



First sitting

Wednesday, 30 May 2007, 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Mdladlana, Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Your Excellencies, colleagues, good morning. It is my privilege as Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office to declare open this 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, and I welcome you all to Geneva. I know that the weather has not been very kind but I hope my welcome will be warm.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

As you all know, the first item on our agenda is the election of the President of the Conference. We will now request the Chairperson of the Government group, Ambassador Van Meeuwen, to address us.

Original French: Mr. VAN MEEUWEN (Government, Belgium, speaking on behalf of the Government group)

Thank you, President. I regret to have to inform you that at this stage I am unable to make a proposal on behalf of the group of Government representatives, and therefore I would crave your indulgence and ask you to bear with us and ask you to enable us to carry out further consultations.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Thank you very much, your Excellency. May I just remind delegates that we have a very long agenda and there are a number of issues and matters that we have to deal with at this plenary.

With the agreement of the Worker Vice-Chairperson, Sir Roy Trotman, and the Employer Vice-Chairperson, Mr. Funes de Rioja, we agree to adjourn for one hour to deal with the questions that are still pending.

(The sitting adjourned at 10.35 a.m. and resumed at 11.55 a.m.)

You will recall that the Government group wanted to meet for consultations. It is time for me again to call on the Chairperson of the Government group, Mr. Van Meeuwen, to take the floor to give us his report.

Original French: Mr. VAN MEEUWEN (Government, Belgium, speaking on behalf of the Government group)

Unfortunately, I have to report to you that I am not able to put forward a proposal from the Government group. During the informal consultations we have had this morning, the African group confirmed to me that there was no consensus in order to be able to make a proposal as a group and, under these conditions and because of lack of time, I thought it would be appropriate to make this report directly to the Conference.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Thank you very much, Ambassador Van Meeuwen, for that very brief report. I am left therefore with a situation, that of asking for nominations from the floor. I will therefore at this juncture ask for nominations. I give the floor to the Coordinator of the Eastern and Central Europe Group.

Mr. BLAZEK (Government, Czech Republic, speaking on behalf of the Eastern and Central Europe Group)

The Central and Eastern European Regional Group attaches great importance to the principles on which multilateralism is based. The principle of rotation of regional groups when it comes to nominations is one of these principles.

At the same moment, the principle of consensus on which nominations should be based is also very important. Consensus in the ILO has its specificity which comes from the unique tripartite character of our Organization.

We understand that consensus is sometimes difficult to reach.

Yesterday, when nominating the Vice-President during the meeting of the Government group, I assured the chair of the Government group that our group is ready to cooperate when trying to find solutions. I think as a solution, a proposal could be presented from our group.

Therefore I would like to nominate the Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Albania, His Excellency Mr. Kastriot Sulka, for the post of President. I would like to remind you that yesterday he received the full support of the Government group for the post of Vice-President.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

I am advised that because the name is proposed by a group, it does not need to be seconded.

Are there any further nominations?

Original French: Mr. MENGA (Government, Congo)

Mr. President, Congo, representing Africa, continues to be a candidate for this august assembly on behalf of Africa.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Board of the International Labour Office)

We were informed by the Chairperson of the Government group that Africa has not made a nomination and, therefore, do not let us argue about an African nomination. But I can pose the question whether there is anybody that is seconding the nomination by Congo.

Original French: Mr. AMOUSSOU-KOUETETE (Government, Togo)

The delegation of Togo strongly supports Congo as a candidate.

Original French: Mr. TONDA (Government, Gabon)

The importance and distinction of this assembly prompts us to say that the procedures for negotiation have led us to support Congo as a candidate.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

This is now the third time and the last time. Are there any other nominations? I note that there are none.

I therefore close the nominations. So we have two nominations: Minister Kastriot Sulka, the Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Albania; and Mr. Gilbert Ondongo, the Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Congo.

I will now turn to the Legal Adviser so that the Conference may be informed of the procedure to be followed in this case.

