

**FOR DEBATE AND GUIDANCE**

SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Report of the ILO Forum on Decent Work
for a Fair Globalization**

1. The ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization was held in Lisbon from 31 October to 2 November 2007. About 400 participants attended the Forum, which was hosted by the Government of Portugal during its Presidency of the European Union (EU) and supported by the European Commission (EC). Participants came from the tripartite constituency of the ILO, international and regional organizations, civil society organizations, research institutes, the media and parliaments. Several members of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization attended as well as eight cabinet-rank ministers from ILO member countries and 38 members of the Governing Body.
2. The Forum, the first of its kind, came three years after the publication of the report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. It facilitated a substantive debate on fair and inclusive globalization and decent work. The high-level interaction between ILO constituents and other actors interested in and supportive of the Decent Work Agenda provided an occasion for an open exchange of views and wide-ranging discussion on approaches and experiences in promoting decent work as a contribution to shaping a fair globalization.
3. The Forum agenda was prepared in close consultation with the Officers of the Governing Body and the Government of Portugal, along the lines agreed by the Governing Body at its March 2006 session.¹ Special attention was paid to six policy areas that are central to the Decent Work Agenda, namely strengthening education, training and employability, upgrading the informal economy, managing labour migration, expanding social security, decent jobs for young women and men and addressing the issue of policy coherence in the international system. In addition, political leaders and leaders from key stakeholder groups provided participants with their perspectives on broad issues linked to the pursuit of decent work and a fair globalization.²

¹ GB.295/WP/SDG/2.

² For the Forum programme, background papers and list of participants, see: www.ilo.org/lisbonforum

4. Some specific suggestions to strengthen the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda came out of the thematic discussion on the six policy areas mentioned above. These are reported in the appendix together with a summary of the proceedings and the programme of the Forum. The main outcomes of the discussion and a short preliminary assessment of the event are outlined below. A fuller report is being prepared as an ILO publication.

Main outcomes

Strong convergence around decent work for a fair globalization

5. The discussions revealed a strong convergence of views around decent work for a fair globalization, including from organizations that had not previously worked closely with the ILO. There was a widespread sense that globalization could be changed and shaped for the better and that the goal of decent work for all provided an important policy focus. Solutions had to take account of the specific situations of particular countries. However, there were common principles and international standards from which all countries could work and many common issues to be addressed. The need for greater coherence between economic and social policies at national and international levels, anchored to the notion of decent work, was broadly recognized.

Focus on policy development and delivering results

6. If consensus around the goal of decent work was a significant achievement, there was also a widespread feeling that the challenge was now implementation. For some participants the Forum marked a new phase in the Decent Work Agenda, one where the focus was on delivering results and having an impact on people's lives. Indeed the Forum provided insights and suggestions for robust and effective decent work policies and programmes, based on the review of experience from a variety of settings. The discussion reflected the fresh commitment to stronger social policies that is now emerging in many developing and industrialized countries. It highlighted the continuing importance of tripartism and the potential of synergies between public and private sectors for policy formulation and delivery. It confronted the day-to-day challenges of implementation, including issues of capability, political commitment and coordination among different agencies and ministries. Lessons in this domain are of particular value to the ILO and other stakeholders engaged in the Decent Work Agenda.

Progress towards international policy coherence

7. There were several references to the value of collaboration among agencies of the multilateral system, and examples where impact could be greater by joining forces in the promotion of decent work. This is prompting new initiatives and changes in the perspectives of the many international agencies that attended the Forum. Representatives of FAO, IMF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), World Bank and WTO all engaged actively in the Forum discussions. The issue of international policy coherence was one main item under discussion. While acknowledging the differences in the mandate, approach and structure of each agency, the discussion showed there are practical means and instruments to promote greater coordination and convergence of action. One such instrument in particular – the *Toolkit for mainstreaming employment and decent work* adopted by the UN System Chief Executives Board – was recognized as a promising avenue.

New opportunities for collaboration and advocacy

8. The Forum provided an opportunity to upgrade the ILO's relationships with international and regional organizations, particularly ASEAN, OECD and the EU. The Prime Minister of Portugal, Mr José Sócrates, highlighted the convergence between the internal and external dimensions of the Lisbon Strategy and the promotion of decent work and a fair globalization. The EC also expressed its commitment to support the Decent Work Agenda among EU and non-EU member countries.
9. Stronger collaboration with parliamentarians was another outcome of the Forum. Representatives from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) brought to the Forum their commitment to set up an international "parliamentary advisory group" on employment and decent work, to formulate a programme of work with the ILO and to prepare tools to help parliamentarians promote policy coherence for decent work and a fair globalization at national and international levels.
10. Another important new partner – the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign, a broad coalition between the international trade union movement and civil society organizations – took the opportunity to launch its Call to Action for Decent Work, a large-scale initiative to mobilize and enhance awareness of people from all over the world.

Greater influence and outreach

11. Finally, the Forum confirmed the value of the ILO's method of work based on dialogue. It made visible the Organization's unique capacity to provide a platform for a focused and purposeful discussion on contentious issues among a variety of voices and interests. At the same time, by means of providing an opportunity for greater outreach, it enhanced the influence of the ILO, its principles and its policies.

A preliminary assessment

12. Many international organizations have set up mechanisms for dialogue and consultation with stakeholders beyond their institutional constituencies in order to enhance awareness of their policies and programmes, mobilize public support, garner new ideas and strengthen implementation.³ In this regard the ILO has the inherent advantage of its tripartite constituency and its many connections to other organizations. Debates, forums and meetings involving differing policy communities beyond the social partners have gradually become part of ILO activities. This has coincided with the engagement of policy-makers from different quarters, at the international and national levels, in the promotion of decent work as a common goal and in developing means for its implementation. It is arguably time the Office developed a clearer outreach strategy, to avoid proliferation of isolated events, to ensure each has a proper follow-up and leads to tangible outcomes, and to sharpen and calibrate the ILO message for different audiences.

