



Reply by the Director-General to the discussion of his Reports

Introduction

1. Allow me to thank all delegates for this vibrant 2010 session of the International Labour Conference. You came together with different perspectives and experience but were united in the conviction that our Organization, with the values it stands for, must exercise leadership at this critical time.
2. You expressed concern about the near- and medium-term prospects of jobs in the wake of the worst economic crisis in over 60 years. In listening to you, there is no doubt that the jobs crisis persists, affecting both the quality and the quantity of jobs, confirming the fears expressed in my Report, *Recovery and growth with decent work*. We see different contexts but a shared policy goal, which is to secure rapid economic recovery with decent work. One year after the adoption of the Global Jobs Pact, national experiences have demonstrated the effectiveness of job-centred policies in mitigating the crisis. We must now redouble our efforts to put decent work at the heart of recovery and renewed growth.
3. Our Conference was guided by the capable hand of Mr Gilles de Robien, Government delegate of France. Recalling the words of President Nicolas Sarkozy of France at the 98th Session of the Conference, Mr de Robien stated that “you cannot have freedom without rules. It is for the ILO to define and enforce these rules. There is no reason why we should not think of ways of making them more effective and adjusting them continuously to the changing reality of today’s world.” He was ably supported by the Vice-Presidents: Ms Powell, Employers’ delegate of Haiti, who expressed her appreciation to the Office for its support after the January 2010 earthquake; Mr Nakajima, Workers’ delegate of Japan, who called for a more just and equitable response to the recovery; and Mr Nkili, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Cameroon, a key player in combating child labour in his country.
4. We owe a lot to the Chairpersons of the Conference committees, their Vice-Chairpersons, the Committee Reporters and the group and Government spokespersons, for their leadership and commitment. Your elected officers are the pulse of this Conference, the tripartism in action that makes the Conference tick. Thank you again. My special appreciation goes to Ambassador Farani Azevêdo of Brazil, Chairperson of the ILO Governing Body, who led us with energy and dedication through a complicated year, spanning the jobs crisis and new opportunities to promote ILO values.
5. I must thank you for the very strong show of support for the approach taken in my Report. For example, Ms Khan-Cummings, Government delegate of Trinidad and Tobago, welcomed my call for a balanced policy convergence strategy. Ms Thapper, Workers’

delegate of Sweden, said that she appreciated the analysis of what had gone wrong and the suggestions for “a fair and workable way forward”. Mr Varela, Employers’ delegate of the Philippines, said that the Report provided “a timely and valuable framework for ... balanced recovery”.

New approaches to global governance

6. On the opening day of the Conference, Ms Doris Leuthard, President of the Swiss Confederation and Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, honoured us with a powerful and forward-looking address.
7. President Leuthard paid tribute to the tenacity with which the Organization promoted social justice through decent work and its tripartite structure. She warned that financial capitalism appeared “to have reached its limits” and called for the construction of a solid and effective system of global governance capable of providing a stable and reliable framework to prevent globalization serving only the interests of a privileged elite. She also called for greater collaboration between the ILO and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), noting that the respective goals of those institutions were “equally essential” in order “to achieve economic globalization with a real social conscience in the world of tomorrow”. She stated that decent work should have a place within the framework of global trade relations and called for ILO observer status at the WTO.
8. Throughout the session, delegates echoed President Leuthard. Many advocated strengthened international coordination. Ms Sinnemäki, Minister of Labour of Finland, called for greater cooperation and solidarity between countries and more coherent policies at the international level. Mr Xu, Workers’ delegate of China, similarly called for greater international cooperation and global governance reform.
9. Greater coherence between the ILO and other international organizations was a recurrent theme. Ms Vicens Bello, Employers’ delegate of the Dominican Republic, called for a “new architecture of cooperation” between the United Nations and the main multilateral agencies. Ms Mirachian, Government delegate of Italy, supported the call for “more coherence with other relevant international organizations and institutions in placing social justice at the core of any governance of globalization”. Mr Kudatgobilik, Employers’ delegate of Turkey, urged the ILO “to seek to actively shape national and global policies to promote global recovery in these turbulent times, when job creation lies at the heart of national and international agendas”. Mr Mohamed, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment of Mauritius, recalled the need for the formal inclusion of Africa at G20 summits, in the light of the disproportionate impact on Africa and the development challenges of the crisis. Mr Luqman, representative of the Arab Labour Organization, noted that South–South cooperation was also an important dimension of the new global governance that was needed.

