



Fourteenth sitting

Wednesday, 13 June 2007, 10 a.m.

Presidents: Mr. Barde and Mr. Sulka

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

Original French: The PRESIDENT

It is my honour to declare this fourteenth sitting of the 96th session of the International Labour Conference open.

We will now continue with our general 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. SWEENEY (*Worker, United States*)

I am pleased to be here today to address the Conference on behalf of the over 10 million members of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) and their families in the United States.

The ILO remains the single most important international organization for protecting, promoting and improving the lives of workers and their families around the world. The ILO, since its inception, has been guided by a moral imperative. A vision based on the premise that universal lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon the decent treatment of working people. Today that message, more so now in this era of rapid globalization, still serves as a shining beacon to make the world a safer and more peaceful place for all its citizens. But the light of that beacon has still not reached the workers in many countries. Workers are still prevented, sometimes brutally, from organizing and forming themselves into unions. That, especially, is the case in Colombia, where trade unionists continue to be killed.

Sadly, almost a century after the founding of the ILO, the free flow of capital and intellectual property rights are more protected than workers' rights. We face daunting challenges to make globalization work for working families everywhere. In the past 20 years, as workers from China, India and the former Soviet Union have entered the global market, the world's labour force has doubled.

Globalization should offer these workers safe, decent, sustainable work and create new work for bil-

lions of workers who are now unemployed or underemployed.

If we fail to manage the huge expansion of the global labour force, it will threaten to undermine the wage and working standards of developed countries, as it fails to raise living conditions, earnings and workers' rights in developing and transition countries.

It is our responsibility here today, governments, employers and labour organizations, to step up and put into action a Decent Work Agenda for the future. That said, we must not allow the Decent Work Agenda to detract in any way from the ILO's core mission of establishing international standards and helping to assure compliance with those standards throughout the world. These two roles must be tightly integrated.

I have the honour of serving on the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. During those deliberations, we debated but, more importantly concluded, that developing decent work, achieving the Millennium Development Goals and protecting the rights of workers are the very foundation of a globalization that is morally, politically, environmentally and economically sustainable.

The concept of decent work is widely accepted around the world. At the same time, we must recognize that the ILO's values and programmes cannot achieve their intended goals unless they are translated into action on the ground.

My own Government and other developed countries must provide the financial resources necessary, and the ILO itself must improve the delivery of its own services. Much of the work of this Conference – highlighting the Global Report, strengthening the ILO's capacity around the world – is promoted by so many principals and Heads of State at the Conference.

We must ensure that the ILO maintains its unique role as the only tripartite body dealing with international labour standards as reforms occur in the United Nations system. The Director-General has advocated, and we support, greater coherence in the multilateral system to achieve decent work for everyone, everywhere. A major first step in that direction was achieved with the joint publication by the ILO and the World Trade Organization (WTO), of the Trade and Employment Report. At AFL-CIO, we have been supporting the development of greater linkages between the growth of employment and expanding trade and respect for international labour standards for over two decades. We will continue to

push for collaboration between the ILO, WTO and the other multi-lateral organizations.

Today the visions, values and work of the ILO need to be moved to front and centre stage. The ILO has not only withstood the test of time, it holds the promise of enhancing the value of human dignity in work and helping shape a more just world.

Mr. NG (*Government, Singapore*)

The Singaporean economy continued to grow, at a healthy pace, expanding by 7.9 per cent in 2006 and 6.1 per cent for the first quarter of this year. Buoyed by strong economic growth, Singapore experienced record employment levels – 76 per cent of working-age Singaporeans at the end of last year, which is one of the highest in the world. The unemployment rate also dropped to a low of 2.6 per cent in 2006. Our efforts to restructure our economy, upgrade the skills of our workforce and maintain a flexible labour market have provided more jobs for our people. Nevertheless, globalization has also led to widening income gaps. Low-wage workers, with lower education and fewer skills, are vulnerable to structural unemployment. The ILO's efforts in helping member States promote decent work is therefore a timely one.

In Singapore, helping vulnerable workers is one of our national priorities. Recently, new initiatives were implemented to help vulnerable workers through concerted efforts of the tripartite partners, namely the Government, the Singapore National Employers' Federation (SNEF) and the Singapore National Trades Union Congress. Two years ago, we implemented a holistic package of policies and measures to help low-wage workers and their families based on the approach of "workfare" rather than welfare. Underpinning this philosophy of workfare was that all workers including low-wage workers, sought to be self-reliant for themselves and their families through meaningful jobs that earned adequate wages. They should be able to own their homes, educate their children and put aside enough for their medical and retirement needs. Recommendations to assist low-wage workers achieve these goals were clustered around six broad initiatives: rewarding work; social support to enable work; higher skills for better work; expand job opportunities; creating hope for the future; and sharing in the nation's progress. Specifically, to reward work, the Government has decided to supplement the take-home pay and retirement savings of low-wage workers provided they work regularly. This is a national wage supplementation scheme for all low-wage workers, for all older low-wage workers, and it has been institutionalized in our social security system under the Workfare Income Supplement Scheme. For example, all older workers above a certain age who earn 1,000 dollars a month will get 100 dollars of workfare income supplement, representing a 10 per cent increase in their income.

The other tripartite partners also play a vital role to help low-wage workers. Employers are given financial incentives by the Government to redesign lower value added jobs into higher value and help upgrade the skills of workers to do these jobs. Workers' organizations and unions have on their own set up employability institutes to encourage low-wage workers to upgrade themselves and stay employable.

Another important agenda item at this session of the ILC is the Director-General's Report, *Equality*

at work: Tackling the challenges. We recognize, as do other countries, that providing equal opportunity for employment requires a multifaceted approach. We agree that legislation alone cannot eliminate discrimination. We therefore formed in Singapore a Tripartite Alliance for Fair Employment Practices (TAFEP) in May of last year to help tackle discrimination at the workplace. TAFEP has made good early progress in raising awareness of fair employment practices at workplaces in Singapore. The Alliance spearheads promotional programmes to shape the perceptions and mindsets of employers, employees and the public against any discriminatory workplace practice. Notably, it has recently introduced a set of tripartite guidelines which shape corporate norms on employment practices, such as the conduct of job interviews and the design of job application forms. The guidelines have been well received by both employers and workers. To date, more than 500 employers, including various chambers of commerce and other employment federations, as well as the civil service, which is the largest employer in Singapore, have signed a pledge to abide by fair employment practices. TAFEP will also set up a one-stop centre where workers and employers can provide feedback on unfair employment practices and seek advisory services. Employers can also tap into the centre's assistance to build up capability such as human resource processes to implement fair employment practices.

In closing, the Singaporean delegation looks forward to a fruitful discussion on the various issues on the agenda. I am confident that under the President's able leadership, this session of the ILC will be a successful one.

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

L'Organisation internationale du Travail occupe une place de choix dans le système onusien, et ce compte tenu de l'unanimité autour du concept du travail décent et ses composantes, et son lien étroit avec la lutte contre la pauvreté et le développement durable.

La Tunisie a récemment ratifié le dernier amendement de la Constitution de l'OIT et exprime ainsi son adhésion aux orientations de l'OIT visant à promouvoir son activité normative.

Les propositions contenues dans le rapport du Directeur général, concernant «Le renforcement de la capacité de l'OIT d'appuyer les efforts déployés par ses Membres pour atteindre ses objectifs dans le cadre de la mondialisation», constituent une occasion propice pour rechercher les meilleurs moyens pour renforcer ses capacités en vue de garantir la réalisation des objectifs stratégiques de l'Organisation et la concrétisation du concept du travail décent dans les Etats Membres.

Je tiens ici à souligner la nécessité d'accorder à la protection sociale toute l'importance qui lui est due dans les composantes du travail décent, et ce compte tenu de son importance dans la réduction de la pauvreté. Dans ce contexte, la Tunisie a réussi à ramener le taux de pauvreté à moins de 4 pour cent et à réaliser un taux de couverture sociale de plus de 90 pour cent et cela grâce aux réformes fondamentales apportées aux systèmes de protection sociale et à la promotion des mesures d'appui en faveur des catégories à besoins spécifiques.

L'examen du thème de la promotion des entreprises durables permet d'évaluer le rôle du secteur

privé pour relever les défis du développement, notamment par la création d'emplois et la connaissance des expériences réussies dans ce domaine.

L'entreprise occupe une place prépondérante en Tunisie, étant le meilleur moyen pour la promotion de l'emploi et des sources de revenus.

La Tunisie veut préparer ses entrepreneurs à relever les défis représentés par la mondialisation, la libéralisation des échanges et la rationalisation de l'utilisation des ressources.

La Tunisie a également créé des mesures pour inciter les investissements en encourageant les partenariats, en développant les ressources humaines et en fixant le cadre adéquat pour l'emploi.

Le programme du Président de la République pour la «Tunisie de Demain» a renforcé ces mesures en faisant de l'emploi la priorité pour le développement du pays. Le programme présidentiel fait de l'accroissement de la création des entreprises l'un de ses objectifs fondamentaux et vise la création de 70 000 nouvelles entreprises, au cours d'une période de cinq ans. Il prévoit également l'adoption d'une loi-cadre d'incitation à l'initiative et à la création d'entreprises ainsi que l'adoption d'un programme national d'encadrement des entreprises et des projets créés.

Par ailleurs, le pays a adopté une stratégie nationale visant à renforcer la recherche et l'innovation au sein des entreprises et à les encourager à adopter les nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication, en vue d'améliorer la gestion des entreprises et la réalisation d'un taux d'encadrement de 17 pour cent en 2009.

La promotion du dialogue dans l'entreprise constitue un facteur essentiel pour l'amélioration du climat social et le renforcement de la compétitivité. La Tunisie a œuvré à cet effet en vue de consolider la protection des représentants des travailleurs y compris des représentants des syndicats et a ratifié la convention n° 135. Elle a adopté en conséquence le Code du travail.

La Tunisie a fait du principe d'égalité des chances dans le domaine du travail l'un de ses principes fondamentaux. C'est pour cela qu'elle a ratifié les instruments pertinents en la matière.

La Tunisie veille également à inscrire le principe d'égalité entre l'homme et la femme dans sa législation sociale concernant le recrutement, la formation et les salaires. Elle a également intégré des dispositions dans le Code pénal, visant la protection contre le harcèlement sexuel dans tous les secteurs y compris dans le domaine du travail.

Je voudrais parler de la situation des travailleurs en Palestine et dans les autres territoires arabes occupés. Le Directeur général l'a dit dans son rapport annuel, cette situation demeure une source d'inquiétudes et est contraire aux droits fondamentaux les plus élémentaires reconnus par les instruments internationaux du travail.

C'est pour cela que la Tunisie appelle la communauté internationale à intensifier ses efforts pour mettre fin à la souffrance du peuple palestinien et à lever le blocus imposé à son encontre. La Tunisie réaffirme son soutien indéfectible à la cause légitime du peuple palestinien afin d'instaurer un Etat palestinien indépendant et de recouvrer ses droits nationaux légitimes.

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

Tengo el placer de informar de que, en el marco de esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia Internacional del Trabajo, hemos celebrado la Reunión de Ministros del Movimiento de Países No Alineados, en cumplimiento del mandato de los Jefes de Estado y de Gobierno en la XIV Cumbre celebrada en La Habana.

Sostuvimos provechosas discusiones sobre temas de interés para la OIT y acordamos apoyar las labores del Grupo tripartito creado para impulsar el funcionamiento de la Comisión de Aplicación de Normas, promover la mayor transparencia en la selección de los países que comparecen ante ella, y contribuir a perfeccionar sus métodos de trabajo.

También se acordó apoyar la propuesta de ampliación de la membresía del Comité de Libertad Sindical en dos representantes del Grupo Gubernamental, lo que garantizará la participación e inclusión de todos los grupos regionales en igualdad de condiciones.

Se decidió respaldar en el seno del Grupo Gubernamental la creación de un grupo de trabajo encargado de la elaboración y presentación cuanto antes, de una propuesta de ampliación del Comité, a los trabajadores y empleadores.

Los países No Alineados estamos convencidos de que la OIT puede brindar una gran contribución a que el multilateralismo sea más eficaz, para lo que es inaplazable lograr una mayor transparencia, una participación representativa e inclusiva de todos sus Miembros, el fortalecimiento del tripartismo y el perfeccionamiento continuo de todas sus estructuras.

Esperamos sinceramente contar con el concurso de todos los miembros de esta prestigiosa organización para trabajar juntos por los mismos objetivos.

En la Memoria del Director General se identifican no sólo los problemas cruciales que afectan al desarrollo sostenible de los países del Sur, sino que constituyen una verdadera amenaza para la supervivencia de la especie humana.

Quiero reiterar la pregunta de que, si en vez de destinarse por determinados países poderosos los cuantiosos recursos financieros a guerras para apropiarse de las reservas energéticas de otros y sufragar la carrera armamentista, se utilizaran para eliminar el hambre, la sed y muchas enfermedades prevenibles que padecen millones de seres humanos en este mundo en que vivimos ¿cuántos empleos productivos con ingresos decorosos podrían crearse para enfrentar y erradicar la pobreza?

Hay que tomar conciencia y unirse para enfrentar la siniestra estrategia de dedicar alimentos para producir combustibles, que condenará a la muerte por hambre y sed a millones de personas en el Tercer Mundo, aumentará el precio de los alimentos, la deforestación, la pérdida de biodiversidad, la contaminación de las aguas y el desempleo.

La OIT debería favorecer la creación inmediata de una Comisión que estudie y dictamine los efectos de esta estrategia de los biocombustibles para el desarrollo presente y futuro del Programa de Trabajo Decente.

Agradezco en nombre de mi Gobierno la estrecha cooperación alcanzada con la OIT en los últimos años.

El trabajo creador y el espíritu de resistencia de nuestro pueblo han permitido continuar avanzando en el desarrollo económico y social de Cuba, y brindar la solidaridad a otros pueblos hermanos, alcanzar el pleno empleo y la seguridad social para todos sus ciudadanos y materializar los objetivos trazados en la Agenda Hemisférica para el Trabajo Decente.

Original portugais: M. LANÇA (travailleur, Portugal)

Je voudrais commencer par souligner l'importance du rapport du Directeur général du BIT soumis à cette Conférence. On y aborde les problèmes fondamentaux avec lesquels se débat l'humanité: développement durable, inégalités croissantes, mondialisation de l'économie et droits des travailleurs. Je voudrais souligner certains de ces problèmes, sans toutefois laisser de côté l'expérience de mon pays car, comme l'explique fort bien le rapport du BIT concernant une mondialisation juste, la gouvernance de la mondialisation doit commencer à l'échelon local.

Un aspect fondamental abordé ici est celui des inégalités. Des processus en cours – comme la mondialisation de l'économie, l'impact des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication, la refonte de l'Etat et des services publics, les privatisations, le pouvoir du capital financier, les réformes des systèmes de protection sociale – ont un impact sur l'accroissement des inégalités qui a été sous-estimé. Si ces processus ne sont pas pondérés et en l'absence d'une réglementation adéquate à l'échelon national et international, rares seront les politiques sociales qui pourront y répondre.

Les politiques d'inclusion sociale et d'égalité, même inspirées par les meilleures intentions, seront impuissantes pour contrecarrer des tendances contraires qui sont le résultat d'une compétitivité effrénée et de la perte des valeurs de solidarité.

La réforme de la sécurité sociale illustre ce changement vers des inégalités croissantes. Ce qui se passe aujourd'hui, un peu partout dans les pays développés, c'est l'émergence, au nom des finances publiques et de la compétition économique, de systèmes où la responsabilité de la couverture des risques sociaux repose toujours plus sur l'individu et toujours moins sur la collectivité organisée en Etats.

Au Portugal, la réforme qui vient d'entrer en vigueur a pour but premier la réduction du montant des salaires pris en compte dans le calcul des retraites et la promotion de régimes de retraite privés, dont nous savons fort bien qu'ils n'entraînent guère de redistribution et qu'ils sont difficilement accessibles aux travailleurs ayant de petits revenus.

Le règlement du marché du travail est un autre thème critique. Il convient de créer davantage d'emplois, certes, mais aussi de meilleurs emplois. La compétitivité dépend aujourd'hui surtout d'une main-d'œuvre qualifiée. Le gouvernement et les partenaires sociaux le comprennent, ce qui est déjà un progrès, et il existe des programmes et des mesures qui ont pour but d'améliorer les qualifications et la formation professionnelle.

Toutefois, cette préoccupation ne concerne pas les emplois précaires, le pseudo travail indépendant et le travail non déclaré. Au Portugal, un salarié sur cinq n'a pas de relations de travail stables, même s'il occupe un poste de travail qui est presque toujours de nature permanente.

Les jeunes sont particulièrement touchés et nous voyons se creuser le fossé entre leurs conditions de travail et celles des travailleurs plus âgés. Il est choquant que l'on n'intervienne pas fermement contre le faux travail indépendant en dépit de la recommandation qui a été adoptée ici l'année dernière sur la relation de travail.

Le travail décent est l'une des composantes essentielles d'un agenda pour une mondialisation juste, mais deux remarques sont nécessaires ici: la première concerne le droit de négociation collective qui est, en toute justice, une pièce essentielle de l'Agenda du travail décent. Il y a des progrès, mais il y a également des reculs puisque le marché du travail est plus déréglementé et que la couverture contractuelle s'est amenuisée.

Il y a des situations parfaitement inacceptables, comme c'est le cas au Portugal où le Code du travail prévoit la suppression des conventions collectives. Dans la législation portugaise, si un employeur ou une association patronale veulent interrompre un contrat, il lui suffit de ne plus vouloir négocier et de refuser toutes les formes de résolution du conflit, y compris l'arbitrage.

Le ministère du Travail et de la Solidarité sociale a déjà décidé que les conventions collectives du travail seraient suspendues. C'est pour nous une violation grave des principes constitutifs de l'OIT, y compris de la convention sur le droit d'organisation et de négociation collective et de la Déclaration de 1998.

Ma deuxième observation concerne les entreprises multinationales et les codes de conduite, y compris la Déclaration de l'OIT, et la responsabilité sociale des entreprises. Ce qui se passe aujourd'hui, y compris au Portugal, ce sont des restructurations et des délocalisations qui se multiplient, sans tenir compte des principes établis dans ces instruments de réglementation internationale.

Le système des Nations Unies a gagné en importance à une époque de rapides changements et d'intensification de la mondialisation économique. Le rôle de l'OIT est essentiel pour assurer une mondialisation juste. C'est pourquoi nous souscrivons au discours du Directeur général.

Original Russian: Mr. YURKIN (Worker, Ukraine)

First of all, I should like to join all those who have congratulated the President on his election to this eminent post and wish him every success in guiding the work of the Conference.

In the Report of the Director-General, there is a true reflection of the role of the International Labour Organization in promoting decent work, which is a "vital part of the international development agenda and an essential element in shaping a fair globalization".

We hope that the implementation of the ILO Decent Work Agenda will lead to a substantial improvement in people's lives, and this is why the trade unions of Ukraine attach great importance to the Decent Work Country Programme, which is designed to foster democratization, increase employment and bring national legislation into line with international and European labour standards.

We in our country have all the prerequisites needed to complete this programme. In recent years, economic growth in Ukraine has averaged over 7 per cent per year. We agree with the Government that growth in the national economy should be enjoyed by all citizens of Ukraine, despite the political

crisis in the country. However, estimates show that over the past 15 years total wages have halved, whilst the profits of private entrepreneurs have doubled.

It should be pointed out that the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine acknowledged the requests of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FFU) and recently made changes to the Law on the Budget for 2007 so that there will be an increase in pensions and wages for workers in the public sector in the second half of the year. Moreover, we have reached the final stage of negotiations with the Government and employers on increased wages in industry.

We are still, however, very far from achieving the goal of transforming Ukraine into a decent work country. There are still arrears in the payment of wages. With respect to this, the trade unions are proposing a number of changes to the laws of Ukraine to increase accountability for violations of labour legislation.

We also need improvements in the practice of social dialogue. Because of violations of the rights of trade unions last year, the unions were forced to defend the interests of workers by means of mass protests. In recent years there has, however, been progress in social dialogue.

To provide jobs for all those willing and able to work, the trade unions are demanding that the Government prepare and introduce a General Employment Creation Scheme to achieve balance between supply and demand on the labour market.

There is a further problem – the continuing disparity between workers on lower wages and workers on higher wages. I think that the adoption of a Convention and Recommendation setting limits on such disparities could be an important way of renewing standard-setting activities at the ILO.

In recent years, the mass media throughout the world have been asserting that globalization does not merely limit the scope of governments in providing workers with decent work but actually prevents them from doing so. British analysts have been forecasting that by 2035 there will be 8.5 billion people living on our earth and 98 per cent of them will be in economically less developed countries. It is hardly likely that most of these people will have decent work. Therefore, decent work and plenty cannot be seen as a reward from the Lord, as Max Weber said in his book *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism*.

The rules of the game under which globalization operates are the result of the dominance of interests of specific parties. This is first and foremost a consequence of economic aid tied to privatization in the policies of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Neighbourhood Policy of the European Union.

In his Report to the 85th Session of the International Labour Conference, *The ILO, standard setting and globalization*, the Director-General stated that globalization opened up new areas for practical and urgent action for the ILO. One of these areas of action was a possible periodic report on “social progress in the world” to assess, alongside the ratification of the Conventions, how the aims of the Organization were being achieved by all member States in the light of the new opportunities afforded by globalization.

I think that this idea, expressed more than ten years’ ago by the Director-General, has become

even more topical now and we are prepared to support it.

Mr. BRION (*Secretary, Department of Labor and Employment, Philippines*)

Last year in Busan, we have already reported what the Philippines has done and what it then intended to do. We have incorporated the Decent Work Agenda in our Philippine Medium-Term Development Plan and we intend to further enhance our policies on circular migration as one of the tools of addressing poverty, the main target of the Decent Work Agenda in a country like the Philippines.

This year, we wish to report that we have made some headway, particularly in the areas the present Report mentioned, and let me relate some of them. In the area of tripartism, we have gone beyond the usual concept by adopting our “3+ programme” which we are already implementing at the regional level and at least in our National Human Resource Conference on productivity and competitiveness. “3+” means going beyond the government, employer, worker model to actively include other stakeholders, particularly local government units, academia, and NGOs. This is the model now that we are building upon in our labour relations and job facilitation approaches.

We have laid down the information groundwork through the development of a Philippine Labor Index, the first of its kind, that we shall use as a summary measure of the progress and gaps in decent work in the Philippines. We are also working towards a skills registry of both our local and overseas workers as a first step towards our job facilitation activities, particularly for the new local and overseas markets. We are calling 2007 our “supply-side year”, as we look not only at the available manpower, but at their intrinsic quality and that of the services they deliver.

We started in the field of household service workers, where the Philippines has a significant share overseas, by requiring assessment and training of our people before they are deployed overseas. In the process, we have set a minimum salary for their services as a marker for the economic value of their services.

We have likewise launched what the International Organization for Migration (IOM) called the first of its kind, our National Reintegration Center, that addresses the transition of our overseas Filipino workers as they return into mainstream Philippine life. We aim to do this while they are still working overseas by linking them up already with their home communities and by addressing their active economic concerns such as remittances and its costs, savings and investments, and the avoidance of the rags-to-riches-to-rags syndrome. We hope to roll out the Center’s full range of activities by the end of this year.

Our developing economy, which started to take off last year, is now gathering strength, favourably affecting the value of the peso, increasing our overall growth rate and allowing us to create 1.528 million new jobs last year. The sad note is that this achievement hardly made a dent in our unemployment figures, which only went down from 8.1 per cent to 7.8 per cent, because the size of our incoming labour entrants merely offset the job creations.

Another area where we appear to be failing is in the report card of the Committee on Freedom of Association which has asked us to explain our vari-

ous deficiencies under the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).

I am aware that this is not the time and place for discussion of this concern. But we do have systemic concerns that we share with the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement, led by Cuba, particularly in looking at the structures and operations of the Committee and its overall effectiveness. The Philippines can only hope that the Committee will be very discerning in giving due course to complaints and in appreciating explanations given. I refer particularly to premature referrals by complainants who have not exhausted their remedies in the local forum and who are simply engaged in forum shopping and other sinister designs. I refer, too, to those who complain to the ILO but at the same time refuse to cooperate in addressing the subject matter of the complaint in the local forum, giving rise to the suspicion that they simply want to use the Committee as a press forum and are not after actual remedies.

We hope, finally, that perceived problems and deficiencies shall be evaluated in the context of a country's unique circumstances, degree of development, history and track record, for each country is different in these respects. As a rule, we posit that faithful Members of the ILO need assistance and encouragement, not condemnation, if indeed there are deficiencies.

Having said all this, let me conclude with the commitment that the Philippines shall continue its vigorous push for decent work and in pursuing the ideals of the ILO, because these are irreplaceable keys to our development as well as effective means to serve the greater interests of humanity.

Sra. PINILLA CISNEROS (*Ministra de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo, Perú*)

En nombre del Gobierno de la República del Perú, y de nuestro Presidente Dr. Alan García, transmito un cordial y afectuoso saludo a usted, a las delegaciones presentes y, en especial, al Director General de la OIT, Sr. Juan Somavia, a quien agradecemos su permanente apoyo, destacando su liderazgo internacional por la inteligente e innovadora propuesta del trabajo decente como parte consustancial del desarrollo sostenible.

El Informe del Director General nos estimula al análisis y a la elaboración de políticas y acciones económicas, laborales, sociales y ambientales que aseguren el progreso y la gobernabilidad de nuestras naciones y de nuestro planeta.

El Perú, situado en el centro de la costa pacífica de América del Sur, es un país de una extraordinaria riqueza, dada principalmente por nuestra gente, sus 28 millones de habitantes, nuestra megabiodiversidad y nuestro diverso y añejo patrimonio cultural, cuna de grandes civilizaciones prehispánicas y del Imperio de los incas que construyó Macchu Picchu.

Nuestro reciente Gobierno tiene gran coincidencia con las propuestas del trabajo decente de la OIT y con el concepto de la cohesión social, y contempla en su plan estratégico de cinco años tres políticas de Estado: la promoción de la inversión nacional e internacional para el crecimiento económico y productivo y, conjunta y complementariamente, el combate y reducción de la pobreza a través del empleo productivo y digno, como forma de redistribuir

de manera sostenible los resultados del crecimiento económico, y la modernización y reforma del Estado, acercándolo al ciudadano, descentralizándolo y haciéndolo ágil y eficiente, para recobrar la credibilidad de la población en la democracia.

Bajo estos lineamientos, hoy estamos logrando un crecimiento del PIB del 8 por ciento anual, que alcanza en términos absolutos alrededor de 90.000 millones de dólares del PIB, con una baja y estable inflación que no llega al 2 por ciento anual, con reservas internacionales solventes, que nos llevan a ser considerados uno de los países más estables para la inversión y el desarrollo en América Latina, y prontos a obtener el grado de inversión.

Este crecimiento económico aunado a las medidas de promoción del empleo está originando el aumento del empleo de un 9 por ciento en empresas de más de diez trabajadores.

Sin embargo, tenemos que ser realistas y enfrentar el gran reto de la pobreza y el subempleo, que es a su vez lo que nos aúna a los países en vías de desarrollo. En nuestro caso, alcanza a más del 50 por ciento de nuestra población, conformada principalmente por trabajadores autónomos y micro y pequeñas empresas. Este es el gran desafío que proponemos a la OIT, para que sea parte de su agenda inmediata.

Tomando en consideración esta realidad, el Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo ha basado su plan sectorial principalmente en tres líneas de acción: la promoción del empleo digno y productivo; la administración democrática de las relaciones de trabajo, y el impulso decidido al diálogo sociolaboral.

En la promoción del empleo digno, nos hemos orientado a tres segmentos fundamentales de nuestra población: a desempleados y trabajadores autónomos de sobrevivencia, especialmente mujeres con carga de familia y jóvenes; al mayoritario sector de micro y pequeñas empresas, que en nuestro país representa el 60 por ciento de la población económicamente activa, con programas de servicios empresariales y de formalización para impulso de la competitividad de este sector, y la calificación laboral para cubrir la demanda empresarial de las empresas en crecimiento.

Este esfuerzo promotor de capacidades y habilidades emprendedoras y técnicas para el impulso del empleo permitirá generar cientos de miles de puestos de trabajo, especialmente a mujeres y jóvenes, comprometiéndonos a disminuir la pobreza en un 10 por ciento en este período gubernamental, así como formalizar y reforzar empresarialmente a cientos de miles de micro y pequeñas empresas, con un enfoque integrado y participativo de inclusión social.

En el campo de la administración democrática de las relaciones de trabajo, tenemos cuatro aspectos fundamentales: el impulso a la cultura de responsabilidad laboral y empresarial, a través de un plan de responsabilidad laboral y empresarial, que comprende una certificación estatal de buenas prácticas laborales en empresas que voluntariamente se acojan, para promover ambientes sanos laborales basados en el respeto de los derechos y en la cooperación. En segundo lugar, la vigilancia y cumplimiento laboral, para lo cual hemos fortalecido y consolidado la labor inspectiva del Ministerio, con la aplicación de una nueva ley que fortalece la autoridad del inspector, la creación de la carrera pública para los mismos con adecuados niveles

salariales, y la implementación del sistema electrónico de registro de contratos y pagos a nivel nacional, con el correspondiente efecto de control laboral y tributario. A su vez, tenemos un gran compromiso para tratar de controlar y evitar la desnaturalización de los contratos laborales en los mecanismos de tercerización e intermediación laboral. En cuanto a la defensa de derechos fundamentales, si bien el trabajo forzoso e infantil está vetado por nuestra Constitución y por la ley, estamos impulsando medidas para luchar contra el mismo.

Y para terminar, queremos mencionarles que brindamos un apoyo decidido al diálogo social y laboral, para lo cual contamos con un Consejo Nacional del Trabajo, que funciona dinámicamente en esta perspectiva.

Concluyo este mensaje ratificando el compromiso del Perú con los objetivos de impulsar el trabajo decente y los derechos laborales para todos los peruanos como forma de impulsar el desarrollo sostenible de nuestro país.

Original Japanese: Mr. MATSUNO (Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Labour and Welfare, Japan)

It is a great honour for me to be given the opportunity to address the 96th International Labour Conference on behalf of the Government of Japan. I see this Conference as a forum to exchange our views and to share our commitment to the goal of decent work. I would like to begin by congratulating the Director-General for his Report on decent work for sustainable development. The Report identifies, in a clear and concise manner, key challenges and opportunities for the ILO today in advancing decent work in the context of globalization and economic development.

Let me repeat our Government's continued, full support for the Decent Work Agenda, for the ILO's initiative in advancing it, and for efforts made by the governments and social partners in each member State. Decent work is not a diversion but a reaffirmation in an integrated manner of the ILO's original mandate. In my view, decent work is also a versatile concept.

On the one hand, it provides an immutable pillar of the value of work and respect for humane conditions of life. On the other, decent work can take many shapes, responding to the specific social and economic circumstances of each society in this diverse world. Decent work should be applied generally in all aspects of work, including the creation, improvement and transition of jobs such as the transition to "green jobs", which is highlighted in the Director-General's Report, and which is increasingly important in the context of global warming. With this attention to specificity, diversity and general applicability, I would like to make the following three points.

First, is the importance of stronger partnerships between the ILO and other United Nations agencies, as articulated in the Director-General's Report. Naturally, the needs of a particular society can be met more comprehensively through a multidisciplinary approach. Some issues are particularly suited to integrated service with a combination of expertise from different fields. In such coordination, the tripartite structure allows the ILO to play a unique role. Tripartism ensures democratic policy formulation that would more fully reflect the specific local situations. This is what the ILO can communicate to its partner organizations, thereby enhancing syner-

gies which should emerge from collaborations among a variety of United Nations agencies.

Second, the need for the ILO to better respond to the diverse circumstances of its Members. While I have just referred to the advantages of tripartism, I also share the view that the ILO itself must reinforce its ability to deliver a service that corresponds to the collective will of national tripartite discussions; in other words, better "vertical governance" as referred to in the Office's report on strengthening the ILO's capacity.

Diversity also means that knowledge sharing could create positive synergies among member States. The ILO could facilitate such exchange of experiences at the regional or global level.

My third point is a pledge for a commitment to participate in such synergies.

Last year, the 14th Asian Regional Meeting launched the Asian decent work decade and declared that constituents will make a joint effort to achieve decent work throughout the region. As part of such efforts, our Government is prepared to make further endeavours in Asia, with particular interest in advancing policies which envisage coordination between the ILO and other UN agencies.

We also welcome the Asian regional forum that will take place this August in Beijing as an immediate opportunity for an exchange of experiences. We look forward to the discussion, all the more for the region's richness in diversity.

Let me conclude by saying that our identities and interests are diverse but our hopes converge in one aspiration: decent work for all. Thank you.

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

On behalf of the Indonesian delegation, I should like, from the outset, to express our congratulations to Mr. Kastriot Sulka, on his election to preside over this 96th Session of the International Labour Conference.

I should also like to convey my appreciation for the Report of the Director-General, which addresses the central issue of equality at work and the challenges associated with it, as well as the Report on *Decent work for sustainable development*.

In this context, poverty eradication, unemployment and development policies, which are some of the most pressing problems faced by developing countries, require our continued action. In doing so, our national tripartite institution has been revitalized by achieving a national commitment. Social dialogue, for instance, has become a day-to-day activity in the process of harmonizing industrial relations, and the bipartite mechanism in the enterprise is being strengthened to reduce the number of dismissals.

Furthermore, the Government has been supporting workers' social welfare gradually by providing low-cost houses, health and children's education services, as well as transportation assistance.

The United Nations have chosen Indonesia as a lead country for the Millennium Development Goals of achieving productive youth employment. At the same time, in the field of training and employment, Indonesia has also introduced a three-in-one concept with the training, certification and placement of manpower.

Indonesia is the world's largest archipelago. Many of our community depend on the maritime and fishing sector to obtain job opportunities. Indonesia is

currently preparing to ratify the ILO Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention, 1958 (No. 108).

With regard to the issue of overseas workers, Indonesia, along with the ASEAN member countries, is committed to promote the Cebu Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers signed by the ASEAN leaders in 2007.

The high level dialogue on international migration and development last year in New York has introduced a link and coordinated efforts in the process of globalization and this might be relevant to continue our discussion in terms of the free flow of capital, investment, goods, services and skilled labour. In this regard, the ILO should take the necessary steps to follow up this matter.

Along with the discussion on enhancing the ILO's capacity, Indonesia is of the view that it is also important to consider continuing our efforts to reform the work of the ILC and other sectoral meetings. In this regard, Indonesia underlines the importance of the ILC closer to the field. Therefore, we are of the view that the venue of the ILC needs to be rotated and to be convened in a developing country. For this purpose and, if it is decided so, Indonesia is ready to host such an important event.

Indonesia remains committed to the responsibility of providing the means for its people to improve their living conditions without discrimination. For this reason, we are currently implementing pro-growth, pro-employment and pro-poor policies as championed by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono on many occasions.

I should like to close, by strongly encouraging the ILO to continue assisting the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to obtain decent work and to strive for a better future world of work for the people.

Original portugais: M^{me} TAIPO (ministre du Travail, Mozambique)

Au nom du gouvernement de la République du Mozambique, ainsi qu'en mon nom personnel et en celui de la délégation qui m'accompagne, permettez-moi, Monsieur le Président, de vous saluer, ainsi que les autres membres du bureau et tous les participants de cette grande Conférence.