³ For example, the WTO has been organizing annual symposia and forums with civil society and other actors, the OECD holds an annual forum on a particular theme and UNEP has been organizing an annual Global Civil Society Forum prior to its Governing Council. For a complete overview of UN system agencies' outreach initiatives, see: *UN system engagement with NGOs, civil society, the private sector and other actors: A compendium*, United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) 2005.

13. Within an overall outreach strategy, a Forum like the one in Lisbon, would fulfil a specific requirement: confirming the ILO as the pre-eminent meeting place to discuss and tackle global issues affecting the world of work. The meeting in Lisbon has shown that a large number and variety of participants from NGOs to the donor community have a strong interest in the Decent Work Agenda. The content and outcomes of the discussion show that it is possible to have meaningful dialogue on politically contentious issues by ensuring adequate technical depth and focusing on solutions. The Forum also provided practical lessons on how to best organize similar events in terms of length, structure and content. Not all stakeholders were adequately represented and the overall gender balance was disappointing. Nevertheless the Lisbon Forum showed there are benefits to the Organization in getting its messages across and unveiling opportunities to strengthen the implementation of its policies.
14. Participants generally agreed the Forum was well organized. Conference facilities were of the highest standard. This owes much to the warm and committed support given by the Portuguese Government and the efforts of the ILO Office in Lisbon. The lesson here is how much can be achieved through close collaboration between constituents in a country and the ILO.
15. The Forum was not part of ILO routines, and at least in this sense was an extraordinary event. As suggested in the closing statement by the Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal, Mr José Antonio Vieira da Silva: “if the challenge is now on delivering results, it would be useful at some stage for the ILO to organize another Forum of this nature, but this time specifically to assess the effectiveness of policies for decent work and sharpen the tools for implementation”.
16. The Working Party is invited to comment on the paper and, in the light of the experience of the Lisbon Forum, provide guidance on the value of developing an overall ILO strategy to consolidate and focus existing outreach and advocacy activities, that would also provide suggestions for how the information and opinions expressed at the Forum, and summarized in the concluding remarks of the Chairs of the panel sessions, could contribute to greater effectiveness of the activities of the Organization.

Geneva, 11 March 2008.

Submitted for debate and guidance.

Appendix

ILO Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization (Lisbon, 31 October–2 November 2007)

Summary of proceedings

- (1) Opening plenary session
- (2) Keynote plenary speeches
- (3) Panel of parliamentarians
- (4) Concluding session
- (5) Conclusions of the thematic sessions
- (6) Programme of the Forum

1. Opening plenary session

Mr Juan Somavia, Director-General of the ILO, opened the Forum by stressing that the leading political and economic priority today is to implement policies that expand opportunities, reduce inequalities and answer people's demand for a fair globalization. This required strong processes of dialogue and action that bring different parties together to shape inclusive responses to the decent work challenge. This was the essence of this Forum, a "meeting of people from many networks" representing a global community of state- and non-state actors which are beginning to converge around what he called an emerging global "decent work movement". He said the true test of development was not only about reducing poverty but also reversing the global tendency toward greater inequality. He emphasized the need to agree internationally that people in every society have a right to a "social floor" defined according to national circumstances, means and priorities, and which would combine social investments with market opportunities to expand social mobility based on increasingly better jobs. It took strong political will to ensure that the benefits of globalization are more fairly shared, he said, and strong advocacy and mobilization of people to come to action.

Mr José Sócrates, Prime Minister of Portugal, said his Government defined decent work as "probably the most powerful and most effective tool that the international community has ever produced for promoting policies that could translate into concrete responses for tackling the effects of globalization". He noted that the EU had progressively embraced and adopted the concepts of decent work and fair globalization. He expressed his commitment under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU to intensify cooperation with the ILO in these fields, which he described as a "truly historic responsibility of Europe". He intended to prioritize improving the potential of the Lisbon Strategy, both in terms of its internal social dimension and external cooperation dimension. He insisted on the urgency in today's world of "putting in place mechanisms for regulating globalization, and concrete commitments on basic citizenship entitlements to which every human being must have access".

Dr Dayan Jayatileka, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, described the title of the Forum as an "axial" concept. On the one hand the Decent Work Agenda addressed the two most pressing problems humanity faces: poverty and alienation. On the other hand a

“fair globalization” was a response to the fundamentalisms at the extremes of the globalization debate. A fairer globalization would preserve the factors of integration and unification of the information revolution but, through the provision of decent work, it would reduce widening inequities within and between communities, nations and social classes. He added that unless there was a fairer globalization and decent work for the many, it would not be possible to deal with other pressing problems, notably climate change, violence and terrorism.

Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, said that economic and political freedoms consolidate each other. He took stock of the many of the benefits that globalization had brought – in terms of poverty reduction, the spread of democracy and freer exchange of goods, ideas and knowledge – but warned that still far too many people and countries were excluded. He emphasized the importance of reaching a broad consensus on the “right policy framework” that would make sure that globalization was as inclusive as possible. He cited in particular the consensus reached at the 2007 session of the International Labour Conference on the “Promotion of sustainable enterprises” as a way forward. Among others, he stressed the importance of a culture of entrepreneurship as the essential building block of successful economies, regulatory frameworks for innovation and competition, and skill development opportunities “to limit low-pay traps and rising earnings inequality”. He said social safety nets were an essential accompaniment to globalization albeit without becoming a barrier to employment or business competitiveness. He suggested the emphasis should shift from “job security” to “employment security” where individuals rather than uncompetitive jobs are protected. Dialogue was absolutely essential to promote better mutual understanding of the benefits and pitfalls of globalization. If current public concerns with globalization were not addressed, he warned, the gains of the last three decades could be rolled back. “In the absence of such frank debate, uncertainty can fuel calls for reactionary policies ... This is in nobody’s interest.” He insisted on the leadership role that business needs to show in articulating its role and responsibilities in society, and what is or is not acceptable business practice.