The LEGAL ADVISER OF THE CONFERENCE

I will give the general indications as found in the Constitution and the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference. There may be additional details that the Clerk of the Conference would need to indicate.

Electing the President of the Conference is the first business of the Conference and, as we see here today, until a President is elected, it is the Officers of the Governing Body who are the provisional Officers of the Conference.

Any vote on the election of the President shall be by secret ballot. This is provided for by article 19, paragraph 10, of the Standing Orders. This means that the individual votes cast by the delegates who have the right to vote shall in no case be recorded or accessible, and what you will see projected on the screen will be only the final result of the vote, in accordance with article 19, paragraph 16, of the Standing Orders.

No explanations of a vote after it is taken may be allowed. This is provided for in article 19, paragraph 14, of the Standing Orders.

In order to be elected, the President must receive a simple majority of the valid votes that are cast by delegates who are entitled to vote. In addition, it is necessary for the quorum to have been met and, in this regard, I refer you to *Provisional Record No. 4A*, which contains the provisional quorum. Before the actual vote, there will be an announcement of the quorum.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

Before we continue, may I draw the attention of the Conference to *Provisional Record No. 4A* on the credentials of delegates and advisers at the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, in conformity with article 17 of the International Labour Organization Constitution and article 20 of the Standing Orders of the Conference. This establishes the necessary quorum to give a vote provisional validity, at 300.

Before we proceed, the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body, Mr. Daniel Funes de Rioja, wishes to take the floor.

Original Spanish: Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

On behalf of the Employers' group, I would like to express our regret concerning the situation that has arisen in the Government group, a regret which prompts us to reaffirm two principles.

First, the task of electing the President of the Conference was in this case incumbent on the Government group, and we are sorry that it has not managed to reach a consensus on this.

Second, we have to maintain the autonomy of the groups and accordingly, our decision will be to abstain as a group, considering that, even if they have not reached consensus, it is up to the Governments to decide who the President of the Conference will be.

Lastly, I would like to point out that our colleagues from Africa have expressed their profound sadness at the fact that the mechanisms for tripartite consultation in the region have not met with the desired response and the decision taken at that level has not been respected.

Mr. MDLADLANA (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

I give the floor to Sir Roy Trotman to speak on behalf of the Workers' group before I call you to vote.

Mr. TROTMAN (Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)

The Workers' group is as saddened as our friends in the Employers' group regarding the inability of this house to reach a determination on so critical a subject as the one that has delayed us now for nearly three hours, not to mention the days before.

More than the question of the prestige and the honour that colleagues may have, our concern is that we might be delayed in making important decisions which have to do with the improvement of workers' conditions and welfare across the world at a time when there is a great need for us to be looking at issues which impact on so many millions and indeed up to billions of people. Our position in that regard is that, even though we would like to believe that Governments can make decisions about selecting a President, on this particular occasion we want to ensure that a President is chosen and that we can get on with our business. We have therefore undertaken to make a decision positive by casting our rightful vote. I do not think it is proper for me to say how that will go, but we would like to express the view that the world ought not to be exposed to this kind of difficulty, when so many millions are suffering and we can enjoy the luxury of taking this length of time not to have a decision on what, after

all, is an issue on which decisions should have been arrived at before we reached Geneva.

VOTE BY SECRET BALLOT ON THE ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

To my Vice-Chairpersons, you may now proceed to vote.

(A vote is taken by secret ballot.)

The results of the vote are as follows: number of votes cast: 376; number of blank votes: 88; quorum: 300; number of valid votes cast: 288. According to this result, Mr. Kastriot Sulka (*Albania*) has obtained 198 votes and Mr. Gilbert Ondongo, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security (*Congo*) has obtained 90 votes, but unfortunately the vote has failed to reach a quorum.

(Delegates are called to order.)