Je salue également chaleureusement M. Juan Somavia, le Directeur général du BIT, en le remerciant tout particulièrement de sa vision concernant la promotion du travail décent avec la participation de tous les acteurs du monde du travail.

Dans son rapport consacré au travail décent pour un développement durable, le Directeur général attire l'attention sur l'importance vitale de l'Agenda du travail décent et de l'Agenda international du développement dans le cadre de la mondialisation et de la lutte contre la pauvreté.

Ces thèmes constituent les grands enjeux du monde actuel, et c'est pourquoi nous attendons anxieusement les résultats des travaux de la Commission des entreprises durables. Nous souhaitons que l'investissement qui est fait dans nos pays soit réellement durable et assure ainsi la stabilité économique et sociale des familles.

Au Mozambique, la pratique du tripartisme, surtout à travers la Commission consultative du travail, prouve à quel point le tripartisme est un instrument important pour la promotion du dialogue social permettant la discussion collective des questions relatives au travail et des questions sociales,

ainsi que d'autres sujets liés au développement économique et social du pays.

Au cours de l'année écoulée, nous avons dans notre pays approfondi les relations entre les partenaires sociaux et le gouvernement, ce qui nous a permis de conclure les débats autour de la loi de protection sociale adoptée par le parlement en 2006. Cette loi a créé un cadre légal adéquat permettant de répondre aux défis de la Campagne mondiale sur la sécurité sociale pour tous, en élargissant ainsi aux personnes travaillant à leur compte la portée de son application aux travailleurs pour le compte d'autrui.

Grâce aussi à ces relations saines entre les partenaires sociaux, le Mozambique a vu adopter par consensus au parlement la nouvelle loi du travail, une loi dont l'élaboration a été difficile en raison de l'esprit de libéralisation de l'économie qui prévaut actuellement, ce qui obligeait à trouver des solutions d'équilibre entre gouvernements, employeurs et travailleurs. Cela a donné lieu à un véritable exercice démocratique entre les Mozambicains qui ont placé les intérêts du pays au-dessus de tous les autres intérêts.

Après l'adoption de ces deux instruments importants, le travail en cours concerne l'élaboration des instruments de réglementation et la concrétisation du projet de création de centres de médiation et d'arbitrage du travail, qui allègeront la charge du système judiciaire.

La nouvelle loi du travail ouvre un espace pour stimuler l'esprit d'entreprise et assurer la création d'un plus grand nombre d'emplois, afin d'inverser les niveaux de pauvreté conformément aux objectifs du Millénaire.

Pour matérialiser cette législation du travail, nous faisons face à un nouveau défi, à savoir la mise en œuvre de la nouvelle stratégie de l'emploi et de la formation professionnelle, un instrument vital pour stimuler l'emploi et en particulier l'emploi indépendant.

Nous pensons qu'une stratégie d'emploi et de formation professionnelle couronnée de succès pourra contribuer à encourager l'esprit d'entreprise, surtout auprès des plus jeunes et des femmes. Nous sommes certains qu'une fois de plus nous pourrions compter sur la collaboration de l'OIT pour créer les conditions qui permettront de mettre en œuvre les objectifs de la stratégie. Nous espérons donc que les débats autour de la Commission du renforcement des capacités institutionnelles de l'OIT pourront établir des chemins plus clairs afin que l'OIT puisse remplir son rôle de façon toujours plus efficace, et ceci face à la volonté de mettre en œuvre l'Agenda du travail décent.

Il est donc impérieux que l'OIT dispose de ressources adéquates pour pouvoir accomplir sa noble et digne mission.

Nous saisissons l'occasion pour remercier les Pays-Bas de leur contribution au projet de lutte contre la pauvreté (WOOP) canalisée à travers l'OIT.

Le gouvernement du Mozambique est bien conscient que la lutte contre la pauvreté dépend du renforcement des conditions qui favorisent la création d'emplois. C'est ainsi qu'il a défini le district comme un pôle de développement et qu'il alloue à chaque district un fonds pour mener des actions qui permettront de créer des emplois et des revenus. Les collectivités et les conseils consultatifs locaux jouent donc un rôle essentiel dans la gestion et le développement de leur district.

Le Mozambique réaffirme son adhésion aux initiatives internationales menées par l'OIT dans le domaine du travail décent, ce qui comprend également la lutte contre l'exploitation et les pires formes de travail des enfants. Compte tenu de l'environnement du travail et des principes et droits consacrés par les normes internationales du travail, le gouvernement impose que les relations professionnelles soient envisagées de façon respectueuse, et cela à un niveau réciproque, sans violations de la loi.

Nous voudrions en profiter pour saluer l'appui international aux mesures prises par le Mozambique pour rectifier des anomalies qui vont contre un environnement de travail décent.

Je salue enfin tous ceux qui travaillent et collaborent avec nous, qui nous fournissent des conseils pour que nos programmes soient menés à bien, pour une culture du travail décent.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL-SHAIKH RADHI (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Iraq)

It gives me great pleasure to convey to you the greetings of the Government and people of Iraq, wishing you all success in your work in this session of the Conference. We hope that the outcome of your work will further enrich the efforts of the Organization to contribute to decent work worldwide.

It is also a great pleasure for me to praise the international efforts contributing to the International Conference of Sharm el-Sheik in support of Iraq. We believe that this is one important step towards helping Iraq and achieving reconciliation within the country, within a new Iraq where democracy is trying to find its way in a very difficult environment.

Ladies and gentlemen, people of all walks of life in Iraq have become victims of terrorism which is targeting cultural, social and political life. However, these terrorist activities have not prevented the Iraqi people from trying to lay the foundations of a democratic process which will enable all human beings to enjoy their normal rights and to contribute to the country's development.

We believe that unusual efforts are being made in unusual circumstances to introduce new technology, to introduce development in a very rational way. We believe that much has been achieved, including labour legislation. Labour legislation is taking into account all international standards. We are doing this in cooperation with the ILO. We are also implementing a number of programmes and projects aimed at the reduction of poverty. The National Protection Network and national security covers more than 1 million families. There is social security support for families to ensure that all segments of society are covered. Most recently there was a programme launched to provide microfinance for small businesses. There is also a programme to help recent graduates who are finding it difficult to find work, as well as those displaced because of terrorist activities. The Government has also approved the Foreign Investment Law, which is closely linked to the new Oil Well Distribution Law. This new law aims to attract foreign investment, from the Arab world to begin with, and then from other parts of the world.

We know that we face an uphill task. The level of underemployment is unprecedented. My Ministry is trying to encourage all elements that would lead to the improvement of investment and we are hoping

that finance will be channelled to the Kurdistan region and some provinces in the south of the country.

The Government is also working hard to develop vocational training programmes and retraining programmes, and we are taking into account the demand for skills within the labour market and the need for development and for investment projects.

I would also like to refer you to the meeting held in 2004 in Oman with the help of the international community to look into better ways of creating employment opportunities.

We are trying very hard to develop programmes that will enable us to create a stable labour market and to ensure that productivity is maintained. We know that without improvements in productivity we will not be able to maintain growth. My Government and the social partners are working in accordance with the latest applied standards, with the help of the ILO, to ensure that we have decent work, renewable work and work that provides income for all families and all individuals.

We would like to congratulate the Director-General for his important Report and, as my colleagues from the Arab group have said, we would like to see the Organization continue to help Palestinian workers in the occupied territories. We believe that this Organization has an even bigger role, an indispensable role, in helping national governments, and that only by doing so can we improve the labour sector.

Original French: The PRESIDENT

We have reached the end of the time that was allotted to the general debate this morning and the Conference is now about to welcome His Royal Highness, Felipe de Borbón, Prince of Asturias.

(The sitting was adjourned at 11.25 a.m. and resumed at 12.05 p.m.)

(Mr. Sulka takes the chair.)

The PRESIDENT (Mr. SULKA)

We shall now resume the fourteenth sitting of the 96th International Labour Conference. Before continuing, I give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference for an announcement.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE 1997 INSTRUMENT OF
AMENDMENT TO THE ILO CONSTITUTION BY THE
REPUBLIC OF MONTENEGRO**

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

It is my pleasure to announce that the Republic of Montenegro has accepted the 1997 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution. The Director-General registered this acceptance on 12 June 2007. This brings the number of member States having ratified or accepted the amendment to 96 out of a total of 120 needed for it to enter into force.

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

The PRESIDENT

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

Even today, the pursuit of social justice remains a most challenging ideal and an operational task for the International Labour Organization as it continues to develop up to date standards and to influence policy in the world of work within the evolving global economy.

In this regard, the delegation of the Holy See acknowledges shared objectives with the ILO. It fully supports the combined action of workers, employers and governments to make decent work for sustainable development a collective goal within the international community, as well as a priority in national programmes. Much of the restlessness and many of the conflicts that torment our society are rooted in the lack of jobs.

The timely agenda of this Conference rightly addresses old and new forms of discrimination, social protection, the new context of work and its impact on individual workers and their families. In fact, work, enterprise and the global arena of financial investments, trade and production should be rooted in a creative, cooperative and rule-based effort at the service of the human person.

In recent years, changes have been brought about in the fields of economy, technology and communications that have transformed the face of work and the conditions of the labour market. Obviously, the international system is evolving under the weight of a number of factors, including the ageing population in some regions, outsourcing, the gap between needed skills and an educational system still incapable of preparing people with skills to meet such demands, the search for balance between fair policy space and an effective multilateralism and the demand for greater flexibility and mobility.

Although workers may no longer find themselves in physical proximity with each other, solidarity remains crucial and indispensable if founded on our common humanity that links all types of work.

In turn, through work, man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also becomes more of a human being.

In a way, the world of labour has overturned the old practice: now work tends to take precedence over capital and real wealth is found in the knowledge and in the human and relational capacity of workers and in their creativity and ability to confront new situations.

The new globalized context of work makes it evident that a person working with and for other persons progressively reaches out to the whole human family. Through his work, a person is opened to an increasingly universal dimension and, in this way, can humanize globalization and thus, by keeping the human person at the centre of this process, can provide an ethical measure against its negative aspects.

Therefore, the universalization of labour standards should not be considered a burden on trade agreements but rather a concrete support for the human rights of workers and a condition for more equitable competition at the global level.

As the world is confronted with a globalization that increases wealth but is not equitable in its distribution, social goals cannot be left out of the picture.

The urgent necessity of creating new jobs is rightly recognized as the first means to prevent discrimination and poverty. With an estimated 195 million men and women unable to find work last

year and 1.4 billion people holding jobs that did not pay enough to lift them above the \$2 a day poverty line, the responsibility of the international community and of governments is put to the test to ensure both an enabling economic environment and the availability of decent work.

Within this somewhat sombre picture, the proposal of a Convention and Recommendation concerning work in the fishing sector represents a sign of major progress.

It is estimated that some 40 million people worldwide work in the fishing industry; 1.5 million of these are industrial or deep-sea fishers, while the rest are traditional coastal fishers. The harsh reality of the work environment for fishers has prompted careful negotiations that, hopefully, will now be brought to conclusion with an additional instrument for protection. In fact, the proposed Convention and Recommendation can also provide the basis for the elimination of the abuse and discrimination inflicted on industrial fishers through illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing on distant water vessels within the system of open registry. Interrelated issues of justice, safety and health demand a concerted response to the legitimate claim by fishers that their rights be protected and their quality of life be advanced.

The instruments of protection become the expression of solidarity at a global level, especially for the large number of people without work or without decent work. A simpler lifestyle and a more equitable sharing of the resources of the planet are needed. The Holy Father Benedict XVI has recently remarked, "It is not possible to continue using the wealth of the poorest countries with impunity, without them also being able to participate in world growth". The new horizon of the social question is now the world, because the human person is at its centre as protagonist of an integral development, development which is the new name of peace.

Through the adoption of decent work as a development paradigm for the multilateral system, locally adapted and implemented in Decent Work Country Programmes, workers, employers and governments, acting together, can give concrete form to this vision for a better future.

M. BABOU (*gouvernement, Sénégal*)

Hier, à pareille heure, du haut de cette tribune, Monsieur le Président de la République du Sénégal, Maître Abdoulaye Wade, s'adressait au monde entier en faisant un plaidoyer pour un monde plus juste fondé sur des relations plus humaines, sur le droit et l'équité. Le Président de la République du Sénégal rappelait une célèbre formule du philosophe Lacordaire qui disait: «Entre le fort et le faible, c'est la liberté qui opprime et la loi qui libère.»

Monsieur le Président s'exprimait ainsi pour qualifier les relations internationales. Cette citation trouve nécessairement son application dans les relations du travail où les forces ne sont pas égales.

C'est pourquoi le thème que nous avons à étudier aujourd'hui, *L'égalité au travail: relever les défis*, n'est rien d'autre qu'un cri du cœur que la communauté internationale lance contre les injustices.

Après avoir parcouru le rapport, nous nous sommes dit que toutes les questions qui étaient soulevées ne recourent rien d'autre que le travail

décent. Le travail décent, nous le savons, fait aujourd'hui l'objet d'un objectif mondial.

Le travail décent, c'est donner à l'homme toute sa dignité pour pouvoir concourir au même titre que les autres, sans aucune exclusion.

Au Sommet de Ouagadougou de septembre 2004, je cite le Directeur général de l'OIT: «L'Afrique a besoin d'une bonne gouvernance mondiale qui n'existe pas encore.» Le Sénégal, notre pays, en a fait le constat hier, par l'organe de son Président de la République, qui est revenu longuement sur les inégalités dans le monde.

Notre pays, le Sénégal, a ratifié nombre de conventions fondamentales. J'en citerai simplement deux qui conviennent parfaitement à ces assises: la convention (n° 182) sur les pires formes de travail des enfants, 1999, et la convention (n° 111) concernant la discrimination (emploi et profession), 1958.

Notre pays a fait de l'ensemble de ces recommandations un sacerdoce pour pouvoir les appliquer d'une manière concrète dans sa législation et dans son programme de tous les jours.

C'est pourquoi, en 2002 déjà, le document intitulé: *Document de stratégie pour la réduction de la pauvreté* se fixait déjà comme objectif de lutter contre la pauvreté et d'améliorer la condition des Sénégalais d'ici à 2015.

A ce propos, des cibles ont été retenues dans des domaines bien précis, tels que la protection de l'emploi, où, déjà avec l'alternance, le gouvernement du Sénégal a recruté dans la fonction publique plus de 200 000 personnes.

De même, dans les secteurs porteurs comme l'agriculture, des plans ont été initiés comme le Plan REVA – Retour vers l'agriculture – pour permettre l'insertion des jeunes.

Quant aux jeunes plus particulièrement, des projets spécifiques, comme le Fonds national pour la promotion de la jeunesse et autres ont été initiés pour permettre leur insertion.

Il faut dire aussi que pour la protection des couches, notre pays, le Sénégal, a pris comme politique prioritaire la protection de la femme.

Nous savons que les inégalités en ce qui concerne les femmes trouvent leurs sources d'abord dans la famille où une certaine conception voudrait que ce soit l'homme qui travaille et que la femme reste au foyer.

Aujourd'hui, au Sénégal, des pas importants ont été franchis pour lutter contre ces conceptions et ces inégalités. Vous le savez, dans certains cadres et dans certains milieux, des fonctions jusque-là fermées aux femmes ont été ouvertes, telles que la gendarmerie, la douane ainsi que d'autres secteurs.

Nous poursuivons cette politique, et même mieux, comme le Président de la République du Sénégal l'a souligné hier, il est l'agent actif, il se veut le promoteur de la parité et c'est lui l'initiateur de la parité au niveau du gouvernement de l'Union africaine.

Poursuivant donc notre politique, le Sénégal a fait sien l'impérieuse nécessité de la protection sociale pour les travailleurs: protection sociale pour les non-travailleurs. Comme vous le savez, dans les pays du tiers-monde, le secteur non salarié occupe une place beaucoup plus importante que le secteur salarié.

Dans ce cadre bien précis, dans une coopération avec la Banque mondiale et le BIT, le Sénégal est parvenu à mettre en place un plan pour l'assurance

pour les routiers. Ce plan est en phase de finition, de même qu'il est question, en ce qui concerne le monde rural, de suivre le même plan.

Last but not least, devrais-je dire, mon pays poursuit sa politique de protection des couches vulnérables: je n'en citerai que le troisième âge où le Président de la République a institué le plan Sésame, mais aussi une protection sociale pour trouver un toit.

Je finirai, Monsieur le Président, si vous le permettez, en revenant sur les migrants, une nécessité impérieuse, un problème à régler. En Asie, les boat-people ont trouvé leur solution. L'Afrique doit pouvoir trouver une solution avec l'aide de l'OIT en signant une convention multilatérale.

Le dialogue social est une réalité du génie sénégalais. A Addis-Abeba en avril 2007, la politique du dialogue social et les structures du dialogue social préconisées par le Sénégal ont été appréciées à telle enseigne que nos recommandations demandent à l'ensemble des pays africains de s'inspirer de l'exemple sénégalais.

Mr. FERNANDES (*Minister of State (IC) for Labour and Employment, India*)

While commending the ILO on its performance, I take this opportunity to highlight a very few important issues raised in the Report of the Director-General entitled: *Decent work for sustainable development* and indicate steps taken by India thereon.

The ILO in recent times has been emphasizing the social dimensions of globalization, sustainable development, productive and equitable markets, fair rules and greater accountability to people. India has a well-established democratic system of consulting stakeholders. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the Government also mandates tripartism and consensus. The goal of India's 11th Five-Year Plan is faster and more inclusive growth, epitomizing the social dimensions. The environment for inclusive growth has been crafted by flagship schemes, such as the Bharat Nirman Plan aimed at providing infrastructure and basic amenities in villages; the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which seeks to provide 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment in 330 districts; the National Rural Health Mission providing primary healthcare; the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan providing free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6-14 years, along with the mid-day meal scheme which provides cooked food to 109 million young schoolchildren; and the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, which provides basic services to the urban poor and to slum dwellers. Various other schemes relating to road connectivity, housing, waged and self-employment, drinking water and the development of backward areas are in operation. These measures are carried out with the active involvement of rural, local governments called the Panchayati Raj, whose 3.4 million elected representatives, nearly 42 per cent of whom are women, make India the most intensely democratic country in the world.

Also, microcredit through immense self-help groups is leading to women's economic empowerment throughout the country. So far as social production is concerned, health insurance, pensions and provident fund benefits are available to workers in the formal sector. A scheme called Rajiv Gandhi Shramik Kalyan Yojana has been implemented as of 2005 as a social safety net for persons who lose

their jobs. These persons are eligible for a monthly unemployment allowance for six months, along with medical coverage. Workers belonging to specific segments in the informal sector have access to social security through various welfare funds. We have also prescribed a minimum wage for each trade. A bill to provide social security in a comprehensive manner to the informal sector will be introduced next month when the Indian Parliament reconvenes.

We are seriously addressing the threat posed by HIV/AIDS in the world of work. We have had a fruitful session with the labour ministers and other dignitaries from South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries and have agreed to set up a working group to collectively find possible solutions.

The Government has commenced a major plan to upgrade 1,896 Industrial Training Institutes into centres of excellence, in order to produce a multi-skilled, world class workforce. My Government has also undertaken a skill development initiative for school drop-outs and existing workers in the informal sector, in close consultation with industry, micro-enterprises, state governments, experts and academia. It is proposed to set up a national mission for vocational training. The Government has undertaken various measures to address gender inequality and eliminate discrimination against women; we adopted a National Policy for the Empowerment of Women in 2001, and have adopted gender budgeting so as to create an enabling environment for gender justice and the empowerment of women.

India has always supported the ILO when it has taken up new challenges in the past. I take this opportunity to assure you that India will continue to support the ILO in its future endeavours to promote workers' interests.

Mr. KARA (*Worker, Israel*)

I would like to congratulate the Director-General and the Chairman of the Governing Body for the excellent Report they have submitted. Two of the items of this year's International Labour Conference are particularly important and strongly interrelated: the need to promote sustainable enterprises worldwide, and particularly in developing countries, is, to a great extent, the result of increasing and rapid globalization.

The Histadrut, the Israeli trade union federation, which I have the privilege and honour to represent at this respected forum, is well aware that globalization is an irreversible process. We know that the potential benefits of globalization are far-reaching. It has constructively transformed and enhanced many nations' societies and economies.

Major positive aspects include: liberalization of international trade, expansion of foreign direct investment, cross-border financial flows, increased competition in global markets, and interconnection through advanced technologies. The blurring of borders allows relatively unhampered movement of people, goods, knowledge and capital across the globe. In the developing world it has brought improved health with increased life spans.

However, globalization has unfavourable effects. These include a growing trend in industrialized countries to export relatively expensive labour-intensive work to countries with cheap labour costs. Consequently, redundant workers in developed countries face great difficulties returning to the la-

bour force. In contrast, the increased application of technology can reduce the use of, and dependence on, labour in developing countries.

Another negative outcome is the growth of the informal economy. A related outcome of this phenomenon is a prevalence of highly adverse employment conditions and exploitation of workers.

In many countries, globalization affected governments' policies regarding responsibility for maintenance of full employment and led to changes in legal protection, thus making working conditions harder. Reduction in government spending has undermined the welfare state.

All these are matters of concern for trade unions and therefore the efforts to strengthen the ILO's capacity to assist its Members in reaching its objectives, in the context of globalization, are most welcome and should be highly praised.

The recommendation of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization that is fully supported by the Histadrut should be quoted within this framework: "The efforts for a fair globalization creating opportunities for all must be aimed at putting a focus on people, encouraging a democratic and effective State, creating and reinforcing sustainable development, establishing fair rules and productive and equitable markets. Emphasis should also be put on globalization with solidarity, greater accountability to people and deeper partnership".

In this context, the promotion of sustainable enterprises leading to more jobs and improved social security is of utmost importance. The Director-General, Mr. Somavia, expressed his concern when he stated that "the present form of globalization has not produced enough jobs for all those who seek them or in the places where they are most needed. Thus a new form of globalization is essential".

By acting wisely and thoroughly, in close collaboration with the ILO, which leads the force to achieve social goals on the national and international levels, I believe unions will regain power and influence and will contribute in a very positive way to achieve the necessary equilibrium between the social partners for establishing a world of decent work.

Last but not least, I would like to emphasize before this distinguished forum that the Histadrut is highly supportive of the peace process in the region and acts, and will continue acting, to advance it. It has always protected Palestinian workers working in Israel and will continue to do so, wishing to maintain the ongoing relations with Palestinian trade unions.

We try to educate all workers for peaceful coexistence and cooperation and we hope that our colleagues in the Arab world will do the same. I wish that in the not too distant future our dream for peace will become a reality.

M. IBOUROI (*travailleur, Comores*)

Permettez-moi de vous transmettre les salutations des travailleurs des Comores et, à cette occasion, de saluer l'important rapport établi par le Directeur général, notamment sur le travail décent.

Permettez-moi également de saluer tous les délégués participant à la 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail. Notre participation, après quatorze ans d'absence, est en tout cas pour nous un renouveau et à la fois un changement d'action par rapport aux institutions en cours aux Comores.

Ce renouveau n'est pas seulement intrinsèque. Nous constatons avec satisfaction que le BIT joue pleinement son rôle en accompagnant les organisations des travailleurs, tant au niveau de l'Organisation que du renforcement des capacités. Mais le champ d'intervention est assez vaste et des efforts complémentaires doivent encore soutenir son action pour l'épanouissement et la protection des travailleurs.

A l'échelle du pays, les autorités comoriennes ont ratifié trois conventions complétant celles fondamentales, incontournables pour les organisations des travailleurs et la mise en place des assises du dialogue. Cependant, les violations des conventions ratifiées sont courantes. Ainsi, aux Comores, il n'existe pas de salaire minimum interprofessionnel garanti et, pourtant, la convention n° 26 est ratifiée depuis 1978.

En outre, malgré la ratification de la convention n° 29, les dirigeants syndicaux ne sont pas libres d'exercer leurs droits syndicaux. Ils sont souvent licenciés, cas actuellement des dirigeants des syndicats d'enseignants dans l'île d'Anjouan, tout simplement pour fait de grève. Leurs salaires sont souvent suspendus et attribués à d'autres personnes. Jamais l'avenir des enseignants n'a été aussi menacé, les droits élémentaires aussi bafoués par l'autorité à la tête de l'île sous l'œil bienveillant du gouvernement de l'Union. Ces enseignants sont privés de leurs maigres salaires depuis janvier 2007.

La ratification de ces conventions n'a pas empêché les autorités de renvoyer manu militari 408 salariés, dockers du port de Moroni, tous pères et chargés de famille laissés sans pensions, ni indemnités. Ces licenciements abusifs sont décidés sans préavis comme ce fut le cas dans l'hôtellerie à Galawa, à la poste, à la Société de l'eau et de l'électricité des Comores.

Dans ce contexte, nous sollicitons l'appui du BIT pour permettre aux autorités comoriennes de cadrer l'action en vue de la pérennisation du dialogue social, sortant ainsi du cycle ponctuel des consultations. En effet, les gouvernements ont mis en place des structures devant susciter et appuyer les échanges entre les partenaires; malheureusement, ces structures ne sont pas opérationnelles à l'exemple du Comité technique pour l'emploi et du Conseil supérieur du travail, structure de consultation, d'arbitrage et de contrôle de l'application de la loi. Tout cela est dû à une inspection du travail défailante.

Ces organes ont pour objectif essentiel de coordonner les instances réglementaires établies par le Code du travail et le statut général des fonctionnaires. A ce niveau, il y a une avancée notable en termes de textes fondamentaux de base, mais ceux-ci tardent à avoir des effets sur la vie au quotidien des travailleurs.

En ce qui concerne les organisations, on a fait également du chemin à travers l'Union des syndicats autonomes des travailleurs des Comores (USATC) et la Confédération des travailleuses et travailleurs des Comores (CTC). Naturellement, à ces nouvelles structures correspondent de nouvelles tâches pour lesquelles nous manquons de savoir-faire et de faire-savoir, d'une part, et de logistique et d'équipements, d'autre part, du fait du versement irrégulier des salaires et du gel des carrières. Ces faits ne permettent jamais aux syndiqués que nous sommes de verser régulièrement nos cotisations et

d'assurer par la suite le fonctionnement régulier de nos organisations.

Il y a lieu de rappeler ici que la Banque mondiale et le FMI, qui sont venus au chevet des Comores en 1994, ne nous ont pas laissé une approche et un bilan méritoires. En effet, les réformes proposées ont créé de nouveaux chômeurs sans que ceux qui sont restés aient eu une amélioration de leur qualité de vie.

Les travailleurs des Comores qui ont accepté de se serrer la ceinture se demandent encore quand ils vont bénéficier des fruits de leur sacrifice. C'est la raison pour laquelle nous pensons que seule l'annulation de la dette pourrait être de bon augure pour le développement économique des Comores.

Nous restons convaincus que la création d'emplois est l'outil incontournable de lutte contre la pauvreté, qui entrave le développement humain dans notre pays.

Si la bonne gouvernance a droit de cité aux Comores, elle doit se traduire pour les travailleurs par un état de droit, le respect de la démocratie, de la liberté d'organisation et de la liberté d'expression, l'émergence de mécanismes de dialogue social, l'instauration d'un travail décent, la garantie des minima salariaux, l'assurance des travailleurs contre les risques d'accident, de maladie de travail et l'assurance vieillesse pour tous les travailleurs.

A ce stade de notre réflexion, nous sommes confrontés à un dilemme. Nous faut-il lutter pour la ratification de nouvelles conventions telles que la convention (n° 129) sur l'inspection du travail (agriculture), 1969, la convention (n° 131) sur la fixation des salaires minima, 1970, la convention (n° 144) sur les consultations tripartites relatives aux normes internationales du travail, 1976, et la convention (n° 151) sur les relations de travail dans la fonction publique, 1978, etc. ou y a-t-il lieu de solliciter l'intervention du BIT pour le suivi et le respect de celles déjà ratifiées?

Pour notre part, les deux axes d'intervention sont possibles, voire souhaitables pour une meilleure animation et coordination des actions relatives aux normes du travail.

De ce fait, nous réitérons nos requêtes relatives au renforcement des capacités et aux appuis permettant à nos organisations d'être fonctionnelles car c'est par la connaissance qu'on est le mieux défendu.

Pour le cas spécifique des pêcheurs, pour les Comores nous souhaitons la mise en place d'une disposition protégeant les pêcheurs gagnant les rives d'un pays étranger, pour qu'ils puissent avoir un droit à être assisté.

Sr. PALACIO BETANCOURT (*Gobierno, Colombia*)

El señor Director ha presentado a consideración de la Conferencia un Informe, en el cual solicita, entre otros, que los diferentes actores sociales ayuden a modernizar los mecanismos de cooperación que, a lo largo del tiempo, ha venido implementando la Organización Internacional del Trabajo.

Colombia puede dar fe de la asistencia que presta la Organización y puede afirmar, sin temor a equivocarse, que es necesario lograr que los instrumentos de cooperación respondan a las particularidades que se presentan en cada uno de los países y en cada uno de los procesos en los cuales está llamada a participar la OIT. Aportaremos en esta discusión, para que la Organización tenga instrumentos que la hagan más competitiva y mucho más efectiva.

Podría dedicarle todo el tiempo que resta de la intervención, a presentar diferentes avances que hemos tenido en Colombia y demostrar que en el país no ha existido, como algunos lo han afirmado, una campaña de exterminio del movimiento sindical, ni mucho menos una violencia dirigida selectivamente contra sus líderes. Asimismo, alguien podría dedicar gran cantidad de tiempo, como algunos lo han hecho, a presentar la problemática que, sin ninguna duda, tiene Colombia en el campo laboral. Creo que ni lo uno ni lo otro, es prudente. Hablar sólo de los problemas o sólo hablar de los avances no es objetivo y, aunque puede ayudar por ejemplo en la búsqueda de una sanción, no ayuda para nada en el proceso de construcción de una solución.

Es importante que podamos conversar, que podamos reconocer y entender el papel de los otros actores sociales y que sepamos conjugar no sólo la problemática, sino que entendamos ésta, la problemática, como un paso más para poder construir la «solucionática» que en el fondo, es lo que necesita la población. Construir la solucionática exige tener que coincidir, no tenerle temor a trabajar juntos, a reconocer y a valorar las diferencias, recordando que más importante que las diferencias y que la ideología que cada uno tenga, lo que tenemos es una enorme responsabilidad compartida, que es la de encontrar y construir cambios estructurales sostenibles en el largo plazo que permitan mejorar las condiciones laborales.

Estos cambios, los cambios profundos, requieren instrumentos. El Acuerdo Tripartito firmado el año pasado, se convierte en un instrumento que debemos valorar, cuidar y fortalecer. Nunca afirmamos que este acuerdo sería la solución mágica e inmediata a todas las dificultades. Pero sí creímos, y lo seguimos haciendo, que el Acuerdo Tripartito es un instrumento innovador y viable e incluso recomendable y replicable, que no es prudente desconocer, ni mucho menos tratar de socavar.

Empresarios y trabajadores de mi país, 20 años de denuncias, de discusión en este auditorio, de sufrimiento, de mucha retórica y de poca solución, nos tienen que motivar e impulsar a fortalecer nuevas alternativas de solución. No podemos, aunque muchos lo quisieran, dejarnos llevar por aquellas personas que quieren que no avancemos. A muchas de estas personas, al igual que a algunas organizaciones, les conviene el conflicto, viven sólo por y para el conflicto y da tristeza decirlo, muchas de ellas, se enriquecen gracias al conflicto. Para ellas, hablar mal de Colombia no sólo es una obsesión, sino que parece que fuera una excelente inversión.

Nuestra responsabilidad, la de aquellos que estamos convencidos de la posibilidad de construir, la de aquellos que sabemos que nosotros y nuestros hijos viviremos en Colombia, es la de aquellos que tenemos la responsabilidad no de defender un interés particular, sino de construir un futuro que estamos obligados a diseñar e implementar una solución.

La experiencia reciente en el Marco del Acuerdo Tripartito tiene resultados puntuales que mostrar; no todos los que quisiéramos, pero es indudable que hay avances y, lo más importante, que existe el espacio en el cual podemos construir.

Señores delegados, desconocer los avances, desaprovechar las oportunidades, promover la confrontación exige valentía. Pero mucha más valentía y mucha más inteligencia, es la que se exige poder buscar una solución. Construir exige más humildad,

más inteligencia, más decisión y representa al mismo tiempo más compromiso para todos aquellos que nos han dado la representación, no tanto por lo que hagamos a corto plazo, sino por todo aquello que podamos hacer por las futuras generaciones.

El Gobierno del Presidente Alvaro Uribe, el Gobierno del cual participo por compromiso y por convicción, quiere reiterarles desde acá, desde esta bella ciudad de Ginebra, el llamado que hacemos a Carlos Rodríguez, a Julio Roberto y a Apécides como representantes de los trabajadores, el llamado que hacemos a los empresarios a través de Alberto Echevarría y, en general, la invitación que hacemos a todos los actores del tripartismo, incluyendo lógicamente a la OIT, para que mejoremos el clima laboral y, por esta vía, ayudemos a crear un país más democrático y más equitativo.

El gran reto, lo más difícil pero simultáneamente lo más apasionante, es el proceso de construcción y para esto, no nos puede dar temor coincidir. El Marco del Acuerdo Tripartito, desarrollado en el seno de la OIT, es una oportunidad y representa para todos y cada uno de los delegados, una gran responsabilidad.

Original Russian: Ms. KARAGUSSOVA (Government, Kazakhstan)

First of all, I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Conference on the very fruitful work it has done this year. I would also like to express my gratitude for the extremely useful Report provided by the Director-General, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*.

However, despite the fact that considerable progress has been made in the fight against discrimination in the workplace, we share the concern expressed by this Organization about continuing discrimination and the considerable inequality in workers' income.

The Republic of Kazakhstan is concerned about finding a solution to these very topical problems because in Kazakhstan, despite the fact that we have ratified several of the fundamental ILO Conventions, we still have a problem with discrimination.

We have evidence of what we would describe as indirect discrimination against women, self-employed workers, young people and elderly people, as well as people with disabilities and migrants.

We still have a serious problem with unemployment among women, which runs at 9.2 per cent. This is higher than the average national unemployment rate of 7.8 per cent which is the average in the European Union.

Women's unemployment is particularly serious in rural areas, which account for 35 per cent of all unemployed women, though this a problem not only for Kazakhstan, of course. We also have a problem in the way in which the labour market is divided up. Women are normally employed in relatively low-paid areas such as the health sector, education and the provision of social welfare services.

We also have a considerable proportion of our population who are self-employed; across the board, such people account for 35.5 per cent of the total workforce – in other words, 2.6 million people. A considerable number of those people work for themselves in their own homes, which means that their income is not stable, nor is it particularly high. What is more, the people who earn such wages are not covered by the social welfare system. They, too, cannot be considered to have decent work.

We also still have considerable problems with regard to tackling the problem of providing equal access to work for our disabled citizens. There is the problem of youth unemployment as well. There is also little demand for employing older people.

The Report and many of the delegates who have spoken have referred to problems which we, too, have in our country. In following the recommendations of the ILO and other international standards, Kazakhstan has been attempting to deal with these problems by taking specific measures.

In a very recent address made by our President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, considerable emphasis was placed on implementing international labour standards in respect of the labour market and social welfare. In Kazakhstan we have already incorporated the rights and freedoms enshrined in the fundamental principles and rights at work into our legislation. In May this year a Labour Code was adopted which prohibited any form of discrimination at work.