The Global Jobs Pact in action

10. Your discussions provided many examples of the application of the Decent Work Agenda to the crisis through the Global Jobs Pact. Ambassador Farani Azevêdo aptly recalled that the Global Jobs Pact was “as crucial today as it was a year ago”.

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11. Mr Wang, Vice-Minister of Human Resources and Social Security of China, said that the Chinese Government had implemented the Pact “in an all-round way in the light of Chinese conditions, promoting a more active employment policy and improving the social security system to actively address the challenges of the crisis”. Mr Kharge, Minister of Labour and Employment of India, described how his country had acted quickly to implement a broad-based, counter-cyclical policy package that included providing credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), coupled with labour market policies and social protection for vulnerable sectors of society. Mr Alakbarov, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Population of Azerbaijan, attributed his country’s resilience to prior reforms of tax, investment and macroeconomic policies, a strengthened banking sector, social programmes to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment, a rise in average wages and job-creation programmes. Mr Gharbi, Minister of Social Affairs, Solidarity and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia, described measures to promote social dialogue at all levels, to increase wages – especially for the poorest – and to expand coverage of social protection. Along the same lines, Mr Gan, Minister for Manpower of Singapore, described how his country had introduced a jobs credit scheme that reimbursed employers a portion of the wages of every worker retained during the crisis. Ms Diallo, Minister of State for the Civil Service, Administrative Reform, Labour and Employment of Guinea, described her country’s priorities in defining a comprehensive social protection policy that covered the whole population.
 12. Delegates from all regions reaffirmed the value of the Global Jobs Pact in developing their policies. Mr Puig, Minister of Labour of the Dominican Republic, described how his Government had adopted the Pact and had included decent work as an objective in its strategic plan for 2009–12, putting in place, in a coherent and integral way, labour standards and a strengthened social security system and promoting non-discrimination on the basis of strong social dialogue. Mr Kone, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Burkina Faso, described how the Pact had motivated his country to ratify a number of Conventions, integrate them into national legislation and adopt an action plan that ensured effective implementation. Mr Kalnpel, Employers’ delegate of Vanuatu, affirmed the application of the Pact as part of the Pacific Action Plan for Decent Work. Ms Abdykalikova, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of Kazakhstan, described the Alma-Ata Ministerial Declaration that had been adopted during a Regional Meeting hosted by her Government and said that the Global Jobs Pact was “very relevant for all the countries in the region” and could “be used as a guideline for future activity”. Ms Ladó, Government delegate of Hungary, described how her Government was applying guidance from the Pact to turn around the economy and lay the foundation for a return to growth and prosperity by creating new jobs for well-educated young people in areas such as the creative economy and green jobs, while also creating jobs for low-skilled workers.

Addressing the crisis before the crisis

13. Some countries described the persistence of basic development challenges that had been further compounded by the crisis, for which the Pact also was a relevant guide. As noted by Ms Mpariwa, Minister of Labour and Social Services of Zimbabwe, for developing countries, the challenge for growth had been ever-present before and throughout the crisis period and therefore the focus had to be on areas where “we believe we can make a difference”. Mr Lozano Alarcón, Secretary of State for Labour and Social Security of Mexico, noted that his country, in addition to the global financial crisis, had been coping with other problems, including the A(H1N1) virus, the fall in international oil production and prices, drought and growing organized crime. Mr Napoleon, Workers’ delegate of Haiti, said that the working class was at the epicentre of his country’s economy, which had been destroyed by the earthquake. Mr Atwoli, Workers’ delegate of Kenya, described how, in his country, economic growth was inadequate to absorb all jobseekers and how many of

the jobs that were created were not decent. To confront such challenges, he said that deepening and fast-tracking the implementation of the Global Jobs Pact held the key to quick and sustainable recovery. Delegates such as Mr Munyes, Minister for Labour of Kenya, urged the ILO to continue to support constituents in utilizing the Pact “through technical support, knowledge sharing and international policy dialogue”.