Sir Roy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, said the “Call to action” launched that morning by the Decent Work Decent Life Campaign should be answered positively by the ILO and by all international institutions that should work coherently to ensure its realization. He said decent work had to be placed at the centre of global governance, a universal goal throughout the UN system, including the international trade and financial institutions. He said in particular that agreements at the World Trade Organization should not take place to the detriment of the engagements made by governments in other international institutions. He drew attention to the pertinence in today’s world of the founding principles of the 1919 ILO Constitution and 1944 Philadelphia Declaration and the continued relevance of tripartite conclusions and standards. He mentioned efforts under way at the annual International Labour Conference to strengthen the ILO in order to make decent work “become practically effective in a globalized world”. He emphasized that an integrated approach to the Decent Work Agenda’s four strategic objectives enabled the ILO to establish “a powerful, coherent package of development tools” at national and global levels to respond to the challenges of our times. He said the Workers’ group was pleased that the tripartite constituency was joined by parliamentarians and democratic civil society organizations to focus on how to set a framework for partnerships with other organizations in meeting these challenges.

Mr José António Vieira Da Silva, Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal, described why his Government thought decent work was such a powerful concept to shape a fairer globalization. He suggested that the reasons that the decent work debate had become a global debate in such a short number of years was because of its strong “ethical density” and the fact that it encompasses many facets which could be applied flexibly and effectively from local community or company levels to the global

level. It was not just a response to the fractures and wounds of globalization, but also a tool capable of changing decisive aspects of the way globalization is evolving. He further described it as a galvanizing concept for society at large to mobilize political will, because it was an effective instrument for scrutinizing decisions that influence life in the community. Decent work could be “transformed into a gauge of our collective decisions and the sustainability of those decisions”, he concluded.

Mr Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary-General designate of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), provided a comprehensive overview of the Asian experience with globalization and the challenges the continent is facing with respect to the Decent Work Agenda. In spite of the high rates of global growth in recent years, the gap between rich and poor within and between countries has continued widening. “If we are not careful, this gap will be the structural defect that could threaten our global community in the long run.” Asia’s economic performance had not been matched by performance in job creation, he said. “Recent unemployment rates, even among university graduates represent large increases over those prevailing five to seven years ago and typically well above the pre-financial crisis level.” He noted with concern that Asia was in danger of letting down what he called the “Millennium Generation” – the world’s young people entering the labour force at the turn of the century, of whom 60 per cent were in Asia. But “Even when people have jobs today, their level of insecurity and uncertainty has mounted in the context of intensified global competition and flexible work arrangements. Yet social protection is largely absent for the huge numbers of workers in the informal economy.” He emphasized the need to combine investments in dynamic sectors with investments in sectors where the majority of workers were employed as a way of balancing employment and productivity goals. He ended with a strong plea to honour commitments to agricultural market liberalization in industrialized countries as a means to promote decent work for the millions of poor people still working in agriculture in the developing world.

2. *Keynote plenary speeches*

Mr Vladimir Špidla, European Union Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities said that the EC attached great importance to a better distribution of the benefits and risks of globalization within and between countries and considered decent work a key factor behind economic performance, productivity and sustainable development. Mr Špidla emphasized the need for better policy coherence in multilateral governance, underlining that this could only be achieved if national policies themselves were more coherent. He described in detail the initiatives taken by the EU and the EC to strengthen the social dimension of globalization and promote decent work for all. He noted that the EC had reinforced its collaboration and political dialogue with the ILO over the years. He emphasized that employment, decent work and social cohesion were an integral part of the European Consensus on development – in relation to which non-EU countries could be eligible for external assistance, notably to support Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). Much remained to be done, he stressed, as employment and decent work had started being taken into account in international governance and development strategies only after the 2005 UN World Summit.

Mr Mats Karlsson, Vice-Chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the UN System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), and Country Director of the World Bank said the international community had developed a body of policy consensus within which the Decent Work Agenda was now securely anchored. What was urgently needed were the tools for the multilateral system to move to implementation. As concerned issues of inequality and poverty, the measurement and analytical tools were available. The same could not be said of employment. Even experienced ministers, he said, could flounder when faced with questions linked to employment. “Policy-makers simply do not have the depth [of knowledge needed] to talk to employment issues the way they can talk to economic growth or poverty reduction.” In developing countries, there were

still large gaps in data that had to be urgently addressed. The employment components of national development strategies, if at all present, were often very weak. He put forward the *Toolkit on mainstreaming employment and decent work* as a simple practical means to address those issues. The Toolkit was the result of a collective effort of the multilateral system through CEB, which had identified employment and decent work as a cross-cutting theme on which system-wide efforts could make a significant difference. The checklist of questions contained in the Toolkit helped each agency of the system to enhance awareness of decent work issues and policies and help identify areas where capacity building was needed. The process would eventually lead to better monitoring and evaluation of each organization's policies, encourage peer learning and generate synergies and opportunities for joint work. The key measure of success, however, would be whether this Toolkit approach could ultimately be developed and utilized by policy-makers at the national level.