Kazakhstan has not only incorporated the principle of equality between men and women at constitutional level; it has provided in its legislation for the economic, social and political aspects of such equality. We have adopted a strategy for gender equality in Kazakhstan to cover the period 2006–16. This will include measures to bring about real equality in opportunity and in wage levels between men and women in the economy and in social and political life. We have a National Commission on Gender Policy and the Family in Kazakhstan. This is an advisory body attached to the President's office. I think I am an example of gender equality myself. In the Government of Kazakhstan we have three women at high level and that is, I think, exceptional in the CIS.

Our state employment policy includes active measures to promote employment, vocational training, socially useful work and youth employment. The unemployment situation in our country is still a problem, but we hope it will be alleviated in the next few years as a result of these measures and through developments in various areas of industry and the economy, including the energy industry, the development of infrastructure, the light mining and metalworking industries and the food industry.

We have a specific aim in Kazakhstan to become one of the 50 most competitive States by 2021. This will, of course, necessitate observance of international standards, including in the area of employment. We encourage our workers to improve their qualifications and we encourage our unemployed to seek training. The President of Kazakhstan has encouraged lifelong learning and continues to do so.

We actively try to protect our disabled workers and provide conditions which are conducive to their employment, so that they can apply for a job on an equal footing with other members of the population. However, if we are to have equal opportunities in employment for disabled people, we have to take more measures. We have already established a quota for the hiring of disabled workers, who must comprise 3 per cent of the total numbers of people hired.

We are combining our policy with other instruments to prevent discrimination, as I said earlier. We have made progress in ending discrimination, partly through a General Agreement with the social partners covering the period to 2009 and including a whole range of anti-discrimination measures. We know that progress is being made in our own coun-

try and worldwide in ending discrimination and ensuring equality of opportunity but, even so, a lot of problems do remain to be tackled.

I am convinced that, in the future, through combined efforts by the ILO and by member States, we will be able to move further to finding a definitive solution to these problems.

Original Vietnamese: Mr. DANG (Worker, Viet Nam)

On behalf of the Vietnamese Workers and trade unions, I would like to convey to you, Mr. President, our warmest congratulations on your election to the post of President of the Conference. I also wish the Conference every success.

The workers and trade unions of Viet Nam highly appreciate the Reports of the Chairman of the Governing Body and the Director-General of the ILO. We all recall that the Director-General of the ILO delivered the first Global Report on discrimination entitled *Time for Equality at Work* at the 91st International Labour Conference in 2003. Four years later these messages remain valid, but the need to combat discrimination in work is even more urgent in the face of a world that appears increasingly unequal, insecure and unsafe.

The second Global Report on *Equality at Work: Tackling the challenges*, presented by the Director-General at this Conference, provided us with a global picture of the fight against discrimination. The Report examines emerging issues and patterns of workplace discrimination and inequalities and outlines the ILO's experiences and achievements to date and the challenges that the ILO and its member States face. Apart from this, the improvement of working conditions in the fishing sector, and promotion of sustainable enterprises in ILO capacity building, which are incorporated in the working agenda of the Conference, are of concern to all ILO member States, including Viet Nam.

Elimination of discrimination in the workplace has become universal and requires political commitment. The workers and trade unions of Viet Nam consider the Decent Work Country Programme to be a key instrument to tackle workplace discrimination at country level.

Viet Nam was one of the first countries in the East Asia and Pacific to adopt the ILO's national framework of cooperation for the period 2006–10 on promotion of decent work in Viet Nam in 2006 with a view to guaranteeing sustainable economic development. Vietnamese trade unions share and support the ILO's approach to promoting sustainable enterprise and insist that economic growth should go hand in hand with social justice.

We support the adoption of the ILO Convention on the fishing sector and consider it to be an instrument with which to improve working conditions and decent work in the fishing sector.

We also support the ILO's reform and will make every effort to further this process in order to enable the ILO to implement its mandate and programmes to assist its member States more effectively in the context of a globalized world.

Viet Nam became a full member of the World Trade Organization in November 2006. In the process of integration into the international economy Viet Nam is completing its legislation. Viet Nam has ratified the ILO Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No.

111). It has just ratified the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29).

In March 2007, the National Assembly of Viet Nam approved a series of key laws and legislation, such as the law on gender equality, the law, revision and amendment of the Labour Code, the law on social security and the law on vocational training and the law on sending Vietnamese workers abroad with fixed-term contracts.

The trade unions of Viet Nam are, on one hand, actively involved in formulation of legislation and policies and improving the representation and development of trade union organizations at the enterprise level, mainly in the foreign investment and private sectors.

We consider negotiation and conclusion of collective labour agreements the most important tool to defend the rights and interests of workers and trade union members and to combat discrimination in the workplace.

In the last four years, the programme of recruiting a million new members has been conducted successfully and increased the total membership of the trade unions in Viet Nam to approximately 5.7 million.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the ILO for its effective technical assistance on various issues, namely capacity building for trade union activists in respect of collective bargaining at the workplace, improvement of gender issues, combating child labour, HIV/AIDS and promotion of sound industrial relations.

We also thank brother trade union organizations the world over for their support and assistance to Vietnamese trade unions. We hope to continue receiving technical assistance from the ILO and support from friendly trade union organizations throughout the world in order to better safeguard the rights and interests of the workers and trade union members in Viet Nam.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Original Chinese: Mr. CHEN (Employer, China)

We noted that there are various important subjects on the agenda of this session of the Conference and that reform has been made to the form of the Conference. We appreciate the efforts made by the Director-General and the Office in this regard.

In the current world, the speeding up of economic globalization has brought about new opportunities as well as severe challenges to the social and economic development of each country. At the same time, many new developments and issues are also arising in the field of international labour, such as promoting employment and the eradication of poverty and so on. How to bring fully into play the advantage and abundant experiences of the ILO and the collective wisdom of the tripartite constituents of member States, to speed up the process of realizing the Decent Work Agenda and fair globalization and to build a harmonious and fair world, these are the important and arduous tasks facing us. Therefore, it is quite essential to enhance our capability. We are happy to see that fruitful discussions have been carried out on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization. This will surely play a positive role in further strengthening the capacity of tripartism in member States.

It is very significant for this session of the Conference to hold discussions on promoting the sus-

tainable development of enterprises as a technical subject. Development of enterprises is the basis for economic growth and social progress as well as promoting social harmony. It has been proven by the achievements of China for the last 30 years since the reform and opening up that the reform, creativeness and market access of enterprises constitute the great driving force for economic and social development.

Currently, China is in the phase of speeding up industrialization. To make the economy and society develop in a good and fast way, one of the urgent issues facing our enterprises and entrepreneurs in making strategic decisions is to put into practice the concept of scientific development characterized by people-oriented and comprehensively coordinated sustainable development. This requires us to change our concept of development, to create new modes of development, to enhance the quality of development, and to explore the road towards new industrialization characterized by technology, good economic profits, low consumption of resources, low pollution of the environment and full utilization of human resources. Only by doing so can we lay down a solid foundation for building an harmonious society. We hope the ILO, in responding to the call of this Conference, will further strengthen the research into collection and dissemination of information concerning the sustainability of enterprises and provide more guidance and assistance to the tripartite constituents of member States, so as to make active contributions to the sustainable development of enterprises in various countries.

The China Enterprise Confederation, as the employers' organization representing tens of millions of Chinese enterprises, has always regarded it our own duty to promote employment and economic and social development. To do this, we have been actively engaged in the promotion of employment, eradication of poverty and realization of decent work, as well as the efforts to strengthen tripartism and our own capacity building. We will, as always, further strengthen the exchanges and cooperation with the ILO and employers' organizations of various countries, so as to make joint efforts for the realization of a fair and just globalization and promotion of the harmony, development and prosperity of the world.

Original German: Mr. SOMMER (Worker, Germany)

The Report of the Director-General contains a number of core messages: employment policy and social protection policies are mutually dependent and reinforcing long-term social stability is a precondition for social and economic development in the age of globalization.

I would like to refer to the G8 Summit Declaration adopted in Heiligendamm on 7 June 2007, where Heads of State and Government made the following commitments: "We support the International Labour Organization (ILO) Decent Work Agenda, with its four pillars of equal importance: the effective implementation of labour standards, especially the ILO core labour standards, the creation of more productive employment, further development of inclusive social protection systems and the support of social dialogue between the different stakeholders."

This sounds as if world leaders had taken an intensive course at the International Labour Conference before their meeting in Heiligendamm.

We, the unions, are of the view that adjustment programmes which, according to the formulae used in the recent past are based on lower labour standards and weak social protection, are bound to fail in the long term. Because they will be unable to combine economic development and social progress. What we need is a balanced strategy which complements economic growth with productive full employment and universal social protection. What we need is the implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda throughout the world.

Decent work means, in essence, the constant improvement of working conditions and the fight against unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. The Decent Work Agenda contains a number of general strategies, which are not linked to any specific development model. These are strategies, however, that aim directly at a fairer and more balanced distribution of the wealth created.

This represents an instrument that envisages a tailor-made development model based on values and good governance, which combines economic competitiveness with social justice. The governments of developing countries, on the other hand, fear that the introduction of such systems could be detrimental to their economic competitiveness. Therefore the work and labour standards achieved in the North are coming under increased pressure, while the South is only starting to provide minimum social security. Some developing countries argue that labour standards are only affordable when there is a high level of economic prosperity, so first growth then redistribution.

There is not a single industrialized country in Asia, Europe, Oceania or North America without a relatively comprehensive social security system. They have in common that their social welfare systems were created around 100 years ago, at a time when they were still poor. Social security always promotes development; it is not a cost factor for society, but instead an investment in the economy and in people. Social security means healthier workers, better educated and trained workers and, therefore, more productive workers. Cuts in social security do not lead to economic growth. Social protection is not a consequence of economic growth, but its precondition. We need a combination of solid macroeconomic policy and an effective labour policy, in order to be able to effectively implement this Organization's programme.

Mr. SENEVIRATNE (*Minister of Labour Relations and Manpower, Sri Lanka*)

On behalf of the Government and the delegation of Sri Lanka let me extend our sincere congratulations to the President and the Vice-President on their election to preside over the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. We also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO and Chairman of the Governing Body, for the Reports they have submitted to the Conference for discussion.

This year the Report of the Director-General focuses on some key issues in promoting *Decent work for sustainable development*. Sri Lanka fully endorses the need to encourage economic initiatives compatible with sustainable development by promoting more sustainable conception and production patterns. Use of resources productively and economically is an important aspect of sustainable development. Given the role of work and production,

no one is better placed than the tripartite constituents to promote sustainable production and consumption. Indeed, sustainable development is based on three equally critical pillars: economic, social and environmental. It is of utmost importance to link economic production and social protection with environmental management. Reconciling those concerns is essential, especially in pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals and access to basic human rights such as access to health, education, water, sanitation and energy.

To solve this equation is the only way to ensure long-term development, integration of an equitable industrial developmental and management of common public goods. The complex agenda of sustainable development requires establishing long-term effective strategies for sustainable development along with strong national commitment and leadership and improved coherence of existing processes, frameworks and strategies. It implies an interaction process of planning, setting priorities, implementing choices relevant to a country's sustainable development needs and learning from experience to continually improve people's lives.

Sri Lanka has formulated a national decent work policy and an action plan with the participation of the tripartite constituents to address existing decent work deficits. Allocation of funds from the national budget for 2007 is a clear reflection of the recognition and the commitment of the Government to address these issues in order to achieve the goal of decent work. Embodying most of the activities in the plan of action for decent work in the ten-year policy development programme, 2006–16 or the ten-year vision of the Government is a further reflection of the Government's commitment to having to address the decent work issues.

With a view to creating more and better jobs, we are in the process of implementing the initiatives of the national employment policy and our national productivity policy. Now we have taken the employment, sourcing, career guidance and productivity promotion to grass-roots level by establishing mechanisms at the divisional administration level. We are committed to minimizing the social cost of economic and legal reforms by promoting appropriate and gender sensitive social production programmes and improving the management of occupational safety and health.

A new law on occupational safety and health is being enacted and an institute of occupational safety and health has been set up with a view to promoting education, enforcement, research and documentation in the area of occupational safety and health. For sustainable development and employment promotion, we recognize the significance of educating the tripartite constituents and strengthening tripartism. In order to build the capacities of tripartite constituents and promote social dialogue, we have set up an institute of labour studies. Let me take this opportunity to thank the ILO for extending assistance in all these activities. Sri Lanka welcomes the initiative taken by the ILO to mainstream decent work throughout the United Nations system. Sri Lanka also welcomes the ongoing reforms in the United Nations system and hopes, as the Director-General states in his Report, that these reforms would contribute to "improve its responsiveness and delivery, provide better service to constituents, enhance agency cooperation and policy coherence and make better use of its knowledge and assets" in the

system. The Decent Work Country Programme for Sri Lanka developed with the participation of the tripartite constituents for the period of 2007–09 is a clear reflection of the role of the ILO.

Original arabe: M. JERAD (représentant, Union syndicale des travailleurs du Maghreb arabe)

Permettez-moi de vous saluer au nom de l'Union des syndicats des travailleurs du Maghreb arabe et de remercier le Directeur général du BIT, M Somavia, pour ses efforts incessants visant à développer la justice sociale et la culture du dialogue dans le monde. J'aimerais saisir cette occasion pour souligner la qualité de ce rapport qui reflète l'importance accordée par l'Organisation au problème de l'égalité au travail dont la réalisation est une condition essentielle de la promotion du travail décent.

Le rapport du Directeur général contient un grand nombre de propositions visant à lutter contre les nouvelles formes de discrimination. Ce sont des propositions qui peuvent effectivement aider à réduire les différences qui existent dans les domaines de l'emploi et des salaires. Nous voudrions cependant signaler ici que le déséquilibre entre la croissance économique et le progrès social, de même que l'accroissement de la dette publique, la fragilité des économies et l'expansion du secteur informel sont des facteurs importants qui contribuent à l'inégalité des chances et à la violation des droits fondamentaux au travail.

Des millions de jeunes et de femmes sont confrontés au chômage et au travail à temps partiel. Si nous pensons que l'accès à un travail décent et le choix de l'égalité comme objectif central du dialogue social peuvent aider à relever ce défi, il est évident que le problème des travailleurs migrants qui font face à toutes sortes de discriminations dans de nombreuses régions du monde requiert une approche globale du problème de la migration qui s'appuie sur le respect des normes internationales du travail, la promotion de programmes pour l'emploi et le développement des ressources humaines dans les pays du Sud.

Dans le rapport du Directeur général, un point important a retenu mon attention à savoir que le travail est le maillon le plus faible dans les politiques de libéralisation de l'économie et du commerce. C'est dans ce contexte que l'Organisation doit élaborer des mécanismes de contrôle du respect des normes du travail dans les accords d'échanges commerciaux et notamment dans les accords de partenariat entre l'Union européenne et le Maghreb. L'Organisation doit également aider les partenaires sociaux dans le monde arabe à renforcer l'égalité au travail dans le cadre de la libre négociation, et ce en coopération avec l'Organisation arabe du Travail, à condition cependant que cette coopération aille au-delà de l'organisation de réunions et de séminaires et qu'elle fixe des objectifs stratégiques communs, dont le renforcement de la liberté syndicale et le dialogue tripartite qui sont des éléments essentiels pour la réalisation de la bonne gouvernance et de la démocratie.

Il faut également encourager les partenaires sociaux dans les pays arabes à s'orienter vers la coopération régionale et à s'impliquer dans le développement de communautés régionales afin d'aider la région arabe dans sa lutte pour le progrès économique et social.

Il faut reconnaître cependant qu'il est difficile d'atteindre cet objectif face à la situation d'instabilité permanente que connaît le monde arabe. Ainsi l'occupation américaine de l'Iraq, les crimes de guerre perpétrés par les forces d'occupation israéliennes dans les territoires palestiniens et l'aggravation des pôles de tension au Moyen-Orient et dans la région du Golfe constituent autant de facteurs qui sapent le développement et la démocratie et alimentent le terrorisme et l'extrémisme.

Tout en appréciant les efforts déployés par l'OIT pour soutenir les partenaires sociaux en Palestine, nous pensons qu'il est nécessaire de continuer à soutenir la lutte du peuple palestinien pour l'établissement d'un Etat indépendant avec pour capitale Al-Qods, de mettre fin à l'occupation des territoires de Syrie et du Liban, de libérer l'Iraq de l'occupation étrangère et de faire de cette région une zone exempte d'armes de destruction massive.

La consolidation de la paix est une des conditions essentielles du règne de la prospérité dans le monde. Nous sommes convaincus que l'Organisation a un rôle important à jouer dans le renforcement des valeurs de coopération et de solidarité entre les Etats contribuant, ainsi à créer un monde exempt de toutes formes de discrimination et de domination et dans lequel règneraient les principes de liberté, d'égalité et de dignité.

Original portugais: M. FERNANDES SALGUEIRO (employeur, Portugal)

L'ordre du jour de cette session de la Conférence internationale du Travail traite de questions majeures.

Compte tenu du peu de temps qui m'est imparti, je n'aborderai que deux points: *Le travail décent au service du développement durable* (rapport du Directeur général), et *La promotion des entreprises durables* (rapport VI soumis à cette session).

Le premier point, qui concerne le travail décent pour un développement durable, est une question étroitement liée au dialogue social et au tripartisme, lequel se traduit par la pratique de la concertation sociale (entre les représentants des employeurs et des travailleurs et les gouvernements).

C'est un point important et d'actualité, mais qui a récemment suscité des interrogations, notamment celles que le Directeur général évoque dans son rapport au troisième paragraphe de la page 2, à savoir que le dialogue social pourrait ne pas survivre aux pressions concurrentielles de la mondialisation, ou que le tripartisme pourrait ne pas répondre de manière assez rapide aux défis qui doivent être relevés, compte tenu du rythme des changements.

Au deuxième paragraphe de la page 20, le Directeur général considère, à juste titre, que «le tripartisme, à l'échelon national comme à l'échelon international, verra s'ouvrir une nouvelle période de renouveau», et que «nous devons consolider ses fondements grâce à un respect accru de la liberté d'association des travailleurs et des employeurs, ... et des politiques actives du marché du travail, fondées sur dialogique social».

Près de 22 ans après le lancement du dialogue social au niveau de l'Union européenne, nous pouvons dire que le bilan est largement positif. Je me souviens que, en 1985, les partenaires sociaux (au niveau de l'UNICE, du CEEP et de la CES) ont eu leur première réunion avec la Commission européenne pour débattre de la politique économique et sociale

face à l'Acte unique européen. Le résultat de cette réunion a été exprimé dans une position conjointe sur le dialogue social et les nouvelles technologies.

Depuis lors, nous avons développé plus de 60 initiatives conjointes dans le cadre de l'Union européenne au niveau du dialogue social transversal, dont, notamment, la négociation de six accords-cadres: trois appliqués sur la base de directives – sur le congé parental (1995), sur le travail à temps partiel (1997) et sur le travail à durée déterminée (1999) –, et trois accords dits autonomes qui sont appliqués par les partenaires sociaux – sur le télétravail (2002), sur le stress au travail (2004) et sur le harcèlement et la violence au travail (2007).

Ces deux types d'accords (les accords négociés par les partenaires sociaux et appliqués sur la base de directives, et les accords autonomes) revêtent une importance majeure car ils reflètent le statut de colégislateurs des partenaires sociaux au niveau des communautés que leur confèrent les articles 138 et 139 du Traité de l'Union européenne.

Au Portugal, la genèse de la concertation sociale – entre le gouvernement, les confédérations patronales et les centrales syndicales – puise ses origines dans une crise économique et financière. Au milieu des années quatre-vingts, nous avons créé le Conseil permanent de concertation sociale, puis en 1991 la Commission permanente de concertation sociale (CPCS). Au sein de cette commission, nous avons réalisé des accords tripartites sur de nombreux sujets, notamment la formation professionnelle, la sécurité et santé au travail, le salaire mensuel garanti, la sécurité sociale et la politique des revenus.

La négociation de ces accords, ainsi que leur mise en œuvre, traduisent la pleine reconnaissance du fait que la concertation sociale et le dialogue social sont des moyens efficaces, modernes et adaptés pour poser et régler les problèmes socio-professionnels qui existent au sein des entreprises et de la société et maintenir ainsi un climat d'entente sociale relative propice au développement du pays.

Le deuxième point que j'aimerais aborder est la promotion d'entreprises durables, non seulement dans la perspective abordée dans le rapport VI, mais surtout dans le cadre de l'accroissement souhaitable de la compétitivité des entreprises et du recours de plus en plus fréquent aux délocalisations.

Le maintien d'entreprises durables au sein de l'UE dépend surtout de conditions de concurrence qui leur permettent de maintenir des parts de marché et d'être compétitives par rapport à d'autres entreprises dans d'autres pays ou régions du monde – USA, Japon, Chine, Inde. Comme cela est dit dans le rapport VI, la productivité est la clé de la compétitivité.

En effet, la compétitivité des entreprises dépend dans une grande mesure de la façon dont elles peuvent articuler leurs facteurs de production en misant sur la productivité. Parmi les différents facteurs de production, le facteur main-d'œuvre, encadré par un système déterminé de relations du travail, est très important.

La façon plus rigide dont les relations de travail sont réglementées dans l'UE, par comparaison avec d'autres régions et avec les pays mentionnés plus haut, empêche les entreprises européennes d'être plus compétitives et de s'adapter aux exigences du marché international et aux impératifs de la mondialisation.

Au Portugal, la situation est particulièrement préoccupante, car la législation du travail est encore

moins adaptée aux exigences réelles du marché que la législation de la plupart des Etats Membres de l'UE.

Dans ce contexte, nous observons la fermeture d'entreprises ou leur délocalisation vers d'autres régions où les conditions de l'organisation des facteurs de production, et en l'occurrence de la main-d'œuvre, sont plus flexibles.

Au sein de l'Union européenne, nous nous apercevons qu'il y a une forte perte d'emplois, avec l'augmentation du chômage qui en résulte, et une incapacité croissante à attirer des investissements étrangers.

Ainsi, les partenaires sociaux, au sein de l'Union européenne et au Portugal tout particulièrement, doivent prendre en considération les nouvelles données économiques mondiales et s'adapter aux réalités à travers un dialogue social tourné vers l'avenir et non vers le passé, afin d'éviter une dégradation de la situation et de garantir le maintien de niveaux de compétitivité suffisants.

Sr. AGUILAR ARCE (*trabajador, Costa Rica*)

Permítame felicitarle a usted, a los Vicepresidentes y asistentes a esta 96.^a reunión de la Conferencia y transmitir el saludo fraterno y el mensaje de amistad y solidaridad en nombre de la clase trabajadora de Costa Rica.

La Memoria del Director General es en sí un tema apasionante para quienes venimos del centro del continente americano, de países pequeños y con grandes problemas, para quienes el desarrollo sostenible y el trabajo decente, como una condición para lograrlo, constituyen un verdadero desafío y una esperanza para cambiar la situación que estamos afrontando, consecuencia del modelo económico implantado durante un cuarto de siglo y que tiene sumergida a nuestra subregión en la desigualdad y la inequidad.

Con una población cercana a 35 millones de personas en centroamérica, un 55 por ciento vive en la pobreza y el 23 por ciento en la pobreza extrema. La indigencia alcanza cifras excesivamente altas, que oscilan desde el 8,2 hasta el 54 por ciento entre los distintos países. He ahí el resultado de un elevado nivel de desigualdad.

La medición, según el coeficiente de Gini, oscila entre el 0,405 y el 0,720, siendo más desiguales, por supuesto, las sociedades que están cercanas a la última cifra.

El desarrollo humano no puede alcanzarse sin mecanismos eficaces y eficientes en torno a la distribución de la riqueza para que se genere el acceso a las oportunidades para todas las personas.

El modelo económico al que hemos hecho referencia excluye a las grandes mayorías, concentra el capital en mano de unos pocos y afecta en mayor grado a las zonas rurales.

Además de la falta de ingresos, la pobreza se manifiesta en imposibilidad de acceder a tierra, capital, crédito, tecnología, educación, servicios básicos de salud, vivienda, etc. Esta genera de forma permanente hambre, nutrición deficiente, graves problemas de salud, incremento en la morbilidad y mortalidad, y potencia la discriminación y la exclusión social.

La pobreza, la desigualdad y la exclusión inciden fuertemente en la gobernabilidad y son un caldo de cultivo muy propicio para la inseguridad y la delincuencia.

Los Estados abandonaron su responsabilidad sobre el equilibrio y la distribución, su política económica restrictiva en torno a la inversión social pública los llevó a exonerar de responsabilidades fiscales a los sectores de mayor dinamismo económico. La carga tributaria es cercana al 13 por ciento del producto interno bruto en nuestra región, lo que imposibilita la solución a los problemas de infraestructura productiva, educación y salud como elementos de gran relevancia para el desarrollo humano sostenible.

La llamada focalización del gasto ha demostrado ser un instrumento inadecuado para resolver los problemas de pobreza. Las organizaciones sindicales creemos que es urgente la creación de empleo digno, de calidad, adecuadamente remunerado y con seguridad social.

El libre comercio y los tratados que se aprueban en ese campo, lejos de resolver problemas, más bien los agigantan. Las inversiones no tienen encadenamientos ni productivos ni fiscales, y aunque se produzca una alta inversión extranjera directa, ésta no genera desarrollo en el interior de nuestros países.

Un ejemplo de ello lo encontramos en Costa Rica. Por varios años se han desarrollado megaproyectos turísticos en nuestra provincia de Guanacaste y, sin embargo, ésta es la segunda más pobre del país.

En América Central y el Caribe compartimos el criterio, expresado en la Plataforma Laboral de las Américas, de que para resolver los problemas reales de los pueblos hay que poner en marcha una economía de nuevo enfoque, que impulse un desarrollo sostenible y coloque en el centro el pleno empleo y el trabajo digno, reconociendo un rol activo del Estado.

En la región, las tasas de informalidad oscilan entre el 42 y el 59 por ciento. El 41 por ciento de la fuerza laboral no ha completado la educación primaria, y los trabajadores con una educación post-secundaria representan sólo el 12 por ciento.

El empleo está sujeto a bajas remuneraciones, ausencia de derechos, desprotección social, desigualdad de género, y las mujeres jóvenes se ven mayormente afectadas.

Hemos participado en el diálogo tripartito centroamericano. Sus resultados son la Agenda Laboral de Santo Domingo y el Acuerdo Tripartito de Tegucigalpa, donde se acordó impulsar ante los Jefes de Estado la incorporación del objetivo de creación del trabajo decente.

Quisiera, por razones de tiempo, finalizar diciendo que sólo con derechos sindicales claros y contundentes podremos avanzar. Este es un problema que existe en la región y nuestro país no es excepción de ninguna de estas situaciones a las que he hecho referencia.

M. GUIRO (*travailleur, Sénégal*)

C'est avec un réel plaisir que je prends la parole à l'occasion de la 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail pour apporter la contribution des travailleurs du Sénégal au débat important des points inscrits à l'ordre du jour.

Je le fais avec d'autant plus de plaisir que cette année l'Organisation internationale du Travail fait honneur à notre pays, le Sénégal, en invitant à cette présente session son Président de la République, Maître Abdoulaye Wade.

Le Sénégal, vous le savez, est un pays riche d'une longue tradition syndicale et de dialogue social, et

l'ensemble des partenaires sociaux, nonobstant certaines difficultés, œuvrent à consolider cet acquis majeur afin d'assurer le développement économique et social de notre pays dans un climat apaisé.

La présente session de la Conférence internationale du Travail nous donne l'opportunité d'aborder l'une des questions essentielles de l'Agenda de l'OIT, à savoir le travail décent.

En effet, l'humanité traverse une des crises les plus aiguës de son histoire à cause de la pauvreté qui frappe d'importantes couches de la population mondiale. Dans tous les continents, des millions de personnes se voient exclues des systèmes de couverture sociale, de santé et d'éducation tout simplement parce qu'ils n'ont pas de moyens de subsistance.

Aujourd'hui, la mondialisation a entraîné un coût très élevé pour les travailleurs, non seulement dans les régions marginalisées, mais aussi dans les pays où elle est considérée comme un succès. En Afrique, dès l'avènement du modèle néolibéral, tous les indicateurs sociaux du bien-être et des conditions de travail ont subi une détérioration marquée par le chômage, la précarité de l'emploi, la réduction de la qualité de la vie, la pauvreté persistante, l'inégalité sociale croissante.

L'insistance à réduire les coûts de la main-d'œuvre et à la précariser, ainsi que les inégalités fondées sur le sexe ou l'origine sociale, raciale et ethnique présentées comme des incitations à l'investissement, remettent gravement en question la viabilité de la pérennité de l'emploi et les systèmes de sécurité sociale; ils réduisent les droits des travailleurs à de simples énoncés de principe, ce qui a pour effet de fragiliser le dialogue social.

Des millions de travailleuses et de travailleurs sont forcés au chômage, poussés à la pauvreté, plongés dans la précarité et la flexibilité de l'emploi.

Monsieur le Président, la réalisation de l'emploi décent dans les pays en développement représente une préoccupation majeure des organisations syndicales de travailleuses et de travailleurs. La création d'emplois décents et durables ne peut se réaliser sans un climat apaisé et une prise en compte conséquente des questions d'intérêt général par les partenaires sociaux, gouvernements, employeurs et travailleurs. Aussi, le dialogue social est-il un instrument fondamental pour l'aptitude de nos pays au renforcement de la croissance et du développement.

L'emploi étant au cœur de tout développement, plusieurs conditions devront être réunies pour y parvenir.

Pour résoudre les problèmes réels d'emploi, il faut établir une économie fondée sur une approche nouvelle capable de promouvoir le développement durable et de s'attacher à atteindre le plein emploi et le travail décent.

Dans ce cadre, l'Etat, premier employeur, doit jouer un rôle actif. Pour garantir le plein emploi, il nous faut assurer la convergence d'un ensemble de politiques dans la sphère macroéconomique, dans l'investissement, l'innovation technologique, les infrastructures, l'utilisation rationnelle des ressources naturelles et environnementales, les politiques ayant trait au commerce, la production, l'émigration, l'enseignement et la sécurité sociale, tout comme il faut également faire preuve de responsabilité sociale à l'égard des tâches domestiques et de la procréation.

Il faut créer des fonds structurels destinés à aider les régions les moins favorisées et à stimuler la compétitivité des Etats sur la base de la promotion du travail décent et la reconversion économique. Les pays développés ont une responsabilité pour ce qui est de l'élimination des asymétries qui existent entre nos nations. Les blocs sous-régionaux doivent créer des fonds d'investissement pour des projets de production et des programmes sociaux.

Il faut constituer également des fonds sociaux universels pour éradiquer la faim et la pauvreté, des fonds pour la formation afin de garantir à tous les travailleuses et travailleurs l'acquisition et la mise à jour des compétences nécessaires leur permettant de réaliser leur plein potentiel et d'accéder à un emploi de qualité, ainsi que des fonds de santé publique pour éliminer le VIH/SIDA.

Les entreprises doivent assumer leur responsabilité sociale et leur engagement au regard du développement intégral de la société; en ce sens,

elles devront avoir activement recours au dialogue tripartite et multipartite à l'échelle nationale et internationale.

Dans un autre domaine, la sécurité sociale, en tant que droit de la personne, est une responsabilité incontournable de l'Etat. Aujourd'hui, nous constatons que des millions de travailleurs à travers le monde sont exclus du système de santé et de sécurité sociale; il est donc urgent de renforcer la sécurité sociale en revenant au principe d'universalité, de solidarité des prestations, en particulier pour les enfants et les personnes âgées.

Nous pensons que la réalisation du travail décent reste un défi majeur de l'Organisation internationale du Travail, que celle-ci doit relever en construisant une forte solidarité en son sein, mais également en développant des alliances fortes avec ses partenaires.

(The Conference adjourned at 1.45 p.m.)

Sixteenth sitting

Wednesday, 13 June 2007, 2.40 p.m.

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

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

The PRESIDENT

I call to order the sixteenth sitting of this session of the Conference. We shall open the afternoon by continuing the 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. RACHMAN (*Employer, Indonesia*)

High unemployment and poverty are still very prevalent in Indonesia. In order to remedy these adverse conditions, Indonesia needs to take serious action to further a business-friendly environment for investment. Indeed, many companies are still burdened by high costs and low productivity. Therefore, the Government's efforts must be directed at improving the infrastructure and striving for more effective policies and law enforcement. For their part employers and workers must play their roles in achieving greater sustainability, employability and productivity in business and industry. This naturally includes promoting harmonious labour relations and implementing human rights at the workplace. As we know, the international market and the business world are always very aware of and concerned by human rights issues, especially with regard to discrimination and child labour.

Core policies to guarantee the implementation of human rights and non-discrimination at the workplace have long been provided by the Indonesian Government. Having ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Indonesian Government enacted the Manpower Act No.13/2003 with specific provisions on equal employment opportunity in its articles 5 and 6. These provisions constitute the basis of the national strategy for equal rights and non-discrimination at the workplace.

Furthermore, guidelines for equal employment opportunity have been developed in tripartite consultations to provide directions to companies on

how to implement equal employment opportunity provisions. The Indonesian Employers' Association (APINDO) has taken part in formulating the guidelines and has actively motivated the business community to implement them accordingly. These actions reflect the importance that the Indonesian Employers' Association attaches to the Government's policy with regard to equal employment opportunity, which it considers a top priority.

Indonesian employers also appreciate the need for non-discrimination and the principle of equal wages for male and female workers. Nowadays, companies have implemented equal payment based on productivity and performance. Therefore, being able to assess and measure productivity is crucial for both management and the workers.

Indonesian employers fully respect the principle of non-discrimination, equal employment opportunity and the need to protect children from exploitation in the world of work. These issues have been addressed by the Indonesian Employers' Association by appointing oversight teams and developing strategic plans of action. We have also developed programmes to enhance the participation of women and former child workers in entrepreneurship projects in the world of work.

It is important to acknowledge here the key contribution that the ILO has made to the implementation of human rights at the workplace in Indonesia. Its technical assistance and expertise in the realization of this process are highly appreciated. I therefore hope that the ILO will its work to assist and empower the industrial relations constituents in Indonesia.

In conclusion, I am convinced that the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference will create opportunities to further enhance dialogue between the social partners, the trade unions and the Government in generally solving all industrial relations problems. We hope that, by overcoming the problems of poverty and unemployment and by creating a conducive investment climate, the Indonesian Employers' Association will continue to play a leading role in the future.

Original German: Ms. MAREK (Secretary of State, Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, Austria)

In my statement, I would like to focus on two issues which are important to Austria, which are: sustainability and equality at work.

Austria has always been a very strong protagonist of sustainable growth, and has always said that economic, social and environmental goals must be pursued simultaneously. The environmental sector

promises, not just in Austria but worldwide, a considerable potential for employment. It is therefore sensible for the ILO to look ahead and consider future developments in the labour markets in this context, in order to be able to plan appropriate labour market policy measures in good time.

In Austria, the environmental technology industry has become a very dynamic sector and has had positive effects on employment. According to a study carried out by the Austrian Economic Research Institute, in the year 2003, about 330 environmental technology enterprises had a turnover of 3.78 million euros and employed 17,200 people. Some 70 per cent of the enterprises indicated that in the next three years they foresee expansion of employment.

