpose of labour market policy, including at global level, must be the protection of employment in general and not specific jobs. Every person must accept that jobs are created and disappear but employment remains.

Finally, I would like to dwell on the arguments in the Report on the measurement of decent work. I recall that, just three months ago, in March 2007, the Employers' group made yet another appeal to consider first the question of decent work indicators and only then authorize the Office to do further work in this field. The reason for this is that, as with the social protection system, every country has its own concrete realization of the concept of decent work, which is essentially a national prerogative. Every country must have the right to resolve this problem in the light of the level of its economic development, history, culture and religion. Of course, ILO Conventions are the foundation uniting us all.

In conclusion, I cannot but repeat the argument which I stated at the last session of the Conference. In order to be competitive the ILO must not, of course, remain a neutral observer. However it cannot and must not concern itself with trying to solve absolutely all the tasks set by the contemporary globalized world. We think that the focus of The ILO's attention, in accordance with its Constitution, must remain the problems of the world of labour, above all the creation of real jobs.

Whatever the impact of globalization on various areas of human life, the solution of emerging problems is first and foremost a national matter. We look forward to an increase in ILO activity, within its competence, precisely at this national level. The confidence of the tripartite constituents of the Organization and their demand for services will depend primarily on the effectiveness of the organization in solving practical problems.

Original Chinese: Mr. HU (Government, China)

First of all please allow me to congratulate the President on his election to the Presidency of the Conference. I also wish to thank Mr. Juan Somavia, the Director-General, for the Report he submitted to the conference entitled *Decent work for sustainable development*.

Across the world, economic globalization is gaining momentum, science and technology are developing at a dazzling speed and the movement of production factors and industrial relocation are taking place at a higher frequency. Peace, development and cooperation are the call of the times. In the field of labour, however, there remain quite a few conspicuous problems and serious challenges, such as how to reduce unemployment, eliminate poverty and protect the fundamental rights and interest of workers to lead a harmonious economic and social development and a sound environment. These are the major issues that constituents of the Organization must take head on and deal with.

China follows the scientific thinking on development in its economic and social development, which is people-oriented and emphasizes all-round, balanced and sustainable development. We will continue to take measures in the following areas to implement the Decent Work Agenda.

Firstly, we will adopt a mutual reinforcing strategy to promote economic growth and employment, secure an economic growth mode that generates more jobs, continue to implement active employment policies and enhance employment opportunities through every possible means. Efforts will be made to improve workers' skills and educational level through more vocational education and training programmes. The year 2006 witnessed the biggest increase in the number of new jobs in China's urban areas – a total of 11.84 million. The registered unemployment rate in urban areas dropped to 4.1 per cent. As many as 9.25 million people received their first professional certificates. Around 300,000 obtained qualifications as technicians and senior technicians in that year.

The second is to accelerate development of the social safety system. The year 2006 witnessed the fastest expansion of social insurance coverage. Over 100 million people were covered by all kinds of social insurance schemes concerning pension, medical care, unemployment and work injury. The Government-funded new type of rural cooperative medical care system had covered close to 700 mil-

lion people. A new programme was launched at the beginning of this year, which provides basic medical insurance for over 200 million city residents who are not economically active.

The third is to foster harmonious labour relations and earnestly protect the rights and interests of workers. The year 2006 saw the most substantial rise of minimum wages in the biggest number of areas in China. Minimum wages were raised in almost all provinces in China. The average wage of urban workers grew by 12.7 percent. The labour contract system was implemented across the nation. Protection of the rights and interests of 120 million migrant workers was enhanced to create a fair employment environment for all workers. Efforts were made to speed up the relevant legislative work such as the drafting of the Labour Contract Law, the Employment Promotion Law, the Law for Labour Disputes Settlement, and the Social Insurance Law. The ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), is implemented now in China.

The Chinese delegation believes that to promote harmonious and sustainable economic and social development, preserve the environment and attain the goal of decent work, the constituents of the Organization need to take more, and more effective, actions to create an enabling environment for the realization of fair globalization and decent work in a changing world through dialogue and cooperation. To that end I would like to propose the following.

Firstly, the constituents need to work hard to create more productive and decent jobs for workers. The Chinese Government is of the view that employment promotion, poverty elimination and enabling more unemployed persons to be employed should be priorities of the Organization.

Secondly, we should strengthen the capacity building of the ILO and earnestly help its member States realize the goal of decent work for all. It is our belief that the ILO tripartite mechanism should be strengthened to release the dynamism and vitality of the Organization. We should particularly strengthen and enhance the capacity of the ILO to help its Members, especially developing Members, to create jobs and improve social security schemes. We should also enhance the Organization's capacity to communicate and cooperate with other international organizations to mobilize more resources and undertake more extensive and in-depth technical cooperation.

Thirdly, we should endeavour to increase the skills and quality of the workers in order to better adapt to rapid changes in globalization and industrial restructuring. To that end, all the three parties must work hard to create more vocational education and training opportunities for the workers so that they are able to meet higher standards brought by globalization and technical progress.

China will continue to work together with other Members to contribute to the realization of social equality and justice and the building of a harmonious world.

Original Lao: Mr. FAIPHENGYOA (Vice-Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao People's Democratic Republic)

The Lao People's Democratic Republic knows that gender equality means placing emphasis on socio-economic development, because legislation on promoting and protecting women and labour le-

gislation are mentioned in the Constitution of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The contents of the Lao Labour Law mentions equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value without discrimination based on gender. This is in accordance with the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). Therefore, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic presented to the ILO for review of its implementation of those Conventions in law and practice.

However, the Lao People's Democratic Republic has not ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), nor the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), but the Lao People's Democratic Republic does not have a problem in practice with discrimination in employment and occupation.

In the past, our country had been supported and assisted by international organizations in the area of promoting women's access to promotion and education to bring them gradually at par with men. We also have a project implemented by the Lao Women's Union, which works to achieve and promote health-care services for women and equality between women and men.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). The Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic has also enacted legislation on child protection, and on promoting and protecting women and has also improved the Labour Law.

The Lao People's Democratic Republic has collaborated with the ILO in many projects on the protection of women's and children's rights and projects against human trafficking, and now we are striving to establish a mechanism to eliminate all forms of child labour.

On this auspicious occasion, on behalf of the Lao people and on behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to express our appreciation to all friends of our country and to international organizations for your continuous support and assistance in the course of our country's development and the previous joint implementation of programmes. We hope that, in future, we will also continue to receive your support.

M. TAZLAOUI (employeur, Maroc)

Je tiens tout d'abord à vous remercier de m'avoir donné l'opportunité de parler en tant que président de la Commission de l'emploi de la Confédération générale des entreprises marocaines.

Cette année, la Conférence internationale du Travail examine plusieurs points d'une très grande importance et d'une grande complexité. Aussi, vu le temps qui m'est imparti pour mon intervention, je vais cibler un point qui est à l'ordre du jour et qui revêt pour nous une grande importance, à savoir la promotion de l'entreprise durable.

Nous sommes entrés dans une ère économique nouvelle caractérisée par des exigences fortes en termes de rapidité et de souplesse, de réactivité et de qualité, et dont l'un des enjeux fondamentaux réside dans la capacité des entreprises à s'adapter à cet environnement particulier par leur organisation.

Si la mondialisation a eu un impact sur les conditions de la concurrence et la pratique des affaires

dans le monde entier, les entreprises se sont trouvées confrontées à une concurrence étrangère dans tous les domaines. Toutes ces mutations ont poussé les gouvernements à se pencher sur la nécessité de créer un climat propice à la croissance économique. Or cette croissance présuppose le renforcement des systèmes d'une bonne gouvernance axée sur le respect des principes fondamentaux du travail et sur la mise en place des mécanismes du dialogue social au niveau des entreprises et de leur environnement.

Le Maroc, comme tous les pays, a été touché par la mondialisation et cela l'a poussé à entreprendre les réformes du secteur public, à créer un nouvel équilibre entre le rôle de l'Etat et les marchés, avec la valorisation du rôle de l'entreprise dans la société en tant qu'entité créatrice d'emploi et de richesse. Tous ces changements ont été le catalyseur d'une nouvelle relation entre la pratique des affaires et le développement durable et équitable.

Par ailleurs, le secteur privé a un rôle vital à jouer pour aider le pays à atteindre les objectifs du Millénaire par la réduction de la pauvreté et assurer un travail décent aux salariés. C'est pourquoi les entreprises doivent promouvoir un développement économique qui réside dans la recherche de la rentabilité tout en incitant à favoriser le développement humain et social.

En tant que représentant du secteur privé, je tiens à vous informer que la CGEM joue un rôle important à côté des pouvoirs publics et des centrales syndicales pour asseoir une culture de dialogue favorisant la paix sociale, pérenne et durable.

En effet, notre programme politique 2007-2009 s'articule autour de quatre points: la mise en conformité sociale, la réforme des régimes de retraite, l'introduction de l'assurance chômage, la mise à niveau du Code du travail, sans oublier l'assurance maladie obligatoire qui a été mise en place récemment au Maroc.

Pour réaliser ces chantiers, le dialogue est un moyen d'améliorer les relations professionnelles et de favoriser le développement durable. La confédération s'inscrit dans la politique menée par le ministère de l'Emploi et de la Formation professionnelle, pour une mise en conformité sociale basée sur le respect des conventions internationales du travail et de la dignité de la personne.

En parallèle, la Confédération générale des entreprises marocaines a mis en place une charte de responsabilité sociale pour la promotion des entreprises citoyennes qui prône le respect et la défense des droits de l'homme, ainsi que la non-discrimination, l'égalité des chances, la sécurité et la participation de tous.

Je termine mon intervention en rappelant le grand chantier social que Sa Majesté, le Roi Mohammed VI, a lancé au mois de mai 2006 sous le nom de l'Initiative nationale du développement humain (INDH). C'est un chantier qui s'inscrit parfaitement dans cette vision, celle qui nous remettra dans les meilleures conditions pour faire face aux enjeux et défis de l'avenir du royaume.

Au nom de la Confédération générale des entreprises marocaines, je vous réitère mes remerciements et souhaite plein succès aux travaux de la 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail. Je vous remercie de votre attention.

Original arabe: M. HAMADEH (employeur, Liban)

Au nom de la délégation des employeurs du Liban et au nom de l'Association des industriels libanais,

qui est l'organisme le plus représentatif des employeurs du Liban, permettez-moi de remercier le Bureau international du Travail pour m'avoir offert l'opportunité de prendre la parole devant les partenaires sociaux afin de débattre des questions du travail, de la croissance, de la justice sociale, de l'égalité et du travail décent en vue du développement durable. C'est le thème du rapport qui a été présenté par le Directeur général lors de la 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail et qui vient à un moment où nous avons le plus besoin de préparer l'Organisation à s'adapter au rythme rapide du changement que connaît le monde du travail dans un monde mondialisé, afin qu'elle joue un rôle important dans la modernisation du système des Nations Unies et du multipartisme.

L'union nous permettra de renforcer nos énergies...

L'ouverture nous permettra de créer des opportunités.

Nous soutenons l'appel du Directeur général dans son rapport à multiplier les efforts afin de traduire le tripartisme en une réalité dynamique sur le plan national et international, à relever les défis, à saisir les opportunités, à assumer les responsabilités afin de mettre en œuvre le programme du travail décent et de réaliser le développement durable. Nous soutenons également les thèmes qui sont inscrits à l'ordre du jour du débat général, à savoir renforcer les capacités de l'OIT afin de faire face à la mondialisation et de promouvoir les entreprises durables. Nous considérons que, même si les priorités des Etats Membres sont différentes, les politiques socio-économiques demeurent une grande nécessité et exigent des études et la recherche de solutions adéquates en vue de réaliser un environnement de travail décent pour nos travailleurs, hommes et femmes, dans le cadre d'institutions durables. C'est là une approche durable qui nous impose de bien comprendre les réalités.

A partir de là, du haut de cette tribune, nous nous engageons à poursuivre le dialogue tripartite afin de trouver le meilleur pour l'avenir de notre Organisation et donc pour les partenaires sociaux. Permettez-moi à cet égard de citer certains principes pertinents auxquels nous croyons au sein de l'Association des industriels libanais, même si certains de ces principes n'ont pas été inventés par nous, nous devons les réaffirmer et les inclure dans le cadre du dialogue tripartite.

Premièrement, l'Organisation internationale du Travail doit définir les priorités, prendre en compte les pays en développement et développer les programmes nationaux de manière à ce qu'ils correspondent aux besoins et aux capacités des pays concernés afin d'améliorer les conditions du travail décent en accord avec la Déclaration de Philadelphie.

Deuxièmement, il est nécessaire de mettre en lumière les initiatives des pays Membres visant à renforcer le rôle de l'OIT dans la réalisation de ses objectifs avant de nous demander ce que l'Organisation fait pour améliorer ses contributions.

Troisièmement, les études/analyses et recherches entreprises par les centres d'étude à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur de l'Organisation ou dans les pays Membres constituent des outils stratégiques pour appliquer dans la réalité le travail décent.

Quatrièmement, investir dans le secteur de l'éducation et de l'enseignement et l'orienter de manière à répondre aux besoins du marché permet-

tra de développer les ressources humaines et de réaliser ainsi un travail décent durable.

Cinquièmement, il faut développer l'esprit d'entreprise et de création chez les jeunes, encourager les projets pionniers et les transformer en des entreprises économiques, ce qui permettra de créer de nouvelles opportunités de travail dans le cadre du développement durable.

Sixièmement, le travail décent au service du développement durable requiert des politiques qui renforcent les institutions économiques, des politiques qui encouragent l'innovation et la productivité en renforçant les ressources humaines dans le cadre des institutions, de sorte que les emplois et les mécanismes de production soient durables et deviennent capables d'entrer en concurrence dans un marché mondialisé. Et c'est ainsi que le travail décent et les entreprises durables deviendront les éléments d'une chaîne complète.

Septièmement, les disparités économiques entre les États qui sont accentuées par une mondialisation injuste constituent une menace grave au développement durable et à la stabilité sociale.

Huitièmement, le problème de la pauvreté ne sera jamais réglé par une recommandation ou une convention, mais par une vision globale et économique, une vision du développement à laquelle s'ajouteraient des indicateurs servant à mesurer de façon méthodique et continue le recul de la pauvreté.

Neuvièmement, il faut prendre en considération qu'il est impossible de réaliser la paix et la stabilité dans le monde si celui-ci reste divisé entre pays pauvres, qui deviennent plus pauvres, et pays riches, qui deviennent plus riches. Il est donc du devoir de la communauté internationale de combler le fossé et de réaliser la justice et l'égalité.

Dixièmement, nous devons mettre au point des conventions et des recommandations qui aboutiraient à la modification des lois nationales afin qu'elles encouragent l'investissement productif et répondent aux besoins de la croissance équitable.

En conclusion, permettez-moi de réaffirmer que l'objectif de l'Association des industriels libanais était et restera celui d'améliorer l'action économique et sociale afin de construire une économie solide et concurrentielle. Nous considérons que cela constitue un passage vers la réalisation du travail décent durable et la création d'entreprises durables dans ce contexte d'ouverture et de mondialisation.

M. OULD CHBIH (*gouvernement, Mauritanie*)

J'ai l'honneur de m'adresser à cette auguste assemblée au nom de la délégation de la République islamique de Mauritanie et je voudrais féliciter M. Juan Somavia, Directeur général du Bureau international du Travail, pour le rapport qu'il a préparé à cette occasion.

Convaincu que l'homme est l'objectif et l'outil même du développement, le gouvernement de la République islamique de Mauritanie accorde aux travailleurs et à leurs conditions de vie une attention particulière. Cette préoccupation constitue l'axe central de la politique de notre pays et Son Excellence le Président de la République, M. Ould Mohamad Ould El-Sheikh Abdallah, lui accorde une attention particulière.

Le gouvernement du Premier ministre Zein Ould Zaidan œuvre à mettre cette politique en application à travers un plan de développement intégré lancé depuis son arrivée au pouvoir.

La Mauritanie, dont les institutions constitutionnelles sont issues d'un processus démocratique transparent qui a été le fruit d'un consensus national, a entamé récemment une nouvelle étape de son histoire. Même si ce nouveau régime n'existe que depuis très peu de temps, il a entamé l'application de toutes les mesures visant à améliorer le niveau de vie des citoyens et les conditions de travail, des travailleurs et des travailleuses.

Ainsi, l'emploi, la lutte contre la pauvreté et la formation professionnelle ont constitué la pierre angulaire du programme adopté par le gouvernement, et elles resteront une base essentielle de toutes les politiques et des plans de développement à venir.