Mr Abraham Katz, President of the International Organisation of Employers, said globalization had spread growth and prosperity and helped lift many people out of poverty. However, many remained poor while rapid technological change had accentuated income disparities and perceptions of being left behind. He suggested that the main objective of labour market policy was no longer “job security” but “employment security”, whereby workers had to adapt to new jobs in the face of the changes brought about by globalization. He acknowledged that this would be difficult for individual workers. It was the challenge of the ILO to help national economies embrace these changes while mitigating their adverse effects. He said he believed that many of the policy guidelines adopted in consensus documents (including at the ILO) some 20 years ago – on the importance of flexibility as essential to adjustment to change – were still valid today, even in terms of addressing the new challenges brought about by the knowledge revolution.

He described adjustment as composed of stabilization, liberalization and privatization. This had to be combined with policies to address the problem of displaced workers, including education, training and retraining and the encouragement of mobility (employment security). These prescriptions, he said, applied to developed and developing countries alike – emphasizing that the responsibility of developed countries to undergo structural adjustment policies was germane to progress on the Doha trade negotiations. He cautioned that the rapidity of current changes is fuelling a backlash against globalization in many countries and warned in particular against a rise of unilateralism in the governance of trade that “could lead into a downward spiral of beggar-thy-neighbour policies and measures with economic fallouts reminiscent of the 1930s” The current round of trade negotiations should thus not fail.

Mr Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) noted the remarkable degree of consensus displayed at the Forum – not only by the ILO's own tripartite constituents but other key actors – on the need for a fair globalization and the central role of the Decent Work Agenda. This was a major aquis. However, this conjuncture – and indeed even the Forum itself – had to mark a point of inflection, the end of one phase and the beginning of a new one. Phase two of the Decent Work Agenda, he suggested, was about delivering results. To do so would put the consensus to a true test. All would agree that current labour market conditions in the world were “tough”. Strong global growth alone was not the solution as inequalities measured along practically any axis were growing. Most notably the inequalities of return between labour and capital were among factors making current globalization politically unsustainable. In that sense, he said, he was in agreement with Mr Katz's warning that globalization could not be taken for granted. It was essential to move in two directions: greater coherence in international policy-making, including coherence of policies of national governments in international bodies; and driving the Decent Work Agenda at the national level, notably through the national DWCPs. This placed the onus of responsibility on national trade unions, employers and governments, rather than the ILO on its own.

Ms Mary Robinson, President of Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative recalled that she had been much inspired by the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization in her own project on The Ethical Globalization Initiative. She was pleased with the progress made since the World Commission report was launched and commended the ILO for its follow-up work. Yet, a fairer globalization was still an unfulfilled promise. Her current work was focusing on putting human rights standards at the heart of governance and policy-making. The goal was to strengthen local and national capacities and voice in ways that would realize human rights, especially social and economic rights. The critical obstacle at the root of all unfulfilled rights was the same: inequalities within and between nations and an imbalance of power and influence. In the area of economic rights her Initiative had been championing the work of the ILO and others on decent work. As concerns international trade, she expressed her concern that current developments in international negotiations were falling far short of fair. Trade reforms had to be measured against whether or not they promoted more and better jobs, and had any impact on those most disadvantaged economically. As concerns the informal economy she recalled how she had been impressed by her visit to an ILO decent work project in Ghana that provides an integrated approach, incorporating an innovative mix of interventions that build on individual initiative and entrepreneurship, combined with the strength of associations and collective action. She noted decent work was still rare in the discourse on corporate social responsibility when it comes to the extensive value chains of companies. These value chains include millions of farmers, traders and artisans in the informal economy. She recalled evidence showing that where companies and governments apply themselves to promoting human rights, the results have been very positive. She especially emphasized the importance of promoting women's rights. Women were disproportionately represented in segments of the informal labour force with low earnings and high poverty risk. At the same time, there were several global movements inspired or led by grass-roots women leaders, including the environment movement, the shack-dwellers movement, the women's rights movement, the micro-finance movement and movements of informal sector workers such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) of India. All these played a critical role in increasing the voice of grass-roots women and the visibility of their working and living conditions, including their economic insecurities. Finally, Ms Robinson called upon all participants to get involved in marking the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2008. She suggested that the anniversary of the Universal Declaration and the tenth anniversary of the ILO's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work in 2008 could offer opportunities to move the Decent Work Agenda forward in practical ways.

3. **Panel of parliamentarians**

This session was organized in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), which had convened a pre-Forum event for parliamentarians where participants adopted conclusions and a series of recommendations to the IPU, notably to establish a "parliamentary advisory group" on employment and decent work. The group will have ILO representation and develop specific tools to support parliamentarians working on the multiple aspects of decent work and a fair globalization, drawing inspiration from the CEB *Toolkit for mainstreaming employment and decent work*. **Senator Sheila Carstairs of Canada** said the parliamentarians present at the Forum adopted these recommendations because parliaments were not as actively engaged as they should be on the decent work for a fair globalization agenda. Parliamentarians, she said, were responsible for any legislation action taken in their country and should become more engaged with the ILO. She underlined the importance of the advisory group that was proposed. **Senator Heráclito Fortes of the Federative Republic of Brazil** emphasized what he called the "historic importance" of this ILO-IPU event. In discussing the challenges parliamentarians face in Brazil, he noted the difficulties of enforcing labour legislation, notably on the issue of modern forms of slave labour. He highlighted the difficulties of reconciling the slow pace

of the legislative process and the fast pace of changes in the labour market. He insisted on the importance of regional and interregional parliamentary cooperation in addressing the social dimension of globalization. He said lessons learnt from the practice of European labour legislation were beginning to be applied in the MERCOSUR region, notably on social protection. He underlined the need for parliamentarians and the ILO to consolidate their common work. **Mr Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, member of the European Parliament and President of the Party of European Socialists**, said it was not difficult to obtain unanimous support for decent work. The difficulty was implementation. He cited the case of European Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) that he noted had been subject to widespread concerns as to their compatibility with aspects of the Decent Work Agenda. He insisted that the world's richest regions had to be consistent with their commitments to promoting decent work in international negotiations. He said the Decent Work Agenda was still little known among parliamentarians. Yet it was essential to integrate it in the discussion on trade, investment and development policies. He noted with concern new developments in global financial markets, notably the growth of private equity funds, hedge funds and investment banks, whose operations fell outside international regulation and whose impact, he said, could seriously undermine decent work objectives. He suggested entering into tripartite dialogue with key actors in the financial markets, with the aim of ensuring that their investment decisions are compatible with decent work.