Sustainable development is a concept which simply cannot function without consistent policies in three areas – economic, social and environmental.

Austria supports the commitment of the Director-General to ensuring that the goal of decent work is appropriately taken into account in the multilateral system and in the context of United Nations reform.

We also welcome the fact that the International Labour Organization has launched a dialogue with the WTO, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and many other UN organizations in order to bring about a better social orientation of international economic and financial policies. The joint WTO/ILO study published in February on trade and employment we see as the first successful step in this process.

However, it is not the task of the ILO to determine social and economic policy but to carry out an analysis and to give pointers. We, as member States, are the ones who have to advocate socially acceptable policies in international forums.

The Report dwells on the activities of the IMF, and I would like to say a few words on this subject from the Austrian point of view. We fundamentally support an IMF policy which seeks not just short-term solutions for preventing and dealing with economic crises but also ways of achieving longer-term sustainability. Austria, therefore, feels it to be extremely important that the IMF, despite temporary financial difficulties, should not withdraw from the environmental aspect of its development agendas. Austria has also been very active in the emergency and natural disaster assistance in recent years.

I come now to the final subject which is important to me, which is equality at work. The Global Report this year analyses the reasons for discrimination described in Convention No. 111 and also other forms of discrimination. We feel it is high time to modernize and update Convention No. 111 and to extend its protection to cover more recent reasons for discrimination.

Austria is one of those countries that have already done a great deal to provide for equality of women under the law. In recent years, in applying EU law, we have further developed legal protection from all forms of discrimination on grounds of ethnic background, religious views, age, sexual orientation and disability, but legal measures are not enough on their own. Many do not know their own rights, and prejudices and stereotypes often lead to a situation whereby people are denied fair treatment. The Austrian Government has therefore decided, in the context of the European year of Equal Opportunities to carry out a comprehensive media campaign in order to raise public awareness of this problem.

Sr. BONOMI (*Ministro de Trabajo y Seguridad Social, Uruguay*)

Desde junio de 2005, cuando empecé a concurrir a esta Conferencia, vengo dando cuenta de los resultados de la lucha contra el desempleo emprendida por el Gobierno que, en Uruguay, asumió el 1.º de marzo de 2005.

Cuando ganamos las elecciones, había un 13,5 por ciento de desempleo, y durante la campaña electoral, cuando el desempleo se encontraba en un 14 o un 15 por ciento, habíamos establecido el compromiso de bajarlo a menos del 10 por ciento en cinco años de gobierno.

Ese objetivo lo logramos en un año y nueve meses. En diciembre de 2006 el desempleo había llegado al 9,1 por ciento. Luego subió un poco y enseguida volvió a bajar. Hoy está a 9,7 por ciento, consolidado y con fuerte tendencia a la baja.

La tasa de empleo es del 56 por ciento. La más alta de toda la historia del Uruguay. Y va a seguir mejorando sin lugar a dudas.

Pero el compromiso del Gobierno iba mucho más allá de bajar el desempleo. Pretendíamos avanzar fuertemente hacia el trabajo decente, formal, con mayores salarios, mejores condiciones de trabajo, con mayor seguridad y acceso a la Seguridad Social.

El salario real promedio en los 26 meses de gobierno, y luego de terminada la segunda ronda de los Consejos de Salarios, aumentó algo más del 14 por ciento. Y pensamos que vamos a terminar el año con un 17 por ciento acumulado: muy cerca del 20 por ciento con el que nos comprometimos al comienzo del gobierno. Cifra que vamos a alcanzar mucho antes de terminar el período.

En este contexto, señalamos la importancia que reviste para el Uruguay el haber sido seleccionado como país piloto en el esquema «ONE UN», así como la firma del Programa de Trabajo Decente con la OIT. Y en ese marco emprendimos varias acciones, así como acentuamos otras con las que ya habíamos empezado.

En la rendición de cuentas que se está discutiendo en estos momentos en el Parlamento incluimos dos elementos muy importantes para alcanzar los objetivos planteados: la concreción de la exclusividad de los inspectores de trabajo, con un aumento salarial del 134 por ciento, de forma que puedan vivir con un solo empleo y mediante el ejercicio de su profesión. Ello va acompañado de una reestructura de la Inspección General del Trabajo y la Seguridad Social, que se comenzó a realizar el 1.º de marzo pasado.

El segundo elemento que se incluyó en la rendición de cuentas fue la creación en el Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social de la Dirección Nacional de Seguridad Social, a los efectos de que se pueda cumplir con la misión encomendada por la Constitución de 1967, y que hasta 2005 no se había cumplido: la elaboración de las políticas de seguridad social desde el Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social. Paralelamente, desde hace tan sólo una semana en Uruguay comenzó el debate nacional sobre la seguridad social que tiene como finalidad buscar soluciones para sostener, modificar o diseñar nuevamente un sistema que entró en crisis.

Fuera de la rendición de cuentas, pero también en el correr de este año, vamos a presentar un proyecto de ley que nos permita transformar la Junta Nacional de Empleo en un verdadero Instituto Nacional de Empleo y Capacitación Profesional,

paraestatal y tripartito, que pueda llevar adelante la mayor parte de las políticas nacionales de empleo.

También estamos trabajando, para tenerlo resuelto este año, en un proyecto de ley de creación de un Sistema Nacional de Negociación, en el que se articulen cuatro elementos distintos y complementarios: la fijación del salario mínimo nacional por decreto y con consulta a las partes; la negociación tripartita por rama de trabajo, con el modelo de nuestros Consejos de Salarios; la negociación por empresa, bipartita, que permita profundizar lo que no se puede discutir en los Consejos de Salarios; y finalmente, que contenga un capítulo sobre prevención de conflictos.

Ninguna de esas iniciativas es sencilla. Incorporan un elemento que, aunque distintos sindicatos o federaciones de sindicatos lo practicaban, no está generalizado en nuestro sistema. Sin embargo, pensamos que vamos a conseguir fortalecer los instrumentos necesarios para seguir avanzando en la concreción del plan nacional sobre trabajo decente con el que nos comprometimos con la OIT.

El compromiso nacional sobre el empleo, los ingresos y las responsabilidades que con participación de trabajadores, empresarios y gobiernos comenzamos a instrumentar en el 2005, será una buena ayuda.

Finalmente, el otro instrumento importante será el Consejo Nacional de Economía, organismo tripartito y previsto en la Constitución de 1967 que comenzará a funcionar por primera vez en el Uruguay el próximo 21 de junio.

Mr. MASEMENE (*Minister of Labour and Employment, Lesotho*)

What a delight it is for me to address this august meeting of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. Let me congratulate the President and the Bureau and hope that his leadership and vision will steer this session of the Conference to its logical conclusion for posterity in the future. I also congratulate the Director-General for the informative, instructive and educative reports in various sectors.

I bring you warm greetings from the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho, the kingdom in the sky. We, Lesotho, are glad to participate in this important Conference. For any social development to be successful, it should be grounded in an electoral model which is acceptable to all social partners, political activists, political leaders and role players.

After 1998, Lesotho engaged in dialogue, as political history has indicated that, after every election after independence, there would be a grievance or unfair elections and an independent local commission was constitutionalized but, be that as it may, even though it was conducted by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), there was no success. There was dialogue for up to five years when the mixed members proportional representation was put into place in the 2002 elections, which witnessed an emergence of a more representative Parliament, including the ruling party. After the 17 February 2007 elections, the same electoral model witnessed a more representative parliament.

Therefore peace and stability are the key for all issues that pertain to labour. As one of the founders of the Pan-Africa said "Seek ye first the political kingdom", and then the issues of labour and the issues of the economic kingdom would follow. I also echo those African leaders who indicate that there is

a need to amend the Constitution of the ILO so that Africa can have its democratic representation and its voice because most of the labour force and most raw materials come from Africa. We need to guide this globalized world towards a fair share and a fair voice on issues that affect us.

On the Decent Work Country Programmes, we are grateful that Lesotho has been elected as a beneficiary.

The five-pronged youth programme is up and running. Of the total population, 40 per cent of Lesotho youth are unemployed. Global warming and desertification have even affected retrenchments, causing the factories and the mines to raise their unemployment rates in Lesotho. But for the youth, the Commonwealth and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have supported the inception of the programme under the Decent Work Country Programme, whereby 1,500 youths will be trained to be able to start up as entrepreneurs, start their own businesses and improve their businesses. Before we came here, there was an ILO mission to ensure that factories better work for the factories had become more competitive and productive so that Lesotho could be the best-sourcing destination in the Government's industry. However, in other areas such as social dialogue, the social institutions of Lesotho still require strengthening because it is only in peace and stability that the workers' organizations, workers' trade unions, Government and civil society can sit together and determine how to improve their quality of life. Consequently, there is a need in this particular area.

However, the Government wishes to ensure that social protection, social security, is the key because when any man or woman is still productively employed, there must be a safety net for when old age comes, as well as for when he is unemployed, even in the formal sector. So that is another area in which the Government has asked that, at the dawn of this year, there should be policy development.

On HIV/AIDS, Lesotho, through the King and the Prime Minister, led the leaders' campaign, as you will be aware. The pandemic is present in the mountain kingdom. And this campaign is geared to identifying the status of each individual, whereby, if one is positive, they can have access to treatment and support here, while those who are negative can retain their status.

We do not have any doubt that we shall win this battle. However, we note that the support of the international community is of key interest. We do not have any doubt that together we can win, we shall overcome, and labour is the key to development.

Lesotho is also ensuring that there is major legislation on the issue of non-discrimination, for this particular reason.

Sr. FERRER DUFOL (*empleador, España*)

Permítanme felicitar al señor Presidente y también a los Vicepresidentes por su elección para dirigir los trabajos de esta reunión de la Conferencia.

Las organizaciones empresariales otorgan especial relevancia a las discusiones de esta reunión de la Conferencia, al haber incluido en su orden del día el debate sobre las empresas sostenibles. La promoción de empresas competitivas que fortalezcan su aportación y viabilidad más allá del corto plazo resulta fundamental. Sólo así podremos estar en condiciones de generar un empleo productivo y

digno que redunde en bienestar para el conjunto de nuestras sociedades.

También se han discutido cuestiones relativas a la mejora de la gobernanza institucional de la OIT y su papel e influencia futura en el entorno internacional.

Con ello, se ha buscado marcar las pautas de funcionamiento para mejorar la eficacia de esta casa, vinculando su actividad a los retos que para los Estados plantea un contexto globalizado.

Las organizaciones empresariales españolas somos conscientes de las dificultades de adaptación de una organización como la OIT, y por eso valoramos y apoyamos el esfuerzo realizado, esperando que sienta las bases para dar una respuesta más eficiente a los nuevos desafíos.

Para ello, no obstante, insistimos en la necesidad de que este esfuerzo se vea acompañado por otro impulso que permita superar inercias que arrastramos del pasado.

Es importante transformar una dinámica de excesiva producción normativa en otra de apoyo, asistencia y cooperación internacional más efectiva para preservar el respeto de los derechos sociales básicos.

En este sentido, observamos con preocupación la aparición en determinadas áreas geográficas, especialmente en América Latina, de nuevas tendencias que, cuestionando tanto las reglas del mercado como los beneficios de una mayor integración económica, abordan políticas restrictivas que vulneran libertades individuales y económicas. Por ello, y frente a la amenaza de injerencias abusivas, nunca insistiremos lo suficiente en la importancia de respetar la libertad de los individuos, la libre empresa y la promoción del espíritu empresarial; sólo así podremos obtener logros en el ámbito social y económico para erradicar la pobreza y las desigualdades.

Precisamente la Memoria del Director General contiene un completo estudio relativo a los retos que plantea el refuerzo de la igualdad en el trabajo. Nuestra organización parte de la convicción de que la igualdad de oportunidades y la no discriminación constituyen las bases para el progreso económico y social.

Además, consideramos que los principios de mérito y capacidad se erigen en una piedra angular de la lucha contra las discriminaciones. Por esta razón, nos preocupan las tendencias que abogan por introducir elementos de discriminación forzada que rebajan el valor de estos dos principios y que suponen, a nuestro juicio, un paso atrás en la consecución de este progreso.

Este año también se ha logrado alcanzar un consenso importante en torno a un futuro instrumento internacional en el sector pesquero de gran importancia en la actividad económica de nuestro país. Sólo a través de los esfuerzos realizados en el marco del diálogo tripartito de la OIT se ha podido obtener un instrumento aceptable para todos.

En este sentido, permítanme una reflexión final sobre la necesidad de estimular el desarrollo del diálogo social. Los empresarios españoles comparecemos ante esta reunión de la Conferencia con la satisfacción de haber dado pasos importantes en este ámbito.

El reciente acuerdo que hemos suscrito con el Gobierno y con las organizaciones sindicales para mejorar la situación de nuestro mercado de trabajo comienza a dar resultados visibles en términos de mejora del empleo y de la estabilidad. Del mismo

modo, hemos alcanzado otro acuerdo para la modernización de nuestro sistema de seguridad social que servirá para reforzar su viabilidad atendiendo a los retos derivados de los cambios demográficos.

Ninguno de estos resultados hubiera sido posible sin la existencia de una tradición de concertación que facilita reformas, quizá no radicales pero graduales y permanentes, de nuestro marco regulador. Sin embargo, es preciso tener en cuenta que para lograr avances reales en esa dirección es necesario, además de madurez, un ejercicio de responsabilidad en los interlocutores sociales.

Creemos que la OIT debe jugar un papel importante en la creación de un entorno que estimule actitudes favorables al cambio en los distintos contextos sociales; sólo así se podrán superar actitudes de recelo y promover la transición hacia un modelo de relaciones laborales eficientes y adaptado a la realidad en la que opera. En la consecución de este objetivo cuentan con nuestra activa colaboración y la más absoluta disponibilidad.

Mr. EDSTRÖM (*Worker, Sweden*)

In his introductory Report to this session of the International Labour Conference entitled *Decent work for sustainable development*, the Director-General argues that social protection cannot be regarded as solely a cost and makes several references to the Nordic countries as examples showing that high social equity and protection and high economic growth and competitiveness go hand in hand. Representing the Swedish trade unions, I indeed agree with his description and the notion that this requires policies that are well thought out with the support and involvement of organized business and labour.

Regrettably, the new liberal-conservative Government in Sweden is now taking steps that go contrary to the above-described model for sustainable development. Not only have large tax reductions been made which mainly benefit the already most wealthy part of the population, but at the same time the level of social protection been reduced for unemployed and sick people. This unfair policy will raise inequalities in Sweden between the rich and poor. Unemployed persons under the age of 25 will, in addition, face age discrimination as they will have an even further decrease in their unemployment benefits, despite the fact that they pay the same level of contributions to the system as older workers. The Government has rushed through its proposals without any analysis of whether ratified ILO Conventions will be violated or not and has given the trade unions just a couple of weeks to respond to its proposals – thereby, in practice, undermining tripartism.

In addition, the Government has dramatically increased workers' individual payments to the unemployment benefits system, with the effect that tens of thousands of workers are now leaving the unemployment system and/or abandoning their trade union membership. Obviously, trade unions seem to have become targets rather than partners in social dialogue. The unfairness is also evident by the fact that workers have to pay more to the unemployment benefits system if the sector they work in is characterized by higher unemployment compared to other sectors, which specifically is affecting low-income workers in sectors with insecure and temporary employment contracts, often dominated by women.

Apparently, what we see in Sweden right now is a redefinition of the concept of "flexicurity", whereby

the Government believes that by reducing social protection for certain groups they will be forced to take any job available. But a problem here is that the jobs that match their qualifications are not available and the number of people who in future can have access to retraining activities is now reduced.

I question whether the flexibility needed in advanced, developed economies will be better achieved if workers become more insecure in the labour market. This question is relevant not only in relation to Sweden but also to France, Australia and other countries. Our trade union experience tells us that flexibility can best be achieved through collective bargaining with strong social partners, that are best placed to adapt to the specific circumstances within their sectors.

Violations of the fundamental principles of freedom of association regrettably continue to be a dominant theme discussed during this Conference. But it is indeed both surprising and worrying that we were not able to discuss Colombia in the Committee on the Application of standards. According to the Colombian trade unions, grave violations of trade union rights continue and the agreement reached during the Conference last year has not been respected by the Government. What does this signal to the world outside the ILO?

Again, the Director-General has provided us with a Report on the continuing deteriorating situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. The horrifying picture involves an accelerated economic crisis, with seven out of ten households in poverty and only one out of three persons in employment. In our view, the illegal settlements and the wall built in Palestinian territory are unacceptable and should be dismantled immediately. We welcome increased ILO efforts in this area.

Let me conclude by stressing that, if we remain serious about strengthening the ILO's capacity, governments in all member States need to promote in practice genuine social dialogue and tripartism.

Sr. COLMENARES (*Ministro de Trabajo y Previsión Social, Guatemala*)

Quiero felicitar al señor Director General por haber seleccionado el trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible como tema central de su Memoria, lo que nos permitirá reconocer la mejor manera de lograr un verdadero concepto de trabajo decente para todos.

Un mundo en constante cambio y evolución necesita la modernización de las relaciones laborales e instituciones más sólidas y eficaces. Reconocemos que la promoción del trabajo decente requiere, entre otras cosas, la integración de políticas económicas, sociales, medioambientales y culturales, así como la contribución efectiva de todos los agentes interesados (los empleadores y los trabajadores), tanto del sector público como del privado, quienes conforman el núcleo central del desarrollo en este nuevo mundo globalizado y sin fronteras.

Este esfuerzo común permitirá enfrentar de mejor manera y lograr con éxito la solución de los enormes desafíos que hoy día se interponen en el camino hacia el establecimiento de un verdadero trabajo decente para todos.

Para Guatemala es indispensable lograr el trabajo conjunto y consensuado de los actores principales de nuestra sociedad para realizar los objetivos estratégicos de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo. En este contexto, apreciamos grandemente y

consideramos de mucho valor toda la cooperación técnica y financiera que hemos recibido. Su continuidad es necesaria para promover las normas, principios y derechos fundamentales que esta Organización ha determinado como necesarios dentro del concepto de trabajo decente.

El Programa de Trabajo Decente por país y su consecuencia, el Plan Nacional de Empleo y Trabajo Decente, debe ser desarrollado e implementado en total concordancia con la realidad particular de cada país. Es la condición para crear la herramienta básica e indispensable que Guatemala solicita a la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, a efecto de fundar las bases e iniciar acciones tendientes a crear mejores oportunidades para todos los sectores, mejorar las condiciones de trabajo y lograr una mayor eficacia en la protección social, así como permitir el fortalecimiento del tripartismo y del diálogo social, todos objetivos estratégicos del concepto ya mencionado.

Guatemala es consciente de la importancia de las normas internacionales del trabajo y el mecanismo de control de su aplicación, en la búsqueda de un trabajo decente para todos, porque permiten obtener la orientación y lineamiento necesarios para la correcta aplicación y cumplimiento de los compromisos adquiridos, buscando la obtención de mejores condiciones y el fortalecimiento de las relaciones laborales, cuyo éxito permitirá lograr un desarrollo económico y social para toda la población.

Compartimos pues la visión del Director General, que el sistema normativo de la Organización Internacional del Trabajo y su mecanismo de control debe continuar y ser fortalecido, incluyendo la adecuación del mismo a la realidad de cada país.

Así pues, hemos decidido comprometernos a realizar acciones concretas para aplicar las normas internacionales de trabajo de forma adecuada y eficaz, para garantizar que nuestro país cumple adecuadamente los estándares laborales internacionalmente reconocidos, aceptando que hay todavía mucho trabajo por delante en la promoción de las normas, su efectiva aplicación y la muy necesaria adecuación de la legislación nacional a las mismas, por lo que recalamos nuestra solicitud de apoyo y colaboración a la Organización Internacional del Trabajo, sin menoscabar el agradecimiento por lo que hasta la fecha hemos recibido.

En este sentido, es importante afirmar que el diálogo social tripartito es una de nuestras prioridades y trabajamos arduamente para fomentarlo, existiendo ya importantes instancias para lograr este objetivo. En efecto, para poder responder a las presiones y retos de la globalización debemos conformar una plataforma que permita lograr más y mejores acuerdos concertados, de donde saldrán políticas públicas para afrontar los problemas sociolaborales.

Finalizo mi intervención destacando el progreso de Guatemala en el camino hacia un desarrollo sostenible, incluidos integralmente los elementos económico, social y de medioambiente. Nuestro objetivo es que cada guatemalteco pueda aspirar a un trabajo productivo en condiciones de libertad, igualdad, seguridad y dignidad.

The PRESIDENT

I shall now suspend the seating in order to allow for the preparation of the High-level Panel on Tripartism and Social Dialogue.

(The sitting was suspended at 3.30 p.m. and resumed at 4.35 p.m.)

(Mr. Sulka takes the Chair.)

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE
ENTERPRISES: SUBMISSION, DISCUSSION
AND APPROVAL**

The PRESIDENT (Mr. SULKA)

We shall now resume the 16th sitting of the International Labour Conference.

As you were informed earlier, our next task is to examine the report of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises. This report is published in *Provisional Record* No. 15.

The Officers of the Committee were as follows: Chairperson, Mr. Andrew Annakin; Employer Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Antje Gerstein; Worker Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Cecilia Brighi; Reporter, Ms. Bettina Ungerer.

I give the floor to Ms. Ungerer to submit the report.

Ms. UNGERER (*Government, Netherlands; Reporter of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises*)

I am very pleased to be able to present to you for adoption the final report of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises. This report is an account of concerted efforts of all who have participated in this Committee, reflecting the sessions, the thoughts and the engagement of many people.

I would like to bring to your attention that the first three sections of the report are not a word by word account of everything that was said, but I intended to give a broader indication of the issues discussed and the arguments used. This was done in good faith and both the secretariat and I cross-checked by going back to the statements and the minutes taken during the sessions, to make sure that what is reported provides a good picture of what was said. We hope that you find that we have accurately reported on the work of this Committee.

I would like to turn now to the report itself, which consists of four parts. The introduction contains the record of the election of Officers, the introductory statement of the Office and the opening statements of Employers, Workers and Governments. The second part of the report represents a record of our discussions; the third section, the history of our amendments; and the last part, the Committee's conclusions. As I mentioned before, it reflects our combined efforts and I believe that I can say that in the process of obtaining these results we practised respect, dignity, empowerment and lots of dialogue.

I am still fascinated by the fact that we have come together as single individuals from so many countries representing different interests, different cultures and attitudes, and that we were able to find common ground on many issues. I will mention just a few here and you will find others in the report and our conclusions.

We acknowledged that sustainable enterprises play an important role in social and economic development, including poverty alleviation, employment creation and decent work, as well as environmental protection. If there are no enterprises, there will be no sustainable enterprises. But there are no "one-size-fits-all" solutions to the design and implementation of policies to promote sustainable enterprises. Policies, therefore, need to take account of

diversity without compromising the standards already achieved as in the areas of labour, human rights and the environment. Actions are needed to remove distortions at regional and multilateral levels and to assist developing countries to build their capacity to export value added products, manage change and develop a competitive industrial base.

Peace and stability and other enabling factors are necessary to nurture the formation and growth of sustainable enterprises. Women's economic empowerment is crucial for sustainable societies. Just a little anecdote, this paragraph was introduced by one of our male colleagues and we all stood behind him in this. Youth and disadvantaged groups need special support and inspiration. Education, training and skills development are very important and of benefit to both the workers and employers. Support is needed to incorporate enterprises from the informal sector into the formal sector. Each social partner has a role to play and their contributions will be more effective when developed in an environment of cooperation. And, last but not least, the ILO, through its tripartite structure and guided by its mandate, budget and comparative advantage, is uniquely placed to make an important contribution through its Decent Work Agenda to the promotion of sustainable enterprises, and sustainable development, working together with others within the United Nations family and outside.

The sessions of this Committee were result-oriented and some of the discussions were tough. But I was happy to see that we never lost our sense of humour and the spirit of trying to find common ground. That can be attributed to a large extent to our Chairperson, Mr. Andrew Annakin, Government member of New Zealand. I would like to thank him for his leadership, knowledge and wonderful sense of humour, which, along with his drive for us to stay focused, were instrumental in helping the Committee complete its work.

But, of course, we could not have done it without the input and efforts from both our Vice-Chairpersons and their teams who, in the spirit of this Committee, showed us what empowered women can do. I would like to express my appreciation and thanks to both the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Antje Gerstein, from Germany, the Worker Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Cecilia Brighi, from Italy.

I would also like to recall the contribution of all Government, Workers' and Employers' delegates that worked together with us in the room and in various submeetings, as well as the members of the Drafting Committee, to provide input, spending many hours in rooms without windows, although we are residing in a beautiful location here that marries mountains and water with luscious vegetation, feeding on junk food and candies, chocolate, nuts and chips and lots of coffee to stay focused.

I would also like to acknowledge the tremendous accomplishment of the secretariat, which worked tirelessly under Mr. Michael Henriques, the representative of the Secretary-General of the International Labour Conference, to provide us with the text in front of us. I would like to thank them for their dedication, commitment and assistance in the long hours of work they put in, as well as the support they provided to me as Reporter.

And, last but not least, I would like to honour the work that was done by those we hardly ever get to see: interpreters and translators, not only during our

meetings and sessions that enabled us to communicate across borders and continents, but also to get the text ready in various languages.

I would like to finish my speech now by sharing with you one moment that we might take with us and recall when faced with difficult negotiations to feed on its positive energy, and that was the moment when we went back to paragraph 11(7), you can all read it afterwards. You find that in the conclusions, at the end of a long, long, long day, a moment dreaded by many in the room, since no consensus had been reached the first time around. At that time, the atmosphere had been emphasized by the forces of nature, producing thunder and lightning and pouring rain. So it was on that Friday evening around 8.30 p.m. that the air was crackling again and then the amendment sailed through in one smooth ride and was adopted without changes. I have to say that many efforts had been undertaken behind the scene, but the special thing was that everyone really wanted to find common ground. That is what made this moment so elevating and people were so happy that they started to clap spontaneously.

I hope that you might take this spirit with you to your countries to let it flow into the work that will be needed to help make the content of those conclusions a reality.

Original German: Ms. GERSTEIN (Employer, Germany; Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises)

After hard but constructive discussion, the Committee produced a resolution with a number of notable achievements. It emphasized the important role of the private sector in economic and social development. It also acknowledged some of the key determinants of enterprise sustainability such as the legitimate quest for profit, one of the key drivers of economic growth. It clearly outlined the roles of the different actors: business, government and workers. It signalled a growing consensus around the key pillars needed for sustainable enterprises, and importantly reaffirmed the role of the ILO in this area and provided guidance for the future. This was indeed a good day's work.

If the policy goal of this Organization is achieving decent work for all then we were discussing the "hard goods" of this objective. Enterprise creation is the prerequisite to productive employment and decent work. Without enterprise creation and development, decent work is not possible.

I think all parties to the debate understood this, which was clear from how they constructively approached the discussions. This was an employer-driven topic, with three key objectives.

First, we wanted a debate at Conference level on the environment needed for enterprise creation and development, the vital ingredients of sustainability. Second, to clarify the different roles of the actors. Finally, within the context of the United Nations reform, to use the debate as an important and timely opportunity to guide and reinforce the existing work of the house in this area.

Let me focus my remarks on these objectives. Concerning the environment needed for sustainable enterprises, the Committee outlined 17 pillars of basic conditions that are necessary for enterprise creation and development, including the importance of property rights, establishing an entrepreneurial culture, putting in place an enabling legal and regu-

latory environment and the rule of law. This is the first time these basic principles have been so clearly acknowledged and outlined in an ILO document.

We are very encouraged by the consensus in the Committee around these pillars or basic principles, and believe that they provide a very clear and useful framework to guide policy at the national level. Importantly, the resolution underlines that these different pillars are not an à la carte menu but comprise a package; they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions. All parties need to commit themselves to each of these pillars and proceed with their implementation. Of course, this needs to be done in line with national capacities and realities. Furthermore, the debate served as a useful opportunity to clarify the roles of the different actors. First, the role of business in our societies: to provide products and services that meet the needs and expectations of customers in a cost-effective way with a return on capital. That means profit and wealth creation that will allow these enterprises to sustain themselves. There, commitment beyond compliance with law is multifaceted. The principle of voluntarism with respect to corporate social responsibility was reaffirmed. Second, the principal role of governments is to create the enabling environment for the creation and equally importantly the development of sustainable enterprises. Third, is the crucial partnership of workers in these endeavours.

As this document was the result of, at times difficult, negotiation, there are naturally elements where we would have liked to have seen a different outcome. All parties struggled with the paragraph in the resolution dealing with trade, reflecting the different interests and perspectives on free trade and its impact. The emphasis on open economies and economic integration could have been much stronger in the text; unfortunately, the negative effects of trade, which do exist, were given too much prominence. Policies that economic integration have, in the last three decades, taken hundreds of millions from poverty and provided opportunities where none existed before. This message is a bit blurred, indeed the recent ILO/WTO joint study underlined this, noting that the economic and in particular employment gains of trade liberalization in the long run are largely positive, both in terms of quality and quantity. The call for conditionalities on both public procurement and lending was also introduced into this resolution. The language of the text is rather specific, narrow and prescriptive. This is unfortunate and the Employers do not support the message emanating from the paragraphs concerned.

Perhaps most importantly, this resolution confirms the mandate of the ILO in creating and developing sustainable enterprises. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises are the overwhelming majority of enterprises throughout the world; in a developing country, context, unfortunately, most of these enterprises work in the informal economy. This has to be the focus of the responses by the ILO and its partners. As the Director-General noted in his address to the Employers' group, the ILO needs to focus its work more in this area. We agree 100 per cent. Efforts are being made to develop tools and methodologies for enterprise creation and development, implement programmes and work closely with employers' organizations and their members. These are areas where the ILO is already working effectively. This private sector network, as noted during our discussions, is a unique comparative ad-

vantage of the ILO. We, as Employers, reaffirm our commitment to develop and strengthen further this already strong partnership. Working together and with others we can achieve our collective goal. At a time when the UN is undergoing major reform efforts, it is merely common sense to restate that the ILO must work with other organizations complementing comparative advantages and the critical mass of all concerned.

This year's discussion on the promotion of sustainable enterprises has been timely in its key messages and convergent with the conclusions emanating from the G8 Summit in Heiligendamm regarding growth and responsibility in the world economy. Whereas the Heiligendamm conclusions address rather abstract policy goals, the resolution before us specifically addresses governments, social partners and the ILO separately so that they each can see clearly where their responsibilities lie. This is its key strength.

I finally would like to thank the Office for its excellent preparation and work throughout this discussion, the Workers' spokesperson, Ms. Cecilia Brighi, and her group for their constructive approach, the Governments for their strong engagement and of course our Chairperson, the excellent Mr. Andrew Annakin, who steered us through to a successful outcome.

Let me finish with a direct quote from the resolution "business thrives where society thrives and vice versa". I feel that perfectly sums up our understanding of sustainability.

Ms. BRIGHI, (*Worker, Italy; Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises*)

Sustainability is an urgency for all, including for enterprises. Jobless economic growth, the financialization of the economy, accompanied by an increasing reduction in productive investments, and the primacy of shareholder's profits, are producing increasing income inequalities and a negative impact on employment, affecting its structure, size and long-term prospects. These tendencies lead to increasing levels of precarious employment, deterioration of working conditions, coupling between growth in wages and productivity, and the increasing violation of fundamental rights at work, in particular the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

These negative social trends are accompanied by alarming data on climate change and its harmful impact on living and working conditions, requiring urgent changes in production and consumption patterns. Our discussions and conclusions are therefore timely. They clearly indicate that the ILO and its constituents can be at the forefront of a renewed and coherent strategy for sustainable development and decent work "to ensure that the quality of ... future life (and employment) is maximized while safeguarding the sustainability of the planet".

Governments, Employers and Workers have all underlined that the ILO's future work on sustainable enterprises should be based on its mandate, budget and comparative advantage. The work needs to be "firmly grounded in its unique standard-setting role and in the Decent Work Agenda". Duplication of programmes that are better developed and resourced by other international organizations must be avoided.

From the local to the international level, tripartism, labour standards, social dialogue, industrial

relations and collective bargaining are the central instruments of our future work. The Decent Work Agenda and the Global Employment Agenda are providing relevant guidance in this regard.

Sustainability is not against the profitability of companies; on the contrary, as underlined by the conclusions of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises, it is the basis for economic viability, decent jobs, economic growth and sustainable development for all. For this aim, a set of rules, policies and programmes must be put into place, with the full participation of all ILO constituents. Each actor has to play a specific role to guide such a change and have the courage to respond positively to new challenges.

Our conclusions highlight the importance of good governance and of a regulatory framework that, on one hand, directs the profit motive towards socially and environmentally sustainable enterprise development, and on the other, brings to an end enterprise practices violating the principle of sustainability and guides the restructuring or phasing out of enterprises in a socially responsible way. While enterprises are different in size and legal structure, they should all adhere to the social, economic and environmental pillars of sustainability and fulfil the social responsibilities that come with property.

New rules and regulations, including taxation, incentives and public procurement procedures, should promote long-term productive investments and address the negative impact of the growing role of global financial markets and short-term, speculative investments oriented to short-term shareholder value maximization, which contradict the objectives of long-term investment, respect for workers' interests and protection of employment. That is why competition rules should ensure that labour laws are universally applicable and that companies cannot gain a competitive advantage by violating workers' rights or damaging the environment.

Extending the coverage of labour laws is not only good for workers, it is beneficial for companies. It prevents enterprises which respect the rule of law from being excluded from markets by those who lower their labour costs by violating labour standards. The ILO should therefore promote the ratification and application of the eight ILO core Conventions and the application of the Recommendations listed in the annex to our conclusions as being relevant to the promotion of sustainable enterprises.

Governments cannot and should not regulate everything, but they must create an institutional and regulatory framework for social dialogue and collective bargaining. These are essential instruments to enable workers to participate and gain a fair share in the benefits of economic activities and increased productivity. As underlined in our conclusions, governments should formulate effective policies at international level, including on debt relief, to promote the sustainable dimension of development and to help poor countries to create the fiscal space to invest in education, health, skills development and social protection as key ingredients for any sustainable enterprise.

Looking to the future and to the role of the ILO in promoting sustainable enterprises, our conclusions provide important guidance. With reference to these conclusions, we call on the Office to assess its practice and to work closely with the social partners in order to give effect to the conclusions along the lines of the Decent Work Agenda. We expect both the assessment outcome and implementation of the

conclusions to be submitted for discussion by the Governing Body.

The ILO should work with international institutions and governments to promote the orientation of microeconomic and trade policies towards decent work and employment creation, assisting developing countries to manage change and develop a sustainable competitive industrial base.

As stressed in our conclusions, the Office should build its knowledge base on emerging issues, including through microeconomic, trade and employment policies. It should facilitate the sharing of knowledge and practice across countries through training programmes with the ILO Turin Centre. Furthermore, it is suggested that the ILO should build a database on good practices on collective agreements and industrial relations, which could provide valuable information, technical assistance and guidance to the constituents. Our conclusions acknowledge the need to close the representational gap in enterprises and the need for the ILO to help to increase unionization levels in order to promote decent work, particularly in small and medium enterprises.

Our conclusions furthermore acknowledge the role of framework agreements and the need for the ILO to provide guidance to enterprises to promote responsible workplace practices along the supply chain. The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy are referenced as key instruments, particularly in developing countries where most work is outsourced or subcontracted. Similarly, the decision that the ILO should promote further discussion on the quality of private auditing standards, with the aim of reaching a coherent approach, is crucial to avoid false and misleading reporting initiatives.