14. Ms Mchiela, Government delegate of Malawi, described how national development policies had turned her country from a food deficit to a food surplus economy, while increasing rural employment and earnings and reducing poverty, demonstrating that “home-grown policies using local capabilities can ignite high growth, which goes against the conventional wisdom”. Similarly, Mr Abdella, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Ethiopia, described his Government’s emphasis on measures to promote training and technical extension as a way to enhance the productivity of the agricultural sector and rural workers, complemented by steps to boost SMEs as job creators.
15. Delegates called for the revival of the private sector through policies to facilitate credit and boost new investment, unleashing new growth and charting a productive path towards the reduction of deficit and debt, in line with the Pact. Mr Sathasivam, Minister of Human Resources of Malaysia, recalled how the private sector in his country had contributed, by creating 69,000 jobs throughout the crisis. Mr Gomes, Minister for the Civil Service, Labour and State Modernization of Guinea-Bissau, explained how his Government was creating conditions to boost growth by stimulating private sector investment. Mr Hamadeh, Employers’ delegate of Lebanon, emphasizing that the private sector was “the principal source of jobs” and facilitated “a constant renewal of economic activity”, called for support for high value added SMEs. Mr Méndez, Employers’ delegate of Argentina, stressed the need to establish strong links between the public and private sectors to make “decent work and sustainable enterprises the two most effective drivers of growth”.
16. Ms Knuppert, Workers’ delegate of Denmark, noted that the Pact called for continued commitment towards respecting workers’ rights, providing social protection and unemployment benefits for the jobless and maintaining active labour market policies to help the unemployed find new jobs. Many Employers’ delegates agreed on the value of the Pact in developing job-centred responses and placed emphasis on enterprise creation and skills development. Mr Kim, Employers’ delegate of the Republic of Korea, cautioned against excessive wage hikes and overly rigid labour markets.
17. Mr Monks, representative of the European Trade Union Confederation, warned that measures cutting public services and jobs, wages and pensions risked plunging the European Union (EU) into depression, which would thereby reduce EU imports.

Remedying structural imbalances

18. Like many other delegates, Mr Samans of the World Economic Forum urged governments to look beyond crisis response towards deeper rebalancing and stressed the need for policies that built a more stable and equitable future. Mr Varela, Employers’ delegate of the Philippines, said that pathways to a recovery programme involved interrelated social and political dimensions and that no less than a holistic approach was necessary. Likewise, Ms André, Minister of Labour and Social Solidarity of Portugal, noted the need for improved national policy coordination and integration across economic, social and environmental spheres to design appropriate policies for jobs-rich recovery and growth, and called on the ILO to provide additional technical support.
19. Ms Merino, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare of Chile, described her country’s recently launched labour and social security programme that aimed for “greater

coordination between macroeconomic policies and policies related to employment, vocational training and social protection”. Mr Lupi, Minister of State for Labour and Employment of Brazil, emphasized that Brazil’s strong economic growth had gone hand-in-hand with the strong expansion of public policies to redress social inequalities. Sir Roy Trotman, Workers’ delegate of Barbados and spokesperson of the Workers’ group, agreed that rebalancing was required, but called for reflection on the means to ensure that balance was restored between the financial and other sectors and not by undermining workers’ rights.

Realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

20. With the approaching High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG Summit) and the need to recover ground lost by the crisis, it was timely to recall the role of decent work in meeting those objectives. Mr Amorim, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil, effectively illustrated the linkages between the MDGs and decent work, explaining that “the real economy and social justice are a means of achieving the MDGs”. He also said that public policy played a central role, noting that experience had made it clear that social welfare could not be left to the market. Mr Mensah, Minister of Employment and Social Welfare of Ghana, drew attention to the importance of gender equality in achieving the MDGs and described his Government’s efforts to “mainstream gender issues and perspectives into national policies and all development programmes through capacity building and advocacy”.