La création d'un Département de l'emploi, de l'intégration et de la formation professionnelle témoigne du fait que le gouvernement a compris le rôle essentiel de ces éléments dans la création d'un climat favorable au travail décent.

Le chemin est long et les défis immenses. Toutefois, par la solidarité, la mobilisation de nos capacités et la coopération dans un partenariat réel de développement, nous parviendrons à notre objectif de réaliser un avenir meilleur.

Et telle est d'ailleurs la vision globale de notre Organisation.

Original German : Ms. COTMAN (*Minister of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, Slovenia*)

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia it is a great honour and a great pleasure for me to be able to give this address before all those present at this year's session of International Labour Conference.

I wish to thank the Director-General, Mr. Somavia, for his detailed and comprehensive reports. They highlight in a graphic manner both positive and negative consequences of globalization. Globalization affects the whole of society which is why a networked approach, involving all players, is necessary.

Cooperation between governments and social partners, non-governmental organizations and international agencies is a prerequisite for achieving the shared objectives which were set in the Decent Work Agenda. A basic tool for achieving the objectives is social dialogue and a consensus which is as broad as possible.

Globalization is a process which has been ongoing for a number of years and nevertheless it requires from us a great deal of responsiveness at all levels.

We are not and must not be obliged to merely create conditions for the efficient operation of companies. We are also under an obligation to create conditions for solving environmental and social problems, that arise in the globalization process. Ensuring decent work and equal opportunities for all must not just be evaluated as an added bonus in addition to the competitiveness of the economy

Decent work and equal opportunities should be generally recognized as a guideline. A reduction of protection for workers and of workers' rights at the expense of labour costs is unacceptable. The flexibility of the labour market is indispensable but at the same time it has to reflect the corresponding level of the rights of the individual worker.

I would like to focus on one element that is relevant for the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda, namely ensuring a family-compatible wor-

king environment. Recent labour market research has revealed that discrimination at the workplace on account of parenthood cannot be overlooked in Slovenia either. Together with the social partners we have therefore decided to ensure a friendly working environment for families. In order to achieve this objective we have made changes to our labour legislation. Consequently, more flexible forms of working hours, for example, working at home are being implemented. It is possible for employees to take their vacations during the school holidays and we are making it easier and faster for companies to recruit workers. We have set in motion a process of awarding of certificates, particularly to companies that create a family-compatible working environment. The results are very encouraging because employers can increase the productivity of their workers by adopting a positive approach.

By way of a conclusion, I would like to follow on from one or two of the Director-General's ideas. He expressed them as misgivings which I often hear, namely that social dialogue would not resist the pressure of globalization. I share your opinion that such misgivings can be refuted by joint efforts. They can also be refuted by strengthening the social responsibility for all social partners and by means of creative cooperation.

Our joint objective should be to improve the efficiency of the social dialogue by concrete practical results at both the national and at the international level within the framework of joint activity in the International Labour Organization.

Original Arabic: Mr. LUQMAN (Arab Labour Organization)

I would like to extend my thanks to Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the International Labour Office, for all of the achievements of the Organization in terms of fostering understanding of labour issues in the Arab region and also for his initiatives and his vision of the world of work against a background of serious challenges and change. At the same time, I would like to welcome the fruitful cooperation between our two Organizations, which has been ongoing for over three decades, and reconfirm our willingness to further our cooperation and develop our shared areas of interest.

It is my pleasure to address the Conference for the first time as Director-General of the Arab Labour Organization, and I am proud to be able to be part of the International Labour Conference community, with you, I feel part of a large global family.

The objectives of our two organizations are the same, and the means by which we seek to achieve them are virtually identical. We often find ourselves inspired by the achievements of your Organization.

As with your Organization, we are well aware of the responsibility on our shoulders today in terms of dialogue between the social partners as a source of confidence and hope for peoples and States across the world. Like you, we are well aware of the challenges that we face when it comes to new rules being drawn up worldwide which threaten the rights of workers. These rights have been acquired over generations of struggle. They are being threatened at all levels, particularly in the developing countries, and we wholeheartedly agree with you that we need to firmly establish the principles of decent work in the context of globalization, bearing in mind the fact that this can affect all aspects of life across the world.

The negative impact of globalization is making itself felt in an alarming manner. In our region as in other developing countries, serious efforts are being made to mitigate the negative effects of globalization and give it a human face.

Our region is almost unique given the long-standing conflicts and resulting destruction it has suffered. Although our people have been seeking economic, political and social stability for many years, at the same time war has taken away their basic rights, causing them to sink into poverty and unemployment, since the economy of the region as a whole has been undermined by war.

Our region has the highest rates of unemployment in the world, and the lowest labour force participation rate of women. We are the region most affected by emigration and movement of people, and it is time for us to come up with projects which will work to the benefit of the Arab region and which seriously tackle the problems facing us, in particular unemployment and low female labour force participation rates. We affirm our willingness to implement such projects once they are adopted. Your Organization has adopted noble objectives in this regard, particularly those of peace and social justice, and in this regard I wish to extend my thanks to the Director-General for the personal interest he has shown in the situation of Arab workers in Palestine and the other occupied Arab territories.

The deterioration in the economic, social and humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, which has been accelerating in recent times, has given rise to serious human tragedies, exacerbating unemployment, which has reached levels without precedent anywhere in the world. This prompts us to call for reactivating and supporting the Palestinian Fund for Employment and Social Protection, and to provide it with the necessary financial assistance to enable it to meet the needs of the social partners in Palestine. It is up to us to support the workers and the people of Lebanon and reaffirm the role of the ILO in helping to eliminate the effects of the last war. In that regard, we call for the adoption of a technical assistance programme for the social partners of that country, which should provide for the reconstruction of vocational training centres and also reinforce national unemployment programmes.

We call on the Organization to assist in the reconstruction of Iraq.

Workers across the world have no better organization than your own to assist them in this mission and building its institutional capacity and civil institution, including workers' and employers' organizations, and solve the unemployment problem, as well as restoring respect for human rights.

It is essential that the ILO help find solutions to the Darfur crisis and achieve a comprehensive peace in Sudan. We call for assistance for Somalia to achieve social peace for all of its inhabitants.

Ms. KNUPPERT (Worker, Denmark)

Mr. President, my delegation thanks you for agreeing, at such short notice, to be available for the important post of President for the International Labour Conference.

As a Danish union representative, it is important for me to inform both our own members in Denmark as well as the Danish public about the work of the ILO.

The other way round, now that I have the possibility of addressing the ILO Plenary, I would like to

pass on some information and viewpoints from the Danish trade union movement.

The themes that the ILO has put on the agenda for this year's labour conference have a lot in common with the issues which we are experiencing in Denmark and which we are debating ourselves. The ILO is at the forefront and I would like to venture to remark that I find that the Danish debate on labour market conditions and globalization does not lag behind.

To a much higher extent than was previously the case, the Danish globalization policy implements ILO proposals, reports and Conventions. The Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) has presented the specific proposal that Denmark should ratify a number of International Labour Organization Conventions. At the moment, we are below the European average. We have argued that the precondition for fair globalization involves Danish ratification of a number of Conventions in order to contribute to international cooperation on globalization.

On the Danish labour market, both the Government and Danish companies display a greater willingness to let the fundamental ILO Conventions serve as an important element when entering into agreements with foreign suppliers.

So, progress has been made. However, we still need to reach agreement on an efficient system to ensure that the agreements and standards are also observed when it comes to the international level. Danish labour market policy is based on binding agreements. If the agreements are breached, there will be consequences. The social responsibility of companies at the international level must also be binding. There must be consequences for breaching agreements and we need an efficient monitoring system to ensure this.

From the outset, my organization has participated in the definition of a Danish globalization policy. In our own proposal, we have defined a strategy which does not only focus on wages but also on workers' fundamental rights.

The collective agreements that have just been concluded between the Danish Employers' Confederation and the Danish LO include the establishment of a skills development fund. This fund gives employees the right to additional continuing education if they so wish. At the same time, 1 per cent of the wages are set aside for optional holidays, pension or training. Training at all levels will have the highest priority in the Danish trade union movement and this is clear from our attitudes on globalization.

It is impressive how the ILO has generated international understanding for a decent work strategy. There is ample reason for congratulating the ILO on this effort which has gathered broad political support in the UN, the EU and many other places in the world. The ILO must continue this very positive initiative. The national globalization policy fully and utterly depends on the international understanding of the decent work policy.

The Danish LO supports the idea that the ILO, at its future annual conferences, should analyse and assess the results of the decent work strategy. In my opinion, this can only be ensured if the Organization receives more funds for this task.

We are pleased that the serious violations of trade union rights in Colombia will be dealt with by an ILO High-level Mission. We look forward to dis-

cussing the Colombian situation next year in the Committee on the Application of Standards.

My organization has had the opportunity to study the report of the ILO Director-General on the situation of workers in the occupied territories. We are sometimes left with a feeling of powerlessness. The conflict in the Middle East does not only involve disagreements between States and governments but also, to a high extent, internal conflicts between citizens and groupings in the same countries and territories.

Neither the ILO nor the rest of us have the right to give up hope or to stop the efforts to create better conditions for the people of the Middle East. The ILO must continue its efforts in the region.

Mr. President, the Labour Conference is moving into its final working week. The ILO is an important platform for social dialogue and it is one of the few forums at the international level in which the trade union movement has voting rights and speaking rights. I hope that the resolutions of the Conference will ensure that the ILO will be able to continue its important efforts for obtaining better working conditions and social justice. Thank you.

Original Chinese: Mr. XU (Worker, China)

Mr. President, first of all I would like to congratulate you on your election as the President of this Conference. I trust that under your guidance the Conference will reach its objectives as indicated in the Director-General's Report delivered to the Conference, decent work as a concept has gained universal recognition. However, strenuous efforts are needed in order to achieve decent work for all. Governments and the social partners must make continuous efforts to defend workers' rights, promote equality at work and eliminate discrimination in employment. The International Labour Organization must also make more support available to its constituents and enable its member States to achieve economic growth and social justice.

Over the past year, our country has made great strides in economic growth and social progress as a result of its continuous efforts to implement reform and open-up policies and its strong commitment to the promotion of a people-centred approach to development and construction of a harmonious society.

The Chinese trade unions have adhered to the path of building trade unionism with Chinese characteristics, and have vigorously implemented their strategy of organizing for better protection, based on the establishment of industrial peace and the adoption of a scientific approach to workers' protection in accordance with the law. To this end, we have made fresh breakthrough in organizing and serving the workers.

At present, the in-depth development of economic globalization has brought about opportunities and challenges to the world of work. Governments, trade unions and employers need to make a joint effort to adapt themselves to the changing world to grasp opportunities and to take up challenges.

Therefore, the Chinese trade unions wish to put forward the following proposals. We should commit ourselves to peaceful and scientific development. Only when development is sustained in a scientific manner can economic growth and social progress be achieved. What we are promoting is a scientific, peaceful, harmonious and common development.

The essence of scientific development is to put people first. The key to scientific development is to achieve coordinated and sustainable development in an all-round way. China will unswervingly follow the path of peaceful development and promote fast and sound social, economic development.

Together with the people of other countries, we will make concerted efforts to bring about a harmonious world that features lasting peace and prosperity for all. We should commit ourselves to building a harmonious world of work. We should press for the construction of a harmonious society, harmonious labour relations and harmonious enterprises. In a harmonious society, wealth shall be generated and fairly distributed among the general public. In harmonious labour relations, social justice and mutual gains shall be pursued and harmonious enterprise profits shall be generated and shared. Development must be by the people and for the people. We should not only facilitate economic growth, but also protect the rights and interests of workers and work hard towards a harmonious world of work. We should commit ourselves to promoting harmonious international labour movements. We live in a colourful world. Differences in development levels and social systems have made the development of international trade unionism colourful and diverse. In this wonderful world, there is not – and will surely never be – a single way of building trade unions. Unions of different countries should proceed from their own national and institutional conditions and choose their own road of development.

The Chinese trade unions maintain that trade unions across the world should respect each other, live in harmony, pursue mutual gains and prosperity for all, learn from each other and draw on each other's experience, and seek diverse organizational modes and production patterns.

Trade unions of all countries should participate in international trade union affairs on an equal footing and strengthen dialogue, exchanges and cooperation on the principle of independence and autonomy.

The ILO has shouldered the arduous mission of meeting the challenges of the world of work. We urge the ILO to attach great importance to its institutional capacity building and its effective decision-making, and to bring more substantial benefits to the working people of all countries.

The Chinese trade unions stand ready to work together with other trade unions in a concerted effort to create a harmonious world of work for all working people.

Sr. VALDÉS MESA (*trabajador, Cuba*)

El compromiso realizado por la comunidad internacional para alcanzar el trabajo decente, agenda fundamental de la OIT, es todavía un objetivo por cumplir.

Por un lado, no existe la necesaria voluntad política en muchos gobiernos para cumplirlo y, por otro, el inmenso poder de las grandes transnacionales, con el apoyo de los gobiernos de los países más desarrollados, no dejan opción alguna, al imponer al mundo la doctrina del dominio del capital y el mercado sobre cualquier otra consideración que no sea la de obtener el máximo de ganancias, aunque a expensas de someter a los pueblos al desempleo, la miseria, el hambre y la exclusión social.

Las deseadas sinergias entre sostenibilidad social, medio ambiental y económica a que llama la OIT no son posibles en un mundo gobernado por la filo-

sofía del despojo, la explotación y la ausencia de solidaridad entre las naciones.

En América Latina, laboratorio por excelencia de las políticas neoliberales, que entronizaron las privatizaciones, que minimizaron el papel del Estado y todo lo confiaron a la ley del mercado, los datos así lo demuestran.

Un reciente informe de la CEPAL califica el período 2003-2006 como el de mejor desempeño económico en los últimos 25 años. Reconoce que el número de pobres es hoy similar al de 1980 y considera la región como la de mayor desigualdad en la distribución de los ingresos.

Las abultadas y crecientes cifras de la deuda externa, la fuga de capitales, la falta de inversión productiva y la imposición de los tratados de libre comercio que socavan la ya deteriorada soberanía de las naciones, demuestran claramente en qué medida son incompatibles el dominio del capital y la idea de crear trabajo decente.

Los acuerdos de integración solidaria como el ALBA, que impulsan, Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua y Cuba hacen posible hoy compartir las riquezas, el conocimiento, la salud, la educación, esas metas del Milenio que aún constituyen un sueño para miles de millones de personas en este mundo.

Nuevos y colosales retos debe enfrentar la humanidad en los próximos años y la OIT y las organizaciones de trabajadores en particular, no debemos estar ajenos a los mismos. Me refiero al acelerado proceso de los cambios climáticos y a los programas hoy en marcha, para convertir los alimentos en combustibles.

La recién concluida cumbre del G8 sólo trajo como resultado un pálido llamado a la reducción de las emanaciones de contaminantes y gases de efecto invernadero, pero sin llegar a ningún compromiso concreto dada la férrea oposición del Presidente de los Estados Unidos. ¿Habremos de aceptar que los alimentos sean utilizados como una alternativa energética viable para sustituir los no renovables combustibles fósiles? ¿Qué pasará con los 800 millones de hambrientos que hoy viven en este planeta cuando los ya escasos alimentos se dediquen a abastecer a 800 millones de automóviles?

La comunidad internacional debiera actuar sin demora para evitar que mañana sea demasiado tarde y la humanidad sea conducida a un callejón sin salida.

La Central de Trabajadores de Cuba comparte los principios fundamentales de la OIT que hacen del tripartismo su piedra angular. El tripartismo y el diálogo social han funcionado en mi país durante años. Las organizaciones sindicales gozan de un profundo respeto y reconocimiento de las instituciones estatales y una amplia participación en los procesos de toma de decisiones a todos los niveles sociales y económicos.

Lamentablemente, en esta propia Conferencia hemos visto seriamente amenazado el tripartismo, al imponerse un absurdo veto al justo reclamo de los trabajadores colombianos de que la OIT les ayude a defender el primer derecho de cualquier persona en el mundo, el derecho a la vida, que les ha venido siendo arrebatada durante años con toda impunidad. La Central de Trabajadores de Cuba, en correspondencia con el sindicalismo internacional presente en esta Conferencia, se solidariza con el movimiento sindical colombiano.

Cuba, país bloqueado durante 48 años por la mayor potencia que recuerde la historia, Estados

Unidos, continúa avanzando en la consolidación de un modelo de desarrollo verdaderamente sostenible y racional que pone el acento fundamental en las necesidades de todo el pueblo.

