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Plenary sitting

Closing of the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference

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Friday, 8 June 2018, 4.30 p.m.

President: Ms Majali

Closing statements

The President

The Conference has now concluded its business and achieved its goals, and the time has come for our closing ceremony. I shall call on each of my fellow Officers to make their concluding remarks to our assembly.

Mr Mattar

Employer Vice-President of the Conference
(*Original Arabic*)

I would like to take this opportunity and to use my closing remarks to express to you our satisfaction with the outcomes that we have achieved during this session of the Conference. This two-week format has, despite all the difficulties faced, reinforced our credibility and efficiency.

This year, the Committee on the Application of Standards has demonstrated yet again its ability to lead a meaningful and results-oriented tripartite dialogue. It has thus reaffirmed its role at the core of ILO standards supervision, providing the forum in which tripartite constituents from all ILO member States can discuss issues relating to the application of ratified Conventions and propose meaningful steps for sustainable compliance. Though significant divergences continue to exist among the tripartite constituents, these were voiced in a spirit of mutual respect. During the discussion of the General Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, the Employers highlighted a number of positive elements in the report. In addition, they made a number of proposals on how to continue to improve the regular supervision of standards, and highlighted a number of issues of concern.

The General Survey concerning 16 working-time instruments provided an opportunity to highlight the Employers' views that, as the world of work becomes more dynamic, so too must working-time regulation. Making working-time regulation more dynamic would balance both the protection needs of workers and the evolving needs of enterprises. During the General Survey discussion, Employers noted the general lack of flexibility and the unduly restrictive nature of many ILO Conventions on working time, which do not reflect the modern realities of the world of work.

Also, 24 individual cases were discussed and conclusions adopted. We highlighted again this year the way in which conclusions were drafted, because we saw real tripartite ownership of the outcomes of the Committee on the Application of Standards.

The recurrent discussion on social dialogue and tripartism took place – appropriately – in an open, free and frank manner. Social dialogue and tripartism are part of the DNA of this house and they are fundamental to fulfilling the ILO's mandate. They are also at the core of a number of international labour standards and are an essential element of ILO research, capacity-building and knowledge-sharing programmes. The Recurrent Discussion Committee also discussed the diverse realities and needs of ILO constituents with regard to social dialogue and tripartism and the different challenges and opportunities that existed between them. The Committee also reflected upon future ILO actions to better respond to constituents' needs. The proposed framework for action contained in the conclusions that

have been adopted by the Conference will help guide ILO member States and the Office, with the support of the constituents, in the strengthening of social dialogue and tripartism at the relevant levels.

Let me now turn to the standard-setting discussion on violence and harassment in the world of work. We, the Employers, have been consistent in our desire to achieve an outcome that has a real impact, because it is an important topic. We have made a global commitment to prevent, and protect workers from, unacceptable behaviours of violence or harassment within our sphere of influence. However, we had serious difficulties in achieving consensus because of the complexity of this matter on the one hand and the weak basis for our discussion on the other. The ILO report that was submitted to the Conference did not take into consideration important and legitimate business concerns. As a result, key definitions approved in the conclusions are still highly problematic.

These definitions do not help us to focus the scope of the instruments or to set key parameters to effectively prevent and eradicate violence and harassment. For example, the lack of differentiation between the concepts of violence and harassment will lead to huge challenges when it comes to practical implementation. Defining legal liability requires clear concepts and clear boundaries. We will take a constructive approach in the next stages and we really hope that the process that we will implement from now and until the publication of the proposed text for the 2019 discussion will lead to substantial changes, so that in 2019 we can unanimously adopt a meaningful instrument to coincide with the ILO centenary. This will demonstrate the power of tripartism in the face of fundamental problems at the workplace.

Development cooperation was an item that was brought by the Employers to the agenda of the Conference. The general discussion on this topic has been a success, despite some tensions. The conclusions renew the constituents' guidance on a future development cooperation strategy for the ILO in the light of the Sustainable Development Goals and the changing world of work and the United Nations reform. They stress the need for a demand-driven strategy that responds to the real needs of the constituents, with responses that are tailored to on-the-ground realities. The role of public-private partnerships will also be key in the future strategy and Employers will help to make it effective.