Regulation of the financial system

21. Mr González Gallardo, Government delegate of Spain, warned that the financial system had moved “away from the needs of the real economy”, at a grave cost to workers and employers; meanwhile, bail-outs had failed to correct the imbalances and lack of regulation that had led to the crisis in the first place. Mr Loverdos, Minister of Labour and Social Security of Greece, stressed that the regulation of the financial system at the global level was essential to ensure economic growth and opportunities for decent work. Mr Brauksiepe, Parliamentary State Secretary of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Germany, pinpointed the major challenge of re-establishing rules in the financial sector and controlling public finances without weakening job-creation incentives. Mr Schmit, Minister of Labour, Employment and Immigration of Luxembourg, called for a coordinated approach to financial regulation “based on human values, rather than the values of the market”. Mr Shakhaleslami, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, stressed that the banks had a genuine role to play in supporting the real economy and business, a view that was echoed by Mr Corr, Government delegate of Ireland, who also drew attention to the needs of SMEs.

Putting decent work at the heart of the recovery

22. The Conference was honoured to receive a video message from the United Nations Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon, who in particular stressed that workers needed to see recovery in their own lives and in the real economy. Also in a video message, Ms Solis, Secretary of Labor of the United States, called for stimulus measures that continued to focus on income support, training and employment services, strengthened social protection for the vulnerable and the upholding of workers’ fundamental rights.

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23. A number of delegates expressed concern at the unfair distribution of the pain of adjustment. Mr Morantes, Workers' delegate of Colombia, said that workers had "paid the cost" of the crisis. Ms Charalambous, Minister of Labour and Social Insurance of Cyprus, said that balancing accounts "by unbalancing people's lives" was unacceptable. Mr Ryder, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), denounced the unfair shifting of adjustment costs onto workers and stressed that it was imperative to maintain income support and implement active labour market policies to help sustain consumption, which could drive demand to enable the productive sector to recover and start creating jobs again. Mr Jurca, Workers' delegate of Romania, said that he deplored the letter of intent sent by his Government to the IMF promising large modifications in collective bargaining, dispute settlement and the Labour Code.
 24. Recalling the tough lessons learned from Argentina's crisis in 2001, Mr Tomada, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security of Argentina, warned of the disastrous effects of reducing labour protection, wages or pensions. He pointed to Argentina's strategy based on investment in the real economy to generate strong and sustainable growth, based on aggregate demand. Likewise, Mr Sunmonu, representative of the Organization of African Trade Union Unity, outlined the adverse impacts of structural adjustment programmes, which undermined domestic industry and increased poverty and political instability in the region.
 25. Ms Polaski, Deputy Under-Secretary of Labor of the United States, underscored the need to evaluate the effectiveness of different stimulus measures, noting that unemployment benefits had proven to be highly effective in sustaining demand and mitigating poverty. That also required balancing short-term action and strategic planning, as Mr Mleczo, Government delegate of Poland, explained.
 26. Mr Tartaglia, Workers' delegate of Italy, said that in a new, multipolar world, the State needed to assume its proper role as the most important guarantor of social cohesion.
 27. Mr Palacio, Minister of Social Protection of Colombia, said that policies and measures must be developed using social dialogue to ensure that they were pragmatic and effective, although governments played the leading role. The important role of social dialogue was noted often as a central process in crisis response. Mr Oliinyk, Employers' delegate of Ukraine, emphasized that "strong and independent employers' and workers' organizations, as well as the active recognition of their right to collective bargaining", were important instruments for effective economic and social policy.
 28. Mr Funes de Rioja, Employers' delegate of Argentina and spokesperson of the Employers' group, emphasized the shared interest of employers and workers alike when he stated that the Employers' group's defence of international labour rights and fundamental principles was not only determined by its own interests, but also by the interests of workers.

Employment policies and decent work

29. This year, we broke new ground, launching the first recurrent item discussion in the framework of the 2008 Declaration. The discussion on employment policies was doubly testing, as the first of this kind of recurrent discussion and because employment lies at the heart of the storm caused by the global crisis. Mr Archer, Government member of Ghana and Reporter of the Committee for the Recurrent Discussion on Employment, captured the mood by stating that the Committee had served to strengthen the resolve to create effective partnerships across government ministries and with other international agencies in order to put productive employment and decent work at the heart of national and international policy frameworks. Mr Woolford, Employers' delegate of Canada and speaking on behalf

of the Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, expressed overall satisfaction with the Committee's results, but said that future reports would need to contain "more impact information", in particular on "how to perfect the balance between economic and social objectives in public policy in order to encourage investment, sustainable enterprise and jobs growth". He also called for a greater focus on "cross-cutting issues where the focus of one strategic objective could be a significant factor in our ability to achieve another".