However, the Conference has to proceed. According to the Constitution and rules of the ILO, the Officers of the Governing Body become the provisional Officers of the Conference until a President is elected.

And so we move straight on to the business of the Conference.

COMPOSITION OF THE CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I now call upon the Clerk of the Conference to announce the nominations for the composition of the Credentials Committee.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The nominations of the Officers of the Credentials Committee are as follows:

Mr. Kavuludi (*Government, Kenya*), Mr. Edström (*Worker, Sweden*) and Ms. Horvatic (*Employer, Croatia*).

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals are adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

NOMINATION OF THE OFFICERS OF THE GROUPS

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

We move to item No. 3, nomination of the Officers of the groups. I now call on the Clerk of the Conference to read out the names for us.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The groups have chosen their Officers as follows:

Government group:

Chairperson:

Mr. Van Meeuwen (*Belgium*)

Employers' group:

Chairperson:

Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*)

Vice-Chairpersons:

Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*)

Mr. Makeka (*Lesotho*)

Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*)

Mr. Potter (*United States*)

Mr. Trogen (*Sweden*)

Secretary:

Mr. Peñalosa (*International Organisation of Employers*)

Workers' group:

Chairperson:

Mr. Trotman (*Barbados*)

Vice-Chairpersons:

Ms. Diallo (*Guinea*)

Mr. Ahmed (*Pakistan*)

Ms. Anderson (*Mexico*)

Mr. Sidorov (*Russian Federation*)

Secretary:

Ms. Biondi (*International Trade Union Confederation*)

Further Officers of the Workers' group, apart from the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons, are: Mr. Adyanthaya (*India*); Mr. Atwoli (*Kenya*); Mr. Azouz (*Syrian Arab Republic*); Mr. Blondel (*France*); Mr. Nakajima (*Japan*); Ms. Salhi (*Algeria*); Ms. Triana Alvis (*Colombia*); Ms. Valkonen (*Finland*) and Mr. Zellhoefer (*United States*).

CONSTITUTION AND COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEES

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

The next item on the agenda concerns the constitution of the various committees that will examine matters put before the Conference. The Conference may wish to establish the following committees: the Selection Committee; the Finance Committee; the Committee on the Application of Standards; the Committee on the Fishing Sector; the Committee on Strengthening the ILO's Capacity; the Committee on Sustainable Enterprises. The composition of the committees as proposed by the groups is available in the room. The Conference may also wish to take as a basis for discussion the texts prepared by the Office and to refer them to the appropriate committees as foreseen in article 40, paragraph 1, of the Standing Orders.

If there are no objections, may I take it that these proposals are adopted?

(The proposals are adopted.)

COMPOSITION OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I shall now ask the Clerk of the Conference to read out the nominations made by the groups for the composition of the Selection Committee.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The composition of the Selection Committee, in conformity with article 4 of the Conference Standing Orders, and the nominations by the respective groups are as follows:

The 28 regular Government members are the regular members of the Governing Body of the following countries: Australia, Belarus, Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, El Salvador, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and the United States.

The Deputy Government members are: Argentina, Barbados, Burundi, Cambodia, Côte d'Ivoire,

Czech Republic, Ethiopia, Finland, Greece, Honduras, Hungary, Ireland, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Singapore, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Viet Nam.

The 14 regular Employer members are: Mr. Dahlan (*Saudi Arabia*), Mr. Ferrer Dufol (*Spain*), Mr. Funes de Rioja (*Argentina*), Mr. Jeetun (*Mauritius*), Mr. Julien (*France*), Mr. Lima Godoy (*Brazil*), Mr. M'Kaissi (*Tunisia*), Mr. Moore (*United Kingdom*), Mr. Nacoulma (*Burkina Faso*), Mr. Potter (*United States*), Mr. Suzuki (*Japan*), Mr. Tabani (*Pakistan*), Mr. Trogen (*Sweden*) and Mr. Van Vuuren (*South Africa*).