Our discussions in the plenary regarding the Women at Work Initiative have served to strengthen our commitment towards effective action on gender equality. As we have stated before, it is not just the right thing to do, it is a powerful step to improving productivity. The International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the Employers' group (ACT/EMP), together with our colleagues in the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities, are committed to working on this issue, first to track progress on how the momentum is gaining ground, but also to provide tools and good practices to our employer colleagues who are looking for help and advice on how to move ahead in this field and regarding this matter.

Finally, I need to refer to the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories, which is of great concern to the entire Employers' group. I want to remind everyone what the Employers have already said in the past on the need for an ambitious and concerted effort from the ILO and from the international community so as to embark on a large-scale technical assistance programme that would be conducive to job creation in these territories.

Ms Gono

Worker Vice-President of the Conference

It has been a great pleasure and honour for me to be elected as Vice-President of the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Workers' delegates for the trust they have placed in me.

I would also like to thank the Presidents of the Conference, Mr Murad and Ms Majali, the Government Vice-President, Mr Elmiger, and the Employer Vice-President, Mr Mattar, for their excellent cooperation. Let me also thank the ILO staff for their support and assistance. Allow me now to briefly address the various subjects discussed during the Conference. This year, the Committee on the Application of Standards was again able to examine the application of international labour standards in 24 country cases. The Committee discussed six “double-footnoted” cases in relation to which the Committee of Experts requested governments to supply full particulars to the Conference. These countries include the following: the Plurinational State of Bolivia concerning the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Cambodia concerning the Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); Eritrea concerning the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); Haiti concerning several Conventions relating to working time; Honduras concerning the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); the Republic of Moldova concerning the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81), and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129).

A consensual list of 18 additional countries had been previously agreed upon, in relation to fundamental, governance and technical Conventions. The Workers’ group regrets that a number of countries with serious violations of fundamental rights were not examined by the Committee. These countries include Bangladesh, Turkey, Indonesia, Egypt and Guatemala.

Our group welcomes the clear and straightforward conclusions adopted by the Committee in order to provide recommendations to Governments in relation to their obligations under the relevant ratified Conventions.

This year’s conclusions include requests for a high-level mission to Algeria and direct contacts missions to Bahrain, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Nigeria.

The Standard-Setting Committee on violence and harassment in the world of work has been able to agree that a Convention, supplemented by a Recommendation, will be essential in order to signal without ambiguity that violence and harassment are unacceptable and the antithesis of decent work. The Committee recognized that particular attention must be paid to those who are most vulnerable, and that certain working situations pose a particularly high risk in terms of violence and harassment. The Committee also broke new ground in acknowledging the impact of domestic violence on the world of work.

The Workers’ group looks forward to returning next year to complete its work. We want to ensure that we have succeeded in discharging the heavy responsibility entrusted to us: to adopt a standard that will make a real difference to the millions of workers for whom violence and harassment are a constant feature of their working lives. Next year, the centenary session of the Conference has an historic opportunity to shape a future of work that no longer tolerates violence and harassment.

Let me now turn to the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism. The evaluation of the Social Justice Declaration in 2016 showed that major challenges remain to ensure that globalization benefits all. Ten years after its adoption, we all have to recognize that we have failed to deliver. It is therefore important to see renewed political commitment to social dialogue and tripartism with collective bargaining at its heart, as the ILO governance paradigm to promote social justice.

We are particularly pleased to see an intensified campaign for the universal ratification of the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), and the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144),

and a high-level event during the centenary session of the Conference, to highlight the importance of freedom of association and collective bargaining.

We also welcome the decision on the publication of an ILO flagship report focusing on the important role that collective bargaining can play in reducing inequality. We are pleased to see an acknowledgement of the importance of cross-border social dialogue to address decent work deficits in global supply chains and a call for the ILO to play a bigger role in that regard. We expect the proposed policy coherence initiatives in pilot countries will help promote policy coherence for decent work and social justice and prevent austerity measures and blind deregulation. We are looking forward to research on access to freedom of association and collective bargaining for gig economy and platform workers followed by a possible experts' meeting to identify areas for further action. We also welcome the focus on gender equality and the strengthening of women's participation in social dialogue. One year before the centenary session of the Conference, we need a strong commitment to action in order to turn the tide on rising inequality and make social justice a reality.