Nuestra economía crece y se consolida. Importantes inversiones y programas de ahorro tienen lugar en la rama energética.

Vivimos orgullosos de constituir un país como queremos los cubanos, compartiendo deberes y derechos como corresponde a una sociedad que tenga como objetivo supremo alcanzar toda la justicia.

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

The dynamic agenda for the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference sets the momentum for dialogue on socio-economic issues affecting various constituents. Zambia reaffirms her commitment to work towards achieving the goals set for this Conference.

Twelve years ago, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen recognized the importance of employment creation for socio-economic development. My delegation is therefore pleased to note that this year's Conference agenda addresses key issues related to the strategic objectives of the ILO, which includes employment creation.

In this regard, Zambia is currently implementing a number of programmes to achieve the targets set at country level. Among these are such programmes as the Time-Bound Programme on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the Global Campaign on Social Security and Coverage for All, and the Decent Work Country Programme.

In implementing the country programmes, Zambia has benefited from technical expertise from the ILO local office at the planning and implementation stages. We therefore fully support the discussion on the strengthening of the ILO's capacity. Whilst welcoming this idea, it is our hope that the proposed reforms would not be to the detriment of the existing structures at both regional and subregional levels. We expect that the Regional and Area offices in Harare and Lusaka, respectively will be strengthened to support the implementation of the ILO strategic objectives at regional and country levels.

With regard to the ILO budget, we expect that more resources would be allocated to programmes and projects within the framework of the Regular Budget Supplementary Account mechanism proposed by the Director-General.

The challenge before developing countries is to address the negative outcomes caused by liberal economic policies, which among others include the increase in unemployment and underemployment, as well as abuse of workers' rights.

These negative outcomes require appropriate policy responses if we are to effectively implement the Decent Work Agenda. It is in view of this that the Zambian Government, in conjunction with the ILO and our social partners in the spirit of tripartism, have developed a number of instruments that are expected to produce positive outcomes on the labour market.

Zambia has further taken steps to create a conducive environment for private sector growth through the provision of incentives for enterprises to become sustainable and be able to contribute positively to employment promotion. We see this measure as one of the solutions needed to unleash the entrepreneurial potential that lies in the informal economy.

Zambia, in consultation with the social partners, is in the process of constituting an advisory structure for our Decent Work Programme. Under this arrangement, we shall explore ways of mobilizing resources for the effective implementation of the various activities identified in the Decent Work Country Programme. We have no doubt that, with the support and active participation of our social partners, the programme will succeed.

In conclusion, Zambia is looking forward to working with the ILO in building capacity to successfully implement the Decent Work Programme in the SADC region. Lastly, Mr. President and Director-General, you can count on the support of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, and Zambia in particular, as we strive to achieve these objectives.

Ms. CRONBERG (*Minister of Labour, Finland*)

First of all, let me congratulate the Director-General for his Report, which outlines the challenges of the ILO in promoting decent work for sustainable development. Also, let me thank him for the Global Report dealing with equality at work.

I, and my Government, very much agree that social inequality and social exclusion are serious threats to sustainable development. Our new Government in Finland, in which the majority of ministers, 12 out of 20, for the first time in the world, are women, has committed itself to promoting equal opportunities for all. I would especially like to draw your attention to two points.

First, one of the challenges facing particularly the European labour markets, and in particular the Finnish labour market, is the increasing use of new, atypical forms of employment. In Finland, women, especially younger, educated women, have more fixed-term contracts than men, partly due to the parental leave costs to the employer.

Fixed-term contracts have often a negative impact on the career prospects and incomes of women.

There is also a risk that the birth rate will further decline due to the uncertainty of the future for young, newly built families. So the new Finnish Government is committed to improving the position of fixed-term employees.

Secondly, the Finnish workforce is ageing even more rapidly than in other European countries. Approximately, 1 million people will leave our workforce between 2000 and 2015. That corresponds to nearly half the current workforce.

At the same time, people over 50 still face difficulties in finding employment.

If we wish to maintain sound economic growth and social development, we have to find ways to develop working life so that ageing people are able and willing to work longer. The new Finnish Government has decided to set up a new cross-sectoral government programme to deal with labour, entrepreneurship and working life.

One of the aims of this programme is to improve the quality of working life, as well as to prolong the careers of older workers.

Proactive policies must therefore encourage all workers to accumulate and maintain their know-how and skills throughout their working life.

The contribution of both young and older workers must be considered equally valuable in working life. The life cycle perspective combined with age management and intergenerational solidarity are needed when extending careers and developing wor-

king life. In my opinion, diversity and equality are necessary preconditions for productivity and competitiveness.

Promoting equality should not be seen as a separate issue. It is much more effective to mainstream gender and equality in policy and practice at all levels.

As the Decent Work Country Programmes are the most important practical instruments of the ILO at country level, I strongly encourage the ILO to include gender and equality perspectives in these programmes from the very beginning.

Globalization as such is not a solution to the problems of poverty and inequality, but it does create opportunities to direct development to a sustainable direction, including social, economic and environmental pillars. To seize this opportunity, international management and governance are needed. My Government welcomes the measures already taken by the ILO in its efforts towards such development.

With its tripartite structure, the ILO is in a unique position to act as a lighthouse for this exercise. However, as it is rightly pointed out in the Report of the Director-General, the ILO cannot do this job alone.

Cooperation with other international organizations and coherent strategies are needed that combine economic policies with social and employment policies. Without firm commitment from the ILO's constituents this will not succeed. My question is: do we have an alternative?

Sr. LA HOZ SALMÓN (*empleador, Perú*)

Antes de nada quiero agradecerle por su gentileza de darme la palabra y felicitarlo por su designación, lo mismo que hago extensivo a los Vicepresidentes.

Hace más de dos décadas se llevaron a cabo en mi país las primeras experiencias de diálogo social. Si bien nos podríamos considerar pioneros por haber participado en tan singular empresa, no exenta de quimeras por pretender instalar la concertación en un país que estaba caracterizado por la confrontación de empleadores y sindicatos, debemos admitir que esos esfuerzos ayudaron mucho para que en el 2001 se reinstalase el antiguo Consejo Nacional de Trabajo de 1982.

Siendo el dialogo social la viga maestra de la democracia, pues abre las compuertas que permite el franco entendimiento de los actores sociales y como se señala en el Informe V de la Memoria que merece nuestro comentario, relativo al fortalecimiento de la OIT, creemos que los consensos a que arriban las partes dialogantes en el seno de los consejos de trabajo o en los organismos económicos-sociales, coadyuvan al fortalecimiento de aquella organización tripartita que ha sido la mentora del diálogo social.

Bien se dice como argumento de singular importancia que en lugar de señalar a los organismos tripartitos lo que deberían hacer, la OIT tiene que esforzarse, como lo indica certeramente la Organización Internacional de Empleadores, «por convencer a los demás actores multilaterales de que, apoyando una mejor integración de los esfuerzos relativos a la política laboral y social en el plano nacional podrán aplicar sus propias políticas». Seremos justos si admitimos que proponer el diálogo es diseñar la ruta para lograr nuestras convicciones.

No quisiéramos terminar esta breve intervención, sin puntualizar que la Memoria refleja «una imagen muy negativa del libre mercado», al punto que ex-

presa conceptos que no cumplen otro objetivo que permeabilizarnos para aceptar la redistribución de las ganancias derivadas de la globalización de la economía.

Este punto anudado a otros que se dan en el documento dado a conocer por el Director General apuntan a cierto economicismo tan distante de otras memorias centradas en los problemas de las relaciones de trabajo.

Tal vez lo anotado sea un signo de los tiempos, pero si bien el trabajo es un hecho que se enmarca en el ámbito social, sin descuidar su impronta económica, no debemos dejar de admitir que esta suerte de «aggiornamento» de la OIT puede llevarla a una irreconocible transformación. Será un organismo más de índole económica.

Estas ideas centrales colocan a nuestro comentario en el carril de las advertencias movidas por el respeto y admiración por una organización que ha sobrevivido pese a los tiempos mas difíciles que le tocó al mundo afrontar y que estamos seguros de que seguirá igualmente señera, necesaria e importante por muchos años más.

Quisiera, al dar término a estas palabras expresar nuestra solidaridad con los pueblos árabes ocupados y CONFEDCAMARA de Venezuela por los momentos difíciles que atraviesa.

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

I wish to thank the Director-General for his comprehensive report highlighting pertinent and urgent issues the ILO has to tackle in order to remain relevant within the multilateral community.

We are indeed gratified that the Decent work concept has been endorsed as a framework for ILO work by the multilateral community as reflected in the agenda of the 2005 World Summit and the 2006 ECOSOC High-level Segment. We share the Director-General's concerns that there are many challenges that impede the realization of the Decent Work Agenda in the context of globalization. This makes it imperative for us to strengthen our identity as a tripartite body in order to surmount these challenges.

On the need for a balanced approach to sustainable development, my delegation concurs that social partners need to cooperate to promote the integration of economic, social and environmental issues, which are interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars. Kenya has embraced the concept of private public sector partnership and corporate social responsibility, especially with regard to environmental issues as a sure way of promoting environmentally sustainable production and consumption patterns.

My delegation further notes the collaborative efforts undertaken between the ILO and WTO in enhancing coherent policies for trade, investments, finance and employment, which ultimately increase productivity and employment. Most developing countries will attest that increase in trade does not necessarily lead to prosperity for the majority of the people. Kenya, for example, has recorded an impressive GDP growth rising from -1 per cent to 6 per cent in the last four years; yet poverty levels and unemployment have not significantly reduced. It is therefore important to tackle economic growth from a broad-based perspective, with a policy framework that makes employment central and not the residual outcome of any policy.

We concur with the Director-General's assertion that wage squeeze and increasing inequalities threaten sustainable development. Most developing countries have not benefited from globalization, and the labour market is characterized by unskilled, underemployed and underpaid workers. To this extent, decent work remains but a mirage.

We are currently working on the integration of our recently conceived decent work programmes in the poverty reduction strategy and our master plan, commonly known as Vision 2030 to ensure sustainability.

Within this strategy, Kenya envisages to operationalize the Decent Work Agenda by lending considerable weight to the reduction in HIV/AIDS prevalence in the workplace. This concern has been the main focus of our bid to address its negative effects on the economy, including the elimination of discrimination against people infected with HIV/AIDS.

Kenya declared HIV/AIDS a national disaster in 1999, by which declaration we sought to reduce the high cost of health care for persons infected with HIV/AIDS. Today anti-retroviral drugs are available free of charge, making a significant positive impact on the health and productivity of workers and Kenyans in general.

Modernizing the governance of the world of work has to be urgently undertaken if the ILO is to remain relevant, especially in view of the ongoing United Nations reforms. We must strengthen the capacity among social partners and enhance dialogue if we are to meet the demands of the changing world as envisaged in the words of the Director-General, and I quote, "Our particular focus is on ensuring that our tripartite identity and our governance structures are acknowledged and respected, so that they can contribute the full measure of their strength".

The ILO must also modernize and strengthen the standard setting and supervisory system to keep pace with the changes in the world of work and become more effective.

In conclusion, we thank the Office for the foresight in bringing forth the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities we encounter as we implement the decent work programme. I believe the roadmap to success lies in clear policies and our strong tripartite structures.

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

I wish first of all to congratulate the President of the Conference and his deputies for their election to preside over the business of the 96th Session. I have no doubt that their combined experience will make this session a resounding success. I also wish to take this opportunity to extend my appreciation to the Director-General for producing a thought-provoking report which focuses on mainstreaming sustainable development in the Decent Work Agenda. In fact this Report comes at an opportune time when most of us in the developing world are grappling to find interventions that sufficiently address the challenges posed by globalization particularly those relating to social equity.

Allow me Mr. President to share with you that the Government of Zimbabwe has a strong conviction that social dialogue is at the heart of all facets of sustainable development. It is in this respect that in my country greater efforts have been made to sustain the engagement of social partners within the

auspices of the tripartite negotiating forum, otherwise known as TNF. The TNF brings together the Government and social partners to negotiate important socio-economic issues on the basis of a shared national ethos. May I also inform you that as a result of collective efforts, Government and the social partners have recently signed key protocols of the social contract for Zimbabwe. These relate to: incomes and price stabilization; restoration of production viability; and mobilization, pricing and management of foreign currency. To progressive Zimbabweans, a social contract is a key instrument for turning the economy around. Thus social dialogue becomes pivotal to economic recovery and indeed development. In this respect, the Zimbabwean social partners, which are party to the social dialogue for sustainable development, have come up with a Zimbabwe-first philosophy at a recently concluded high-level Tripartite Social Dialogue Symposium.

Mr. President, my delegation fully subscribes to the aspect raised in the report on the multilateral reform agenda, particularly within the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization, for indeed the social costs of their policies have inhibited the attainment of the Decent Work Agenda in our developing countries. It suffices to mention that the fiscal and monetary austerity programmes prescribed by these institutions have tended to erode the gains made by our governments in generating employment and improving our people's welfare. There is therefore, an urgent need to ensure coherence of policies and the mainstreaming of the Decent Work Agenda in all our development partners' programmes.

The Government of Zimbabwe fully recognizes the fact that sustainable development has to be underpinned by employment-generating initiatives aimed at transforming the lives of the people, particularly those in vulnerable circumstances. It is in this context that the Government of Zimbabwe has, through an integrated skills outreach programme, made deliberate efforts to equip young persons with skills relevant to the resources available in their localities. It is our view that the programme, besides generating employment, will also address the income inequality that has tended to drive the youth and women, in particular, into absolute poverty.

Mr. President, I am also pleased to inform you that the Government of Zimbabwe has a fully fledged ministry that is solely mandated to promote the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The overall policy objective underpinning the work of this ministry is to accelerate the reduction of poverty and income inequalities.

The Report, Mr. President, also raises a very fundamental point regarding the need to strengthen our labour market information systems. Indeed, decent work deficits can only be competently ascertained given socially acceptable, correctly defined and accurate labour market information. In this regard, the point raised in your Report about the need to develop socially acceptable definitions of labour market indicators cannot be overemphasized. I share this conviction since the situations of the most vulnerable sectors of our labour markets have tended to be excluded from the labour market data. This in my view has not assisted policy-makers in generating appropriate interventions to address the real situation of the workers concerned.

Mr. President, the Government of Zimbabwe greatly appreciates the assistance offered by the Su-

regional Office for Southern Africa – (SRO, Harare) in building capacity to develop our labour market information systems, most recently in the context of the setting up of the African Labour Market Indicators Library.

In conclusion, Mr. President, the Government of Zimbabwe welcomes your Report and looks forward to working with the ILO to mainstream the Decent Work Agenda in development programmes.

Thank you.

(Mr. Blondel takes the chair.)

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-KOBISY (Employer, Egypt)

We are very pleased to be working in this Organization, which is doing everything it can to enhance working conditions. We are tackling globalization, a subject which has aroused a great deal of interest.

Our Organization has a large membership. We have an enormous responsibility for present and future generations.

The subjects for general discussion, not only have a bearing on the work of individuals but concern social life in general, and therefore the world in general. Sustainable development is vital, as we all need to look forward to a better future. I therefore greet all those who have organized this Conference, and the link that has been drawn between work and sustainable development. We must work together in a coordinated international effort to ensure that globalization is more equitable.

We fully agree with the Director-General when he says that the standards adopted by the Organization must be flexible in order to respond to the changes occurring in the world, so that all countries throughout the world will be able to comply with them. Each country should be in a position to tackle its own problems. Sustainable development is of the highest importance, and the environment must be taken into account when dealing with these issues. That is why we fully agree with the Global Compact, and we must highlight the importance of social responsibility and place ourselves at the service of the world of work. That is why we have highlighted human rights, freedom of expression, sustainable development, the protection of the environment and other aspects. Our programme must aim to underpin government action to attain the objectives adopted in Johannesburg in 2002.

We reaffirm the importance of an international linkage between trade and labour, and consider that an international fund should take the different economic aspects into consideration in order to take account of conditions in different countries. This is why we must correct the current imbalance and not allow the rich to become richer and the poor poorer. We must highlight employment and, on behalf of the Egyptian employers' organizations, I wish to refer to section 5 of the Director-General's Report concerning labour market information. That can serve as a basis to draft bills which are reasonable and which respond to the requirements of the market. We must also be in a position to promote the interests of all, and the Egyptian Government has taken account of this situation. We have a daily bulletin that is published, we need technical support in the use of existing data. The Egyptian employers' organizations welcome any cooperation in this area. With regard to social protection, we agree with Section 6 of the Report, and our Ministry endorses that wording. We employers consider that tripartite

structure should be consolidated for everyone's benefit, while taking account of the interest of society as a whole.