4. Concluding session

Dr Dayan Jayatileka said that this Forum had been an experiment and departure for the ILO. The Organization had sought to broaden its outreach while maintaining its unique tripartism as the nuclear core of its endeavours. He said that current achievements at mainstreaming decent work could not be taken for granted. The idea of decent work for a fair globalization had to be continuously sharpened and clarified, and be given the status of a leading and guiding idea.

Mr Daniel Funes de Rioja said on behalf of the Employers' group that the exchange of views had been very positive. The key question was to confront different ideas in good faith – and that had been an extremely valuable result of the discussion. The dialogues, ideas and views that had made up the Forum would be very useful for tripartite discussions at the ILO. It was now the task of the Governing Body and the Office to reflect on these. He noted that appropriate policies for employment and decent work depended on the countries and cultures, but there were certainly common values. He reiterated the Employers' positions on the different themes of the Forum and concluded by saying that: "If economic growth is not feasible without productive employment, employment without sound macroeconomic policies is not sustainable."

Sir Roy Trotman said on behalf of the Workers, as well as the NGOs associated with them, that the Forum had produced a high level of discussion which he described as a "distillation of intelligence and vision". The ILO Governing Body would study the report of the meeting and would need to have a number of practical action programmes put in place within a reasonable time frame. These would have to be directed at national and regional experiences and inter-agency action at the global level. It was important to ensure effective outreach of the main messages of the Forum to a very wide audience. He was pleased to see the engagement of parliamentarians on decent work and the possibility of tripartite dialogue with them in the future. He noted with interest the suggestion that the ILO examines the issue of private equity funds and hedge funds. The need to mobilize the necessary political will for implementation, he concluded, was the main message from the Workers' side.

Mr Juan Somavia said the thematic sessions had produced clear and pragmatic ideas, some of which could already be included in the ILO's future work. He noted that the Forum had revealed strong consensus in favour of decent work for a fair globalization and

on the notion that decent work should be at the core of policy coherence, which must begin with fairer policies at the national level. He emphasized the essential role of fostering social justice, entrepreneurship and innovation, and creativity in finding new solutions. If the ILO could bring anything to such complex search for solutions, it was above all due to its working method based on dialogue. Moreover, the Decent Work Agenda could not be advanced with ILO resources alone. He said he was very encouraged that other actors such as parliamentarians and international institutions were taking responsibility to advance the Agenda as part of the emerging global movement that institutions represented at the Forum were contributing to foster.

Mr José António Viera Da Silva closed the meeting by expressing his satisfaction with the way the Forum had been carried out and the results that it had achieved. He proposed to the ILO that the Lisbon Forum should constitute a stepping stone for holding other meetings designed to assess the impacts of policies for decent work and perfect the tools for implementation. The experience of the three days, he concluded, provided a strong incentive to organize another forum which would help increase global mobilization for decent work and strengthen political will around this agenda.

5. **Concluding remarks of the Chairs of the thematic sessions**

Session 1: Employability: Education, skills development and technology *Bridging knowledge gaps*

This session was chaired by **Mr François Périgot**, Honorary President of the International Organisation of Employers (IOE). The panel members included: **Ms Maria Rodrigues**, Special Adviser, PM Office, Portugal; **Mr Mark Richmond**, UNESCO; **Mr Phil O'Reilly**, Business New Zealand; **Ms Jan Eastman**, Education International.¹ **Mr Périgot's** concluding remarks on the session were presented by **Ms Eastman** at the closing plenary. In summary form, these were:

- Access to quality education is a universal human right and the precondition to decent work. It is also the best answer to eliminate child labour. Education is key to personal development, builds the foundations of employability and promotes both economic and social progress.
- Focusing on basic education alone, however, is not enough. Lifelong learning is the only way for skills to keep pace with fast changes in technology and work organization brought about by globalization. Economies pay a high premium to skills that enhance the capacity to secure and retain work, move to different jobs, and cope with changes in technology and labour market conditions. Education and training systems need to provide not only technical skills but also new key competencies or “employability skills” such as those relating to communication, acquisition and application of new information, and teamwork. Governments should develop and maintain national qualification frameworks (NQFs) that enable recognition of prior learning and accumulation of learning throughout life.
- Education and training policies and systems are often not interconnected and do not provide skills that are relevant to the labour market. Policy coherence and more effective coordination across systems and institutions, including relevant ministries, should be sought at all levels of education, training and lifelong learning. Together with relevant regional and multilateral institutions, the ILO and UNESCO should

¹ See full titles in attached programme.

enhance cooperation to help member States achieve greater policy coherence on these issues.

- Sustained action to improve employability is a shared responsibility among a wide range of actors, requires a common vision and effective partnerships. The international community should assist the public sector, industry, trade unions, parents and communities in fostering public–private partnerships at national and local levels to deliver education and training that matches the needs for competitiveness of companies with workers’ aspiration to decent work.
- Second-chance programmes are an important means of remedying education and labour market failures. These include active labour market policies offering an integrated package of services to promote labour market inclusion of people who have missed out prior stages of education and training or who need to enhance their employability while moving to other jobs.
- Social dialogue on national skills policies and strategies, from the stage of formulation to their implementation, has proven effective in crafting solutions that bridge the gap between schools and the world of work.
- The ILO should act as a catalyst in collecting and disseminating knowledge on good practices among governments, the social partners and other interested stakeholders.