Let me also say a few words on the work of the General Discussion Committee on effective development cooperation in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. We welcome the adopted conclusions. The preamble puts forward key principles governing ILO development cooperation. We welcome in particular the reference to the ILO normative mandate. The promotion of the ratification and implementation of international labour standards, taking into account the comments of the ILO supervisory system, needs to be at the core of ILO development cooperation. Transparency and accountability have been recognized as fundamental criteria to be respected, in particular when talking about innovative finance instruments and the role of the private sector in development. The ILO's role in promoting decent work in supply chains has been reaffirmed.

Lastly, the conclusions highlight the need to uphold a more balanced approach among the four strategic pillars of the Decent Work Agenda and the importance of supporting the organizational capacity of constituents. The conclusions also provide a solid and clear-cut positioning of constituents with regard to the United Nations reform, preserving the unique character of the ILO based on its normative mandate, supervisory system and tripartite governance.

Next year, we will all meet again to celebrate the centenary of the ILO. This will be an historic event. The Workers' group stands ready to work with governments and employers to demonstrate the relevance of the ILO's mandate in shaping a world of work that delivers on the promises of the Declaration of Philadelphia to realize social justice for all.

Mr Elmiger

Government Vice-President of the Conference

(Original French)

The Conference appointed me Government Vice-President of its 107th Session. Thank you for the honour you bestowed on me and on my country, Switzerland.

It has been a pleasure working with the Officers of the Conference, who formed a close-knit and effective team. I wish to thank the Presidents, Mr Murad and Ms Majali, and also the other Vice-Presidents, Ms Gono and Mr Mattar. The Conference could not function without the leadership of its Secretary-General, Mr Guy Ryder, and I offer him my congratulations and thanks. There are also a great many people who work very hard during the two weeks of the Conference in various roles: administration, interpreting, translation, official relations, protocol, security, technical services, documentation – the list goes on. I would like to express my profound gratitude to all these collaborators, women and men, at ILO headquarters and the Palais des Nations. Do not forget that you, too, play a part in ensuring the success of the Conference in the smoothest possible way.

The various committees have brought their work to a successful conclusion, which I am confident will reshape the future of our Organization. Guidance has been provided in the areas of effective development cooperation and the promotion of social dialogue and tripartism. The foundations have been laid for new instruments to combat violence and harassment in the world of work. Let us hope that the second discussion in 2019 will resolve existing differences and set a dignified tone for the centenary of our Organization.

The Committee on the Application of Standards dealt with 24 cases, focusing on a range of different standards while ensuring a balanced geographical distribution. A very large number of plenary statements looked ahead to the centenary of the ILO in 2019. They called for stronger action to promote decent work, especially in connection with the discussion of the report of the Director-General, *The Women at Work Initiative: The push for equality*. One thing is absolutely certain for all ILO member States: without women, there is no future for work.

As we all know, 2019 is the centenary year of the ILO and the session of the Conference in June will celebrate this historic event. My country, Switzerland, has officially announced its intention to preside over the centenary session of the Conference, and has therefore noted with satisfaction the commitment of the Western European group of governments to entrust the 2019 Conference presidency to the country of origin of the 2018 Government Vice-President. Rest assured, Director-General and all delegates, that my country and I will spare no efforts in contributing to the success of next year's session of the Conference.

The Secretary-General of the Conference

Our Conference is coming to an end. As we all knew it would be, it has been intense; it has been challenging on occasions, but it has been productive as well.

You may remember that, on the first day of this session, I appealed to all participants to work constructively in a spirit of tripartism, in the search for consensus, and showing respect for the diversity of views and perspectives. All of this in pursuit of the shared objectives of the International Labour Organization. And that is what you have done. The results are there to prove it and they would not, and could not, have been achieved in any other way. And so I want to begin by congratulating and thanking you all for this.

Your work over the last two weeks has been, once again, the most concrete demonstration possible that tripartism works. It is not without difficulties, but it works. It not only adds value in the world of work but it is a most potent antidote to some of those negative trends that we are observing in public and political discourse. And that is just one reason why we must nurture, protect and practise it.

A considerable part of the business of this Conference has been focused directly or indirectly on gender issues, so let me start there and talk about how we have done in terms of gender in participation at this session.