In conclusion, allow me to take this opportunity to appeal to the International Labour Organization to give further support to the employers' organizations in Egypt through specific and varied programmes. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Organization for its unflagging support. We have a unique model here for a tripartite structure, in order to enhance sustainable development without disregarding the social dimension, and to highlight the human factor, which is one of the greatest riches of our planet.

Mr. IQBAL (Minister of Labour and Employment, Bangladesh)

The Director-General's excellent Report carries an important message for member States for improving the welfare of our people through job creation and elimination of discrimination. Decent work is important for all of us.

I would first like to brief the Conference on the recent political and administrative changes in Bangladesh following the expiry of the term of the elected Government in accordance with our Constitution, and 11-member caretaker government has been formed to run the Government for an interim period and to hold free and fair national elections. The caretaker government is pledge-bound to create a better environment for such an election. In doing so, our caretaker government has taken initiatives and adopted a reform agenda to free the country from the curse of corruption, extortion and terrorism. As part of our reform agenda, three major constitutional bodies, the Election Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Public Service Commission have been reconstituted to make them effective and credible, we expect to carry through our reform agenda and to hold national elections without any undue delay. Since our membership of the ILO in 1972, we have been constructively participating in all ILO activities. Bangladesh is committed to the implementation of international labour standards. We have adopted a new Labour Code in October 2006 to create a discrimination-free work environment, strengthen congenial relations between workers and employers and increase productivity.

Our Government is implementing the Bangladesh Labour Welfare Foundation Law 2006, to ensure the welfare of the workers in the formal and informal sectors. The EPZ Workers Association and Industrial Relations Act 2004, provides for freedom of association and collective bargaining rights in factories of export processing zones.

The new Labour Law will help prevent child labour. In addition, a child labour policy is expected to be finalized within the year. We are implementing the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) since 1994 with ILO support. In addition, we are also implementing a Time-bound Programme for the elimination of the worst form of child labour. My Ministry, from our budget, is implementing phase II of the project entitled: Eradication of Hazardous Child Labour after successfully completing phase I. In our ready-made garments industry sector, a tripartite MOU was signed in June 2006 among the Government, and employers associations and major trade unions for full implementation of the minimum wage for the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. Furthermore, a

Social Compliance Forum and crisis management committee are set up for the RMG industry for continuous monitoring and enforcement of the minimum wage and the immediate resolution of any problems that may emerge.

I would like to draw the attention of this house to a very important issue confronting many countries, that of short-term movement of labour from one country to another. A large number of Bangladeshi professionals – skilled or less-skilled – are employed abroad. There is a demand for dedicated workers from our countries. The management of short-term circular movement of service providers requires coordination particularly to optimize the benefits and prevent exploitation and abuse. This is an area where consensus can prove immensely beneficial to both sending and receiving countries. We believe that the ILO has an important role to play in this very complex and sensitive subject.

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

Fidèle à sa diplomatie de présence et de participation, le Cameroun est heureux de prendre part à la 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail du BIT.

Au nom de mon pays, je vous adresse mes vives félicitations pour votre élection à la présidence de notre Conférence.

Je souhaite néanmoins qu'il soit tenu compte de la volonté de l'Afrique en général, et de l'Afrique centrale en particulier, de présider effectivement la 97^e session de 2008.

Comme vous le savez, le Cameroun, depuis de longues années et davantage en sa qualité de membre titulaire du Conseil d'administration du BIT, a résolument fait siennes les grandes aspirations de L'OIT.

Ainsi avons-nous adopté le dialogue comme mode de gestion de nos problèmes.

Notre pays compte à ce jour six centrales syndicales de travailleurs et quatre organisations patronales. Toutes les questions relatives au maintien d'un climat sain en entreprise sont examinées dans le cadre d'un dialogue social constructif et responsable. Notre syndicalisme a cessé d'être un syndicalisme de revendication et d'agitation stérile; il est devenu, fort heureusement, un syndicalisme de proposition et de coresponsabilité.

Du coup, le travail est visible en entreprise et sur les autres chantiers de la production des richesses. Tous les cadres institutionnels du dialogue sont vivants: Commission nationale consultative du travail, comité de synergie, comité ad hoc, etc.

Le monde d'aujourd'hui est complexe et nous le savons; le chef de l'Etat, Son Excellence Paul Biya, en est parfaitement conscient. Il est convaincu que la paix dans son pays ne peut se maintenir que grâce à la participation de chaque bonne volonté. Aussi a-t-il affirmé en septembre 2006: «Pour nous, le dialogue social est une nécessité».

Voilà qui explique que le Cameroun demeure aujourd'hui ce havre de paix et de stabilité dans une Afrique en proie à des turbulences dangereuses.

Les Camerounais ont choisi le débat et non le combat. Nous sommes convaincus, comme au BIT, que sans dialogue social il ne saurait y avoir de paix sociale, et sans paix sociale, il ne saurait y avoir de développement.

Concernant le deuxième axe, le travail pour tous, en 2001, le Président de la République, Son Excel-

lence Paul Biya, a qualifié le chômage de «véritable cancer social».

Et parce que la dignité de l'homme n'est possible que par le travail décent, nous avons pris des mesures vigoureuses pour la création des emplois: toilettage de la politique nationale de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle, révision du Code du travail de 1992, harmonisation du Code de travail OHADA, accent particulier sur l'emploi des jeunes, mesures spécifiques en vue de la facilitation de l'insertion des personnes handicapées dans les circuits de production, meilleur encadrement des paysans, codification du secteur informel, révision du Code des investissements à l'effet de le rendre plus attractif.

Et pour galvaniser le tout, création d'un ministère des Petites et moyennes entreprises et de l'Artisanat, et de l'Economie sociale.

C'est dire que la politique des grandes ambitions en vigueur au Cameroun n'est pas un leurre.

C'est aussi le lieu de remercier le BIT pour l'appui qu'il n'a cessé d'apporter à notre pays dans ses efforts de lutte contre la pauvreté.

Enfin, et s'agissant du troisième axe, soulignons que la protection sociale, à travers la sécurité sociale, est aujourd'hui l'un des piliers de la politique sociale du chef de l'Etat qui caractérise son septennat en cours.

Par rapport à la convention n° 102 de l'OIT, le Cameroun assure effectivement des prestations à ses travailleurs. Mais, il convient de le dire: 10 pour cent des Camerounais, tant du secteur public que du secteur privé, en sont bénéficiaires. Près de 90 pour cent restent sur la touche.

Notre ambition est d'inverser la tendance. Avec plus de détermination, la réflexion a été formalisée dès 1998-99. Elle vient d'aboutir avec l'élaboration d'un arsenal juridique de grande portée.

Selon les très hautes directives du chef de l'Etat, nous ambitionnons de mettre en œuvre une nouvelle sécurité sociale à la camerounaise.

Celle-ci assurera non seulement les ouvriers, mais aussi les paysans, les artisans, les vendeurs à la sauvette, le secteur libéral, etc. Nous mettrons l'accent sur la couverture maladie. Et dans cette perspective, les mutuelles de santé verront bientôt le jour, sous la coresponsabilité des ministères de la Santé et du Travail.

Un accent sera également mis sur la protection des seigneurs de la terre, les plus nombreux qui, comme hier et aujourd'hui, participent activement à la vie économique de notre pays.

Une sécurité sociale à la camerounaise qui évitera le piège du déficit chronique et dont le financement sera mesuré, progressif et prudent.

Pour sa mise en place définitive, nous comptons évidemment sur l'appui sans défaut du BIT. En sa qualité de membre titulaire du Conseil d'administration du BIT, le Cameroun soutient le Directeur général dans ses efforts en faveur de l'instauration d'une mondialisation juste et équitable, et de la promotion du travail décent, un facteur de lutte contre la pauvreté. Paix par le dialogue, travail décent par la lutte contre le chômage, sécurité sociale. Voilà notre vision commune.

Mr. PETRIASHVILI (*Worker, Georgia*)

An eternal concern for the rights of working people and an aspiration to social justice lie behind the enormously significant role and authority of the International Labour Conference. We are sincerely

thankful to the International Labour Organization for the great assistance it is giving our country in the process of complex economic and social changes.

The economic situation of Georgia in the past three years has been characterized by positive advances. Gross domestic product has, on average, been growing at over 9 per cent a year. Nevertheless, the influence of the long-term decline of preceding years is reducing the social effectiveness of this growth. There have been no major changes towards raising the living standards of the population. More than 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line, and 30 per cent of wage earners are paid below the minimum level of subsistence. The labour market continues to be extremely harsh, and unemployment is high. The Government has, to all intents and purposes, abandoned any active state policy of promoting employment or stimulating the creation of new jobs. It has stopped financing programmes for the social protection of the unemployed. The Employment Act is recognized as no longer being enforced, and the labour inspectorate no longer functions.

As part of the liberalization of labour relations, a new Labour Code was adopted in May 2006. Its principle provisions do not meet the ILO's minimum standards and infringe fundamental labour rights. In conditions of unemployment and poverty, workers have to agree to discriminatory terms in their labour contracts. The employers have unlimited rights. They do not have to explain failure to hire, they can terminate a labour contract without warning and they can introduce a longer working week. Overtime, even in hazardous and dangerous conditions, and work at night are performed without extra pay, and ordinary workers can fail to be paid through the fault of the employer. Workers are switched to short-term contracts of one, three or six months in order to deprive them of the right to paid leave. Inability to work for more than 30 successive days or more than 50 days in total within six months are grounds for suspending a labour contract. Laws recognized as no longer effective include the Act on Collective Bargaining, while the Act on the Settlement of Collective Labour Disputes restricts the collective defence of working people. In response to strike action, employers can declare a 90-day lock-out.

Georgia has ratified 16 ILO Conventions, including all eight core Conventions, as well as the European Social Charter, and it has undertaken to implement 62 paragraphs under 19 Articles of the Charter. However, many of the provisions are not being implemented, which is a threat to workers' rights, decent working conditions and trade union activity. Social dialogue at national level is practically non-existent, and collective bargaining in individual sectors is episodic.

Recently, the Government placed before Parliament for consideration a draft Bill on Changes in and Additions to the Tax Code, providing for an increase in individual income tax from 12 to 25 per cent, the abolition of social tax and more than a twofold increase in the tax burden on working people.

We have called for the abolition of the flat rate tax and the introduction of a progressive scale of taxation such as is used in developed market economies, whereby the greater part of the tax burden rests on the better-off. We have called for exemption from

income tax for workers and other individuals whose income is below the minimum subsistence level.

Our task is to react in timely fashion to the changes that are taking place, to take measures to protect working people on the basis of the principles of tripartism and to cooperate effectively with both Government and employers.

I would like to note our particular concern at the state of affairs whereby, because of political disputes between countries, ordinary people are made to suffer. People's rights are being infringed because of their nationality. There are cases of massive persecution and xenophobia against persons of Georgian nationality taking place in Russia. We consider that the World Federation of Trade Unions, the ILO and other international organizations should develop a position in order to prevent such actions in any State anywhere in the world.

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

Je mesure le privilège qui m'est donné aujourd'hui de prononcer cette allocution devant cette auguste assemblée. Je le fais au nom de mon pays, Madagascar, dont l'histoire très récente a été témoin de la gestation d'une des péripéties politiques les plus encourageantes, suite à l'expression de la légitime aspiration d'un peuple à s'affranchir de la pauvreté par le travail.

Je félicite le Président pour son élection à la tête de cette Conférence, et je félicite également le Directeur général pour le rapport qu'il a présenté à la Conférence, rapport dans lequel il exhorte l'ensemble des membres à se tourner vers les réalités vécues par chaque pays pour évaluer les progrès réalisés.

Il permet en effet aux mandants des organisations ici présentes d'apprécier les efforts accomplis par la communauté internationale en vue, d'une part, d'intégrer les objectifs stratégiques de l'Organisation dans les politiques économiques et sociales à tous les niveaux et, d'autre part, d'évaluer les avancées enregistrées par chaque nation dans la prise en compte de l'égalité, objectif essentiel des programmes par pays pour le travail décent.

L'année dernière, Madagascar a rapporté ici-même l'initiation d'une large consultation nationale en vue d'élaborer et d'adopter un nouveau document de cadrage répondant aux différents défis socio-économiques auxquels le pays se doit de faire face. C'est ainsi que le *Madagascar Action Plan* (MAP) a vu le jour en novembre 2006. Inspiré des objectifs du Millénaire pour le développement et de la vision «Madagascar naturellement» de Son Excellence Marc Ravalomanana, Président de la République, le MAP exprime les nécessités du pays et traduit les huit engagements appelés à faire sortir Madagascar de la situation de pauvreté, et à lancer un saut qualitatif pour le développement durable. Document de référence, cette feuille de route a obtenu l'adhésion de l'ensemble des partenaires internationaux de Madagascar.

Le gouvernement s'est engagé, en effet, pour les cinq ans à venir, d'abord à mettre en place une gouvernance responsable, des infrastructures reliées et une économie à forte croissance; ensuite, à assurer la transformation de son système éducatif, le développement rural, la santé, le planning familial et la lutte contre le VIH/SIDA et enfin, à prendre soin de l'environnement et à consolider la solidarité nationale.

Cette nouvelle feuille de route du développement s'articule aisément avec l'Agenda du travail décent de l'OIT et relève, entre autres, les défis du renforcement des prestations des services publics et de la promotion du plein emploi. Elle souscrit bien à la création d'emplois en donnant la priorité aux catégories les plus vulnérables – jeunes, femmes et handicapés –, à l'intégration du secteur informel et à l'augmentation de la productivité pour faire face aux contextes de la mondialisation.

C'est ainsi que le Comité national tripartite, élargi de suivi de la promotion de l'emploi et de la réduction de la pauvreté, poursuit la mise en œuvre des recommandations du Sommet de Ouagadougou.

La loi sur la politique nationale de l'emploi a été dotée en 2006 d'un plan d'action à travers le programme national de soutien à l'emploi. Le BIT, le PNUD, la FAO et la Coopération suédoise appuient la réalisation du programme emploi/revenu et du programme HIMO, en renforçant les capacités des structures locales de promotion de l'emploi en milieu rural. De même, plusieurs autres structures sont déjà opérationnelles pour soutenir les diverses opérations initiées. La nouvelle stratégie consiste, en définitive, à réaliser progressivement la décentralisation effective des actions et des structures au niveau de chaque région, devenue nouveau pôle de développement.

La stratégie et le processus de promotion de l'emploi ainsi adoptés sous-tendent en synergie la mise en chantier des programmes ciblant la promotion du travail décent. Le Programme d'appui à la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration (PAMODEC) de l'OIT vient d'être lancé par une étude visant la promotion de l'égalité et de la liberté syndicale. Les actions en vue de l'amélioration de la productivité dans les entreprises franches par le travail décent (APRODEF) débutent avec une table ronde prévue à la fin du mois pour en garantir une réalisation sans faille.

Concernant la promotion du dialogue social, le gouvernement s'est attelé l'année passée à mettre en place et à renforcer les différentes structures à chaque niveau: national, régional, et jusqu'au sein même des entreprises. La mise en œuvre du programme de promotion du dialogue social en Afrique francophone (PODIAF) permettra de fixer les modalités pratiques des critères de représentativité, le renforcement des capacités d'intervention de l'inspection du travail ainsi que le renforcement des compétences et aptitudes à la négociation des partenaires sociaux.

S'agissant des normes internationales et des droits fondamentaux au travail et leur suivi, Madagascar se félicite, à ce jour, de l'enregistrement de la semaine passée de l'instrument de ratification de la convention n° 105 sur l'abolition du travail forcé, 1957. La ratification des huit conventions fondamentales de la Déclaration de l'OIT se trouve ainsi satisfaite.

Pour terminer, le gouvernement malgache se réjouit de l'excellence de la coopération avec le BIT et espère que les actions de soutien seront renforcées, en vue de mener à terme ce programme de coopération.

M. BOTI (*ministre de la Fonction publique, du Travail, de la Sécurité sociale et de l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes, République centrafricaine*).

Qu'il me soit permis ici de rappeler que mon pays, la République centrafricaine, a déployé depuis

2003, avec l'appui de la communauté internationale ainsi que des pays amis et du Bureau de consolidation de la paix des Nations Unies en Centrafrique (BONUCA) des efforts considérables pour instaurer la paix sur son territoire et à ses frontières, condition sine qua non pour favoriser la libre circulation de la population et le redémarrage du développement économique et social.