The Deputy Employer members are: Mr. Anderson (*Australia*), Ms. Awassi Atsimadja (*Gabon*), Mr. de Arbeloa (*Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela*), Mr. Finlay (*Canada*), Mr. Hilton-Clarke (*Trinidad and Tobago*), Ms. Horvatic (*Croatia*), Mr. Mattar (*United Arab Emirates*), Mr. O'Reilly (*New Zealand*), Mr. Oshinowo (*Nigeria*), Mr. Prior (*Czech Republic*), Mr. de Regil (*Mexico*), Mr. Tomek (*Austria*), Mr. Traoré (*Mali*) and Mr. Varela (*Philippines*).

The 14 regular Worker members are the same as the names I read out previously as Officers of the Workers' group.

The Deputy Worker members are Mr. Cortebeek (*Belgium*), Mr. Sand Mortensen (*Denmark*) and Ms. Brighi (*Italy*).

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

If there are no objections, may I take it that the composition of the Selection Committee is adopted by the Conference?

(The proposals are adopted.)

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

The next agenda item concerns the suspension of certain provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference. The purpose of this suspension is to implement recommendations made by the Governing Body at its 292nd Session in March 2005 regarding the discussion of the Global Report that the Director-General presents annually under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

My fellow Officers and I unanimously recommend, in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders, that the Conference decide that a discussion of the Global Report should not fall under the limitation concerning the number of statements by its member States in plenary and that, to that extent, article 12, paragraph 3, of the Standing Orders should be suspended. In the case of Government delegations, speaking preference will be given to ministers or to the accredited Government delegates. We further recommend that the Conference decide that, to a reasonable degree, the discussions should not be governed by the provisions regarding time limits to speeches and, to that extent, suspend article 14, paragraph 6, of the Standing Orders, and that the Conference decide not to apply, to the extent required, the provisions of article 14, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders on the sequence in which

the floor is given to speakers in order to facilitate an exchange of views. These proposals, will, in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders, be submitted for decision by the Conference at its next sitting.

The discussion of the Global Report, *Equality at work: Tackling the challenges*, will take place on Friday, 8 June, during two sittings. There will be no other plenary sittings on that day.

There will be no formal list of speakers for the Global Report sittings. Participants will be able to register their wish to speak on the day of the discussion itself by means of the application forms that will be available in the room. The speaking order will be decided by the President. At the beginning and towards the end of the debate, time will be allocated to those who speak on behalf of a group. The objective is for us to have a discussion which is interactive and aims at giving guidance for future ILO action to eliminate discrimination in employment and occupation.

In addition, within the context of the discussion in plenary of the Reports of the Chairperson of the Governing Body and of the Director-General, the arrangements for the reproduction of participants' five-minute speeches in English, French and Spanish only, depending upon the language chosen by the Government of the speaker's country for purposes of official correspondence with the ILO, call for the suspension of the corresponding part of paragraph 5 of article 24 of the Standing Orders. My fellow Officers and I thus recommend that these provisions be suspended to the extent necessary for this session of the Conference in accordance with article 76 of the Standing Orders of the Conference.

Finally, as a result of the revised format of the International Labour Conference unanimously recommended by the 297th Session of the Governing Body in November 2006 to this session of the Conference on a trial basis, the Director-General will not be in a position to reply to the Conference on all questions raised during the general discussion in plenary. This is simply because there is not enough time to prepare a reply between the closing of the general discussion on the evening of Thursday, 14 June and the time allotted for the reply the morning of Friday, 15 June. The Director-General therefore proposes to reply exhaustively in writing to points raised in the plenary discussion, and his reply will feature in the final *Provisional Record* of the 96th Session of the Conference. This procedure requires the suspension of article 23, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders solely for the purposes just stated. If there are no objections, may I take it that this proposal will take effect if the Conference so decides at its next sitting, as from the plenary sitting to be held on Friday, 8 June?