We had 5,238 participants at this Conference. And in the national tripartite delegations, as we have heard from the Credentials Committee, 32.7 per cent of the total number of ministers, delegates and advisers were women. This is progress of a sort. It marks a slight improvement on 2017 but with significant differences between groups and regions, and I am going to leave it to you to judge its significance, because my Report to the Conference, *The Women at Work Initiative: The push for equality*, was felt by some speakers in the plenary debate to have not said enough and not focused enough on the progress that has already been made. But despite that, I think that we all agreed that business as usual will not suffice and that the five building blocks for this new push for equality were of major importance in terms of accelerating progress, so we need to give greater substance to them and we will do that as the Women at Work Initiative moves to its culmination next year. I believe that this, in turn,

must feed into the outcome of the Future of Work Initiative for the very simple reason that the future of work that we want is, of course, one with full equality.

In this context, the start made this year in the negotiation of standards on violence and harassment at work has been of great and obvious significance. We heard this morning that this work was challenging; unsurprisingly, because what really matters is rarely easy. Yes, there are a range of fundamental issues that will need to be resolved over the next year but, for my part, I have the fullest confidence that they will be resolved. Confident, because our tripartism will continue to deliver, as it has over the last two weeks, and confident, too, because of the sheer importance of what is at stake. Truly, this issue is too big for us to fail.

This standard-setting process is, of course, at the heart of the ILO's mandate and functioning and it is particularly demanding in our shorter two-week Conference arrangements.

In addition, our two other discussions, the recurrent discussion and the general discussion, have equally addressed one of the ILO's strategic objectives, social dialogue, and one of its key means of action, development cooperation.

Now, with respect to the first, I think it is important that the ILO should continue to be vigilant in ensuring that the recurrent discussions, which have now become a permanent fixture of our Conference, do indeed fulfil the functions that the Conference has so recently decided for them, and I think that this was indeed the case this year. I find it important as well that the conclusions that have been adopted do a great deal more than simply occupy the familiar terrain of principled commitment to tripartism – important as that may be. Rather, they have also taken on the challenges and opportunities for social dialogue presented by transformative change at work. And that has been a more demanding task, but one that is absolutely necessary to take on. Why? Because it helps us to grasp the reality, as we head towards our centenary, that while tripartism will of course be fundamental to the future of the ILO and the future of the world of work, the instruments and the substance and scope of tripartism will need to adapt and to evolve, as they always have done, if they are to serve their purpose fully in the future.

With respect to the second, the conclusions on effective development cooperation could hardly be more timely. The fact that the General Assembly adopted a resolution on the reform of the United Nations development system in the middle of our Conference might look symbolic, but I think it is much more than that. It is a critical political step and one that confirms that there is an urgent need for the ILO – a committed UN team player – to trace out the future path of its development cooperation work in these changing circumstances. The guiding principles and the roadmap adopted by this Conference really respond to that need. They do so promptly and they do so concretely. And they will be critically important in guiding the ILO's contribution to the operationalization of the decisions that the General Assembly has taken.

Let me just say, in addition, that I have heard from delegates here at the Conference and from members of the Governing Body about the concern and the absolute determination of constituents that new UN development cooperation arrangements should in no manner impair the role and the practice of tripartism at the ILO, but should instead help propagate and amplify tripartism across the UN system. In this context, let me recall the truly extraordinary opportunity for us that derives from the fact that the United Nations reform is consciously designed to improve the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that the 2030 Agenda, in turn, has decent work at its heart. So if we are good enough, we really can reap the harvest from the seeds that we sowed in the Agenda back in 2015.

At the opening sitting, I described the Committee on the Application of Standards as the permanent vertebral column of our Conference, and it is deeply satisfying that this year – once again – it has completed its work successfully. This matters a great deal. It matters to the specific responsibilities of this Conference, but also for the ongoing Standards Initiative which will take us up to, and considerably beyond, our centenary next year. Let me note that the discussion on the General Survey concerning working-time instruments cast light on one of the key challenges of that initiative, which is ensuring the full relevance and effectiveness of ILO standards in these conditions of transformative change.