We achieved unanimously agreed conclusions that will help us to promote our common objective of decent work. May I take the opportunity to thank, in particular, the Chairperson, the Office, for its tireless work, and my Worker colleagues who supported me throughout our discussions. Lastly, I want to thank the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Antje Gerstein. I think that such positive results were achieved partly because the discussion was led by two women, with a strong gender perspective on issues and problem solving.

Mr. ANNAKIN (*Government, New Zealand; Chairperson of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises*)

It has been my honour to chair the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises. This discussion was hugely important because of the substance and the timing. The topic of sustainable enterprises links closely with the wider topic of sustainable development regarding which we have seen a worldwide increase in public concern over recent years. So it is indeed timely for the ILO to take a close look at how the Decent Work Agenda connects with this global debate and how it can contribute to solutions. This was the central theme of Mr. Somavia's excellent Report to the Conference this year.

From our work, it is very clear that the role of enterprises, particularly sustainable enterprises, must be central to any strategy that addresses these challenges because it is, as our Committee's conclusions say, at the workplace that the three dimensions of

sustainability – economic, social and environmental – come together inseparably.

The challenge given to the Committee was to take stock of the international debate on the role of the private sector and sustainable enterprise in overall social and economic development, to assess the relevance and implications of recent trends for the Decent Work Agenda, to provide an ILO contribution to the debate and to give guidance to the Office on its work in this area. I think that the Committee more than met this challenge.

I will not cover in depth the substance of the Committee's conclusions; this has already been done ably by our Reporter, Ms. Bettina Ungerer, and by the Vice-Chairpersons. However, I will touch on some points of particular significance.

Firstly, the conclusions confirm the important contribution the ILO can make in promoting sustainable enterprises. They reiterate strong links with the Decent Work Agenda and its employment pillar, the Global Employment Agenda. They provide guidance on the right environment for sustainable enterprises, acknowledging that good practice combines the legitimate quest for profit with the need for development that respects human dignity and the environment and provides decent work. The conclusions then identify practices that characterize sustainable enterprises including social dialogue, good industrial relations, human resource development, working conditions, productivity, wages and shared benefits, CSR and corporate governance. The conclusions also provide guidance to governments and social partners on their roles in creating and supporting these enabling conditions.

Finally, the conclusions provide guidance to the ILO on future priorities in supporting the promotion of sustainable enterprises, including research activities, policy guidelines and tools, all within the context of the ILO's commitment to implementing effective Decent Work Country Programmes and within the wider context of UN reforms.

In my view, these are comprehensive, balanced and practical guidelines.

The Committee was greatly assisted by two enthusiastic and committed Vice-Chairpersons, Ms. Antje Gerstein for the Employers and Ms. Cecilia Brighi for the Workers. They both greatly assisted me in guiding the Committee and in maintaining the quality of the debate. I was also impressed by the exemplary human qualities they each demonstrated, particularly at difficult junctures in the discussions. Government members from all parts of the globe also brought a range of perspectives and expertise that added greatly to the richness of our discussions. I thank you all.

Turning now to the Secretariat, my thanks go to the representative of the Director-General, Mr. Michael Henriques, the deputy representative, Mr. David Lamotte, and the coordinator, Ms. Barbara Collins and all of her team. Their contributions were outstanding and invaluable. I also want to thank Graeme Buckley, the lead writer of the Office report, upon which our work was based. Also, without the highly professional team of interpreters and translators, who also had technical problems to deal with, we could not have functioned as a Committee. My thanks, too, to the excellent work of the drafting group.

In my view, these conclusions are potentially a watershed for the ILO for several reasons. Firstly, they set out a powerful case for all economies to

promote sustainable enterprises through social dialogue. Secondly, they embed the positive influence of entrepreneurship with the authority of the Decent Work Agenda. Thirdly, these conclusions give clear guidance to the ILO in how it can strengthen and prioritize its work programme towards promoting sustainable enterprises and decent work within current and future budget cycles.

These messages deserve to be communicated widely and enthusiastically by the ILO and its Members. I strongly urge the ILO to package the messages from these conclusions in a powerful way and to communicate them broadly outside of this house.

I therefore have no hesitation in recommending to the Conference that the conclusions of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises be adopted. Thank you and *kia ora!*

The PRESIDENT

The floor is now open for the general discussion of the report of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises.

Ms. GREENFIELD (*Worker, United States*)

The conclusions this Conference will adopt today emphasize that social dialogue, collective bargaining and enterprise sustainability are inseparable. As we made clear during our Committee's discussion, the link between dialogue, bargaining and sustainability flows from the very nature of private enterprises, regardless of their different sizes and forms. They all involve employers and workers engaged in the production of goods and services to satisfy the needs of society. Therefore, social dialogue in general – and collective bargaining in particular – enable enterprises to maximize the long-term needs of both parties with respect to both the creation of wealth and its equitable distribution. In addition, enterprises that engage in collective bargaining can help meet the challenges of sustainable development by maintaining their competitiveness, respecting genuine employment relationships, creating safe and healthy workplaces, and engaging in effective workforce skills development.

Our conclusions stress that Governments, enterprises and the social partners have important roles to play in promoting and implementing social dialogue, collective bargaining and sound industrial relations at all levels. In addition, we have highlighted that collective bargaining and social dialogue are equally important in large and multinational enterprises and in start-ups and micro- and small and medium enterprises. In multinationals, for example, collectively bargained framework agreements promote the conditions for sustainable practices across borders and throughout the supply chain. As the conclusions also recognize, social dialogue plays a vital role in transitioning from the informal to the formal economy – one of the greatest challenges of sustainability.

The importance of promoting social dialogue, workers' rights and collective bargaining in achieving enterprise sustainability should help shape the ILO's work in this crucial area. It should also help define the ILO's contribution to the global debate on defining the conditions for long-term economic and social growth.

Finally, we have stressed that achieving decent work happens only in an environment in which enterprises are sustainable, and so we have asked the

Office to assure, on an ongoing basis, that it incorporates into its Decent Work Country Programmes the sustainability principles outlined in these conclusions. We have also urged the Office to ensure that it strengthens its sustainable enterprise programmes in the field and fully involves workers in those efforts. In this way, promoting sustainability – and therefore social dialogue and collective bargaining – will remain at the heart of the ILO's mandate and its "comparative advantage".

Mr. GEORGE (*Worker, South Africa*)

The Declaration of Philadelphia states that "lasting peace can be established only if it is based on social justice". The ILO has a very specific mandate with regard to all national and international policy that has an impact on employment and collective bargaining. I quote from the Declaration of Philadelphia: "it is a responsibility of the International Labour Organization to examine and consider all international economic and financial policies and measures in the light of this fundamental objective".

The Committee on Sustainable Enterprises correctly concluded that monetary, fiscal and exchange policies should guarantee stable and predictable economic conditions in order to create more and better jobs and achieve long-term productive investment.

In my country, South Africa, more than 1 million public service workers have been on a protective strike for more than 11 days today, as we fight for more and better jobs and a living wage for all. The main reason for the current deadlock is that the monetary, fiscal and exchange rate policies are not giving priority to employment and social equity and have failed to address the challenge of growing inequality.

I am happy that my fellow Government and Employer members have agreed with the Workers in the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises that collective bargaining and the right to strike remain a fundamental method to determine wages, shared benefits and productivity.

The social partners in South Africa will have to meet very soon to discuss the challenges to stabilize the economic situation in our country to ensure that the working poor will also share in the economic growth of our country.

This is not only a challenge for my country but for many other developing countries. I would like to add that workers are committed to work together with government and employers across the world to halve unemployment and poverty by 2014.

In conclusion, the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises agreed that trade integration can lead to job dislocation, increased informality and growing income inequality, and government must discuss measures in consultation with the social parties in order to better assess and address the employment and decent work impact of these trade policies.

The Non-agricultural Market Access (NAMA) 11 Trade Ministers yesterday received a delegation of trade unions leaders from developing countries, and a joint declaration was issued by the parties to work together to ensure that the development needs of developing countries are taken into consideration in the next round of trade negotiations.

This is an encouraging step towards more global fairness and we hope also to gather broader support from others.

I would like to thank all the members of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises for their contribution and participation and sincerely hope that the ILO and the member States will make full use of the guidance of the conclusions.

Mr. ROYE (*Worker, India*)

A precondition for enterprise sustainability is people-oriented sustainable economic development. The Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development committed that, "Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and protecting and managing the natural resources base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development".

The essentiality of the Decent Work Agenda of the ILO must be comprehended in cohesion to this understanding. That without eradication of poverty there cannot be a conducive society for enterprises to sustain is borne out by the statement of the Director-General of the ILO in 2003. What constitutes one of the biggest obstacles to peace and social justice? The Declaration of Philadelphia, adopted by the ILO in 1944 and annexed to its Constitution, makes it clear: poverty. As the Declaration states, and I quote, "poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere".

Despite the "incentive war" led by the governments of developing countries in granting various concessions to attract foreign direct investment and foreign institutional investment, it neither brings much foreign capital nor generates employment in the countries concerned. Global capital mobility is characterized by absence of capital in production and dominance of capital in finance. To retain the confidence of international capital, the governments of developing countries have been resorting to steps to infringe upon the right to organize trade unions, the right to strike, the right to collective bargaining, job security, social security, etc. The growth of multinational corporations has mirrored the rise of globalization.

Ever-growing informalization of entrepreneurial activities in its different dimensions, and the result in informalization and casualization of employment have brought forth a serious industrial relations tension. This situation has been harming the workers in terms of skill formation, unionization, right to collective bargaining and decent wage, among others.

The practices of engaging very poorly paid contract workers, hiring and firing workers at will, outsourcing, subcontracting, etc., are as a serious challenge to the trade union movement. It has been very aptly said, and I quote, "If there is one thing that undermines the declared position of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, it is excessive and uncontrolled use of contract and agency labour."

Last, but not least, enterprise sustainability cannot be defined only in the confines of productivity and profit. Undermining the interest of labour, an essential and also a living input of production, enterprises cannot attain sustainability. In the face of a perverse privatization onslaught, state-owned enterprises, particularly in developing countries, are victims of hostile policies and the denial of a level playing field. In recognition of the commendable contribution of state-owned enterprises in socio-economic development, corporate social responsibility, better recognition of the right to organize and the right to

collective bargaining and sustainability of state-owned enterprises must be promoted with priority.

Finally, the Prime Minister of India, while addressing the Confederation of Indian Industry, recently said, and I quote, "When I read about the growing number of Indian millionaires and billionaires, about Indian companies buying up multinationals abroad [...] about soaring CEO compensations, I know that you have benefited from the growth process [...]. However, even to win this race, you must work in a harmonious environment, an environment in which all citizens feel equally involved in the processes of economic growth; an environment in which each citizen sees hope for a better future for him and for his or her children."

Lastly, with this submission I commend the adopted conclusions of the Committee.

Original Spanish: Ms. PAMPHIL (Government, Bolivian Republic of Venezuela)

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela would like to greet all the distinguished delegates who are participating in this important event, with a view to adopting as part of the ILO Conference, the draft resolution containing the conclusions reached in the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises.

Our Government is well aware that the whole concept of sustainable enterprises is related to the general approach to sustainable development, which requires the integration of the three fundamental pillars of development, namely, economic growth, social development and environmental aspects.

We attach importance, of course, to the contribution and work of the ILO in promoting the development of coherent policies and strategies which promote decent work.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, through its own legal system, respects and implements many of the aspects already contained in the conclusions which are set out in the draft resolution. We take part in this process with a great deal of interest and commitment in order to promote the adoption of the conclusions which, as such, are not binding in nature.

However, our Government has decided to enter some reservations on the conclusions, because they cover certain issues that go above and beyond the competence of the ILO, issues such as macroeconomic stability and the sound management of the economy, trade and economic integration, which I think are under the remit of other international bodies. Furthermore, we do not think that promoting partnership with Bretton Woods institutions and other international and regional agencies, which have different agendas to those which this Organization should have, should be highlighted as being the role of the ILO, under the pretext of promoting sustainable enterprises and decent work.

In addition, we are concerned that if we establish in these conclusions a so-called flexible working environment and flexibility and protection to manage changes in market conditions, this might lead to the undesired labour flexibility which would be to the detriment of workers.

We think that these conclusions could be used as some sort of point of reference, but should never be followed up by the ILO with a view to being complied with by member States.

Despite all these reservations, my Government is convinced, and I wanted to make this quite clear before the whole international community, that it is

vital to promote sustainable enterprises with a view to ensuring decent work, which is why we need responsible and decent enterprises and employers who are committed to the country they are working in and who respect the labour force working for them, without which they would not be able to remain in the market, and far less be sustainable market.

I request that these reservations be reflected in the record of this meeting.

Mr. DE LEEUW (*Worker, Belgium*)

After long and intense work, in a difficult process, including over, it must be like 200, amendments, we feel we have succeeded in drafting a document that has brought our different visions closer.

For us, any discussion on sustainable enterprises should not focus exclusively on creating the enabling environment for enterprises to flourish.

It is a fact that the rules of the global economy were changed in favour of businesses and give them unprecedented freedom from national regulations. Now, the sustainable enterprise discussion should promote the integration of the three components of sustainable development. Sustainable enterprises will become, given such an environment, a principal source of creation of wealth, employment and decent work, while also contributing to poverty eradication and social cohesion and changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns.

The instruments that we have developed with the ILO over all these years, in the form of Conventions and Recommendations, should become our prime building tools in doing so, thus guaranteeing that enterprise development becomes the development of sustainable enterprises.

Governments have a leading role to play but not only in setting basic conditions, including the implementation and enforcement of labour and environmental standards. They have a responsibility to behave as sustainable enterprises themselves through their procurement policies and especially through an open, democratic, transparent policy that respects social dialogue.

We reiterate the important role and responsibility the ILO has in using its competitive advantage to mainstream the Decent Work Agenda throughout other United Nations agencies and also throughout the Bretton Woods institutions, the OECD and the WTO. We hope the work done over the last weeks becomes an essential stepping stone in achieving this mainstreaming. Thank you all for your work.

Mr. GROZIER (*Employer, Australia*)

I wish to briefly echo the comments made by our spokesperson, Ms. Gerstein. The promotion of sustainable enterprises is not usual fare for the International Labour Conference and we are pleased to see that the Governing Body saw fit to bring this matter onto this year's agenda. It is important for the ILO in its work to take account of the significance of private sector enterprises, particularly small to medium enterprises, in driving economic growth and employment creation. Report VI, which provided the background to the Committee's work, draws attention to an OECD report published in 2000 which estimated that 60 to 70 per cent of employment in the OECD was within SMEs.

The Committee's conclusions, too, recognize the role of enterprises. In point 3 they state: "Sustainable enterprises are a principal source of growth, wealth creation, employment and decent work." The

corollary of this is that without sustainable enterprises there will not be that principal source of growth or employment, and without that, little or no chance of decent work. One aspect of sustainability is that the enterprise operates in a lawful way. One challenge, greater in some countries than in others but absent from none, is to bring informal economic activity into the formal sector.

Informal economic activity is not a source of good jobs and decent work; it reduces the national tax base and can be a source of corruption. Addressing informal economic activity is not just a matter of regulation for its own sake however. As the Committee's conclusions state, "Poorly designed regulations and unnecessary bureaucratic burdens on businesses limit enterprise start-ups and the ongoing operations of existing companies, and lead to informality, corruption and efficiency costs."

And the Committee concludes that there is proper work here for the ILO. The ILO should pay particular attention to targeting SME development and the promotion of entrepreneurship to economically marginalized groups and pay particular attention to the informal economy. The conclusions state that "the ILO could provide guidance on the relationship between regulation and informality, working conditions and economic growth, and the development of programmes that support the transition of informal economy operators into the formal economy".

Whilst we think that the Committee's conclusions properly recognize the importance of the private sector in economic development, as our spokesperson said, these conclusions are a negotiated outcome. In some areas, we would have preferred to see a different outcome or a different weighting to properly capture the needs of flourishing sustainable enterprises.

I also voice our concern about the paragraphs addressing the directed use of government procurement policies to achieve social and environmental ends. We are supportive of well-designed social and environmental legislation, but we are concerned that the emphasis in the conclusions could justify practices which give rise to economic inefficiencies and waste and operate to exclude smaller enterprises from public tendering.

That said, we look forward to seeing the Committee's conclusions shaping the work of the ILO into the future.

The Committee's conclusions are the product of negotiations and debate. The topic raised very important and, for this house somewhat novel issues. Debate was sometimes robust and had the potential to become unfocused. That it did not do so is a credit to the members of what was a very large committee, but also to the Chair, Mr. Annakin, and to the two Vice-Chairs, Ms. Brighi and Ms. Gerstein. I think that all of the Committee would agree on that fact. When the Committee adopted the report to bring forward to this plenary sitting, it commented on the small number of changes which were required to the draft report. That outcome is in no small way attributable to our Reporter, Ms. Ungerer. I wish finally to recognize the very great contribution and great amount of work undertaken by the Office, translators and interpreters. No matter how late the Committee adjourned for the day, many of those staff then began the second part of their day. To them I say "thank you".

Much of the debate around enterprises and their role, even in this house, tends to focus on the tensions between society and businesses. Whilst this is obviously important, such a discussion can now easily ignore the huge potential of companies to take actions that could support communities as well as support the enterprises in reaching their business goals. What is as important, and what this resolution recognizes, is that society and enterprises are inter-dependent and that societies need successful companies, as they are one of the main creators of growth, employment and wealth – creators of growth, employment and wealth that over time lead to improvements in living and social conditions. And that is before you even look at the actual work that many businesses have done through innovation: new games to entertain us, new styles to clothe us – not basic requirements, it is true, but enterprises have also created drugs and medical devices that make the treatment of some major health problems possible and alleviate the immense suffering of those with chronic conditions.

The most important thing enterprises do is to contribute to prosperous economies. Of course this does not in anyway take away from the need for companies to act in ways that plan for the long term and that as far as possible avoid short-term behaviour. Strong sustainable enterprises are what we all need, so it is appropriate that this body came together to see what each of the relevant actors could do to recreate and to sustain the conditions that such enterprises need in order to thrive.

As a first-time visitor to the ILO, working on this Committee has been an incredible personal experience and, I must be honest, a bewildering one at times. This resolution is not what I would have written myself. It is not in my eyes perfect. There are sections that I was ultimately disappointed in. But this resolution is something much more important. It is based on a shared and a common tripartite understanding of what is at issue. Coming from a country where we try hard to play our full role as social partners this is very important to me, and I firmly believe that this makes this a stronger, sounder and more sustainable document. It is my pleasure to recommend this resolution for your approval.

The PRESIDENT

If there are no more requests for the floor, I propose that we proceed to adopt the report of the Committee – that is, the summary of the discussions contained in paragraphs 1 to 790 of *Provisional Record* No. 15.

If there are no objections may I take it that the report is adopted?

(The report – paragraphs 1 to 790 – is adopted.)

CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES: ADOPTION

The PRESIDENT

We shall now move to adopt the Committee's conclusions. I propose that we proceed section by section.

(The conclusions – paragraphs 1 to 27 – are adopted seriatim.)

The report has an annex which contains a list of ILO instruments that relate to the promotion of sustainable enterprises. Are there any objections to the adoption of this annex?

(The annex is adopted.)

May I take it, that the Conference adopts the conclusions of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises as a whole, with the annex?

(The conclusions with the annex are adopted.)

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PROMOTION OF SUSTAINABLE ENTERPRISES: ADOPTION

The PRESIDENT

Our next task is to move to the adoption of the resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises. If there are no objections, may I take it that the Conference adopts this resolution?

(The resolution is adopted.)

We have now concluded the consideration of the report of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises. I should like to take this opportunity to thank the Officers and the members of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises for their work over the past two weeks. I should also like to express thanks to the secretariat for its very efficient support.

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

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.

The PRESIDENT

We shall now return to the general discussion of the reports submitted to the Conference by the Chairperson of the Governing Body and by the Director-General.

Mr. STROMMEN (*Government, Norway*)

The International Labour Organization is at a crossroads. Globalization – the combination of modern technology and legally binding rules promoting trade, investment and transnational production systems – has fundamentally altered the balance of power in labour markets.

The effect of this global shift is aggravated by the ILO's relative weakness, both as a body of instruments, as a political arena and as a partner for development. The results can be read in figures from the International Monetary Fund, showing how labour is getting a diminishing share of national income, as appropriately pointed out by the Director-General in his speech on Monday.

This year's Global Report deals with discrimination. Addressing discrimination is not only the right thing to do from an ethical perspective. Fighting discrimination and promoting equal opportunity for all is also great economics. Norway's experience in this regard is a telling example. By actively promoting equality of opportunity, even at times of poverty, we succeeded in transforming one of Europe's poorest countries into one of the most prosperous.

The trend of diminishing relative returns to labour represents an antithesis to social justice. In response, we urgently need a stronger ILO.

Norway therefore welcomes, with relief, the way this year's session of the International Labour Conference has been conducted. Over the past three weeks, we have reassured ourselves and those who care about social justice that, although the ILO may have been a little down in the face of globalization, the ILO is definitely not out!

On the contrary, we have been gathered this year for a particularly important session of the International Labour Conference. For the first time, we have formally had on our agenda how to strengthen the ILO in the context of globalization. The discussions were difficult, as expected, but we can all be proud of the result: the follow-up agreed by consensus represents a breakthrough for those who wish to put the ILO on track for greater relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

We were able to avoid what many consider an important reason for the Organization's perceived and real weakness – the strong propensity to make any discussion of what are really very political questions, questions of values and interest and political direction for the world economy, into a technical exercise on how to manage this Organization. Fortunately, we were able to avoid that.

Of course, the ILO has potential for improvement in management, including transparency in budgeting. Of course the ILO can be even better at working with others, both within and outside the United Nations system. And of course the ILO would benefit from even greater focus. But none of these potentials for improvement should allow us to be distracted from the real political message: the ILO, with its tripartite membership and its clear and comprehensive mandate, is indispensable for fair globalization and sustainable development.

And here, let me express Norway's appreciation for how the Director-General, and several other speakers, have pointed out the importance of establishing the necessary balance of all three dimensions of sustainability: environmental, economic and social. They are all mutually re-enforcing and policy-makers should pursue them as such, to a greater extent than is currently the case.

In this regard, we also note with satisfaction how the debate on sustainable enterprises, another first for this Conference, has confirmed the relevance of the ILO and the Decent Work Agenda. To be clear, without decent work, no enterprise will be sustainable in the long run. The problem is that in the long run, we are all gone, at least from the economic and political arena.

Thus, perhaps the greatest challenge of all in this era of globalized interdependence is to tackle short-termism and narrow pursuit of self-interest. To help us deal with this, the ILO, with its tripartism and social dialogue, is particularly well placed in the family of international organizations within and beyond the United Nations.

We therefore welcome the genuine and constructive outreach conducted by the Director-General and his staff, both in the context of the United Nations reform at country level and vis-à-vis other institutions of global economic governance, most notably recently the joint study with the World Trade Organization on the crucial links between trade and employment.

Because it is only through dialogue, across differences, that we can move beyond the current, unsustainable form of globalization, where unequally distributed might is given right. It is only through dialogue, both nationally, regionally and at the global level, that we can develop a global economic system where might not is right, but where right is might.

Because this is what we believe in, Norway will continue its strong support for the ILO. We even have the intention of increasing our voluntary financial contributions for the next biennium. In doing so, we will maintain a comprehensive perspective, giving due attention to the Organization's and its Members' priorities.

In this regard, we note with particular interest the closing remarks of the Director-General's opening speech to the Conference, when he pointed out that in an increasingly competitive global market economy, there is an urgent need to strengthen the social partners, to promote tripartism and social dialogue. We could not agree more.

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

On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Bulgaria, it is my honour and pleasure to congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents on their election and wish them every success in the work of this session of the International Labour Conference.

I would like to outline our position on the Director-General's Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*.

We fully agree with the conclusion that a successful social policy means agreed-upon policies on the economy, finance, employment and the environment. You cannot talk about sustainable development and creating decent jobs if you do not have a proper balance between security and flexibility on the labour market and social justice. Social dialogue guarantees the interests of both sides in this process.

The positive progress achieved in Bulgaria, particularly over the last few years, has been the result of successful policies in various areas of public life. We have worked especially hard to improve labour legislation by introducing up-to-date standards for healthy and safe conditions of work, establishing proper mechanisms to protect workers' rights and modernizing the social security system. This has furthered the ongoing trend of reducing unemployment, which has fallen from around 12 per cent two years ago to less than eight per cent today. Employment in Bulgaria has risen very sharply in recent years. Employment has gone up by 4.4 per cent in the last year and employment among women has reached 56 per cent. We have laid the basis for a more logical link between wage levels and indicators of economic growth and productivity, competitiveness and the financial situation of enterprises.

Of course, we must continue further. We have to stimulate the development of different, atypical forms of work which provide job satisfaction and increased mobility for the Bulgarian workforce. Our Government is undertaking many measures to improve the unfavourable demographic situation in the country. In 2006 a National Strategy on the Demographic Development of Bulgaria to 2020 was adopted. The main aim of this strategy is the development of high-quality human resources as a whole and in each individual. Special attention is given to reconciling work life with family responsibilities.

In the last 16 years, we have received invaluable support and help from the ILO, which to a significant extent has helped us achieve these results. I think that we show the highest possible appreciation for the way in which our cooperation has taken place over the last few years in the context of the Decent Work Country Programmes. On a tripartite basis, these programmes have made it possible to pinpoint those areas that need international expertise and support. Furthermore, we consider that further development of these programmes should be based on regional projects in countries with similar problems and comparable levels of social and economic development.

Allow me to express my conviction that the ILO will continue in playing a leading role in introducing up-to-date rights and principles in labour and social relations, because one of the main merits of the Organization is that it has made labour a basic human right that guarantees people a normal and decent existence. It is on this basis, together with the tripartite nature of the Organization, that the ILO should continue to develop and improve its work.

Mr. FRANCIS (*Government, Trinidad and Tobago*)

The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is renowned for its rich ethnic and cultural diversity and strong economic performance, as evidenced by its continuing annual growth.

While poverty has been reduced significantly over the years, there are a number of developmental issues still to be addressed as the country strives to become a knowledge-based society and a developed economy by the year 2020.

Since 1975, Trinidad and Tobago has been a proud member of the Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, and of its single market which was established in January 2006. The establishment of the CARICOM single market poses many labour challenges to the member States. These include managing intra-regional labour migration, developing a social floor of rights for all workers and developing our human resources. We see this as an opportunity to collaborate with the ILO on advancing the Decent Work Agenda in the Caribbean. We have been ably assisted by the ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean, which has sought to convene timely regional forum on decent work. We thank its Director for her work in this and other areas as we continue into the decade of decent work.

Trinidad and Tobago looks forward to the future as we prepare to host the 15th Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labour (IACML) in September 2007, as well as both the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Americas in 2009. You will be pleased to know that the major focus of the discussions at the 15th IACML will be the challenge of making decent work central to social and economic development.

Trinidad and Tobago has been leading by example with the incorporation of the goal of decent work in its national planning framework. This can be seen in the operational plan for its long-term development strategy known as "Vision 2020", which seeks to achieve developed nation status for the country by the year 2020 and which has a focus on labour as a key element. We will not develop by sacrificing labour.

The Director-General's Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, provides invaluable insight into issues of workplace discrimination. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to eliminating this practice, and in this regard, an equal opportunity bill is being debated in our national Parliament at present. Part three of this bill, addresses the issue of discrimination in employment.

The general discussion at the 96th Session on the promotion of sustainable enterprises is of particular interest to us at this time, as we develop and pursue strategies to enable the development of competitive businesses. We are also cognizant of the significant contribution of small and micro-enterprises to employment creation and poverty reduction.

To facilitate the development of SMEs, the National Entrepreneurship Development Company Limited (NEDCO) was established in 2002 in Trinidad and Tobago as the primary agency to facilitate SME business development activities such as loans, training and advisory services.

Thousands of SME loans have been disbursed since that time. We are at this time also seeking to implement a fair share policy that seeks to level the playing field for SMEs by guaranteeing them a percentage of small Government contracts.

The proclamation of the Trinidad and Tobago Safety and Health Act No. 1 of 2004, and its amendment of 2006, has allowed us to pursue actively the safety, health and welfare of persons at work. An Occupational Safety and Health Authority was established in October 2006 to transform further the state and non-state sectors into OSH-ready and OSH-compliant entities. We are therefore under way to becoming an OSH beacon in our hemisphere.

In closing, let me join with the ILO family in making the decade of decent work one of change and achievement, one of which government, employer and worker can be equally proud.

Mr. YUSOF (*Minister of Home Affairs, Brunei Darussalam*)

Brunei Darussalam is truly honoured to be here and accepted as the 180th Member of the ILO. This marks a very important milestone for us, and it will make this day one of the important days in the calendar of Brunei Darussalam.

It is indeed a great honour and privilege to be here at this auspicious gathering and to be part of a renowned international community. We believe this meeting presents an opportunity for us to engage in productive dialogue and consultations on labour and employment issues that are of common concern. We are here to learn and share information, experience and ideas with member countries.

We all know that the ILO is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and human dignity. The aims are to promote rights at work, encourage decent employment opportunities, enhance social protection and strengthen dialogue in handling work-related issues. Today, the ILO helps advance the creation of decent jobs and the kinds of economic and working conditions that give working people and business people a stake in lasting peace, prosperity and progress.

Today, Brunei Darussalam has cordial and warm relationships among the tripartite groups, i.e. the Government, employers and workers. It is normal for the Brunei Darussalam tripartite partners to nur-

ture and practice a consultative working relationship, in a spirit of close cooperation and goodwill, based on mutual respect and confidence.

Working conditions in Brunei Darussalam are on a positive trend. The workers and people of Brunei Darussalam are protected by our Acts, that is, the Labour Act, the Trade Disputes Act, the Trade Unions Act, the Employment Agencies Order, the Trafficking and Smuggling of Persons Order, the Children Order, and the Women and Girls Protection Act.

We recognize that the ILO in recent years has placed emphasis on the initiative for member countries to formulate a national plan for decent work. The basic notion of decent work is productive work in which fundamental rights are protected, adequate income is generated and sufficient social safeguards are provided. The promotion of decent work is our central objective of Brunei Darussalam's national development strategies, as well as supporting regional and international policies. In this context, we promote competitiveness, job creation in the private sector, promoting gender equality and social security, improving occupational safety and health conditions, and information on labour migration, and strengthening the labour market and social dialogue. Addressing these issues contributes not only to our national development, but also to regional and global integration.

Thus our first ever attendance and participation reaffirms the Brunei Government's increasing commitment and support of the role of the ILO and the causes it stands for.

Inevitably, we have so many things to learn from this Conference, and we are certainly very eager to do so. Therefore Brunei Darussalam is willing to share its views on any labour matters and issues with the ILO and member countries. I believe such collective understanding between us will ensure a cohesive and productive outcome.

Nowadays we are more aware of and concerned about the importance of the safety and health of our workers in our efforts to promote decent work policies. Our workers have the right to obtain protection from employers and from the Government. It is in this context that Brunei Darussalam is in the process of drafting a Workplace Safety and Health Act.

I believe that by the end of this Conference Brunei Darussalam will share new knowledge and information regarding world labour matters and issues, and we hope that to be able to move forward together for a better future for the workers of the world. We may seek experts and technical assistance from the ILO on various ILO matters along the way. This is a small step for us, but a giant leap for our country towards a productive and decent workforce to ensure sustainable socio-economic development.

Sr. PARRA ROJAS (*empleador, Cuba*)

Consideramos que las modificaciones introducidas en la organización de la Conferencia son positivas, deben ser mantenidas y perfeccionadas.

En ese sentido, resulta importante disponer de tiempo suficiente para estudio del documento contenido de las Memorias del Director General, lo cual lamentablemente no ha sido así en esta Conferencia.

En esta ocasión, la Memoria del Director General se centra en cuestiones consideradas claves en la promoción del trabajo decente para un desarrollo

sostenible. No cabe duda de que los temas abordados tienen esa prioridad y, al respecto, quisiéramos señalar a la atención lo siguiente.

Es un paso de avance importante la inclusión del concepto de trabajo decente para todos en la agenda internacional para el desarrollo, como parte de los objetivos aprobados por el Consejo Económico y Social. Esto implica un compromiso para nuestra Organización, que deberá dar primera prioridad a la colaboración con otros organismos especializados del sistema de las Naciones Unidas, basando esta cooperación en su ventaja comparativa derivada de sus conocimientos relacionados con los programas de creación de nuevos empleos.

El informe tiene el mérito de recoger y alertar sobre el aumento de las desigualdades en el mundo actual.

Destaca como «sólo el 1 por ciento de los adultos más ricos poseían el 40 por ciento de los activos mundiales en 2000, y que el 10 por ciento de los adultos más ricos poseían el 85 por ciento del total mundial. En contraste con ello, la mitad más pobre de la población mundial adulta poseía, apenas, el 1 por ciento de la riqueza mundial».

Este incremento de las desigualdades tiene su mayor expresión en las economías de los países en vías de desarrollo, lo cual resulta un obstáculo para la creación y desarrollo de empresas sostenibles.

La promoción de una transición socialmente justa a empleos verdes se ha convertido en una necesidad vital para la humanidad.

Es un alto reto si consideramos el contexto donde esto se produce. El no acceso a fuentes de energía y agua potable para una parte importante de la población mundial, la creciente desertificación, el analfabetismo, el intercambio desigual, leyes migratorias incoherentes, barreras al comercio, especialmente el incremento de las no arancelarias o los escollos para la transferencia de tecnologías. Esto debe ser atendido con esa prioridad por esta Organización.

La buena gobernanza es otro factor clave. El Director General reflexionó sobre la reforma de las Naciones Unidas. La contribución y el compromiso de la OIT con las mismas. Sus oportunidades y dificultades. En este contexto, consideramos que la OIT debe promover sus propias reformas y perfeccionamiento, y la primera prioridad, por lo sensible y significativo, deben ser las reformas en la Comisión de Normas, buscando una mayor transparencia y democracia.

Este año se ha producido el debate acerca de la promoción de las empresas sostenibles, un debate interesante y con una influencia significativa en los programas de empleo, en el entendido de que es la empresa sostenible el principal motor para generar trabajo decente.

Los empleadores cubanos apoyamos ese concepto. Lo hemos introducido en nuestra agenda. Pero, lamentablemente, como en años anteriores, tenemos que reconocer que los efectos del bloqueo impuesto por el Gobierno de los Estados Unidos sobre nuestro país sigue teniendo un gran impacto negativo en el desarrollo de las empresas y en su capacidad para generar nuevos empleos.

No obstante esta situación, compartimos con orgullo los logros alcanzados en materia de empleo, lo cual nos permite ver con optimismo que estos problemas, a los cuales se ha hecho mención en la Memoria del Director General, pueden tener solución.

It is a great pleasure for me to participate in the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, and on this occasion I would like to congratulate Mr. Sulka on his election as President of the Conference.

Albania brings to this Conference a number of achievements in the field of social dialogue and materialization of international labour standards.

A significant role has been given to social dialogue which is the foundations of the programme of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. My Government is of the opinion that without social dialogue there cannot be social cohesion, and without social cohesion there is no social justice and equal opportunities for development and integration for all citizens.