In addition to the written records, the proceedings in plenary will be webcast in video format and delegates will be web-recorded in the original language and in the interpreted versions. They will therefore be immediately available for viewing and will remain available for a period of two weeks and the *Daily Bulletin* will give information on access to this system. If there are no objections, may I take it that it is so decided?

(It is so decided.)

**PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF THE PROGRAMME
AND BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR 2008–09**

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

This year the Conference is called upon to examine the Programme and Budget proposals for 2008–09. As these proposals are discussed in the Finance Committee, which is made up exclusively of Government representatives, the next item on our agenda this morning is a preliminary discussion of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2008–09 and other questions. The purpose of this discussion is to allow the Employers' and Workers' groups to make their statements regarding these proposals. With this I therefore give the floor to Mr. Funes de Rioja (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Employers' group.

Mr. FUNES DE RIOJA (*Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

The Employers' group supports the strategic approach of the programme and budget, but feels that the time has come to reflect upon that approach and also on its capacity to respond to constituents' needs in order to improve its transparency and efficiency. We are looking forward to discussing this point next November as promised by the Director-General.

On the matter of the philosophy of the ILO, the Employers' group was sometimes under the impression that the Organization's role was to promote the United Nations in the eyes of constituents. For us it is above all at the service of its constituents and should retain its tripartite character, including in the context of UN reform. Despite financial constraints, the programme and budget has tried to respond to the needs of the world of work. We are pleased with the focus on employment and social dialogue issues. We are also satisfied to see the emphasis placed on the fundamental role of the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP).

Transparency is key to understanding. We regret that much information is still missing. We need indeed to know what the ILO is doing. The Employers' group formally requested work plans by strategic objective to be presented by the Executive Directors. Those work plans should indicate the means and resources proposed to achieve the intermediate objectives and should cover not only the departments at headquarters but also those in the regions. These plans are important to better know the ILO's work.

The ILO is facing two challenges which are linked. The first is UN reform. The ILO should therefore adapt its work to the "One United Nations" initiative. Nevertheless, the ILO should keep its specificity and its unique tripartite nature. Moreover, the ILO will have priorities which are not part of the "One United Nations". The Director-General committed himself to support the participation of the social partners in this process. We will pay attention to this. The second challenge concerns the ongoing discussion on strengthening the ILO's capacity to assist its Members' efforts to reach its objectives in the context of globalization. That will be faced in one of the committees at this Conference. The discussion on the future of the ILO will have also important consequences on the programme and budget, as well as on the future working methods of the Office.

During the discussion, we should be aware of the financial realities of the ILO and of the consequences of the adopted programme and budget. On the other hand, the Programme, Financial and Administrative (PFA) Committee of the Governing Body, should be informed of potential requests that emerge from the June discussion.

In his conclusion, my colleague and friend, Mr. Michel Barde, speaking on behalf of the Employers' group at the March session, said that the Employers were willing to support the point for decision as it is now presented to the International Labour Conference.

In March, we expressed two reservations: the allocation of funds from the Regular Budget Supplementary Account should be the responsibility of the Governing Body, and more detailed information should be provided on the budget dedicated to the urgent renovation of the Geneva building. On this latter point, the Employers deeply regret that the necessary provision had never been made for the upkeep and renovation of the headquarters building. We also sincerely regret that most Governments and the Workers' group did not support the inclusion of a specific provision in the programme and budget to cover these renovations. We expected a positive response to those issues.

You will find more details of our position in the report of the PFA Committee presented in Report II submitted to the Conference. On behalf of the Employers' group, thank you for giving me the opportunity to express our views.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

I now give the floor to Sir Roy Trotman (Barbados), to speak on behalf of the Workers' group.