- 30.** Looking ahead, Ms Kelly, Workers' delegate of New Zealand, speaking on behalf of the Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, said that the need for national and international employment-centred macroeconomic policy was overwhelming. She called call on the Office "to improve and coordinate its technical and analytical capacity to examine macroeconomic policies from the perspective of employment outcomes and to increase its engagement in international macroeconomic policy dialogues". Mr Mocanu, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Labour, the Family and Social Protection of Romania and Chairperson of the Committee, noted that the conclusions urged "governments to assess the design and implementation of a pro-employment macroeconomic policy framework" and called on the Office "to strengthen its work on the review and impact assessment of employment policies and programmes". Mr Elmiger, Government delegate of Switzerland, recalling President Leuthard's address, underscored that the challenge of coherence in respect of employment and decent work was a challenge that "we must take up now and not tomorrow or the day after that".
- 31.** I welcome the conclusions adopted by the Conference. They are substantive. They provide invaluable guidance to the Governing Body and the Office to strengthen its work on employment policies, and to draw lessons for future recurrent item discussions.

Domestic workers

- 32.** Good progress was made during the first discussion on standard setting for domestic workers. Ms Herzfeld Olsson, Government delegate of Sweden and Reporter of the Committee on Domestic Workers, highlighted that the definitions of "domestic work" and "domestic worker" were inclusive to ensure that all domestic workers in need of protection could benefit from the future standards. While recognizing differing views among delegates, which would require further consideration, she expressed a strong belief that the Committee had "produced a solid basis for the second discussion next year". Mr Sajinarayanan, Workers' delegate of India, called for the ILO to "play a historic role in reaching the grey areas of the world of work".
- 33.** Mr Rahman, Employers' delegate of Bangladesh and Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, said that his group's "vision of a Convention is not a flagship text which will never be ratified, but a tool which will be implemented to better protect domestic workers". Ms Yacob, Workers' delegate of Singapore and Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, said that "all countries, regardless of their level of development, are concerned about the marginalization of their domestic workers". She said that there had been strong agreement among Committee members that decent work deficits suffered by domestic workers were also basic human rights issues, and that strong standards were therefore necessary to address the situation. Ms Trasmonte, Government delegate of the Philippines and Chairperson of the Committee, emphasized the broad support for "new standards on domestic work that are robust, flexible and guarantee minimum protection to domestic workers, while allowing for wide ratification". She added that the standards aimed to provide practical and realistic guidance to ensure coverage and implementation.

HIV/AIDS and the world of work

34. I commend delegates on their overwhelming adoption of the ILO Recommendation on HIV and AIDS and the world of work, which was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 439 votes in favour, or 96.6 per cent of votes cast. Ms McDonough, Government delegate of Australia, speaking on behalf of the Reporter of the Committee on HIV/AIDS, praised the Recommendation, which reinforced the fact that “HIV/AIDS is a global challenge and as such demands a global response”. Ms Nene-Shezi, Government delegate of South Africa and Chairperson of the Committee, characterized the work of the Committee as “an excellent example of tripartism in action”.
35. In terms of the next steps, Mr Obath, Employers’ delegate of Kenya and Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, stated that the Recommendation “filled in the gaps” and updated the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS and the world of work. He called on the ILO to take the necessary action to promote the Recommendation and to assist member States and the social partners in implementing it. Mr Sithole, Workers’ delegate of Swaziland and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, expressed confidence that, when applied, the instrument would “effectively combat the negative impact of the pandemic”.
36. Ms Stepanoff, Employers’ delegate of France, urged delegates as they returned home to “raise awareness of the Recommendation and, above all, inspire others with the outstandingly respectful and constructive spirit that has prevailed in the Committee”. Ms Mokrani, Workers’ delegate of Algeria, declared that the Recommendation would “reinforce the policies implemented for free, voluntary and anonymous testing, the fight against discrimination and the provision of care for those living with HIV and AIDS”. Ms Gouadi Bouzimbou, Employers’ delegate of Congo, noted that HIV/AIDS had evolved from being a strictly medical issue to being one that affected the world of work, as “a universal concern, including for employers”. Various delegates emphasized the important role of tripartite cooperation in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS, including Mr del Río Doñé, Workers’ delegate of the Dominican Republic, Mr Panyanouvong, Employers’ delegate of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Mr Ying, Government delegate of Jamaica.