Session 2: Upgrading work and enterprises in the informal economy *Organizing for voice and participation*

This session was chaired by **Mr Manuel Viage**, General Secretary of the National Union of Angolan Workers. The panel members included: **Mr Yash Tandon**, South Centre; **Mr Charles Gore**, UNCTAD; **Mr Jean-Yves Barcelo**, UN–HABITAT; **Ms Hilda Sánchez**, ICFTU–ORIT.² **Mr Viage** presented his concluding remarks on the session at the closing plenary. In summary form, these were:

- The spread of the informal economy is a worldwide phenomenon, including in industrialized countries, and globalization is a contributing cause of this process. The nature of the process of “informalization” varies between a range of different situations. At one extreme, in developed countries, there is an informalization of formal employment. At the other extreme, in least developed countries, increasing informalization is associated with the declining ability of the agricultural sector to absorb the growing workforce productively and its declining attractiveness to young school-leavers together with the inability to generate sufficient non-agricultural formal jobs. Informal work is often correlated with poor governance and the absence of the rule of law. Fair globalization cannot be achieved if we fail addressing those challenges.
- The challenges are highly complex and require coherent sets of international, national and local policies. An integrated strategy should look at the synergies of policies dealing notably with land access and registration, enhancing agricultural productivity, taxation, property rights, skills and technology development, macroeconomic and structural policies supportive of domestic demand growth. Opinions differed with respect to the right mix of policies and measures. For some, securing legal entitlements, however important in their own right, would not be sufficient to upgrade

² See full titles in attached programme.

the informal economy in the absence of an economic development process that generates sufficient productive jobs.

- Related to the question of adequate policy formulation was the issue of not having reliable labour market data. Urgent attention had to be given to address this problem.
- It was also suggested that promoting fair globalization and upgrading informal enterprises could not be done without a change of multinational enterprises' practices, especially vis-à-vis their suppliers in global value chains.
- Organizing informal economy actors (workers, self-employed, micro entrepreneurs) was itself seen as a major challenge, while duplication of efforts should be avoided. Trade unions' representation role and mandates should be recognized and respected. The question of how to give representation and voice to informal economy actors at the international level was also raised.
- Experiences had shown that trade unions and NGOs can effectively join forces around common agendas. It was suggested that partnerships could be developed around common objectives such as developing capabilities within the informal economy. It was also suggested that local authorities could take the lead in coordinating organizational efforts at local level, while the ILO should help develop a global integrated strategy to upgrade the informal economy with relevant agencies in the context of UN reform.

Session 3: Migration for work, within borders and internationally
*Securing the benefits, diminishing the risks
of worker mobility*

This session was chaired by **Mr John Sweeney**, President of AFL–CIO. The panel members included: **Mr Giuliano Amato**, Minister of the Interior of Italy; **Mr Jesús Caldera Sánchez Capitán**, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain; **Ms Caridad T. Sri Tharan**, Migrant Forum in Asia; **Mr John Bingham**, International Catholic Migration Commission; **Ms Jacqueline Mugo**, Kenya Federation of Employers.³ **Mr Sweeney** presented his concluding remarks on the session at the closing plenary. In summary form these were:

- International labour migration is a core feature of globalization. It can be beneficial for countries of origin and countries of destination which need migrant workers. Therefore, channels of regular migration should be expanded and legal job opportunities offered to migrants. Recruitment procedures should also be regulated.
- Demand for labour is the primary reason for migration. If it is not met regularly, it will be met irregularly, as it acts as a magnet for irregular migrants. Labour inspection needs to be extended and enforced to avoid exploitation of irregular migrant workers and violations of their human rights. This is especially so for women migrant workers, who often work in occupations not covered by labour law, such as domestic work. Regularization of irregular migrant workers employed in occupations where there is a demonstrated shortage of native workers was seen as in the best interest of countries of destination. In Spain for instance, regularization improved the working and living conditions of migrant workers and redressed the social security system. Social dialogue was instrumental in leading this regularization.

³ See full titles in attached programme.

- The benefits of novel programmes of temporary and circular migration were extensively discussed, although these programmes were put into question by some on grounds that they led to settlement and undermined the rights of migrants and their integration in receiving countries.
- The brain drain was strongly denounced, resulting in loss of skills in vital sectors such as health care and education. The provision of services, especially in poor and in rural areas, is severely compromised in many countries as a result. It was suggested that some compensating mechanisms should be devised.
- Freedom of association for workers crossing borders is a basic human right and migrant workers must have the opportunity to secure regularized legal status. Ratification and implementation of the two ILO Conventions on migrant workers and of the International Convention on the Protection of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families was called for. The ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration should be implemented at national level as a concrete step toward improving the life of migrant workers.
- There was general recognition of the benefits of increased remittances observed in recent years. But these are not a substitute for government social spending or for meeting ODA targets. Policies should aim at dealing with the deep roots of international migration – poverty and the lack of decent work in sending countries. Migration should become a choice, not a necessity.

Session 4: Social protection policies for social cohesion
and economic development
Moving towards a global social floor?