The normal functioning for almost two years of the National Labour Council brings together at a round table the Government, workers and employers, and regularly convenes to consider most important issues concerning the field of production in Albania, thus reflecting the interests of all stakeholders.

I would like to thank the International Labour Office sincerely for the remarkable assistance provided in the establishment of a Council capable of facing a heavy and complex workload.

We are fully aware that the functioning of social dialogue contributes enormously to safeguarding social peace in the country. Albania has already signed a two-year decent work programme with the ILO. It is the very first time that our cooperation has been placed on an institutional basis, which is reflected in more consolidated achievements.

Albania has opted recently to be a pilot country in implementing the "One UN" initiative.

The ILO Office in Tirana, strongly supported by the Regional Office in Budapest and the ILO Office in Geneva, has been performing some very good work for the inclusion of the decent work programme in the overall United Nations programme for the development of our country.

We very much appreciate the fact that the interests of the Albanian Government and the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities have been reflected in relevant documents of the ILO.

I would like, in this context, to inform you that we are in the process of doing a tremendous amount of work for the ratification of international labour Conventions, being fully aware of the importance of establishing and implementing international labour standards.

The Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities is currently working for the adoption of the most relevant and important Conventions, with the objective of responding to the Albanian reality in the most efficient way.

The ratification of ILO Conventions is all the more urgent because Albania has started along the path towards integration into the European Union, and our entire labour legislation must be in full conformity with international standards. In this context, we very much appreciate the continuous assistance provided by the ILO, which has consisted of counselling, assistance and encouragement.

The Albanian economy still has crucial problems to solve, even though there have been some remark-

able results recently. Unemployment has further decreased in accordance with the objectives set by the Albanian Government. Business has received further encouragement through a modern and efficient legislation. Nevertheless, we must still work hard to eliminate many negative phenomena which accompany development.

In order to illustrate the seriousness of current economic problems, I would like to point out that the informal sector of the economy is running at a level of about 25 per cent, which shows that economic development is hindered by tax evasion and unfair competition. With the objective of eradicating these problems in cooperation with the ILO, the Government of Albania has declared openly a battle on this and zero tolerance of economic and labour market informality. I am confident that we will, very soon, be able to achieve the first outcomes of this very serious battle.

I would like to thank you once again for the opportunity to address this Conference and wish you all every success.

Mr. ABDELLA (Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia)

In his Report, the Director-General has raised a number of important issues in relation to the ILO's vigorous initiative to bring about changes in the world of work with its Decent Work Agenda. He has invited us to effectively advance this noble idea of the Organization and provide guidance on the development of workable strategies.

On our part, we are very much convinced that shaping the decent work approach to our societies with much more commitment, to deal with the real problems, should be our responsibility. However, in the reality of most developing nations the attainment of decent work might appear to be something ambitious. We still feel that, if poverty is to be reduced, an employment-centred growth strategy is required. To this end, decent work as a logical means to reduce poverty and inequality deserves to come to the forefront.

As the major challenges confronting us today are combating poverty and unemployment and promoting work for all, my delegation believes that the issue of employment should be at the centre of any development agenda, and there should be more co-operation and partnership among the concerned stakeholders so that sustainable development could be realized.

In view of this, we share the idea that tripartism and social dialogue are vital mechanisms for finding areas of agreement and shared commitments to progress in an era of rapid change in the world of work. Hence, we appreciate the ILO's initiative in promoting tripartism and social dialogue as a way of guaranteeing social peace and fostering fair and sustainable development.

Coming to more specific efforts at country level, it will be proper for me to highlight some issues in relation to the Ethiopian experience. The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has been engaged in implementing a strategy for poverty reduction basing itself on a global long-term vision, focused on national transformation and aimed at alleviating or reducing poverty on the basis of sustainable and equitable economic growth. The performance of this poverty reduction strategy witnessed significant achievements in various fields. However, daunting challenges are still there, having regard to the fact that the development process is

dynamic, which requires immense resources in expertise and capital. It should also be recognized that the changing international situation has a direct bearing on the outcome of national plans and strategies.

In our interdependent global economy, there is a need to work together for the common good. Without meaningful cooperation and partnership between and within countries, it will be difficult to meet any development goals or ensure that globalization works for all. Hence, as part and parcel of the changing world we should prepare ourselves to benefit from the opportunities of globalization while appropriately overcoming its challenges. In this respect, we believe that, the ILO Decent Work Agenda can create rooms for social inclusion, and we should join hands to translate it into concrete country programmes.

In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the ILO Subregional Office in Addis Ababa, in collaboration with its constituents, has been developing a Decent Work Country Programme in Ethiopia in response to the development strategy of the country. This country programme mainly focuses on the areas of raising employability and strengthening private sector growth as a catalyst to effectively utilize the country's abundant human resources and the newly flourishing private sector. At this juncture, we would like to appreciate the ILO's contribution as a significant development partner to the realization of the objectives of Ethiopia's plan for accelerated and sustainable development.

Turning to the rest of the agenda items before the Conference, my delegation appreciates all the Reports submitted for our consideration. The issues are all important and pertinent to the work of the ILO. In particular, the Global Report under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work which, among other things, raises the issue of equality at work, is subject of our primary concern, for it provides the global picture and gives us guidance on the way forward.

Original arabe: M. DJILANI (employeur, Tunisie)

Je voudrais féliciter et remercier M. Juan Somavia, le Directeur général du BIT, pour l'excellent rapport présenté et les propositions qui y sont formulées.

Le choix cette année du thème de la durabilité des entreprises reflète la prise de conscience de l'importance de la sauvegarde de l'entreprise, source de progrès et vecteur essentiel de l'emploi, de même qu'il traduit la préoccupation de tous les Etats de renforcer la compétitivité des entreprises. Car si l'entreprise est une composante essentielle du développement, sa durabilité et son évolution sont devenues des priorités qui doivent se traduire à tous les niveaux dans les politiques nationales, de même que les plus grandes réformes visent à améliorer le climat des affaires afin d'encourager l'investissement et la création d'entreprises.

Je dois rappeler, à cet égard, les mesures importantes prises par le Président de la République, M. Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, en faveur des entreprises au niveau financier comme aux plans de la fiscalité et des règlements, et son initiative de célébrer la journée nationale de l'entreprise, au cours de laquelle il rend hommage aux chefs d'entreprise qui se sont distingués en encourageant la croissance et l'exportation, en plus de la désignation, chaque an-

née, des entreprises les plus performantes à l'occasion de la Fête du travail.

La pression démographique et l'évolution des connaissances constituent pour nous une préoccupation majeure et font de l'emploi une priorité absolue, de même qu'elles transforment la question de l'intégration des demandeurs d'emploi et spécialement les diplômés de l'enseignement supérieur en un objectif stratégique de développement. C'est pour cela que nous œuvrons pour la création de plus d'entreprises et pour intégrer les jeunes dans le monde du travail.

La mondialisation a ouvert une nouvelle ère dans les relations internationales et créé des formes nouvelles dans les moyens de production et les échanges. Ainsi, l'entreprise se voit contrainte de suivre ces changements et de gérer ses capacités de manière judicieuse afin d'améliorer sa productivité et sa rentabilité. L'intégration dans une économie mondialisée nécessite le regroupement et la coopération aux niveaux régional et international pour créer des marchés plus grands et des espaces plus favorables à la production et avec une grande capacité de concurrence sur les marchés internationaux.

Nous avons ainsi créé l'Union méditerranéenne des employeurs pour qu'elle soit la voix des entreprises de la rive sud de la Méditerranée et renforce leur intégration active dans l'espace euro-méditerranéen. Nous avons également créé, cette année, l'Union des employeurs du Maghreb qui reflète l'importance accordée au Maghreb et dans laquelle nous œuvrons tous à développer les entreprises privées qui sont un élément du développement durable dans la région du Maghreb, sur les plans économique et social et sur le plan de l'environnement.

La stabilité politique et le climat de cohésion sociale sont essentiels pour le développement économique et la viabilité de l'entreprise. Et, alors que nous célébrons le 20^e anniversaire du changement politique en Tunisie, nous sommes pleinement conscients de la complémentarité des deux composantes économique et sociale, et nous sommes de plus en plus convaincus de l'efficacité de la politique du dialogue, établie et encouragée par le Président Ben Ali, et qui a eu des résultats positifs sur la situation sociale du pays et sur les efforts de développement en général. Il en est ainsi de l'expérience des négociations sociales menées une fois tous les trois ans entre les partenaires sociaux dans un esprit de compréhension et de respect mutuel.

En conclusion, je voudrais rendre hommage à l'action de l'OIT qui nous offre la possibilité d'exprimer nos préoccupations et de dialoguer avec les autres partenaires sociaux.

Original Arabic: Mr. AL AZALY (Worker, Egypt)

It gives me pleasure to convey to you all the greetings of the workers, and their trade unions. I would also like to express their wish that this unique body, the International Labour Conference, will accomplish what we all aspire to, that is, an improvement in their living standards and those of their fellow workers in other countries. This session of the Conference takes place at a time when we are experiencing difficult economic and social circumstances resulting from globalization, which increase the problems and crises affecting the majority of the workers in the world, particularly in developing

countries. The ILO should be commended for placing on the agenda of this Conference an item on globalization and its consequences because globalization is here to stay.

Our participation in this Conference is of special importance, since it comes a few months after our winning a new mandate lasting up to 2011. This new mandate was the result of free and fair democratic elections, organized by the workers themselves under the supervision of the judicial authorities and with the participation of more than 4 million unionized workers throughout the country. The elections led to big changes in the leadership of workers' organizations, from committees at enterprise level to trade unions and the general trade union ranging from 40 to 60 per cent. The election was also characterized by wide representation of young people and women. This will enrich the work of trade unions and is a sign of optimism that this work will continue in the future. The result of the elections was that 23,000 trade union officers were elected, after a strong competition in which double this number stood for office. This is proof of the increasing awareness of our workers of the importance of trade unions and the vital role they play in their economic, professional and social lives and that trade unions are a partner in contributing to the success of the programmes and policies for reform, restructuring and privatization which are being currently implemented in our country.

It is satisfying that the winning leaders, although they belong to different political parties and are of different political colours, are working in harmony with each other. This, of course, is a continuation of our long tradition of respect for the principle of independence and for the rights and interests of workers alone. It is also a good omen that we are entering a new term now, as ten years ago our workers celebrated the centenary of the creation of a trade union in Egypt and this year, 2007, they are celebrating the fact that 50 years have elapsed since they established the general trade union. The trade unions have continued to work hard in order to defend the workers' rights.

I have tried to give you a brief account of the situation in Egypt and show you that we are looking forward to further cooperation with our counterparts in different countries. This will be based on mutual respect and our desire to work towards achieving our common objectives, because we are all facing very rapid changes in the world.

I would also like to refer to the fact that we understand that we have to integrate ourselves into the globalized economy. Therefore, we need to attract investments from abroad and put in place free trade agreements and partnerships. We know that this will help us and will raise growth rates, and that it will be accompanied by a transfer of technology, providing more jobs for workers and further increasing living standards, with due respect for international labour standards and collective bargaining.

I would also like to say that I do appreciate the social dialogue established by the ILO. We have adopted this system in our trade union work because it has proved its worth, since we have been able to deal rationally with strikes and sit-ins staged by workers, of which we have seen a lot in Egypt recently. These have been dealt with without recourse to violence and in an atmosphere of free expression of opinions.

Maybe you agree with me that the success of dialogue and collective bargaining depends on having strong trade unions and employers' organizations alongside governments.

In conclusion, I would like to mention the situation of workers in the occupied Arab territories. I would like to say that we are concerned at the continuing Israeli occupation with its inhumane practices, which has been going on for 40 years, weighing on the people of Palestine, Syria, Golan and Lebanon. It is sad that the international community and donors have imposed a financial embargo on the Palestinian workers and population – the victims, not the perpetrators – which has further increased their suffering.

So, from this rostrum, I would like to appeal to your consciences, you who represent your governments and employer and worker organizations, to urgently mobilize your efforts in order to condemn and end this unjust embargo and heinous occupation and prove that you are in favour of justice, freedom and peace.

Original Russian: Mr. ZHELYAZKOV (Employer, Bulgaria)

Ladies and gentlemen, over the past year the employers of Bulgaria have continued their dynamic participation in tripartite cooperation and bilateral social dialogue in the interests of a balanced development of industrial relations in Bulgaria. The year was marked by further changes to the Labour Code affecting the criteria for representivity of employers' organizations and trade unions. We accepted these in the name of increasing the significance of tripartite cooperation in Bulgaria. At the same time we must note that the Parliament was under pressure from an employers' organization, which is not a member of the IOE, to introduce criteria which would have led to the elimination of a specific employers' organization involved in tripartite cooperation. In the final analysis after discussion in the National Council for Tripartite Cooperation, Parliament and the government showed common sense and did not rise to the provocation aimed at undermining tripartite cooperation in Bulgaria. The employers' organizations that are members of the IOE showed solidarity and unity against the attempts to artificially redraw the map of social dialogue in Bulgaria.

In the past year we have seen a reduction in the tax on profits and employers' organizations have managed to agree on the highest rates to the minimum wage since this was introduced. Finally, after six years we managed to introduce tax-free food coupons for workers. The Economic and Social Development Pact was concluded and, at the wish of social partners, legislation was introduced on temporary work agencies and telework. We are pleased to note the positive influence of Bulgaria's ratification of ILO Convention No. 181 on Private Employment Agencies on 24 March 2005. Unfortunately, there are still contradictions between employers' and workers' organizations. The trade unions have made very harsh proposals on criminal sanctions, which are intentionally exaggerated for employers who breach labour and pensions rights and the criminal sanctions.

I would like to draw your attention to the great human tragedy that has affected Benghazi. We should not forget that there are two sides to the problem: the innocently detained nurses and Palestinian doctor, and the Libyan children who are suf-

fering from AIDS. It is our moral duty to do everything in our power to successfully solve this long-standing problem in a way that satisfies both sides.

We therefore appeal to the Employers' Association to demonstrate our solidarity with and support for the medical personnel so that they can go home as soon as possible and, on the other hand, solidarity with the Libyan children so that they can have a chance to grow up and fulfil their dreams.

Mr. KOONOPAKARN (*Employer, Thailand*)

There have been significant improvements in Thailand's economic, social and environmental situation during the past and current years. All efforts have been geared toward achieving better lives for all.

Due to a limited time, I will go straight to what I want to say without any fringes. The progress in Thailand toward decent work may be summed up as follows.

First, more focus has been placed on personnel resources development and management, emphasizing fairer and more humane consideration of workers.

Secondly, the application of competency-based compensation has been promoted as a means of giving opportunities to all workers for a comparable income, based on individual competency.

Thirdly, efforts have been stepped up for skills development aimed at developing and upgrading the skills of workers, as well as those of the general public, so that they may engage themselves in trade that would bring them better income or be promoted to better jobs with better pay.

Fourthly, efforts have been stepped up for better occupational safety, health and environment at work for all levels and in all sectors, especially small and medium enterprises.

Fifthly, labour protection and social security coverage have been expanded to include small and medium enterprises, home workers and unorganized workers in general.

Sixthly, education for young people is free up to 12th grade. In addition, there are Government loans for university education, in addition to scholarships from educational institutions.

Seventhly, there are increased benefits from the social security system for all workers. The Government is also considering extending social security coverage to unorganized labour in the informal sector.

Eighthly, as far as health is concerned, people not covered by social security will get free medical treatment if they are registered with the competent authorities.

As a predominantly agricultural nation, there are numerous measures to help farmers elevate their living standards. Protection and improvement of water resources have been a national agenda. Agricultural technology, improvement of crop yields, protection against crop diseases, etc., have been widely promoted.

A Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives has been set up by the Government to provide credit especially to farmers. There have also been Government-sponsored export promotion programmes for agricultural products. All these have been our national priorities.

All the efforts and measures mentioned above have contributed substantially to the betterment of life of the Thai people. Regrettably, there has been

an unfortunate interruption in the political process in the country, which has delayed many economic and social development programmes that would otherwise contribute more to the improvement of life for the Thai people.

I hope that these unfortunate circumstances will soon come to an end and may be pushed forward by the social and economic development programme that will be beneficial to all.

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

Let me congratulate the President and Vice-Presidents of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, on their election to their respective positions. The topics for discussion under their leadership represent important issues for members of the tripartite groups and our societies globally.

Jamaica is pleased and proud that its Prime Minister, the Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller, addressed the special sitting of the General Assembly on 12 June and shared with you her passion, vision and strategies for the social dimension of development.

It is in this atmosphere of pride and pleasure that I bring greetings to all participants of this Conference and congratulate the Director-General and the staff of the ILO for another successful year of operation.

This year, the Global Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges* by the Director-General, addresses the critical area of discrimination. This is an important dimension of people relationships, covering a wide range of vulnerable groups. It forces us to examine critical components of diversity, religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, educational levels and class. These factors have implications for global terrorism, wars, employment relationships, trading relationships, bilateral and multilateral financial support and technical cooperation. So we all need to make a concerted effort towards elimination of all forms of discrimination.

We are pleased to report that in Jamaica we are tackling discrimination in several areas, and I will highlight four of these.

Our work with HIV/AIDS is multifaceted and multisectoral in approach. We are dealing with policies to guide workplace practices, health care, treatment and rehabilitation, public education dealing with lifestyle management, prejudices, attitudes and prevention. Our Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Ministry of Health have joined forces with our tripartite partners, trade unions and employers in a concerted effort to reduce discriminatory practices.

An important result of the efforts of this partnership has been the development of a national workplace policy on HIV/AIDS based on the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS. Here, I wish to acknowledge the support and assistance from the ILO and, in particular, the Subregional Office for the Caribbean and the US Department of Labor (USDOL) in this national endeavour.

In 1975, Jamaica ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). However, we are constantly seeking to improve our policies and laws to deal with discrimination against women. The Bureau of Women's Affairs in Jamaica plays an important role in this process. This agency is a vigilant advocate

and lobby group for the rights of women. Its work is particularly focused on giving effect to the requirements of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979 (ratified 1980), which recognizes the role of law reform in achieving gender equality.

Its work has had great influence on national policies and actions for issues relating to discrimination against women. Three examples of these are: changes to the Domestic Violence Act, which now provides redress and protection for women affected by domestic violence; the Property Rights of Spouses Act 2004, which provides for equitable division of assets between spouses upon marriage breakdown; and the Maintenance Act 2005, which confers equal rights and obligations on spouses with respect to the support of each other and their children.

Persons with disabilities represent a very important vulnerable group, for which we have devised policies and implemented strategic initiatives to discriminatory practices. These include a national policy for persons with disabilities, increasing employment opportunities for disabled persons in different industries and increasing the number of trained teachers in special education.

Discrimination faced by migrant workers is another important area of concern to us. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security, together with its liaison officers, employ the process of social dialogue in working directly with the employers of our temporary workers in the United States and Canada. In this way, we are pleased that issues of discrimination related to decent and productive work in areas such as working conditions, pay and social security benefits are resolved in a timely and effective manner.

I would like to commend the ILO for doing self-examination and introspection with the aim of strengthening its capacity to serve us with greater impact.

I would therefore urge all of us to work in partnership with the ILO.

Ms. SIGURDARDÓTTIR (*Minister of Social Affairs, Iceland*)

It is now nearly 20 years since I had the opportunity to address the International Labour Conference for the first time. Since then, quite a number of things have changed, not least the political landscape in the international arena.

The ILO, under the able leadership of the Director-General, Mr. Juan Somavia and his staff, has certainly identified new tasks and paved the way into this century. The Decent Work Agenda has placed the ILO right at the centre in times of globalization and economic integration.

A topic of special interest to Iceland, as a fishing nation, is the proposed Convention on work in the fishing sector. Iceland has actively worked towards the adoption by this Conference of an instrument regarding work in the fishing sector which could achieve widespread acceptance. In order to obtain this goal, it is necessary to take into account that, for various reasons, fishing fleets have developed differently from country to country. I hope the proposal for a Convention will be passed in a similarly good spirit as the Maritime Labour Convention in 2006.

Gender equality in the world of work has always been close to my heart. Therefore, I want to thank the Director-General and his staff for the Global

Report entitled: *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*. This publication is well structured, accessible and informative. Although labour participation of women in Iceland is one of the highest in the world, there is always room for improvement.

One of the persistent problems facing us is the gender pay gap. Over the years, Icelanders have used different tools to try and bridge the gap, some of which are described in the Global Report. Among others is legislation on paternal leave, which includes a provision on a "use it or lose it" right for fathers to three months paid paternal leave. This legislation has proven to be a success, as 90 per cent of fathers utilize it, and might be a model to follow for other countries. The main aim of it is to equalize the status of women and men both within the labour market and in their family life. But the gender pay gap is still there. The new Government, which was elected three weeks ago, has decided to develop an action plan to cut the unexplained gender-based wage difference within the formal sector by 50 per cent within the next four-year term. With almost no unemployment in Iceland today and a strong demand for labour, we need both women and men within the labour market. It is very important for Iceland and every other society to recognize the great human resource captured in women as well as in men.

Let me conclude my statement by referring to one of the reports to the Conference, the General Survey concerning the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105). In Europe and North America an increasing number of women, children and men are victims of trafficking for sexual and labour exploitation. This deplorable development, which stands out as one of the most urgent problems of this century, carries with it a responsibility for all of us.

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

In the ILO documents and reports, in the Report of the ILO Director-General the question of decent work is the main issue. No one disagrees with the basic need for decent work.

We need, though, to clarify what we mean by decent work from a scientific and methodological aspect.

The general reports and generalizations cannot enlighten the problem. The World Federation of Trade Unions supports the quest for decent work and, at the same time, we consider it necessary to invite all parties to clearly and openly define the meaning of this question.

We assert that in the twenty-first century, the world's working class is facing serious attacks from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and international capital. And because of those attacks, the rights of workers are strangled and held back. Workers' rights are removed. At the same time, the poverty of ordinary people is getting worse and profits for multinationals are accumulated as well.

Under those economic and social conditions, what should the parameters be which define decent work? First of all, we mean stability at work; to be certain there is work for all. The work to be paid for regularly and the worker to receive a satisfactory salary. To work five days per week, eight hours per day and to have social security cover; conditions of

health and safety to be followed in all workplaces; workers' children to have access to a free education and health system; workers to have trade union and democratic freedoms, the abolition of child labour and exploitation. Without having clarified these specific terms, any discussion about decent work is just words.

Take the example of Colombia. During the last ten years, 2,400 trade unionists have been murdered. In Iraq, the occupation forces are killing thousands of innocent workers. In the Third World countries, tens of million of people live and work for one dollar per day. Two hundred million immigrants live under conditions of complete poverty. In the European Union today unemployed people are more than 25 million. For all these people the meaning of decent work is identified by the right to live, a right, which has been eliminated by capitalist barbarity. Another serious impediment for the workers in many countries is the huge debts especially of Third World countries.

Africa's debt is about US\$230 billion. For Asia, Africa and Latin America, these debts are creating poverty, exploitation, and the political and military dependence of these overcharged countries. Last year, the People's Republic of China gave a bright example by cancelling 31 African countries' debts totalling US\$1.27 billion. For the WFTU the necessity to cancel the debts of Third World countries is a central point. It deals with the struggle for decent work. Debts are killing ordinary people. Another scary fact is that, according to the WHO, life expectancy in developed countries is 71 years while the Third World's life expectancy is approximately 38 years.

Why does this situation continue in the twenty-first century? How decent is it for people to die with such ease in the twenty-first century? Who is responsible for this situation? How responsible are the governments of those countries?

We consider as a serious mistake the fact that the Colombian Government, accused of continuous violations of labour and democratic rights, has been exempted from appearing in the Standards Commission because of pressures from the employers. While this happens a progressive and democratic government, as is the Government of Venezuela that cares for the workers and has proven it with actions, is been taken to the Standards Commission. Why? Is this transparency? Is it justice? Is it equity? We condemn both facts.

In conclusion, for the World Federation of Trade Unions, for all militant and class-oriented trade unions of the world it is a serious, contemporary duty to unite all working people, men and women, irrespective of religion, colour and language. Let us all unite, fight for and demand the satisfaction of people's needs in every country. Let us all unite and organize the workers' defence and counter-attack.

(Mr. Blondel takes the Chair.)

Mr. PALKOVICS (*Worker, Hungary*)

In the name of Hungarian workers, we would like to express our satisfaction that the issue of eliminating workplace discrimination has been placed on the agenda of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference.

Today, in a world proclaiming the all importance of market competition and the economic growth, it is crucial to address other dimensions of the devel-

opment. The Decent Work Agenda of the ILO provides a good framework for the implementation of sustainable social and economic processes, at least in theory. As a result of the decent work deficit, however, the present practice, especially in the Central and Eastern European region, still leads to "low road" paths, also in the areas of equal opportunities and workplace discrimination.

Our country, and consequently the workers in our country, were given a serious opportunity when Hungary joined the European Union three years ago and both the "hard and soft" European laws were transposed in Hungary. The act on equal opportunities, equal treatment and the elimination of discrimination was introduced within the framework of this legal harmonization. The formation of this act was the result of cooperation between the Hungarian social partners.

Today, it is compulsory at the workplace to set up a code on equal treatment. It is highly important that the ILO and the European Union put equal emphasis on the prohibition of all forms of employment-related discrimination, as an important issue. Several studies have recently been published in this field in Hungary, with the following fundamental conclusions: the Roma population is still greatly disadvantaged, as are those with reduced work capacity in general and especially disabled women; gender discrimination is also significant; the elderly and the young also have serious disadvantages; and workers in less-developed regions also lack equal opportunities.

As citizens of the European Union, we consider the existing barriers to the free movement of workers in the single European labour market to be a form of discrimination. We also regard the huge wage gaps within the same occupations across the European Union as discriminatory.

Workers and employees in our country are gravely threatened by the aggressive deregulation and liberalization tendencies in labour law, accepted by the present Government as a justifiable demand by investors. In several cases and contexts the problem of discrimination is still regarded, both by the legal and economic professions and by society, as a contrived and insignificant issue. The Hungarian public and employers, however, will have to accept the fact that there is an ongoing debate, extended to the whole society, on equal treatment and on discrimination, including the prohibition of discrimination at the workplace. It will also have to be accepted that the involvement of more proactive trade unions and, as a result, the development of the judicial practice will enforce the application and observation of anti-discriminatory regulations.

Sr. DEL RIO (*trabajador, República Dominicana*)

Es un gran honor para la Confederación Autónoma Sindical Clasista (CASC), organización mayoritaria de los trabajadores dominicanos, representar a los trabajadores en esta Conferencia.

Nuestro país caribeño ha tenido que soportar grandes dificultades de carácter económico, político y social en toda su historia, especialmente en los últimos años, que han afectado al pueblo dominicano, especialmente a los trabajadores del campo y la ciudad, públicos y privados, a los más pobres y necesitados.

Venimos luchando contra los males del subdesarrollo como son el desempleo y los bajos salarios, la pobreza, la corrupción tanto en el sector público

como en el privado, la falta de seguridad social y la falta de libertad sindical entre otros problemas.

Desde hace dos años nuestro país ha avanzado notablemente en los índices económicos. Sin embargo, no percibimos suficientemente estos avances y los trabajadores y la población empobrecida demandamos cambios profundos que hagan de nuestra república un mundo mejor con mayores posibilidades para todos y todas, donde los privilegios y las injusticias cesen, para que miles de dominicanos y dominicanas no tengan que seguir intentando irse en barcas para Puerto Rico, como vía para llegar a Estados Unidos, o buscando fórmulas para llegar a Europa.

Constatamos que la búsqueda de empleo decente y trabajo digno para las grandes mayorías es una gran utopía, así como la aplicación de los principales Convenios de la OIT, a pesar de los esfuerzos que realiza el Gobierno del Presidente Leonel Fernández.

La libertad sindical y la negociación colectiva contempladas en los Convenios núms. 87 y 98 siguen siendo una consigna a alcanzar en la mayoría de las empresas públicas y privadas. Por otra parte, el fuero sindical consagrado en el código de trabajo se viola con frecuencia.

Tenemos casos recientes de desprecio de la libertad sindical en la empresa Coca Cola, donde se violaron los derechos de los trabajadores cuando intentaron organizarse en un sindicato filial a la CASC y fueron despedidos 18 compañeros del Comité Gestor.

En la empresa Cemento Nacional fueron despedidos 8 dirigentes sindicales al dejar constituido un sindicato afiliado a la CNTD.

Tenemos dificultades de empleo. Sólo en las zonas francas (maquilas) en los últimos años hemos perdido más de 60.000 empleos, si bien en otros sectores ha disminuido el desempleo. Preocupados por el empleo y el derecho al trabajo, recientemente la CASC y la CNTD firmaron un acuerdo con la cúpula empresarial de ese sector para buscar fórmulas de protección del empleo en ese importante sector de las maquilas.

Es cierto que aún tenemos dificultades de libertad sindical en las zonas francas y en la mayoría de las empresas en nuestro país, pero es digno de mencionar el caso de la empresa Grupo M, entre otras empresas, donde existen varios sindicatos y se han mejorado las relaciones con la dirección. Hoy tenemos una pujante Federación en las zonas francas (maquilas), la Unatrzonas, afiliada a la CASC.

Desde el mes de enero 2007 las tres principales centrales del país, la CASC, la CNUS y la CNTD, iniciamos una lucha difícil para mejorar los salarios de los trabajadores. Después de varias acciones (diálogo tripartito, piquetes, marchas), la CASC y la CNTD firmamos responsablemente, pensando en los trabajadores y en el país, un importante acuerdo con el sector empleador y el Gobierno para aumentar en un 15 por ciento el salario mínimo y en un 5 por ciento, a los salarios que pasen del mínimo.

Sigue siendo una gran preocupación para el país y los trabajadores el problema de la inmigración haitiana. Algunos sectores interesados en hacer daño a la República Dominicana han intentado manipular el tema haitiano y hacer creer al mundo que en nuestro país se esclaviza esta mano de obra, en especial en la industria azucarera. Esta denuncia fue aplastada ante la verdad de los hechos.

Hoy, la industria azucarera privada ha mecanizado el corte de la caña en más de un 60 por ciento y podemos afirmar que los braceros haitianos, especialmente en Central Romana Corporation Ltd. y en la casa Vicini tiene unas relaciones obrero-patronales conforme a la ley y a un contrato colectivo que mejora las condiciones de vida y de trabajo, no sólo para los picadores de caña sino para todos los trabajadores.

Desde hace muchos años el movimiento socio cultural de trabajadores haitianos (Mostha) y otros sectores de trabajadores haitianos están afiliados a la CNC. Defendemos los derechos de esos trabajadores porque son nuestros hermanos y luchamos por los mismos principios y valores que inspira el pensamiento cristiano.

Nuestra confederación CASC firmó en mayo pasado un importante acuerdo Copresida - Banco Mundial para ayudar a detener la expansión del VIH/SIDA en nuestro país.

Después de 45 años de haberse fundado la CASC (28 de enero de 1962) seguimos luchando por la justicia social con buen ánimo, para construir un país donde los trabajadores logremos un real reconocimiento de todos nuestros derechos como personas humanas y dignas, y se respeten todos y cada unos de los acuerdos de la OIT y predomine la justicia social para todos los trabajadores por ser hijos de Dios.

La Confederación Autónoma Sindical Clasista (CASC) reclama al Gobierno cubano la puesta en libertad de ocho dirigentes sindicales del Consejo Unitario de Trabajadores Cubanos (CUTC) detenidos tan sólo por formar una organización sindical independiente de acuerdo al Convenio núm. 87 de la OIT.

También exigimos que en la República de Colombia y en otros países de América Latina y del Caribe se respeten los derechos de los trabajadores y cesen los asesinatos de dirigentes sindicales.

Original arabe: M. TRABELSI (travailleur, Tunisie)

Je voudrais au nom de l'Union générale tunisienne du travail remercier Monsieur le Directeur général pour son rapport sur l'égalité du travail, rapport qui comporte un ensemble de données et d'informations qui confirment, comme l'a déclaré le Directeur général, que «l'urgence à lutter contre la discrimination au travail est plus grande encore dans un monde où montent les inégalités, l'insécurité et les incertitudes».

Le rapport traite de plusieurs aspects de la discrimination, qu'il s'agisse de ceux visés dans les conventions n° 100 et n° 111 ou de nouvelles formes de discrimination.

En ce qui concerne la définition de la discrimination contenue dans le paragraphe 22 de la partie I du rapport, nous sommes de plus en plus convaincus que la discrimination basée sur le sexe, la religion, la race, la couleur, la croyance ou le choix du style de vie est un phénomène qui persiste et constitue une violation des droits de l'homme, engendre des inégalités socio-économiques et est source de tensions dans l'entreprise et la société.

Le rapport, bien que de façon succincte, traite de la discrimination subie par les travailleurs migrants et qui n'est pas imputable nécessairement à la différence de religion, de couleur ou de race. En effet, les travailleurs migrants sont exposés à la discrimination, même s'ils partagent avec la population des pays hôtes tous ces aspects.

La mondialisation économique et la libéralisation des mouvements des capitaux et de marchandises ne se sont pas accompagnées d'une même flexibilité en ce qui concerne le mouvement de personnes. Il s'agit là d'une discrimination flagrante. Les embarcations de la mort qui rejettent chaque année des milliers de corps de jeunes sur les deux rives de la Méditerranée et de l'Atlantique sont la conséquence objective d'une politique basée sur une approche sécuritaire des migrations.

Nous devons nous opposer avec force aux tendances de certaines forces politiques qui exacerbent les instincts raciaux, la xénophobie contre les migrants, pour des raisons électorales aggravant davantage les conditions de vie des migrants et la discrimination qu'ils subissent. Cette situation aboutit nécessairement à des troubles sociaux et ouvre la voie aux forces du racisme, de l'extrémisme et du terrorisme, pour exacerber les haines et en appeler à ce qui est désigné comme le conflit des religions et des cultures.

La situation d'injustice et d'inégalité dont souffrent les migrants partout dans le monde ajoute à la discrimination traditionnelle une nouvelle forme, à savoir la discrimination culturelle. C'est pour cela que le fait de considérer les conventions internationales du travail relatives aux migrants parmi les normes fondamentales du travail est susceptible de réduire la discrimination subie par les migrants et de faire du lieu de travail un modèle de coexistence et de dialogue entre les cultures. Un autre aspect de la discrimination non souligné dans le rapport est celui qui frappe les travailleurs qui souffrent de la précarité de l'emploi et qui sont contraints d'accepter des conditions de travail défavorables qui ne respectent pas le minimum des normes internationales du travail, afin de fuir les affres du chômage et de l'extrême pauvreté. Il s'agit indubitablement d'une forme de discrimination qu'il faut combattre dans le cadre d'une stratégie de l'OIT pour promouvoir le travail décent.

Un autre aspect de la discrimination que nous aurions voulu voir de manière détaillée dans le rapport concerne l'oppression dont souffrent les syndicalistes, qui prend la forme de licenciements, de poursuites policières, de restrictions du droit syndical, de la privation de promotion et de l'exclusion des sessions de formation. C'est pourquoi la ratification de la convention n° 135 doit s'inscrire dans la stratégie de l'OIT relative à la lutte contre la discrimination en vue de protéger le droit syndical.