Accelerating action against child labour

37. The Conference made a commitment to bring renewed momentum to the fight against child labour. Indeed, our task is not yet complete. I join many delegates in expressing our appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands for hosting the Hague Global Child Labour Conference, which adopted a road map to attain the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labour by 2016. I also acknowledge the effort of various members of the UN family who join us in this cause.
38. Mr Donner, Minister of Social Affairs and Employment of the Netherlands, stressed the need for an “integrated approach to child labour, within a broader policy framework”. Mr Guirieoulou, Minister of the Civil Service and Employment of Côte d’Ivoire, asserted that the prevalence of child labour was “a result of poverty, so it needs to be part of the overall national development plan, which we have done”. Ms Hanartani, Government delegate of Indonesia, suggested that child labour programmes should be more deeply interrelated with other UN programmes at the national level. Ms Robinson, Government delegate of Canada, said that priority should be given to building the capacity of labour ministries to develop and implement national child labour strategies, especially for children removed from the worst forms of child labour.

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39. Mr Javed, Employers' delegate of Pakistan, put emphasis on "basic education and then skills training" so that children acquire the skills to find a decent job. Ms Sundnes, Workers' delegate of Norway, affirmed that education must be free of charge and available to all children. Ms Eastman, representative of Education International, stressed the importance of gender equality, underscoring that investment in the education of girls was a major factor in breaking the cycle of poverty. Ms Velásquez de Avilés, Minister of Labour and Social Protection of El Salvador, similarly pointed out that, when women were excluded or marginalized from formal sector employment, families remained in poverty and girls were excluded from education. Mr Parkhouse, Employers' delegate of Namibia, described how employers had worked with the ILO to raise awareness of child labour in rural communities.
40. Your discussions showed that the effective abolition of child labour ultimately requires the integrated approach of the Decent Work Agenda. I look forward to hearing more success stories as we renew our commitment to achieving the elimination of the worst forms of child labour by 2016.

Workers in the occupied Arab territories

41. I heard widespread expressions of support for Palestinian workers and deep concern over the situation of Arab workers in occupied territories. Many delegates called for further technical support to enhance employment opportunities and to build the foundations of a peaceful coexistence. Mr Saed, Workers' delegate from the occupied Palestinian territory, thanked the members of the ILO high-level mission "for their faithful account of the realities of everyday life for Palestinian people". Mr Majdalani, Minister of Labour of the Palestinian Authority gave an account of how the Palestinian Authority was "trying to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and create jobs for the unemployed, through legislative and other action measures and ambitious programmes". Mr Maatouk, representative of the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions (ICATU), called for support for "the six-point strategy of the Palestinian Ministry of Labour, to work towards holding an international conference to provide the necessary support to the Palestinian Employment Fund, and to refer the violations committed by the occupation authorities to the competent bodies of the Organization". Sir Roy Trotman, Workers' delegate of Barbados and spokesperson of the Workers' group, affirmed that marginalization and impoverishment would not lead to peace, security or development in the region and called for an end to the blockade and the provision of more technical and financial support to the Palestinian people. Mr Brosh, Employers' delegate of Israel, reiterated his view that "the chances for a lasting peace between Israel and its neighbour will increase if both sides understand that they have common interests and that economic cooperation will help to reduce violence, improve welfare for the inhabitants, and improve chances for peace".