As always, the examination of individual cases and the adoption of conclusions on them were crucially important, if sometimes difficult and even controversial. In this context, it is instructive to recall the message that President Santos Calderón of the Republic of Colombia delivered when he honoured our Conference with his presence last week. He recalled, and some here will remember, Colombia's difficult relationship with the ILO supervisory system over very many years. That included the Government's rejection of ILO conclusions which, as he recalled, had even taken his country to the brink of a Commission of Inquiry. And yet, today, that system's contribution to paving the way to peace and to social justice in his country was evident and was recognized by him. And so, as we join together to ensure full tripartite support for an authoritative supervisory system, let us do so mindful of, and instructed by, the lessons of history and not just by the heat generated in any specific conjuncture. This is truly about being on the right side of history.

In addition to the visit of President Santos Calderón, yesterday's World of Work Summit on employment and decent work for peace and resilience was honoured to receive President Higgins of Ireland and President Touadéra of the Central African Republic. Theirs were powerful testimonies to the concrete realities underlying the enduring proposition that social justice is the necessary guarantee of the building and preservation of permanent peace. They conveyed to us echoes from the past, pointers for the future, and reminders of the pressing responsibilities of the present. We owe them our gratitude but, more than that, we owe them our action.

One of these responsibilities is to do all that is within our power and mandate to bring concrete improvement to the situation of workers of the occupied Arab territories. There are real opportunities to do that and I intend to pursue them – but we will need your active support if we are to have a chance of real and significant success.

That brings me to the end of my thoughts about what has been done at this year's session of the Conference. I have the impression that quite a few of you here are now a bit worried that I am going to inflict upon you a lengthy, rhetorical, unnecessary and probably unwelcome reminder and pep talk about next year's centenary session of the Conference. So, let me reassure you, I will not do that; not because it is late and because you are tired, but because I know that you know what will be at stake when we gather here again next year for the 108th Session of our Conference. Nothing less than the future of work that we want and the future of the ILO.

So let me close with thanks. We started this Conference with one President, Minister Murad of Jordan, and we finished with another – you, Madam Ambassador Majali, also of Jordan. You have both led us brilliantly and we thank you and congratulate ourselves on the wisdom of our choices. You have been ably, and collegially, supported by your excellent Vice-Presidents, Mr Elmiger for the Government group, Ms Gono for the Workers' group, and Mr Mattar for the Employers' group – so thanks also to them for the shared responsibilities that they have taken on.

I have said that more than 5,000 Government, Worker and Employer representatives have been here at the Conference these last two weeks. And you have come from across the globe, and you have worked long, and you have worked hard, and you have worked

productively. And so you, too, are to be thanked for your dedication, for your resolve, your persistence and, as I have said, for that spirit of tripartism.

Many of you have been generous in your appreciation of those who have serviced and supported your activities: my colleagues in the ILO secretariat, interpreters, technicians, those who have fed you, those who have kept you safe, those young colleagues who have given you access to the meeting rooms – or occasionally prevented you from getting into the meeting rooms – and all of us who I hope have made you feel comfortable and welcome here. So, let me add my thanks to all of my own colleagues for their hard work and commitment. They are an enormous credit, too, to our International Labour Organization. I thank you and I wish you safe journeys to your homes.

The President

Thank you very much, Secretary-General of the Conference, for your excellent speech, which was inspiring and detailed. Now, with your permission, I shall make a few closing remarks myself.

(The speaker continues in Arabic.)

First, allow me to convey to you the salutation of Mr Murad, who had to leave Geneva for reasons beyond his control. At the same time, I would like to extend my thanks and appreciation once again to the Governments, Employers and Workers, who have reiterated their trust in Jordan to continue presiding over the remaining sittings of the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference. I would like to reaffirm that my country, Jordan, under the aegis of His Majesty King Abdullah II, is always bound by the noble principles of our Organization.

With my colleagues, the elected Officers, as well as with the secretariat of the Conference, I have had the honour to contribute with them all to the smooth running of our Conference this year and to serving our noble objectives.

The Organization will embark on its second century at this time next year. We will all have to prepare fully for this great centenary event, which will give fresh impetus so that our Organization can enjoy another 100 years of successful work in the upholding of rights, the application of social justice and the achievement of the goals and principles of our Organization. This requires us, as we look to the future, to intensify our efforts to make sure that the standards and programmes of our Organization are still valid, strong and sufficient and that we will prepare well for this second century too. The old and new challenges are still there ahead of us; we need to commit ourselves to addressing them and finding the right solutions.