L'Union générale tunisienne du travail voudrait exprimer tout son respect à M. Somavia pour son souci d'assurer le suivi de la situation des travailleurs arabes en Palestine et dans les autres territoires arabes occupés et dans le Golan syrien occupé. Le rapport met l'accent sur la discrimination dont ils souffrent, les situations de pauvreté, de chômage et les conditions de vie misérables.

L'occupation israélienne des territoires palestiniens et du Golan syrien et la politique de colonisation sont la cause de cette situation dramatique. Nous devons donc conjuguer nos efforts pour exercer tous les moyens de pression pour que les résolutions des Nations Unies soient appliquées et que la légalité internationale soit respectée afin que le peuple palestinien puisse constituer son Etat indépendant, avec pour capitale Al-Qods.

Notre région connaît des situations délicates et des défis importants en matière de développement qui s'ajoutent aux conflits sanglants dus à

l'occupation israélienne. L'OIT doit accorder davantage d'importance à cette région et un soutien aux partenaires sociaux dans l'Orient et le Maghreb arabes pour réaliser la paix et approfondir les valeurs de la démocratie, des droits de l'homme et de respect des normes internationales du travail.

Sr. BONMATI PORTILLO (*trabajador, España*)

Señor Presidente, compañero Marx, en su Memoria, «El trabajo decente para un desarrollo sostenible», el Director General tiene el doble acierto de plantear aquellos retos que son claves para el mundo del trabajo y de introducir el medio ambiente como otro factor a tener en cuenta por su estrecha interrelación con el modo de producir y, por tanto, con el modelo de crecimiento y el empleo.

En mi país, tras algunos años de crecimiento sin redistribución y limitado diálogo social, en el período más reciente se han producido avances indiscutibles al mejorarse derechos sociales ya existentes e implantarse otros nuevos. Desde que en 2004 se firmara la Declaración para el Diálogo Social entre el Presidente del Gobierno y los interlocutores sociales, se han alcanzado alrededor de 20 acuerdos en el ámbito sociolaboral que configuran un nuevo modelo de diálogo social, sin precedentes en nuestro sistema de relaciones laborales.

Desde la anterior Conferencia, se han producido progresos en algunos ámbitos que son muy queridos para esta Organización. Así, en julio del pasado año los interlocutores sociales y el Gobierno firmamos un acuerdo sobre la Seguridad Social, que además de asegurar la viabilidad del sistema, mejora y amplía nuestro sistema de protección social, el cual se ha perfeccionado, además, con un sistema de cuidados a las personas dependientes, fruto de otro acuerdo social.

En marzo de este año ha entrado en vigor la Ley Orgánica de Igualdad Efectiva de Mujeres y Hombres, que tiene el loable objetivo de asegurar el principio de igualdad de trato y la eliminación de toda discriminación de la mujer mediante una serie de medidas que inciden en todos los ámbitos, desde el de la política y la empresa hasta el social. Destacamos, al respecto, que los importantes avances en el ámbito laboral y de la Seguridad Social, con destacable repercusión, por ejemplo, en la protección por maternidad y paternidad y la conciliación de la vida familiar y laboral, han sido todos ellos el resultado de un acuerdo con los interlocutores sociales.

En este preciso momento está en sede parlamentaria la discusión de la Ley del Estatuto del Trabajador Autónomo, otra norma importante negociada con las organizaciones del sector, mediante la cual se mejora la posición jurídica del trabajador por cuenta propia, que presta sus servicios para un determinado cliente o empresario. Entre otras mejoras, ello supone: tener un régimen contractual, disponer de un sistema de arbitraje, asignar a la jurisdicción social la resolución de los litigios, poder defender sus intereses a través de los sindicatos y asociaciones profesionales o disponer de unas prestaciones sociales muy similares a las del Régimen General de la Seguridad Social para los trabajadores por cuenta ajena. Muchos aspectos de esta nueva regulación se extienden también a los trabajadores autónomos en general.

En otro orden de cosas, tiene toda la razón el Director General al señalar que la compresión de los salarios amenaza el desarrollo sostenible. En muchos países, y también en España, se aprecia un

descenso de la participación de las rentas de los trabajadores en la renta nacional. Es por ello que el movimiento sindical español ha situado como prioridad un incremento importante de los salarios mínimos de los convenios colectivos.

Finalmente, señor Presidente, compañero Marx, en sus conclusiones, el Director General hace un llamamiento a favor del tripartismo, para lo que reclama el incremento de la libertad sindical. Al respecto, el sindicalismo español lamenta la injustificable exclusión de la lista de casos graves en la Comisión de Normas del país que bate todos los record en cuanto a violencia antisindical por el exterminio físico de dirigentes sindicales. Allí donde los derechos fundamentales, empezando por el derecho a la vida y a la seguridad de las personas, son conculcados a diario, la libertad sindical es imposible que prospere. No solo pretendemos expresar nuestra solidaridad con el movimiento sindical colombiano, al que se ha hecho un inadmisibles daño con este veto, también por el enorme daño que se ha hecho al tripartismo y al sistema de control de esta Organización.

M. HOSSU (*travailleur, Roumanie*)

Nous saluons le rapport présenté par le Directeur général.

Vraiment, la discrimination est un problème grave. Pensons à la discrimination fondée sur l'appartenance syndicale, qui a même conduit à tuer des militants un peu partout dans le monde. Vous connaissez sans doute la situation en Colombie, où 2 000 syndicalistes ont été tués entre 1991 et 2006, simplement parce qu'ils avaient mené un combat légitime pour les droits des travailleurs.

La délégation roumaine des travailleurs exprime sa protestation contre ce type de répression et se déclare solidaire de la lutte syndicale internationale contre ces attentats.

Oui, la discrimination est un problème à la fois ancien et actuel, auquel notre société est confrontée, surtout dans le contexte de la mondialisation. C'est un problème difficile à éradiquer, car il a ses racines dans les mentalités. Et changer les mentalités peut prendre plusieurs années. C'est pourquoi le problème de la discrimination est un vrai défi pour nous tous.

Dans ce contexte, le cas de la Roumanie est un paradoxe: notre pays a ratifié les deux conventions de l'OIT concernant ladite discrimination et dispose d'un cadre législatif adapté aux réglementations internationales pertinentes. Mais le problème en Roumanie, comme dans d'autres pays, c'est le respect des lois.

Ainsi, les Roumains sont toujours en butte à la discrimination. Ceux qui cherchent un emploi se voient souvent victimes de discrimination fondée sur le sexe ou l'âge. On pourrait dire qu'au-delà des lois ce sont les préjugés et l'arbitraire des employeurs qui déterminent l'évolution professionnelle des travailleurs. Il est vraiment déplorable, quand on a la sagesse et l'expérience d'une vie de 55 ans et de se voir rejeté par les employeurs.

Ces dernières années, un nouveau critère de discrimination a également fait son apparition en Roumanie, surtout dans les entreprises privées: l'appartenance syndicale. Les cas sont nombreux où nos membres ont subi des chantages et ont été contraints de choisir entre le syndicat et leur emploi.

Et puis il y a aussi les lois discriminatoires, notamment la loi sur les pensions qui établit, d'une

manière injuste et injustifiée des écarts insurmontables entre les catégories de retraités, entre les femmes et les hommes.

Compte tenu de ce contexte, les syndicats roumains luttent contre toute forme de discrimination. Dans un premier temps, nous nous sommes efforcés d'éliminer, par des négociations avec les employeurs, tout critère de discrimination dans les contrats collectifs de travail. Mais nous ne pouvons pas en rester là.

Les lois discriminatoires doivent être modifiées; en outre, un programme anti discrimination cohérent, commun à toutes les confédérations syndicales, réclame un statut d'urgence.

Par ailleurs, il faut faire des bureaux de l'inspection du travail des instruments efficaces de la lutte contre la discrimination. Conformément à la loi de l'inspection du travail et à la convention no 81 de l'OIT, les bureaux de l'inspection du travail devraient jouer un rôle de premier plan dans la lutte contre la discrimination. Mais ce n'est pas le cas dans la pratique. Ils agissent sous le contrôle direct du ministère du Travail et s'avèrent être des instruments plutôt inefficaces pour régler le problème des travailleurs. Aussi le renforcement de bureaux de l'inspection du travail est-il une mesure qui s'impose de toute urgence pour tous.

Il convient néanmoins de noter un progrès: le Conseil national de lutter contre la discrimination a été créé, et il est vraiment actif. Il mène des investigations et sanctionne par des amendes les actes de discrimination.

Outre la discrimination, la Roumanie est actuellement confrontée à un problème extrêmement grave: la violation des réglementations inscrites dans la convention n° 87 sur la liberté syndicale et la protection du droit syndical, ratifiée par la Roumanie.

Ces dernières années, en vertu des dispositions internes du ministère roumain du Travail, les bureaux de travail régionaux refusent d'enregistrer les demandes de conciliation soumises par les syndicats. D'après la loi n° 168/1999, l'étape de conciliation est obligatoire avant que l'on puisse recourir éventuellement à une grève, sinon la grève est réputée illégale.

La manière dont la loi 68/1999 est formulée donne matière à plusieurs interprétations. La Confédération syndicale Cartel ALFA, la Confédération des syndicats démocratiques de Roumanie et le BNS ont déjà porté plainte à ce sujet contre le gouvernement roumain auprès de l'Organisation internationale du Travail et vont continuer de lutter contre toute forme de violation des droits des syndicats.

La solution consiste à faire modifier la loi sur les conflits du travail, la loi sur les contrats collectifs de travail et la loi sur les syndicats. Nous devons aussi insister pour que le gouvernement roumain adopte la loi sur les tribunaux du travail (conseils de prud'hommes) pour tous les grades et toutes les juridictions.

La toute dernière atteinte portée par le gouvernement roumain à la convention n° 87 de l'OIT et à l'indépendance des institutions syndicales a été l'adoption de la loi sur l'Agence nationale pour l'intégrité.

Les confédérations syndicales de Roumanie saluent l'initiative de l'Etat roumain consistant à adopter une loi sur cette question. Mais le fait de ranger les dirigeants syndicaux dans les catégories de charges publiques à soumettre au contrôle de

l'Agence nationale pour l'intégrité constitue une immixtion grave de l'Etat dans l'activité des syndicats et une violation de l'indépendance de l'organisation syndicale.

Tous ces exemples négatifs auxquels nous avons fait référence démontrent que le progrès social en Roumanie est lent et connaît des coups d'arrêt. Mais nous qu'à l'avenir, avec l'aide de l'OIT et grâce aux efforts conjugués de tous les partenaires sociaux, nous parviendrons à mettre en place un cadre conforme aux conventions de l'OIT pour développer des relations de travail et sociales harmonieuses.

Mr. MENDOZA (*Worker, Philippines*)

On behalf of the Filipino workers, allow me to congratulate the Director-General and the staff of the ILO for the splendid work that has gone into the Report.

The agenda of the 96th Session of the ILO Conference speaks volumes about the work that the tripartite partners need to sustain in order to promote decent work.

At the outset let me emphasize the commitment of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) to the adoption of the Recommendation and Convention concerning work in the fishing sector. For a country, the economic activity of which depends a great deal on the fishing sector, and a nation known for its great seafaring tradition, we believe that the adoption of the Convention and its accompanying Recommendation is not only timely but necessary.

We fully support that this Conference should use the Report of the Committee on the Fishing Sector of the 93rd Session as a basis for discussion.

Regarding the promotion of sustainable enterprises, while there is a growing recognition of the role of the private sector in the promotion of employment creation, little has been said about the role of the workers' organizations.

There are countries that share a great deal of experience in workers' enterprises in the Philippines. The TUCP initiative for creating a cargo-handling enterprise in the port of Cebu, wholly owned and operated by workers, has produced decent jobs for over 1000 port workers. The TUCP has also been involved in a venture to provide skills training for call agents which has trained over 1,000 young people who have found work in the business process industry. The latter programme started only in October last year.

Trade unions have evolved their traditional responsibility of representation. Such initiatives should be supported at the international and local levels. We also call on the multilateral recognition and support of these programmes.

This year, the Director-General has spoken to the Conference about the need for more coherent policies on trade, financing, investment and employment.

Globalization and trade liberalization, while creating a super highway for the movement of capital and unlimited returns for multinational enterprises, has created problems for job security and distribution of wealth at the national level. Economic development must translate to investment in social services.

In the Philippines, while there have been marked improvements in the economy, these must translate into improvements in social security allocation, un-

employment insurance, skill training and other social services.

Let me also take this opportunity to call on the ILO to make proposals, in conjunction with the Bretton Woods institutions, on programmes for debt reduction or debt-swap arrangements. This will enable Third World countries to reinvest debt-servicing budgets to programmes on skills development, social protection, and environmental protection, including programmes that shall assist the social partners in pursuing the creation of green jobs.

However, we must do more to translate policies into action at the earliest opportunity. This is imperative if social unrest is to be prevented. This should be a priority for everyone.

Mr. MOHBALIYEV (*Worker, Azerbaijan*)

In beginning my speech, I would like to draw your attention that two Conventions of the International Labour Organization that play a significant role in the solution of the problem set forth for discussion today, namely the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). These have been ratified by the Azerbaijan Republic and appropriate measures on their implementation were taken. The Conventions mentioned are applied to all employees without distinction, mainly by means of national legislation, general collective agreements signed between the Government, the National Confederation of Entrepreneurs, organizations of Azerbaijan and trade unions, sectoral tariff agreements and collective contracts.

Barring discrimination, labour relations are regulated. First of all, by the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic, articles 35, 36 and 37, of the Constitution concern labour legislation and its implementation. These articles basically contain the following principles: everyone is free to choose a profession, occupation and workplace in accordance with his or her abilities; people work only on the basis of a labour contract concluded on a voluntary and free basis, and no one should be compelled to conclude such a contract, except in cases specifically provided for in the Constitution or international norms instruments to which Azerbaijan is a party.

No one may be forced to work, everyone is entitled to work in safe and healthy conditions and receive a wage which is no less than the minimum wage defined by the State and commensurate with the work performed, without discrimination.

Legislative instruments adopted in our State and labour regulations are consistent with the Constitution. On the other hand, the Labour Code has been in effect since 1999 and is a document in conformity with market economy demands, and international norms and standards. While drawing up the Code, labour legislation of advanced States with classic market economies and international practice was taken as a model.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to note that 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan has been occupied by Armenia. As a result, hundreds of thousands of workplaces have been lost and infrastructure has been destroyed. All these facts negatively influence the labour market situation in our country.

The measures taken to regulate labour relations and carried out in implementation of the present policy in the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as the laws adopted serve, above all, the elimination of any differences that could hamper equality of opportunities and lead to unequal treatment on the basis of race, sex, religion, political convictions, national origin or social status in the labour and employment spheres. The Azerbaijan trade unions support this policy, assist in its implementation, and apply public control over it.

Trade unions are the defenders of employees and their social and economic rights and interests, but they cannot quite agree with the level of compliance with labour legislation in the different sectors and enterprises, particularly in the private sector. In spite of the creation of conditions to ensure employees' labour rights, and the existence of relevant legislation, serious problems in the conclusion of labour agreements and the establishment of favourable working conditions still exist.

As we mentioned earlier, the conclusion of employment contracts is the most serious problem in the world of work in our country. Although regulations on employment contracts establish an obligation to sign, and the failure to do so incurs a fine for the employer, labour relations established with employees in the absence of a contract prevail in some, mainly in small and medium-scale, enterprises. Labour employment agreements are replaced by oral arrangements. The most serious concern is that in most cases labour relations with employees are not documented in any form at all.

The other grave problem for us is the violation of employees' rights by multinational companies. We often face cases such as discrimination in remuneration, limitation of labour rights by means of labour contracts. Unequal pay by transnational companies, foreign firms, and private enterprises must not be seen only as a breach of rights. It should also be considered discrimination in the world of work, that is a violation of civil rights. Salaries paid by foreign companies differ depending on the employee's nationality and religious affiliation. Staff from Western countries receive wages that are sometimes ten times higher than those earned by employees from other regions for the same work. People who have come from South-East Asia work for wages which are even several times lower than that. The lowest category is the local employee, and they receive the lowest wage for work of equal value.

Everyone is aware of the important role played by trade unions in protecting employees' rights. Unfortunately, in many companies, especially in foreign oil companies operating in Azerbaijan, serious barriers to trade unions are being established. Efforts of employees to organize meet with serious resistance on the part of employers. But we take significant action to change this.

I would like to underline the increased trust in the Azerbaijan Trade Unions Confederation, and its sectoral organizations and I will give you one indicator: trade union membership has increased from 75,000 to 144,000.

Mr. BARAK (*Employer, Israel*)

When we spoke to delegates in this hall a year ago, we stressed our belief that the chances for lasting peace between Israel and its neighbours would increase if all sides would realize that they shared common interests.

Economic cooperation would lead to a reduction in violence and greater welfare for all citizens and significantly improve the chances of reaching peace. We stated that, if businessmen from both sides were to lead the process, it would probably move forward at a more rapid pace.

To our regret, the present situation has resulted in a worsened economic situation for the Palestinians and prevents the possibility of together finding ways of economic cooperation.

A further result of their situation is that the number of Palestinians permitted to work in Israel is lower than in the past, due to security considerations. Israeli businessmen have little desire to cooperate with their Palestinian colleagues in setting up enterprises in Palestinian-controlled areas which could provide more job opportunities, and we very much regret this.

We continue to hope that the situation will change and that next year we will be able to report progress in economic cooperation for the welfare of all citizens and for a reduction in violence.

Although as businessmen we operate subject to consideration of profit, we are also able to create work opportunities and social stability, which are the best possible weapons against terror.

On the domestic plane in Israel, the labour relations system has recently changed. A joint agreement was reached between the Federation of Israeli Economic Organizations (on behalf of the employers) and the General Federation of Labour, the *Histadrut*.

Both sides are cooperating in an attempt to reach agreement in meeting common goals by means of collective agreements in order to avoid the need for legislation. This accord has led to a new status quo in labour relations, to a dramatic drop in the number of strikes during the last two years and to joint agreements on two central issues.

The sides reached agreement among themselves and called upon the Government to join them, thus effectively putting into practice one of the ILO's basic guiding principles.

The first subject is increasing the enforcement of labour laws. In Israel there is a progressive system of labour laws which are protective laws to defend workers' rights. However, the level of enforcement is not high and this harms mainly the weaker, non-organized sections of the population.

This is the first time that employers' organizations have signed an agreement whose aim is to increase supervision and enforcement of laws among members. This is in order to take care of workers' rights on the one hand and to ensure equality in costs and competition between employers on the other hand. This agreement between the sides also softened the Government's approach and, at present, steps are under way to include the Government in this initiative and to arrive at a compulsory order which will be binding for all three parties.

The second subject is compulsory pensions for all workers. The situation today is that most organized workers have agreements that guarantee their pensions, but hundreds of thousands of workers – mainly non-organized and with low wages – have no pension arrangements. The General Federation of Labour of the Federation of Israeli Economic Organizations have signed an agreement that will make pension insurance compulsory for all workers. This agreement will become a law that will oblige all non-organized employers to insure their workers.

Thus the problem will be solved in the foreseeable future. We are presently diligently working together in other areas of mutual interest to improve the welfare of workers and to reduce the gaps in Israeli society and its poverty level while advancing the Israeli economy. This example of cooperation and attaining common goals may well serve as a model for other countries and we will be happy to share it.

Mr. ROLEK (*Employer, Hungary*)

Since its foundation the ILO has always played a pivotal role in developing properly organized labour relations, setting labour standards and also fighting discrimination at the workplace. This activity sets the trend globally for national legislators and greatly contributes to ensuring the existing workplaces meet basic expectations. At the same time, creating new jobs and sustaining existing ones also rank as one of the most serious social and economic issues both globally and in my country, Hungary.

In the world of labour the problems of those with and without jobs are fundamentally different. While not ignoring the efforts made by the ILO to tackle the issues of those outside of the labour market, we may state that, to date, these issues have carried relatively less weight within the activities of the ILO. Even in doing so, the ILO mostly focuses on individuals, the opportunity to employ them and their training and vocational training needs.

In this respect, the 2007 Session of the International Labour Conference can be regarded as a milestone. The central topic of the Conference is the promotion of sustainable enterprises. This means that the emphasis is now on the sustaining and expansion of workplaces and on what social partners and governments can do to promote sustainable development. Speaking on behalf of the Hungarian employers, I warmly welcome this subject and hope that it will continue to be a focal point for both the ILO and the Conference for an extensive period.

Promoting sustainable enterprises is a complex subject in which each player has a role to play. While not losing sight of the primary objective, which is profitable operation, both the owners and the employers must meet the expectation of other stakeholders. The employers need to maintain safe and sustainable jobs, securing acceptable living standards in line with the expectation of employees, while there is also a need to fully comply with social expectations be they financial, environmental, legal or other in nature.

The frameworks under which enterprises operate are specified by the State to a large extent. Legal security, predictability and the creation of physical and intellectual infrastructure are all fundamental requirements. In this respect Hungary is in a difficult period. Due to state budget problems, the burden on enterprises has become heavier, tax reductions prescribed and guaranteed by law have failed to take place and, instead, taxes have been increased significantly. Even worse, these changes have not been predictable and have often been implemented during the tax year. The system of vocational training also needs major structural change as it is unable to provide professionals for a number of companies and industries. These factors significantly hinder the sustainable development of enterprises and jeopardize jobs in both the short and long run.

In terms of the sustainable development of enterprises, both employees and trade unions must demonstrate a more down-to-earth approach. The capac-

ity to sustain enterprises in the various stages of their life cycle requires local social partners to demonstrate flexibility based on their long-term mutual interests. To this end the role played by local collective and individual bargaining agreements is increasing, and legislation must increasingly cater for these needs. Unfortunately, current Hungarian legislation offers only limited opportunities for local, collective and individual agreements. Both the Government and trade unions see as the primary solution the existence and strict enforcement of very detailed legislation.

This approach must be reviewed. In a modern knowledge-based economy, the sustainability of enterprises emerges in a new form. The nature of labour relations changes fundamentally and the traditional employer/employee relationship, in which the employer plays the dominant role and the employee is largely defenceless, becomes a much more balanced one. Instead of being based on just capital invested, the value of an enterprise is increasingly dependent on the intellectual potential of its staff. As a result, a complex symbiosis develops between the employer and the employee in which only new types of organizational structure, labour relations and income allocation forms can be successful in the long run. This transformation process is even more prominent in hi-tech industries and certain service sectors and fundamentally changes the traditional relationship paradigm.

In this respect, the sustainability of enterprises further increases the importance of social relations. Recognizing this fact and developing appropriate strategies and guidelines will be one of the major challenges faced by the ILO in the coming years.

The Hungarian employers are fully confident that the ILO will be coping with these new challenges as successfully as it has so far.

Sr. TATAMUEZ (*trabajador, Ecuador*)

Para la delegación del Ecuador, participar una vez más en esta Conferencia es demostrar que toda la delegación estamos unidos por un cambio y por la profundidad política de un país.

Nosotros, hace diez años venimos desde el Ecuador peleando por un cambio profundo a través de nuestra misión de cambio de espíritu y autonomía de nuestra patria.

Hoy, Sr. Presidente, venimos de un país donde tenemos una migración del 9,5 y de un subempleo del 56 por ciento. Eso quiere decir la irresponsabilidad de gobiernos pasados, de gobiernos que realmente, irresponsablemente, nos dejaron dolarizados, donde empobreció el 90 por ciento de los ecuatorianos. Y por ello, para que conozca el mundo la solución y lo que busca el Ecuador entero, es respeto a su autonomía, respeto a su soberanía y respeto a los países que han ido así aliándose dentro de este proceso.

Porque el Fondo Monetario Internacional nos chantajeó, nuestro Gobierno tuvo que sacarlo de nuestro país. Para que realmente gobiernos o los bancos mundiales, como los que quieren seguir existiendo en el mundo sigan funcionando, tienen que ayudar a los países pobres, pero no chantajeando.

Esa es la posición de los trabajadores. Por ello nosotros apoyamos el tripartismo, por ello apoyamos a la OIT y pedimos, con todo respeto, que en el futuro no se violen las listas de oradores, porque eso es fatal, no es democracia, y la democracia tenemos que hacerla aquí en nuestra casa, que es la OIT. Y

los trabajadores, con todo el respeto, señores de la Mesa, somos los únicos que la defendemos con más coraje y hombría de bien en todas partes del mundo.

Venimos también trabajando, como lo conoce la OIT regional de los países andinos, por la erradicación del trabajo infantil. La conoce también el señor Secretario General, porque ha visitado también esos sectores y lo estamos haciendo con compromiso radical, profundamente de un compromiso tanto con el gobierno y el pueblo ecuatoriano.

Dentro de este proceso, le queremos hacer conocer al mundo y pedirle a la OIT, que debemos sacar una resolución en el futuro, que ojalá la tercerización no sea hecho como se ha venido haciendo en otras partes, cooperativismo que se ha hecho mercantilismo, en contra del pueblo ecuatoriano y en contra de los pueblos del mundo.

El trabajo por horas es otra complicidad que se ha dado en nuestro país, y eso también lo estamos defendiendo, estamos defendiendo el derecho del trabajo, el derecho a la organización.

También estamos dentro de este nivel y concordamos con el Informe del señor Director General, cuando dice que todos y todas tenemos que ir contra el trabajo forzoso, contra el proceso de los países del cambio y ojalá que en el futuro no haya trabajadores niños en la agricultura y en otros trabajos que lo están haciendo dentro de este proceso.

Nosotros vamos a una constitución. En esa constitución vamos a una reforma, primero del modelo económico, ese es el compromiso del Gobierno nacional, del pueblo ecuatoriano y de todos los que queremos que nuestro país vaya siendo y vaya más adelante.

Nosotros venimos de un país que es conocido en el mundo, estamos con 3.000.000 de emigrantes afuera, esos 3.000.000 han roto toda su familia, han quebrado, y sigue siendo el rubro de envíos económicos, el segundo rubro en nuestro país. Eso no quiere decir que sea solución; por eso es que estamos aquí, por eso es que nos quedamos aquí y por eso seguiremos estando aquí en la OIT, defendiendo a la OIT para que el tripartismo salga adelante.

Por ello no podemos aceptar ciertos criterios de ciertas personas, que se enferman por los cambios de criterios de revolución de los países. No podemos aceptar que se diga que en Cuba no hay derecho a la organización. Nadie puede desconocer a Cuba, todo lo que ha hecho en organización, en la salud y en la capacitación.

Por ello estamos con el proceso del cambio, estamos en nuestro país y en los países de América del Sur, apoyamos el banco, la creación del Banco del Sur, y apoyamos la unidad de América Latina, como apoyaremos siempre a la OIT y todos juntos para el cambio de todas y todos los trabajadores del mundo.

Original Polish: Mr. CYBULSKI (Worker, Poland)

A report has been given to the Conference on the principles of equal rights under the law and non-discrimination of members of society. This seems to be a very old and well-known issue but unfortunately it is still of great importance today. The report tells us of the results of the fight against discrimination. We are made aware of discrimination on grounds of sex and on grounds of ethnic origin, and also discrimination on grounds of health. Allow me here to express our solidarity with the workers of Colombia. In the fight against discrimination the United Nations agencies, including the ILO, have a

huge role to play and they have achieved some great successes.

You might think that in my country, where European Union standards are complied with, there are no such problems, but that is not the way things are. I can give you an example in Pepsi Cola, Poland. In the Secretary-General's report we read about the role of professional organizations in the fight against discrimination. However, I regret to say that joining a union can be an obstacle to getting a job and can also be seen as an obstacle to recognition of services rendered and to promotion. The Minister of Education expressed this by discriminating against teachers who are members of a particular union. There is a tripartite committee for economic and social affairs in Poland and for a year and a half, it has not worked regularly. And yet the Government responsible seems quite unconcerned.

The Government implements no measures to help women who would like to have their children taken care of, there are no kindergartens, there is no day-care available. What is available is so expensive that the average Polish family cannot pay for it. Doctors have been on strike for some time, and teachers are intending to strike soon, and that points to the Government's unwillingness to discuss the terms of our life together. It is not an important issue for them, any more than are the problems of families and living standards in society.

The Government attempted to intimidate the striking doctors with police monitoring and harassment. The police have been used to "discipline" those who have been striking, and they intervened brutally in a company in northern Poland ten days ago.

Productivity has gone up more than 40 per cent over recent years and wages have only gone up 7 per cent. If you look at the statistics you can see that 40 per cent of society is living below the poverty line. The Government's rejection of social dialogue means that the social partners do not have any opportunity to engage in negotiations in order to solve problems in that context, although that is what society expects.

The problems of equal rights have a history of their own and there are many new developments there. What is, however, important is that the ILO achieve success. I hope that this current meeting of the ILO will be a milestone in the struggle for equal rights and for respect for the workers.

Mr. NICOLESCU (Employer, Romania)

The Romanian Employers' delegation of representatives of seven national employers' confederations, components of the Romanian Alliance of Employers' Confederations, is honoured to speak at the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. For a start, we would like to congratulate the President of this session on his election to this important function and to wish him success.

In the period since the last session of the annual International Labour Conference in 2006, significant progress was achieved in Romania, from the employers' point of view, following the country's integration into the EU and a GNP growth rate of over 7 per cent, among the highest in Europe. At the national level, the seven employers' organizations at the beginning of this year created the strategic alliance known as the Alliance of Romanian Employers' Confederations of Romania (ACPR). This alliance, which represents over 70 per cent of the Romanian economy, was organized according to the

principles promoted by the Organization of International Employers' Organization, Business Europe and UEAPME, to which it is affiliated directly or through its members.

The ACPR elaborates a strategy based on a deep SWOT analysis of the Romanian economy which will present a viable alternative for development and which, through social dialogue and the employers' lobby, will be reflected in national and sectoral strategies and policies, thereby contributing to the modernization of the economy and of society. The ACPR is a strategic modern alliance which, applying the best EU employers' practices, will encourage the development of social dialogue with all partners with the focus on the national interest in the context of Romania's integration into the European Union and globalization.

In the framework of this positive contextual evolution, we have to mention that there have been injurious remarks from one trade union confederation, whose representatives are present in Geneva, on the occasion of the new employers' law project and of the constitution of the Romanian Economic and Social Council. We hope in future not to be faced with such situations, which go against the ILO Constitution and the spirit of social dialogue and partnership.

Regarding the work agenda of the present International Labour Conference, we would like to underline two essential aspects.

First, regarding the strengthening of the ILO's role in globalization and sustainable enterprises, we consider that it is necessary to devote more attention to SMEs, which represent 99 per cent of all companies in the majority of countries. SMEs, the main generator of new jobs, products, services and incomes for the state budget, have some important particularities. In formulating the next ILO Recommendations regarding the future economic and social development of humanity, it is necessary to formulate certain special provisions for SMEs. It is in the interest of all countries and social partners to develop and place a high value on the potential of SMEs. Let us not forget that SMEs represent – as the President of the Organization for Accelerated Development in Latin America, Ms. Schmidheiny said – the only anti-poverty machine capable of generating wealth for everyone.

Second, formulation of the ILO's points of view regarding the promotion of sustainable enterprise, is crucial to the future development of mankind. The study prepared by ILO specialists, debated within the Conference, and which represents the premise for the ILO's recommendations, contains a great number of high-quality elements. Still, neither in the case of the study nor in the debates is sufficient attention paid to the consequences of the knowledge revolution and of the transition to the new type of economy based on knowledge, processes that are currently developing rapidly and which will become prevalent in the majority of countries in the coming decades. The sustainable enterprise to which the world economy is advancing is a knowledge-based enterprise in which intellectual capital has a decisive role to play, where human resources based on knowledge prevail, where obtaining a competitive advantage depends mainly on a company's know-how. The sustainable, knowledge-based enterprise of the future can be built only in an economic and social environment based on knowledge. Therefore, it is logical that, in the final ILO document on sus-

tainable future enterprises, these aspects should be largely emphasized.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the deep appreciation of the Romanian employers' delegation for the work of the International Labour Conference, which is again proving the usefulness and, through the decisions that will be adopted, will accelerate economic and social development.

Mr. GIUSEPPI (*Worker, Trinidad and Tobago*)

On behalf of the people of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in general, and the working class and organized labour in particular, I bring warm and fraternal greetings from the National Trade Union Centre of Trinidad and Tobago (NATUC) to all the delegates and the countries that they represent in this bicentennial year of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

As I stand before you today to make this very brief address, I do so with a sense of great pride, when I look back at the achievements that we have made under the banner of the Decent Work Agenda. This great mantra and shining light has enabled us to see the end of the tunnel of yet another capitalist system that went mad under its most obscene form called globalization.

Under the banner of the ILO Decent Work Agenda, I am very pleased to report to you that our movement broke the back of gender discrimination at the workplace of the single largest employer: the State. Gone are the days when a female worker would get less than her male counterpart. The Government finally accepted our principle of equal pay for equal work. Today, thousands of female workers now enjoy the same rates of pay as their male counterparts. We even went further and put into our collective agreements a clause that prohibits all forms of discrimination at the workplace.

Delegates will recall that the Decent Work Agenda has been the mainstay of our deliberations for the past five years. We, in Trinidad and Tobago, have demonstrated that we are not only prepared to talk the talk but to implement and enforce. I am certain that, in this regard, we do not stand alone and I want to take this opportunity to urge all the delegates to leave no stone unturned and let us do all that is in our power to continue to facilitate the collapse of globalization.

This means that we must see the Decent Work Agenda as the midwife of the new economic order that is being built by the working class. It is the implementation of this agenda that will consign all the negatives of globalization, such as downsizing, privatizing, contract work and forced retirement, into the graveyard of capitalist history. The pure economic approach to global development has had its day.

You will notice that I am not spending much time in my address to you complaining about the problem. I think it is more productive to devote our energy and time to talking about the development of solutions, so that the working class will not have to wait to receive the crumbs from the ruling class. Rather, they would be developing an economic system that would harness the resources of the world to provide a decent quality of life for all.

Let us accept the unquestionable fact that the more we, the majority, press forward with our demand for full employment, the more the State and the ruling class will have no choice but to react and give in. For example, we have persistently pressed

for an end to unemployment, which was well into the double digits over the years. Today, the Government is proclaiming that unemployment has now dropped to 5 per cent, which makes us compatible with the criteria for developed nation status.

Our call for full employment is far from over, notwithstanding the fact that unemployment has dropped to that low level. I say so because the Decent Work Agenda requires nation States to have a programme of sustainable employment and a living wage. The records show that employment increased in the community and in the social and personal services sectors, but more so at the lower end of the wage ladder. While there have been increases in the working poor, underemployment and poverty still remains at over 20 per cent.

On this subject, in concrete terms, it means that special emphasis also has to be placed on employment in other areas such as the agricultural sector, whose contribution to the GDP has been consistently declining. It also means that there must be a shift away from employment under minimum wages to employment under a living wage, thus enforcing our programme for a more just and fair distribution of the wealth that labour creates.

I am also pleased to report that the long awaited and overdue Occupational Safety and Health Act has not only become law but the relevant agency has also been established and staffed. This achievement is the culmination of years of struggle by NATUC for legislation to protect the lives of workers. This too, is also part of the Decent Work Agenda.

To crown it all, I am pleased to inform this Conference that the legislation gives the worker and trade unions a voice in the workplace, since joint safety committees and safety policies must be established as a requirement of the law.

It is the implementation of the principles laid down in this piece of legislation that will require the wealth that was created by the working class, but appropriated by the ruling class to be returned to the workers, so that the working environment can be safe and healthy for them and to ensure that their lives are free from danger. This too ensures the just and fair redistribution of growth and income throughout society.