This session was chaired by **Mr Carlos Tomada**, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina. The panel members included: **Mr Aart de Geus**, OECD; **Mr Roberto Bissio**, Social Watch; **Ms Suddha Pillai**, Ministry of Labour and Employment, India; **Mr Helmut Schwartzer**, Ministry of Social Security, Brazil; **Mr João Proença**, General Workers' Union of Portugal.⁴ **Mr Tomada** presented his concluding remarks on the session at the closing plenary. In summary form, these were:

- Social protection is a human right for everybody enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. That is the ethical basis of national social security systems. However, social security is not only a human right; it is also an essential social and economic need. In a context of intensified labour market turbulence and social dislocation associated with globalization, national economies cannot function without social security systems that provide the basic level of security to residents and workers to help them cope with these rapid changes.
- Social security facilitates social inclusion, fosters economic growth, helps to eradicate poverty and strengthens democracy. It is thus an indispensable element of national development strategies. The criticisms and cutbacks that social security systems were subjected to in many countries during the last decades were justified on the basis that these represented wrong priorities and flawed design, rather than founded on objective evidence against social transfers and social security benefits in principle.
- There is now a new consensus that the social and economic need for social security should be translated into a global social floor. The session's background paper listed a set of core benefits that could be considered as the social security components of a

⁴ See full titles in attached programme.

social floor that could be used as a starting point for debate.⁵ The initiatives taken by India and Brazil show that basic levels of social security are affordable alongside rapid economic development. The example of Argentina shows that social protection mechanisms are also necessary to enable a country to overcome economic shocks rapidly. The OECD recognizes that some of the most successful and most open economies have also the most extensive welfare states.

- Social security systems are considered affordable at any stage of economic development, provided the political will is sufficient. However, poorer countries may need external support to kick-start social protection programmes. Investing in social protection must become more widely recognized as an essential component of any viable development strategy and in meeting the Millennium Development Goals. International financial institutions and the donor community in particular must step up their support in developing the social security component of a global social floor and avoid undermining such national efforts through inappropriate policy advice.
- There was some debate on benefit priorities, such as between spending on the elderly or on young families. This is probably less of a dilemma in developing countries where cash benefits are likely to benefit all generations in households.
- The global social floor can be considered a widely recognized element of the Decent Work Agenda. A number of participants expressed the need to develop a new ILO standard that would codify the modern principles for social security so as to define a basic level of benefits that all people should be able to enjoy.

Session 5: Policy coherence among international organizations *Creating the tools to make it work*

This session was chaired by **Mr Sha Zukang**, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs. The panel members included: **Mr Josep Borrell**, European Parliament and Global Progressive Forum; **Mr Raymond Parsons**, Business Unity South Africa; **Mr Saleh Nsouli**, IMF; **Mr Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz**, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD); **Mr Zwelinzima Vavi**, COSATU.⁶ **Mr Sha** presented his concluding remarks on the session at the closing plenary. In summary form, these were:

- The agencies of the multilateral system share common goals such as global peace and development, but institutional division of labour and specialization give rise to situations where some parts of the system may promote policies that offset the intended policy objectives of others. The need for policy coherence is reinforced by globalization and growing interdependence of markets, countries and issues, where no international organization can achieve its objectives on its own.
- Policy coherence must be defined in terms of its ultimate objectives. There is political consensus at the multilateral level on making full and productive employment and decent work for all a central objective of relevant national and international policies to support fair globalization. Policy frameworks must converge around this objective. Among the tools available to foster implementation, the approach used in the *Toolkit*

⁵ These include: universal child benefits; universal access to essential health services; some financial relief for the working poor unable to earn enough for their families to escape poverty as a result of underemployment or low productivity; and basic tax-financed pensions for the elderly, the disabled and those who have lost the main breadwinner in a family.

⁶ See full titles in attached programme.

for mainstreaming employment and decent work adopted by the UN CEB was underscored.

- Most speakers indicated the need to develop a new development paradigm for employment and decent work to guide policy coherence, or at least the need to acknowledge that there are different policy paradigms – such as those inspired more by neo-classical or Keynesian schools of economic thought – implying different policy solutions. Some called for new thinking in development, beyond GDP growth targets, to focus more on employment and decent work targets and on developing endogenous productive capacities and boosting domestic demand.
- It is important that policy coherence did not imply a loss in the plurality of policy choices available to countries. Policy coherence at the international level does not mean a one-size-fits-all policy approach.
- Policy coherence starts at home. This implies that meaningful coherence at national and international levels requires genuine social dialogue and transparency. The capacity of those who participate in such dialogue needs to be improved, along with the availability of reliable labour market information.
- It is important to reach consensus on what needs to be reformed in global governance to achieve better policy coherence and deliver on results.
- The ILO's Policy Coherence Initiative was well appreciated, although the ultimate objective of productive employment and decent work for all was far from achieved. Various speakers gave examples where policy coherence for productive employment and decent work is absent or where one can observe contradictory policies of different agencies. In order to proceed on policy coherence for employment and decent work, it is important to single out a few areas of central concern, such as the destabilizing potential of global financial imbalances, more employment-friendly macroeconomic policy options, the creation of sustainable enterprises, and the capacity of developing countries to participate meaningfully in international trade negotiations.

Session 6: Decent work opportunities for young women and men: Overcoming discrimination and disadvantage
Equality in diversity: A dream or a necessity?

This session was chaired by **Mr Ashraf Tabani**, President of the Employers' Federation of Pakistan. The panel members included: **Mr Carlos Lupi**, Minister of Labour and Employment, Brazil; **Mr António D. Pitra Neto**, Minister for Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, Angola; **Mr Gilles de Robien**, Ambassador with responsibility for promoting social security, France; **Ms Barbara Byers**, Canadian Labour Congress; **Mr Carvalho da Silva**, General Confederation of the Portuguese Workers; **Mr Ariosto Manrique**, Youth Commission of the Mexican Employers' Confederation.⁷ **Mr Tabani** presented his concluding remarks on the session at the closing plenary. In summary form, these were:

- Economic development is critical to meet the youth employment challenge – a challenge shared by both developed and developing countries. Responses at national and global levels should be informed by a vision that values equality and solidarity across generations.