Our Conference this year has had the honour of listening to statements from high-level guests. Most of their messages and statements included important and valuable information, a vision of what the future of work will be and how we have to address gender equality, the way to increase the participation of women in the labour market, the mechanisms for addressing the issues of violence and harassment in the world of work and for eliminating child labour, and also other topics that have been raised during the Conference.

The Director-General, Mr Guy Ryder, submitted his Report, *The Women at Work Initiative: The push for equality*. Everyone has highly appreciated the Report of the Director-General and has considered it a roadmap that can be used as a basis for setting our plans and strategies, according to the nature and conditions of each State. Mr Ryder also said that it is through social dialogue alone that we will be able to listen and talk to each other, whether in the ranks of governments, employers or workers.

During our Conference, we have been honoured to have the presence of Heads of State who have a clear vision. For instance, President Santos Calderón of the Republic of Colombia, who holds the Nobel Peace Prize for reaching an agreement relating to the longest-running conflict in the Americas, stressed the importance of peace in achieving more equal opportunities, gender equality and decent work. We listened to him carefully when he said that peace is about more than just silencing the guns. It is a process that involves political, economic and social policy. It has to do with ensuring good jobs and reducing poverty and inequality.

The World of Work Summit also discussed the opportunities for decent work to ensure and achieve peace and stability. It dealt with a number of topics, such as addressing the challenges of sustaining peace through ensuring job opportunities for young people. In particular, it highlighted the need for good partnerships.

At the Summit, we had the honour to organize a panel discussion where high-level speakers took the floor, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr Grandi. He spoke of the different challenges that many countries, such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, are faced with and identified a number of possible solutions. At the Summit, we were also honoured to listen to the President of Ireland, Mr Higgins. In his speech, he said that the whole world needs to listen to the message of the ILO. He commended the ILO's ambition to be part of efforts to establish a new world covenant to preserve peace at all levels. He said that investing in rights-based peacebuilding programmes will not only save lives but will also provide the world with all possible opportunities for human development and prosperity. This, in turn, can achieve peace based on international human solidarity, which also relies on sufficient economic and social knowledge, as well as equality in terms of gender, economic status, social status and opportunities. We also had the honour to have the visit of the President of the Central African Republic, Mr Touadéra. He addressed our Conference by referring to the different challenges faced in his country and the ways they were overcome, including with sufficient support from the Organization.

Various events took place, including the World Day Against Child Labour, which coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Global March Against Child Labour. All the different speakers, including Nobel Peace Prize winner Mr Satyarthi, said that efforts will continue in order to face the various challenges related to child labour with a view to eliminating it.

It is worth mentioning here that the Arab Labour Organization also organized a very important event to support employers and workers in the occupied Arab territories (including the Occupied Palestinian Territory). This event was a gesture of solidarity and it reiterated, as the Report of the Director-General recalled, that occupation is a major reason behind the deterioration of the economic situation in the occupied Arab territories, that dialogue will lead to improving the situation and creating decent jobs there, and that all organizations and States need to pursue their efforts towards this goal.

Most of our work has been conducted, of course, in technical committees. We have all looked closely at the different discussions that took place and statements that were made in the technical committees, which worked very long hours, sometimes until midnight and even later.

I will start with the Recurrent Discussion Committee on social dialogue and tripartism, which adopted very important and fruitful conclusions to reinforce social dialogue among the social partners so that they can continue to make progress towards the most efficient future. The results of the Committee and the work of the recurrent discussion cannot only be considered as tools to address the current challenges in the world of work. They are vital for facing a very important phenomenon that was highlighted by the Director-General in his opening speech, namely that it is very difficult to talk to each other at times but we have to

listen carefully to each other. In the end, the Committee agreed upon practical and consensual conclusions and the social partners reiterated their commitments to the principles of social dialogue and tripartism in policy setting. The mandate given to the ILO is very important, especially in the light of the centenary that we will celebrate soon, and this is in line with the 2030 Agenda and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals.

The Standard-Setting Committee on violence and harassment in the world of work held its first discussion. As the Secretary-General of the Conference said in his opening speech, the opportunities that lie ahead for the ILO to negotiate with regard to a new standard are few and far between. We all know that this topic is very timely and important. This is why all the different groups need to agree on the steps to take in order to arrive at a new Convention on violence and harassment against men and women in the world of work, and this is a significant task in itself.