Our deliberations at this Conference will always have great significance. It is here, at these forums, that all the Conventions that have gone a long way in civilizing a slave-centred capitalism have been produced.

Since its formation 90 years ago, there can be no doubt that the ILO has played an important role in improving the lot of the working and common people throughout the world and has continued to bring the three social partners to the table in the interests of global development.

I urge all of you to keep advancing the Decent Work Agenda. This is the global tool that the working class must use to reshape not only the workplace but also the national and global economy into a working class economy. It is upon this new world economic order that the new super structures in politics and culture can be built to allow true social justice and real democracy to prevail. Can it be done? Of course it can be done! It has to be done! The future of mankind depends on the full achievement of this and other such noble socio-economic agendas.

Mr. GOODLEIGH (*Worker, Jamaica*)

Attempts at the coherence of policy among multilaterals was first discussed in the ILO system in 2004. At that time, the Jamaica Confederation of Trade Unions had indicated a deep interest in that matter. Our interest was fuelled by the fact that Jamaica had a 17-year structural adjustment relationship with the IMF World Bank during the periods of the 1970s and the 1980s.

We therefore have extensive experience with coherent, neo-liberal, economic doctrines paraded by multilaterals under the guise of one-size-fits-all.

We are very aware of the devastation caused to a nation's social and physical infrastructure by this approach. We are therefore very sceptical of an international economic policy based on the IMF World Bank model.

We note, with interest, the comments of the Chairperson of the Governing Body about the Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization. The report indicates that ECOSOC, in July 2006, had made a Ministerial Declaration in which it called for agencies of the multilateral systems, including the IMF, World Bank, regional banks and economic commissions to take explicit account of the impact of their activities on decent work and productive employment and how the multilateral system could forge greater operational coherence in policies at the national levels.

Taken at face value there is nothing in the declaration that should cause alarm. But then the report indicates that the ILO Working Party on the Social Dimension of Globalization was of the opinion that it was now essential to harmonize national and international policies in the fields of finance, trade, migration, social security and the labour markets.

It also quite correctly identified that those circumstances had given the ILO a major opportunity to lead the drive for greater coherence in the global system because of the ILO agreed-objective of decent work.

While that might be true, it would be our view that the ILO cannot lead the drive for greater policy coherence until the ILO has done the technical work of identifying the macro-economic framework that can accommodate the centrality of decent work in economic and social policy. We cannot rely on the World Bank and the IMF to do that macro-economic work.

Even if we have an agreed objective between multilaterals and even if we provide the macro-economic framework, the unions anticipate two major difficulties in the ILO's quest for social coherence with other multilaterals.

The first of these is about arriving at an agreed multilateral objective. The ILO has an agreed objective of decent work. The IMF and the World Bank historically have had an aversion to stating clearly articulated objectives when formulating macro-economic policy.

Both institutions have always argued that economic policy and social policy are things apart. Whereas in the ILO, we know that the two things are similar. The IMF and the World Bank have always made macro-economic policy on the basis of a presumed good, rather than on some explicitly stated objective. One could never ask them the question as to what the objective of structural adjustment, macro-economic stabilization or the transition to a market economy was.

Was it economic growth, was it efficiency or equity? Or was it a combination of two of the above? If so, what kind of equity and what kind of efficiency? Over the years, no one has ever received an answer.

So, basically, what we have is a difference in institutional cultures.

We are not optimistic that the ILO will be able to convince the IMF World Bank to change, primarily because those institutions have forgotten that they are intergovernmental public institutions and, at worst, not a private club that is hostage to the macroeconomic prejudices of some governments. These governments are of the view that the policies that benefit them should be applicable to all of us. It is common sense that these governments represent the major shareholders of the World Bank. The unions see no possibility of them not exercising their rights as the major shareholders. Conversely, we see no indication that the governments of the emerging economies intend to increase their shareholding in the World Bank. But unless the ILO wins the objective argument, it cannot pursue any plan for international economic policy coherence and policy harmonization. It is common sense that if the ILO wins that argument it would automatically trigger economic policies dedicated to economic growth, employment, monetary and fiscal exchange rate policies to accommodate the objective of decent work. It would also put in place policies for poverty eradication through education, training, health and safety and social protection. If it does not win, the macroeconomic policies of the World Bank and the IMF will continue.

Another obstacle is that the ILO is seeking international coherence and harmonization of policies, precisely at the time when unions and progressive economists and NGOs are starting to convince the IMF and the World Bank that their policies dedicated to the notion of one size fits all are inappropriate. Consequently, there has started to emerge the concept of country-owned and country-specific macroeconomic policies. These developments are in their embryonic stage. They are not pervasive and they are only considered because many developing countries have followed the recommended first-generation reforms of the IMF and the World Bank. These policies have failed to generate sustained economic growth in the context of FTA.

Finally, the workers of Jamaica give full support to the establishment of a joint ILO/WTO secretariat that is empowered to explore the relationship between free trade and ILO core standards. In closing, let me thank the ILO Regional Office for all the assistance that it has given Jamaican to workers and the workers of the Caribbean.

Sr. GRAELL AÑINO (*trabajador, Panamá*)

Desde la última Conferencia el Gobierno nacional ha llevado adelante una serie de procesos de transformación socioeconómica que están impactando a la población panameña y, en particular, a los trabajadores, lo que nos lleva a mantener un estado de alerta de cara a salvaguardar nuestros legítimos intereses y conquistas sociales.

Sin embargo, el Consejo Nacional de Trabajadores Organizados (CONATO) es consciente de su responsabilidad y, en este sentido, la dirigencia sindical participa en la concertación nacional con propuestas fundamentadas apoyadas técnica y científicamente.

En este marco, la clase trabajadora organizada cuestiona las acciones del Gobierno nacional y de los empresarios, cuyas prácticas y políticas están afectando la calidad de vida de los trabajadores panameños, a saber:

1) El Tratado de Libre Comercio de Panamá. Estados Unidos va mucho más allá de un simple acuerdo de intercambio comercial, ya que no se trata de integrar mercados, sino de tomarse los mercados por parte de las multinacionales con la impronta de la dominación política y someter a nuestra débil economía a sus dictámenes.

El CONATO ha rechazado por unanimidad el unirse con los Estados Unidos, ya que no basta con que se haya establecido el respeto a los convenios fundamentales de la OIT y las normas laborales debido a que una vez entre en vigencia, se pone en grave peligro el aparato productivo nacional y los sindicatos.

2) El sector público. Es necesario construir un escenario laboral donde se encuentre garantizada la seguridad jurídica en cuanto a estabilidad, unido a un sistema de políticas salariales que erradiquen la infame situación de desigualdad. También es preciso que Panamá solucione los pasivos laborales por concepto de decimotercer mes adeudado a los trabajadores públicos, atendiendo así el reclamo de las víctimas de la oprobiosa ley núm. 25, y que cumpla eficazmente con las órdenes de reintegro emanada de la propia OIT.

Además, es esencialmente importante que nuestro país ratifique el Convenio sobre las relaciones de trabajo en la administración pública, 1978 (núm. 151) y el Convenio sobre la negociación colectiva, 1981 (núm. 154).

3) Pedimos que se deje de exigir un número elevado de trabajadores para formar un sindicato, contratando con los criterios fijados por el Comité de Libertad Sindical en aplicación del Convenio sobre la libertad sindical y la protección del derecho de sindicación, 1948 (núm. 87) y el Convenio sobre el derecho de sindicación y de negociación colectiva, 1949 (núm. 98).

Además, el sector empresarial arremete duramente contra aquellos trabajadores que deciden organizarse en sindicato, aplicándoles la pena máxima del despido.

Hoy la constitución de un sindicato en mi país se ha convertido en un trabajo clandestino y al amparo de la oscuridad, en contraposición con lo establecido en la Constitución y la Ley.

Condenamos la negación a los trabajadores del mar y a las vías navegables del derecho de negociación colectiva y a la huelga.

De igual forma, condenamos la prohibición del derecho de huelga a los trabajadores del canal, así como la alegación de la representación de los trabajadores en la Junta Directiva de la Autoridad del Canal de Panamá.

Rechazamos la prohibición de declarar huelga a la Confederación Central y federaciones de trabajadores, las cuales son contrarias a lo establecido en el Comité de Libertad Sindical.

Condenamos la falta de seguridad en la industria y, en especial, en el sector de la construcción, lo que ha provocado la pérdida de vidas humanas de un número importante de trabajadores.

Condenamos la discriminación sindical existente en la zona libre de Colón y en los bancos, ya que a los empleadores les permite la organización y a los trabajadores se nos niega y obstaculiza.

La clase trabajadora ha visto cómo crece la economía nacional y sus resultados no se ven reflejados en la gran mayoría.

Hoy los propios empleadores reconocen la existencia de un 40 por ciento de pobreza.

Finalmente, existe en nuestro país una injusta práctica de mala distribución de la riqueza. Es imprescindible que este crecimiento se acompañe con políticas económicas orientadas a los sectores más desprotegidos y que se pueda elaborar y ejecutar un verdadero plan de desarrollo.

Original portugais: M. SITOÉ (travailleur, Mozambique)

Je tiens à féliciter le Directeur général du BIT pour la présentation brillante du rapport d'activité pour 2006 qui est soumis au débat des représentants des gouvernements, des organisations d'employeurs et de travailleurs.

Le rapport qui est présenté montre à quel point les thèmes retenus pour le débat à cette Conférence annuelle de l'OIT sont importants, notamment la mise en œuvre de la Déclaration relative aux principes et droits fondamentaux au travail, la promotion de la santé et de la sécurité au travail, et la fixation de normes dans le secteur de la pêche visant à l'adoption d'une convention et d'une recommandation.

Nous, travailleurs, nous réjouissons de la performance de l'OIT dans ses actions quotidiennes, qui conduisent à faire entendre notre voix dans les relations de travail au sein des Etats Membres, dans le contexte du respect des droits fondamentaux des travailleurs et de la société dans son ensemble.

L'Organisation des travailleurs du Mozambique-Centrale syndicale (OTM-CS) dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de son plan stratégique, a porté une attention particulière à la mise en œuvre effective de la Déclaration de l'OIT relative aux principes et droits fondamentaux au travail, en tant que moyen d'améliorer les conditions de travail et de vie des travailleurs.

La République du Mozambique a déjà ratifié les huit conventions fondamentales de l'OIT. Cependant, l'OTM-CS considère que la ratification des conventions internationales n'est pas une fin en soi. Ce qui est plus important encore, c'est de les mettre en œuvre, d'assurer leur suivi et d'en faire une évaluation, évaluation faite par les partenaires sociaux dans l'esprit du dialogue social.

Les côtes du Mozambique s'étendent sur près de 3 000 kilomètres. Pour l'OTM-CS, le secteur de la pêche est une source d'orientation économique, de promotion de l'emploi et de lutte contre la pauvreté absolue.

Ainsi, nous estimons que l'initiative d'une discussion sur la situation des travailleurs de ce secteur est un moyen d'atteindre les objectifs de l'élimination de la pauvreté, du développement économique et du travail décent.

Au nom de l'OTM-CS et de tous les travailleurs mozambicains, je voudrais une fois de plus exprimer notre gratitude du fait que les travailleurs sont présents dans les diverses activités que l'OIT entreprend tous les ans au niveau du continent africain, et en particulier en Afrique australe.

Nous sommes certains que cette inclusion se poursuivra au cours des prochaines années, en prenant en considération les défis complexes qui sont imposés par les différents changements sociaux et du travail, ainsi que par l'impact de la pandémie du VIH/SIDA qui ruine le tissu social et humain

dans le monde et en Afrique subsaharienne en particulier.

J'adresse tous mes vœux de succès aux participants à cette 96^e session de la Conférence internationale du Travail.

Mr. BENYDIN (*Worker, Mauritius*)

As the representative of the workers of Mauritius, I must say that we recognize the importance and essence of the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. We also attach considerable importance to the promotion of the Decent Work Agenda, particularly in the present context where the struggle against poverty and unemployment has become permanent and continuous.

Gender equality, the empowerment of women and young workers must also be underpinned to reinforce the pillars and bedrock of economic and social development. Fundamental principles and rights at work should focus on a strong social dimension based on the respect of universal human rights and the dignity of workers. In this context, the need for stronger representative organizations of workers is essential to meet these growing challenges.

In the wake of the extension of the liberal mode of development, exacerbated by policies of flexibility and deregulation, core labour standards are becoming increasingly important and should be strengthened, particularly in export-processing zones and in the field of information communication technologies which are gaining ground in our countries and result in workers being made to work longer hours, contrary to those prescribed by law.

With the pressure of international financial institutions, governments and employers are adopting new strategies to change the present pattern of social dialogue and negotiating machinery to meet their own ends. Under the pretext of labour market reforms and the argument that union membership is not high enough, they have invented new models of consultation through parallel discussions with other civil society organizations on labour-related issues. This enables them to circumvent genuine and representative trade union organizations from participating in the collective bargaining mechanism. My country is no exception to this new-found practice.

In Mauritius these days, there is a burning issue which affects workers in general: the continually increasing cost of living, caused mainly by rises in the prices of common commodities. While it has been the practice for more than 30 years to compensate workers to enable them to recoup losses in purchasing power through annual negotiations conducted at the level of a tripartite committee, the Government of Mauritius has departed from this procedure this year by imposing a National Pay Council, consisting of 15 members, to make recommendations on annual minimum salary compensation to be paid to workers.

Unlike the tripartite committee, which based itself mainly on the cost price index and rate of inflation to determine the quantum of compensation to be paid to workers, the Government, through the National Pay Council, has unilaterally included new determinants like productivity, capacity to pay, competitiveness, employment and unemployment rates as factors to be considered before making recommendations on salary compensation.

Representatives of the trade union federations and confederations of Mauritius have opposed these criteria and have called on the Government to con-

tinue discussions as before at the level of the Tripartite Committee, which has broader membership and is chaired by the Minister of Finance.

In view of these objections, the Government has selected five worker representatives, who have close affinities with the government alliance political parties, to sit on the National Pay Council. Representative trade union organizations in Mauritius consider this decision contrary to the norms and standards of the ILO and in particular to ILO Convention No. 98 concerning the Application of the principles of the right to organize and bargain collectively. A complaint to this effect has been filed with the Director-General of the ILO by the National Trade Unions Confederation.

Mr. Chairman, trade unions should be considered major actors in shaping and defending fundamental rights of workers, rather than being seen by government and employers as opponents. Collective bargaining should be carried out in a climate of trust and good faith and both the government and employers should favour negotiations and social dialogue with genuine representatives of trade union organizations, in line with the sacrosanct principles of industrial democracy. Policymakers and development partners should therefore recognize that representative trade unions have a key role to play in all actions and measures geared towards protecting jobs and making working conditions secure and conducive to the prescriptions of occupational health and safety.

Mr. Chairman, trade unions should be recognized as a driving force to countervail the perverse effects of the globalization process. The ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work should be respected at all times to win the battle for the elimination of discrimination in all its forms in respect of labour-related issues, in particular employment and occupation.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity.

Mr. DAHAL (*Worker, Nepal*)

It is my great pleasure to participate in the 96th Session of the ILO Conference as a delegate on behalf of Nepali workers. I would like to congratulate the President and the Director-General of the ILO for steering this Conference successfully.

A year back, Nepali people achieved victory over the autocratic regime of the King and restored full-fledged democracy in Nepal. To achieve this victory, more than six million people participated in demonstrations throughout the country, a majority of whom were workers. Twenty-one of the demonstrators, half of which were workers and unionists attained martyrdom, over 5,000 sustained serious injury, (over 2,000 were workers), and thousands were arrested and detained. Trade unions played a vital role in making this historic movement a success. We achieved this result with the strong solidarity of democracy-loving countries and institutions, in particular, the ILO and the trade union community of the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our tribute and gratitude to the entire ILO family and the international trade union community which supported us in the time of difficulty.

After the restoration of democracy in Nepal, the Parliament made a historic declaration. This declaration, often called the Magna Carta of Nepal, formally ended the old concept of having the King in

Parliament. Similarly, the Parliament also allowed senior officials to join unions.

Following the historic declaration of the Parliament, the Government of Nepal and the Maoist Party entered into negotiation to end the decade-long armed conflict. On 21 November 2006, the Government of Nepal and the Maoist Party inked the comprehensive peace accord which effectively ended the decade-long armed conflict.

On 15 January 2007, the Parliament dissolved the old constitution and promulgated an interim constitution. The interim constitution incorporated workers' rights as fundamental rights and makes a provision for the establishment of a labour commission.

On 2 December 2006, four Nepali trade union confederations, (the Democratic Confederation of Nepalese Trade Unions, the General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions, the Nepal Trade Union Congress and the All Nepal Trade Union Federation (ANTUF) a Maoist trade union) made a ten-point declaration in the presence of the ILO Country Director to respect each other mutually and maintain congenial industrial relations. The declaration provides a sound basis for solidarity among the trade unions in the country and expects all parties involved in it, including ANTUF, to respect and honour the spirit of the declaration.

Although the armed conflict has formally ended, it has still not been resolved completely. We are in a transitional phase. People, representing different ethnic groups, castes, classes and regions, are demanding their participation in the development of the new Constitution as well as in the State structure. I expect that political peace will be established completely after the election of the constitutional assembly, but we have to work hard to establish economic as well as industrial peace.

In Nepal, more than 90 per cent of workers are working in the informal economy. There is no provision for workers' registration or social protection. Workers are not even getting a minimum wage. Because of globalization and a decade-long conflict, the formal sector has been informalized. We can see tremendous effects of this armed conflict on the working people. Women and children are among the most serious victims of the armed conflicts. The incidence of child labour seems to have increased. Unemployment and underemployment is high. Besides those working in India, more than 1.5 million Nepali workers are working in different countries as migrant workers. They are not receiving economic and social protection from the receiving countries.

After the restoration of democracy, we are now in the process of reconstruction. After the promulgation of the interim constitution and the formation of a new Parliament, we are now in need of reforming our labour market. This process has to cover the social transformation of education, technology and the economy. Free and compulsory education can support working children for their better future. Knowledge about new technology will increase the skill of workers. Social protection is the key issue for the working people. Without workers' participation in the decision-making process, we can not think about social justice and good governance. Without the provision of social security for all, labour market reform is impossible. Without increasing workers' skills, employment generation is not possible. Without respecting the rights to organize and bargain collectively, industrial peace will not exist. Without fair globalization, workers' dignity

will not be maintained. Without unionizing workers who are working in informal economy within the trade union movement, workers' voices will not be strong. Without a united voice of trade unions, workers' demands will not be fulfilled. Without accepting decent work and a poverty reduction, the socio-economic conditions of working people will not be improved. Without addressing post-conflict situation properly, sustainable peace and better industrial relations will not be maintained.

Considering these issues, I heartily request the ILO family, the international trade union community, governments and international financial institutions to support Nepali workers in their quest to create more decent jobs, to promote social justice and social security for all, to eliminate child labour, to address issues of women and men workers who are working in the informal economy, to promote workers' participation in the decision-making process, to improve management of post-conflict situations, to improve the situation of migrant workers and to protect the right of association and collective bargaining.

Mr. SUTTON (*representative, Trade Unions International of Workers of the Building, Wood and Building Materials Industries*)

Let me extend congratulations to the President on his election and to the Director-General for some important observations in his Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*. We particularly commend his decision to highlight the growing inequality in developed and developing countries alike, his focus on the need to address dangerous climate change by embracing environmentally sustainable development, and his criticism of the fashionable job-killing capitalist device known as private equity buy-out. These issues are not minor disfunctionalities of the market, but rather endemic features of capitalist globalization.

The Director-General has pointed to some serious consequences of the era, to a neo-liberal economic development that we are currently experiencing. For instance, we see that the share of national income that has moved from workers to employers' profits in 16 developed countries amounts to trillions of dollars. And the income inequality between workers from rich and poor countries has more than doubled in the last 50 years. There can be no doubt, in my Organization's view, that the neo-liberal economic policy revolution ushered in by Reagan and Thatcher 25 years ago, the work of the multilateral institutions charged with implementing the neo-liberal agenda, the IMF, World Bank and WTO, and the power wielded by the multinational companies today undermine the very purpose of the ILO and the Decent Work Agenda we would all like to believe in.

In the construction sector, from which I come, the reality for most of the world's construction workers is the informal economy, precarious employment, dangerous work, non-existent social security and suppression of trade union rights. Again, a far cry from the Decent Work Agenda that many governments and employers would like to pretend exists in their domestic setting.

My own organization, the UITBB, seeks to organize construction workers to fight for their rights. We believe that militant trade unionism is the only real answer to the power that employers wield in our class society. The UITBB takes the view that it is

essential that the ILO's resources are used to empower workers. We would like to see more construction workers trained in how to recognize and deal with unsafe work situations. We would like to see more construction workers trained in how to bargain effectively and collectively. Our construction international, which is an affiliate of the WFTU, has rebuilt its capacity over the last five years and stands ready to work with construction and forestry workers everywhere who are struggling to advance their interests.

On behalf of the UITBB, let me join with those who have expressed grave concern at the fact that the Government of Colombia is not called to account before the Committee on the Application of Standards, but the Government of Venezuela is. This type of politics discredits the ILO and encourages those who think murdering trade union officials will solve their labour or social problems.

The popular revolutions of Venezuela and Cuba are a cause for optimism among those interested in the dignity of labour. Certainly the inspiration provided by workers in these countries is reverberating around Latin America and reinvigorating the workers' movement on that continent.

The world of work needs a strong ILO more than ever. We need to find a way to strengthen the standard-setting and supervisory mechanisms to give workers confidence that the ILO's Decent Work Agenda is much more than just more rhetoric, but rather of concrete relevance to the lives of billions of workers.

Mr. KONKOLEWSKY (*representative, International Social Security Association*)

On behalf of the President of the International Social Security Association (ISSA), it is my pleasure to address the International Labour Conference for the first time since my election as Secretary-General. I bring to all delegates the greetings of the Association and of its membership of over 370 social security institutions from more than 150 countries.

As many of you know, the record of mutually-beneficial cooperation between the ILO and the ISSA stretches back 80 years, to ISSA's founding in 1927. During these 80 years, both organizations have sought to make the relationship productive and efficient and geared to the changes and needs of each era.

This long-term relationship and solid partnership has been possible because of our shared goals and objectives and the compatibility of our mandates. The activities of the ILO in the field of social protection are guided by the global goal of decent work and are an important source of inspiration and complementary to those engaged in the same field by the ISSA worldwide.

The existence of social security is one of the most significant social achievements of the twentieth century, but its enhancement and extension remain one of the main challenges of the twenty-first. On the one hand, the provision of social security can ensure that all men and women have basic social and economic security. On the other hand, it can play a more far-reaching role in enhancing the quality of life of individuals and societies by developing human potential, facilitating structural change, increasing stability, advancing social justice and cohesion, and producing and promoting economic dynamism

In the current global context and in order to face the evolving and growing needs of the world's population, social protection and social security must adapt dynamically and innovate to secure the social dimension of globalization.

ISSA supports this process of innovation by promoting excellence in social security administration and a new strategic vision of dynamic social security.

This strategic vision is fully consistent with and complementary to the objectives of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and its global social security campaign.

The ISSA considers a dynamic social security system as one that constantly strives towards achieving the following characteristics: to be accessible to all, sustainable and well governed, to be forward-looking, innovative and proactive and, finally, to be socially inclusive and economically productive.

In order to debate ways forward towards a dynamic social security and to promote the important role of social security in societies worldwide, ISSA is this year for the first time organizing its session of the Statutory General Assembly in the framework of a World Social Security Forum. The Forum will take place in Moscow from 10 to 15 September 2007 on the invitation of the Ministry of Health and Social Development and other ISSA member organizations of the Russian Federation. It will bring together more than 1,200 leaders, policy-makers and specialists in all fields of social security.

This World Social Security Forum will take stock of current developments, achievements and challenges for social security around the world. It will also include a special plenary session organized by the ILO on its new approach towards extending social security coverage.

Finally, the World Forum will be crowned by a social security summit that brings together outstanding personalities to debate the future of social security, in particular the important contribution that social security can make to facing global challenges.

On behalf of ISSA's president, I would like to invite you take part in this first-ever Social Security Forum and to contribute to strengthening and enhancing

The collaboration between the ILO and ISSA, since together we can much better serve the cause of social protection and social security around the world.

Mr. DAVID (*Worker, Indonesia*)

I should like to convey my appreciation of the Report of the Director-General which addresses the central issue of equality at work and the challenges associated with it, the Report on *Decent work for sustainable development*.

I would like to take this opportunity to support the Indonesian workers in their efforts to further freedom of association and defend their rights and interests.

Indonesia has ratified eight core ILO Conventions, including the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87). But its application is not so easy. Peaceful demonstrations have resulted in trade unionists being imprisoned for allegedly committing criminal offences. Their activities were, however, within the purview of ILO Final Articles Revision

Convention, 1946 (No. 80), namely performing union activities in protest against the amendment of Act No. 13, 2003, concerning manpower.

I very much appreciate the ILO's support to release the eight trade unionists on 3 May 2006 and His Excellency Mr. Juan Somavia's response to our request.

We also express our gratitude for the ILO's assistance in the settlement of Bridgestone Tyre Indonesia Company, which dismissed four trade union leaders due to union activities. The case is still being handled by the Supreme Court in Indonesia.

On behalf of the Indonesian Workers, I would like to express our thanks to the ILO concerning the Joint USA/ILO Declaration Project with a total budget of US\$1 million to increase the skill and knowledge of Indonesian workers on how to build a democratic healthy and strong union in the workplace, through workers' education and training.

Also, I appreciate the efforts of ILO Norway in cooperation with the ILO, in the field of trade union research and training, and the establishment of a research and training institute.

The great challenges facing Indonesian workers are unemployment, poor education, poverty and the lack of employment generation. The impact of globalization means that Indonesia has to restructure and redesign the industrial sector, industrial relations and the rule of law in all fields and recreate a conducive climate for investment.

In the reformation era, Indonesia developed a democratic life and has now established more than 87 national trade unions. We request the ILO to give higher priority to the developing countries in terms of building industrial relations, giving technical assistance and promoting freedom of association and the rights of workers and their interests.

With regard to strengthening the capacity of national tripartite and sustainable enterprises, the Indonesian workers and employers' associations attending the 1996 session of the International Labour Conference made a statement calling for the more serious implementation of the ILO Conventions in the future.

Finally, may I express the hope that the ILO, together with the United Nations specialized agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), will urgently address these problems.

We, the Indonesian workers wholeheartedly support the immediate implementation of this noble goal.

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

Since speaking on this podium, year after year, for ten years, I have noted that this year's Global Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, is the most detailed in concepts, quantitative measurements and candid discussions on emerging phenomena and manifestations of discrimination based on gender.

It is remarkable, however, that in spite of the Office's persevering efforts to identify the economic, social and cultural kaleidoscope of a society that has perpetuated gender discrimination and decent work equally for women and men, we still see that nowhere in the world women have equal pay with men despite the striking advances of women in educational attainments, except in certain Nordic and Latin American countries, where there has been re-

markable decrease in wage differentials. Almost everywhere, women's unemployment remains higher than men. Leadership and decision-making positions are still largely dominated by men, despite the over 50 per cent of women joining the labour market. We are even seeing today new emerging obstacles founded on demographic developments of ageing where women live longer, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, women's childbearing capacity that penalize them in the form of precarious forms of employment and employment in the informal sector without social safety nets, and increasing trafficking in women.

What are the root causes and the essential elements to take us out of this dilemma?

First, I want to address the significance of unpaid work in the context of decent work which cannot be understated. Already in 1995 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) estimated US\$16 trillion or 70 per cent of the world's GDP corresponds to unpaid work, and this number has considerably increased in later studies conducted by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). One has therefore to look at the income that the unpaid work supports, rather than merely the income that the unpaid work might generate. The opportunity cost of unpaid work would therefore be the worth of the paid work it enables. Only through systemic sex and age disaggregation of all national statistics could one form benchmarks and indicators of the move towards gender equality. We therefore urge that the ILO should take into consideration that unremunerated work enables and supports breadwinners, families and children, providing them with a sustainable future.

Secondly, because institutions and laws are the most resilient to change, we need strong leaders, political goodwill and financial resources that are gender sensitive. Equal representation and sufficient gender expertise in political institutions have to be put in place. While we see women in leadership roles increasing in certain countries, access to policy-making positions remain below the critical mass. For example, in this year's Session of the Conference, women titular delegates remain below the 25 per cent mark. If the ILO were to amend its Constitution under article 3, paragraph 2, to stipulate equal gender participation instead of "when questions specially affecting women are to be considered by the Conference, one at least of the advisers should be a woman", then the ILO constituents would exert extra efforts to respect this constitutional mandate.

Take the Nordic countries, where the law on parental leave gave choice to the partners about who was to take the leave, and where men took 20 per cent and women 80 per cent; when those laws were amended to provide parental leave on a 50/50 basis, and with transferable rights, there has been an increase to 90 per cent of men taking the leave in Iceland, as the Minister has said. A shift in the law to parental or gender equality has also impacted the mindsets, attitudes and behaviour of men.

The third root cause which has to be tackled is the domination of customs, traditions and religious beliefs that create gender imbalances and subordinate women's reproductive role to violence against them.

We congratulate the ILO for putting as a main item gender equality as a core concept of decent work on the agenda of the 98th Session of the Con-

ference. I hope you will review the statement I made at the 95th Session in 2006 which addresses policy issues including, inter alia, financing for gender, which will be the subject before the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2008, as part of the preparatory process to the 98th Session of the International Labour Conference. We hope that all stakeholders, especially NGOs like ourselves, will be involved in preparing the programme of this agenda item for 2009.

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

The Director-General's introduction to the 96th Session of the ILC, with his Report, *Decent work for sustainable development*, has no doubt given us a valuable document, which and it deals with many important aspects of the world of work. But, most unfortunately, the ferocity of the new liberalization dictated by internationally financed capital is directing the world economy and public policies altogether to reverse the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, and all of the postulates which are in interest of the labour. Sorry to say, that tripartite and social dialogues, though very encouraging concepts, are being trampled underfoot by the steam roller of exploitation, by global capital and, consequently, the policy dictates to national governments, whether in the developing part of the world or in the developed, are running counter to this concept.

Obviously, the developing part of the world is the worst sufferer as this part is being targeted as hapless victims of a merciless offensive of neo-liberal economic policies. Actually, never in the past have workers and employees been subjected to so much merciless exploitation as they are now since the onset of the policy of neo-liberal globalization.

Thus, while the Report has correctly recognized the fact that "the wage squeeze and increasing inequality threaten sustainable development" it fails to indicate any remedy for this unbearable situation but merely enumerates certain grim facts.

As regards widening inequality between countries and within countries, the Report has no doubt done good homework. The Report cites that "the overall gap between the poorest and the richest countries has widened substantially."

As our Trade Union International deals mainly with the interests of public services, here we point out that working conditions in the public service at global level is seriously worsening day by day.

The offensive of neo-liberal globalization is coming down on the public services most prominently in the following areas:

- (a) Snatching away of existing social protection – this has been in vogue mainly in the form of pension and other retirement benefits.
- (b) Continuing squeeze in the number of public service workers and their wages.
- (c) Privatization of government departments and public-sector undertakings, leading to retrenchment. No new recruitment of employees in any department. Alarming increases in contract, casual and daily-rated employees and continuous deflation of the number of regular employees.
- (d) Denial of labour rights and banning of strike action by public service employees in many countries. In countries such as India, South Africa, Japan, Pakistan and many others, the ILO Freedom of Association and Protection

of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981 (No. 154) – which set out public service employees’ trade union, civil and political rights and which are essential for the normal exercise of those employees’ freedom of association – are denied, since the Conventions have not been ratified by the respective Governments.

I would like to draw the attention of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference and the Governing Body to this unbearable situation, which runs directly counter to all ILO standards and Conventions and makes a mockery of the Decent Work Agenda.

The Director-General’s Report pleads for the promotion of a socially just transition to green jobs, while the reality is that the present growth is not only jobless but in fact leads to job loss.

The Director-General’s Report includes a section entitled “A global approach to social protection: Every society needs a social floor”. But what is the

reality? In country after country, even the old-age pension system of government employees, which is the best of all social security benefits, is being snatched away in the name of the pension reform policy dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Public employees in all countries are bitterly fighting against this offensive on pensions and attacks on other social security benefits. So, how does the ILO want to remedy this situation? Ironically, the Report falls short of indicating a remedy.

The fair globalization pleaded by the ILO has proved to be a Utopia. So, without radical social, economic and political changes, it does not seem possible to protect the interests of workers and poor people, or even to render this inequality as much as an inch smaller.

Finally, I would like to say that the ILO should seriously consider and take up the United States’ blockades of Cuba and other countries, so that this procedure of blockades and sanctions is withdrawn immediately and people are allowed to live in peace.

(The Conference adjourned at 9.25 p.m.)

CONTENTS

Page

Fourteenth sitting

Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>)	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Sweeney, Mr. Ng, Mr. Chaouch, Mr. Morales Cartaya, Mr. Lança, Mr. Yurkin, Mr. Brion, Ms. Pinilla Cisneros, Mr. Matsuno, Mr. Suparno, Ms. Taípo, Mr. Al-Shaikh Radhi	
Acceptance of the 1997 Instrument of Amendment to the ILO Constitution by the Republic of Montenegro.....	9
Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>)	9
<i>Speakers:</i> Mgr. Tomasi, Mr. Babou, Mr. Fernandes, Mr. Kara, Mr. Ibouroi, Mr. Palacio Betancourt, Ms. Karagussova, Mr. Dang, Mr. Chen, Mr. Sommer, Mr. Seneviratne, Mr. Jerad, Mr. Fernandes Salgueiro, Mr. Aguilar Arce, Mr. Guiro	

Sixteenth sitting

Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>)	23
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Rachman, Ms. Marek, Mr. Bonomi, Mr. Masemene, Mr. Ferrer Dufol, Mr. Edström, Mr. Colmenares	
Report of the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises: Submission, discussion and approval	28
<i>Speakers:</i> Ms. Ungerer (<i>Reporter</i>), Ms. Gerstein, Ms. Brighi, Mr. Annakin, Ms. Greenfield, Mr. George, Mr. Roye	
Conclusions concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises: Adoption	35
<i>Speakers:</i> Ms. Pamphil, Mr. De Leeuw, Mr. Grozier, Ms. Loughheed	
Resolution concerning the promotion of sustainable enterprises: Adoption.....	35
Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General: Discussion (<i>cont.</i>)	35
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Strommen, Ms. Maslarova, Mr. Francis, Mr. Yusof, Mr. Parra Rojas, Mr. Barka, Mr. Abdella, Mr. Djilani, Mr. Al Azaly, Mr. Zhelyazkov, Mr. Koonopakarn, Mr. Kellier, Ms. Sigurdardóttir, Mr. Mavrikos, Mr. Palkovics, Mr. Del Río, Mr. Trabelsi, Mr. Bonmati Portillo, Mr. Hossu, Mr. Mendoza, Mr. Mohbaliyev, Mr. Barak, Mr. Rolek, Mr. Tatamuez, Mr. Cybulski, Mr. Nicolescu, Mr. Giuseppi, Mr. Goodleigh, Mr. Graell Añino, Mr. Siteo, Mr. Benydin, Mr. Dahal, Mr. Sutton, Mr. Konkolewsky, Mr. David, Ms. Poncini, Mr. Sen	