Mr. TROTMAN (*Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

We in the Workers' group have no doubt made our position clear enough to you over the years, and so it will not surprise you at all when you hear that our position is still this: that the International Labour Organization's original mandate remains what it always was and needs to be strengthened. We are very strongly of the view that, whether or not we speak about one United Nations organization or machinery, the specialized nature of the ILO is one that has done tremendous work to bring about world peace, tremendous work in creating an environment within countries and among countries which in our view has done much to alleviate tensions and remove the conditions which have brought about unrest and disaffection among people. We feel that, particularly in these days we are living in, the work which the ILO has done and still has the capacity to do should be bolstered, should be supported, should be reinforced, so much so that, with regard to the question of the budget, all Government members or countries concerned should recognize and respect our concern for having the machinery to empower the ILO administration to bring greater levels of social alleviation and improvement in countries through the work that we do and are called upon to do more and more every day. The very fact that more people write to us, call upon us, look in our direction for support, is not in our view a result of the ILO doing nothing about the conditions of discrimination, disparity, conflict and poverty around the world. It is rather because increasing numbers of

people, having nowhere else to turn, are turning to the ILO and to the work that the ILO is doing, in order to bring about world peace.

There may be some people who feel, "well that may be so, but it happens in an extreme corner of the world somewhere, and it does not affect me on my doorstep". I am sure that colleagues within the hearing of my voice have been seeing over and over again, or have been hearing stories, over and over again, of people who, faced with poverty, faced with autocratic governments and dictatorships, faced with threats of one kind or another, are leaving their home countries and, although they know they face either one kind of shark or another in the waters, are prepared to risk their lives to flee from the conditions under which they live.

The ILO's role in helping with poverty alleviation, and indeed with poverty eradication, to a very great extent works in this direction. I would venture to say that it is not so merely for the countries from which people are fleeing, but also for those countries which are sufficiently well off to become destination countries. You ought to be able to recognize the work the ILO does in your regard in trying to make conditions in the home country better for all.

The point here is that if we remain comfortable with our levels of satisfaction or levels of wealth, or levels of ease and of comfort, then we run the risk of seeing pockets of disaffection and unease elsewhere that will in all likelihood threaten our own "comfort zone".

The budget which is before us gives us yet another opportunity to reach out and to do the best we can to help people who need our support. The Workers' group respects the difficulties which the entire world is faced with, and we understand the problems which might lead individual countries to express either fatigue or incapacity to address the budget levels and budget needs. We, however, would wish to emphasize that our work will not be properly accomplished and our mandate will not be fulfilled unless we are able to give the support for the work that has to be done. Speaking from this position, we therefore urge support for the budget from all countries, and we urge that you look beyond that to whatever complementary assistance might be given to helping people around the world wrestle with their individual and their societal problems in such a way that we achieve the greatest good for the greatest number.

HEALTH AND SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

We are now going to move to the next item, which is No. 8, which deals with health and security arrangements.

I should like to say just a few words. At its 288th Session, in November 2003, the Governing Body recommended that access to the ILO building should be controlled for the purposes of security, and measures were therefore introduced three years ago and have subsequently been reinforced. On behalf of my fellow Officers, may I ask all participants to the Conference kindly to accept any inconvenience that current measures may entail. Authority, in its nature, can cause us inconvenience. So please wear your "necklace". You are also requested to wear the Conference badge that you have

received at registration at all times and also to carry a personal identity document bearing a photo. We count on the cooperation of all to ensure that Conference activities run smoothly. Please bring to the attention of the guards or the secretariat staff any irregularities you feel could compromise the security of individuals in this Conference or in the surrounding buildings. If you see anything suspicious, please do not run away from it. Bring it to the attention of the guards and the secretariat, who will see how to dispose of whatever it is that you may see lying around in the buildings that may injure or hurt or cause problems with our security. May we further ask you to respect scrupulously the health rules that have been established. Take care of your health in Geneva and bear in mind that we are all responsible for our own health. We are also all responsible for our own security so, with your permission I should like to bring to your attention article 13, paragraph 2, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, according to which the President of the Conference is responsible for maintaining order throughout the proceedings. Many thanks for your understanding.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE OFFICERS OF THE CONFERENCE

