



Second sitting

Friday, 1 June 2007, 10.20 a.m.

Presidents: Mr. Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and Mr. Sulka.

ELECTION OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE

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

As you know, the Officers of the Governing Body have taken on the role of provisional Officers of the Conference until it has elected a President. In that capacity, I have the honour to say that my colleagues, the Chairperson of the Governing Body, His Excellency the Minister of Labour of South Africa, Mr. Mdladlana, and my colleague, Sir Roy Trotman from Barbados, the Chairperson of the Workers' group, have delegated the authority to me to preside over this assembly. Accordingly, and thanking them for their trust in me, I declare the second sitting of the International Labour Conference open.

I should now like to give the floor to the Clerk of the Conference to recall the provisions of the Standing Orders in respect of the functioning of the Conference.

Original Spanish: The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

I should like to remind you that in accordance with article 25, paragraph 1, of the Standing Orders of the Conference, pending the election of a President of the Conference, the Officers of the Governing Body act as provisional Officers of the Conference.

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

This morning, our first item of business is the election of the President of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. It is thus my pleasure to give the floor to His Excellency, Ambassador Van Meeuwen of Belgium and Chairperson of the Government group.

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

First of all, I would like to thank those who participated in the consultations held since Wednesday. Thanks to the availability and the determination to achieve results which I noticed during the consultations, and, which I would like to commend, I have the feeling that we may have the parameters for a successful outcome this morning in our common interest, and thus also in the interest of our Organization.

May I suggest that you give the floor to the Republic of the Congo?

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

Thank you Ambassador. Speaking on behalf of the Government group and acceding to that request, I now give the floor to His Excellency, Ambassador Menga of the Republic of the Congo.

Original French: Mr. MENGA (Government, the Congo)

I would like to convey my greetings to the President and the provisional Officers. I would also like to thank the Government delegates, Workers and Employers who wished to see the Congo preside at the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference, and who voted for us the day before yesterday.

For those among us who are not aware of it, the Republic of the Congo was designated by the Eighth Ordinary Session of the Summit of African Heads of State and Government to preside at this session. This decision was based, *inter alia*, on the principle of rotation of the presidency among the subregions. It is in accordance with this mandate entrusted to us by the supreme body of the African Union that our country submitted its candidacy to this august assembly.

Must I recall that the candidacy of the Congo proceeds from a certain concept of the African Union – an African Union that knows exactly and clearly what it wants in the global arena; an African Union that wants to take its place and play its role fully in globalization; an African Union that defends and protects the interests of peoples beyond the frontiers of Africa. In short, an African Union that is free, bold and fights for the ideals of peace, harmonious and sustainable development, justice and solidarity: that is our message. Obviously, we are in favour of freedom and diversity of opinions, and hence in favour of open debate as a way to find solutions to a problem. That is why we do not regret what happened here the day before yesterday and perhaps even before. Is this not irrefutable proof of our commitment to democracy and respect for others? Out of scrupulous respect for the fundamental principles underpinning the African Union, it is our candidacy – and I hope we are worthy of it – that is supported by the overwhelming majority of Africans.

We would like here to commend Cameroon, a friendly and fraternal country, which did not hesitate to withdraw from the running when it found that it was opposing the Congo, a fraternal country. We also commend the attitude of Nigeria, a long-

standing friend, which withdrew early on for the sake of African unity.

In a spirit of responsibility and altruism, I would like to call to all participants in this Conference to realize that the time has come to reach an agreement so that we can move forward.

With the understanding of all of those who have placed their confidence in us – and clearly there are many of them, to judge from the results of the vote the day before yesterday – we have chosen to move forward more quickly by not calling for another vote to decide between us and our sister Republic, Albania.

You can count on the active participation of the tripartite delegation of the Congo to this session. While solemnly renewing the expression of our thanks to all the delegates who wanted to see the Congo preside at this meeting, we would like to wish every success to the President who will be elected. Long live African unity! Long live the International Labour Organization!

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

I sincerely thank the Ambassador. The candidacy for the presidency of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference of His Excellency Mr. Gilbert Ondongo, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of the Republic of the Congo, has been withdrawn. As I understand it, this means that there is only one remaining candidate for this post, His Excellency Mr. Kastriot Sulka, Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Albania. May we have confirmation that this candidature is maintained?

I take this as a positive reply, and given that this implies the assent of the Government group and the acceptance of the Workers' and Employers' groups, it is my understanding that there is a consensus in the Conference that Mr. Sulka should be elected President of the Conference.

There being no objections, I have the honour to declare that Mr. Sulka has been elected President of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. I invite him to come up to the podium and to conduct the rest of the business of the Conference.

(Mr. Kastriot Sulka, Deputy Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of Albania, is elected President of the Conference and takes the President's chair.)

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

The PRESIDENT

It is a great honour for me to assume such a very high post as that of the President of the 96th Session of the International Labour Conference. In this connection, I would like to sincerely thank the provisional Officers of the Conference who conducted

with remarkable talent the normal business of the Conference and showed, once again, that the Standing Orders are in good standing shape. I thank you very much.

To conclude, allow me, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, to wish every success to the Conference. I sincerely thank you for your support.

I now give the floor to the Clerk for the announcements.

ELECTION OF THE VICE-PRESIDENTS OF THE CONFERENCE

The CLERK OF THE CONFERENCE

We now pass to the nominations of the Vice-Presidents of the Conference. The groups have nominated the Vice-Presidents of the Conference as follows:

Government group

Mr. Carlos Antonio da Rocha Paranhos (*Brazil*)

Employers' group

Mr. Michel Barde (*Switzerland*)

Workers' group

Mr. Marc Blondel (*France*)

The PRESIDENT

I note that these candidates are each of different nationality, as required under article 3, paragraph 1, of the Standing Orders of the International Labour Conference. Does the Conference adopt the proposals that these three candidates be elected as the Vice-Presidents of this session of the International Labour Conference?

(The proposals are adopted.)

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE STANDING ORDERS OF THE CONFERENCE

The PRESIDENT

A number of suspensions of certain provisions of the Standing Orders were proposed for the purposes of this session of the Conference. Is it confirmed that these proposals, which were set forth in detail in *Provisional Record No. 5*, are now approved?

(The proposals are adopted.)

As this concludes the business for this sitting of the Conference, I now close the sitting and we can return to our work in the committees. The second sitting of the International Labour Conference is closed.

(The Conference adjourned at 10.40 a.m.)

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