Après les élections démocratiques intervenues au courant de l'année 2005, le gouvernement, que dirige le Premier ministre Eddy Doté, sous l'inspiration du Président de la République, M. François Bozize, a consolidé son attachement aux principes d'équité et de justice sociale chers à l'OIT et s'est immédiatement engagé à la promotion de l'Agenda du travail décent prôné par l'Organisation internationale du Travail à travers la réalisation des objectifs stratégiques suivants.

Premièrement, promouvoir et mettre en œuvre les normes internationales du travail, ainsi que les principes et droits fondamentaux au travail; deuxièmement, créer davantage d'opportunités d'emplois et de revenus décents pour les femmes et les hommes; troisièmement, améliorer la couverture de la protection sociale pour tous; enfin, quatrièmement, renforcer le tripartisme et le dialogue social.

C'est donc dans cette logique que mon pays a procédé à la ratification des conventions (n° 87) sur la liberté syndicale et la protection du droit syndical, 1948, (n° 182) sur les pires formes de travail des enfants, 1999, (n° 156) sur les travailleurs ayant des responsabilités familiales, 1981, (n° 29) sur le travail forcé, 1930, (n° 105) sur l'abolition du travail forcé, 1957, (n° 155) sur la sécurité et la santé des travailleurs, 1981, et (n° 122) sur la politique de l'emploi, 1964.

Aussi, pour adapter la législation nationale du travail au nouvel environnement socio-économique, le gouvernement a, avec l'appui du BIT, du BONUCA et de l'UNICEF, fait valider au cours d'un séminaire tripartite national l'avant-projet du nouveau Code du travail, qui définit aujourd'hui les règles et principes nouveaux conformes au libéralisme économique. Le projet d'instrument, une fois adopté en loi et promulgué, sera transformé en texte d'application et de référence.

Dans le domaine de la sécurité sociale, la loi portant création de la Caisse nationale de sécurité sociale a été promulguée, ainsi que celle qui institue le nouveau Code de sécurité sociale. Cette nouvelle réglementation, inspirée par les nouvelles règles de protection sociale approuvées par le Système d'information pastoralisme et environnement au Sahel (SIPES), permettrait au gouvernement de mon pays de poursuivre son action en faveur d'une plus grande solidarité nationale.

S'agissant de la création des opportunités d'emplois et de revenus décents pour les femmes et les hommes, le gouvernement de la République centrafricaine est plus que convaincu que le moyen essentiel d'échapper à la pauvreté est l'accès à un emploi décent, concept qui recouvre la qualité de l'emploi défini comme productif et assurant un revenu adéquat aux hommes et aux femmes.

C'est donc fort de cette conviction qu'il a, dans le document concernant la stratégie pour la réduction de la pauvreté, défini ses priorités en matière d'emploi ainsi que les stratégies pour les créer et les développer qui seront soumises au gouvernement et aux bailleurs de fonds pour financement au cours de ce mois.

Enfin, en ce qui concerne le renforcement du tripartisme et du dialogue social, la République centrafricaine attache une très grande importance à la promotion du dialogue politique et social et du tripartisme à travers la recherche permanente d'un compromis acceptable autour des questions concernant les intérêts des partenaires sociaux en général. C'est pour cela que, forts du dialogue social organisé dans tous les départements ministériels et certaines entreprises, nous avons permis aujourd'hui au pays d'obtenir le calme nécessaire à la relance de son économie.

Avant de terminer mon propos, je réaffirme que l'appui du BIT sous toutes ses formes est indispensable au gouvernement centrafricain pour lui permettre d'aller encore plus loin dans ses engagements. C'est pourquoi j'émet le vœu que les dossiers techniques soumis au bureau des zones qui a la juridiction sur mon pays soient examinés avec bienveillance dans un délai raisonnable.

Ms. TAYLOR (*Worker, United Kingdom*)

Unlike my birthplace, Malaysia, my hometown of Glasgow has no elephants. But the Trades Union Congress sees two elephants in the room at this Conference. Steering the first effectively will aid the ILO and its constituents. The damage inflicted by the second must be repaired.

The Trades Union Congress welcomes the discussion on strengthening the ILO and hopes for a Declaration next year. The origin of this discussion was the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, but the current context – the first elephant – is United Nations reform.

We concur with the Director-General: we have achieved a higher profile for the ILO and for decent work within the common family. But United Nations reform must respect the ILO's mandate and structure.

Pascal Lamy praised the ILO as the key United Nations asset to the pursuit of fair globalization. Our competitive advantages are our standards, our roots in the world of work and tripartism. In Geneva and nationally, United Nations – One cannot deliver the Decent Work Agenda without us.

Fulfilling that mandate requires sufficient resources. We regret our Government's gesture in opposing the consensus of the – again, zero-growth budget. Why, in a globalized economy when the rich – and rich countries – grow ever wealthier, are the budgets for working people always squeezed?

The Trades Union Congress supports efficiency. Decent Work Country Programmes will assist results-based management. But with even more member States' demands and demands from constituents, the ILO needs more resources to fulfil its mandate and to ensure that tripartism and the policy coherence for decent work are maintained and enhanced in the United Nations reform process. Our key indicator is mature industrial relations, so are more working people organized in trade unions and are more protected by collective agreements?

Among other solidarity priorities, the Trades Union Congress supports free trade unionism and fundamental rights in Burma, Colombia, Zimbabwe, Iran, Iraq and Palestine.

The Director-General has submitted two Reports *Decent work for sustainable development*, and *The situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories*. No element of the Decent Work report has been realized in Palestine. He notes the profound

sense of collective punishment the Palestinian people legitimately feel and their dignity in confronting the humiliation they face.

So the Trades Union Congress says: monies owing to the Palestinian Authority must be paid; the Temporary International Mechanism must function. If we are serious about reinvigorating the process for a sustainable peace for two secure States living as neighbours, Palestine must be free to develop a functioning economy in Gaza and in the contentious West Bank with full respect of the pre-1967 borders. The occupation must end. Cantonization must end. Colonies, roadblocks and the Wall, all illegally built on Palestinian territory, must go. IDF and Hamas attacks must stop.

Security, self-determination, sustainable development and decent work for both Palestinians and Israelis are the building blocks of peace. The ILO has a key role to play in that process, and the TUC stands ready to assist.

Besides resources, the ILO needs commitment to its standards and the universality of fundamental rights. Colombia is a top Trades Union Congress priority – we are already supporting the Bogotá office, which must be strengthened to fulfil its mandate.

The Standards Committee's mandate is to supervise compliance with ratified Conventions, not least fundamental rights, and to protect international law, not governments or multinationals.

For years we have heard protests about the linkage of trade and labour standards. Yet the other elephant in the room is the Free Trade Area of the Americas and consequent disrespect for the Committee.

It is now clear that the veto this year of one of the most shameful cases was meant to protect the Free Trade Area of the Americas in the face of recent revelations of collusion between government, States and the security forces on one hand and the paramilitaries on the other, and this despite 72 more murders of trade unionists last year, persistent impunity, continued non-compliance of labour law and practice with ratified Conventions and no real progress with the tripartite agreement signed last year.

The Employers criticized Venezuela but prevented discussion of the "parapolitics" in Colombia, thus undermining peaceful social dialogue and democratic trade unionism there. That harms the probability of the Standards Committee and the International Labour Organization's image among Latin American workers. The case must be discussed next year.

Mr. RADIBE (*Worker, Botswana*)

We want to also congratulate the President on his election and we appreciate very much the kind of job that he is doing at the moment. Also I would like to thank my Government of Botswana for having given me the opportunity to come to such a wonderful and august gathering of the International Labour Organization Conference.

It gives me great pleasure to allude to the fact that the ILO has done a lot of work worldwide to make sure that, of course, peace and stability is maintained in the tripartite structures of different governments and to say that from the outset our federation of trade unions does recommend and appreciate the way the ILO Governing Body is managed and is administering its issues worldwide.

And we also observe the complexity and the management of the ILO in various regions that, of course, are a little bit risky. We are also acknowledging the fact that the International Labour Organization does have some budgetary and financial constraints and also we do observe that the ILO has gone ahead with measured reforms on problems on decent work. We believe these are issues that, of course, are very fundamental and the globalization Report that was made really gives a lot of challenges to our federation of trade unions. It provides an environment that, of course, needs to be acted on quickly because in our country, Botswana, we find that we still have a serious problem with the issues of social dialogue. We are aware of the fact that now there are economic groupings like the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and the Community of Sakel-Saharan States (COMESSA). We find that in our case it is always difficult for us to interact with our Government properly due to limitations that cannot actually be explained.

However, you have to be aware of the fact that labour is very important and taking the case of Botswana one realizes that, of course, Botswana is one of the few countries in Africa that has done quite well, has political stability and is encouraging democracy. And the economy of Botswana has grown so far and people are asking really where the magic was and I would like to tell this august gathering that the workers of Botswana have done so well, with the result that, of course, the economy has grown in that manner.

However, on the other hand, we have observed that for the past ten years Botswana has actually ratified some of the fundamental Conventions. It is our surprise that in the public sector the Government even at this moment has not actually made the environment conducive for collective bargaining agreements and for the freedom of association, of course, and we are greatly surprised as to why such a Government which, of course, thrived as a result of the hardship of the workers is now no longer recognizing the efforts of the workers. And, of course, we realize that it is very critical that the ILO should actually help our Government to realize that, of course, workers play a very critical role.

And on a very sad note, we have observed for the past four to five years the problem of victimization and intimidation of union leaders and we have also observed massive dismissal by some employers to an extent whereby now people are afraid of joining trade unions and this to us is now negating the work that the Government of Botswana has done for the promotion of democracy and, of course, of economic growth. And on the latest note, we have found also the Government now gunning towards sacking and dismissing the workers in the public sectors. The leaders in the public sectors have also been intimidated by all these things and they are saying that the time has come for the ILO to come to the rescue of Botswana to provide the legal and technical assistance that it has to help the Botswana Government and we believe this is very critical.

We are quite aware that the ILO in the region has some regional offices, Lusaka, Harare and South Africa. But we would love to urge the ILO Office to make sure that, of course, these offices are put to good use and, furthermore, to provide robust programmes that can help to educate the workers.

And lastly, as regards our federation of trade unions, we are going ahead to educate our members and also to push for issues of dialogue with the Government and we are very hopeful that our Government will listen to us with your help.

Mr. CHILIGATI (*Minister of Labour, Employment and Youth Development, United Republic of Tanzania*)

I feel greatly honoured to be given this opportunity to address this important meeting. First, on behalf of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, I would like to express my appreciation to the ILO headquarters for the recent visit to the United Republic of Tanzania of two senior officials, namely Ms. Maria Ducci, Executive Director of the office of the Director-General, and Ms. Regina Njoku, Regional Director for Africa. Their personal participation during the Workers' Day celebrations was very inspirational to the workers and employers of the United Republic of Tanzania.

Second, let me also extend my appreciation to the Director-General of the ILO for his Report on discrimination and equality at the workplace. Apart from indicating the outstanding and commendable success achieved, the Report also reveals the challenges ahead and how best they can be tackled. As we position ourselves to face these challenges, I wish to assure you, Mr. President, that the United Republic of Tanzania has made a commitment to the progressive implementation of labour standards, particularly the elimination of all forms of discrimination at our workplaces.

Discrimination worldwide is viewed as a vice, more so in relation to employment and occupation. In the world of work today, discrimination is characterized by sharp contrast, differing from one country to another and depending on community lifestyle and norms, prevailing circumstances and local situations. While social segregation and gender inequalities remain widespread forms of discrimination, other forms have emerged based on ethnicity, social isolation, violence and sexual harassment or abuse. Further, it has also been observed that gender inequality in employment and occupation is very common in African countries, with women being the major victims. In most cases, women have been trapped in low-pay, low-skilled jobs, and are often pushed to the informal economy.

The other form of discrimination which has emerged in the world of work is social isolation in terms of lifestyle and health status. Marginalization at workplaces is now a common phenomenon that calls for immediate remedial action. The ongoing reforms of labour market policies and laws in the United Republic of Tanzania have focused on and addressed, among other issues, discrimination, victimization, sexual harassment and inequality at the workplace.

Suffice to state at this juncture that discrimination and equality are fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania, which is the basic law of the land. Further, it is on record that the United Republic of Tanzania has ratified the ILO eight core Conventions, which include the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).

In addressing the issues of discrimination and equality at the workplace, the United Republic of Tanzania, having ratified the core Conventions, has domesticated the tenets of these Conventions in its

reformed labour laws and policies, thus creating a conducive and better working climate in line with the strategy for growth and poverty reduction.

The second part of the Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004 contains provisions dealing with fundamental rights and protection, which cover the issues of discrimination and equal remuneration.

The inclusion of such provisions is a clear manifestation of the United Republic of Tanzania's commitment to secure compliance with ILO labour standards and to adopt best practices in labour relations. We are indeed committed to condemning discrimination in employment and occupation and promoting equality at our workplaces.

The United Republic of Tanzania has taken various steps in relation to promoting active labour market policies to address the issues of jobseeking, recruitment and placement, training and various support services targeting vulnerable groups.

The Government is reviewing the National Employment Policy of 1997, which is now at an advanced stage of finalization with its related strategy. Furthermore, we have established labour exchange centres geared towards the provision of various support services in accessing the labour markets, which is key in addressing the issue of discrimination at workplaces.

In conclusion, I would like to urge the international community to continue supporting the developing economies both technically and financially in their endeavours to address issues not only relating to discrimination and inequality at workplaces but also the whole range of issues relating to fundamental rights and principles of work.

Original portugués: Sr. COSTA (empleador, Brasil)

El Director General ha propuesto diversos temas, la globalización de la economía, los mercados libres, las empresas sostenibles, la relación entre las pequeñas, medianas y grandes empresas y la capacidad de cada una de generar trabajo, los contratos y los salarios, la medición de los déficit de trabajo decente, la protección social, la modernización de la gestión de los asuntos públicos en el mundo del trabajo, y la reforma de las Naciones Unidas.

En el Brasil, compartimos la misma inquietud que se experimenta en todo el mundo por el agotamiento de las reservas de combustibles fósiles y la degradación del medio ambiente, en particular en las grandes ciudades. Nos esforzamos para producir combustibles alternativos, tales como el etanol, que ya se está utilizando en gran parte en nuestro mercado automotriz y el biodiesel, que hemos comenzado a mezclar con el diesel destinado a nuestros autobuses y camiones.

En el proceso de producción se utilizan tierras disponibles no destinadas a la producción de alimentos. Por lo que respecta al medio ambiente, con el apoyo de las empresas y las organizaciones de trabajadores, el Gobierno brasileño está mejorando su legislación y sus sistemas de inspección y supervisión. Ejemplo de ello son el organismo medioambiental IBAMA y el Programa de descontaminación, CNT. Habida cuenta de los cambios suscitados por la globalización, es preciso modificar profundamente las normas que rigen el trabajo.

En mi país hay enormes diferencias entre el progreso tecnológico, el trabajo y la legislación social y la capacidad de las PYMES para cumplir con la variedad de normativas. El mundo está cambiando y debemos cambiar para mantenernos competitivos.

Por ello, debemos hallar alternativas que contemplen tanto los intereses de los trabajadores, como los de los empleadores, beneficiando así a la sociedad en su conjunto.

Sólo a través de las negociaciones tripartitas será posible salvar los obstáculos con que tropieza el desarrollo, tales como el desempleo y el empleo informal. La formulación de políticas tendientes a mejorar las calificaciones de los trabajadores es una estrategia muy conveniente.

En cuanto a la formación profesional, las organizaciones de empleadores del Brasil, han emprendido esta tarea hace largo tiempo, manteniendo y administrando, a través de las confederaciones nacionales de la industria, el comercio, el transporte y la agricultura, sus propios servicios de formación profesional.

Por lo tanto, la solución para fomentar el empleo tiene que ver con la flexibilidad del mercado de trabajo, es decir debe adoptarse un nuevo modelo de relaciones laborales que defina una lista mínima de derechos fundamentales y que permita que las negociaciones entre las partes interesadas amplíen esta lista mínima según sus posibilidades y necesidades.

En cuanto al costo de la mano de obra, sería más provechoso comenzar a integrar medidas para suprimir algunas reglamentaciones excesivas en torno al trabajo.