⁷ See full titles in attached programme.

- Achieving decent work for youth requires integrated and coherent policy frameworks spanning education and training, alongside economic and social policies. The international community together with national governments should enhance policy coherence between policies and agreements that have an impact on youth employment.
- Quality and relevance of education and training by and large affect the type and pace of youth transition to the world of work, and enable young people to become active citizens. Apprenticeship, career guidance, labour market information and other measures bringing students and teachers closer to enterprises have proven to be effective in making this transition smooth and should be part of regular programmes offered by education and training institutions.
- There are many factors which can make young people vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market. Some have grown up without proper education, adequate nutrition and housing. Others encounter discrimination at work regardless of their pre-work background. Removing barriers of access to education of girls and young women is of the utmost priority. Gender and race issues should be included in all policies affecting youth employment to avoid perpetuating labour market segregation and discrimination. Measures to prevent discrimination can help young people avoid falling into destructive behaviour, including drug addiction. These measures should be part of education and training curricula. Measures to help young workers reconcile work and family responsibilities should also be encouraged.
- Global and regional networks and forums provide useful platforms to share knowledge and experience on youth employment policies and programmes. Partnerships between public and private sectors at the local and national levels and coalitions with civil society groups, including youth groups, are a powerful tool to mobilize support and deliver on youth employment. Public-private partnerships between schools, training institutions, universities and enterprises should be forged to better align skills to the world of work and to leverage resources for funding education, training and lifelong learning.
- Governments and the social partners are the major players in the development of youth employment policies and programmes. Employers' and workers' organizations have real knowledge of the needs of enterprises and labour markets. They should be involved in the design, monitoring and evaluation of youth employment measures. Efforts should be made to encourage young entrepreneurs and workers to join employers' organizations and trade unions.

6. Programme of the Forum

Wednesday, 31 October

08.00–10.00 Registration

14.00–17.00

17.00–18.00

Opening plenary session:

Juan Somavia, ILO Director-General

José Sócrates, Prime Minister of Portugal

José António Vieira Da Silva,

Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity, Portugal

Dayan Jayatilleka, Chairperson, ILO Governing Body

Daniel Funes de Rioja, Employer Vice-Chairperson, ILO Governing Body

Leroy Trotman, Worker Vice-Chairperson, ILO Governing Body

Panel members:

Giuliano Amato, Minister of the Interior of Italy

Mr Jesús Caldera Sánchez Capitán, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Spain

Caridad T. Sri Tharan, Founding Member and Advisor, Migrant Forum in Asia

John Bingham, Head of Policy, International Catholic Migration Commission

Jacqueline Mugo, Executive Director, Kenya Federation of Employers

Session 4: Social protection policies for social cohesion and economic development

Moving towards a global social floor?

Chairperson:

Carlos Tomada, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina

Panel members:

Aart de Geus, Deputy-Secretary-General, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Roberto Bissio, Coordinator, Social Watch and Executive Director, Third World Institute

Sudha Pillai, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, India

Helmut Schwarzer, Social Security Secretary, Ministry of Social Security, Brazil

João Proença, General Secretary, General Workers' Union (UGT), Portugal

15.45–16.15

Coffee break

16.15–18.00

Session 3 (*cont.*)

Session 4 (*cont.*)

Friday, 2 November

09.00–10.15

Session 5: Policy coherence among international organizations

Creating the tools to make it work

Chairperson:

Sha Zukang, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Panel members:

Josep Borrell, President, Committee on Development of the European Parliament, and Chair of the Global Progressive Forum (GPF)

Raymond Parsons, member of the Management Committee of Business Unity South Africa (BUSA) and Overall Business Convenor at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC)

Saleh Nsouli, Director, Offices in Europe, International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Ricardo Meléndez-Ortiz, Chief Executive, International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD)

Zwelinzima Vavi, General Secretary of Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

Session 6: Decent work opportunities for young women and men:
Overcoming discrimination and disadvantage
Equality in diversity: A dream or a necessity?

Chairperson:

Ashraf Tabani, President, Employers' Federation of Pakistan

Panel members:

Carlos Lupi, Minister of Labour and Employment of Brazil

António D. Pitra Neto, Minister for Public Administration,
Employment and Social Security, Angola

Gilles de Robien, Ambassador with responsibility for promoting social
cohesion, France

Barbara Byers, Executive Vice-President, Canadian Labour Congress
(CLC)

Carvalho da Silva, General Secretary, General Confederation of the
Portuguese Workers (GCTP)

Ariosto Manrique, President, Youth Commission of the Mexican
Employers' Confederation

10.15–10.45

Coffee break

10.45–12.00

Session 5 (*cont.*)

Session 6 (*cont.*)

12.00–12.30

Keynote speakers:

Abraham Katz, President, International Organisation of Employers (IOE)

Guy Ryder, General Secretary, International Trade Union
Confederation (ITUC)

12.30–14.00

Lunch (provided at AIP)

14.00–14.30

Keynote speaker (plenary)

Mary Robinson, President, Realizing Rights: The Ethical
Globalization Initiative

14.30–15.00

Panel of parliamentarians

*Accountability and coherence of public policy for decent work and a fair
globalization: The role of parliaments*

Heráclito Fortes, Senator, the Federative Republic of Brazil

Sheila Carstairs, Senator, Canada

Poul Nyrup Rasmussen, Member of the European Parliament, and President
of the Party of European Socialists

15.00–15.30

Coffee break

15.30–17.30

Report-back session and discussion on next steps

Closing session:

Chaired by:

José António Vieira Da Silva, Minister for Labour and Social Solidarity,
Portugal