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

Now, before I hand over to the Clerk, let me tell you what he is going to do. The fact that the next plenary sitting for official business under the agenda of this session of the Conference will not be until Friday, 8 June, implies that the everyday tasks related to the organization of the Conference will be carried out by the Officers of the Conference, if the Conference wishes to confer on them the necessary powers to do so. The Clerk is going to read out, for your approval, the delegation of authority so that you can give us powers to control you. The Clerk will tell you what sort of powers you will have.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

The General Conference of the International Labour Organization hereby delegates to its President and three Vice-Presidents authority to take any decisions or perform any functions within the competence of the Conference with respect to any matter that needs to be dealt with before the Conference resumes its plenary sittings unless the Officers consider that the Conference should hold a sitting to discuss such matters. Decisions taken under this delegation of authority will be set out in the *Provisional Record* of the work of the Conference. This delegation shall take effect at the end of this sitting and shall terminate when the Conference resumes its plenary sittings.

It being understood, may I add, Mr. President, that in this particular instance the word "Officers" refers to the provisional Officers.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

If there are no objections, can I take it that the delegation of authority is accepted?

Mr. SHOUKRY (*Government, Egypt*)

Mr. President, we would like at this time, before endorsing the delegation of authority, to seek clarification as to the intention of the President and the

secretariat on the implementation of article 20, paragraph 3(1), of the Constitution.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

The Legal Adviser will assist us.

The LEGAL ADVISER OF THE CONFERENCE

Article 20 of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference, in paragraph 3(1), provides that: "Where a quorum has not been obtained in a vote by a show of hands or in a record vote, the President may take a record vote on the same question at one of the two following sittings."

In terms of the intention of the provisional Officers, it would not be appropriate for me to speak in their place. I would simply point out that this is a facultative clause, that is, it is action which may be taken and it is really up to the provisional Officers to determine for themselves at what sitting a vote would be taken.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

Further to that you will be informed about when the next sitting is going to be in order to deal with that matter that we are unable to deal with. We will proceed, seeing that there are no objections to the delegation of authority.

(*The delegation of authority is accepted.*)

Before we close I will ask the Clerk to make some announcements.

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

It will be understood that given the circumstances of this morning, it will be necessary to reschedule a number of the committee meetings and the programme will have to be reviewed. Details of the rescheduled meetings will be found in the *Daily Bulletin* and on the notice boards.

I must also announce that the Conference will have the honour of hearing addresses by a number of Heads of State and Government at this session. Each of these addresses will take place at a special sitting of the plenary.

Information and full details concerning all of these special sittings will be announced, as is regularly the case, in the *Daily Bulletin*.

Mr. MDLADLANA (*Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office*)

That concludes our business. Many thanks to you all. I now declare closed this first sitting of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference.

(*The Conference adjourned at 2.30 p.m.*)

CONTENTS

Page

First sitting:

Opening of the session	1
<i>Speaker:</i> Mr. Mdladlana (Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office)	
Election of the President of the Conference	1
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Van Meeuwen, Mr. Blazek, Mr. Menga, Mr. Amoussou-Kouetete, Mr. Tonda, the Legal Adviser of the Conference, Mr. Funes de Rioja, Mr. Trotman	
Vote by secret ballot on the election of the President of the Conference.....	3
Composition of the Credentials Committee	3
Nomination of the Officers of the groups	3
Constitution and composition of Conference committees.....	3
Composition of the Selection Committee	3
Suspension of certain provisions of the Standing Orders of the Conference	4
Preliminary discussion of the Programme and Budget proposals for 2008–09	5
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Funes de Rioja, Mr. Trotman	
Health and security arrangements	6
Delegation of authority to the Officers of the Conference	6
<i>Speakers:</i> Mr. Shoukry, the Legal Adviser of the Conference	