Application of Conventions and Recommendations

42. Extensive and detailed work was carried out, this year again, by the Committee on the Application of Standards. Mr Horn, Government delegate of Namibia and Reporter of the Committee, noted that "the operative approach for the Committee's work is oversight through dialogue, which is also the ILO's hallmark". In his view, the new procedure adopted regarding selection of cases for discussion "brought an unprecedented efficiency" to the Committee's work. He further observed that better follow-up and enhanced technical cooperation had produced positive results. The alignment of the General Survey with the

recurrent discussion on employment was viewed as a valuable exercise, but there were mixed reviews as to whether such alignment should be continued.

43. Mr Potter, Employers' delegate of the United States and Employer Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, said that "[t]aking a 29-year perspective, my assessment is that we have successfully motivated more governments to do the right thing, make progress and implement their obligation to apply and implement the ratified labour standards in law and practice by the assistance-mission approach than via the special paragraph route". He expressed the view that something very valuable was being lost by mechanically aligning General Surveys to the schedule of the recurrent reviews. Mr Cortebeek, Workers' delegate of Belgium and Worker Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, viewed the new procedure as time consuming, as it involved a "double discussion", and said that there was a risk of losing the benefit of a "legal and pedagogical process with a high added value". In the words of Mr Paixão Pardo, Government delegate of Brazil and Chairperson of the Committee, "we can and must improve our procedures ... however, we should not overlook the positive". We need to evaluate carefully the effectiveness of this new procedure in planning next year's session of the Conference.

Follow-up to the 1998 ILO Declaration

44. I am pleased to note that the Conference has again shown its capacity to reform and innovate. Mr Bel, Government delegate of the Netherlands and Chairperson and Reporter of the Committee on the 1998 Declaration, stated that "the ILO should continue to assist member States in their efforts to respect, promote and realize the fundamental principles and rights at work", recognizing that "this would require more technical cooperation, not less". Mr Funes de Rioja, Employers' delegate of Argentina and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, expressed satisfaction for the new proposed arrangements. He assured the Organization of the "commitment of the Employers' group to give a new impetus to the follow-up procedures for the Declaration". Sir Roy Trotman, Workers' delegate of Barbados and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee, underlined the consensus that new follow-up procedures would "preserve the integrity of the Declaration and enhance its effectiveness in the years to come". He noted that, although progress had been made with increased ratification rates of the core Conventions, it was important not to overlook the need for greater efforts to ensure that ratification was followed by effective implementation.

Conclusions and looking forward

45. Our Conference this year was energetic and highly productive. Over 7,300 delegates, staff and visitors took part in this year's session. This is no small achievement and there is no better testimony to the relevance of our Organization. A total of 166 member States were represented. The number of accredited delegates reached a new record of 5,138 by the close of the session. Some 342 delegates addressed the plenary, of whom 22 per cent were women. Women represented 28.3 per cent of all delegates, still some distance from our target of one third. I strongly encourage delegations to consider seriously their commitment to gender equality and to make every effort to increase the number of women delegates to the Conference.
46. The number of meetings organized by and through the Conference totalled 726, an increase of 60 per cent relative to 2009, and a three-fold increase relative to 2001. I can only conclude that the Conference plays a major role as a forum for learning and exchanges.

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47. This strong interest is also reflected in how the media report on Conference issues, events and speakers. By the closing day, over 1,500 published news articles had covered the Conference. Recordings of over 90 speeches were made for national radio coverage, while some 100 videos or video interviews were recorded and either distributed or published on the Internet. I was pleased to note that visitors to the ILO web site doubled from last year and that my Report *Recovery and growth with decent work* had been downloaded over 8,000 times, in addition to the substantial distribution of printed copies.
48. You have given your guidance and set out your expectations. We emerge with a reaffirmed commitment to the balanced policy approach I presented in my Report, which puts decent jobs and sustainable enterprises at the heart of the recovery. We will continue to provide support to country-level implementation of Pact-inspired measures and extract and share policy lessons derived from your experiences.
49. In his closing words, Mr de Robien stated that the Conference had met at a crucial time when “the world is trying to find itself, when globalization can tip either way: into something better ... or into real danger if we fail in the task of organizing it together with global institutional and policy coherence”. I am confident that our Organization, grounded in the real economy and with its foundation of tripartism and dialogue, will continue to draw on its values to give practical direction for achieving a fair globalization.