La globalización del comercio ha exacerbado la competitividad y ha impuesto nuevas normas de producción que exigen que los agentes económicos incorporen nuevas tecnologías y redoblen sus esfuerzos para aumentar la rentabilidad de la producción. Lamentablemente, estas prácticas eliminan puestos de trabajo e incrementan los niveles de desempleo, incluso habiendo crecimiento económico.

La cuestión más importante que en los próximos años deberán abordar los gobernantes de todo el mundo, y en particular, la OIT, es como conciliar la irreversible demanda de calidad y productividad con la necesidad de seguir creando suficientes puestos de trabajo para atender las necesidades de millones de jóvenes que cada año entran al mercado laboral.

Creemos que la generación y la promoción de trabajo decente, es la mejor manera de conseguir la inclusión social y el medio más apropiado de lograr el desarrollo sostenible desde la perspectiva económica, social y ambiental. Es imprescindible aunar las políticas macroeconómicas y de empleo y trabajar con el fin de lograr un crecimiento económico con desarrollo social y protección del medio ambiente.

En efecto, es posible que la OIT por sí sola no dé con la solución para todos estos graves problemas del mundo laboral pero convendría que en su programa de trabajo se incluyeran estudios sobre los diversos problemas ocasionados por la globalización, así como la dimensión social de los mismos.

La globalización del trabajo decente sólo puede triunfar a través de un proyecto de ámbito mundial en el que se armonicen los aspectos económico y social. Es la única manera de lograr el desarrollo sostenible y la paz mundial. Si deseamos el trabajo decente, debemos promover un mundo decente para todos.

Sin embargo, vale la pena mencionar que el progreso necesario para el proceso de globalización exige que se tengan en cuenta las relaciones comerciales internacionales. Sin perjuicio de las iniciativas nacionales que cada país emprenda de forma

responsable, es necesario contar con un entorno de mayor cooperación y menos proteccionismo, en el que la integración de los mercados sea un instrumento justo para crear condiciones propicias para lograr más trabajo decente e inclusión social.

Los dirigentes y los empresarios deben fomentar la unión de la sociedad civil sobre la base de causas comunes. Los gobiernos no tienen respuesta ni soluciones para todos los problemas. Corresponde a la sociedad trabajar de manera conjunta para analizar los problemas y proponer soluciones.

En el Brasil, nuestro Presidente, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva ha sorprendido a los observadores con el equilibrio logrado, traducido en importantes progresos económicos y sociales, lo cual ha atraído inversión y capital extranjero.

Esperamos que la reducción de las tasas de interés en el Brasil permita al país retomar un crecimiento mayor, y que las decisiones en términos de política fiscal y las reformas necesarias en esta área, así como la relación entre el capital y el trabajo, evolucionen con la misma presteza y determinación.

Para concluir, en el espíritu de fraternidad universal y la confianza que los empleadores brasileños depositamos en la OIT, creemos que será posible crear un mundo de trabajo decente, gracias a la cooperación tripartita que aquí se practica.

Mr. RADUNOVIC (*Minister of Health, Labour and Social Welfare, Montenegro*)

It is a great pleasure and an honour for me to speak before you today for the first time on behalf of the independent and internationally recognized State of Montenegro and its Government, which achieved full membership of this international Organization as the 179th member State on 14 July 2006, thus taking over all the rights and responsibilities which derive from that membership.

It is a constitutional and legal right of the Republic of Montenegro to regulate and provide labour relations, health and safety at work, employment, social insurance and other forms of social protection based on the provision and protection of human rights and liberties in accordance with international standards.

The fundamental principle of labour legislation is that every person has the right to work and freedom to work. Forced labour is prohibited. Every person is free to choose their occupation and profession and has equal opportunities to access employment and official duties. Employment may cease against the will of an employee in accordance with the law and collective agreements. Every person has the right to a salary for their employment, together with limited working hours, daily and weekly rest time, annual vacation and absence from work in accordance with the law and collective agreements.

Freedom of trade union organization and activities is guaranteed and employees have the right to strike, in accordance with the law, in order to protect their professional and economic interests. In reforming its labour legislation, as an ILO Member, our country has accepted as a guideline the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work of 1998, especially with regard to tripartism and social dialogue in order to promote social equality and economic efficiency. In that regard, when reviewing labour legislation we primarily take into consideration the implementation of the fundamental principles and rights at work which stem from the ILO Conventions we have ratified and existing

practice in the labour legislation and social and economic regulations of other countries in the region.

Social and economic regulations are based on the 1988 Declaration, especially regarding freedom of association and collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of compulsory and forced labour, the efficient elimination of child labour and the elimination of discrimination with regard to employment and occupation.

In order to protect these principles in our labour legislation, we are increasing our institutional capacities for social dialogue through the preparation of a draft law on the economic and social council and a law on resolving disputes, as well as reviewing our labour law.

Our labour legislation focuses on legal principles and the framework. It provides a basis for developing key social and economic actions, discussions and dialogue in the labour market, primarily through collective bargaining and wider social dialogue related to economic and social policies defined by the State, giving importance to the social economic actors, such as trade unions and employers' associations, in developing the legislation. At national level and at the level of sectors and enterprises we are fulfilling all our democratic duties in labour legislation, with the aim of contributing to the improvement of democracy, social cohesion and economic development. We are also trying to make legal regulations in this field more flexible in order to ease their implementation and thus enable interested parties to seek the protection of their dignity and exercise their rights without discrimination of any type in the labour market.

It is also a great pleasure for me to inform you that tomorrow, on 12 June 2007, on behalf of the State of Montenegro, I will deliver to the Director-General the instrument on succession regarding 69 labour Conventions that the former State of Serbia and Montenegro had ratified and that the State of Montenegro, as an independent State, wishes to formally accept, bearing in mind that, in the previous period, we incorporated into our legal system the principles of these Conventions and Recommendations and we have implemented them in practice, which we plan to continue to do in the future.

Mr. ATWOLI (*Worker, Kenya*)

The Director-General has pointed out the need for better enforcement of legislation against discrimination, as well as non-regulatory initiatives by governments and enterprises and equipping the social partners to be more effective in making equality a reality at the workplace.

The Report has described at length the major advances in the struggle against discrimination, including progress in ratification of the related ILO Conventions, as well as improvement on the national legal and institutional fronts, action plans and programmes to combat inequalities stemming from discrimination.

Despite the advances made in the struggle against inequality, discrimination still persists in many workplaces in Kenya and Africa. Apart from gender inequality, there exist many other forms of discrimination that include casualization of employment, outsourcing, seasonal employment, as well as subcontracting of labour and serious disparities in the informal economy which the legal machinery hardly covers. Together with the abovementioned unfair

labour practices, there exists discrimination based on one's HIV/AIDS status.

Globalization and the current economic reforms have made it difficult to address the challenge of equality at workplaces. We, as workers, are tired, year in year out, to be talking about casualization, contractual, seasonal and casual employment across the world. We now need action and not words.

Casualization of employment is discriminatory, because it denies workers' access to social security, like the National Social Security Fund, pension schemes, national hospital insurance schemes and shelter. It does not guarantee job security and incomes for workers and their families.

Many employers, especially the multinationals, are engaged in outsourcing services, thereby discriminating against the outsourced workers, as they are not entitled to the same terms as workers employed directly by such multinationals.

The informal economy in Kenya is rapidly expanding. It is a source of livelihood for the majority of workers in Kenya. However, since the labour laws do not apply in this sector, there exists inequality that ranges from gender to age discrimination. There is need urgently to address the informal sector with the aim of formalizing the sector and ensuring that anti-discriminatory policies apply in all sectors, and the ILO can fund governments towards this direction.

I agree with the Director-General's observations that discrimination is an insidious and shifting phenomenon that is difficult to quantify, yet statistical information is needed to capture the progress made in the elimination of the discrimination.

Workers in Kenya, through the Central Organization of Trade Unions' economics and research department, have attempted to collect data based on the worst forms of workers' discrimination by employers, and we have supplied the same information to government and employers for action. Further efforts are therefore required in the collection of information on key indicators of discrimination for it to be tackled.

The export processing zones which have been established on the advice of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are workplaces where discrimination exists. Cases of sexual harassment and abuse have been rampant in these zones. Women workers are subjected to harassment by their managers, who are reluctant to recognize the trade unions.

In Kenya today, police officers still work in deplorable conditions and without freedom of association, since they have been denied their right to form and belong to a trade union. We appeal to our Government to allow police officers, like other workers, to form a trade union, and this is an ILO issue.

It is unfortunate that many regional economic integration blocks and trade agreements do not address discrimination and inequality. The East African Community has not embraced inequality issues, and the trade unions in the region have come up with a protocol on the free movement of persons, right to residence and employment as a response to the East African Community.

Further, although the East African Community has come up with a very impressive protocol on the importation of new technology and technological changes, the Community is opposed to any technology that can deny the East Africans creation of employment. However, the Kenyan Government

has not acted fully on the issue of importation and the use of tea plucking and pruning machines by multinationals in Kenya, which stands to deny Kenyans thousands of jobs.

We have applauded the efforts made by the Kenyan Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development, Mr Kulundu, who is the head of our delegation here in Geneva, for having moved very fast to introduce the new labour laws in the Kenyan Parliament.

In conclusion, we would like to record our agreement with the Report's analysis of the lessons learned from the biennium under review, and encourage the Organization to implement the suggested recommendations on the way forward during the current biennium.

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

Fidèle à l'esprit, ainsi qu'aux principes qui guident l'OIT, le gouvernement du Cap-Vert a cherché et cherche encore à renforcer le dialogue au sein de sa société, notamment à travers le Conseil de la concertation sociale. Ceci a permis de créer un climat favorable de négociation entre les représentants du gouvernement, des travailleurs et du patronat.

Suivant cette démarche, une proposition d'accord de concertation stratégique est actuellement en cours de discussion au parlement. Elle consacre les principales lignes d'action en matière de travail et d'emploi, ainsi que quelques autres matières importantes étroitement liées aux exigences du pays, liées à son développement économique, social et politique. L'adoption de cette proposition par le Conseil de la concertation sociale est extrêmement importante pour le pays.

Dans cette même perspective et avec l'appui du BIT, nous préparons actuellement aussi notre Plan national pour l'emploi. Celui-ci compte avec des subventions et s'appuie sur des analyses des divers partenaires sociaux du gouvernement. Le plan devrait, au cours des prochaines années, accorder une priorité particulière à la formation technique et professionnelle, aux sciences de la santé, aux nouvelles technologies de l'information, etc. Autant de thèmes qui figurent parmi les domaines d'intérêt en matière de développement social et économique du pays.

Pour atteindre ces objectifs prioritaires, nous devons fixer des axes qui se traduisent par: la structuration et l'édification d'un système intégré d'éducation, de formation et d'emploi; le développement d'un système national de qualification et de compétences professionnelles; la création d'une unité de mise à jour permanente destinée aux formateurs et tuteurs de la formation professionnelle; la promotion et le développement de la formation continue; l'organisation d'un système d'informations statistiques et d'un observatoire de l'emploi et la formation professionnelle; ainsi que, par l'établissement d'une offre formative permanente à des fins de formation professionnelle initiale.

Pour donner la priorité au dialogue social tripartite, nous avons mis en place le Conseil national de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle, dont la principale mission consiste à prendre des mesures politiques dans le domaine de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle, tant au niveau national que régional et sectoriel.

Le gouvernement du Cap-Vert est conscient de l'importance que revêt le secteur du travail, essentiel pour cimenter la cohésion sociale à long terme.

D'ailleurs, le mois dernier, nous avons tenu un séminaire important sur la question de la prévention des risques professionnels, dont les conclusions nous renvoient à une réflexion et une action approfondie en ce qui concerne l'inspection du travail.

Parallèlement à cette formation, nous envisageons de mettre en place des actions de formation initiale et continue dans le domaine de l'inspection du travail, ce qui permettra de doter nos techniciens d'outils essentiels pour lutter contre la sinistralité et les maladies du travail.

Après avoir obtenu un large consensus auprès de nos principaux partenaires sociaux sur les idées-forces du nouveau Code du travail, le gouvernement a obtenu le feu vert du parlement pour son adoption.

Ce nouveau Code du travail traite un nombre important des sujets non régis par le droit du travail national, à savoir, le travail domestique, l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies sur le lieu de travail, la sous-traitance des travailleurs et le travail par roulement; de même qu'il aborde d'autres questions importantes notamment les incitations et les avantages fiscaux accordés aux entreprises qui emploient des travailleurs handicapés, l'égalité de traitement des travailleurs migrants et la non-discrimination des femmes.

Soulignons, d'autre part, que les dispositions relatives au régime du travail maritime reflètent l'esprit consacré par la convention du travail maritime, 2006.

Pour terminer, c'est avec satisfaction que je communique à cette grande assemblée, que l'Assemblée nationale du Cap-Vert a ratifié l'instrument d'amendement à la Constitution de l'OIT adopté en 1997, contribuant, ainsi, à ce qu'il entre en vigueur.

Mr. KATAVIC (*Government, Croatia*)

Mr. Chairperson, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honour and exceptional pleasure to be a participant at the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Croatian delegation and on my personal behalf, to thank the International Labour Office in Geneva for organizing this important forum where social and labour questions of importance to the entire world are discussed.

It seems that the history of human society is a chronicle of challenges to the achievement of balanced social development which is, and must continue to be, an integral part of economic development. This implies new responses to old questions of economic growth and development, poverty, social exclusion, equal opportunities, freedoms and rights to participate in public life.

In the Croatian case, important parts of the broad national dialogue include issues of economic growth, competitiveness of the Croatian economy and the need for increased social inclusion and social security.

We are aware that it is very important to secure coherence between economic and financial policies, policies of the labour market and employment and social policy. For the achievement of social balance, the active participation of civil society is of particular importance, and the unions and employers play especially important roles. It is therefore important to continue to strengthen the structure of social dialogue in order to respond to the current and coming challenges that await Croatia in its accession to the EU and in the process of harmonizing Croatian legi-

slation, its institutional framework and practices with the EU *acquis*. Yet, it is not difficult to recognize that the greatest challenges for Croatia are in the area of developing more stable and advanced legislation and institutions, more effective and flexible labour markets and in the acceptance of more effective processes and innovative technologies. These challenges can only be met if we accelerate reforms needed for moving from a transitional to a market economy. Such reforms presuppose further joint efforts in order to raise the level of economic growth. In this regard, we are aware of our limitations which can be met most often in insufficiently established creditor and property rights and in inadequacies in the judiciary and public administration. We are therefore particularly determined to remove those barriers and create a business-friendly environment that promotes investment, economic growth and the creation of new jobs.

Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Croatian delegation, I welcome the documents prepared for this meeting as well as the (possible) adoption of a Convention concerning work in the fishing sector which, to a great extent, defines its very future.

We are hoping that this draft Convention will pave the way for the necessary partnership agreement between the three constituent parties. Moreover, we are hoping that the Convention will overcome the existing economic, social, traditional and cultural differences between countries concerned, as well as differences in fishing fleets and types of fishing operations.

We believe that the instruments proposed will be effective and flexible enough for both developing and developed countries. Let us not forget that those countries that are underdeveloped in both infrastructure and institutions, should get the opportunity to grow in this newly created fishing sector environment. We hope therefore that ratification of the Convention will meet the expectations of the majority of fishers by addressing most of their specific national and regional requirements and that they will be accommodated in a reasonable time frame.

Thank you for your attention.

Sr. GORRITI VALLE (*trabajador, Perú*)

Señor Director General de la OIT, señores delegados a la Conferencia, valga la oportunidad para expresar mis saludos en nombre de los Trabajadores del Perú, y reconocer los esfuerzos de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo por incorporar en la agenda de esta 96.ª reunión de la Conferencia el enfoque del trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible.

Son válidas las reflexiones sobre la necesidad de profundizar un marco de acción y estrategias globales sobre el desarrollo sostenible, que atienda al contexto globalizado de desigualdad y de cambios. Y también son importantes las medidas orientadas a impulsar el despliegue del Programa de Trabajo Decente en el marco del desarrollo sostenible.

Sin embargo, ¿cómo promover empleos sostenibles, cuando subsisten en nuestras economías actividades que mantienen condiciones inadmisibles para el ser humano y que impiden su realización social, económica y medioambiental?

El uso de tecnologías de punta y las demandas sobre la productividad replantearon el tratamiento otorgado a las relaciones laborales.

Se esperan aún mayores cambios, que exigen respuestas distintas en el ámbito de las relaciones indi-

viduales, colectivas, provisionales, de seguridad en el trabajo y de seguridad social.