The Committee reached a conviction that violence and harassment in the world of work are universal and have highly disruptive impacts and consequences on families and individuals. The discussions were wide-ranging and at times even emotional. This is not surprising, especially as this was the first time that the ILO was negotiating labour standards on this very complicated and multidimensional topic. Some participants considered that the definitions were very vague at times. Others saw that this will provide flexibility so that these definitions can be applied to different national contexts. There is still a long road ahead of us before we can arrive at an instrument but at least we have established a strong basis for continuing the discussion next year.

As for the Committee on the Application of Standards, this Committee is a cornerstone of the international labour standards mechanism, an efficient and unique system that seeks to ensure countries' compliance with ILO standards. The Committee actually discussed 24 individual country cases and we all listened to the approval of its report and the adoption of its conclusions.

Regarding the General Discussion Committee on effective development cooperation, the Committee held intensive discussions on the future of ILO development cooperation. Some members of the Committee identified not only major challenges but also major opportunities that can arise in the light of the different social, economic and environmental changes occurring in the world of work. Others talked about the consequences and aftermath of conflicts and disasters that have resulted in loss and displacement, and they also highlighted the fact that some countries have had to deal with a huge influx of refugees. These burdens need to be shared in a more predictable and equitable manner. The Committee also adopted some very good conclusions.

Here, I would like to reiterate my thanks and appreciation to all who have worked in the committees, to the delegates who have participated in the discussions, and also to the technical and administrative teams who have done everything they could to facilitate the committees' work.

On another level, the Conference approved the amendments to the Code of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006, as amended (MLC, 2006), which had been adopted by the Special Tripartite Committee further to submission by the group of Seafarer representatives. In addition, the Conference abrogated six Conventions and withdrew three Recommendations.

The whole world today is facing huge challenges and difficult circumstances at the economic and social level. Some countries are also faced with political crises. All these circumstances have increased unemployment rates, especially among women. This is why, with the ILO leading the way, we need to work together to ensure sufficient funding to allow the Organization, in cooperation with its partners, to deal effectively with these challenges.

I would like to thank the Government Vice-President, Mr Elmiger, the Employer Vice-President, Mr Mattar, and the Worker Vice-President, Ms Gono. They have shown great solidarity; I am very proud to have worked with them all, and I would like to respectfully thank them.

I would also like to address my thanks and appreciation to Mr Ryder for all that he has achieved in his first term of office. I am confident that we are in safe hands with him as Director-General of our noble Organization, and that with him we will be able to move ahead and overcome new challenges in the future.

(The speaker continues in English.)

Before finishing, I would also like to thank a number of people for their assistance: Mr Llobera, Director of secretariat services; Ms Dimitrova, Clerk of the Conference, and her team, including Ms Peniche, Ms Ontal and Ms Mbinkar-Gondo; Ms Juvet-Mir, Chief of Protocol, and her team; and also my own team, who have helped me and the Minister before me, including Ms Hamed and Ms Zayed.

(The speaker continues in Arabic.)

I would also like to say a big thank you to all the technical, administrative and logistical staff, who have all contributed to the success of the Conference, including the interpreters who facilitated our work, and all who participated in our proceedings.

In finishing, I would like to go back to a speech that was delivered by His Majesty King Abdullah II when he addressed the 91st Session of the Conference. He said that by the work one knows the workman; by our work, future generations will know the strength of the ILO's commitment to peace, equality and justice; by our work, we can achieve what we think is right; and by working together as partners with mutual respect, we can and will achieve our goal.

The Secretary-General of the Conference

Before the President brings this 107th Session of the Conference to a close, we have one very important piece of business to conclude. For as long as I can recall, it has been the tradition of this Conference to present its President with the engraved gavel. It is a symbol of authority, of course, but, much more than that, it is a symbol of our appreciation for the wonderful job done in leading this session. So, allow me to present the President with the gavel of the Conference.

The President

I would like to thank the Secretary-General of the Conference. I now use this gavel to declare the 107th Session of the International Labour Conference closed.

(The Conference adjourned sine die at 5.35 p.m.)