Está claro que la prevalencia de estructuras avanzadas, intermedias y tradicionales, cada cual con especiales características y condiciones de trabajo, viene condicionando una forma específica de organización y contenido del trabajo en nuestras industrias. Esto implica una asignación de recursos, procedimientos, ritmos e intensidades del trabajo, tendientes a replantear una nueva división del trabajo.

Resulta urgente que demos respuesta a dichos desafíos y que las agendas que prioricemos resulten sostenibles y generen consenso en nuestras sociedades.

En el Perú, si bien existen avances en el reconocimiento y en el nivel de cumplimiento de los derechos laborales y sociales, también es cierto que hasta la fecha no se han aplicado correcciones al modelo de desregulación y flexibilización de las condiciones de empleo y trabajo, aún vigentes desde la década de los años 90.

Para una PEA de más de 11 millones de personas, el desempleo alcanza el 8 por ciento y el subempleo llega al 52,7 por ciento.

Más de 6 millones de personas padecen un continuo deterioro en sus niveles de ingreso, colocándose por debajo del costo de la canasta mínima de subsistencia.

El nivel del salario real se mantiene bajo desde su fuerte caída en 1988. Mientras tanto, la tasa de sindicalización cayó al 20 por ciento de la población económicamente activa sindicalizable y la cobertura de la negociación colectiva no supera el 10 por ciento de la PEA total.

En lo esencial, aún no se han dictado las correcciones en materia laboral que configuren un marco legal para el fomento de empleos decentes en un clima de libertad sindical y de respeto a los trabajadores.

Esto explica la enorme distancia que tiene el empleo real en el Perú con los estándares que establecen los convenios y recomendaciones de la OIT.

Poco es lo avanzado, además, en el ámbito de la erradicación del trabajo forzoso y el trabajo infantil, en la mejora de la desigualdad de oportunidades sin discriminación en relación al género y el empleo, y especialmente en el respeto de la libertad sindical.

Lo más preocupante es que en el marco de la discusión del proyecto de Ley General de Trabajo iniciado en el año 2001, cuya aprobación está aún pendiente en el Congreso, hemos escuchado reiteradamente al Gobierno coincidir con los empresarios en el argumento de que lo importante no es la creación de trabajo decente o empleo digno, sino simplemente crear ocupación, escindiendo así el acceso al empleo de los derechos que ello supone, postergando para después cómo incorporar los derechos laborales. Es más, se han dictado años atrás leyes para las MYPES, rebajando los derechos para los que laboran en ese sector sin ningún impacto ni resultado importante. Para los que así razonan, la Ley General del Trabajo no supone un cambio inmediato del marco regulatorio laboral en materia de derechos individuales y colectivos, ni un mejoramiento real de las condiciones de contratación y subcontratación de los trabajadores, de protección contra el despido arbitrario, de incremento de las remuneraciones y utilidades, ni de aumento de los procedimientos de negociación colectiva y reconocimiento del derecho de huelga.

Para nosotros, la promulgación de la Ley General del Trabajo y otros cambios en materia laboral, que todos son medidas previstas en el Acuerdo Nacional del 2001 que contó con el consentimiento de todos los partidos políticos e instituciones altamente representativas de la sociedad civil, deben considerarse nuevamente con un enfoque de derechos humanos y, como tal, deben ser indivisibles y exigibles.

Si así fuera, todos coincidiríamos en la necesidad de que la nueva ley esté orientada a proteger los derechos de los trabajadores teniendo como base los Convenios de la OIT. Un enfoque de derechos humanos comprometería a toda la sociedad, ante todo al Estado, a liderar dicha protección, y el Estado, en el marco de un verdadero pacto nacional, debería estar dispuesto a desprenderse de recursos y promover incentivos para que las empresas garanticen los derechos de los trabajadores.

Los trabajadores hemos puesto siempre de manifiesto nuestra voluntad y disposición para alcanzar acuerdos tripartitos que incorporen, además de los compromisos señalados en el Acuerdo Nacional, consensos más específicos para la promoción de la inversión y el empleo decente, la protección de los derechos laborales y libertades sindicales.

Si bien es necesario considerar las expectativas de los empresarios entre los factores de la inversión privada y de los Tratados de Libre Comercio, también hay que considerar las expectativas de los trabajadores en cuanto a la protección contra el despido arbitrario, la subcontratación, la protección ambiental, la protección de los recursos naturales y los derechos reconocidos en los convenios internacionales en un marco de exigibilidad que asegure el respeto de dichos derechos.

Nuestro compromiso con el tripartismo es firme y permanente en el Perú. Lo demuestran los esfuerzos que desplegamos en el Consejo Nacional del Trabajo para responder programáticamente a los desafíos que se nos plantean. En los últimos meses hemos intercedido ante el Gobierno por la difícil situación de los trabajadores mineros, textiles, de salud, del transporte, portuarios, de los supermercados, de la micro y pequeña empresa, de la agroindustria, así como de los pensionistas y discapacitados. En este sentido mantenemos nuestro compromiso con todos los espacios de diálogo y concertación creados desde el Estado, y los de participación, vigilancia y transparencia ciudadana, especialmente en las áreas de la competitividad, seguridad social, pensiones, mujer y familia, y el transporte, que facilitan la actuación de nuestras instituciones y que nos permiten influir en el fomento de políticas públicas para dichos sectores. El enfoque de la promoción del trabajo decente en el marco de un desarrollo sostenible viene a enriquecer estos espacios.

Termino señalando nuestra solidaridad con los hermanos pueblos andinos de Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador y Colombia, así como los heroicos pueblos de Cuba y Palestina. Con la seguridad de que con el esfuerzo de todos alcanzaremos las metas que nos tracemos para nuestros países, reitero mis saludos y deseos de éxito para esta importante Conferencia.

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

It is indeed a great privilege for me to address this 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. Allow me to commend the Director-General for the excellent Report submitted to this Confe-

rence. Last year, I apprised the assembly of the difficult times which the Republic of Mauritius is going through, following the loss of its trade preferences in the context of globalization. To put the economy back on track, we are implementing a number of major reforms, a few of which, I must admit, are not necessarily popular with some segments of the population, as they challenge the comfort of traditional practices and expectations. We have been dictated, however, by national interest and the need to secure long-term sustainable growth and development.

This Conference will be adopting new labour standards for the fishing sector. In our efforts to diversify our economic base, we are currently looking towards the ocean for new opportunities. Our objective is to develop Mauritius into a seafood hub, coupled with a thriving land-based oceanic industry. Although we have some way still to go to make the fishing sector a new engine of growth, we have already, among other things, set up a Fisherman Investment Trust which aims at democratizing access to the fishery resources of Mauritius and giving due recognition to the fishing community.

We have brought about major changes to the legal framework regulating our business sector. A Business Facilitation Act was voted in by Parliament last year, which allows businesses to start operating on the strength only of their adherence to set guidelines. This has contributed to making the business environment more dynamic. We are also pursuing our efforts to promote such fundamental principles as trust and respect, non-discrimination, harmonious labour-management relations and corporate social responsibility. The ILO report on the promotion of sustainable enterprises will help us further strengthen our enterprises for more equitable economic growth and greater employment generation.

Mauritius has ratified Convention No. 111 and we are actively pursuing a national policy to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in employment and occupation. Respect for the fundamental rights of the individual and protection against discrimination are enshrined in our Constitution. Our national laws include a Sex Discrimination Act. An equal opportunities bill is currently being finalized. We are also implementing with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the ILO, a project on capacity building for gender equality and women's empowerment, which will ensure the full alignment of our legislation with Convention No. 111.

The review of our labour laws is now near finalization. We are introducing, in the context of this review, new "flexicurity" measures whereby the Government will take charge, for a given period of time, of all laid-off workers. They will be placed in new jobs, trained to increase their employability or assisted to become small entrepreneurs themselves.

We have also reviewed the mechanism which was determining the annual wage compensation for the rise in the cost of living. The previous system of a once-yearly tripartite committee was essentially a political process. We have replaced it by a National Pay Council which allows for structured discussions in the spirit of tripartism and which will ensure that the level of compensation reflects not only the rise in the cost of living but also other economic conditions. We have been inspired in this exercise by recommendations contained in a technical memorandum entitled *Pay determination in Mauritius: Op-*

tions for reform which was the outcome of a UNDP/ILO project in 1998.

There has been unwarranted apprehension that the National Pay Council would mean the end of tripartism in Mauritius. Let me emphatically state that this is not at all the case. The Council is tripartite in composition, with equal representation of workers, employers and government, and each partner has an equal voice in the process.

To conclude, I wish to reiterate unequivocally that the Government of Mauritius strongly believes in social dialogue and is convinced that any industrial tensions which may arise in the context of economic transition and adjustment can be diffused through this process. We are currently engaged in extensive consultations with all stakeholders for the setting up of a national tripartite forum which will reinforce social dialogue on labour, employment and related issues and ensure also that economic growth and social progress go hand in hand. We are looking forward to the support of the ILO in this endeavour.

Mr. MOTAMEDI (*Employer, Islamic Republic of Iran*)

I wish to express my appreciation to the ILO for organizing the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference.

This being my first time attending the ILO Conference on behalf of the Employers of Iran, it is especially pleasing to witness the tripartite spirit present among Employers, Workers and Governments, and the real substantive discussions under way in the context of different Committees, especially the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises, where I have the honour to participate and make contributions.

As an industrial employer personally, as well as a representative of the some 3,000 other employers and 77 employer-related NGOs of Iran – who's who of titans of private business – I must confess to being really glad to see that an overwhelming consensus exists crediting the entrepreneur spirit of employers as a prerequisite for the creation of meaningful, sustainable enterprises, which is, in itself a precondition for any thriving, prosperous and stable society.

Time and again, when opinions are expressed as about the needs of any nation aspiring for growth and the creation of wealth which would naturally permeate throughout society, the word entrepreneur is pronounced.

In the last two decades plus, we have witnessed most dramatic changes in the workplace covering a variety of basic, practical doctrines of work, but one in particular stands out as perhaps the most potent driver of them all – namely, the enterprising entrepreneur being behind the wheel of progress and growth.

A lot of countries at the same time acknowledge the importance of preserving and promoting the entrepreneurship ambience of their respective economies but are still at the trial-and-error phase, discovering the basic elements needed in the creation of an entrepreneurial, conducive environment.

To assist with the above, I would like to propose a set of rules that any and all countries can draw from and use as a prescription for entrepreneur seeds to propagate and flourish.

Entrepreneurs really exist in most communities, but where we see them surface and actively take part in the development of their respective societies, industrial and others, is where their certain funda-

mental rights are legally acknowledged, meticulously fostered and zealously protected.

We see these rights and their practical frame of application as a common denominator in the Constitutions of most developed countries, and, where silence prevails in some countries, it could be remedied by a favourable and positive interpretation to create and protect essential enterprise-creating right.

In order to assist with streamlining research and development of what is needed to formulate the required elements, I would like to take the opportunity at this important international forum to put forward the doctrine of the rights of the entrepreneur, or, in practical ILO terminology, the employer's bill of rights. These basic rights are rather simple, and laws and regulations promulgated by Government can rest on them.

Number one: to have the right to form profitable enterprises and business coalitions.

Two: to have the right of free association and freedom to form non-governmental organizations and international nongovernmental organizations for its needs.

Three: to have the right to be free from unnecessarily restrictive regulations and paperwork, wasting time and energy and hurting production and job creation.

Four: to have the right to be free from any laws or government regulation formulated and enacted without its direct participation from outset.

Five: to have the right that no laws or government acts that negatively impact its property rights, capital or intellectual, may be implemented without just and equitable compensation, determined by the related NGOs.

Six: to have the right of self-determination for the best and most productive use of business resources: capital, labour and others.

Seven: to have the right to be free from frivolous lawsuits and counterproductive, punitive government adjudications.

Dear fellow employers, now the ball is in our court. I sincerely hope a great deal of good comes from this, and we all can make a difference.

Original Arabic: Ms. AL-DAKHEEL (Employer, Saudi Arabia)

First of all, I would like to quote the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which, in some of its chapters, dealt with the obligation given to member States in their tripartite structure to put into application the fundamental principles and rights at work set forth in the Declaration and, in particular, to fight against discrimination and ensure equality at work.

I am proud to say that the social partners in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wish to fight against racism in all its manifestations, and particularly the discrimination against foreign workers, whose number has reached 8 million. Most of them work in the private sector and come from those countries in the world that send out their labour force to other countries, particularly qualified, unskilled and domestic workers. These persons have rights, on the basis of the contracts they signed and in accordance with the Saudi labour system, which is inspired by international legislation.

The public sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wishes to guarantee individual freedom and create the appropriate conditions to provide decent work

for national and foreign workers, both men and women.

We make no distinction whatsoever, be it racial, religious; there is no doctrine of discrimination. Saudi and foreign women work in all professional fields and enjoy all the rights ensured by the Saudi labour system. These women enjoy all the rights, privileges and duties, without any distinction between men and women. Businesswomen in Saudi Arabia do take part freely in all areas; they also take part in economic decision-making and participate in administrative and other councils and boards, and hold important posts in specialized businesses. They also represent the private sector in the official delegations. The most beautiful illustration of this is this presentation to the International Labour Conference on behalf of Saudi employers.

The private sector of Saudi Arabia expresses reservations about the views expressed in the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as regards the fundamental labour rights of qualified temporary workers in our country, which were classified as migrant workers. In fact, this is temporary labour with highly specific contracts which extend over predetermined periods. We hope that this qualification will be corrected in the future Report.

I would also like to point out the very important role that Saudi Arabia is playing in the support provided to the enterprises, sustainable enterprises, while creating favourable conditions. We would like to endorse and give our support to small enterprises so as to enable them to continue and pursue their activities. We think that these enterprises must be taken into account in decision-making concerning the world economy. This requires that we start a social dialogue and start to cooperate in a fruitful manner.

On behalf of the employers, both men and women, of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, I would like to urge the implementation of the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its Follow-up in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories, which have been deprived of this since the productive enterprises stopped their activities. Unemployment rates have increased, freedom has been reduced to zero, and other rights have been taken away as a result of the occupation. We are a people of peace, we look for peace, we are in favour of peace, and we are asking the Organization to give us its support so as to achieve this, to find peace.

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

The Director-General has presented a detailed Global Report entitled *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. I commend him for this comprehensive Report and wish to highlight the main issues in the context of Sudan.

In Sudan, the Interim National Constitution, Article 31 (Equality before the Law) states that all persons are equal before the law without any discrimination. So the allegation mentioned on page 34, paragraph 120, in the Global Report is untrue. Allow me to request the Director-General to investigate the source of this unfounded allegation.

Sudan has ratified most of the ILO Conventions on fundamental principles and rights at work, including the Discrimination (Employment and Occupa-

tion) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), showing national political commitment to promote equal treatment and opportunities. Therefore, women in Sudan enjoy equal pay with men, as far as they have equal qualifications and experience, and they enjoy full-time employment. Some are now occupying posts as high-court judges, ministers, under-secretaries, directors and members of parliament.

Sudan has taken far-reaching steps to promote youth employment by providing appropriate education, training and recruitment opportunities in the public sector, and micro-finance and credits for self-employment and training to start a business.

In 2006 about 20,000 employment opportunities in the government sector have been filled, in addition to those expected in 2007.

As for HIV/AIDS, since 2003 the national commission chaired by the President of the Republic, Omar Hassan Al-Bashir, has formulated a national strategy for combating the HIV/AIDS pandemic, creating public awareness and protecting the rights of those affected by the disease.

Despite internal and external challenges targeting Sudan's unity and stability, the Sudan Government is conducting an intensive campaign to privatize all national institutions so that Sudan can qualify to join the World Trade Organization. We have the full participation of Sudan trade unions and employers' organizations in this respect.

I take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the delegation of Sudan, our thanks and gratitude to the ILO for the invaluable assistance rendered to Sudan.

The situation in Darfur continues to be of concern to the Government of Sudan, and therefore my Government is currently organizing a conference that will bring all rebel factions to Juba to hold discussions and find a way for finalizing a peace agreement in Darfur. We affirm the Government's readiness to achieve peace and stability all over the country. The implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 is progressing well and the Darfur Peace Agreement of 2006 is also being implemented. We call for transparent engagement with Sudan and we shall guard the vital role of the African Union in Darfur, which has to be preserved, strengthened and augmented.

I conclude by expressing great concern with regard to the situation of Palestinian workers, which is worse than before because Israel continues to kill and to destroy houses, farms and infrastructure. Sudan calls again and again on the international community to take firm action to bring peace and restore the inalienable rights of the people of Palestine and other occupied areas and enable the establishment of a viable Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital.

Original portugais: M. ASCENCÃO SILVA (*travailleur, Cap-Vert*)

Nous voudrions avant tout commencer par féliciter le Président pour son élection à la présidence de cette 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail et lui souhaiter le plus grand succès dans la conduite des travaux de celle-ci. Nous félicitons également le Directeur général pour l'excellent rapport présenté au cours de cette Conférence car il aborde des sujets de la plus grande importance, parmi lesquels l'élimination de la discrimination sur le lieu de travail.

Le Cap-Vert en 2008, c'est-à-dire l'année prochaine déjà, n'appartiendra plus au groupe des pays

les moins avancés et entrera dans la liste des pays au développement moyen. L'évaluation et le fait de passer de PMA à PDM est sans aucun doute un motif de fierté pour le peuple en général, mais également pour les travailleurs du Cap-Vert.

Nous ne pouvons cependant pas oublier la réalité du pays qui est le nôtre.

En effet, au Cap-Vert la pauvreté est encore évidente. Trente-sept pour cent de la population est pauvre et parmi ceux-là, 20 pour cent sont considérés comme très pauvres. Le chômage, qui est un phénomène structurel, se situe à l'heure actuelle autour de 18,3 pour cent et dans certaines îles, ce taux dépasse les 27 pour cent.

Au Cap-Vert, environ 80 pour cent des investissements sont réalisés grâce à des financements et des aides extérieures. Quatre-vingt-dix pour cent de ce que nous consommons est importé.

Soyons donc prudents dans la mesure où le pays continue de rester vulnérable et dépendant de l'extérieur.

Le rapport de suivi de la Déclaration relative aux principes et droits fondamentaux au travail met l'accent sur l'élimination de la discrimination, et la nécessité de promouvoir l'égalité de traitement et de chances sur le lieu de travail.

A cet égard, nous voudrions rappeler que, depuis 1979, le Cap Vert a ratifié les conventions sur cette matière, c'est-à-dire la convention (n° 100) sur l'égalité de rémunération, 1951, ainsi que la convention (n° 111) concernant la discrimination (emploi et profession), 1958.

D'ailleurs, parmi les conventions qui font partie de la Déclaration de l'OIT relative aux principes et aux droits fondamentaux au travail, il ne nous manque plus qu'à ratifier la convention (n° 138) sur l'âge minimum, 1973.

Nous nous en réjouissons; cependant, en dépit du fait que la liberté syndicale soit, depuis de nombreuses années, une réalité palpable dans notre pays, nous constatons tout de même que le gouvernement ne cesse d'avoir recours à la réquisition civile, c'est-à-dire qu'il contourne et empêche la réalisation complète d'un droit fondamental et constitutionnellement stipulé, à savoir, le droit à la grève.

C'est pourquoi notre organisation, la centrale syndicale, a présenté en 2006 une plainte à l'OIT. Il s'agit du dossier 2534 qui est en train d'être examiné par le Comité de la liberté syndicale.

D'ailleurs, en 1999, à l'issue d'une plainte du même genre présentée par notre centrale syndicale, l'OIT avait déjà produit une recommandation concernant les services minimaux, qui, pour l'instant, n'a pas été respectée par notre gouvernement.

Original Arabic: Mr. AHMMED (*Employer, Iraq*)

May I begin by extending to the President of this session of the Conference and to the Vice-Presidents my warm congratulations on their election to the Presidency of this session of the International Labour Conference. May I also convey the best wishes for success from the employers' organization in Iraq. May I express our deep esteem for the Report of the Director-General *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, Global Report under the follow-up of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. This is a very important question which has human and social dimensions and which is among the priorities for reform of employment and labour relations. We intend to place the emphasis on activities which are

now taking place in the social sphere in collaboration with the social partners. These activities are intended to strengthen training and to establish clear and appropriate policies, above all in regard to gender equality, equal remuneration treatment and professional training as well as the fight against discrimination. One of the characteristics of our world today, one of the scourges of today's world, in fact, is unemployment and the resulting poverty which is so widespread in the world. There are human social and economic dimensions to this problem. It is a major concern and source of anxiety since this scourge of unemployment and poverty is a threat to international peace and security. In Iraq we face very difficult conditions which stand in the way of all our best efforts to improve and to reduce unemployment and poverty. The widespread insecurity in Iraq arises from terrorist acts which unfortunately are being perpetrated in the country by forces wishing to return Iraq to the Stone Age. The resulting climate of insecurity on these terrorist acts stands in the way of all efforts undertaken by Iraqis and the Iraqi Government to improve the employment situation and to combat unemployment. The Sharm el-Sheik Conference, as well as the document on reciprocal commitments adopted at that conference encompass all aspects of the Iraqi crisis as well as outlining possible solutions to the crisis. This new international covenant with Iraq seeks above all to achieve the aspirations of the Iraqi people and to create a pluralist and federal democratic state where stability and security will prevail. This international pact or covenant also seeks to lay the foundations for a prosperous economy and productivity in Iraq so that the country may become an important player on the international stage as well as within international organizations. This covenant is also designed to enable the country to play a leading role in the economic sphere in collaboration with the Government. It is also designed to protect the poor and vulnerable among the population. Prosperity in Iraq is one of the key objectives of national policy, and effort is to be made to improve living standards and to enhance the role of the private sector. A very important role is to be played by the private sector in close collaboration with the Iraqi Government and such prosperity is only possible if the private sector plays its role to the full. The commitment of the Iraqi Government to this effect must be respected in the next five years. International partners should also honour their commitments vis-à-vis Iraq, their commitment to provide Iraq with the technical and financial assistance it needs in order to cope with the enormous challenges facing the country.

The world is aware of the importance of Iraq and of its potential in all spheres particularly in preserving peace and security and combating terrorism in the region and worldwide in order to reduce the burden under which our people are groaning as are the peoples of the region and the whole world. In conclusion, therefore I greet the Arab members of the Board of Governors and we reiterate to them the support of the Iraqi employers' organizations for the recommendations of the Arab group during their meeting in Geneva as well as the March and November meetings and particularly the appeal addressed to the regional offices of the ILO in the Regional Office in Beirut to provide the country and the region with the technical assistance that they need particularly for the constituents and the social partners.

Mr. VARELA (*Employer, Philippines*)

Mr. President I would like to extend to you on behalf of developing Employers our heartfelt congratulations on your well-deserved election as the President of the 96th Session of the ILO Conference.

On behalf of the Philippine employers, I should like to commend the Director-General not only for his incisive Report on decent work for sustainable development, but also for his firm advocacy and perseverance in spreading the ideal of the Decent Work Agenda for sustainable development.

Indeed, the vision of decent work for all is an ideal whose time has come. It has an unmistakable nobility of purpose, since it is premised on a higher moral order. It is a shared vision of international community. Translating it into reality through country-specific action programmes is a daunting task. However, it is not an impossible dream. Every single step towards its realization is worth taking.

There is an underlying moral principle behind the Decent Work Agenda. It underscores the dignity of the worker, which must not be sacrificed in the pursuit of globalization and macroeconomic gains.

Even as we affirm our commitment to help create the conditions conducive to the mission of providing decent work for all, we realize that no single sector production can perform the task alone. This lofty vision has better chances of becoming real only in the context and within the dynamics of international tripartism and social dialogue.

Any strategic aspiration, however far-reaching and global in its ramifications, is only a compass. It indicates particular locations in relation to the destination. To be able to reach the common goal, a more detailed road map is needed that gives an indication of the terrain and its contours together with suggested pathways and obstacles to avoid.

Hence, the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference is a most timely occasion for checking our bearings. How far have we gone in our collective journey towards decent work for all? How can we accelerate our pace? What adjustments in direction must we take? To what extent is the Decent Work Agenda affected by the speed and extent of globalization and by the mounting pressure to shift to a low carbon economy.

Decent work for all is the seed of a great idea that needs good soil in which to grow. We believe that only within the framework of a holistic development strategy that is balanced and sustainable can the idea mature to produce the desired results.

It is in keeping with the spirit of the Decent Work Agenda that the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP) has factored into its range of institutional activities the philosophy and practice of corporate social responsibility. The profit motive is not the only driving force for business expansion. There is a growing concern to give an organized and constructive response to the legitimate needs of stakeholders. The challenge lies in achieving a proper balance so that no single sector profits to the exclusion of others.

The Employers' Confederation of the Philippines is a strong advocate of respect for human rights both within and beyond the place of work, gender equality at work, providing a window of opportunity for the handicapped, protection of the environment and sustained generation of income-yielding opportunities through the setting up of small enter-

prises and corporate involvement in community development activities.

We have set up our own corporate responsibility department to give greater focus to our outreach programme, which seeks to help create a more just, caring and equitable society.

Also, a substantive feature of our advocacy is the reform of inflexible labour market policies that hinder the promotion and growth of sustainable enterprises.

The challenge confronting us in labour market reform is that, while enterprises in the formal sector, 91 per cent of which are micro enterprises employing less than ten workers, absorb only 18 per cent of the total employed labour, their number and total employment continue to shrink, while the informal sector has expanded to over 73 per cent of total employment. What is worrisome is that most of the losses more often involved micro and small establishments which employ the majority of wage and salary workers in the formal sector.

This adverse pattern of a shrinking formal sector and an expanding informal sector is confirmed by various independent studies of the UNDP, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. The findings indicate, among other things, that quite a number of local businesses that are unlicensed are increasing as many traders avoid the high cost of regulations, which include onerous populist labour enactments that will play a role in constraining job growth in the formal sector.

We should therefore step on the brakes so that the business will flourish and more jobs will be created. This is also consistent with the broad objective of ECOP's advocacy of the introduction of reforms to increase economic freedom, particularly business freedom, both at the macro and micro levels to the extent that our nationalistic and populist Constitution will allow. In the area of labour market reform, ECOP's advocacy is two-pronged: to promote reforms in labour market policies conducive to the promotion and growth of sustainable enterprises and to promote and maintain industrial peace and stable labour-management relations through enlightened and responsible tripartism.

As we learn more from the experiences of employers' sectors in other countries in implementing the Decent Work Agenda, we develop additional insights into how to accomplish more. We have much to learn from the practices of others whose vision we also share.

In conclusion, I believe that only with the solidarity of all the Members of the International Labour Organization can the Decent Work Agenda develop roots and branches for the benefit of all.

Thank you.

Mr. SITHOLE (*Worker, Swaziland*)

I want to align myself with the theme of the Director-General's Global Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*. This theme reminds me of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights according to which all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. It is unfortunate that the reality on the ground is that the majority of workers are victims of a series of injustices, such as: discrimination on the basis of political opinion, social status, gender, sex, age, religion, cultural background and other factors; ever increasing poverty; undemocratic regimes; intolerance, brutality and

violence; and bad governance by those we mandate with the role of governance.

While considering this theme, we should take cognizance of the fact that equality can only happen where there is respect for the rule of law, genuine democracy and good governance, which is a scarce commodity with some governments. That is true for many countries, including, among others, Colombia, Zimbabwe and Swaziland.

It remains a duty and obligation of the ILO relentlessly to persuade these countries and many such offenders to adhere to the principles of social justice and human dignity for the attainment of decent work for all.

What remains the greatest challenge is that, while other member States have a good record of ratifying human rights-related treaties, in the majority of member States, there is a glaring disparity between ratification and application. The unfortunate, but undeniable, truth is that, while ratification is good and commendable when it is followed by the domestication of those Conventions, they are of no use or effect to workers if they are not put into practice.

We have a number of such situations across the global village. My country is one of the pathological serial offenders; it is very proactive in ratifying and domesticating but denying practice of the ratified Conventions, particularly Conventions Nos 87 and 98. As a result of such conduct, Swaziland has been a regular at the Committee on the Application of Standards of the Conference. This has led to various missions, but unfortunately there is no meaningful progress to date.

The major complaint over time was the Draconian State of Emergency Decree of 12 April 1973, which denied all fundamental rights and the 1963 Public Order Act, which was used against workers. Workers and civil society demanded a constitution as opposed to a situation whereby they were ruled by decree. It is important to mention that the constitution-making process was exclusionary, premised by Decree No. 2 of 1996, which presented the terms of reference which discriminated against groups and civic society.

The content of the eventual Constitution embraces the State of Emergency Decree. The Government made an undertaking to the Committee of the Application of Standards that the draft constitution would be submitted to the Committee of Experts before promulgation so that the Committee could assist in ensuring that the Constitution was compatible with the dictates of the Convention before adoption.

It was unfortunate that the Government as usual did not live up to its promises. The Government hastily adopted the Constitution with all discrepancies, which makes it very difficult to work with, particularly as regards civil liberties.

Because the Constitution was adopted with many discrepancies, the union and civil society demanded social dialogue on those discrepancies. Unfortunately, the Government reneged from dialogue so we also submitted the matter before court.

The Committee on the Application of Standards sent a high-level mission, which resulted in an undertaking to hold tripartite social dialogue. No meaningful progress has been achieved to date however in terms of engagement on issues

The list of proposed recommendations made to the Government cover issues such as the denial of the correctional service workers and the police to

form and join unions of their own choosing and contain suggested amendments designed to cause the Industrial Relations Act to conform to Conventions Nos 87 and 98, respectively.

The withdrawal by the Government from the dialogue with the National Constitutional Assembly demonstrates beyond any shadow of doubt not only that there is no commitment but that there is no political will on the part of the Government to engage with civil society.

The Constitution we are challenging does not guarantee the fundamental protection of basic rights such as the separation of powers, the right to land, the right to life and the right to protest, and has "claw-back" clauses on all fundamental rights such as the right to expression, the right to assembly, the right to movement and the right to association, which are fundamental values without which there can be no basis for social progress.

This Constitution, which is a decree in a constitution dress code, needs a total overhaul and should be considered through an all-inclusive people-driven forum in full recognition of different groups and individuals, of the fact that every individual has a right to self determination and of the fact that a constitution should be a product of the people who it seeks to govern. Those that govern should do so at the mandate of the governed; anything less is tantamount to tyranny.

What is also very surprising with the Constitution is that, while Swaziland is a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and is bound by its charters, agreements and protocols, the Constitution has opted, among other violations, to undermine the SADC electoral protocol which dictates that there should be political pluralism and competition and that opposition must be allowed. The Constitution has flagrantly disregarded that protocol and states that elections can only be held on individual merit and not on a political party basis.

The above concerns have led the workers and civil society to demand multi-party elections next year. This is very important if Swaziland is to remove the stigma of being the only undemocratic country in the SADC region.

We call upon all international organizations, including the ILO, to put all necessary pressure on the Government to comply with all the international treaties to which it is a party, which include, among others: the African Charter for Human and People's Rights, the African Union Constitutive Act, The Commonwealth's Harare Declaration, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the SADC Social Charter and its protocols, and others.

We appeal to all advocates of social justice and human dignity to unrelentingly exert pressure until the ordinary Swazi enjoys the minimum international fundamental rights in their entirety.

Long live solidarity and long live global justice.

Original French: The PRESIDENT (Mr. BLONDEL)

I give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference.

Original French: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The Conference has a request for a right of reply. Implicit to what was decided by the Bureau of the Conference and brought to the attention of the Conference by its President, at the seventh sitting, the reply must be brief (that means not in excess of two minutes), should be confined to the points in question and should not be a new speech. Furthermore, it should be expressed in parliamentary language. As decided by the Bureau of the Conference, no right of reply to a reply can be granted.

(Original French): The PRESIDENT

I give the floor to Ms. Simonyan, representative of the Government of Armenia, who has asked to exercise her right of reply.

Ms. SIMONYAN (*Government, Armenia*)

Our delegation would like to exercise its right to reply to the statement by the distinguished Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan, Mr. Alakbarov, in which baseless accusations were again made towards my country with frivolous interpretation of the Security Council resolutions. Mentioning Armenia in the context of labour issues is simply disingenuous, since Armenia has nothing to do with the failure of the Azerbaijani Government to ensure the social protection of its population, with its inability to successfully tackle labour issues.

While the distinguished Minister complained about the insufficiency of resources for socially-oriented problems affecting vulnerable groups of the population, we would recommend that, instead of misleading this august body, he address the issue in his own governmental format. For those not informed of one detail, during the last two years Azerbaijan tripled its military budgets, thus starting the arms race in the region. In our humble opinion, this vast sum of money could have been spent more wisely.

Original French: The PRESIDENT (Mr. BLONDEL)

The ninth Session of the 96th International Labour Conference is adjourned.

(The Conference adjourned at 8 p.m.)

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